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## Contents

PREFACE	1
I. THE CAUSES OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION	
1. <i>Bread and Butter in Tsarist Russia</i>	3
2. <i>Popular Struggle Against Tyranny</i>	9
3. <i>How Russia was Governed</i>	12
4. <i>No Cromwells in Russia</i>	16
5. <i>Who Should Lead the People?</i>	20
6. <i>Bolsheviks and Mensheviks</i>	25
7. <i>Three Revolutions, 1905-17</i>	28
II. THE BREATHING SPACE	
1. <i>Brest-Litovsk</i>	35
2. <i>Crushing Armed Opposition and Sabotage</i>	40
3. <i>Building the New State</i>	44
4. <i>The Constituent Assembly</i>	49
5. <i>Subject Nations Revolt</i>	54
6. <i>Beginnings of the Socialist Order</i>	58
7. <i>Mass Initiative</i>	65
8. <i>The Plan for Reaching Socialism</i>	68
9. <i>"World Revolution"</i>	72
10. <i>The New Menace</i>	75
III. INVASION AND CIVIL WAR	
1. <i>Open Hostilities</i>	81
2. <i>The Role of Allied Diplomacy</i>	85
3. <i>The White Regimes</i>	92
4. <i>The Grain Crusade</i>	95
5. <i>The Struggle with Counter-Revolution</i>	98
6. <i>White Terror and Red Terror</i>	102
7. <i>Socialist Legislation</i>	106
8. <i>The Civil War</i>	109
9. <i>Soviet Peace Proposals</i>	122
10. <i>War Communism</i>	129
11. <i>Steps to Socialism</i>	134
12. <i>The Freeing of Nationalities</i>	139
IV. REBUILDING AND INDUSTRIALIZING	
1. <i>The New Economic Policy</i>	144
2. <i>The Great Famine</i>	149
3. <i>The Genoa Conference</i>	151
4. <i>Economic Difficulties and Political Disputes</i>	156

*Preface*

5.	<i>External Difficulties, 1923-4</i>	161
6.	<i>Problems of Construction</i>	167
7.	<i>The Struggle for Industrialization</i>	172
8.	<i>The Attack on Rural Capitalism</i>	180
9.	<i>The Five Year Plan</i>	185
V.	FOUNDATIONS COMPLETED	
1.	<i>A New Revolution</i>	190
2.	<i>Problems of Expanding Industry</i>	195
3.	<i>The Human Element</i>	199
4.	<i>Wreckers</i>	203
5.	<i>Alarums Without</i>	206
6.	<i>Results of the Plan</i>	216
7.	<i>War on the Horizon</i>	218
8.	<i>The Basis of Soviet Confidence</i>	227
VI.	THE NEW SOCIETY	
1.	<i>Coming-of-Age Year, 1935</i>	235
2.	<i>The Stalin Constitution</i>	243
3.	<i>The Struggle for Collective Security, 1936-7</i>	254
4.	<i>The Year of Munich</i>	262
VII.	THE ROAD TO COMMUNISM 1939-41	
1.	<i>The Third Five-Year Plan</i>	275
2.	<i>The Moscow Negotiations of 1939</i>	281
3.	<i>Soviet Neutrality, 1939-41</i>	303
4.	<i>Preparations at Home</i>	316
VIII.	THE SOVIET UNION AT WAR	
1.	<i>The Front</i>	332
2.	<i>Behind the Front</i>	334
3.	<i>Stalin's Leadership</i>	344
4.	<i>Foreign Relations, 1941-2</i>	349
5.	<i>Stalingrad – The Turning-Point</i>	363
6.	<i>Potsdam</i>	381
	EPILOGUE	390
	[INDEX]	395

## *Preface*

Too many histories dealing with the Soviet Union which have appeared in English so far have suffered from the handicap of assuming – and sometimes saying in so many words – that the people of that great country are children, or savages, or slaves by nature, or just plain cyphers, not to be reckoned with by their governments, mere pawns on the political chessboard.

With that assumption, it was fatally easy for even historians of repute to forget the elementary rules of their profession, abandon the method of testing assertion by documents, and so fall into the peddling of anecdotes and clubroom gossip in place of history.

Anyone who has had to teach the history of the U.S.S.R., either academically or by way of adult education, must be painfully aware of the results. Moreover, any reader of these lines can ask himself or herself: ‘If all I ever read in school books or my newspaper about the Bolsheviks and Soviet Russia is true, how on earth do they manage to go on existing? Why are Mr X and Mr Y, statesmen with great resources behind them, so worried about the power of the Soviets? How comes it that Mr Z, who has spent thirty years exposing the misery and ineptitude of Bolshevism, now declares it is stronger than ever?’

The answer is that history by anecdote is not reliable history, nor is history in the form of second-hand gossip; nor is history which plays on national prejudice, or ignorance of a different system of society. All such history leaves people in the dark, powerless to understand unexpected events, unprepared and floundering, constantly taken by surprise.

For want of a better, this book is an attempt to provide a more reliable guide to understanding the Soviet Union, based on a different view of its people. Like all histories, it can but select what appear to the author to be main and decisive factors at every stage. That means that the author’s own point of view counts in its writing; and anyone who pretends that Soviet or any other history can be written differently is cheating. But what matters is that, on controversial questions, the reader should be aware of a different point of view if it exists; and above all that the historical explanations given by the author should stand the test of experience.

In this respect the writer can truly say that he has done his best by the reader, applying the same criteria to events that he has used

## *Preface*

successfully, on many occasions since 1917, when trying to understand them for himself. The results may not always be palatable to many readers, as they will probably find in the subsequent pages. But the writer has a profound belief in the adult capacity of the British people for accepting unpleasant shocks to cherished prejudices and shibboleths, as part of getting to know the real world which surrounds them.

And if such an approach is not very popular at the moment, that is no argument for those who would know the true history of our own times:

They are slaves who will not choose  
Hatred, scoffing and abuse,  
Rather than in silence shrink  
From the truth they needs must think;  
They are slaves who dare not be  
In the right with two or three.

So wrote the American poet of emancipation, Russell Lowell, a century ago. His lines are no bad companion for reading and trying to understand the history of the Soviet Union.

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The narrative in this book is necessarily based upon the best sources available, and most of these are in Russian – the Soviet newspapers, Soviet historical and political journals and monographs, proceedings of Soviet congresses, and the like. As most readers of the book will not be familiar with Russian, however, the writer has not thought it useful to burden its text with such references.

The suggestions for further reading at the end of each chapter, therefore, are confined to books in English or French, and are not meant to be exhaustive. They are intended to provide a first guide to reliable original sources which will help the student to deeper independent judgment.

## CHAPTER I

### *The Causes of the Russian Revolution*

#### 1. BREAD AND BUTTER IN TSARIST RUSSIA

Russia before 1917 was an Empire ruled by an absolute monarchy. Long after other Great Powers had begun to develop modern industry Russia continued to be a backward agricultural country, in which farming at a very low level of output was carried on by some 15,000,000 small peasant owners or tenants. The 130,000 landowners, of whom the greatest was the Tsar or Emperor himself, maintained their economic and political rule by dictatorial methods, and for decades held back economic development and social progress comparable to that of other European Powers.

Up to 1861 most of the peasants were actually tied to the land as serfs, and could be bought or sold like animals. But the experience of the Crimean War (1854-6) showed that serfdom was bankrupt, and the Emancipation of 1861 was the result. It restored to the peasant that freedom of personal status which he had begun to lose in the 11th century, and had finally lost when the Romanov dynasty was established in the 17th. But in every other respect the Emancipation, from the peasant's point of view, was a swindle. The landlords after it held more land than they had controlled before, they had been allowed to choose the best land, and they were compensated for that part of their estates which went to the peasants at inflated prices, ultimately double the market value. The peasants could only hold their land collectively, as a village community, and the officials of that community now became responsible for their paying off the purchase price – the process went on for more than forty years – as well as for gathering taxes, mustering recruits for the army and handing over law-breakers. The system under which each peasant family had its land scattered in tiny strips over a considerable area, inherited from the Middle Ages, still remained, and was indeed reinforced by the control of the village community. The peasant could not leave his village without police permission, and that for only brief periods. In large areas of the country the peasants went on ploughing the landlord's estate with their own equipment and horses – for wages, or as rent for additional plots of land, or to pay off debt: a relic of the serf labour prevailing before 1861 which survived right up to 1917.

Everything was done, in fact, to leave the landowners with the

economic privileges undiminished or even increased, with the sole difference that the peasant was now a defenceless wage-labourer on the landowner's estate, instead of a serf. Poverty and economic stagnation remained the characteristic features of the Russian village.\* After the first Russian Revolution of 1905, legislation associated with the name of Prime Minister Stolypin made it possible for peasants to leave the village community and consolidate their strips into independent farms. Between 1907 and 1915 less than one-fifth of all the peasant households of European Russia took advantage of this permission, taking with them one-eighth of all peasant land. But it turned out that over three-fifths of those who left were miserably poor peasants who sold their holdings at the first opportunity: only just over a million proved to be substantial peasants, or 'kulaks'. It was for their benefit that Stolypin's reforms had been intended – to create a class of substantial farmers on whom Tsardom could rely. They now developed their holdings as capitalist farms, employing their poorer neighbours for hire under conditions no less burdensome than those on the estates of the landowners.

Russian agriculture on the eve of the first world war showed the lowest yields in Europe. Its peasants still used ten million wooden ploughs; 30 per cent of them had no working animals to draw the plough and had to hire a horse from the neighbouring kulak at extortionate rates. Poverty, hunger and disease, with a high rate of infant mortality approaching that of colonial countries, were the mark of the Russian village.† And although the Russian government did its utmost to promote emigration, and settled more than two million people in its own Asiatic colonies, on land from which the original owners – the native peoples – were driven off to make room for Russian colonists, the Russian countryside right up to the Revolution of 1917 was 'over-populated' – that is, hundreds of thousands

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\* Owen, *The Russian Peasant Movement* (1937), provides much interesting information on this. So does the article on Russia in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (13th edition, 1910-11), vol. 23, pp. 887-9.

† See, for example, the extremely restrained description of Russian peasant conditions in Mavor, *Economic History of Russia*, vol. II (1914), book v.



every year had to leave the land to look for work elsewhere.\*

Before 1861 Russian industry had been greatly hampered in its development by the prevailing feudal economy. But it made rapid strides afterwards, particularly after 1890.† Some 50,000 miles of railways were built in the half-century following Emancipation, to provide an outlet for Russian grain to the foreign markets, and for strategic purposes. Iron output increased from 300,000 tons to 4,500,000 tons over the same period, and the production of coal and steel increased proportionately; so did that of oil, in which Russia was far wealthier than any other of the European Powers. Moreover, Russian industrial expansion in the last twenty years of Tsardom took place at a time when the technique of large-scale production in countries with a longer industrial history had made great progress; with the consequence that very large plants, employing thousands of workers in each establishment, were built in Russia from scratch, as it were, without a preliminary development of smaller modern enterprises. By 1910 about 54 per cent of all Russia's industrial workers were employed in factories with 500 workmen or more – the highest percentage in the world of its kind. Furthermore, control of these factories was highly concentrated. Monopoly organizations – either trusts directly owning groups of factories, or syndicates marketing their products – controlled over 75 per cent of Russian iron output, most of the coal and iron ore mined, a very large proportion of metal goods such as steel rails, girders and agricultural machinery, most of the oil and sugar production, and so on.

The speed at which Russian industry developed from the '90s onwards must not, however, hide from us the incredibly backward state of Russian economy in spite of all this development.‡ In proportion to her size, Russia's network of railways in 1913 was four

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\* The *Russian Year Book* for 1913 (pp. 72-4) – a volume published in London with official support – makes some straightforward admissions in this respect.

† Mavor, *op. cit.*, vol. II, book vi., can be consulted for further information.

‡ Additional data on this subject were quoted by Stalin and Molotov in their speeches at the 18th Congress of the Communist Party in 1939 (report published in English as *Land of Socialism Today and Tomorrow*).

times smaller than that of the U.S.A. and twelve times smaller than that of Germany or the United Kingdom. Her output of coal, in proportion to the population, was five times less than that of France, fifteen times less than that of Germany, twenty-six times less than that of the U.S.A. and thirty-one times less than that of Great Britain. Moreover, the lag was increasing as time went on. Thus, Russian output of iron per head of population was three times less than French in 1900, but four times less in 1913: it was six times less than German output in 1900, but eight times less in 1913: it was already eight times less than American output per head in 1900, and by 1913 it was eleven times less.

The fact was that the survivals of feudalism in the Russian countryside, with the paramount domination of the Russian land-owners in political life which they perpetuated, hung like a crushing millstone round the neck of Russia's economy long after 1861. They prevented her full *capitalist* development and the growth of a large home market, retarding the accumulation of capital and its free flow into industrial productive enterprise. Even the expansion of the iron and steel industry was due primarily to the needs of railway construction and of a huge army and navy, rather than to all-round economic demand. This was most clearly shown, not only by the low output of capital goods per head already noted, but by the fact that there was very little machinery production in Russia, except for the simplest agricultural implements. Ordinary lathes were not produced in any quantity, the automobile and chemical industries scarcely existed, and when the first world war began to tax Russia's industrial resources in 1915 she had to import 60 per cent of her rifles and small arms ammunition, over 70 per cent of her guns and shells, and nearly 100 per cent of her lorries.

If Russia was so backward, how was her industrial development able to advance at such a speed in the '90s? Chiefly owing to an enormous influx of foreign capital which began in those years. After years of quarrelling with Germany over the Russian Government's industrial tariffs, introduced to protect the first infant industries in the '80s, and over Russia's increasing grain exports, which infuriated the big Prussian landowners, Tsardom turned in the '90s to the French money market for the loans which it constantly needed to balance its Budget. Beginning with loans for Treasury purposes and railway construction, foreign capital imports began to flow into the coal, oil, iron and steel industries, attracted by vastly higher profits (25-50 per

cent) than it could earn at home. Between 1896 and 1900 a quarter of all new companies formed were foreign, and by 1900 foreign capital accounted for 28 per cent of the total. By 1914 the proportion had risen to 33 per cent. Foreign capital controlled 45 per cent of Russia's oil output, 54 per cent of her iron output, 50 per cent of her chemical industry, 74 per cent of her coal output. More than half the capital of the six leading banks of the country – themselves controlling nearly 60 per cent of all banking capital and nearly half of all bank deposits – was foreign.\* The influx had made a new leap after 1906, when the Tsar's Government, staggering under the impact of the first Russian revolution, was able to stabilize its finances and crush opposition thanks to a huge loan of £90,000,000 floated by French and French-controlled banks, with the approval of British bankers (the French financiers had made such approval a condition of their aid).†

In a recent survey of Russia's population problems a dispassionate authority has given this bird's-eye picture of Russia's economy in 1914:

The proportion of the Russian population actively occupied in manufacturing and mechanical industries on the eve of World War I, though twice as high as in 1860, was still extremely low, with less than two industrial workers per 100 persons in the total population. At about this time in the United States there were 11.6 gainfully occupied persons in manufacturing and mechanical industries per 100 total population, and the corresponding proportion in 1820 had been about 3.6 per cent...

As industrial activity was heightened in Western Europe, Russia slowly emerged from a locally self-sufficient feudal economy and developed many of the characteristics of a colonial economy. Russian economy became heavily dependent on foreign capital... Above all, the whole Russian economy remained predominantly agrarian at a low technical level. The conditions of the Russian economy as a

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\* One of the few accounts in English of this feature of Russia's economy is in Alexinsky, *Russia and Europe* (1917), part I, chapter 5.

† Brailsford, *The War of Steel and Gold* (1914), chapter 8. £13,000,000 of the total was placed on the London money market.

whole fixed the level on which the economic integration of the various parts of the Empire was worked out. The outlying regions, therefore, might be characterized as the colonial appendages of a nation whose economic relations to the outside world also had many of the characteristics of a colonial economy.\*

In the foregoing pages emphasis has been laid on the economic facts of Tsarist Russia, because in the long run they were the determining cause of the Socialist revolution of November, 1917. The social conditions they generated did not prevent the appearance of a great Russian literature, drama and musical art, or of world-famous Russian scholars, philosophers and scientists. But how many of these were forced to spend their most fruitful years abroad or in exile – scientists and historians like Mechnikov and Vinogradov, social students and profound thinkers like Kovalevsky or Chernyshevsky – and how many lived and died in poverty or obscurity, their work starved or frustrated by an ignorant bureaucracy – like the Russian inventor of radio Popov, the composer Moussorgsky, and the discoverer of jet-propulsion Tsiolkovsky! The great writer Tolstoy was excommunicated, Maxim Gorky had his name struck from the roll of newly-elected members of the Academy of Sciences by the Tsar (Chekhov and Korolenko, masters of Russian prose, resigned in protest), and the world-famous chemist Mendeleyev was voted down by the obedient servants of the government in the same body. More directly reflecting the general social conditions was the state of popular education. Only about 8 million children were at school in 1913 – 23 per cent of those of school age – and expenditure on education per head was one-sixth to one-eighth of that of Britain, France or Germany. Barely 27 per cent of the people over nine years of age could read and write (or 30 per cent if we take European Russia, without its colonies in the Caucasus and in Asia). For a population of over 170 millions, less than 3 million daily copies of newspapers appeared.

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\* F. Lorimer, *The Population of the Soviet Union* (League of Nations, 1946), pp. 21.

## 2. POPULAR STRUGGLE AGAINST TYRANNY

Against the oppressive consequences of these economic and social conditions, for the individual and for society as a whole, the Russian people were for generations in constant revolt. It is quite wrong to think of the Russians as a docile, patient and easily-regimented people, meekly submitting to whatever fate despotic rulers might send them. The peoples ruled by the Russian Tsars were always distinguished by their stubborn fighting qualities in face of oppression, whether foreign or home-grown. It was their vast guerrilla war – not to go back any further in their history – which broke the back of Napoleon's Grand Army in 1812, and not merely 'General Winter'. The peasants continued to fight serfdom after peace was restored. That, and not simply the Republican doctrines learned in Western Europe, stimulated the first revolutionaries of modern Russia – the young officer-noblemen whose abortive rebellion in December, 1825, is known as that of the 'Decembrists'. The documents they left behind show that liberation of the serfs was a cornerstone of their programme. Ceaseless peasant outbreaks against the landowners and Tsarist officials also inspired a whole generation of courageous middle-class revolutionaries in the middle of the 19th century – the democratic writers Belinsky, Dobrolyubov and Herzen, and above all the great revolutionary thinker and organizer Chernyshevsky.\*

For their part, the Russian peasants, the subject peoples and, later, the industrial workmen filled Russian history in the 19th century and the first years of the 20th with endless agrarian outbreaks, national insurrections, industrial disputes and revolutionary political activity, bloodily suppressed but ever renewed. No peoples in Western Europe can show a more magnificent record of resistance to oppression, at the cost of life, liberty and happiness freely given, than those of Tsarist Russia during the 150 years before the Revolution of 1917. The representation of them as nations who would submit tamely to dictation is a part of the mythology carefully cultivated in the days of Tsardom by its Russian and foreign supporters. Historical truth presents a very different story.

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\* Short accounts in English of their views were given (before the Revolution) by Kropotkin, *Russian Literature: Ideals and Realities* (1905) and Alexinsky, *op. cit.* Selections from the writings of Herzen, Belinsky and Dobrolyubov are also available in English.

Agrarian discontent, passing constantly into revolt, attended the painful advance of capitalist relations between master and man in the countryside after 1861. The break-up of the Russian village into peasant capitalists (kulaks), middle peasants living mainly by the labour of themselves and their families on their own land, and the poor and landless peasantry, representing by the eve of the first world war some 70 per cent of the total, provided more occasions for such outbreaks. This was the other side of the picture of bursting Russian cornbins which made possible the growth of Russia's annual grain exports from 1.2 million tons in 1861-5 to 9 million tons in 1911-13.

Already in the late '50s the peasants by their outbreaks – burning barns and haystacks, attacking landowners and their officials, driving off the landlord's cattle and ploughing up his land for themselves – had prompted Tsar Alexander II to make his historic remark that it was better to abolish serfdom from above than to wait until it began abolishing itself from below. But the peasants showed their appreciation of the character of this abolition: there had been 284 peasant outbreaks in the years 1858-60, but nearly 2,000 in the three years following Emancipation. And although this rebellious spirit, essentially elemental and unorganized, had its waves of depression and rebirth in after years, the 20th century saw peasant revolt rising to unheard-of dimensions. In 1905-7 there were 7,000 peasant risings, finally gripping more than half the territory of Russia. In the following two years the wave fell, only to rise to a new peak of 13,000 outbreaks in the years 1910-14. It must be remembered that these outbreaks involved a direct conflict with the law, administered in Russia by sabre and bullet without stint.\*

Again, the story of the Russian Empire from 1863 to 1916 is one of constant and widening revolt of the subject or colonial peoples, who were in various stages of economic and social development - from capitalism in the case of Poland to pre-feudal, patriarchal tribalism in many parts of Central Asia and the Far East. From the great Polish insurrection of 1863, when 30,000 were killed in battle and 1,500 executed, to the tremendous national uprising of the Central Asian peoples (Kirghiz, Kazakh, Turkmen) of 1916, in which unnumbered thousands were massacred, flogged and sent to convict

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\* For further details, the reader may consult the works of Mavor and Owen, already mentioned.

labour, revolt in one part or other of the Empire was endemic. In the '60s and '70s its scene was chiefly the Caucasus. In the '80s, following upon the hard-fought conquest of Central Asia in the previous decade, came the bloody resistance of the Turkmen nation to the suppression of its independence. In 1898 there was an Uzbek and Kirghiz rising in Andizhan. In 1905 the peasants and workmen of the Baltic provinces, of Poland and of Georgia, were in no way behind those of Russia in violent rebellion against the Tsar's authority.

Only gradually, on the background of this much older ferment, did there appear the struggle of the industrial working class which, although it came late on the scene, proved particularly responsive to the principles of Socialism, and for that very reason rapidly advanced in the large centres to the position of the most class-conscious body of workmen in Europe. At the beginning of the '80s, more than half of the industrial workers were employed in large factories; and different political conditions might well have given rise to the beginnings of powerful trade union organization.\* But this was not tolerated by the Tsar's government, and the Russian employers, connected by a thousand economic strings with the landowning class and its officialdom, took full advantage of the repressive machinery of the State. The first workmen's organizations – the South Russian Workmen's Union, founded at Odessa in 1874, and the Northern Union of Russian Workers, which arose at St. Petersburg in 1878 – were illegal from the outset, and were soon suppressed.

Nevertheless, great strikes – in St. Petersburg and Narva in 1882, at the Morozov textile mills in Vladimir province in 1885, and at St. Petersburg in 1895-6 – secured in each case a series of factory laws, though in practice these were seldom carried out. After a series of local general and political strikes from the turn of the century onwards (Stalin led one of the biggest and most successful of these at Baku in December, 1904, when for the first time a body of workmen forced the employers to sign a collective agreement), there came the revolutionary upheaval of 1905. That year there were 3 million

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\* Average working hours at this time were 12½ hours, with 14-15 hours in the textile industry, and still longer in the colonial borderlands. Wages in the textile industry averaged 16/- a month, in the coalfields 25/- to 50/-. Child labour was widespread. Exorbitant fines and compulsory use of employers' shops were the rule.

strikers, the following year a million, and the year after that 740,000. After a short interval of depression, the strike wave began to rise again in 1911, and by 1914 had brought into action 1½ millions, with workers' barricades on the streets of St. Petersburg in July, on the very eve of the war.\*

It must be remembered, here too, that when a Russian workman went on strike in the days of Tsardom he was running very different risks from his fellow-workmen of Britain, France or Germany – even when these were engaged in 'unofficial' strikes. The action itself was an illegal act – a 'mutiny', in police phraseology – and the striker had no nationally recognized trade union or disputes fund to support him. Except for a brief space in 1905, and in St. Petersburg from 1912 to 1914, there was no legal daily paper to voice his demands; nor did he have any right such as that of peaceful picketing. Workers going on strike knew that within twenty-four hours many of them might be bludgeoned or sabred or shot, many might be arrested and subjected to administrative exile, if not sent for trial with the prospect of a term at a convict settlement. To go on strike in Tsarist Russia was an act of heroism.

### 3. HOW RUSSIA WAS GOVERNED

The policy of the ruling landlord class in these conditions was to maintain the system of autocracy to the utmost, and to give only those minimum concessions which mass upheavals made advisable. During the first fifteen years after the Emancipation of 1861, a number of administrative reforms were carried out, with the aim of eliminating the more inefficient survivals of mediaeval times. 'Zemstvos' – county assemblies of large property-owners, principally the landed gentry, with a sprinkling of the richer peasantry – were set up in certain parts of European Russia. They were allowed to begin the provision of local services such as hospitals, roads and voluntary schools. Similarly, town councils, elected on a high property franchise which excluded all but 1 or 2 per cent of the urban population from the vote, were given responsibility for such municipal services as they should think fit. Public courts were set up to replace the pri-

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\* Conditions of the Russian working class are described by Mavor, *op. cit.*, vol. II book vi, by Perris, *Russia in Revolution* (1905), chapter 19, and by the *Russian Year Book* (1913) *passim*.



vate jurisdiction of the landowners, and universal liability to military service, instead of recruiting through the local landowners, was introduced. But the entire machinery of government remained effectively in the hands of the landed gentry, from whom were drawn the high officials of State, the governors of provinces who were directly responsible to the Minister of the Interior, and the upper ranks of the police machinery which, depending directly on the governors or the centrally controlled gendarmerie, were the real ultimate authority in the villages.

Even this brief honeymoon of what seemed liberalism, against Russia's murky background of autocracy, came to an end after the assassination of Alexander II in 1881. The peasants were excluded from the Zemstvos, and a special plenipotentiary officially drawn from among the landowners, the 'Zemski Nachalnik', was set up as the local 'tsar and god' in each county. Many Zemstvo schools were swept away and replaced by church schools, usually of the two-class calibre. The town-council franchise was still further cut down. The Government declared itself against the idea that 'children of cooks and laundresses' should be allowed into secondary schools, and the first tentative steps in women's higher education were brought to an end. The Jewish pogrom was introduced in 1881 as one of the standing features of Russian political life, together with the system of laying down a maximum percentage of Jewish pupils who might enter the secondary schools and universities. With minor modifications forced upon the Government by the 1905 Revolution, this system held good until 1917.

Repression and reaction marked particularly the reign of the last Tsar, Nicholas II. In a speech to delegates of the Zemstvos – moderately liberal landowners and business men, with a certain number of professors and public officials – who came to congratulate him on his accession in 1895, Nicholas warned them against the 'senseless dreams' that they could be called upon to participate in the government, or that the principle of the absolute monarchy might be modified. From the beginning of his reign, Nicholas attacked the democratic and autonomous constitution of Finland, secured by that country as the condition of its union with Russia in 1809. In Central Asia as in Armenia, Russian officials and the Russian Orthodox

Church worked hand in hand to Russify subject nations,\* sweeping away their native institutions, denying them native schools, and imposing on them forced conversion. The Tsar's judicial authorities did not hesitate to give currency to the malignant legend of 'ritual murder' by Jews, in the notorious Beilis trial at Kiev in 1913, which earned for Russia the contempt of Europe.

Nicholas reacted with particular ferocity against the labour movement. In April 1895 a meeting of textile workers on strike at Yaroslavl was shot down by troops of the Phanagorian Regiment. On the margin of the official report Nicholas wrote: 'I am very satisfied with the behaviour of the troops at Yaroslavl during the factory disturbances'. But this was published only after the Revolution: publicly Nicholas associated himself with the shootings by a telegram which electrified Russia: 'Best thanks to the splendid Phanagorians!' Ten years later the Tsar personally was involved in the military arrangements which on Sunday, January 22nd, 1905, trapped large and peaceable crowds, bearing his portrait and holy images in a procession to petition him for improved conditions, in the squares and main streets of the capital, to be shot down by hundreds. This 'Bloody Sunday' was followed by pogroms, punitive expeditions, and mass executions all over European Russia in 1905-6. The Tsar himself was publicly enrolled in the anti-semitic hooligan organization known as the Black Hundreds, and wore their badge on State occasions.†

After a long period of intense repression of all mass activity,‡ the strike wave began to rise again in 1911. What lifted it to an unprecedented height was the famous massacre at the Lena gold-fields in 1912, when once again a peaceful demonstration of strikers was met with bullets, 250 being killed and 270 wounded, and the Minister of the Interior, replying to protests, declared: 'So it has been, so it will

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\* See, for example, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (13th edition, 1910-11), vol. XXVII, p. 422.

† See, for many other such illustrations of the influence, character and activities of Nicholas II, a sketch by the present writer prefixed to his translation of Bykov's *Last Days of Tsardom* (1934).

‡ Prison archives, accessible since 1917, show that 40,000 revolutionaries perished in the central convict prisons from 1907 to 1910. 944 trade unions were dissolved or refused registration, and 723 of their leaders arrested.

be'. A big wave of political strikes of protest did succeed to the extent of securing yet another limited factory act, this time instituting a system of health insurance for approximately 25 per cent of Russia's workmen – chiefly at their own expense (they paid 60 per cent of the contributions), and never effectively put into force because of the outbreak of war in 1914.

The Revolution of 1905 had secured the semblance of a Constitution. A national assembly, or State Duma, was created, but of a very peculiar character. Certain subjects were withdrawn from its competence altogether, particularly defence and foreign policy, while on the others it had only the right to approve Bills, but no ultimate legislative authority. The Tsar could through his Ministers issue binding edicts on any subject, and the Ministers were not responsible to the Duma. The vote was withheld from women, men under twenty-five, agricultural labourers, day-labourers, and many other categories of the common people. Representation was by classes, who met separately, through local assemblies of their own representatives in each province, and in two or three stages of indirect election in the case of the workmen and peasants, to choose electors for the provincial electoral assembly, at which deputies were chosen to the Duma. As a result, the landowners had one elector for every 2,000 of their number, town merchants, manufacturers and other property-owners one for 7,000, the peasants one for 30,000, and the workmen one for 90,000.

However, even elected in this way, the Duma proved insufficiently reliable at times of great upheaval, and in June 1907, by a *coup d'état*, the electoral system was radically altered. Central Asia was deprived of its representatives altogether, and Poland found its representation reduced from 35 to 12, of whom 2 must be Russian. It was calculated that in 51 provinces of European Russia, with a total population of 112 millions, only 17 millions now had votes. But these votes were to be cast according to a still more unequal system than that before 1907. The landowners now had one elector for every 230 of their number, the capitalists one for every 1,000, the peasants one for every 60,000, and the workmen – who had only six seats reserved for them, in as many industrial provinces – had one for every 125,000. The effect of this was that the large landed proprietors alone had between them more than half of the electors at all the provincial

assemblies of Russia (2,594 out of 5,161).\*

When it is borne in mind that, parallel with the Duma, there existed the practically unlimited power of the police apparatus already mentioned, it will be clear why the Minister of Finance (later Prime Minister) Kokovtsov could exclaim with feeling and justification, at a Duma session on April 24th, 1908: 'In Russia, thank God, there is no Parliament'. He meant much the same as Stolypin meant when he once said that there was no intention of 'converting the Ministerial bench into a prisoner's dock': and the Empress, when she wrote to Nicholas II (July 8th, 1915): 'Russia, thank God, is not a constitutional country.' Lenin put the same thing in more positive revolutionary terms in 1907, when he described the manner by which Russia was governed as 'a military despotism embellished with parliamentary forms'.

This is not to say that the Duma played no part. Its discussions provided a platform for exposing some of the worst counter-revolutionary abuses after 1905. To that extent they afforded a certain amount of protection for those liberties of the subject which, guaranteed at the time of the 1905-6 Revolution, were not formally abrogated. Some of the more progressive middle-class members of the Duma, as well as the peasants and the Social-Democrats, were able to use it as a tribune, for example to expose the oppression of subject nationalities. But it would be wrong to imagine that parliamentary methods were as a result making progress in Russia before 1917.†

#### 4. NO CROMWELLS IN RUSSIA

What is most striking about the Russian bourgeoisie – the class of substantial manufacturers, bankers and merchants – and of the educated professional men who spoke for them, as in other countries, is that in the main they had no ambitions to impose real checks on the autocracy. Far from providing a Cromwell or a Robespierre, the Russian bourgeoisie did not even venture to produce a Cobden or a Bright, a Gambetta or a W. J. Bryan, who would dare to call the mass of the people to action for even limited reforms. Growing up as they

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\* These figures are compiled from the Electoral Law of June 16th, 1907.

† Sir Bernard Pares, in his *Fall of the Russian Monarchy* (1939), gives a striking picture of the real nature of the regime in this respect.

did under the tutelage of a landowning class still soaked in serf-owning ideas, the Russian capitalists were in addition linked with that class by economic interests. It has already been mentioned that the iron and steel industry grew up in the main on military and State railway orders. It was the Tsarist autocracy which opened new markets for the Russian textile industry in Central Asia, where it also developed at the expense of the native peoples a new source of raw cotton for the Russian mills. High protective tariffs, particularly on mass consumption goods rather than on luxuries, reconciled the interests of the aristocracy with those of the Russian manufacturers. When the latter were threatened in their profits by strike action, it was the Tsar's gendarmes and his troops who came to their rescue. Since the Revolution, the opening of police, provincial and factory archives has revealed with dazzling clarity how closely interwoven were the interests of the manufacturers and the landowners. Evidently the Russian capitalist class, coming so late into the political arena that its workers were able to borrow from abroad the dread weapon of scientific Socialism fully developed, found the Russian working class an even more terrible enemy than the stifling atmosphere of Russian Tsardom, and became counter-revolutionary without ever having been revolutionary.

This showed itself particularly in the parties which spoke for the interests of industry and commerce. From 1903 onwards progressive landowners, smaller manufacturers and middle-class intellectuals came together by degrees in an organization which, in the course of the 1905 Revolution, assumed the title of Constitutional-Democratic Party (Kadets). At its most daring moments, it never demanded more than a limitation of the Tsar's powers, the compulsory sale of lands to the peasantry at a fair price and an eight-hour day. The latter demand, however, was hastily abandoned directly the workers began to demand it with strikes in the winter of 1905, and by the end of the first revolution the Kadets had in practice abandoned the demand for limitation of the monarchy also. They themselves took part in the Duma in working out more precise police regulation of public meeting and freedom of speech, they proclaimed their 'unity with the Monarch' in the Duma of 1907, and they declared themselves no more than 'His Majesty's Opposition' – in a parliament where both Ministerial and Opposition benches were alike at the mercy of the Tsar. The utmost length to which the Kadet leaders went in their opposition thereafter, at a time of economic chaos and military col-

lapse during the first world war (1915-16), was to engage in conspiracies for a palace revolution, to replace Nicholas II by someone more 'progressive'.

The party immediately to the right of the Kadets – the Octobrists – voiced more specifically the interest of the larger capitalists, and was even less daring in its demands for reform. Like the Kadets, the Octobrists feared that one breach in the dam of private property, though it were at the expense of only the largest landowners represented by the autocracy, would admit a flood that would sweep away private property in land, factories, banks and trade altogether.

It was not only in home policy, however, that the Russian bourgeoisie rallied on all decisive occasions to the defence of Tsardom. The latter made itself the spearhead of their search for monopoly markets abroad, backed by the huge armed forces of Imperial Russia. From 1860 to 1890 Tsarist Russia found itself in congenial alliance with the military autocracy of Prussia. Like the Russian Empire, it was fighting against the menace of Socialism, it was interested in the suppression of Polish national aspirations, and it feared France as a source of democratic 'contamination'. Behind the shelter of this alliance, Russian Tsardom devoted twenty years to the conquest of Central Asia, and attempted, in the Turkish War of 1877-8, by supporting the national struggles of the Slav peoples under Turkish rule, to penetrate new markets in the Balkans. But here Russia was deserted by her ally, who could not sacrifice the interests of her other partner, Austria-Hungary, in the Balkan Peninsula. Russia found herself with exhausted finances and a discredited monarchy at home, and faced with an alliance of all Europe abroad. The result was her retreat from the favourable terms imposed upon Turkey at San Stefano in February, 1878, to the relative fiasco of the Berlin Treaty later that year.

This experience, followed by increasing financial difficulties in the next decade, made worse by the friction with Germany over economic questions mentioned earlier, led, in 1891, to the turn towards France, and a Franco-Russian military convention was ratified in 1894. Millions of French francs saved the Imperial Treasury and gave a vast new impulse to industrial development, in which once again the interests of Tsardom and capitalism found a temporary common purpose. Subsidies to manufacturers and high tariffs on foreign manufactured goods reinforced this alliance.

But the peculiar irresponsibility of an autocratic system of gov-

ernment gave an opportunity in the late '90s to a small clique around the Court to engage Russia in a policy of adventure in the Far East. It spelt untold wealth to a knot of company-promoters, embezzlers and bribe-takers in the highest positions; but after several years of intrigue and counter-intrigue it dragged Russia into disastrous war with Japan (1904-5). The war was at first supported by the big banks and manufacturers. But very soon the same military defeats which opened the flood-gates of revolution encouraged the budding liberal politicians to engage in a campaign of highly respectful 'pressure' on Tsardom, in favour of reforms, by means of a series of public banquets at which they voiced their aspirations.

This temporary rift, however, was rapidly healed when the dreaded spectre of real revolution raised its head in 1905. After a gesture of protest against the French loan of 1906, the Kadets turned to enthusiastic support of the Tsardom in its new foreign policy, based upon military alliance with France and, after 1907, upon an Anglo-Russian Convention (August 31st, 1907), delimiting spheres of influence in Asia.

While Tsardom was suppressing the Persian revolution in 1908-11, driving the Young Turks into the arms of Germany, and supporting Chinese reaction and the interests of foreign bondholders against the Chinese Revolution of 1911, the bourgeois parties in the Duma gave it full support. They welcomed with enthusiasm the close military collaboration with France, from 1911 onwards, which brought Russia into the war of 1914. Indeed, it was to the Russian manufacturers and merchants in the first instance that Tsardom turned, in the course of the war, when its own corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy proved powerless to organize a satisfactory machinery of supply for war factories and the civil population. By now the leaders of the Kadet and Octobrist parties, if not their rank-and-file, were well aware that the reward for victory, in Russia's case, would be Constantinople and other acquisitions at the expense of Turkey, with renewed hopes of economic domination in the Balkans.

Thus the cause of Tsardom, for all its mediaeval, half-feudal characteristics, for all the clogging influence of the large landowning class on economic development which it represented, nevertheless became inextricably mixed up in Russia with the cause of capitalism. The capitalist class never dared to venture far in its opposition to a system whose protection it hastily sought whenever its own immediate profits or more far-reaching interests were threatened. The

downfall of Tsardom was bound to bring in its train the downfall of capitalism, in one shape or another. It was not from the capitalist class, therefore, that the Russian people could expect their liberation. From whom, under whose leadership, could it come?

## 5. WHO SHOULD LEAD THE PEOPLE?

In the first years after Emancipation the reply had come from the radical middle-class movement of intellectuals later known as Narodniks.\* It was inspired by deep sympathies with the suffering peasantry and by the traditions handed down from Belinsky, Herzen and Chernyshevsky. Tsardom and large landowning, said the Narodniks, must be replaced by Socialism, but the Socialism they thought of had nothing in common with Marxism. If anything, it was akin to the ideas of the French anarchist and middle-class Utopian reformer Proudhon. Capitalism and industrial development, of the type familiar in Western Europe, was something alien to Russia, they thought: in this they were reinforced by the hatred of Western capitalism which men like Belinsky and Herzen had conceived in 1848, when they saw the workers first supplying the striking force of the popular revolts against the European autocracies, and then shot down in Prague, Paris and Berlin, or terrorized by the police in Britain, when they put forward their own class demands. 'Russian Socialism' must mean peasant ownership of the land through village communities, and industrial production in self-governing workshops. A loose federation of municipalities in town and country must become the political form of national unity.

The Narodniks differed among themselves as to whether this end could be achieved by mass propaganda work among the peasantry (as Lavrov thought), or by means of a revolutionary conspiracy to overthrow the Tsar (as Tkachov believed). But where they were united was in thinking that the mass of the people could be led towards emancipation only by self-sacrificing intellectuals from the educated classes, and in their ideas of leadership the very young working class of the Russian factories played no independent part; although a number of workmen did come under their influence.

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\* This word may be rendered as 'friends of the people' (narod). The word began to be used about 1876, but the ideas it represented were widely held earlier.



### *The Causes of the Russian Revolution*

At first the peasant disturbances of 1861-3 had been met with enthusiastic support from the democratic intellectuals, by illegal proclamations, great student demonstrations and the formation of a secret society in which some of the most brilliant young writers took part.

Then came attempts at peaceful Narodnik propaganda, in the first half of the '70s – attempts which met with severe repression and the exile of hundreds of young people to Siberia and other remote regions. The most active spirits among the Narodniks now turned to equally impracticable methods of influencing the ruling clique. Bombs and revolvers became their weapons, and in 1879 their leading organization formally split – into a majority which looked upon terrorism as the way to freedom, and a minority which still looked to some form of mass action for the; emancipation of Russia, although not rejecting terrorist methods entirely.

The majority constituted that famous secret society, the 'Narodnaya Volya' (People's Will), numbering at the height of its activity only a few score young men and women, who, completely devoted to their object, carried out a series of assassinations of high Tsarist officials, culminating in the execution of Alexander II himself in 1881, and for a season confining his successor, Alexander III, to the seclusion of his palace. But these assassinations were not understood by the people, and provoked violent and extensive counter-measures by the Government in which the organization was broken.

In the '90s groups of liberal idealists revived the Utopian theory that Russia could pass to Socialism without going through capitalism; but they no longer associated themselves with terrorist methods, and were concerned mainly with combating the rising influence of the Marxists upon the university youth. \* When the Marxists had won the contest by the first years of the 20th century – thanks to the now indisputable appearance and expansion of capitalism in Russia – the champions of Narodnik ideas dubbed themselves 'Socialist-Revolutionaries', and attempted for a short time to rival the Marxists in seeking the allegiance of the workers to a programme of spontaneous upheavals, and even jettisoning the idea of terror and of

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\* See, for this period, Lenin's writings, in his *Selected Works* (London), vols. I and XI, and Plekhanov, *In Defence of Materialism* (English translation, 1947).

peasant revolution. This phase did not survive the first peasant outbreak of the period preceding the 1905 Revolution. Once again the Socialist-Revolutionaries turned to belief in the peasantry as the ultimate revolutionary force in Russia, under leadership of middle-class intellectuals who must assert their influence (since they could not command the support of the workers) by terrorist acts.

But, in their return to the old Narodnik theories, the Socialist-Revolutionaries of 1902-3 onwards made one significant change. They began to place their hopes more and more on the substantial peasantry, who now dominated those very village communities to which the Socialist-Revolutionaries looked as the future basis of a Russian Republic; and at the same time they began to be more and more suspicious of the poor and landless peasantry – the proletarian elements in the countryside, wage-earners foreign to its spirit, and akin rather to those factory workmen whom the Socialist-Revolutionaries regarded with distrust, because of their inclination to Marxism. Thus the Socialist-Revolutionaries came by degrees to be the mouthpiece of the kulaks.

However, terror proved no more effective against Tsarist repression than before. The mass movement of the workmen and peasants went on developing independently of the Socialist-Revolutionaries; while their own organization became riddled with police agents, of whom one – Azef – became the head of their ‘Combat Organization’, and in that capacity was able to send scores of his comrades to the gallows. When the war of 1914 broke out the overwhelming majority of the Socialist-Revolutionaries showed its essential kinship with the main body of the Russian bourgeoisie and its dependant middle classes by siding wholeheartedly with the war; whereas for the larger part of the Russian peasantry and workmen it was something alien and unacceptable from the start.

Neither the Russian capitalist class nor the radical middle-class intellectuals, therefore, provided the force capable of leading the whole people to overthrow autocracy. That force came from the Russian working class, led by a revolutionary Marxist party, the Bolsheviks.

The working-class movement had begun, as we saw earlier, in the ‘70s. The South Russian Union of Workmen declared that its object was ‘the liberation of the workers from the yoke of capital and of the privileged classes’. In December 1876 there took place the first open demonstration of Russian workmen and students, in the Square

outside the Kazan Cathedral at St Petersburg. A red flag was unfurled, and a young student, George Plekhanov, was hoisted on the shoulders of his comrades and made a short speech, before the astonished police succeeded in breaking up the meeting. The news of this audacious challenge spread throughout Russia, and it became an historic milestone on the road to independent working-class organization. It is curious now to read the comment of *The Times* correspondent in Russia, faithfully recorded in the *Annual Register* for 1876 (pp. 254-5) that it was 'a miserable effort at political propaganda', and that 'as an attempt at popular agitation, a more ridiculous exhibition could scarcely be imagined'. The following year, at a monster trial of Narodnik students and workmen in Moscow, one of them – a weaver by the name of Peter Alexeyev – made a speech which, reproduced illegally and circulated all over Russia, proved an equally historic event. After describing the terrible conditions of Russian factory life, Alexeyev, though frequently interrupted by the president of the court, concluded:

The Russian working people now have only themselves to rely upon, and have no one to expect help from, except for our intellectual youth. They alone will go faithfully along with us, until the day when the muscular arm of the millions of working folk rises up, and the yoke of despotism, protected by soldiers' bayonets, will crumble into dust.

Read attentively, this declaration drew a very different picture from that conceived by the Narodniks, even though Alexeyev himself was influenced by Narodnik ideas. So also the banner unfurled on the Kazan Square the year before had borne the Narodnik watchword 'Zemlya i Volya' (Land and Freedom), although the demonstration was the result of the initiative of factory workers. When, in 1878, active workmen in the St. Petersburg factories came together in a fairly widespread secret organization, with its own central and local funds, its Library and printing press, as the Northern Union of Russian Workers, they were taken to task in the equally illegal Narodnik paper for borrowing too much from the Marxists – particularly the idea of fighting for political liberty for the workers. The workmen replied in a letter to the editor that they needed political liberties in order to secure economic liberty, and that the workers' horizon was wider than that of the peasants, which did not extend beyond their own village and the nearest priest. From that time onwards, in St

Petersburg and then in other industrial towns, small workmen's organizations with a revolutionary programme were continually being formed, even though they were just as regularly broken up by the police.\*

From 1883 onwards, however, their formation and activities were being powerfully reinforced by a stream of Marxist literature, at first smuggled in from abroad and then reproduced by hectograph and secret printing press in Russia itself. This was the work of the Emancipation of Labour Group, founded at Geneva in 1883 by Plekhanov and other members of that minority in the Narodnik organization which in 1879 had refused to accept the unfruitful tactics of terror. During the next few years, contemplating in exile abroad the work and growth of the labour movements of Western Europe, they had finally shed their Narodnik ideas and accepted those of Marx and Engels. Plekhanov began a series of brilliant polemical explanations of the Marxist position, combating in succession the ideas of the terrorists, the Narodniks and the other advocates of rival theories in the workers' ranks.

In this sphere his work was taken over and developed at home by a young student of a later generation, Vladimir Ulyanov (Lenin), whose brother had been hanged as a Narodnik terrorist in 1887, but who, very soon after coming to St. Petersburg in 1893, was deeply involved both in the strike struggles of the workers and in Marxist theoretical study and propaganda through underground<sup>†</sup> study circles. In 1895, under Lenin's direct inspiration, the first distinctively Marxist organization of workmen in St. Petersburg, the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, came into existence. It was this body which led the strikes, mentioned earlier, that forced the Tsar's government to issue its Factory Act of 1897. In 1898 a first congress of Marxist groups from all over Russia, at Minsk, proclaimed the formation of a Social-Democratic Party, and although all delegates to the Congress were arrested by the police, its

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\* Some account of these early movements, and of the revolutionary struggle generally, was given by G. H. Perris, in his moving book *Russia in Revolution* (1905) already quoted.

<sup>†</sup> It has been set forth, with lucidity and authority, in the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, first published in this country in 1939.

work was not lost. Moreover, in January that year an eighteen-year-old cobbler's son, Joseph Djugashvili (Stalin), a student, had begun a Marxist class among the workmen of Tiflis and other towns of the Caucasus, leading his first strike in 1900. The same year the first illegal newspaper of the Social-Democrats began to be published abroad for regular smuggling into Russia – '*Iskra*' (The Spark).

## 6. BOLSHEVIKS AND MENSHEVIKS

Marxism was now in the front of the revolutionary struggle against Tsardom, insisting that that struggle could achieve success only as a working-class movement. But before it could actually lead the great masses of the Russian people to victory over Tsardom, it had to undergo a tremendous conflict within its own ranks – one which lasted for many years, and in the course of which the Bolshevik Party came to leadership of the Russian working class. It is impossible to summarize all the stages of that struggle in this book;\* but the main issues may usefully be summarized, as they appeared at the Second Congress of the Social-Democratic Party in 1903 (it was held in London because a meeting on Russian territory would have been impossible), and in later years.

Both wings of the Social-Democrats agreed that the revolution in Russia must necessarily be a bourgeois revolution: that is to say, it must begin by sweeping away the survivals of feudalism in political and economic life, as the French Revolution had done in the 18th century. To fulfil this function, it must transfer the land to the peasants, in such a way as to break for ever the economic power and class privileges of the landowners. This must mean at least the confiscation of the Imperial and Church estates, the return of the land which the peasants had lost in 1861, the forcible overthrow of the Tsardom in which the power of the landowners was centred, and its replacement by a democratic republic. Such a republic would clear the decks for capitalist development, a step forward in Russia's circumstances, and at the same time would provide the broadest possible platform on which a mass struggle for Socialism could develop.

At this point the Congress of 1903 divided into a majority led by Lenin (in Russian: '*bolshinstvo*' – hence '*Bolsheviks*') – and a minority led by Martov ('*menshinstvo*' – hence '*Mensheviks*'). The formal issue dividing them was that of the conditions for membership of the Party, and particularly whether those conditions were to in-

clude active work in one of the organizations directed by the Party. But behind these questions of organization lay a profound division of opinion about the coming revolution.

The Bolsheviks saw that fear of the working class made the bourgeoisie seek the Tsar's support at every critical moment, and in turn support the Tsar and the landowners against revolutionary action by the peasantry, which might spread to the workmen. The bourgeoisie therefore were counter-revolutionary, and could not lead the peasantry as they had done in past revolutions elsewhere. The working class of Russia, in spite of many drawbacks, had the unprecedented advantage, when a revolutionary situation arose, of being imbued, at least in its most far-sighted and resolute sections, with the principles of Marxism, which made it conscious of itself as a class and of the historic part it could play in changing society. Only the workers could lead the peasantry in the Russian Revolution; the bourgeoisie could not. Moreover, differentiation within the countryside itself had created allies for the working class against the capitalist class, should the latter attempt to play in Russia the part which it did in France in 1848. Against the kulaks, village allies of the town bourgeois, the workmen could find support in the poor and middle peasantry. Thus from the beginning, the Bolsheviks argued, the working class must fight for leadership of the revolutionary movement, and must join the other democratic forces in a strong revolutionary Government of the Jacobin type – one embodying the rule of the working class and peasantry. Then it could develop the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a Socialist revolution.

The Mensheviks took the opposite view. Russia as a capitalist State was so immature that the workers could not play the part of the leading class of the revolution. They had not the experience, the education, the influence. Just as elsewhere, the bourgeoisie must lead the fight against Tsardom. This was all the more necessary because the peasantry as a body was potentially counterrevolutionary, just as it had been in France in 1848. It would be satisfied with securing the land, and would join with the bourgeoisie in crushing any premature attempt of the working class to carry the revolution on to Socialism in its own interests. The workers must therefore look forward to a provisional government of the capitalists as a result of the revolution, and must confine themselves to the modest but essential part of a goad and spur to further democratic reforms, consolidating their organization on the industrial and political fields, and extending their

influence in proportion to Russia's development into an advanced capitalist country. Only then, at a much later date, would come the opportunity for a Socialist revolution.

From these two opposite conceptions followed opposite conclusions on a number of practical issues, either at the Congress of 1903 or in later years. Here we need consider only two. On the question of underground party organization, the Bolshevik ideas meant that it was essential to keep the party rooted firmly in the factories, and inspired with a resolute and consistent proletarian spirit.' This could best be achieved by insisting that membership depended, not only on acceptance of its programme and payment of dues, but also upon the dangerous responsibility of regular work in one of its organizations. Such a clause would winnow out the wavering elements, most likely to come from the middle-class sympathizers, and would harden the revolutionary worker in practical experience. The Mensheviks, on the other hand, needed a party able at every moment to appeal both to the bourgeoisie and to the proletariat, not locked up in a hard proletarian shell which would be likely to antagonize the bourgeoisie. For a long time to come the interests of the workers must be auxiliary to those of the capitalists. Consequently no barrier should be set up against the introduction into the party of a broad liberal spirit common to both workmen and capitalists, inspired by common hostility to Tsardom. Such a spirit came in the first instance from the middle-class intellectuals, from whom one could expect acceptance of the party programme and general support of its work, but not the every-day drudgery and risk of work in a party organization. After 1905 the Mensheviks even advocated dissolving all underground party organizations.

So also the question of the attitude of Social-Democrats (i.e. Marxists) to the subject nationalities of the Russian Empire was decided in diametrically opposite ways, according to the basic conceptions of the two groups. The Mensheviks, seeing bourgeois interests as predominant in the coming Russian revolution, and knowing that those interests included the maximum exploitation of existing markets for Russian industry, dared not support the liberation of the various nations and races inhabiting the Russian Empire, for fear this would alienate the capitalist elements from the revolution. They put forward, accordingly, the slogan of 'cultural-national autonomy' for the non-Russian peoples – a slogan difficult to interpret, and non-committal where the claims of the subject peoples were

concerned. The Bolsheviks, on the contrary, saw the subject nationalities as yet another most powerful ally of the working class in the struggle to overthrow Tsardom. First, they were for the most part peasant nationalities, whose feudal and tribal chiefs were used by the Tsarist government as a means of indirect rule; therefore they had to bear a double burden which made them a most explosive element in the Russian Empire. Secondly, the continuation of colonial oppression was the justification in Tsarist Russia for the maintenance of a large military and police force, as well as of an ideology of racial superiority, which could not fail to serve the interests of Tsardom against the Russian workmen in the struggle for Socialism. Hence the Bolsheviks put forward the right of all peoples, large or small, inhabiting the Russian Empire, to national independence, including the right to separate from that Empire if they chose.

It is perhaps necessary to add that, throughout the long years of struggle between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks on these and other issues, the Mensheviks had an erratic but on the whole determined supporter in the person of an intellectual named Trotsky, who attacked the Bolsheviks, their Party organization and above all their recognized leader, Lenin, in terms which anticipated in all essentials (often in the very words used) his later attacks on the Bolshevik Party after the Revolution of 1917, and in particular on Lenin's successor as its leader, Joseph Stalin.

## 7. THREE REVOLUTIONS, 1905-17

The rival theories were tested out, and the long, popular struggle against Tsardom came to its conclusion, in the course of three great revolutions.

Something has already been said of the 1905 Revolution – the ‘General Rehearsal’, as Lenin afterwards called it. Its immense wave of strikes was joined by a mounting wave of peasant revolt, which, however, reached its climax six months after the workers’ movement had begun to be defeated. The bourgeoisie, after some fiery initial speeches by the Kadets, played a more and more markedly counter-revolutionary part. In the course of the struggle,\* the industrial

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\* For a foreign economist's account of events in the 1905 Revolution, see Mavor, *op. cit.*, vol. II, book vii, chapters 2-11. For a penetrating



workers in a number of important towns, and particularly effectively at St. Petersburg and Moscow, brought into being a new weapon of combat – the Soviet, or Council of Workmen’s Deputies. This was a body of delegates from all the factories of the given city (in some places, as at Krasnoyarsk in Siberia, there were soldiers’ deputies as well; and in some areas, as in parts of Georgia and the Baltic provinces, elected peasant committees played the same part of combat organizations as the Soviets in the towns). The St Petersburg Soviet not only played the part of a strike committee during a general strike in October, 1905, which was one of the high points of the revolutionary movement; it also took upon itself powers, such as that of closing down newspapers and issuing its own, authorizing transport, etc., which went beyond those of a simple strike leadership.

At once the differing conceptions of what the revolution should be asserted themselves in respect of this new form of organization. The Mensheviks considered it only a revolutionary step towards local self-government; the Bolsheviks considered it, in Lenin’s words, ‘the embryo of a new organ of power’. The Mensheviks who led the Petersburg Soviet systematically isolated the workers it represented from the troops with whom the capital was flooded, and refused suggestions to arm the factory workers of the capital. Finally the whole Soviet was arrested as a body in December, 1905. The Bolsheviks, who were the leaders of the Moscow Soviet, brought it that month, through a general strike, to the point of leading an armed insurrection of factory workers, in which a considerable portion of the troops stationed in Moscow were neutralized. As a consequence the insurrection, albeit hastily and insufficiently prepared, could be put down only by bringing troops from a great distance, and using heavy artillery. Armed insurrections also took place in a number of other industrial towns where the Bolsheviks were influential among the workers, such as the big Siberian railway junction of Krasnoyarsk, the great port of Novorossiisk, the engineering centre of Sormovo, etc., and also, under the leadership of the Lettish Social-Democrats who supported the Bolsheviks, among the industrial workers of Riga and the village labourers of Latvia.

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summary by Lenin, see his *Revolution of 1905* (published in England in 1931).

In 1917 came the second test, in the March Revolution which overthrew the Tsardom. The war had plunged Russia into misery and economic chaos, because the industrial resources and the transport of the Russian Empire were totally inadequate to bear the strain of a modern war, its agriculture gradually fell into decline owing to the absence of 14 million peasants on military service, and the supply system collapsed completely by the end of 1916. Between March 8th and March 12th, 1917, political strikes and mass demonstrations by women from the food queues at Petrograd (as St Petersburg had been renamed in 1914) merged into a general strike and gigantic political demonstrations, with the workers disarming the police and finding increasing support in the soldiers sent against them. On March 12th a Provisional Committee of the Duma parties proclaimed itself the new authority of the country, and on the same day a Petrograd Soviet once more came into existence, composed of one delegate from each factory (large or small) and one from every battalion or other unit of the armed forces, under the title of Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The Bolsheviks at this stage had their organization only in the larger factories: on them had fallen the brunt of revolutionary illegal struggle against the war in the three preceding years, and hundreds of their active members were in exile. The Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, on the other hand, had had a semi-legal existence as supporters of the war. The Bolshevik delegates in the Soviet, therefore, were completely outnumbered by their opponents at this stage; and the Soviet majority on March 15th endorsed the transformation of the Duma Committee into a Provisional Government. The Committee was composed entirely of bourgeois representatives, except for one Socialist lawyer, Kerensky, as the spokesman of the lower classes. Nicholas II abdicated, and his brother Michael wisely refused the crown.

Thus the Menshevik aim seemed to have been achieved. Tsardom was overthrown, the bourgeoisie was in power, the way was open for it to begin remoulding the whole of Russia on capitalist lines, and the predominance of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in the Petrograd Soviet – and in other Soviets which began to spring up in town and country – seemed to guarantee that the workers and peasants whom they represented would in fact accept the modest role to which Menshevik theory assigned them.

But the Bolsheviks continued to stand by their own views, now expressed in the sharpest and clearest form by Lenin,\* in the demand for the transfer of all power to the Soviets. That power was in their hands already, Lenin declared, since the workmen, the peasants and the soldiers followed no other leadership, and only supported the Provisional Government, with which they had no political or other ties, because the majority in the Soviets deliberately invested the Provisional Government with power. Thus a peculiar state of 'dual power' existed, which it depended upon the will of the workers, above all, to change into their own power.

The story of the subsequent months, up to the armed insurrection of November, 1917, which actually carried out that transfer of power, has been vividly told in the dramatic but well-documented account by the American journalist John Reed, *Ten Days that Shook the World*. In broad outline it records that the policy of the Provisional Government gradually drove into violent opposition the main mass of the popular forces of Russia, and that support of the Provisional Government in its policy by the leaders of the Soviets gradually brought the Bolshevik Party from the position of a small minority in those bodies to that of the unchallenged leader of the workers, in alliance with the left wing of the Socialist- Revolutionaries, who won the leadership of the mass of the peasantry.

The Provisional Government's policy did not, indeed, conflict with the general scheme which the Mensheviks had anticipated for many years past. It prosecuted the war for aims which it did not define, but which obviously were those of the big manufacturers, bankers and merchants whom it represented. It opposed any transfer of the land to the peasants, and when they began seizing it in the summer, the Provisional Government sent punitive expeditions against them. Only with great difficulty could recognition of the

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\* Lenin, like other Bolshevik and Menshevik leaders, had been in exile in Switzerland when the Revolution took place. The Allies refused to grant them transit to Russia. Thereupon the exiles negotiated through the Swiss Socialists for permission to cross Germany in a sealed train. On the train there were supporters of the war as well as opponents. On his arrival in Petrograd Lenin published his famous 'April Theses' explaining the demand for Soviet power and the formation of a revolutionary International.

eight-hour day in the factories be forced from it, and, when the big manufacturers began a policy of concerted resistance by lockout to further inroads on their managerial rights in the factories by the elected workers' committees, the Provisional Government supported them. In general, the power of monopoly capital was untouched; and when, in the first days of July, a gigantic demonstration of workers and soldiers in the capital demanded the overthrow of the government by withdrawal of Soviet support and the establishment of Soviet power, the Provisional Government, with the support of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries turned to armed suppression of the Bolsheviks.

But, once the Provisional Government turned against the mass of the workers and soldiers, it necessarily had to rely more and more upon the forces of the old regime – the officers of the old Army, the police, the officer cadet battalions – who had been disorganized by the overthrow of Tsardom, but not destroyed. With a new feeling of strength, these forces came together the following month, under the leadership of a mediocre but well-advertised officer, General Kornilov. Kornilov was hailed as a saviour of the country by the united representatives of the capitalist and landlord parties, and by the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary leaders, at a 'Council of State' convened by the Provisional Government in Moscow (August 25th). Emboldened by this reception, Kornilov rose in rebellion a fortnight later, and it was clear from the outset that, if the rebellion were successful, it would re-establish Tsardom.

At this juncture the gradual shifting of allegiance, which experience during the first months of the Provisional Government had brought, not only within the factories, but also among the soldiers, made itself felt in an overwhelming counter-attack by the working class, responding to a call from the now illegal Bolshevik Party. With considerable support from the soldiers, who were disgusted at the continuation of a war which in existing conditions meant massacre of the Russian troops by the much-better armed Germans, the workers defeated Kornilov. Within the next two months Bolshevik majorities had been won in the Soviets of Petrograd, Moscow, and more than 200 of the other principal towns, as well as in the trade unions and the Soldiers' Soviets of the front-line armies. Six months' experience of Menshevik principles in practice had taught very sharp lessons. It was the turn of the Bolsheviks, working now in contact with a left wing among the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

## *The Causes of the Russian Revolution*

The military committee of the Petrograd Soviet, about midday on November 6th, 1917, issued instructions to the armed workers' guards in the factories, the numerous units of the Petrograd garrison who had accepted the principle of 'All power to the Soviets', and the revolutionary units of the Baltic fleet, to go into action and occupy all key points of the capital, as a preliminary to seizing the Winter Palace and arresting the Provisional Government. In doing so the Bolsheviks who constituted the majority of the committee were, of course, themselves acting on instructions from their Central Committee, which had thrashed out the decision to seize power in a series of protracted and heated discussions. But the decision itself was only the final act, the flash-point, as it were, of an explosion which had been generating rapidly during the preceding months. What made the explosion possible was the transfer of allegiance by the decisive majority of the working people in town and country to the Bolshevik Party and its allies.

That change of allegiance was not only the settling of a fifteen-year-old dispute with the Mensheviks. It was the culmination of a long struggle over the problem of how to overthrow Tsardom and set free the giant creative forces of the Russian people, which dated back to the Emancipation of 1861, and before that to the first handful of young noblemen who raised the standard of revolt in 1825. Peter Alexeyev's prophecy had come to fulfilment. The industrial working class of Russia had done what all other classes oppressed by Tsardom had failed to do. It had not only shattered the power of Tsardom, but had taken a decisive step towards preventing the restoration of either Tsardom or any other form of government protecting the system of private property in land, factories, mines or other means of production.

### *Further Reading*

The references in the footnotes have been entirely to works available in English, and for the most part to such books as were written before the Revolution (many by those who became its opponents). The English student unfamiliar with Russian would do well to extend his study by reading the work of James Mavor on Russian Economic History, referred to more than once, supplemented by the introductory chapters (2 and 3) of Dobb, *Soviet Economic Development since 1917* (published in 1948); by comparing the account of political history given by Pares in *The Fall of the Russian Monarchy* with that

*A History of the U.S.S.R.*

traced in chapters 1-7 of *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (both works published in 1939); and, for 1917, by referring to the well-documented *History of the Civil War in the U.S.S.R.*, vols. I and II (published in English translations in 1937 and 1947). Christopher Hill's book, *Lenin and the Russian Revolution* (1947) is an excellent introduction both to this period and to later history up to 1924. The Soviet history textbook for upper forms of secondary schools – Prof. A. M. Pankratova, *History of the U.S.S.R.* – is also available in translation (3 vols., 1947-48)

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## CHAPTER II

### *The Breathing Space*

#### 1. BREST-LITOVSK

The new Government brought into being by the insurrection of November 6th-7th, 1917, and endorsed on November 7th by the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies which had been summoned some weeks before, under Kerensky, was determined that, unlike its predecessor in working-class history – the Paris Commune of 1871 – it was going to survive. For this purpose it was essential to get Russia out of the war. Every day of further fighting not only increased the mortal danger to the revolution from German military power, but weakened Russia's strength to resist a future attack by the united forces of world capitalism, which Lenin's genius already foresaw. He gave a vivid analysis of the situation at a meeting of the Bolshevik Central Committee on January 24th, 1918:

The Army is extremely exhausted by the war, the state of its horses is such that we shall not be able to withdraw the artillery if they attack, the position of the Germans on the islands in the Baltic is so favourable that if they attack they will be able to take Reval and Petrograd with their bare hands. Continuing the war in such conditions we uncommonly strengthen German imperialism, and we shall have to make peace all the same: only then it will be a worse peace, since it will not be we who will make it. Undoubtedly the peace we are obliged to sign now is a foul peace, but, if war begins, our Government will be swept away and peace will be signed by another Government. At present we are supported not only by the proletariat, but also by the poorest peasants, who will abandon us if war continues ... Of course, the peace we shall conclude will be a foul peace, but we need delay in order to give effect to social reforms (take transport alone); it is essential for us to consolidate ourselves, and for this we need time.

The Soviet Congress on November 8th adopted a decree on peace, proposing to all belligerent nations and their governments that negotiations should begin immediately for an equitable democratic peace, i.e. without annexations or indemnities, at the same time de-

claring that these conditions did not constitute an ultimatum, and that the Soviet Government would be prepared to examine any other terms which might be proposed. As a first step, an immediate armistice for three months was suggested, to enable negotiations to reach completion. On the same day the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs sent a Note to the Allied ambassadors with formal proposals in the sense of the decree, and followed it up on November 23rd with a Note to the neutrals, asking for their good offices. That very day, the first collection of secret international agreements, which in so far as they brought aggrandisement to Russia at the expense of weaker countries the decree of November 8th had declared null and void, was printed and put on sale.

While the Germans and Austrians declared their readiness for negotiations, the French and British military missions on November 23rd made it clear, in a Note to the former commander-in-chief Dukhonin, that their governments were rejecting the Soviet proposal. A further approach, on November 30th, also proved vain. After waiting for nearly a month, the Soviet Government authorized its representatives to sign an armistice for one month with the Germans and Austrians (December 15th), and on December 22nd peace negotiations began at Brest-Litovsk. The Germans began by pretending to accept the Soviet principle of 'no annexations and no indemnities'; but they hedged the acceptance with a number of suspicious reservations, which were denounced in the Soviet press. On December 28th the Soviet delegation secured an interruption of the negotiations for ten days – a period which was used to appeal to the peoples and governments of the Entente to join in the peace talks, with the suggestion that the negotiations might be transferred to some neutral country. On December 29th an appeal in this sense was issued through the press and radio, and Litvinov, appointed unofficial representative in London, did his utmost to make it widely known. There was no response.

When the conference reassembled on January 9th the Germans were now sure of the isolation of the Soviet Government from the former allies of Russia, and in addition had secured the formation in the western regions of the Ukraine of a puppet local government of their own. They now tabled their full demands, which were a mockery of the principle of 'no annexations'. The publication of these terms, and their denunciation by the Soviet delegation, brought about a general strike of protest in Austria on January 19th, and a week's



general strike at Berlin in the last days of January and the beginning of February. But these movements were not enough to shake the determination of the German military leaders, and on February 10th Trotsky, as leader of the Soviet delegation, made the announcement that, while rejecting the thievish German terms, the Soviet Government would not continue the war, and was demobilizing its forces immediately.

This situation – ‘neither peace nor war’ – at first took the Germans aback. But they needed a clear settlement, and on February 18th they resumed their offensive, occupying Pskov and Dvinsk. The following day the Soviet Government agreed to accept the terms; but the German advance continued, and a reply was received only on the 21st, containing much worse terms than had been originally demanded, and giving Russia forty-eight hours to accept. On the 24th the Central Executive Committee of Soviets, to which the question had been referred, decided on acceptance by 126 to 85, with 28 abstaining or absent – a section of the Communists joining with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries in opposition. On March 3rd a new Soviet delegation signed the draft treaty under protest, and without entering into discussion of its terms.

Whereas the earlier German demands had involved the loss of western Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, the Treaty completed the detachment of Latvia and Estonia from Russia, as well as that of Finland, Ukraine, Kars and Batum (in the Caucasus). Russia lost three hundred thousand square miles of her best developed territory, with a population of fifty-six millions. She lost 73 per cent of her iron, 89 per cent of her coal, 1,000 engineering factories and 900 textile mills. The robber peace – worse than the Versailles Treaty – was ratified on March 16th at the Fourth All-Russian Congress of Soviets by 704 to 285, with 115 abstentions (including fifty-six Communists).<sup>\*</sup> An immediate result of its acceptance was the transfer of the capital to Moscow, whence Peter the Great had moved it in 1703. Almost all the territory lost to Russia by the Treaty had been added to the Russian Empire during the intervening 200 years.

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<sup>\*</sup> Col. Raymond Robins, then head of the U.S. Red Cross Mission in Russia, subsequently revealed that he had transmitted an inquiry by Lenin as to Allied military aid in the event of ratification being refused: but no reply ever came either from Washington or London.

But the real lesson of these events for the Russian people was not only the exposure of German rapacity and of their own impotence; and those abroad who thought the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk had only these results made the first of many mistakes in understanding the Russian Revolution. The real lesson was the supreme need in a Socialist State, isolated and manoeuvring for elbow-room in a capitalist world, to maintain the utmost sobriety of judgment and unity of purpose in its political leadership. Rumours of acute dissensions among the leaders of the Bolshevik party reached the press, but in dim or fragmentary forms; and only the publication of the minutes of the Bolshevik Central Committee, ten years later, made fully known to the world what many active members of the Party had long known and grimly carried in their hearts, as a guide in subsequent debates.

For it was revealed that, while Lenin had been pressing from the beginning for immediate signature of peace, he was heavily defeated on January 21st, 1918, after the first German terms had become known, at a meeting of the Central Committee with the chief Bolshevik delegates to the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets. The voting was: for immediate signature of peace fifteen, for a 'revolutionary war' thirty-two, and for the policy of 'neither peace nor war' – that subsequently attempted by Trotsky – sixteen. Thus the Soviet delegation had no clear mandate; and right up to the day of the new German offensive, on February 18th, Lenin suffered five successive defeats in his stubborn fight within the Party leadership for a realistic policy. And even when he carried a resolution to sign if the Germans presented an ultimatum, by five to two, seven did not vote and three were away at the time of voting (February 3rd); and it was this minority position of Lenin's which Trotsky used, a week later, to justify his failure to carry out the decision arrived at. Trotsky's rupture of negotiations at Brest-Litovsk (contrary to cabled instructions from Lenin and Stalin) added further huge losses to those imposed on the young Soviet Republic. Even on February 23rd, when the Germans were advancing, and when it was a question of giving immediate guidance to the Bolshevik members of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets next day, Lenin won his point for immediate signature by only seven votes to four, with four abstentions; and that after an ultimatum in which the minutes show him as declaring:

The policy of revolutionary phrases is finished; if this policy is now continued, I resign from the Government and

from the Central Committee. For a revolutionary war, we need an army, and it doesn't exist. That means we must accept the terms.

Even after signature of the terms the Trotsky-Bukharin group fought against their ratification tooth and nail at a special Party Congress (March 6th to 8th), and it was carried only by thirty votes to twelve with four abstentions.

Lenin's desperate struggle in these weeks was of crucial importance for the very existence of the Soviet Republic. The lengths to which his opponents declared themselves prepared to go (Bukharin, one of Trotsky's allies in this struggle, wrote that 'in the interests of the international revolution we consider it expedient to consent to the possible loss of Soviet power, which has now become purely formal'),\* and the disastrous consequences of the short-lived ascendancy of the 'policy of revolutionary phrases', were never forgotten within the Bolshevik ranks. Tens of millions of workmen and peasants passed under alien rule as a result of this bitter period.

It has often been urged, to justify the contention that the Soviet Government should have continued the war, that the signature of the treaty enabled the Germans to concentrate all their forces against the Allies in the West. In point of fact, the total number of German and Austrian divisions on the eastern front fell from 94 in January to 71 in March, while on the western front their numbers rose from 173 to 187 in the same period. But the transfer of 10 more divisions from the east in March came too late to influence the German offensive on March 21st on the western front, just as the further transfer of 6 divisions in April came too late for the April 9th offensive in the west. And it is significant that in May and June, when the Germans were really desperate on the western front in face of Allied preparations for their counterattack, not a single division was moved from the eastern front. This was because, from March onwards, innumerable partisan detachments, supported secretly by the Soviet Government, were in action in the German rear, followed by risings all over the Ukraine in

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\* At a State trial in Moscow in March, 1938, it was established that Bukharin's group of 'Left Communists' had discussed with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries a scheme for the overthrow of the Soviet Government (including the arrest and possible murder of Lenin) in order to establish a government of their two groups.

May and June, directed from a common centre outside the Ukraine. Thus the struggle in the east kept over 800,000 German and Austrian troops fully occupied, at a time when the western front generals were crying out for reinforcements.\*

## 2. CRUSHING ARMED OPPOSITION AND SABOTAGE

Brest-Litovsk secured a short breathing space from external perils. Internal dangers were for the time being less threatening, and were more like 'mopping up' operations.

Armed opposition in the political centres of the country was slight, so complete had been the soldiers' transfer of political allegiance during the last few months before the November revolution. Outside Petrograd the Cossacks of General Krasnov put up a half-hearted resistance, and the General himself had to surrender within a few days, giving his parole to stop anti-Soviet activities – which he naturally broke at once. An officer cadet battalion put up some resistance for a week, with the help of auxiliary units, in the Moscow Kremlin – mainly because of hesitations in the revolutionary camp – but then was forced to capitulate. In all these and other very minor armed conflicts, the brunt of the fighting fell upon the armed workmen, organized since the Kornilov rebellion in the 'Red Guard' at the factories where they were employed, and upon the sailors of the Baltic Fleet; military units played a secondary part, because of their profoundly pacifist mood.

The struggle lasted somewhat longer in the colonial borderlands of Russia. Here the forces in conflict were, on the one hand, the Russian workmen on the railways and in the few industrial centres, supported by only the poorest of the Russian peasants settled as colonists, and by the majority of the native peasants and handicraft workers in the non-Russian areas. Opposed to them were not only Russian troops and Russian well-to-do civilians, but a section of the colonial peoples themselves, particularly the native bourgeoisie in a country like Kirgizia, and the native feudal nobles in more backward

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\* President Wilson's private secretary, Stephen Bonsai, in his *Unfinished Business* (1944), quotes illuminating German documents about the 'countless army trains' returning from Ukraine in August, 1918, laden not with hoped-for foodstuffs, but with wounded and invalid victims of this 'Kleinkrieg' (pp. 223-4).

areas like the mountain districts of the North Caucasus. The counter-revolutionaries were backed by the Cossacks in Orenburg, in the Don and Kuban valleys and in the North Caucasus – that is, by Russian peasants planted with Government assistance as substantial yeomen farmers, who at the same time were military colonists, i.e. employers of native poor labourers and holding their land by military service. However, in all the areas named, and in Siberia, Soviet power was strongly established by the end of February, 1918 (except on the Kuban, where the struggle lasted until April).

More serious was the sabotage encountered by the new authorities in all kinds of Government departments and organizations – particularly those connected with the food supply and distribution generally. One of the consequences of the late-coming of Russian capitalism was that the middle-class and lower middle-class employees of such institutions, with their smattering of education and slightly westernised culture, regarded themselves in general as an entirely different breed from the workmen and peasants. With living conditions, however poor, nevertheless far above those of most of their fellow-countrymen, the employees of State and commercial organizations of all kinds, clerical employees in the large factories, even most shop assistants in the larger towns, looked at the coming of worker and peasant rule – the rule of the ‘kham’ or boor – through the eyes of their employers and betters.

That sabotage could be organized was due to the extraordinary gentleness with which, contrary to much that was written at the time and since, the Soviet authorities treated the potential organizers of resistance. It is true that the Kadet party, as the mouthpiece of open monarchist restoration, was suppressed at the end of December, 1917. But, notwithstanding a decree of November 17th giving powers to the Government to suppress hostile newspapers, which was adopted by a narrow majority (thirty-four-twenty-four) by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets elected at the Second Soviet Congress, the newspapers of a number of capitalist groups, as well as of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, went on being published until August, 1918, with scarcely any interference. The wildest inventions (such as that about an alleged ‘nationalization of women’ in certain Volga towns), the most violent denunciations of the Soviet Government and the Bolshevik Party, the most open championship of the enemies of Soviet power, filled the columns of these newspapers. To turn over their pages nowadays –

those of the bourgeois papers like *Utro Rossii* and *Zarya Rossii*, or of S.R. and Menshevik papers in their infinite variety, like *Dielo Naroda* and *Novaya Zhizn* – is to see proof of a tolerance which was as fruitless as that of the Paris Commune.

A second legal organizer of resistance was the Russian Orthodox Church. Its Assembly, called together in August, 1917, for the first time since the days of Peter the Great, confined its activities under the Provisional Government to internal church matters. But directly the workers seized power it became a militant gathering of the most violent opponents of the Soviet Government. This was hardly to be wondered at, since out of its 586 members only 277 were clergy, while the remainder were laity who included counts, princes, generals, leaders of the legal capitalist parties of Tsarist days like the prominent manufacturer Guchkov, and others of the same kind. Already on November 24th the Assembly denounced the Soviet Government, prophesying its early overthrow and proclaiming its supporters ‘traitors to the country\*. It approved the first encyclical of its newly-elected Patriarch Tikhon (January 19th, 1918) declaring the activities of the Soviet Government to be ‘the work of Satan’, proclaiming an anathema against all its supporters, and exhorting ‘all faithful children of the Orthodox Church not to enter into any communication with such outcasts from the human race’. When the Soviet Government issue its well-known decree separating the Church from the State and disendowing the Church, a new manifesto called on the faithful to ‘rally around the temples, monasteries, and convents to defend the menaced sanctuary’, and summoned the people to struggle against ‘the dark deeds of the sons of Belial,’ promising them ‘a martyrs’ crown’. After the signature of the Brest-Litovsk Peace, Tikhon issued a public manifesto (signed on March 16th, 1918) denouncing it.

With these influences at work openly encouraging resistance, it is not surprising that a good deal of sabotage took place. The first act was a strike of fourteen Ministries (November 15th, 1917), in which all but the lowest grades of employees took part. It was organized by the businessmen’s federation known as the ‘Union of Congresses of Trade and Industry’; but the strike funds were supplied by an arrangement between the Ministers of the deposed Provisional Government and the management of the State Bank, which advanced forty million roubles for the purpose. The Ministry of Social Welfare stopped paying pensions, the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs

stopped transmitting cables. At the same time the commercial banks refused to pay out of current accounts to any factories from which they received instructions countersigned by representatives of the workmen's control committees – now functioning by the side of the old managements in most industrial establishments. Worst of all was the food situation, where owing to such sabotage thousands of tons of grain piled up in the marshalling yards on the main railways, and tens of thousands of tons at important railway junctions and river ports in the producing provinces. In the capitals, by November 20th, the bread ration had to be reduced to six ounces per day.

Sabotage in the Government departments and similar organizations was broken, partly by reinforcing the loyal lower grades with simple workers, typists and clerks who volunteered from the factories, and partly by stopping the rations of the higher-grade strikers. But the effect of sabotage in the food organization was so far-reaching that it called for mass action. Red Guards from the factories in hundreds searched the marshalling yards, and recruited thousands of volunteers among their fellow-workmen to help in unloading trucks. Ten detachments, each of fifty Baltic Fleet sailors, were sent to the main provincial railway junctions, while agitators “were sent in scores to the grain provinces, in order to mobilize the poorer peasants by the story of the effects of the sabotage campaign. As a result of these measures, it became possible to raise the bread ration by November 29th to eight ounces per day, and by December 14th to three quarters of a pound.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this period of intense internal struggle was that it proved almost entirely bloodless. Not a single person lost his life as a result of Government measures to break this sabotage. On December 20th the Military Revolutionary Committee was converted into the Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution, Speculation and Sabotage – the famous ‘Cheka’ – with powers equal to those of the Committee of Public Safety in the French Revolution. The only death sentences carried out by this body during the first seven months of the revolution, however, were those passed on bandits and Tsarist agents-provocateurs, exposed on investigation of police archives (some twenty-two in all). Two ministers of the Provisional Government were murdered in hospital by a hooligan mob organized by provocateurs; but the first execution after November 7th was that of Admiral Shchastny, Naval Commander-in-Chief, who had repaid the

confidence shown him despite his Tsarist past by sabotaging measures for the defence of Petrograd and by anti-Soviet agitation among the officers of the Baltic Fleet. Shchastny in February had surrendered Narva without firing a shot. Yet this death sentence was carried out only after a public trial before a Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal (June 22nd).

The fact is that these first few months constituted a period, taking the country as a whole, which Lenin described as that of the 'triumphal progress of Soviet power' – a period in which the Bolshevik majority won in hundreds of town and country Soviets during the months immediately preceding the revolution, either as a single party or in alliance with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, made it possible to effect a peaceful transfer of power.

The Bolsheviks, it may be noted, did not claim monopoly of power. In the C.E.C. of Soviets they had 61 members out of 110: but on November 14th they offered to form a coalition Government provided all parties accepted the main Soviet decrees and responsibility to the Soviet Congress and its Central Executive Committee. The offer was rejected.

### 3. BUILDING THE NEW STATE

Apart from protecting the November revolution from perils within and without, the Soviet Government had immediately to take thought for the new State which should replace the old order. The Communist Party which guided it turned for new personnel to the common people. And notwithstanding much that has been asserted since those tumultuous days, whoever wishes to understand what was done in the sphere of administration and government must turn for guidance, not to the traditions of Peter the Great or the 19th-century Tsars, but rather to Marx's 'Civil War in France' and Lenin's 'State and Revolution'.

The army was the first concern, not only because the old military organization had to be demobilized, but because the foundations had to be created, as speedily as possible, of a new fighting machine capable of defending the Socialist revolution because it understood what that meant. As a first step, on December 29th, 1917, the elected Soldiers' Committees were given full control of their units and authorized to carry out an election of new officers – not because Marxist theory was in favour of electing officers, but in order to get rid of unreliable old ones as rapidly as possible. A few days before, a



board had been appointed by the Council of People's Commissars to organize a new 'Workers' and Peasants' Red Army': and the draft decree constituting it, for the time being on a voluntary basis, was submitted to a meeting of the front-line delegates attending the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets (January 15th, 1918). After their amendments, it was issued by the Government. It provided that officers of the old army might be employed as 'military specialists' under the supervision of reliable persons. When the German advance began, on February 18th, a decree proclaiming 'the Socialist Fatherland in danger' (February 21st) led to a mass enrolment of volunteers; while the small forces already constituted were strong enough, on February 23rd, to inflict a repulse on the German forces at Pskov and Narva. This baptism of fire established February 23rd as 'Red Army Day.' By March 3rd, 1918, the day of the signature of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the Red Army on its new basis numbered 250,000: and the influx of politically experienced members of the Red Guard, and of volunteer officers and N.C.O.'s from the old army who were loyal to the Soviet cause, was so large that it became possible, on March 21st, to abolish the election of officers.

The same principle was applied in the other machinery of government. The old courts in town and country, where the judges had been drawn in the main from the landed gentry or loyal Tsarist officials, were set aside, and new People's Courts created. They were composed of a permanent judge, with two assessors sitting for short periods in rotation from a general list. Both judge and the list of assessors were chosen by the town Soviet or Soviet Congress of the country district where they had jurisdiction. The old police force was dissolved, and, by a decree of November 10th, 1917, a new force of public order, known as the 'Workers' Militia', was enrolled from among volunteer workers and peasants loyal to the revolution, with the right of forming their own trade union organization. The militia was controlled by the local Soviet.

Mention has already been made of the way in which the many vacant posts in the great Ministries were filled. Telegraph workers from the Siemens factory came in as cypher clerks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a leading seaman, Markin, was the first editor of the collections of secret treaties from its archives. Sail-or-telegraphists came in from Kronstadt to work at the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs. In all the Petrograd factories, volunteers were sought from among those active in factory committees and sick

clubs, factory groups of the two revolutionary parties and trade union district committees, to serve as clerks, typists, bookkeepers, statisticians and insurance experts at the Ministry of Labour.

Everything was done to break that association of the Russian Orthodox Church with the landowners' State which had been inherited from the medieval Tsardom, and at the same time to end the exclusive privileges of this particular Church. Already on November 15th, 1917, a Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia had proclaimed the abolition of all religious discrimination, and a message to the Working Muslims of Russia (December 5th) had guaranteed religious freedom and equality with all other religions. At the beginning of January, 1918, the equal rights of the sexes in matters of property and the family were proclaimed, and civil marriage instituted, irrespective of whether the parties proceeded to Church marriage or not. On February 3rd the separation of Church and State, and the exclusion of religious instruction from the schools, were decreed. The Russian Orthodox Church was thus relegated decisively to the sphere of private activity. At the same time, the adherents of other religions were given their first opportunity to breathe freely – if not with the privileged status enjoyed by the Russian Orthodox Church before the revolution, at any rate freed from the oppressive and humiliating conditions which had existed in the old days.

The revolution had inherited from the Kerensky period only the most sketchy machinery of representative government. The basis of elections to the All-Russian Congresses of Soviets was still in its simplest form. Relationship between the town Soviets and peasant Soviets was still undefined, no general constitution was yet in existence, and the question of the Constituent Assembly, the convening of which had been generally expected when Tsardom was overthrown in March, 1917, was still unsettled. Here, too, the first months saw the contours of the future Soviet State come into being.

On November 15th, 1917, the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, mentioned earlier, had been issued, signed by Stalin and Lenin (in that order). It announced:

The Council of People's Commissars has decided upon the following principles as the basis of its activity in regard to the question of nationalities in Russia.

i. The equality and sovereign rights of the peoples of Russia.

ii. The right of the peoples of Russia to determine freely how they are to be governed, including their separation and formation of an independent State.

iii. The revocation of all national and religious privileges and restrictions.

iv. The free development of national minorities and ethnographic groups inhabiting the Russian territory.

Three days later Lenin, as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, sent a message to all Soviets throughout Russia which gave a vivid content to this Declaration.\* 'Remember that now you yourselves are governing the State', he wrote. 'No one will help you if you yourselves don't unite and take all the affairs of the State into your own hands.' And in fact a survey of the activities of the local Soviets throughout the country would show that this was precisely what the organized workmen and peasants whom they represented were engaged in.

The town Soviets were setting up *economic departments*, with the help of the local trade unions, and establishing regular supervision of supplies to and output of the local factories. Again with the help of the local trade unions, they were setting up *departments of labour*, which settled disputes (overwhelmingly in favour of the workmen), drew up local wage rates and provided for the unemployed. Their *food departments* were registering stocks, taking over important shops where the owners had attempted sabotage, and fixing maximum prices. Their *finance departments* were unifying under their control the numerous local offices of various revenue departments inherited from Tsarist days, and beginning to levy local employers and property owners. Their *education departments* were taking over private schools, convening teachers' conferences, opening numerous adult schools, clubs, 'evening universities' and the like. *Health departments* everywhere were coming into being, overcoming considerable resistance from the wealthier doctors to the introduction of free medical service for the population. *Municipal enterprise departments* were opening kindergartens and canteens,

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\* On November 17th, at the Central Executive Committee of Soviets, he said: The Soviets in the localities, according to conditions of time and place, can vary, extend and supplement the main principle. Living creative work of the masses – that is the basic factor of the new social order.'

bakeries and workshops for the unemployed. It was the town and rural district Soviets which organized the elections of judges and assessors for the People's Courts.

In the countryside the rural district and county Zemstvos were gradually dissolved, and their control of schools and health services, so far as they existed, of roads and veterinary or agronomic aid to the peasants, passed over to the new rural authorities – the county and rural district Congresses of Soviets and their executive committees.

During the whole period from November, 1917 until March, 1918, however, the attention of these bodies and of the entire peasantry which elected them was fixed upon one problem – the division of the land, and with it the abolition of such relics of feudalism as the system of share-cropping, of work with the peasant's own horse and equipment on the landowner's estate, the payment of rent in kind, etc. This had been decided upon at the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets during the Kerensky regime (June 23rd, 1917), but had never been put into effect. The news of the land decree adopted by the Second Congress of Soviets on November 7th, abolishing all private ownership of land and handing over the landowners', Crown and Church lands to the peasantry without compensation, spread throughout the country, but for some weeks there were no texts available. An endless stream of delegates from the countryside came to Moscow for further guidance, and on November 20th an important article by Lenin – his 'Replies to the Peasants', based on talks with such delegates and explaining the main provision of the decree – was published. During the first month after the November revolution, 627 agitators were sent out to fifty-three provinces, to help the peasantry apply the Decree.

An Extraordinary Congress of Peasant Soviets which opened at Petrograd on November 23rd, after a heated struggle in which the Socialist-Revolutionary majority split over the question of power being transferred to the Soviets, endorsed the decree of November 7th by a large majority (composed of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and Bolsheviks). It elected a Central Executive Committee of 108 members, which joined the similar body elected at the Second All-Russian Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets on No-

vember 8th as the supreme legislative body of the country.\* These proceedings were confirmed at the regular All-Russian Congress of Peasant Deputies (the second of its kind) which was held from December 9th to 23rd. Out of its 789 full delegates, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries numbered 350, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries 305, the Bolsheviks 91 and the other small groups 43, all told. The Right Socialist-Revolutionaries withdrew from the Congress when they found themselves in a minority, which enabled the Congress unanimously to welcome the abolition of private property in land, and to urge the peasantry to carry out the division of the private estates through elected land committees. Regulations for these were being drafted by the People's Commissar for Agriculture, the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Kolegayev, who had entered the Soviet Government with a number of his colleagues on December 2nd, after the coalition of the peasant and worker Soviets had been effected by the Extraordinary Peasant Congress mentioned earlier.

Thus the division of the land by the peasantry, which was already in full swing throughout the country by the end of December, not only laid the foundations for firm support by the peasantry of the Soviet Government during the hard years ahead: it also brought the fusing of the peasants' representative bodies – the country Soviets – with the town Soviets, in the shape of a united Central Executive Committee of Soviets. When the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets was convened in January, 1918, it was an assembly which fully represented the three forces that had made the November revolution – the industrial workers, the peasantry and the soldiers.

#### 4. THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

A reflection of the land revolution, more uncertain in character, was the transformation of the Soviet Government into a coalition by the entry of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who received the portfo-

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\* The first regular meeting of the Joint C.E.C. (November 30th) resolved that, in accordance with the spirit of the decisions of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, the Council of People's Commissars must be responsible to the C.E.C., which must furthermore have submitted for its endorsement all important legislation and administrative regulations.

lios of Land, Justice, State Property, Local Self-Government, Posts and Telegraphs, and several other posts. The coalition, however, lasted only until the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, when the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries resigned in protest. This action was perhaps inevitable, sooner or later. The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, although voicing the demands of the peasantry at one stage of the political struggle in Russia, were not themselves for die most part peasants, but middle-class intellectuals. Their Socialism did not go beyond what in Great Britain would have been termed Radicalism. In the last analysis their programme – the division of the land and the free disposal of its produce by the peasantry, with minimum guarantees for the working class like the eight-hour day – was perfectly compatible with a system of capitalism, and ultimately their coalition with the Bolsheviks was bound to come to grief over the large-scale Socialist transformation of industry and agriculture.

In the meantime, however, the Soviet parties were united. And their unity spoke the unanimity of the vast mass of the working folk of Russia on the matter of the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly (January 18th-19th, 1918).

The calling of such a body, taken as a matter of course in all democratic revolutions since 1789, had been promised many times by the Provisional Government throughout 1917, and by the Soviet majority parties during that period – the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. But on one pretext or another it was repeatedly postponed. Even when the Socialist-Revolutionaries joined the Provisional Government in May, 1917, they did not insist on calling the Constituent Assembly, although they had ample time to do so before the Kornilov rebellion in August let loose class conflict on a scale which made elections, for the time being, irrelevant.

The Bolsheviks, who had been campaigning among other things for the calling of the Constituent Assembly, for the same reason that they were demanding the transfer of power to the Soviets long before they had a majority in the latter – because of the great political education which the convening of the Constituent Assembly would bring the people – took steps after November 7th to carry out their pledge. By a decree of November 9th, 1917, elections were fixed for the end of the month, and were duly held.

At this time the land decree was not yet carried into effect, as we have seen. Even the armistice at the front had not been concluded. Thus the issues facing the mass of the electorate – the peasants and

the soldiers – had not yet taken such tangible shape that the voters could feel for themselves, as it were, the difference between the old power and the new. In particular, the split in the ranks of the Socialist-Revolutionaries which was maturing at the top – but which, as has been shown, actually took final shape only at the Peasant Congresses held at the end of November and during December – had not extended into the country.

The Socialist-Revolutionary party organizations in the country districts were still intact, and in the main under the leadership of the adherents of the old majority in the Party – the right wing. The lists of candidates for the Constituent Assembly, which had been drawn up in September and October, still reflected that balance of forces within the Socialist-Revolutionary party, the right wing heading the lists almost everywhere.\*

Thus, when the Soviet Government called for Constituent Assembly elections in which it was a foregone conclusion that the majority of the electorate – the peasantry and part of the soldiers – would vote for the Socialist-Revolutionaries, it was in fact giving the right wing of that Party a last opportunity to win a voting success which, after November 7th, was in complete contradiction to its defeat in the arena of political struggle between the classes. If the Soviet Government had waited a few weeks with the election, until the division of the land, the conclusion of the armistice with Germany and the nation-wide split in the ranks of the Socialist-Revolutionaries had had their cumulative effect, the results of the Constituent Assembly elections would unquestionably have reflected much more closely the shifting of political allegiance in the Soviets.

As it was, the elections which began on November 25th produced, not merely the expected Socialist-Revolutionary majority, 21 million votes, against 9 millions for the Bolsheviks, 11 millions for the Mensheviks and 4½ millions for the landlord and capitalist parties, but a majority which had no contact with realities in the coun-

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\* The minutes of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets for November 19th show that this very question was raised there, seemingly by the Left S.R.s. They asked for facilities to put forward new lists, as it was 'very difficult to vote for the Right S.R.s, with whom they figure in joint lists.' When it was pointed out that this would mean postponing the elections, they dropped the question.

tryside by the time the Constituent Assembly met in mid- January.\* There were 412 Socialist-Revolutionaries, most of them the old national and regional leaders of that Party, i.e. adherents of the right wing; there were 183 Bolsheviks and 120 of all other parties. The voting showed strikingly how political evolution between different parts of the country varied. At Petrograd the Socialist-Revolutionaries had actually split; and there the Bolsheviks and Left Socialists-Revolutionaries between them (576,000 votes) had an absolute majority over all other parties (363,000). The whole north, centre and west of European Russia – the more industrialized regions of the country, and those most affected by the disasters of war – gave the Bolsheviks 43 per cent of the votes, the Socialist-Revolutionary list 39 per cent and the Kadets (the manufacturers' and landowners' party, in conditions then prevailing) 9 per cent. In the more remote areas – the Ukraine, the Urals and Siberia – the Bolshevik percentage was 11, and the Kadet 4, while the Socialist-Revolutionary vote was 75 per cent of the total. Yet even in Siberia, as the events of December and January showed, the realization by the peasantry that the Bolshevik revolution had given them the land led to a split in the ranks of the Socialist- Revolutionaries and the establishment of Soviet power.

It is hardly surprising that, in these conditions, the classes and parties overthrown on November 7th now became as zealous in championing the Constituent Assembly as they had been previously in postponing it. The intention of the Bolsheviks – with which the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries agreed – was to induce the Constituent Assembly peacefully to accept the basic decrees of the November revolution, and to regard its own principal function as “the general elaboration of the fundamental principles of the Socialist transformation of society”. For this purpose a ‘Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People’, embodying the decrees in question, was drawn up and adopted by the C.E.C. on January 16th. In order to give the bourgeois parties an opportunity to bring the composition of the Assembly into greater conformity with the feeling of the masses, the C.E.C. had earlier (December 4th) unanimously adopted a decree

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\* Lenin declared at the C.E.C. on December 4th. and the Left S.R. leader Karelin agreed, that ‘the people in effect voted for a party which no longer existed.’



providing for the right to recall deputies and to hold new elections, where the local Soviets judged this expedient. But this procedure was not put into effect, in view of the turn of events when the time for opening the Constituent Assembly arrived.

This was on January 18th. By a large majority (roughly 60 per cent to 40 per cent) the Assembly rejected the Bolshevik proposal to elect the Left Socialist-Revolutionary leader, Maria Spiridonova, as President, and chose one of the principal anti-Soviet politicians, Victor Chernov (leader of the Right S.R.'s) instead. It refused even to discuss the Declaration of Rights. First the Bolsheviks and then the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries retired from the Assembly in the course of the night (January 19th), after making it clear that the Assembly by its actions was taking the path of counter-revolution. At 4 a.m. on January 19th the commander of the sailors guarding the Assembly told Chernov 'it was time to go home, as the sailors were tired': and twenty-four hours later the C.E.C. decreed the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, as having 'ruptured every link between itself and the Soviet Republic of Russia'.

It must be added that the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly attracted much more attention abroad than it did in Russia.

On January 23rd the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets met in Petrograd and itself adopted the Declaration of Rights of the Labouring and Exploited Masses. This document was embodied in all the subsequent Soviet Constitutions up to July, 1936. With a second resolution, 'On the Federal Institutions of the Russian Republic', it represented the germ of the future Soviet constitutional structure.

The Declaration proclaimed Russia to be a 'Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies', in which all authority was vested: and a 'free union of free nations'. With the aim of suppressing all exploitation of man by man, the Declaration nationalized all land, forests, and mineral wealth without compensation, transferred all banks to the State, enacted that 'work useful to the community shall be obligatory upon all', and ratified the Soviet Government's decrees establishing workmen's control of industry and a Supreme Economic Council, as a 'first step' towards nationalization of industry and transport. It repudiated Tsarist debts, Tsarist secret treaties and the colonial policy of capitalism. It decreed the arming of the workers, the disarming of the propertied classes and their exclusion from the machinery of government. It proclaimed that

Russia's aim was a democratic peace, based on the free self-determination of the nations.

The resolution on federal institutions laid down that supreme power in the Republic was vested in the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, meeting at least once every three months. Between its sessions, its elected Central Executive Committee wielded full power. Either of them could change the composition of the Government – the Council of People's Commissars. Relations with other Soviet Republics as they were formed, or with regions distinguished by national peculiarities, were to be regulated by the C.E.C. and the appropriate bodies in the territories concerned. The central authority was responsible only for measures applying to the State as a whole. 'All local affairs are decided solely by the local Soviets.' These basic principles of the federal Constitution were to be worked out by the C.E.C. in detail, for submission to the next ordinary Congress of Soviets.

In his speech closing the Congress, on January 31st, Lenin said that it had opened a new epoch of world history: 'This Congress, which has consolidated the organization of the new State authority brought into being by the October revolution, has marked the way forward for future Socialist construction for the whole world, for the working people of all countries.'

Thus the Bolsheviks and their active supporters among the workers and peasants had created the framework of the new State by the end of January, 1918, three months after the revolution.

## 5. SUBJECT NATIONS REVOLT

An essential condition for the success of the revolution carried out by the Russians was that it should find understanding, support and co-operation among the peoples formerly ruled by the Russian Emperor. Already at the Seventh Conference of the Bolshevik Party, on May 12th, 1917, Stalin in his report on the national question had declared: 'When we put forward the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, we are thereby raising the struggle against national oppression to the level of a struggle against imperialism, our common foe. Unless we do so, we may find ourselves in the position of people who bring grist to the mill of the imperialists.' And indeed the subsequent history of the Russian revolution showed that Soviet policy towards the former subject nationalities was decisive for the outcome of the struggle, not merely against the relatively puny forces

of Russian imperialism, surviving in the shape of expropriated landlords and capitalists and officers of the old Tsarist army, but against the far more formidable Great Powers with whom the Soviet Republic soon had to contend arms in hand. The colonial borderlands of Russia were to be a base for foreign intervention, or else a volcano ready to explode in the rear of the invaders, according to the nationalities policy pursued by the Soviet power.

That policy had already been proclaimed by implication in the decree on Peace of November 8th, when the Second Congress of Soviets denounced annexation of nations contrary to their wishes, 'independently of when such annexation was accomplished'. The decree had further declared it to be 'arbitrary seizure and violation of rights' when any nation was 'retained within the boundaries of any State forcibly', and was not given the possibility by free vote, 'with the removal of all troops of the annexing or stronger nation', to decide the forms of its existence as a State without the least compulsion. On November 15th this was followed up by the 'Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia' which laid it down that 'an honourable and solid union of the peoples of Russia', capable of withstanding all attacks from aggressive imperialists, could be achieved only by ending the policy of systematic incitement of nation against nation which had been practised under Tsarism. Then followed the four points of nationality policy which have been quoted earlier. This was followed, in January, by the Declaration of Rights of the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets, with its unambiguous statement that the Soviet Republic must be founded on 'a free alliance of free nations, as a federation of Soviet national republics'.

From the beginning the Soviet Government sought to put these declarations into effect, in the different forms suitable to the various countries concerned. The manifesto of December 5th, 1917, 'To the Working Muslims of Russia and the East', proclaimed that the Anglo-Russian treaty for the partition of Persia had been 'torn up and annulled', and that similar inter-Allied agreements for the dismemberment of Turkey had been 'torn up and destroyed'. By the end of the month the Soviet Government, as guarantee of its good intentions, had begun the withdrawal of Russian troops from Northern Persia. Far away in Finland, Soviet policy was reaching similar conclusions. At the Congress of the Finnish Social-Democratic Party on November 27th, Stalin as a fraternal delegate from the Russian Bolsheviks had guaranteed that the Soviet Government would rec-

ognize Finnish independence, and speaking as a Socialist had advised the Finnish workers to take revolutionary action in the situation so created. But the Finnish workers hesitated, and a bourgeois government was established. On December 30th, 1917, the Soviet Government recognized the independence of Finland, on the application of that Government, without conditions. When in January the Social-Democrats of Finland made up their minds and established a Workers' Government, and throughout the subsequent civil war in Finland, which was ended tragically for the workers by a German invasion under General von der Goltz, the Soviet Government refrained from any intervention.

In Estonia and Eastern Latvia, where social revolution had once before raised its head (in 1905), the town and country Soviets elected by the working peoples of the respective countries were in power until they were overthrown by the Germans during their offensive in February, 1918.

In Transcaucasia, an area populated by some seven million people of dozens of nationalities, large and small, the middle-class nationalists of different labels and colours were able everywhere to establish their power, except at the great industrial centre of Baku, an old stronghold of the Bolsheviks. There the local Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was able to seize power and maintain itself, with popular support from the numerous nationalities inhabiting the territory, until the autumn of 1918.

In Central Asia the Russian railway workers and Uzbek cotton workers at and around the sole large industrial city of the vast territory of Turkestan – Tashkent – proved strong enough to establish their Soviet as a Government, within a week of the proclamation of Soviet power at Petrograd. With support from the villagers and still poorer nomads of the countryside – Uzbeks, Kirgiz, Kazakhs, Turkmens – they proved able to crush the forces of the Russian Cossack colonists and officer cadet units, and later (February) of the 'autonomous' government of native bourgeoisie at Kokand. They proved strong enough, in fact, to hold out alone, cut off from all communication with the central Soviet power except by air and radio, throughout the subsequent civil war.

In the vast steppes of Kazakhstan, to the north, Soviet power was established everywhere between December, 1917 and March, 1918, the poorer Russian labourers leading the Kazakh peasantry and nomads at village and 'steppe' conferences which proclaimed the

transfer of land to the working peasantry. This policy met with furious resistance from both Russian rich peasant (kulak) settlers and their natural allies among the native feudal beys.

In Bessarabia, where the peasants began seizing the land immediately they received the news from Petrograd, and a 'People's Republic' within Soviet Russia was proclaimed, Rumanian troops seized the country and overthrew peasant authority on January 26th, 1918. Further to the north, in Bukovina, a peasant congress at Khotin on January 8th and 9th, 1918, voted all power to the Soviets, and maintained their struggle for land all through 1918, despite the German occupation. Directly this weakened, at the beginning of November, 1918, the peasants showed how economic and political questions were linked in their minds by proclaiming adherence to Soviet Ukraine at a conference of several thousand delegates at Czernauti. Here, too, it was Rumanian armed force which for the time being reversed the decision.

Within Soviet Russia itself the new People's Commissariat for Nationalities, headed by Stalin, began actively applying the principles of the Declaration of Rights. In January, 1918, it issued a manifesto to the Soviets of the eastern regions of the Republic, calling for the establishment of autonomous self-governing units wherever distinct nationalities were living. They were to have the full and unfettered right to use their own language in their schools, in the courts, in the Soviets and other government departments, and the publication of newspapers in their own language was guaranteed.

This manifesto had a profound effect. The idea that the Russians were the natural or inevitable governing race, and the Russian language the essential instrument of government, had received its death-blow. This impression grew deeper when on March 24th, 1918, the first large self-governing national unit within the boundaries of Soviet Russia came into being, by the decree creating a Bashkir-Tartar Republic in the southern Urals and mid-Volga regions. In April the Fifth All-Turkestan Congress of Soviets, convened at Tashkent, proclaimed the Turkestan Soviet Republic as an autonomous and integral part of the Russian Soviet Republic.

Thus the poorest classes in the colonial territories of the former Russian Empire – the overwhelming majority of their people – found in the policy of the Soviet Government a link between their interests and those of the workmen and peasants of Russia.

## 6. BEGINNINGS OF THE SOCIALIST ORDER

It was not enough, however, to break the political power and the machinery of government of Russian capitalism. The breaking of its economic power was a necessary accompaniment; and with the break-up of capitalist economy there must simultaneously be laid the foundations of the new Socialist order. The *Communist Manifesto*, on which several generations of Russian Marxists were bred, had pointed this out seventy years before.

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible. Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which in the course of the movement outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionizing the mode of production.

This forecast was exemplified remarkably in the first months after the November revolution. But prevailing economic conditions made immediate action even more necessary- There were lock-outs by employers at Petrograd and in the Urals, in Moscow and the Donetz coalfield. There was a heavy fall both in production and in the food supply, owing to the deterioration of the railways. Average real wages in 1917 were no more than 57 per cent of the 1913 level.

Chronologically, the first measure was that land decree of November 8th, which has already been mentioned, and which broke the power of Russian landlordism. It declared the land national property, not to be bought, sold or mortgaged. It transferred the land to the rural Land Committees, elected by adult suffrage and secret ballot, for distribution among the peasantry on the basis of equal allotments according to working hands or mouths to feed, as the peasants might decide; but without the right of using hired labour. This form of land settlement was not in the Bolshevik programme: it had been worked out by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, on the basis of 242 local peasant

instructions to their delegates in August, 1917, and published by the official Soviet organ, *Izvestia* (August 19th), at a time when the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks were still in control. But the Socialist-Revolutionaries had not had the courage to apply their own programme. The Land Bill which they had laid before the Provisional Government in the last weeks of its existence was a timid measure which barely touched the big estates, and transferred to the peasantry only the lands which they had rented for a long time, or which had been worked by peasant equipment.

Now the Soviet Government was applying the Socialist-Revolutionary programme, in order to satisfy the immediate aspirations of the peasants for division of the soil, and at the same time to prepare the way in the future for a higher organization of agriculture, when they discovered the limitations of the method they had adopted. The division of the land, which took a more and more organized form from the end of November onwards (the reasons for this have been set out earlier), nevertheless differed widely in different parts of the country. As a rule, it was the volost (rural district) conference which decided the fate of the land at its disposal. This meant that those peasants who had been exploited by particular landowners got their land. As the amount of land thus available varied from district to district, there could be no standard allotment for the whole country. The division according to 'working hands' or 'eaters' in the family also meant unequal standards of allotment. The kulaks who already held or owned land did their utmost to prevent a general redistribution, i.e. one including their own holdings, and did not hesitate to resort to force where, by penetrating into the local Soviets or by other means, they had established ascendancy over a considerable number of their fellow-villagers. There was no elaborate machinery of distribution available; less than 2,000 surveyors could be found in the countryside, thirty or forty times less than were needed, and teachers, co-operative organizers, members of the rural district or county Soviets had to be enrolled for the work, despite their inexperience.

From the autumn of 1917, furthermore, the anti-peasant policy of the Provisional Government had led to regular 'pogroms' of the landowners' estates in a number of provinces – the break-up of valuable model farms and division of their stock, the burning of many landowners' houses and the looting of their property among individual households. This stopped when the land decree began to reach

the villages; but the Socialist-Revolutionaries in the country districts, as a rule, joined the kulaks in resisting the maintenance of the surviving model estates as State farms, and insisted on their division, and often of the furnishings and libraries of the landowners' mansions as well.

In spite of all these difficulties', statistics collected at an All-Russian Congress of Land Departments in December, 1918, showed that, in twenty-two provinces for which statistics were available, a radical transformation of the land situation had taken place. Private estates were gone. Individual peasant households held more than four-fifths of the land thus made available. The number of peasants with small sowings increased by 50 per cent to 100 per cent, and those with middle-sized sowings by 25 per cent; the number of peasants with sowings above medium declined by one-third to one-half. Only about 5 per cent of the land was held by State farms or collective farms (at this time called 'communes'). In the course of this gigantic change, the peasants wiped out their enormous debt of over 1,300 million roubles (as at January 1st, 1914), for land which they were buying from the landowners; they had wiped out their rent for leased land, amounting to nearly 290 million roubles (£30 million) per annum: and they had abolished a mass of services in kind which still survived from the days of feudal serfdom before 1861.

The countryside had thus been 'cleansed' of the relics of feudalism. Whether it would return to a new capitalism, as the Socialist-Revolutionary programme implied, or would advance towards a Socialist form of agriculture, as the Bolshevik or Marxist programme provided, would depend henceforth on the way in which the Soviet Government shaped its relations with the peasantry.

The Soviet Government, however, sprang directly from the working class;\* and it was in the interests of the working class that three fundamental measures of economic importance, striking at capitalist power, were taken.

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\* At the 'Democratic Conference' held in Petrograd in September, 1917, under Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary auspices, 70 out of the 117 delegates sent by the trade union movement were Bolsheviks. At the first All-Russian T.U.C.. in January, 1918, 273 out of 416 delegates were Bolsheviks and sympathizers.



The first was the decree introducing a maximum eight-hour day (November 12th), with elaborate subsidiary regulations including the prohibition of night work for women and youths under sixteen, the limitation of working hours for young people between sixteen and eighteen to seven hours, the prohibition of underground or overtime work for women or boys under eighteen, the stringent limitation of overtime and the provision of a minimum weekly rest period.

The second was the decree (November 27th) on workmen's control over 'the production, purchase, sale of products and raw materials, their storage and also over the financial side of the enterprise', in the interests of the 'planned regulation of national economy'. It is important to realize that 'control' here means *supervision* rather than *direct management*. This was indeed made perfectly clear by Clause 6 of the regulations, laying down that the organs of workmen's control 'are entitled to supervise production, to establish minimum quotas of production and to take measures to elucidate the cost price of the products'. The decree did not displace the old owners and employers, who were jointly responsible with the representatives of the workmen for the proper working of their factory. While they were obliged to produce books and correspondence of every kind to the Workmen's Control Committee, and decisions of the Committee were binding, the owners could raise objections to such decisions before the local Council of Workmen's Control composed of trade union, factory and cooperative delegates, functioning under the local Soviet; or, failing satisfaction, before the All-Russian Council of Workmen's Control, formed on a similar basis by the national bodies concerned, together with representatives of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets, the national organizations of technicians and agricultural experts, etc.

This decision was met at the point of the bayonet by the employers. The standing committee of the All-Russian Congress of Manufacturers decided on December 6th that factories should be closed down rather than submit to this interference in managerial rights. In fact a number of mines and factories were closed down by the employers. There were even cases of the sale of their equipment for scrap. The management of the big engineering works at Sormovo sent a million roubles of factory funds to the White General Kaledin. The majority of the press attacked the measure as 'anarchy'; and there were many cases where this charge had some justification, particularly in those factories or industries where the Bolsheviks

were weak and Mensheviks or Anarchists had a footing. Some for motives of sabotage, some with genuine anarchist illusions, attempted to proclaim the factories the property of the workmen engaged in them, and to begin marketing on that basis. But this aspect of workmen's control, inevitable in the circumstances, should not be exaggerated. In the great majority of cases the workmen's representatives clearly understood their task as that of preventing sabotage and embezzlement, assuring the reopening or proper functioning of the factories, struggling for the improvement of labour discipline and output, and interfering with attempted black-market operations by the employers or their equally disaffected assistants among the technicians. Many thousands of workmen learnt in the process of workmen's control the elements of management of industry, which proved invaluable when the next stage – nationalization – was reached.

This essentially constructive side of workmen's control was demonstrated when the third basic measure for industry was adopted on the proposal of the workmen's organizations – the decree setting up the Supreme Economic Council (or, more literally, 'the Supreme Council of People's Economy') on December 14th. The need for some governmental body co-ordinating all economic activity had been expressed strongly throughout November, in discussions at the Central Council of Factory Committees. In these discussions the syndicalist tendencies already mentioned were overwhelmingly rejected, and the Bolshevik Party's draft decree, providing for centralized direction of economy in the national interests, was accepted. The Supreme Economic Council was given power to take over and reorganize the marketing wholesale organizations set up by the various industries in Tsarist days under the title of 'syndicates', which in many cases held virtual monopolies of such things as agricultural machinery, textiles, sugar and leather. A majority of workers, nominated by the appropriate trade unions, was assured in their management committees. New directing bodies were formed in those industries where no syndicates existed. The Supreme Economic Council was organized out of expert representatives of such bodies, of the All-Russian Council of Workmen's Control and of the Government departments concerned, with a smaller standing committee of fifteen members. Local Economic Councils were set up on the same model.

The original purpose of the S.E.C. was to co-ordinate the activity of every branch of economy – trade, food, agriculture and finance as well as industry – but in fact, at this very early stage of the mastery of economy by the workers, such a programme was beyond the capacity of any one body. In practice, the Supreme Economic Council became in the course of its first year's work the Government department dealing with industry.

This was hastened by the local and central acts of nationalization of factories forced upon the local and central authorities by the sabotage of the employers. Thus, in the Nizhni-Novgorod province, several factories had to be nationalized because of the unwillingness of the owners to carry on production. A provisional management was appointed, composed of representatives of the workmen and of the economic department of the local Soviet. Similarly at the great textile centre of Ivanovo-Voznesensk, two important mills were nationalized on account of the sabotage of the employers. In the Kursk province all the sugar factories had to be nationalized for the same reason, and in the Donetsk coalfield also a number of collieries. The Supreme Economic Council itself confiscated the electrical power-supply trust, on account of its particular importance to the State (which in any case financed it); but it also effected a number of penal nationalizations where the employers were sabotaging or deserting their plant. The first of these – the Kyshtym copper plant in the Urals – was already nationalized by November 17th ; later came such important enterprises as the Russo-Belgian iron and steel works in the Donetsk, the great Putilov engineering works and shipyard at Petrograd, and a number of large grain elevators in various parts of the country. By May 80 per cent of the mines and factories in the Urals had been nationalized, and 50 per cent of all the large engineering works, together with the river fleet (January 26th, 1918) and the sugar industry (May 2nd).

Nevertheless, all these nationalizations touched only a fraction of the 4,000 large and medium industrial establishments of the country. They were acts of self-defence in a running battle for the control of industry, and not yet a final or settled decisive action. In fact, by May, 1918, only 234 factories had been nationalized throughout the country, and another 70 requisitioned; of these, less than one-third had been taken over by the central authorities.

Thus, while Soviet economic policy from the outset had no element of syndicalism in it, there was no undue haste to impose upon

the still young apparatus of management tasks which were beyond its powers. This was still the period (November-February) which Lenin called 'the Red Guard attack on capital'.

In fact, however, far-reaching plans of nationalization on a more systematic basis for the iron and steel, chemical, oil and textile industries were being carefully worked out, together with model statutes for a nationalized enterprise, when the first Congress of Economic Councils was called by the S.E.C. in May, 1918. Attempts were being made to secure, even at this late hour, the co-operation of such capitalists as would accept the new system, by the formation of mixed trusts in the leather, sugar, textile and some metal-working industries.

But nearly all these attempts came to nothing, since even those private owners who were willing to talk business instead of sabotage (like Meshchersky, representing the owners of a group of large metal-working factories) insisted, as a minimum, on compensation for part of their shares in the shape of long-term bonds with guaranteed minimum rates of interest. This meant creating within the future Socialist economy islands of privileged capitalists who, while they ceased to draw profit from particular factories, were exchanging this privilege for the right to draw such profit from national economy as a whole. Such islands might prove a rallying ground for a capitalist counter-offensive at a time of economic or political difficulty.

The nationalized factories were put under managements the composition of which emphasized their responsibility to the nation as a whole. They were bodies of from six to nine members, two-thirds of them appointed by the S.E.C. and one-third by the workmen concerned. It was stipulated that at least 50 per cent of the members should be nominated by the trade unions; in practice, however, as the trade unions held the dominating position in the machinery of the S.E.C. itself, the majority was usually nominated by the trade unions. This did not prevent men and women with special technical or business experience being included – when they could be found.

With the main sources of capitalist power in Russia thus weakened or broken, the machinery of finance had inevitably to be tackled as well. In fact, the role of the State Bank and of the private commercial banks in financing sabotage in the Government departments and trading organizations, described earlier, forced the pace. On November 20th the State Bank was occupied by Red Guards, and a Commissioner appointed representing the Soviet Government. On

December 27th the private banks were nationalized and their amalgamation with the State Bank was decreed, with a guarantee for deposits. In fact, the private banks were closed for three months by the strike of their employees, and effective amalgamation was not completed by the end of the summer of 1918. But by the end of January the State Bank was working again, and the Soviet Government was in a position to use it as the channel for subsidies to nationalized enterprises, for payments to State departments on account of their Budget grants, and for credits to private enterprises under workers' control.

The hostile attitude of foreign Powers, already quite clear within a month of the revolution, led to the cancelling of the foreign debt of the State on December 24th; and the active display of capitalist hostility in Russia as well as abroad led in rapid succession to the suspension of payment of interest on State bonds and of dividends on shares (December 29th, 1917), the cancellation of State loans (January 21st) and the annulling of bank shares (January 23rd). On December 27th Lenin proposed, as a means of fighting sabotage, nationalization of all joint stock companies: but this was postponed.

From these fundamental changes in the ownership of industry, agriculture and finance, other essential measures giving the State control of the chief levers of the economic machine followed inevitably. On April 22nd, 1918, a State monopoly of foreign trade was proclaimed; in February the mercantile marine was nationalized; and on April 12th a decree was issued on workers' cooperation, providing for special facilities and advantages in home trade for existing co-operatives (in which the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and even bourgeois Liberals were dominant), and for new workers' co-operative societies which might be set up.

These measures underlined the aim of the Soviet Government to concentrate in its hands for the time being an effective machinery of direction and control, rather than to attempt direct management itself either of industry or of agriculture. For that ultimate purpose a period of careful preparation, and above all of mass effort and experience, was necessary.

## 7. MASS INITIATIVE

It is quite impossible to understand either the immense scope of the Socialist revolution in Russia or the success of its policies if one thinks of it as the work of a group of fanatical conspirators who se-

cured tyrannical powers in 1917, or of cunning demagogues leading workers, peasants and soldiers after them along some preconceived path. To understand the events of 1917-18 – and those indeed of the next thirty years no less – the independent creative effort of the mass of the people must be taken into account.

In a sense the past of the Russian people itself – that series of eruptions of peasant revolt stretching back more than a hundred years, merging in the middle of the nineteenth century with a more and more continuous series of fiercely-fought strikes and political demonstrations of the industrial workers – should suggest how inevitable it was that the Russian people should play a new part after the Revolution. The volcanic energy of the people of Russia, displayed in agrarian and industrial struggle long before 1917, could not but seek for a new outlet: and found it in constructive initiative.

Lenin had already dealt with this question in a profoundly significant work, *Will the Bolsheviks Maintain Power?* (September, 1917). Russia had been governed by 130,000 landowners, he said: could it now be governed by 240,000 Bolsheviks? Yes, he replied; for those 240,000 were governing not by ‘subjecting the vast majority to penal labour and semi-starvation’, as the landowners had done after the 1905 revolution. The Bolsheviks would be governing ‘in the interest of the poor and against the rich’. They already had no less than a million votes behind them, as the August municipal elections in Petrograd had shown – a million who were ‘faithful to the ideal of the Socialist State, and not working merely for the sake of getting on every 20th of the month a considerable bundle of notes’. And Lenin continued:

Moreover, we have a splendid means of increasing tenfold our apparatus of government – a means which never has been and never could be at the disposal of a capitalist State. It is a very effective expedient: the drawing-in of the workers, the poor, to the daily work of managing the State ... For the administration of the State we can bring into action immediately an administrative machine of about 10 if not 20 millions – an apparatus unknown in any capitalist country. We alone are capable of creating such an apparatus, for we are assured of the full unlimited sympathy of the vast majority of the population. This apparatus we alone can create, because we have conscious workers disciplined by a long

‘apprenticeship’ to capitalism ... The conscious workers must be in control, but they can attract to the actual work of management the real labouring and oppressed masses.

Of course, mistakes are inevitable during the first activities of this new apparatus. But did the peasants make no mistakes when they first threw off the shackles of serfdom, and, becoming free, began to manage their own affairs? Can there be any other method of teaching the people to manage their own affairs and to avoid mistakes than that of actual practice, than the immediate starting of real popular self-administration? The most important thing at the present time is to get rid of the prejudice of the bourgeois intellectuals that only special officials, entirely dependent on capital by their whole social position, can carry on the administration of the State ... The most important thing is to instil in the oppressed and labouring masses confidence in their own power ... An honest, courageous, universal first move to hand over the management of the country to the proletariat and semi-proletariat will cause such an unheard-of revolutionary enthusiasm in the masses, will multiply so many times the popular forces in the struggle with our misfortunes, that much that seemed impossible to our narrow old bureaucratic forces will become practicable for the millions, beginning to work for themselves and not for the capitalists, not for a boss or official and not under compulsion of the stick.

In fact, a number of examples have already been quoted which show that Lenin’s anticipations were being justified. The multifold activity of the town Soviets – themselves composed of delegates who went on working at their trade during the day, and controlling various public activities during their spare time, or when specially released for a period by the managements of their factories – depended upon this initiative and native good sense of scores of thousands of workers, most of them not members of the Bolshevik Party, of which Lenin wrote. The thousands who took part in the Workmen’s Control Committees were another illustration. It was no longer a subject working class that, for example, at the textile workers’ conference of the Moscow region, on January 27th, 1918, demanded (pending nationalization) a State monopoly of the sale of textiles, the com-

pulsory amalgamation of all textile firms into trusts and trading cartels under Government direction, and the reorganization of managerial bodies so as to include a large proportion of workers' representatives. It was the same sense of responsibility for the State that led the Central Council of Factory Committees itself to launch the idea, very soon after the revolution, of creating a Supreme Economic Council; and, in February, 1918, prompted the resolution of a conference of factory committees of the Petrograd region to set up a special bureau in each industry to draft plans for nationalization. We have seen also how the gaps in Government departments caused by sabotage or desertion of the better-qualified staff were filled by volunteers from among the working people of the large cities. There were many mistakes and many crudities as a result: but the new machine worked, and with increasing efficiency as experience was gained.

In the countryside, too, the land committees and the sub-committees of the county and rural district conferences of Soviets which actually carried out the reapportioning of the land were not in the main composed of 'experts'. They were ordinary working peasants, village school-teachers, people whom the peasantry recognized as part of themselves.

Speaking of this period long afterwards, at the Eleventh Congress of the Communist Party in 1922, Lenin said that the decrees issued immediately after the revolution aimed at awakening and encouraging this very initiative. They were 'a form of propaganda. ... This is how we should like the State to be managed, here is the decree, try'.

## 8. THE PLAN FOR REACHING SOCIALISM

By April, 1918, the main sources of armed opposition and sabotage within the country were broken, the machinery of Socialist government in its broad outline had been constructed, the personnel of the Bolshevik Party had been reinforced by a much wider, non-Party throng of working people in town and country active in public affairs, and there were the first small signs of economic revival on the new foundations.

In the spring, financial budgets for the controlled industries had begun to be worked out, for example a half-year budget for the Urals industries. The State held substantial stocks of coal, oil and textiles as a basis for modest beginnings in trading on its own account. The April decree on co-operatives had encouraged a great many workers



to come forward in the factories with the formation of workers' trading organizations, and thus to multiply the possibilities of non-capitalist trade. At the first Congress of Economic Councils it was reported that an increase in production was noticeable in a number of industries, for example in the Moscow coalfield, in the leather and paper industries, and in the textile factories of the Kostroma province, where the workers themselves had raised the question of finding means to raise labour productivity. In the Donetsk coalfield there were cases like that of the Makeyevka mine, where output had been raised from 1,000 to 1,500 tons a day. Railway traffic was showing a slight but appreciable improvement. The number of trade unionists was approaching three millions – double the figure of July, 1917.

It was in these conditions that Lenin, in a notable address to the Central Executive Committee of Soviets on April 29th, 1918, outlined the 'Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government' – the programme of approach to Socialism in the particular conditions of Soviet Russia – expanded the following week in a *Pravda* article: 'On Left Childishness and the Mistakes of Comrade Bukharin'. It will repay students of much later phases in the Russian Revolution – and not only the Russian Revolution – to study these important documents. Here it is possible only to summarize their main points.

The picture which Lenin drew was of a vast country far behind western Europe in its economic development. There were no less than five different types of economy existing side by side in it. First came *patriarchal or natural, self-sufficient, economy*, characteristic of the most remote tribal life, far earlier than feudalism in the ladder of man's development. Great numbers of nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples were still living in such conditions. There was *petty commodity production*, i.e. tiny, self-sufficing peasant production at a miserably low level, but producing also a small surplus – for sale on the market. There was still a large sector of *private capitalism* – the village capitalist or kulak, the agent who bought his commodities, the speculator and merchant in the towns, the owners of non-nationalized factories. There was *State capitalism* – the State monopoly of the grain trade, the State regulation of privately-owned industry and commerce, the petty-bourgeois co-operative trading now passing under Government direction. And there was a small and still weak section of economy which could be described as *Socialist*: those branches of economy which had been nationalized without com-

pensation to the large shareholders. The final objective must be to bring up all the economic activities which could be classified under the first four heads to the level of the fifth; but that would be a long and difficult task. State capitalism itself was an immense advance on the first three forms of economy: it brought society up to the threshold of an advance to Socialism.

‘If we take the scale of Western European revolutions’, wrote Lenin, ‘we stand at present approximately on the level of what was reached in 1793 and 1871.\* ... In one respect we have undoubtedly gone a little further, namely, we have decreed and introduced all over Russia a higher type of State – the Soviet power. But we cannot in any circumstances rest content with what has been achieved, since we have only begun going on to Socialism.’ In order to make possible further progress it was now necessary to ‘consolidate what has been won, decreed and discussed’. Lenin gave a simple and convincing outline of what practical steps were necessary to achieve this object.

The first step was to keep a check on production and consumption. This meant establishing over industry and the distribution of its products, as well as over the distribution of agricultural produce, ‘that control and order formerly achieved by the propertied class’. This would be State capitalism, said Lenin: and that would be salvation for Russia and a step towards Socialism. State capitalism – centralizing, calculating, controlling the vast mass of petty production and petty properties existing in Russia – would be very different under a Soviet Government from what it was in a country of large monopoly capital like Germany. Added to the confiscation of many factories and works, the nationalization of big companies and banks, the breaking of the resistance of the militant capitalists and saboteurs, it would mean ‘three-quarters of Socialism’. Russia was a country of twenty million small producers, in the shape of the peasantry: this meant a favourable field for speculation: speculation, if allowed to rage unchecked, would mean the ruin of the chances of Socialism. Consequently control through a check on production and consumption was an essential step – always given the rule of the working class through Soviet power.

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\* That is, of France under the Jacobin dictatorship and of Paris at the time of the Commune.

Secondly, it was necessary to raise production and the standard of discipline among the workers. It was no longer a question of expropriating the capitalists. In the stage which had been reached, this was not the centre of attention. Nothing was easier, in view of the immense power of the Soviet Government, than to go on expropriating. 'And to every workers' delegation, when it came to me and complained that the factory was being closed down, I replied : Is it your pleasure that your factory should be confiscated? Very well, we've got the blank decrees ready, we can sign a decree in one minute. But tell me: have you been able to take production into your hands, have you calculated what you produce, do you know the connexions between your industry and the Russian and international market? And then it turns out that they haven't studied that yet, and there's nothing written about it in the Bolshevik books, and nothing said in the Menshevik books either.' Therefore, said Lenin, to continue merely expropriating *now* would probably mean defeat. What was necessary was to 'mop up\* in the territory already won – by raising productivity of labour, by studying the means of improving output, by improving labour discipline, by establishing one-man management in the factories. Without this there would be no Socialism: since Socialism, among other things, meant raising the productivity of labour.

Moreover, it was necessary in doing so to develop emulation between the factories, by means of the publicity and statistics which the capitalists could never permit among themselves, because that would mean abolishing commercial secrecy. 'Amidst the nonsensical stories which the bourgeoisie willingly spread about Socialism is the one that Socialists allegedly deny the importance of emulation. In reality it is only Socialism which, by abolishing classes and consequently the enslavement of the masses, for the first time opens the road to emulation on a really mass scale.' Successful working of every factory and every village, which was a private affair of an individual capitalist, landlord or kulak under capitalism, had become a most important public matter under the Soviet power.

Thirdly, it was essential to use capitalist experts and technicians, not being afraid of paying them high salaries in order to learn from them the technique of industrial management. Lenin boldly said: 'We must learn Socialism from the promoters of trusts'; and he ridiculed the would-be 'Left Communists', led by Bukharin, who were horrified at this suggestion. He reminded them that there was in existence

the Soviet power, which maintained control over such technicians and experts, and made it possible to learn from them without falling under their sway. Workers' committees could follow every step of the capitalist expert, learning from him and at the same time able not only to complain of him but to get him dismissed if necessary. Executive functions were given to such experts, not as former capitalists but as skilled organizers, from whom the workers could learn.

Using these methods, Lenin said, 'we have conquered capital, we shall conquer our own lack of organization too, and only then shall we arrive at the full victory of Socialism'.

### 9. 'WORLD REVOLUTION'

In the course of his speech of April 29th, and of the statement of its underlying principles which had appeared in the press the day before, Lenin had insisted that what had been secured by the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was a temporary opportunity for the Soviet State to concentrate its energies on the building of Socialism. This, he said, was the most important and most difficult side of the Socialist revolution. At the same time, it was the only means of giving serious assistance to Socialist revolution in the West, which had been delayed for a number of reasons. Lenin denied that the revolution was doomed if it were not supported by revolutions in other countries: this, he said, was 'the greatest stupidity and pedantry'. The task of Soviet Russia, since it was alone, was 'to preserve the revolution, to maintain for it even somewhat of a fortress of Socialism, however weak and moderate its dimensions, while the revolution matured in other countries'. But to expect of history that it should move forward Socialist forces in the various countries in strictly planned and orderly fashion meant 'not to have any understanding of revolution, or through one's own stupidity to renounce support of the Socialist revolution'.

Lenin thus made it clear, first, that in his view it was possible to build up a Socialist Russia *without* revolutions in other countries, and secondly that this was her *main* task, and not that of 'promoting world revolution' – except in the sense that the example of Socialism successfully built in a backward country like Russia would be of great educative value for countries more advanced. 'That Russian who took it into his head, relying only on Russian forces, to tackle the problem of overthrowing international imperialism, would be a man who had gone mad.'

This was no new attitude. It had been taken up by the Bolshevik majority from the very beginning of the Revolution. It is worth looking at some of the evidence of this, in order to get clear the basis of Soviet diplomacy in this period.

On November 18th, when several leading Bolsheviks had resigned from the Central Committee of the Party and from the Council of People's Commissars over the alleged refusal of the majority to share power with the other Soviet parties, Lenin drafted a manifesto: 'To all Party members and the working classes of Russia', which was published in *Pravda* two days later. Denouncing the deserters and assuring the workers that the Soviet Government would stand firm, the manifesto stated that the Central Committee remained loyal to 'the programme approved by the entire Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets, and consisting of gradual but firm and unwavering steps to Socialism'. There was not one word in the statement about dependence on international revolution, or any suggestion that Socialism could not be built in its absence.

Again, when publicly announcing the attitude of the Soviet Government on the question of peace with Germany, in his *Theses on Peace* (January 7th, 1918), Lenin wrote that the basis of Soviet tactics must be the principle of 'how more certainly and surely to safeguard for the Socialist revolution the possibility of consolidating its position, or at least maintaining itself, in one country' pending revolutions elsewhere. In any case, 'it would be a mistake to build the tactics of a Socialist Government in Russia on attempts to determine whether a European, and particularly a German Socialist revolution, will take place in the next six months or a similar short period': since 'the probable moment when a revolution will explode and overthrow any of the European governments (including the German) is absolutely incalculable'.

During the discussions on the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, again, Lenin made it perfectly clear that the building of Socialism in Russia was the primary task for Russian Socialists, once Russian capitalism had been overthrown, and it was only in this sense that international revolution could be 'promoted'. Thus, at the Central Committee meeting on January 24th, 1918, discussing the prospects of the German revolution, Lenin insisted, as we have seen, that the reason for accepting the 'disgraceful peace' was that Russia needed 'a delay in order to put social reforms into effect: we need to consolidate, and for that we need time'.

Furthermore, at a meeting of the Central Committee with responsible Party workers, on February 3rd, 1918, it was Lenin who put two resolutions which in reality stated the problem in the most concrete form possible at that particular moment, when the whole fate of the young Soviet Republic was hanging in the balance. 'Is peace in general between a Socialist and imperialist States permissible?' was the first. To this Lenin, Stalin and three others answered unconditionally in the affirmative, while seven more supported them conditionally (opposing immediate signature). Two voted 'no', while three, including Zinoviev and Bukharin, left before the voting was taken. The second resolution put the question of what later came to be called peaceful coexistence between Socialist and capitalist States even more concretely: 'Are economic treaties admissible between a Socialist and an imperialist State?' Here the question was one of direct economic collaboration; and here the voting was the same as on the first resolution.

'Preserving the Soviet power', wrote the Party leaders in a letter to all members (*Pravda*, February 13th), 'we are giving the best and strongest support to the proletariat of all countries'.

One other example can be taken from the period of the violent internal discussions within the Bolshevik Party on the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. On February 28th, Lenin published his article, 'Strange and Monstrous', in reply to the declaration of the 'Left' Communists that Soviet power by peace with Germany was becoming a pure formality; and that they could reconcile themselves to losing that power. Lenin challenged the whole idea that the interests of international revolution forbade any peace with the imperialists. 'A Socialist Republic among imperialist Powers would not be able, taking its stand on such views, to conclude any economic treaties, and could not exist without flying away to the moon.'

Then he went on to challenge directly the conception that the interests of international revolution required 'pushing it forward'. Such a theory would be a complete break with Marxism, wrote Lenin. Marxism 'always rejected the "pushing forward" of revolutions, which develop in the measure that the acuteness of class contradictions which give rise to revolutions matures. ... In reality the interests of the international revolution require that the Soviet power, having overthrown the bourgeoisie of its own country, should aid that revolution, but should select the *form* of aid in keeping with its powers.'

The whole of Lenin's speeches at the Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party (March 6th to 8th, 1918), which was convened primarily to discuss the Brest-Litovsk peace and to adopt a new Party programme, are penetrated with the same idea. It underlay a scheme for developing economic relations with capitalist States, including many concessions for developing Russia's resources, adopted at the Congress of Economic Councils (May 26th, 1918).

## 10. THE NEW MENACE

But though the Soviet Government and the majority of politically intelligent Russians were painfully aware that Socialist reconstruction required a continuing breathing-space, in which at any rate to make good the disasters of the last four years, others thought differently. Already in mid-March, only a few days after the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, Lenin in a speech at the Moscow Soviet had warned the people that the Republic now had to face an enemy very different from those it had dealt with hitherto – 'the Romanovs, Kerensky, the petty-bourgeois compromisers, our dull-witted, cowardly, unorganized bourgeoisie.' He repeated this warning in his closing remarks on April 29th, on the occasion of his programme speech already quoted. In Europe, Lenin said, 'they haven't in power either idiots like Romanov or boasters like Kerensky, but serious leaders of capitalism, who didn't exist in Russia'.

And indeed there were ominous signs that these serious leaders had taken serious decisions. As early as November 12th the chief of the French Military Mission in Russia had informed General Shcherbachev that the French Government did not recognize the Council of People's Commissars, and on the 16th the British Embassy protested against the steps taken towards the conclusion of peace. The United States Government intimated for its part that the despatch of all supplies contracted for by the Provisional Government would cease forthwith. Litvinov, who was living in London, was unofficially accepted as Soviet representative in Great Britain, and in the same way Vorovsky, another old Bolshevik who was living in Stockholm, was accepted as an official envoy by the Swedish Government. In mid-December, however, when Don Cossack generals revolted, they were offered £20 millions by Britain and 100 million roubles by France: and in January U.S. Ambassador Francis advised his Government to follow suit. It was not known then that

Britain and France had already signed a secret agreement (December 23rd, 1917) dividing South Russia into spheres of influence.

After the first revelation of the German terms at the end of December, it became more and more clear that the Western Allies were resolved to treat the Soviet Government as an enemy. In January, British and Japanese cruisers anchored off Vladivostok (followed by an American cruiser on March 1st). Although the Allied missions, in the critical days of February 21st to 23rd, during the German advance, had promised military assistance in reorganizing the Russian Army, no such assistance had been given. Instead, on February 27th, on the plea of the German offensive (but three days after the Central Executive Committee of Soviets had accepted the German terms) the foreign Embassies left Petro-grad for Vologda, in Northern Russia. Early in March a British naval force had arrived off Murmansk, where the leaders of the Soviet, after consulting Trotsky (then People's Commissar for War), entered into negotiations with the British commander, at the latter's invitation, ostensibly about joint defence of the area against a German-Finnish invasion (March 14th).

On March 9th British forces were landed there, and on March 18th a French cruiser arrived. By the end of the month rumours that Allied intentions in the north were hostile had become so persistent that on April 2nd Chicherin demanded – and secured – from the British agent in Moscow, Mr Lockhart, assurances that no occupation of Archangel was intended. On April 5th Japanese and British forces landed at Vladivostok, and four days later the Rumanians declared their annexation of Bessarabia. Their troops had occupied this territory in January.

At first (April 8th) the British, French and United States representatives in Moscow had told Chicherin that they were opposed to the Japanese action. But on the 10th, they informed the Foreign Commissariat that the Japanese were not intervening in Russian internal affairs, but were landing only to protect Japanese lives and property – a familiar enough explanation in international experience, which deceived no-one. And in fact, on April 22nd, the French Ambassador Noulens issued a press statement defending the Japanese landing in such arrogant and hostile terms that the Soviet Government demanded his recall. The French Government underlined its non-recognition of the Soviet Government by refusing the request: whereupon the Soviet Government announced that it would henceforth treat him as a private person. The previous day a further British



landing had taken place at Murmansk: and more troops were landed in early May.

These more and more open signs that a new period of military peril was opening were accompanied by evidence that a new wave of internal difficulties had begun. At the first Congress of Economic Councils, it had been calculated that there was more than enough grain in the country to cover the three million tons which the State needed in order to supply the towns, industry and the army. But out of the seven million tons of grain which were estimated to be available by Milyutin, the reporter on this question, over two million tons were in the Urals and Siberia and over four million tons were in the North Caucasus. The latter source of supply was cut off almost at once by the German occupation of the Ukraine, and by the end of May the Siberian and Urals sources were also cut off. This at once changed the whole situation, and decisively. Instead of a vast surplus, the State was faced with an acute deficit. In the countryside, the rich peasantry were fully aware of these difficulties, and began taking advantage of their control of marketable surpluses of grain, and of their influence over poorer neighbours, to force up prices beyond the maximum laid down by the State. There was a phase, in April and May, when the newly-formed and still inexperienced local Soviet authorities in many areas showed signs of capitulating to the difficulties thus created, particularly when armed clashes began to occur here and there in the grain-producing areas. In some districts the local authorities raised the State maximum price arbitrarily, in order to appease the kulaks. Elsewhere there were cases of deliveries to the State by the local authorities being delayed owing to local shortages. On May 29th railwaymen, water transport workers and others petitioned Lenin for the right to send representatives into the producing provinces, in order to buy grain for themselves. All these were signs of weakness which might, if unchecked, completely disorganize that very registration and control on which Lenin was insisting, and would give further encouragement to the kulaks.

Accordingly the central authorities were forced to take urgent measures to reinforce centralized control of the distribution of food-stuffs and staple commodities. On April 2nd the People's Commissariat for Food was given power to distribute certain consumer goods in exchange for produce. Special 'commodity funds' of the goods in question – those of particular importance to the countryside, such as fabrics, clothes, soap, kerosene, agricultural implements – were set

up in the provincial centres. On May 4th the People's Commissariat for Food was given dictatorial powers to ensure the observance of the food regulations. It had the right to set aside decisions of the local authorities which infringed those regulations, and to dismiss or arrest officials. On May 24th it was given monopoly rights to distribute staple goods, and to form armed food detachments for the purpose of enforcing its authority. These detachments were composed of factory workers specially vouched for by their organizations (some 15,000 came from Petrograd alone). They had the right to inspect barns, to requisition surpluses at fixed prices, and to confiscate these surpluses where resistance was offered, or windmills where there was ground for belief that they would be used for profiteering. The offenders were to be brought before the courts, and a minimum punishment of ten years' imprisonment was prescribed. The food detachments were instructed to co-operate with the poorer peasantry.

We shall see in the next chapter the far-reaching importance of this decision. What Lenin called subsequently 'the crusade for bread, the crusade against the speculators and kulaks', was beginning. But though it involved much anxiety and difficulty, its true significance will only be understood against the background of the other crusade – the crusade from outside the country, the crusade against Bolshevism – which was now under way.

This was well understood by the bourgeois parties thrown into confusion by the triumph of the Soviets in November. The spring of 1918 saw a revival of anti-Soviet activity, particularly as the result of negotiations between the executive committees of the principal parties overthrown in November – the Kadets, Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, the latter serving as the principal organizers. In March and April, 1918, an underground 'Union for the Regeneration of Russia' was formed by these parties, with the programme of (I) non-recognition of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty; (K) restoration of Russia's 1914 frontiers, except for Poland and Finland; (H) the calling of the Constituent Assembly and overthrow of the Soviet Government. It was in regular contact with the foreign missions in Moscow, Petrograd and Vologda, through Noulens. The bourgeois parties, with some groups of business men and monarchist politicians which had been set up since November, 1917, also formed a separate organization, the 'Right Centre', in February and March, with the same objectives; but they did not include the Socialists, rejecting the idea of universal suffrage or of division of the land to any extent among

the peasantry. They chose Siberia as the seat of this organization. In May they split over the question of the Brest-Litovsk peace, the pro-Allied group forming a new organization, the 'National Centre'. Close contact was established between the 'Union' and this latter body. They addressed a joint document to the representatives of the Entente, signed on behalf of both the 'Union' and the 'Centre' by representatives of all the parties concerned, together with some smaller groups.

A third organization, closely linked financially with the Allied missions, the 'Union for the Defence of the Motherland and Liberty', was discovered by the Extraordinary Commission on May 29th. Its objective was to bring about an anti-Soviet rising in Moscow and in the rich grain-producing Volga provinces. Here there was a high percentage of kulaks in the countryside and an influential merchant class in the big river ports, commercial rather than industrial centres.

A number of small organizations also existed, devoting themselves to the despatch of officers with false papers from Moscow to the Volga or to Archangel. It was ascertained that the French Mission was supplying one such organization with French papers for its members.

Thus, at the very time when a clear programme for steady advance towards Socialism had been sketched out, and the first small successes in economic activity were beginning to strengthen the authority of the Soviet Government and the local Soviets, now rapidly gaining experience in every sphere, hostile forces were gathering themselves together and completing their preliminary arrangements for open and large-scale counter-revolution.

#### *Further Reading*

Two first hand general accounts by foreign eye-witnesses are of value to the student here – M. Philips Price, *Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution* (1921) and Capt. J. Sadoul, *Notes sur la Revolution Bolchevique* (1919). They should be supplemented by Lenin, *Selected Works*, vol. VII and vol. IX (in English), Dobb, *op. cit.*, chapter 4, gives a useful summary of economic development. The diplomatic history of the period has been written by Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs*, vol. I (1930), Lockhart, *Memoirs of a British Agent* (1932; Penguin Edn., 1950), and Coates, *Armed Intervention in Russia* (1935), chapters 4-6. Many valuable extracts from documents and speeches are given by J. L. Magnes, *Russia and*

*A History of the U.S.S.R.*

*Germany at Brest-Litovsk* (1919). William Hard, *Raymond Robins' Own Story* (1920) is an exceptionally interesting account of the Allied attitude to Soviet offers of co-operation, written by an American officer of considerable standing. For this chapter and the next, the memoirs of Mr Lloyd George and Mr Winston Churchill – *The Truth About the Peace Treaties* and *The World Crisis: Aftermath* respectively – are full of revelatory matter. Wheeler-Bennett, *Brest-Litovsk, The Forgotten Peace* (1935) is a specialized study.

## CHAPTER III

### *Invasion and Civil War*

#### 1. OPEN HOSTILITIES

Up to May, 1918, Allied intentions had been clouded with a certain ambiguity. The landings at Murmansk had been represented as a step towards Allied help in reconstituting Russia's fighting capacity, which had often been promised since February; and the Soviet Government, although watchful, accordingly did not at once treat these landings as a hostile act. Again, the Japanese and British landings at Vladivostok at the beginning of April were accompanied, as we have seen, by assurances that no occupation was intended, and there appeared to be some divergence in policy between Britain and the United States on the matter. The Soviet Government confined itself to a protest, and to demanding reassurances about the possibility of similar landings at Archangel. These, as we have seen, were promptly given.

So doubtful was the position that on May 5th, in a letter to the American Colonel Raymond Robins (a strong supporter of Allied co-operation with the Soviet Government), the British representative in Moscow, Mr Bruce Lockhart, was able to enumerate a number of heads under which the Soviet Government had invited Allied co-operation. These included (i) the use of Allied instructors in building the new army; (ii) the use of British naval officers in saving the Black Sea Fleet; (iii) the despatch of the Czechoslovak Army Corps in Russia to Murmansk and Archangel; (iv) the retention of Allied control over war material which had been lying at Archangel for many months.

Abruptly the whole situation changed. On May 9th a large number of new troops under British command was disembarked at Murmansk. The previous day, encouraged by the Japanese landing, detachments of White officers in the Far East seized part of the Transbaikal railway. On May 25th it became known that the Cossack general Krasnov, who had been defeated in the first days of revolution outside Petrograd and allowed to escape, had organized a revolt on the Don, under the protection and with the assistance in arms and munitions of the Germans, who had now occupied Ukraine. On the same day there took place the first clash between the Soviet troops

and the Czechoslovaks, which developed rapidly into a large-scale revolt of the latter, all along the Volga and the Siberian railway.

The Czechoslovaks were prisoners of war from the Austrian Army, some 40,000 in number, who had been formed into a national corps by agreement between the Allied Governments and the Czech national leader, Professor Masaryk. It had been agreed between the Soviet Government and the Czechs on March 26th that they would be sent to France through Siberia, and that in the meantime the arms they held would be returned to the Soviet authorities, with the exception of ten rifles and one machine-gun per 100 men, as they would receive ample further equipment when they arrived in France. In fact, however, as Dr E. Benes subsequently revealed in 1928, the Czechoslovak leaders decided, under the influence of Tsarist officers and Allied attaches (particularly French officers) not to surrender their arms, and began hiding them in the carriages in which they were travelling, and resisting disarmament when the arms were discovered. Moreover, on April 1st the British War Office had forwarded Dr Benes a memorandum urging that the Czechoslovak forces should be 'employed' in Russia or Siberia, instead of coming to Europe; and the same advice was repeated to him personally in London, by Mr Balfour (then Foreign Secretary) and Lord Robert Cecil (May 10th and 15th).

It is thus clear that arguments later used to justify the Czechoslovak outbreak – that they were being disarmed contrary to agreement – had no basis in fact; indeed, Professor Masaryk himself, in a book published in 1925, admitted that very soon after the November revolution he had thought of the Czechoslovak Corps making war on the Bolsheviks, provided there was an army on the spot strong enough to start the battle, and he indicated the Japanese as the only possible force. It is also significant, in view of the advice afterwards given by the British and French Governments, that between March 7th and April 4th (as documents of the Czechoslovak National Council in Moscow, seized by the Soviet Government after the rising, showed) the Council received 11,188,000 roubles from the French Consul-General for their expenses, and a sum of £80,000 from 'British sources' – thus becoming 'financially dependent on France and the Allies', in Masaryk's words.

The Czech soldiers were mostly workmen, strongly democratic in their leanings. It was therefore necessary to present the reason for their attack on the Soviets, in the various towns at which their trains

were strung out along the railway lines, in some form which would be overwhelmingly persuasive. Two arguments were used- that their disarmament was due to German pressure, and that the Soviet Government was allegedly arming huge numbers of Austrian and Hungarian prisoners of war in order to help Germany. Both these assertions were entirely untrue. No representations whatsoever were made by the Germans about disarming them until after their rebellion had started; and a report on April 26th by an American and a British officer, sent by their respective diplomatic chiefs to Siberia to investigate this very story, showed that it was an entire invention. No more than 931 prisoners of war – and some of these Slavs – had been armed and incorporated into the Red Army. ‘We can but add, after seeing the armed prisoners and the type of men they are, that we feel there is no danger to the Allied cause through them’, the report concluded.

Within a few days after the Czechoslovaks had revolted, they had occupied a number of important cities on the Volga and in Siberia – Syzran, Chelyabinsk, Omsk, Tomsk, Novo-Nikolaevsk, and Samara. An appeal from three members of their National Council at Vladivostok, where there were already 12,000 Czechoslovaks supposedly waiting for Allied transports, to stop fighting and continue on their way to the Far East, was ignored. When the Soviet Government requested the French and British representatives in Moscow to use their influence to persuade the Czechoslovaks to lay down their arms (May 26th and 28th), the representatives in question, together with those of Italy and the U.S.A., retaliated with a Note (June 4th) declaring that ‘if the disarmament of the Czechs were carried out, the Powers in question would consider it a hostile act directed against themselves, since the Czechoslovak detachments were Allied troops under the protection and enjoying the support of the Allied and Associated Powers\*.

The initiative of the Allies was rapidly followed up. On June 29th, Czech, British, Japanese and White Russian troops occupied Vladivostok and overthrew Soviet power there. The next day, France recognized the Czechoslovak Republic – at that time still part of Austro-Hungary, and existing only in the person of these troops which were fighting the Red Army. A fortnight later, the Czechs at Vladivostok began entraining for Central Siberia. The last suggestion that they were there for evacuation to France was abandoned.

Meanwhile, the political significance of the revolt had been clearly brought out by other means. On June 8th a government of members of the Constituent Assembly had been set up under Czechoslovak protection at Samara. On June 30th, a similar government, headed by the Socialist-Revolutionary Vologodsky, had been set up for Western Siberia at Omsk – again under the protection of the Czechoslovaks. At Murmansk still more British troops had been landed on June 25th and during the next few days, despite an official warning which Chicherin had given Lockhart (June 14th) that the Soviet Government would resist any further landings without its consent. Under pressure from the British commander, Major-General Poole, the leaders of the Murmansk Soviet were induced to declare their independence of Moscow and to sign a ‘treaty’ with the occupying forces – which then proceeded southward into the Kola Peninsula and along the Leningrad railway, dissolving the Soviets as they went (and, where they encountered resistance, shooting members of the Soviets, as they did at Kem). In July, also, British forces penetrating into Soviet Central Asia from Persia overthrew Soviet authority in the Transcaspian region (now Turkmenistan).

At Archangel, the other great White Sea port, where British warships were already lying, their commander, Rear-Admiral Kemp, once again assured the local Soviet authorities (July 6th), that the actions taken at Murmansk were not aimed against the Soviet Government, but were measures taken only because of possible German action. In view of the professed friendliness of the Allied Governments, the Soviet Governments now (July 10th) invited their Ambassadors to leave the northern city of Vologda (where they had gone from Petrograd at the time of the German offensive) and come to Moscow. Instead, after declining the invitation on various grounds, the Ambassadors announced on July 23rd that they were leaving Vologda for Archangel, where they arrived at the end of the month. The conclusion was obvious, and events did not fail to justify it. On August 2nd British and United States forces were landed at Archangel, under cover of artillery fire, the local Soviet was overthrown, and yet another puppet government was established, again under the leadership of a former Socialist of the Narodnik school, Chaikovsky. Two days later British forces occupied Baku.

Thus, with the Germans occupying the Baltic territory, Ukraine and most of the Northern Caucasus, with British forces in possession of Russia’s northern seaboard, eastern Transcaucasia and the western



parts of Central Asia, with a Czechoslovak 'front' in being along the Volga and across the Urals, backed by Japanese, British and American forces at Vladivostok, and rival 'Governments' obediently springing into being under the protection of their respective foreign patrons, the 'breathing space' had emphatically come to an end by the beginning of August, 1918.

## 2. THE ROLE OF ALLIED DIPLOMACY

Before proceeding, it is worth dwelling a little on the part played by the Allied diplomats in Russia during these months – not merely because the story of Allied intervention in Russia in 1918 requires it, but because the lessons which the Soviet people then learned have never been forgotten.

Most famous of these lessons was that of the 'Lockhart affair', in which it will be sufficient to juxtapose the account given by the Soviet authorities with that given subsequently by the British Consul General in Moscow, Mr Bruce Lockhart, himself. The Soviet version is taken from the report on two years' work of the Extraordinary Commission, published by M. Y. Latzis (an important member of that body) in 1920. The second is taken from Mr Lockhart's book, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, published in 1932.

The Soviet account is as follows. On August 14th, 1918, Lockhart met at his flat a British agent, Smidchen, who had arrived from Petrograd with a recommendation to him. Smidchen brought with him the commander of a Soviet Lettish military unit, and they discussed the possibility of organizing a rising in Moscow linked with the British operations on the northern coast. At Lockhart's request, the Soviet officer in future was to maintain contact with Sidney Reilly, a lieutenant in the British Army engaged on underground work. On the 17th the officer met Reilly on a boulevard, and discussed with him (i) the despatch of Soviet troops to Vologda, with the object of their mutinying and handing over the town to the British; (ii) a rising in Moscow, to take place somewhere about September 10; (iii) the timing of the revolt to coincide with a full session of the Council of People's Commissars, so that they could all be arrested; (iv) occupation of the State Bank and other public buildings, and proclamation of a military dictatorship; (v) prohibition of public meetings on pain of death. At this meeting 700,000 roubles were handed to the Soviet officer.

On August 22nd Reilly and the officer met again. Detailed plans for the raiding of the offices of Lenin and other Soviet leaders were discussed, and a further 200,000 roubles handed over. At a further meeting on August 28th the Soviet officer received 300,000 roubles, and he agreed to visit Petrograd in order to establish contact with the British military authorities there and the Russian Whites organized by them. The meeting took place the following day, and contacts with groups at Nizhni-Novgorod and Tambov were discussed.

At first the idea was that the Council of People's Commissars, who were to be arrested by a unit on guard duty that day at the Kremlin, were to be sent immediately to Archangel; but Reilly decided that it would be more secure if Lenin and Trotsky were shot as soon as they had been arrested.

Latzis added that the Extraordinary Commission held a number of authentic documents confirming all these details.

The following is Mr Lockhart's version of 'the whole truth about the so-called Lockhart plot' (1932 edition, page 324: now available as a Penguin).

Mr Lockhart knew of the existence of British missions 'all over Russia' in April, 1918, every one of which 'had a different policy' (p. 252). As early as February, 1918, he knew that one of them, 'engaged in various anti-Bolshevik schemes', was Terence Keyes, brother of Admiral Keyes and 'Colonel in our Intelligence Service' (p. 234). Mr Lockhart describes the considerable lengths to which he went to secure the safe departure of Colonel Keyes from Russia at a critical moment. In April, 1918, Mr Lockhart knew that there was a whole group of British officers and officials in Russia, about whose work he was 'in the dark'; but not so much in the dark that he did not add that they were men 'for whose presence in Russia, and for whose protection, my position with the Bolsheviks was the only guarantee' (p. 263). On May 7th to 8th, Mr Lockhart learned that Reilly had arrived in Moscow as an intelligence agent whose methods 'were on a grand scale': and he arranged matters so that the Soviet authorities' suspicions were 'not unduly aroused' (p. 277). The same month, he informed the French Ambassador Noulens of his agreement that there should be Allied intervention even without Soviet consent, i.e. against the Soviet Government (pp. 283-4), and helped to smuggle Kerensky out of the country with false papers (p. 278). In June, Mr Lockhart increased his contacts with the chief illegal organizations planning insurrection against the Soviet Government; and, while not

giving them any cash or promises at this stage, he knew of the French financial assistance to these organizations, and of the promises of Allied military support in the near future (p. 291) – nor does Mr Lockhart indicate that he contradicted these promises. In July, he already knew that Reilly was engaged in ‘compromising’ activities (p. 300); and by July 22nd he knew that Allied intervention at Archangel was only a matter of days’ (p. 305). In August he himself began giving financial aid to the Russian counter-revolutionaries (p. 312). All this time he was in close contact with Reilly (pp. 300, 313). When Smidchen, a Lettish agent of Captain Cromie, the British naval attaché at Petrograd, brought a Soviet colonel to see him about his unit – the Lettish Rifles – deserting to the British forces when the latter reached Vologda, it was to Reilly that Mr Lockhart directed them (p. 314). Reilly had already announced his intention to stay on in Moscow, i.e. ‘underground’, after the forthcoming departure of Mr Lockhart and the other consuls (p. 313). On August 18th he told Mr Lockhart that he was planning an insurrection in Moscow, with the help of the Letts, once the consuls had gone (p. 316). Mr Lockhart and the French Consul-General warned him against ‘so dangerous and doubtful a move’ (*ibid.*) – although, as we have seen, Mr Lockhart himself had been financing Russian organizations with just such aims. Thereupon Reilly ‘went underground’, and Lockhart did not see him again until long afterwards, in England.

Mr Lockhart emphatically denied in his book any responsibility for Reilly’s schemes, and any knowledge of their details – especially of the plot to assassinate Soviet leaders. He also categorically denied this to Louis Fischer (*The Soviets in World Affairs*, vol. I, pp. 123-4). As for Reilly, his widow published his own account of the plot (quoted in Sayers and Kahn, *The Great Conspiracy against Russia*, 1946).

On the role of the French diplomats, the evidence is, however, quite unquestionable, because it comes from the lips of Frenchmen who were involved themselves. They began their work in Russia as strong opponents of the Bolsheviks and believers in the anti-German policies of their superiors in Russia. Only gradually, in face of what they saw and heard themselves, did they become convinced that the French Government’s hatred of the Bolsheviks was even stronger than its fear of the Germans, and that assurances of interest in Soviet-French co-operation against the Germans were only a blind.

One such Frenchman was Captain Jacques Sadoul, a member of the French Military Mission from October, 1917, onwards. His letters to the then Minister of Munitions in the French Government, the well-known Socialist Albert Thomas, were republished in 1919. They reveal the picture of just such an evolution as that described above. From very soon after the revolution, Sadoul was pressing for assistance to the Bolsheviks in rebuilding the military forces of Russia, on condition that they were prepared to resume hostilities against Germany. He was convinced that the threatening attitude of Germany would make such a resumption of hostilities inevitable. On December 14th, 1917, Sadoul was already writing of the 'appeal which Trotsky and Lenin, through my mediation, addressed three weeks ago already to the Allied Missions for the reorganization of the Russian Army'. Numerous succeeding letters speak of the same subject.

But the letters also show the indomitable conviction of the majority of the diplomats and officers by whom Sadoul was surrounded that the Bolsheviks were German agents, and nothing more. The curious thing is that, as Sadoul remarked himself, the secret intrigues which French officers were carrying on with counterrevolutionary circles in the Ukraine, on the Don and elsewhere were in reality strengthening pro-German elements and not Russian patriots. More and more Sadoul's protests against intrigues of this kind begin to play a prominent part in his letters.

On March 17th, 1918, Sadoul reports that Trotsky had received 'further information establishing that the Berthelot Mission has advised Rumania to take the offensive against the Bolsheviks and drawn up the plan of campaign which was applied by the Rumanian Army. French officers are reported to have participated personally in the first engagements, and only to have withdrawn from the Rumanian units after several weeks of fighting against the Russian'. Two days later Sadoul mentions that General Berthelot had given him a complete denial of the story, but that Trotsky has replied saying he has full documentary evidence and 'I have insisted all the less because, for my part, I have gathered the impressions of colleagues belonging to the Berthelot mission, now passing through Moscow, who have told me the whole truth'.

On April 11th, when on a very tiny scale military advisers had begun to be supplied to the War Commissariat, Sadoul reports that three weeks before the Soviet authority had asked for forty French

officers, who had not yet arrived or been placed at their disposal. Meanwhile, telegrams from Siberia were daily reporting counterrevolutionary movements in preparation in the Far East, 'with the more or less official support of Allied consular agents'. By April 30th the plot in Siberia had matured with the unasked-for Japanese landing, as we have seen, and Sadoul records that the Soviet Government was demanding the recall of the Allied consular agents compromised at Vladivostok.

By July 26th, when the Allied Missions were hastily preparing to leave on account of the open war now being waged against the Soviet Government, Sadoul was writing his last letters, in which the march of events was forcing him to speak openly. After recalling the failure of all his efforts to bring about better relations, thanks to the hostility of the Allies, and the rejection of all the Soviet offers of military co-operation, Sadoul continues: 'In the interior of Russia, our counter-revolutionary manoeuvres are multiplying with an unbelievable cynicism. Not a White Guard taken prisoner, not a counter-revolutionary arrested, on whom Anglo-French gold is not discovered, and documents establishing his connivance with our agents'. In a further note the next day, Sadoul added: 'I have too long closed my eyes to the evidence. It is really against the revolution, and only against it, that the Allies have directed their blows for nine months'. Sadoul said he had not yet met a single Allied representative who had not a morbid hatred and fear of Socialism. It was because of this, he was convinced, that the Allied Governments had by corruption, counterrevolution and arms been attempting to overthrow the Soviet power. 'In spite of the elementary international rules which impose on civilized States the duty of not intervening in the internal affairs of a foreign country, both the Allies and our enemies have I supported and tirelessly support all the bourgeois parties whom they supposed capable of overthrowing the power which the workmen and peasants of Russia have freely chosen'. Sadoul insisted that he was neither a fanatic, nor a madman, nor a traitor: he was still a moderate and an opportunist as he always had been. ; The Allies had hitherto been relying upon Germany to accomplish the 'fine work' of overthrowing the Russian revolution: now that Germany was unable to do it, the Allies were operating themselves.

Sadoul decided to stay in Russia. On January 17th, 1919, he took advantage of the departure of a section of the French Military Mission to send a further letter to Jean Longuet, director of the Socialist

*Populaire* at Paris, in which he gave a survey of events since the final rupture with the Allies. Here we may note his remark that the majority of the officers who were returning had just passed three months in jail charged with espionage – ‘and very legitimately. They themselves have very often recognized that they have a hundred times merited being tied to the execution post. They have in fact carried on the vilest work of police agents, of sabotage, provocation and counter-revolution.’

Equally striking was the evidence of Rene Marchand, a Conservative journalist who went to Russia as correspondent of the right-wing *Figaro*. He wrote a letter on September 4th, 1918, to M. Poincare, President of the French Republic, who knew him personally, on the way in which the Allies in recent months had allowed themselves to become involved in the struggle against Bolshevism. He reminded the President that he was ‘one of those who have with the deepest conviction criticized Bolshevism in its character of violent demagoguery’, and that he was a strong opponent of the ‘abominable treaty of Brest-Litovsk’. But, wrote Marchand, when Russian powers of resistance to Germany were vigorously raising their head and beginning to prepare for a new struggle, an official meeting held at the United States Consulate-General on August 23rd or 24th, at which both the French and American Consuls-General had been present, had opened his eyes to the existence of secret activity of the most dangerous character. Neither of the two officials mentioned had spoken of this work himself, but the conversation of Allied agents who were present had revealed the truth to him.

‘I learned thus that an English agent was arranging to destroy the railway bridge across the river Volkhoff, near the station of Zvanka. Now it requires but a glance at the map to see that the destruction of this bridge would mean the complete starvation of Petrograd; the city would find itself practically cut off from all communication on the east, whence comes all the corn on which it is existing so miserably, even at present ... A French agent added to this that he had already attempted to blow up the bridge of Cherepovetz, which so far as the provisioning of Petrograd is concerned would have the same effect as the destruction of the bridge of Zvanka, Cherepovetz being on the only line which connects Petrograd with the eastern districts. Subsequently there was discussion of the question of derailing trains on various lines ... I will not labour the point, but must add that, during

the whole of the meeting in question, not a word was said about the war against Germany'.

It will be remembered that this was the very time when Lieut. Reilly had 'gone underground'. In a book which Marchand subsequently published (*Why I Have Come to Support Bolshevism*, April, 1919), he revealed that the British officer mentioned was in fact Reilly, and that he spoke quite loudly 'without interruption and therefore without the smallest expression of disapproval from the Consuls'. He also gave the name of the French agent, de Vertamond, who had already been introduced to him by the French Consul-General. Vertamond's remark also 'aroused absolutely no protest either from Mr Poole or from M. Grenard'. The latter, intervening in the conversation, advised Vertamond to try and 'get hold of' some document confirming agreement between the Bolsheviks and the Germans, under which the latter would abstain from any offensive in order to enable the Bolsheviks to concentrate against the Czechoslovaks. This document was necessary, said the Consul-General, because 'it is of the utmost importance that Bolshevism should be compromised in the eyes of Western Socialists'.

Even before this, Marchand records in his book, he had known that a Socialist-Revolutionary rising at Yaroslavl on July 6th 'was made upon a formal demand by M. Noulens, and on the strength of his positive assurance that Allied troops were about to be landed'. But at this time Marchand was in favour of such intervention, against both the Germans and the Bolsheviks, because he was convinced that the latter were German agents, and Bolshevism for him meant 'the seizing of Russia by Germans'. One of the events which first shook his childlike belief, as Marchand himself calls it, was a document which came to his notice at the end of July. This was a note by Lockhart of the Soviet agreement to Allied landings in the north and the Far East, on condition that (i) Allied military instructors would be supplied to the Red Army in order to enable it to join the fight against German imperialism, and (ii) the Allies recognized the Soviet Government and withdrew support from the Russian counter-revolutionaries (Mr Lockhart, in the book quoted earlier, confirms this offer). In the margin of this document Noulens had written in blue pencil the following note: 'I can see quite well that this offers advantages for the Bolsheviks, but I cannot for the life of me see how the Allies would gain anything'. This remark opened Marchand's eyes to 'new and unsuspected horizons'.

Before leaving these illustrations of the workings of Allied diplomacy in 1918, it is worth pointing out that to imagine this to be a case of 'drifting', or of the right hand not knowing what the left was doing, would be seriously to underestimate the capacities of Allied, and particularly of British statesmanship. What actually happened was that Mr Balfour, the Foreign Secretary, had on December 21st, 1917, submitted to the British Cabinet a memorandum on British policy towards Russia. In this the two main proposals were, first, that 'we should represent to the Bolsheviks that we have no desire to take part in any way in the internal politics of Russia, and that any idea that we favour a counterrevolution is a profound mistake. Such a policy might be attractive to the autocratic governments of Germany and Austria, but not to the Western democracies or America': and, secondly, that while pressing these views on the Bolsheviks, the Allies were to supply money 'to reorganize the Ukraine, to pay the Cossacks and the Caucasian forces, and to subsidize the Persians ... Besides finance, it is important to have agents and officers to advise and support the Provincial Governments and their armies. It is essential that this should be done as quietly as possible, so as to avoid the imputation – as far as we can – that we are preparing to make war on the Bolsheviks.'

This characteristic document was accepted by the British Government, and two days later by the French Government. Those desiring further information about these discussions will find them fully summarized in Mr K. Zilliacus' book *The Mirror of the Past* (1944). During the first twelve months' existence of the Soviet Republic the Russian people had received a new and probably unforgettable insight into the Western mind and the ways of Western diplomacy – or perhaps of its unofficial agents.

### 3. THE WHITE REGIMES

What was the character of the new Governments which were installed wherever foreign armed forces appeared? There were of course minor differences of organization, due to different conditions. But in the main the regime in all the 'White' territories was the same. Everywhere the Soviets and the trade unions were dissolved. Everywhere known or suspected members of the Bolshevik Party, active trade unionists, members of factory committees, were shot. Everywhere hundreds of suspects were thrown into jail. Wherever there was any substantial Jewish community, pogroms occurred at some



time or another. Everywhere the land and the factories were restored to their former owners, or in default of these taken from the peasants, municipalities and State bodies and leased to private persons. Everywhere the actual machinery of rule was in the hands of Tsarist officers, Tsarist police and, wherever possible, Tsarist officials.

Thus the mass of the population received a practical education in political science during the first few months after large-scale intervention began. They learned, first, that in real life there was no half-way house between military dictatorship of the landlords and capitalists and the power of the Soviets; and secondly, that in this respect, territories occupied by the Allies were in no way distinguishable from those occupied by the Germans. The fact that several of the White regimes began in a Socialist guise – as at Samara, Omsk and Archangel – but were rapidly transformed by the generals on whom they relied into plain military dictatorship, with the ill-concealed approval of the Allies, only served to underline these lessons.

Nor could anything different have been expected. Numerous accounts, published by leading Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary politicians (often before the end of the civil war) provide ample evidence for this conclusion. Thus, at Samara, the Socialist-Revolutionary Klimushkin wrote as early as September, 1918, both the rank and file of the army and the workmen were ‘hopeless’ from their point of view, and the fugitive members of the Constituent Assembly had to open their sessions ‘under the protection, unfortunately, not of our own bayonets but of the bayonets of the Czechoslovaks’. Moreover, lack of funds forced them to turn immediately to the owners of capital: the Samara Society of Manufacturers, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Stock Exchange Committee, the Commercial and Industrial Society and the banks formed a ‘Financial Board’ for the management of the affairs of the new Government. It was hardly surprising that, within two days of the formation of the Samara Government, all rights of the factory-owners were restored. Within the next month, the return of 50 per cent of the harvest taken from estates of the former land-owners was ordered: in fact, as the Cossacks approached the city from the Urals, the peasants everywhere were obliged to give up the whole of the harvest.

At Archangel, on the first day of the existence of the ‘Supreme Administration of the Northern Region’ (i.e. the day of the British

landing, August 2nd) a state of war was proclaimed and political demonstrations prohibited, the restoration of the 'legitimate rights of former owners' was decreed, and the government secured on these terms a loan of one-and-a-half million roubles from the 'Commercial and Industrial Union'. Four days later the Socialist- Revolutionary Likhach, a well-known anti-Bolshevik who had become head of the department of labour in the Administration, was reporting arbitrary arrests of workers by the army, eviction of trade unions from their offices, dismissal from the factories of members of factory committees, etc.

Perhaps one of the most vivid pieces of evidence was that provided in 1919 by leaders of the Czechoslovak forces themselves, as a result of their experiences in Siberia. The document, dated 'Irkutsk, November 13th, 1919', was drawn up by B. Pavlu, one of the main organizers of the Czechoslovak rising in 1918, and Dr. Girska, later Czechoslovak Foreign Minister for a short period. The document was published in the official journal of the Czechoslovaks in Siberia, *Cesko-Slovenski Dennik*. Pleading for the right of the Czechoslovak forces to return to their own country, it said: 'Our army is forced, against its convictions, to support and maintain that situation of arbitrary rule and lawlessness which reigns here. Under the defence of Czechoslovak bayonets the local Russian military organizations are permitting themselves actions at which the whole civilized world will be horrified. The burning of villages, the killing of peaceful Russian citizens in hundreds at a time, the shooting without trial of democratically-inclined people on the mere suspicion of political disloyalty, are an everyday occurrence ... Maintaining our absolute neutrality, we become against our will accomplices in these atrocities.'

The story of the various White regimes has been told in a number of works by anti-Bolshevik eye-witnesses. In every case the utter dependence of the counter-revolutionary governments on foreign military commanders stands out beyond question. Perhaps the most pitiable and ludicrous documents on the subject are those which were exchanged in September, 1919, between the Georgian Menshevik Government and the British military command. A memorandum from Gegechkori, the Georgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, to General Wardrop declared: 'The Government of Georgia realizes that it must be supported by some strong State, and this realization has dictated for us a definite orientation towards England. Of course we know that such help on the part of the United Kingdom must be

compensated by us in one way or another. Unfortunately, so far as we have been unable to get a reply to this question, so essential for us ... I sum up all I have said: in the situation which has been created, Georgia cannot alone, without support, go through the testing crucible. She asks for help from England, and wants to know what England will need in exchange'. But the British Command, then as on previous occasions, did not vouchsafe the information asked for.

In other correspondence, the Georgian Government offered the British Government Batum as a military base and coaling station on the Black Sea. Unfortunately for the Georgian Mensheviks, who needed an agreement in order to raise their prestige at home, the British forces had already taken Batum from the Turks, and evidently did not feel they stood in need of any grant from the Mensheviks. Moreover, Gegechkori complained, the British had instructed Russian officials, who had previously collaborated with the Turks when the latter were in occupation of the Batum region, to organize a Government: with the result that this region, inhabited by Georgian and other Transcaucasian peoples, found itself under the arbitrary rule of a 'Provisional Commission of Nine' composed entirely of Russian reactionaries. The Georgian Mensheviks, who wanted to maintain their claim to be the democratic Socialist alternative to the Bolsheviks, pleaded for the right to organize democratic elections for the management of the region. But the British Governor-General flatly refused to allow them.

In varying ways, much the same story could be told by the non-Russian peoples in other parts of the former Russian Empire – Baku, Estonia and Central Asia. This played an important part in deciding the outcome of the armed struggle of 1918-20.\*

#### 4. THE GRAIN CRUSADE

By May 1918, as we have seen, the kulak elements in the countryside were on the offensive once more, virtually attempting to starve out the towns as a means of forcing the Soviet Government to return to

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\* In November and December, 1918, the Central Committees of the Right Socialist Revolutionary and Menshevik Parties declared they were renouncing the armed struggle against the Soviet Government, in January, 1919, they were allowed to start newspapers of their own in Moscow.

free trade in foodstuffs and raw materials. Some of the difficulties which the Soviet Government had to encounter, through sheer lack of trained and experienced personnel, have already been mentioned. The demobilization of the old Russian Army, which was still in progress while the new army was coming into being, made transport particularly difficult, even where the grain was secured. In May, there were periods in both Petrograd and Moscow when only 2 oz. of bread could be issued to the workers every other day. When it became clear that persuasion was not enough, and that the kulak blockade was fitting in too well with the unfolding scheme of foreign intervention and insurrection, the Soviet Government turned to sterner measures.

On May 24th Lenin published a letter to the Petrograd workers, headed 'On the Famine'. There was hunger in Russia, Lenin wrote, not because there was no grain, 'but because the bourgeoisie and all the rich are giving the last and decisive battle to the rule of the working people, the workmen's State, the Soviet Power, over the most important and acute question of all, the question of bread'. He called on the Petrograd workers to organize a mass crusade, directed against grain speculators, kulaks, bribe-takers, and to disorganizers of economic life. It was essential for them to go into the countryside themselves to organize the poor and landless peasantry and take the grain from the kulaks. The fight for bread at that moment was the fight for Socialism. It was then that food detachments began to be set up. Their work of requisitioning, and where necessary confiscation, was to be done at the expense of the kulaks; but in practice in many places – particularly in the grain-producing areas, where even the middle peasantry had stores far exceeding those to which people from the unfertile central provinces were accustomed – some of the middle peasants also suffered by indiscriminate requisitioning. This led in places to considerable friction, and to temporary support for the kulaks; but the food detachments saved the situation, by providing the minimum of foodstuffs which the urban population needed.

In the course of their work they were reinforced by special organizations in the villages themselves – the 'Committees of Village Poor', set up by a decree of June 11th, 1918. In addition to the poor peasantry, the middle peasants were encouraged to join the Committees, if they hired labour only for the needs of their own household (not to produce for the market). Kulaks who owned surplus produce, or commercial or industrial undertakings in the countryside, or who

hired labour for profit, were excluded. Their formation was all the more important for the purposes of the Soviet Government because in many parts of the country, particularly those well off in produce, the Soviets had been formed merely by excluding the landowners from the old Zemstvos and renaming them 'Soviets', thus leaving them in the hands of the richest peasantry. Elsewhere they had been elected in the autumn of 1917, before the sharp divisions in the countryside showed themselves over the division of the land, and before the split had taken place in the ranks of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, to whom many of the well-to-do in the countryside had given their nominal allegiance. Thus the Committees of Village Poor were heralds of a sharper class struggle among the peasantry.

In addition to their work with the food detachments, they were given wide powers of combating sabotage, speculation and counter-revolution. They redistributed equipment and cattle at the expense of the kulak, they took charge of forests in order to ensure fuel supply to the towns, they became collectors of taxes and recruiters for the Red Army, and- through co-operative societies | they organized the distribution of manufactured goods supplied by the People's Commissariat for Food, in exchange for produce. The bitter struggle with the kulaks which this work of the Committees involved led to the alienation from the latter of another 50 million hectares (125 million acres) of land in favour of the middle and poor peasantry – in addition to the 150 million hectares which the peasants had already taken from the landowners

at the beginning of the year. An important part was played by the town workers in this struggle. Thus, in the prosperous province of Tambov, among the chairmen of the rural district Committees of Village Poor, nearly 25 per cent were workers who had left the countryside before 1914, and over 50 per cent were workers or soldiers who had left the villages during the war.

By the end of the year the work of thousands of these Committees had in the main been completed. They had brought into being a vast organized force of poor peasantry in the countryside to aid the industrial workers. They had assured the minimum food supply necessary to the towns and the Red Army. They had prevented the kulaks taking full advantage of the division of the big estates in their own class interests (as had been done by the substantial peasantry in the English and French revolutions), and had thoroughly weakened

the kulak element in the countryside, and its hold over the peasantry. This was demonstrated most clearly when new elections to the rural Soviets were held in December, 1918 and January, 1919. It became possible to abolish the Committees of Village Poor, because the new Soviets for the first time represented only the working peasantry, excluding the profit-making elements as they had already been excluded in the towns more than a year before. Lenin emphasized this point when he declared that the work of the Committees of Village Poor had been 'the real October Revolution' in the countryside.

## 5. THE STRUGGLE WITH COUNTER-REVOLUTION

The crusade for grain had been essentially a measure of defence. It will be convenient to consider in chronological order, rather than under separate headings, the parallel measures taken in the towns so that the reader can form a picture of the multitude of perils with which the Soviet power was faced at one and the same time- bearing in mind particularly the development of the Czechoslovak revolt from May 25th onwards.

On May 29th and 30th the 'Union for the Defence of the Motherland and Liberty' was discovered, and a large number of arrests were made. On June 9th a decree of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets reintroduced compulsory military service for certain age-groups in the main working-class centres, and also – with a view to large-scale labour service – in the areas most threatened with counter-revolution. The first such call-up was made two days later. On June 14th the Central Executive Committee of Soviets expelled the Menshevik and Right Socialist-Revolutionary deputies, on account of their complicity in the activity of the counter-revolutionary organizations and their support of the Czechoslovak rising.

On June 20th one of the most popular leaders of the Petrograd industrial workers, Volodarsky, was assassinated by a Socialist-Revolutionary, and a counter-revolutionary outbreak was suppressed by the armed workers at Yekaterinburg, in the Urals, where Nicholas Romanov, the former Tsar, was interned with his family. On June 29th a counter-revolutionary conspiracy, in which several former Grand Dukes (members of the Imperial family) were involved, was discovered at the textile centre of Kostroma, south-east of Moscow. On June 28th the Council of People's Commissars adopted a decree nationalizing the largest enterprises in the mining, metallurgical, textile, railway, tobacco and other industries.

This decree was of particular importance. Its aim was to deprive the Germans of the possibility of presenting a demand for control of Russian industry, which it became known they were preparing. They had secretly been buying up the title-deeds and shares of Russian factories from their former owners, with a view to presenting a demand for their transfer at the beginning of July. The effect of the decree was not merely to thwart this desire, but to deprive the enemy in the civil war now opening – the Russian bourgeoisie – of potential footholds and chances of sabotage. The Soviet Government could not pretend to itself or its people that the departments of the Supreme Economic Council had loyal enough staffs, or that the workers' control committees in the factories had gained enough experience, to make this nationalization immediately effective. It was clear that there was temporarily much risk of inefficiency and disorganization. But the alternative was far more perilous; and the bold decision to nationalize the decisive sections of industry, and to call for the workers and trade unions to redouble their efforts to make industry work, fully justified itself. By the end of August, 1918, there were 1,500 nationalized factories – over 50 per cent of all the largest enterprises in industry – and the first economic machinery of a Socialist industry was coming into being. By the end of the year, at the Sixth AU- Russian Congress of Soviets on November 6th, 1918, Lenin was able to declare:

'It was necessary that the workers themselves should set about the great task of building the industry of a great country, without the exploiters and against the exploiters ... We consider it most important and valuable that the workers themselves should have set about managing industry: that from workmen's control, which was bound to remain chaotic, broken up, makeshift, incomplete in all the main branches of industry, we have advanced to workers' management of industry on a national scale.'

On July 5th the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets opened in Moscow. Eight hundred and sixty-eight of the delegates were Bolsheviks, 470 were Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, and in addition there were 87 delegates representing a number of smaller groups. The Socialist-Revolutionaries immediately gave battle to the Bolsheviks on the question of the formation of the Committees of Village Poor and the dictatorial power exercised by the People's Commissariat for Food. Both these measures were denounced as infringements of the liberty of the peasantry: to which the Bolsheviks replied that behind

this phrase was defence of the only section of the peasantry which stood to suffer from the measures taken, namely, the village exploiters. At the same time the Socialist-Revolutionaries violently denounced the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and appealed for a revolutionary partisan war in support of the immense guerrilla campaign already sweeping through the Ukraine (actually with the help of the Soviet Government, although of course it was not politic for the latter to say so). The Congress, however, reaffirmed the measures taken by the Soviet Government to protect the food supply.

It also confirmed the measures taken to build up the Red Army on a centralized and disciplined basis of universal military service, calling up officers of the old army for use as military specialists under the supervision of politically reliable persons (as had been the practice in the armies of the French Revolution). The bourgeoisie were to be called up for labour service. The Congress also adopted the first Soviet Constitution (July 10th).

But the most dramatic event of the Congress was that, on its second day, a Left Socialist-Revolutionary assassinated the German Ambassador at his home, by instructions of his party, in the hope that this would bring about a rupture of relations with Germany. On the same day (July 6th) a Socialist-Revolutionary and White rebellion, financed by the French Consul-General, broke out at Yaroslavl, and that evening the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries attempted an insurrection in Moscow. They were able to take advantage of the fact that, after their representatives had resigned from the Soviet Government, they had stayed in the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission. A Left Socialist-Revolutionary, Alexandrovich, was deputy to the chairman, the old Bolshevik Dzerzhinsky, and the small armed detachment which was at that time the sole military force of the Commission was composed in the main of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, or of workers under their influence. The outbreak was quelled in a few hours, and twelve ringleaders were shot. The Congress expelled from the Soviets those Left Socialist-Revolutionaries who 'accept solidarity with the attempt to draw Russia into war by means of the murder of Mirbach and rebellion against the Soviet power/ The effect of this resolution was to bring about a far-reaching split in the ranks of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, many of their rank and file repudiating their leaders and remaining in the Soviets.



The Yaroslavl revolt was suppressed, after a destructive bombardment of the town, by July 21st. By this time similar revolts, lasting a few hours, had been suppressed at Murom, Rostov, Rybinsk and Nizhni-Novgorod. Characteristic of the desperate situation was that the Commander-in-Chief himself, Muravyov, an officer of the old army who had been appointed to this post shortly before owing to his professions of loyalty, attempted to desert to the Czechoslovaks at Simbirsk, and – on his troops refusing to follow him – shot himself.

On July 15th the German Government presented a demand for compensation for the murder of its Ambassador, and also that a battalion of the German Army should be allowed to come to Moscow to guard the Embassy. The Council of People's Commissars and the Central Executive Committee of Soviets unanimously rejected this request, running the risk that, at this crucial moment when counter-revolution was on the offensive from so many sides, the Germans (already infuriated by events in the Ukraine) might be tempted to throw their sword into the balance. The Soviet leaders prepared for evacuation to the Urals. But the German threat did not mature, owing to the difficulties the Germans were already experiencing elsewhere.

It was in these circumstances that, on July 16th, Nicholas Romanov and all his family were shot by order of the Urals Regional Soviet at Yekaterinburg, at a time when the Czechoslovaks and Whites were only three days' march away (in fact, owing to a last-minute rally of the Soviet forces, the city was not occupied until August 1st).

This action was denounced as an atrocity by the White leaders and by their numerous supporters abroad, as was natural. The fact that the ex-Tsar and his wife had been executed without trial, and still more that their four daughters and 13-year-old son were also shot, was made the occasion, then and for many years subsequently, of denunciation of the Soviet leaders as blood-thirsty monsters. On the other hand, in Russia, apart from a fairly narrow circle of old professional officers of the Imperial Army and Navy, the event caused hardly any discussion, much less aroused any feeling on either side among the mass of the people. In order to understand this sharp contrast, the following hard facts must be borne in mind.

It had long been known, and documents had begun to be published from February, 1917, onwards proving it, that Nicholas II and his wife had played a personal and directing part in innumerable bloody suppressions of peasant outbreaks, strikes and political dis-

turbances from the very beginning of their reign. The marginal comments of Nicholas II on Ministerial reports, demonstrating this to the full, had already begun to be widely published. In particular, the role played by the Tsar on Bloody Sunday (January 22nd, 1905), when hundreds of peaceful demonstrators, men, women and children, bearing religious ikons and images, were shot down in the streets of St. Petersburg, was very well appreciated. The Tsar had as we have seen openly patronised, at the time of the counter-revolution of 1906-7 and afterwards, the anti-Semitic pogrom organization known as the 'Union of Russian People', or in common speech the 'Black Hundreds'. In short, for the great mass of the workmen and peasantry of Russia the Tsar was merely the largest and most powerful of the landowning class, against whom they had been in revolt on innumerable occasions. His execution was no more out-of-the-way than the killing of landlords in any peasant outbreak, such as had frequently occurred during the previous century. As for the shooting of the Imperial family, it must be remembered that there were tens of thousands of Russian peasant and worker parents who had seen their children shot, or sabred by Cossacks, or die by slow starvation, under the regime for which the Tsar stood. It would be a mistake to suppose that the vast mass of the Russian people regarded the Tsar's son and daughters as in any way more sacred than their own.

The original intention of the Soviet Government had been to put the Tsar and his wife on trial in Moscow, making the occasion an historic exposure of the old regime; and of this the leaders of the Urals Soviets were aware. But they felt they could not take the responsibility of allowing any member of the Imperial family to fall alive into the hands of the counter-revolutionary forces, for whom they would become a banner, as it were. For the same reason that they shot Nicholas II and his family, they also shot a very large number of Grand Dukes and Duchesses who had been concentrated at Alapayevsk, about a hundred miles away.

## 6. WHITE TERROR AND RED TERROR

On July 29th, when preparations for the Anglo-American landing at Archangel were obviously far advanced, the Central Executive Committee of Soviets issued a proclamation that the Socialist Fatherland was in danger. Within a week of this announcement, the British had occupied Onega and Archangel, the Baku Soviet by a

small majority had reversed the policy of its Bolshevik leadership and, fearing Turkish occupation, had voted to invite a British occupation (British agents had been busy among the Tartar nationalities and Mensheviks beforehand), the Czechoslovaks occupied Yekaterinburg, White Cossacks made a violent attack on Soviet forces in Turkestan, and at Kiev a partisan threw a bomb at the German Commander-in-Chief in the Ukraine, General Eichorn, who died a few days later of his wounds.

On August 4th, for the first time since the November revolution, all the capitalist papers were closed down for the period of the civil war, on the ground of their open support of the Czechoslovaks and foreign invasion. On the 22nd a system of class rationing was introduced: civilians were divided into four groups, of which workers in war industry came first and the property-owning classes last. By this time the first victories were being won with the newly-formed Red Army (now numbering over half-a-million) against the Czechoslovaks. But the peril threatening the Soviet power was demonstrated in all its violence when, on August 29th, a well-known Bolshevik, Uritsky, was shot at Petrograd, and on the following day, when a Left Socialist-Revolutionary terrorist, Dora Kaplan, penetrated into the courtyard of a big Moscow factory where Lenin had addressed a mass meeting of the workers and shot him, wounding him seriously.

The news of the attempt on Lenin's life produced an outburst of fury among the working class and poorer peasantry all over Russia, the memory of which reverberated for many years. Without any instructions from the centre, meetings in town and country began to demand reprisals against the bourgeoisie. In some places the threat was carried into effect, prominent counter-revolutionaries being shot by orders of the provincial Extraordinary Commissions.

Then, on September 4th, an official statement was published containing the charges about Mr Lockhart's activities. On the day that Mr Lockhart had been arrested (September 1st) a number of prominent British Whites had been traced making their way to the British Embassy at Petrograd. The building was surrounded, and an entrance demanded. When this was refused, the Soviet troops broke into the building. Captain Cromie, the British naval attaché, thereupon opened fire with a revolver, killing two men, and in the return fire was shot dead himself. A search was now made of the building,

and the Whites were captured in full conference, together with Allied agents.

This action, like the arrest of Mr Lockhart, was denounced as a breach of international law, as of course technically it was. A deputation of Allied and German diplomats protested to the Soviet Government. It is open to question, however, whether international law had ever provided for an Embassy not only refusing to maintain even *de facto* relations with the Government of the territory on which it continued to claim the right to exist, and to move about freely at its own discretion (from Petrograd to Vologda, and from Vologda to Archangel), but also (i) maintaining its activity after the armed forces of its Government had invaded the country to which it had been accredited and (ii) giving help, information and refuge to secret organizations planning sabotage and insurrection against the Government of the territory on which the Embassy was situated. As for Captain Cromie himself, Mr Lockhart does not conceal that the Lett who brought the Soviet colonel to him was an agent of the naval attaché, and quotes a letter to him from the latter in which Captain Cromie had said that he was making preparations to leave, but hoped before he went to 'bang the dore' in no uncertain fashion. To mention international law in such circumstances might have seemed somewhat far-fetched.

At all events, on September 4th searches were carried out in the bourgeois quarters of Moscow, and the People's Commissariat for the Interior published an order to take hostages from among the bourgeoisie against any further attempts on the lives of Soviet leaders. However, the mass agitation and local action against the bourgeoisie continued, and on September 10th the Council of People's Commissars proclaimed that Red terror would answer the White terror. All over the country Tsarist Ministers, high police officials, prominent industrialists and landowners were executed under direction of the All-Russian or the provincial Extraordinary Commissions. Most were shot at Leningrad – some 500: in all, throughout the country, about 6,000 were shot.

Until this time, only speculators and bandits had been shot by the Extraordinary Commissions; but the Red terror of September, 1918, marked the beginning of a change to sterner tactics. Not only was foreign invasion closing in a fiery circle around the shrinking borders of the Soviet Republic, raising White armies in its wake, but the dispossessed landowners and manufacturers, with their adherents

from the middle class, were scattered in all the cities, and many of the country districts, within the Soviet Republic itself. In the autumn of 1918 there were 38,000 officers, commissioned into the Tsarist army and navy before 1916, living in Moscow alone. The mass of the working class which had carried out the revolution of November, 1917, almost bloodlessly, and had behaved with remarkable magnanimity to its defeated enemy, was desperately aware of the revival of counter-revolutionary hopes among the enemies living in its midst.

Yet the fact is that the terrifying ‘statistics’ of countless thousands shot by the Extraordinary Commission during the civil war, which were circulated by the White emigrants and eagerly taken up in the press of the countries which were organizing counterrevolution on Russian territory, have no basis in reality. One of the favourite stories, recurring again and again, was that the Cheka had shot ‘6,675 professors, 355,250 intellectuals, 260,000 soldiers, 193,350 workers, 815,000 peasants and 28 arch-priests’. Sometimes, for greater effect, it was asserted that these figures were taken from Soviet publications. The truth is that no such figures, or anything remotely resembling them, were ever published in Soviet works. The total figures of executions, published in 1921, were as follows. In the first half of 1918 they were 22, in the second half some 6,300, and for the three years 1918-20 (for all Russia) 12,733. When it is remembered that in Rostov alone about 25,000 workers were shot by the Whites upon occupying the city, not to speak of many other towns, the Red terror will fall into rather more just perspective.

The remarkable thing, indeed, is that, wherever even a prominent adherent of the old regime had made a formal declaration of his opposition to intervention and the White rebellions, he was not only left in peace but given responsible work. Thus, Palchinsky, who had been organizer of the defence of the Winter Palace for the Provisional Government against the armed workers on November 7th, 1917, was not only safe and sound in March, 1920, but was appointed that month a member of the State Electrification Commission – the body which prepared the way for State planning. Again, General Brussilov, who had been the Tsar’s Commander-in-Chief in 1916, and was unquestionably a loyal monarchist, was nevertheless able, in the spring of 1920, to bring together a number of other high officers of the former Imperial army to draw up a patriotic manifesto, on the occasion of the Polish attack on the Soviet Republic.

## 7. SOCIALIST LEGISLATION

The military and repressive measures now being taken with ever-increasing resolution and ruthlessness must be seen in their combination with the laws of the same period intended to give the workers practical proof that power in their hands could build a new society. In Lenin's speech at the Sixth Congress of Soviets which has already been quoted, he said: 'Socialism can come into existence and establish itself only when the working class has learned to govern, when the authority of the mass of the workers has been established. Without that, Socialism is only an aspiration'. He was referring at the moment to the system of workmen's control in industry: but his words applied equally well to the general development of the Soviet system of government in the second half of 1918.

The most important piece of legislation was of course the Soviet Constitution itself, adopted at the Fifth Congress of Soviets.

The Constitution embodied the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People which had been adopted in January. In keeping with the character of the time, the Constitution declared its aim to be to guarantee the dictatorship of the proletariat for the purposes of 'suppressing the bourgeoisie, abolishing the exploitation of man by man, and establishing Socialism'.

It granted the franchise (at 18) only to workers by hand and brain, to those peasants who did not exploit others for gain, and to their dependants. In this respect its franchise provisions reproduced those under which the Soviets had been elected from early in 1917, with the important change that the kulaks were excluded from the vote. With them were excluded all others employing hired labour for profit, or living on income not earned by productive labour, as well as former members of the gendarmerie and Tsarist police, monks and priests, and members of the former Imperial dynasty. The separation of Church and State, the prohibition of religious instruction in school and freedom of religious and anti-religious propaganda were now given constitutional sanction.

Full political and economic power, except in so far as it was specifically delegated to higher authority, was put in the hands of the local Soviets, elected in the manner described. Higher authority was vested in rural district (volost), county (uyezd), provincial (gubernia) and All-Russian Congresses of Soviets, meeting at statutory intervals, and electing executive committees (in the case of the

All-Russian Congress, a Central Executive Committee of Soviets) to carry on public business in the intervals.

The All-Russian Congress was composed of representatives of town Soviets, at the rate of one deputy for every 25,000 *electors*, and of provincial Congresses of Soviets at the rate of one deputy per 125,000 *inhabitants*. A similar proportion was maintained (with smaller numbers represented by each deputy) in the provincial and county Congresses, where representatives of town and country sat together.

In fact, the difference in the method of representation between town and country had been copied from the regulations for electing congresses of Soviets adopted even before the November Revolution. Their effect was to give the workers proportionately higher representation than the peasants: since the average town family was smaller than in the country, and 25,000 *electors* (i.e. persons not exploiting hired labour) would normally represent a total *population* of fifty or sixty thousand – as against the 125,000 represented by each deputy from the countryside. But this disproportion (not unknown in countries with very different constitutions and a very different system of society) was maintained after the November Revolution frankly in order to give the better-organized and more Socialist working class the means of giving effective leadership to the less advanced and less well organized peasantry. At this time, the formation of the Committees of Village Poor was only just beginning.

Article 78 of the Constitution provided that electors had the right at any time to recall their deputies to the Soviets, and to proceed to new elections.

Remoulding and extending the Declarations of Rights included in the revolutionary constitutions of other countries, the Soviet Constitution in each case indicated the guarantees which made these rights effective: for example, the transfer of printing-presses and materials to the working class and the peasantry, in order to ensure effective liberty of opinion. The duty of all citizens to work, on the principle that 'he that does not work, neither shall he eat', was included in the preamble.

General direction of the affairs of the Republic was vested in the Council of People's Commissars, responsible to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, and in the interim to the Central Executive Committee as before.

The arms of the Republic were defined as the now famous 'sickle and hammer, gold upon a red field and in the rays of the sun, the handles crossed and turned downwards, the whole surrounded by a wreath of ears of corn'. The appeal of the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 became the motto of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic – 'Workers of all lands, unite!'

The principles of the Constitution began rapidly to find their application in a number of important decrees. Only a few examples can be given here, drawn from various fields. On July 11th were published regulations for the first working colony for juvenile offenders, creating as normal conditions of labour for them as possible, with the object of returning them to ordinary life as useful citizens of a Socialist community. Out of the practice of such working colonies developed remarkably successful work, recognized in after years by social and penal reformers of many different schools of thought, in reclaiming the common criminal, and later on of the counter-revolutionary criminal as well.

On August 18th regulations for the People's Commissariat of State Control were published, ensuring that, in the checking of public expenditure and supervision of the working of public institutions, delegates of the working class and the peasantry would be used – thus transforming the essential work of public auditing from a purely bureaucratic into a popular concern. Although the work of this Commissariat did not develop to the full until after the civil war, its experience created the first cadres of men and women skilled in such work.

On August 24th a decree abolished private property in real estate in the towns: which meant that the municipal authorities became the owners of housing space. This made it possible effectively to ration housing, and deprived an important section of the urban bourgeoisie of the opportunity of profiteering – which in the circumstances of the civil war was equivalent to counterrevolution.

On August 30th – the very day of the attempted murder of Lenin – a decree laying down the rights and duties of church and religious associations was published. While it deprived them of the right to hold real property, in the sense of land or other sources of profit, it enabled them to maintain their clergy at their own expense, and placed at their disposal the buildings, fittings and articles of worship associated with their particular religion, whatever it might be,



without any charge and on condition of their maintenance in the same state of repair as when the State transferred them.

On September 16th the Central Executive Committee of Soviets adopted a decree establishing the Order of the Red Banner, as the first Soviet decoration for valour or distinguished leadership in battle. On the same day the People's Commissariat for Labour issued, for the first time in Russian history, compulsory regulations for an unbroken weekly rest period of not less than forty- two hours.

On September 30th the Central Executive Committee adopted a decree for the organization of the unitary school, based on productive labour. Both first-grade and second-grade (i.e. elementary and secondary) education were to be free and compulsory.

Important decrees in October were those introducing 'labour booklets' for persons not belonging to the working classes of society, which enabled their labour to be more effectively controlled in conditions of a besieged fortress (October 5th); the Civil, Marriage and Family Code, which gave women equal status in private life with men, and protected the rights of children (October 22nd); and an important decision on October 30th, imposing an Extraordinary Tax of 10 milliard roubles on the town bourgeoisie and village kulaks. This measure served to break still further the economic power of the former privileged classes.

## 8. THE CIVIL WAR

At this point we may usefully turn to the military side of the struggle, and trace its successive stages from the first battles with the Czechoslovaks until its victorious conclusion in the late autumn of 1920 (except for an isolated sector of White resistance " and Japanese occupation in the Far East, which continued until 1922).

The first stage of the campaign, until November, 1918, was exceptionally difficult because the Red Army (in spite of the reintroduction of compulsory military service on June 9th) as yet consisted of little more than local volunteer detachments, linked together still very loosely. This explained the victories gained by the Czechoslovaks on the Volga and along the Siberian railway in July and August. Only on September 2nd was a supreme military authority – the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic – set up, and, four days later, a Commander-in-Chief of all the armed forces appointed. Special detachments of armed workers and reliable troops were sent to Svyazhsk, on the Volga, barring the way to Moscow from Kazan,

across the river, where the main Czechoslovak and White forces were concentrated. With remarkable enterprise, three destroyers of the Baltic Fleet were sent through the inland waterways across country to the Volga, and torpedo-boats and small submarines by rail. Concentrating all its forces, the Red Army captured Kazan on September 10th and, organizing itself more and more effectively as it progressed, cleared both banks of the Volga by the middle of October, and advanced towards the foothills of the Urals. By this time the Red Army numbered some forty divisions. During the same period, the key city of Tsaritsyn, far to the south down the Volga, had been successfully defended under Stalin's direction against White forces attacking from the Don, who were supported by officer conspirators in the ranks of the Red Army itself. The importance of Tsaritsyn for the Soviet Republic was great: it was the door to the vast grain supplies of the lower Volga and the Northern Caucasus, to the oil of Baku on the Caspian, and to cotton-growing Central Asia (Turkistan), where an independent Soviet area was holding out. For the Whites it meant a link between the Czechoslovak and Siberian forces and those of the southern Cossacks, secretly supported, as we have seen, by the Germans.

In October a further violent offensive of the Whites against Tsaritsyn was broken by the exceptional efforts of the population, under the leadership of a number of commanders who had come from the ranks of the workmen, and whose names filled the annals of the Red Army for many years afterwards – Voroshilov, Budyonny, Timoshenko, Shchadenko, Kulik and many others.

Further south still, in the Northern Caucasus and the Kuban, a desperate struggle was waged against the forces of General Denikin, who was also armed by the Germans; but the eastern part of the Northern Caucasus was held by Soviet troops. Across the Caucasus, first German and Turkish and then British forces overthrew Soviet power. It was in the course of these struggles that twenty-six Bolshevik leaders of the Baku working class, headed by Shaumyan, were shot by one of the rebel governments – that of Krasnovodsk – which was under the military and political direction of British officers.

When the Sixth All-Russian Congress of Soviets met on November 6th, 1918, it seemed as if a new breathing-space might be opening. The Red Army had shown that it could win victories, and in addition to those already mentioned was pressing hard on the heels of the retreating Germans in the Ukraine. The Germans themselves

were on the eve of collapse. With this situation in mind, the Sixth Congress gave instructions that all political prisoners not charged with direct participation in rebellion, or in parties promoting such rebellion, were to be liberated, and all hostages set free except those essential for the safety of specific prisoners in the hands of the Whites. At the same time the Congress gave instructions to the Council of People's Commissars immediately to make a formal offer of peace negotiations to the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Japan.

But no reply was received to this offer. On the contrary, as the Red Army advanced into the Ukraine, it met with resistance in the Kiev direction from a nationalist government temporarily supported by the Poles, and in the south from French and Greek divisions hastily landed after the collapse of Turkey. In the Baltic provinces, where the workers and poor peasants rose once more to proclaim Soviet Republics as the Germans retreated, a special corps of Germans in Latvia and a Finnish expeditionary force in Estonia co-operated with a British cruiser squadron in rallying local White forces, and finally – by the spring of 1919 – in overthrowing Soviet power once again. It soon became known that these actions were taking place in virtue of a special provision in the armistice terms with Germany signed on November 11th, under which existing German forces were to remain in the Baltic States so long as 'the Allies shall consider this desirable, having regard to the internal condition of those territories'. As early as December 23rd, 1918, a British naval force in the Dvina (Latvia) was used to oblige the German Commissioner in charge of repatriating German soldiers – the Social-Democrat Winnig – to maintain troops and stores on the spot for the purpose of fighting the Bolsheviks; and even earlier a German-controlled newspaper in the Ukraine published an official manifesto of the Allied Command in South Russia (November 16th) announcing co-operation between the Germans, the Allies and the White forces (Price, *My Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution*, pp. 356-7). The subsequent Versailles Treaty contained a provision (article 433) similar to that of the armistice terms. It was not surprising that, encouraged by these demonstrations, the rulers of Poland joined in the attack in the spring of 1919, and overthrew Soviet power in Lithuania and the western regions of Byelorussia as well.

During the new 'triumphal march' of Soviet power westward, in November and December, 1918, the Soviet Government had been

able to detach only very small forces of its own Red Army to help the workmen and peasants of the western territories in their revolt. They had had to rely almost entirely on their own forces. This was because, thanks to exceptional disorganization and sabotage by disaffected officers and lack of political work by Communists, Czech forces on the north-eastern front, supported by White troops under the command of Admiral Kolchak, had inflicted a crushing defeat on the Third Red Army; while British-controlled forces were advancing from Archangel up the Northern Dvina towards the railway terminus of Kotlas and a possible junction with Kolchak. The Third Army lost 20,000 men out of 35,000, with vast quantities of arms and munitions. Perm was occupied (December 24th), and the north-eastern road to Moscow through Vyatka was opened. It was at this desperate moment that the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party appointed Stalin and Dzerzhinsky as a special commission with full powers to discover the causes of the 'Perm catastrophe', as it has since become known in Soviet military history, and to take measures to put matters right. By drastic expulsion of doubtful elements from the staffs, reorganization of commands and regiments, replenishment with a hard core of reliable armed workers from Moscow and elsewhere, and mobilization of all Communists for mass political work both in the army and in all civilian institutions, the Commission restored order and fighting capacity into the Red Army, which was able to hold Vyatka. By doing so it was enabled not only to drive back the Kolchak forces some 50 to 100 miles, but to prevent a dangerous junction between British and Kolchak forces in the north.

The lessons of this experience were embodied in important decisions of the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party in March, 1919, laying down the need for full military discipline in the Red Army and the abandonment of all traces of partisan or guerrilla methods in the regular forces, fully developed political work in the Army and its immediate rear under the direction of a special Political Department of the Revolutionary Military Council, and close control by political commissars of former officers working as experts in Red Army staffs.

The Congress took place when the Red Army was successfully advancing through the Ukraine. By the end of April, 1919, it had cleared almost the whole Black Sea shore (including the Crimea) and was approaching the Donetsk, still held by the Whites. In the last

stages of the occupation of the Ukraine, considerable help had been given to it by a mutiny of the French Navy in the Black Sea, headed by the sailor Andre Marty (April 19th). A mutiny of American troops had occurred in the North in March.

But by now a new combined offensive of the counter-revolutionary forces was in progress. The main drive came from Kolchak, who had now nearly 300,000 men, including not only Czechs but also mobilized Russians, armed and instructed under the direction of Allied military missions. His rear, in Siberia, was protected by Czechs, Japanese and smaller units of the other Allies. Supporting actions were to be taken against Petrograd by the British Navy, by the White Army of General Yudenich concentrated in Estonia, and by the Finns. General Miller, leading a small White force, was to attack from the north, under the direction of the British commander at Archangel, General Ironside.

Kolchak opened his offensive on March 4th, and by the middle of April had advanced from 100 to 200 miles, coming perilously near the Volga from Kazan to Samara, while his Cossack allies advanced to meet him, reaching the bend of the river Ural between Uralsk and Orenburg.

In mid-April the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued the appeal: 'Everything to the eastern front', which it saw as the chief peril. Tens of thousands of Communists and active trade unionists were taken from civil occupations and sent to the front to stiffen and build up new armies, of which the core were textile workers taken from the now idle factories of Central Russia. Under the command of two old Bolsheviks – Frunze as commander and Kuibyshev as a member of his military council – the Red Army took the offensive at the end of April on Kolchak's southern flank, and after a series of violent battles reoccupied Ufa early in June, then reoccupying Perm and Yekaterinburg and finally driving Kolchak over the Urals into Siberia in the course of the following month.

In May also the Russian White forces in Estonia began an advance towards Petrograd, supported by Finnish raiders from the north and by Estonian units; supported also by treachery within the Soviet ranks (one of the main forts of the outer defences of the city, Krasnaya Gorka, revolted). The White forces advanced through the city's outer suburbs. Once again Stalin was sent up by the Central Committee to cleanse the staffs and civilian institutions of suspected traitors, to mobilize Communists and send them into the army, and to

disarm the bourgeois. Mass searches by the workers in the former well-to-do quarters of the city revealed 4,000 concealed rifles and several hundred bombs, and brought to light the existence of a large-scale conspiracy, in which White officers were using the foreign embassies as their headquarters. By a skilful combined attack from sea and land, the rebel fort was subdued and the White forces were driven back to Estonia.

Other operations involved in this first combined attack were an attempted raid on Kronstadt by British naval forces, the bombardment of Odessa by French troops advancing from Denikin's territory (further east along the Black Sea coast) and an attack by Denikin himself into the eastern regions of the Ukraine, where he occupied the big industrial centre of Kharkov on June 25th and Yekaterinoslav, in the Donetz coalfield, on July 1st. So confident were the Allies at this time of the ultimate success of their enterprise that on June 13th they had recognized Kolchak as 'Supreme Ruler of Russia'. On June 6th General Ironside had told an Archangel paper 'he was sure he could take Kotlas'.

Nevertheless, in the second combined attack on the Soviet Government (in the autumn of 1919) it was Denikin's 'Volunteer Army' which took the lead in the offensive, supported by Poland, by the White forces in Estonia under Yudenich and – to the extent that they could be made to march – by the bourgeois Governments in the Baltic States, whose position was a characteristic example of the difficulties which in the long run proved fatal for the White cause in Russia. Brought into being and maintained entirely by British, German or other external support, without which they could not have maintained themselves in power against the Estonian, Lettish and Lithuanian workmen and poor peasants, the Governments of these countries found that the main support of the Allies, and particularly of Great Britain and France, was committed to the cause of the Russian generals. And the latter's aim was the restoration of a monarchist Russia, 'one and indivisible' – which spelt, in the event of victory, the loss of that limited independence for which the Baltic bourgeois elements were hoping.

Nevertheless, in the first stages fortune seemed to favour Denikin. No White ruler had received such a wealth of Allied support in war material, in instructors and in commercial supplies of every kind. A very considerable portion of the £100,000,000 spent by Great Britain in attempts to overthrow the Soviet Government, from 1918

to 1920, went in Denikin's cause. He was able to set in motion no less than three armies of his own – one moving up the Volga from Tsaritsyn, which had been captured on June 30th: a second up the Don: a third moving along the two railways leading directly to Moscow. Denikin himself, assured of uninterrupted supplies from the Allies through the Black Sea, overrode the advice of his own generals by insisting on the advance towards Moscow by the shortest route. This was politically necessary for him, now that Kolchak was retreating, in order to strengthen his own position in relation to the Allies. His forces and those of his supporters were numerically much stronger than the 1,500,000 infantry and 250,000 cavalry which were at the disposal of the Red Army commanders.

On August 17th Denikin's cavalry corps, commanded by General Mamontov, broke through the Red Army front and penetrated far into the rear, raiding important towns like Tambov and Kozlov, in the heart of the grain-producing areas, massacring workmen and Soviet employees and attempting to raise the richer peasantry in insurrection. Although the raid was arrested with considerable difficulty a week later, it gave very great assistance to Denikin's advance. On August 23rd he took Odessa, and a week later Kiev. On September 21st his infantry forces, advancing from Kharkov, reached Kursk. On October 6th his second column reached Voronezh, on the other north-south railway line leading to Moscow; and a week later it occupied Oryol, some 200 miles from Moscow, and half that distance from the important armaments city of Tula.

Meanwhile, on October 11th, Yudenich had begun a second advance on Petrograd and, in a series of hard-fought battles, had reached the outer suburbs of the city once again by October 21st. His forces were armed with tanks, his line of advance had been worked out by the Chief of Staff of the Soviet forces – a White agent – and it was generally believed in Western Europe that no serious obstacle stood in his way. Moreover, under the influence of a Soviet peace offer on September 11th, the Baltic States had decided at a conference on September 30th to open negotiations with the Soviet Government; but the day after the Yudenich offensive had opened, the Allied navies began a blockade of the Baltic States. This proved effective: the negotiations did not take place, and Finland on October 15th herself proclaimed a blockade of Soviet Russia.

To complete the main outlines of this picture, it should be added that on September 23rd the most important secret conspiracy of the

war had been discovered in Petrograd and Moscow – that of the ‘National Centre’ organized with the help of foreign spies and saboteurs. Leading former business-men, monarchists, officers, Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were involved. There was a special ‘Volunteer Army Staff for the Moscow District’, which had planned with the help of sympathetic officers to seize armoured cars and artillery, cut cables and establish strong points, win over officer training schools, etc., and thus bring about a rising to meet Denikin when he was approaching Moscow. Sixty-eight Whites were executed as the result of the discovery of this conspiracy. Through their contacts with the Anarchists, who were involved in the conspiracy, the Left Socialist- Revolutionaries succeeded two days later in arranging a massive bomb explosion at the Moscow Committee of the Communist Party, where a large conference of district speakers had assembled to hear reports on the conspiracy. Twelve leading Bolsheviks were killed and many wounded.

By this time preparations for the Soviet counter-offensive were far advanced. ‘Everything into the battle with Denikin’ was the slogan from July onwards. Every conceivable mobilization of manpower and resources was made. One of the most potent forms of campaigning was the proclamation of ‘Party weeks’, in which all formal restrictions on acceptance of workers into the ranks of the Communist Party were suspended. Although it was well understood that Communists were being sent to the most dangerous sectors of the front; and that when taken prisoner they were executed without question, usually after frightful tortures (whereas non-Communists stood a chance of safety and even of incorporation into the White armies), nearly 200,000 workers joined the Communist Party in September and October. At Petrograd the mass of the population came out to dig trenches, throw up fortifications and establish strong points in houses. In Moscow preparations were made for the Communist Party to form special defence battalions in the event of the White troops reaching the city, for the creation of underground organizations in the event of its occupation and for the evacuation of important institutions and archives to the Urals.

But the decisive event in all these preparations was the struggle which took place in profound secrecy, behind the scenes, between the supporters of Trotsky in the political leadership of the country and the group headed by Stalin. Trotsky, supported by a number of old officers of the Tsarist army, proposed that the counterblow of the Red



Army should take the form of a classical flank attack, through Tsaritsyn to Novorossiisk, the great port on the Black Sea. This would have led the advancing Red Armies through territory with a high percentage of rich Cossacks and kulaks among the population, with no industrial workers before Novorossiisk was reached, and without the prospect of either saving Moscow or relieving its economic difficulties, short of overwhelming victory, since the railways remained in the hands of Denikin. Against this Stalin put forward the plan of attacking in Denikin's centre – from Tula towards Kharkov, the Donetz Basin and Rostov, at the mouth of the Don. This meant advance through territory inhabited mainly by industrial workers and poor and middle peasants. It meant taking important railway lines in the course of the advance, and at the same time dividing Denikin's army into two. It meant opening up the coal reserves of the Donetz to Moscow. In Stalin's words (writing to Lenin on October 15th), 'fourthly, we get the chance of promoting a quarrel between Denikin and the Cossacks, whose units he will try, in the event of our successful advance, to move over to the west, which the majority of the Cossacks won't accept'. The Soviet Government accepted Stalin's plan, removing Trotsky from control of the southern front, and placing at Stalin's disposal a large cavalry force which had been formed under the leadership of a former cavalry sergeant, Budyonny, who had distinguished himself a year before in the defence of Tsaritsyn.

On October 20th, after three days fighting, the Red Army recaptured Oryol. A few days later Budyonny's cavalry met and crushed Mamontov's corps, and swiftly reoccupied Voronezh, where it was supported by a rising of the railwaymen. On November 17th Kursk was recaptured; and in the course of a general offensive which now began Kharkov, Kiev and Yekaterinoslav were reoccupied in December, and Tsaritsyn and Rostov during the first days of January, 1920. Denikin's army was in complete dissolution.

Meanwhile, simultaneously with the counter-attack at Oryol, the Red Army had gone into action against Yudenich. Between October 22nd and November 4th it drove back his forces to the frontier of Estonia, capturing the greater part of its survivors, who themselves in many cases killed their officers. One of the signs that the White cause in this part of Russia was now regarded as hopeless was that, on December 5th, Estonia resumed peace negotiations with the Soviet Government.

Meanwhile, the Allied northern fronts were also being rapidly liquidated. A determined advance from Murmansk had ended in confusion for the British-controlled White forces on July 20th, when the forcibly-mobilized Russian soldiers revolted, killed their officers (including several British) and went over to the Red Army, which occupied Onega. Under the influence of this disaster and of the outcry it caused in Great Britain, the British Government began evacuating its forces from territory invaded in 1918.

The liquidation of Yudenich and the defeat of Denikin considerably accelerated operations against what remained of Kolchak's army. On October 23rd the Red Army captured Tobolsk, the first large city across the Urals, and on November 4th it took Omsk, the most important railway junction in the same region. Rapidly pursuing the enemy, the Red Army occupied Tomsk, where railwayman and part of Kolchak's own soldiers had risen to meet the Soviet forces, on December 17th. On December 27th Kolchak's train was arrested at Irkutsk, by the Czechoslovaks, who were already tired of the regime they had been defending, as we have seen earlier. On January 8th, 1920, Krasnoyarsk, in Central Siberia, was occupied by the Red Army, and the remainder of Kolchak's three armies surrendered. By this time, Kolchak himself had given up supreme authority to Denikin and military command to a Cossack officer, Semyonov (January 4th). He was captured at Irkutsk, three weeks later, and shot after examination by a revolutionary tribunal on February 7th. By February also the Red Army had burst into Turkestan and restored connexions between Moscow and Soviet Central Asia.

In March, 1920, the Red Army reached Novorossiisk, where 100,000 men, the last fragments of Denikin's army, surrendered. Command of the remaining White troops, which had barricaded themselves in the Crimea, was taken over by General Wrangel. He began rapidly reorganizing his army, using as its core entire battalions of officers who had lost their men in the course of the preceding operations. To these were added troops which had been evacuated during Denikin's retreat, and several Russian units which had been sent to France during the First World War and were now shipped back to the Crimea. Allied tanks, guns and aircraft, together with large quantities of munitions, were also despatched to Wrangel, and a British fleet was stationed in the Black Sea.

In anticipation of Wrangel's advance, however, the third Allied attack was launched on April 25th, 1920, by the Poles. The Polish

Government had taken up an uncertain and vacillating attitude toward Soviet Russia ever since the armistice with Germany, sometimes attacking Soviet territory and sometimes negotiating with the Soviet Government. Supported and encouraged by the Allies, the Polish Government now advanced into Soviet territory without any declaration of war, proclaiming its aims to be the 1772 frontiers and the establishment of a 'Great Poland from sea to sea,' i.e. including the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Lithuania. On May 7th the Poles occupied Kiev, and a telegram of congratulation from King George V was published on May 10th. In a very short time the Poles had occupied a vast territory, covering nearly the whole of what used to be called 'Right Bank Ukraine,' i.e. on the right bank of the Dnieper.

The Red Army counter-attacked with its cavalry forces at the beginning of June, occupying Zhitomir far to the west of Kiev, and completely disorganizing the rear of the Polish forces. The Poles began to retreat, and on June 11th the Red Army recaptured Kiev and began to advance towards Poland's southern territories. At the beginning of July the Red Army attacked on the northern half of the front as well. Whereas at the beginning of the Polish offensive the Red Army had had only 15,000 men on the Ukrainian borders against 50,000 Poles, there were now 100,000 Soviet troops on the northern sectors alone, against 75,000 Poles. Breaking up the Polish front, the Red Army reoccupied Minsk on July 11th and Vilna on July 14th, entering Polish territory on July 23rd. The advance towards Warsaw and Lvov by the two main Soviet armies continued, in spite of threats by the British Government to send the British Fleet into the Baltic, to grant extensive aid both to the Poles and to Wrangel, and to break off trade negotiations with Soviet representatives which were now proceeding in London. On August 13th the southern Red Army was eight miles from Lvov, which it had been planned to capture on the 17th in order to advance into the basic industrial areas of Poland. On the same day the Diplomatic Corps left Warsaw, the outskirts of which Soviet forces reached on the 16th, while the main forces of the Red Army bypassed the Polish capital to the north, hoping to cut the railways along which Allied supplies were moving from the Baltic.

But the northern Soviet armies had moved at breakneck speed, far outrunning their supply columns and even their reinforcements. The front-line troops were in rags, often barefoot and exhausted. The southern units had advanced in better order; but on the 13th received orders from Trotsky not to advance any further towards Lvov and to

march northwards, supposedly for an attack on Warsaw. It is noteworthy that Stalin, in an interview published seven weeks before, had already given public warning against ‘boasting and harmful complacency’, which was ignoring the existence of Polish reserves, support by the Allies, and the detachment of considerable Soviet forces watching Wrangel. Some, he said, were boastfully and harmfully ‘shouting about “the march on Warsaw” or proudly declaring that they are ready for peace only in “Red Soviet Warsaw”,’ which was quite out of keeping either with the policy of the Soviet Government or with the military situation.\* He protested against Trotsky’s order, but on this occasion the protest did not succeed. Lvov was not entered, the forces there turned northwards, and had no opportunity of engaging important Polish forces before they became involved in the general retreat of the Red Army. This had become necessary because a hastily-gathered force at Warsaw was formed into a reserve army with the help of French instructors and munitions, and had taken advantage of the unexpected breathing space when the main Soviet forces were diverted from the city. Striking northwards, they took these forces in the rear and defeated them, while at the same time the relatively thin line east of Warsaw was driven back.

The Soviet forces now had to withdraw along the whole front, reaching a line on which an armistice was signed in September and a ‘preliminary peace’ on October 12th. The line was considerably to the west of a frontier which the Soviet Government had offered Poland in January, 1920; but it was 200 miles and more to the east of the so-called ‘Curzon line’ – the frontier of territory inhabited by Poles, which had been accepted by the Allied Supreme Council on December 8th, 1919. The peace was made definite by the Treaty of Riga on March 18th, 1921. Many millions of Ukrainians and Byelorussians were thus left under Polish rule.

By this time, Wrangel had been defeated, in spite of desperate efforts by the British Government in April and May to secure an armistice for him; and in spite also of considerable naval and military aid – including a letter to Wrangel (June 5th, 1920) from the Commander-in-Chief of the British naval forces in the Black Sea, explaining that ‘His Majesty’s ships are not to take part in any offensive

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\* Interview printed in the Kharkov newspaper *Kommunist*, June 24th, 1920.

operations which you may commence against the Red forces, but they may assist your forces in the event of a Red attack on the Crimea'. In July Wrangel had broken out of the Crimea, advanced into Ukraine towards the Donetsk coalfield, threatened the southern communications of the Red Army advancing against Poland, and attempted landings across the sea of Azov into the Kuban Cossack districts. The Soviet forces succeeded in arresting his advance in August, but not in pushing him back. Only in November did a Red Army offensive drive Wrangel into the Crimea, which was defended by a double line of heavily-fortified barriers at the isthmus of Perekop, five miles across.

On November 7th and 8th, 1920, the Soviet forces stormed the isthmus, however, combining a frontal attack on the sixty-foot- high fortifications with a flank advance through the shallow waters of the neighbouring gulf of Sivash. This enabled them to take the Whites in the rear, at immense cost to themselves. By November 16th the entire Crimean peninsula had been occupied, and the last White troops in the territory of European Russia were evacuated to Constantinople.

This was almost the last act in the civil war: but the foreign invasion which had precipitated the civil war was still not at an end. In the Far East, when the remnants of Kolchak's army were being liquidated, partisans had taken Vladivostok from the Whites on January 31st, 1920, Blagoveshchensk, on the Amur River boundary between Russia and China, on February 5th, and Khabarovsk on February 12th. The Whites fled: but on April 4th the Japanese who still had large forces on Russian territory as far west as Chita, many hundreds of miles inland, took the offensive and seized Vladivostok, where they remained in control until October, 1922. For these two years the Far Eastern Soviet territory not directly occupied by the Japanese was constituted as a nominally independent 'Far Eastern Democratic Republic', in which private capitalism was tolerated and the Bolshevik Party governed the country through a Parliament, in which Bolsheviks and non-Party peasants constituted the majority and Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries the opposition. The purpose of this buffer State was to prevent the possibility of direct conflict with the Japanese in unfavourable conditions. At Vladivostok the Japanese created their own White Government which was engaged in constant struggles with partisans. Finally Japan, under pressure from the United States, began in 1921 to evacuate her forces. The partisans won their first outstanding success in the cap-

ture of Khabarovsk on February 14th, 1922, after several days of desperate fighting in forty degrees of frost. On October 25th, 1922, the army of the F.E.R. entered Vladivostok, and on November 7th the Far Eastern Republic re-entered Soviet Russia.

## 9. SOVIET PEACE PROPOSALS

Throughout the period of the Civil War, the Soviet Government had maintained the attitude towards the capitalist States which we saw them adopting in the first months after the November revolution. So long as foreign invasion continued and foreign support was given to counter-revolutionary forces on Russian territory, the Soviet Government defended itself by every means at its disposal, political as well as military. But it never attempted to sacrifice the chances of peace, however slender, to its hopes of revolutions in other countries.

The progress of the armed struggle from 1918 was, therefore, accompanied by a series of offers of peace negotiations probably without parallel in history.

As early as August 5th, 1918, three days after the Allied landing at Archangel, the first offer had been made through the United States Consul in Moscow. On October 24th, 1918, Chicherin sent a Note to President Wilson through the Norwegian Minister in Moscow, responding to the President's proposal to Germany for international negotiations for a general peace, and asking the Allies on what terms they would be prepared to cease hostilities against the Soviet Government.

On November 3rd, 1918, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs invited all the neutral representatives in Moscow to transmit written proposals to the Entente Powers to open negotiations for the ending of hostilities. Three days later the Sixth All-Russian Extraordinary Congress of Soviets adopted a resolution declaring to the Governments of the U.S.A., Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan that 'with a view to the cessation of bloodshed, the Congress proposes to open negotiations for the conclusion of peace,' and instructed the Central Executive Committee to take immediate steps to carry this out. The decree was transmitted by wireless, and in addition Litvinov – then Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs – was sent to Stockholm with authority to make contacts with the Allied Governments in order to prepare peace negotiations.

Litvinov gave an interview to Arthur Ransome, the correspondent of the *Daily News*, declaring that the Soviet Government

was ready to make financial and economic concessions to the Allies. This was widely discussed in Great Britain, and evidently the protests against invasion of the Soviet Republic aroused some alarm within the British Government. Mr Churchill's message to the British representatives at Archangel and Vladivostok, on November 30th, informing them of British policy in regard to Russia, may be taken as the effective British reply to the offer of the Soviet Congress (*Aftermath*, pp. 165-6): (i) British forces would remain in occupation of Murmansk and Archangel ; (ii) Britain would continue her Siberian expeditionary force; (iii) efforts would be made to persuade the Czechs to remain in Western Siberia; (iv) the Baku-Batum railway would be occupied with five British brigades; (v) all possible war material would be sent to General Denikin at Novorossiisk; (vi) war material would be supplied to the Baltic States.

Naturally, these instructions remained a secret; and on December 23rd, 1918, Litvinov sent a formal Note to the diplomatic representatives of the United States and the Allies at Stockholm, informing them of his full powers to enter into provisional negotiations for a peaceful settlement. He also sent a cable direct to President Wilson, who was then in London, repeating the request for peace, for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Russian territory and for the raising of the economic blockade, together with a request for 'technical advice on how to exploit her natural wealth in the most effective way, for the benefit of all countries badly in need of foodstuffs and raw materials'. This offer of economic collaboration in post-war reconstruction was the first of several of its kind, and should not be overlooked.

On January 12th, 1919, replying to a statement by the chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee about the reasons for the maintenance of American forces in Russia, Chicherin cabled the U.S. Secretary of State recapitulating the steps already taken to offer peace, and asking the U.S. Government to name a place and time for the opening of peace negotiations.

No response came to this offer, but the Entente Powers issued a declaration to the effect that they intended to give up armed intervention in Russia. The Soviet Government immediately (January 17th) issued a statement saying it was 'unable to see that this renunciation has as yet been expressed in action', but asking the five Allied Governments if they were prepared to begin negotiations at an early date.

It was at this stage that the extraordinary incident known as the 'Prinkipo Proposals' took place.

This scheme arose as a result of conversations held at Stockholm with Litvinov by an attaché of the American Embassy in London, Buckler, the result of which the latter telegraphed to Paris. Already, at a session of the Allied 'Council of Ten' on January 16th, Lloyd George had suggested that representatives of the warring governments in Russia should be summoned to Paris 'to give an account of themselves to the Great Powers'. In the light of Buckler's reports, at a further meeting on January 21st, President Wilson supported this proposal, with the amendment that the representatives should be sent, not to Paris but to some place nearer the Black Sea, such as Salonika. The Italian and French representatives openly objected to the proposal to negotiate with the Soviet Government because, in the words of the French Premier Clemenceau, 'we would be raising them to our level by saying that they were worthy of entering into conversation with us'. But Mr Balfour, supporting Mr Lloyd George, explained that he agreed with the terms only because 'he thought the Bolsheviks would refuse, and by their refusal they would put themselves in a very bad position'. Finally it was agreed that a proposal should be sent for a meeting as suggested by President Wilson, at which representatives of the invading Powers would be present, to discuss 'the means of restoring order and peace in Russia'. Participation was to be conditional on a cessation of hostilities. Prinkipo, an island in the Aegean, was appointed as the place of meeting.

In fact, no such direct proposal was sent to the Soviet Government; but on January 23rd the Soviet wireless intercepted a Paris broadcast, addressed to no-one in particular, which referred to the Allies' decision (it should be noted that the White Governments all had official representatives in Paris, who were notified in the ordinary way). The broadcast was not even a text of the announcement, but merely a review of the press, from which it became clear that the absence of any answer from the Soviet Government was already being interpreted as a refusal. Consequently, on February 4th, the Soviet Government sent a Note to the five Allies declaring its readiness for 'immediate negotiations on Prinkipo Island or at any other place, with all the Entente Powers or with individual Powers among them, or with certain Russian political groups, according to the wish of the Entente Powers'. It asked the latter to state immediately where the Soviet representatives should be sent, and the time and route. In



addition, the Note offered to recognize financial obligations to Entente subjects, to guarantee payment of interest on loans by raw materials, to grant Entente subjects concessions in mines, forests and other resources, and to yield territorial concessions as well if the Entente required them: offering, in fact, to recognize the *independence* of the White governments.

But the Whites were informed by the French Foreign Office that, if they were to refuse the proposals, France would continue to support them, and would do its utmost to prevent the other Allies from making peace with the Soviet Government. Naturally, the White governments and their Paris representatives rejected the invitation (February 10th to 12th) – although, characteristically enough, the Estonian and Lettish representatives in Paris accepted.

This situation put the Allies in a difficulty, but they did not dream of exercising pressure on their White protégés. Faced with a report from their own military experts of Soviet successes on nearly every front (February 15th, 1919), the Council of Ten on that day and on February 17th was concerned only with how to withdraw the invitation in such a way as to make it appear that the Soviet Government was responsible for the breakdown. Lloyd George and Wilson refused to accept a proposal by Churchill that the Council should declare that the Bolsheviks had not ‘observed the conditions of an armistice’ (which of course had never been concluded), and that it was forming a special military section to organize war against Bolshevism. But they allowed Mr Churchill to go on organizing that war, *without* any such statement or section.

This becomes clear from the fate of another remarkable enterprise, undertaken by the United States and British Governments the very next day. On February 18th a member of the American delegation in Paris, in charge of their daily intelligence reports – William C. Bullitt – received orders to go to Russia to study political and economic conditions (according to his official powers), and in reality to obtain from the Soviet Government ‘an exact statement of the terms on which they were prepared to stop fighting’. Before leaving, Bullitt received from Lloyd George’s private secretary, Philip Kerr (afterwards Lord Lothian) a precise list of the conditions which the British might accept: Kerr informed him he had discussed the entire matter with Lloyd George and Balfour.

Bullitt left for Russia immediately, and stayed there one week. He received on March 14th a statement signed by Chicherin and

Litvinov, and supported by a conversation he had had with Lenin, which in fact was an enlargement of the terms already offered by the Soviet Government on February 4th, together with explicit acceptance of an armistice for the period of negotiations. The proposal held good until April 10th.

Upon his return, all the American Commissioners in Paris, with the exception of the President, agreed with Bullitt that 'it was highly desirable to attempt to bring about peace on that basis'. The next day, Bullitt had breakfast with Lloyd George and General Smuts, who both agreed that the proposals were 'of the utmost importance'. But nothing more was done with the proposals, which were allowed to lapse; although a futile attempt began to make relief to the victims of famine in Russia, which Dr Nansen had proposed, dependent upon cessation of hostilities – a scheme of which Bullitt himself said to a Senate investigation commission that 'the Soviet Government could not possibly conceive it as a genuine peace proposition'.

In reality, the proposal was not proceeded with because of Kolchak's spring offensive of 1919. His big initial advance was hailed by the British and French press as a sign that he would soon reach Moscow; 'and therefore everyone in Paris, including I regret to say members of the American Commission, began to grow very lukewarm about peace in Russia'.

A characteristic final touch to this episode – although perhaps not surprising after what has been quoted earlier – was the statement by Mr Lloyd George in Parliament on April 16th, in reply to a question whether any approaches had been made to the British Government on behalf of the Soviet Government. Mr Lloyd George said: (i) 'We have had no approaches at all'; (ii) 'We have made no approach of any sort'; (iii) 'I have only heard reports of others having proposals which they assume have come from authentic quarters'; (iv) 'There was some suggestion that a young American had come back from Russia with a communication. It is not for me to judge the value of this communication'.

Although the reports of the Allied discussions in Paris, made by Bullitt to the Senate and confirmed by the volumes printed many years later by the United States Government, reveal no references to the Communist International, it should be noted that this body had been founded at a conference in Moscow on March 5th, 1919. Its initiation was the reply to a conference of the right-wing Socialists which had been called to re-form the old International at Berne, and

the announcement that the conference was sending a commission of inquiry to Russia. But Arthur Ransome, who left Moscow simultaneously with Bullitt, saw Lenin on March 8th, and records that Lenin anticipated further attacks by the war party in England and France, on the ground that it was impossible to leave Soviet Russia in peace when the Bolsheviks were 'setting the world on fire'. He continued: 'To that I would answer, "We are at war, gentlemen! And just as during your war you tried to make revolution in Germany, and Germany did her best to make trouble in Ireland and India, so we, while we are at war with you, adopt the measures that are open to us. We have told you we are willing to make peace".'

Of course the formation of a new, Communist International, for which Lenin had been explicitly campaigning ever since November, 1914, had been predetermined ever since Lenin's return to Russia and the publication of his 'April Theses' in 1917. The formation of the new International was also hastened by the Berne Conference – although precisely because of its obvious intention to supply propaganda material against Bolshevism. But Lenin's statement makes it reasonable to suppose that the precise time of formation and activities of the new body were determined to a considerable extent by the activity of the Allies themselves. However, the Soviet Government continued to make clear its readiness for peace in spite of the rejection of its earlier offers. It was only on May 4th that the Soviet Government received the doctored version of Nansen's proposals to organize famine relief in Russia. Replying on May 7th, Chicherin accepted the offer of relief, while pointing out that negotiations for the suspension of hostilities could be carried on only with the Allied Governments themselves, and declared it would enter into such negotiations with pleasure. Nansen replied promising to transmit the offer to the Governments: but no reply was received. Throughout the spring and summer of 1919 the Soviet Government went on reiterating its readiness for peace negotiations to visiting British and other journalists and politicians – for example to Mr W. T. Goode, the head of a teachers' training college in London and a special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, and to Col. C. L. Malone, M.P., at that time a Coalition Liberal. It also conducted long-range negotiations by wireless for many months with the British Government over the question of an exchange of war prisoners, which was finally settled only on February 12th, 1920, by an agreement in Copenhagen between Litvinov and a Labour M.P., James O'Grady. But during the

period of the Kolchak, Denikin and Yudenich offensives the invading Governments were not interested in further peace discussions.

On December 5th, 1919, the Seventh Congress of Soviets once again (for the eleventh time) offered peace negotiations with the Entente, jointly or singly. On the same day the long-postponed negotiations with Estonia were reopened, and this time carried to a successful conclusion, first in the form of an armistice (December 23rd) and then of a peace treaty (February 2nd, 1920). This treaty was very favourable to Estonia, as the first capitalist State to come to terms with Soviet Russia. Estonia undertook to refuse shelter to active White conspirators and rebels, and in return secured recognition of her frontiers and a share in the gold reserve of the former Tsarist State (fifteen million gold roubles). This treaty was followed up by one with Lithuania (July 12th), which secured recognition of Lithuanian sovereignty over Kaunas and the ancient capital of Vilnius, together with three million gold roubles of the old reserve; by another with Latvia (August 11th), which received four million gold roubles and substantial timber concessions: and finally by negotiations with Finland which took many months, but which ended in a treaty on October 14th, 1920, under which the Pechenga (Petsamo) isthmus, with an outlet to the White Sea, was ceded by Russia.

Between January and March, 1920, the Soviet Government made three unsuccessful peace offers to Poland, before the latter chose the way of aggression. But before this an important new step had been taken in relations between the Soviet Government and its enemies. As a result of Litvinov's conversations in Copenhagen with British and other representatives, and of the evident collapse of the leading Allied protégés in Russia, the Entente Powers (while pressing ahead with their preparations to help Poland and Wrangel) announced on January 16th, 1920, that the blockade of Soviet Russia was ended, and that trade with the Russian co-operative movement would be permitted – the latter device being adopted in order to avoid even the semblance of recognition of the Soviet Government. This attitude was formally stated in a resolution of the Allied Supreme Council on February 24th. Nevertheless the Soviet Government accepted the opportunity presented, appointing a delegation headed by Krassin, the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade. Preliminary conversations at Copenhagen led to an invitation to Krassin to come to London, where he began negotiations with Mr Lloyd George on May 31st. Negotiations continued throughout the Polish war. In August

only threats of a General Strike prevented Lloyd George from breaking them off and declaring war in support of Poland. In September, when the Red Army had retreated, the British Government expelled Kamenev, the second member of the delegation, on the charge of financing the *Daily Herald*. However, the Soviet Government maintained the delegation in London, and several months later an Anglo-Soviet trade agreement was signed on March 16th, 1921. By this time a number of important orders had been placed by the Soviet delegation with British manufacturers, and treaties of friendship, abolishing a host of privileges extorted in the past by Tsarist Russia, had been signed with Afghanistan (February 25th), Persia (February 26th) and Turkey (March 16th).

## 10. WAR COMMUNISM

This breaking down of at any rate the most important barriers which had been thrown up all round the Soviet Republic from the autumn of 1918 was of the utmost importance. The war had been fought in conditions of privation unexampled in history. The Soviet Republic had in truth been the 'armed camp' which it had been proclaimed by the Central Executive Committee of Soviets on September 2nd, 1918: but it was a camp which was deprived of grain, coal, oil, metals and raw cotton in all but the smallest quantity. By the middle of 1919 industrial output was down to a quarter of the pre-war level, the bread ration in Moscow and Petrograd at times was again no more than two ounces every other day, with dried fish taking the place of meat, and millions were suffering from typhus, malaria and cholera. 'If we had been told in 1917', said Lenin at the Moscow Soviet on February 27th, 1921, 'that we should hold out for three years in a war against the whole world, and that as a result of the war two million Russian landowners, capitalists and their children would find themselves abroad, none of us would have believed it'.

In these conditions, the economic life of the country also became that of a beleaguered fortress; and many measures were then adopted, under the pressure of circumstances, which because of the political colour of the Government responsible for them were proclaimed to be peculiarly characteristic of Communism, and even brought the title of 'War Communism' to the whole system.

All essential industry was nationalized, in order to put decisive control in the hands of the State, in conditions when the old managements were violently hostile. By October, 1920, some 4,500

factories were nationalized, employing over one million workers; there were still 2,600 small enterprises, employing less than 200,000 workers, in private or co-operative ownership. The management of the nationalized factories, which had begun as we have seen by being collective because of the lack of loyal managerial and technical personnel, became more and more one-man in its character, as the workers gained experience in the collective managements. By the autumn of 1920, only 300 out of 2,500 factories working under the *central* authorities were under collective management. By November, 1920, about 25 per cent of the nationalized factories, employing about 45 per cent of the workers in such factories, were grouped according to their industry and location into State trusts. All factories, whether organized in trusts or not, came under the direction of Chief Boards or Centres, which laid down plans of production, supply, disposal and finance for their factories. There were fifty-nine such central managing bodies by November, 1920, all functioning as departments of the Supreme Economic Council – the Government department which had originally been intended to plan all economy, but under pressure of war conditions had come to concentrate almost exclusively on industry. In practice it was the trade unions which put forward nominations for all posts on these Boards.

This improvised machinery managed to maintain the minimum of production necessary to equip the Red Army and to provide a thin trickle of manufactured goods for the countryside. Where there was relative independence of raw materials from outside, this machinery succeeded in actually raising output. Thus, in the Moscow coalfield it rose from some 280,090 tons in 1918 to about 600,000 tons of coal in 1920. The output of peat, which was extensively used for the power stations during the Civil War, rose from just under one millions tons in 1918 to one-and-a-half million tons in 1920. A similar increase of 50 per cent in the output of pig-iron in the Urals, compared with that of 1919, was secured in the course of 1920, after the liberation of that region. But in the main what industrial results were achieved during the war years were the result of the ruthless concentration of production in a few factories, to which the scanty stocks of raw materials, fuel and foodstuffs and the small numbers of skilled personnel could be directed. Total industrial output in 1920 was no more than 13 per cent of the level of 1913, as against 62 per cent in 1917. The output of pig-iron was less than 3 per cent of what it had been in 1913, of cotton yarns 5 per cent, of sugar 6 per cent, of railway en-

gines 15 per cent, of coal barely 25 per cent. It can be imagined what hardships this situation imposed upon the civil population. A graphic and truthful picture, which still repays study, was drawn by Arthur Ransome in his *Six Weeks in Russia* in 1919.

To make this machinery of nationalized industry work, the administrators had to be drawn from the working class. In 1919, 40 per cent of the members of the boards of managements of factories were workmen and 60 per cent technicians. In that year the Central Committee of the Metal Workers' Union endorsed 184 works managements, of whose members 64 per cent were workers and 27.5 per cent technicians. By the beginning of 1920, in the textile industry, out of 1,124 members of the managements of 460 factories, 726 were workmen and 398 technicians. When trusts were organized in the iron and steel industry, the trade union called a conference of works committees and managements of the factories concerned, which discussed forms of organization and production programmes, and elected the boards of the trusts. It is beyond question that the vast experience of workmen's control during 1917 and 1918 was the elementary school, as it were, in which the best workers learned how to proceed to this higher stage of training in management, thrust upon them by the needs of defence.

Nor did the process stop there. The report of the Supreme Economic Council to the Eighth Congress of Soviets in December, 1920, showed that 63 per cent of the managers of nationalized factories were now former workmen, and 54 per cent of the members of the Chief Boards and Centres, of the Provincial Economic Councils and Of the executives of the Supreme Economic Council itself, were also drawn from the working class.

The worst of the difficulties which had to be encountered in production was, of course, that of food. Ultimately, in this sphere, economics were decided by politics: the Soviet Government guaranteed the land to the peasantry, whereas the Whites took the land away. This enabled the Soviet Government in the course of the war to subject the alliance between the workers and the peasants, based on this simple contrast, to a very severe test. On January 24th, 1919, it issued its first decree establishing the 'razvyorstka' – the allocation of grain requisitioning targets in the form of provincial quotas which had to be broken down into local quotas, and on the basis of which the peasantry had to supply fixed quantities to the State. At first this applied to grain and meat; later it was extended to butter, poultry and

other foodstuffs. From the first an appeal was made to the reason as well as to the obedience of the peasant: Lenin made it clear that the peasant was 'giving his grain as a loan', and in December, 1919, the Seventh Soviet Congress declared that the loan later on, 'when the workers have restored the industrial life of the Republic, will be repaid a hundredfold'. This point of view was stressed by the food detachments.\* By these means grain supplies collected in 1920-21 were four times as great as in 1917-18, meat supplies five times as great, and butter twice as great.

But the peasants often had to give up not merely their surplus but part of their reserves, in order to reach the quota where crops had been bad. Moreover, in the course of the war, the countryside received no more than 12 per cent to 15 per cent of the manufactured goods which came to it in 1913. As a consequence, for large numbers of the peasantry there was a gradual slowing down of the stimulus to production. By 1920 the cultivated area was only four-fifths of what it had been in 1916, with proportionate decreases in the number of horses and cattle. The harvest that year was only three-fifths of what it had been in 1916.

From November, 1919, the peasants also had compulsory timber-felling and cartage duty to perform in stated quotas, in order to reinforce the fuel supply, the problem of which became more and more urgent as the fronts began to recede.

The small quantities of food secured by the State were distributed, as was mentioned earlier, on a basis of strict class rationing, reinforced in 1920 by a widespread system of public restaurants and canteens at which the meals were free. By the end of 1920 about thirty-seven million people were being supplied in this way – this in an overwhelmingly peasant country, over huge territories with very sparse transport. Such a scale of public feeding had never been attempted before. Nevertheless in prevailing conditions the rations were terribly inadequate. In Petrograd, for example, the workers

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\* A Government 'propaganda steamer' on the Volga reported in July, 1919, the typical reaction of a county congress of peasant Soviets in the rich grain-growing district of Chistopol, at which there were only 51 Communists and 46 sympathizers out of 253 delegates: unanimous votes to mobilize men for the Red Army against Denikin and to organize food aid for Moscow.



received no more than 110 pounds of bread each, for the whole of 1919, while office workers had only just half that quantity. In Petrograd and Moscow the population secured no more than 35 to 40 per cent of its foodstuffs from the rations; the rest had to be bought on the free market or bartered locally, or obtained by a bartering visit to the countryside. The same was the position in other towns, with the exception of the most fertile provinces, where as much as 70 per cent of personal consumption was covered by rations. The lion's share of privations was borne by the working class during these years, and its average real wage by the end of 1920, even reckoning the free rations, was no more than one-third of the pre-war level.

By the mass requisitioning of surplus housing space, millions of workers were enabled to move from dark and damp basements, hovels and dug-outs into light and well-built apartments. But in the absence of adequate fuel supplies, the full benefit of this sharing of available accommodation could not be felt. It is not surprising that, in addition to some 600,000 factory workers who left industry' in 1919 alone to enter the Red Army or for posts in the trade unions or the Soviets all over the country, millions of townsfolk wandered away into the countryside in search of food. Moscow lost half its population in this way, and other towns from a quarter to a third.

Naturally, the half-starved workers could not maintain labour discipline adequately, and absenteeism in the big works sometimes – as in the summer of 1919 – reached as high a figure as 40 per cent. This was all the more to be expected because of the voluntary departure of so many of the skilled and politically experienced workers to help at the front. Although compulsory labour service had been decreed the duty of every citizen as early as October 5th, 1918, obligations under this decree could be enforced only for relatively simple work of a mass character, such as digging trenches or unloading freight from railway trucks.

The means of maintaining the morale of the working class in the factories, and through which the Communist Party transmitted its influence to the workers on a nation-wide scale, were the trade unions. Their membership rose to over eight-and-a-half millions by the middle of 1920, as was natural since what rationed goods were available were distributed through their agency. The holding of a trade union card became for practical purposes a badge of citizenship. Trade union dues by 1919 were being collected automatically, through deductions before the worker received his wage. It is nev-

ertheless a fact that the trade unions were able successfully to overcome the frightful material difficulties, and to appeal effectively to the sense of solidarity of the workers.

One of the features of War Communism was the gradual decline in the purchasing power of the currency, as it came to play a smaller and smaller part in regulating the exchange of commodities, particularly between town and country. Even at the beginning of the civil war, there was vast speculation in manufactured goods such as sugar, kerosene and tobacco; and with the growing shortages barter began to replace ordinary trade. On the Volga peasants required salt of the townsmen who came to buy food: elsewhere ordinary household goods were asked for, or even gold coins, pictures and musical instruments. Taxation in these conditions could play very little part in balancing the Budget, and became mainly a means of squeezing the bourgeoisie of their concealed resources. The State had to issue more and more currency as the rouble lost its purchasing power (by the end of the Civil War, the purchasing power of one rouble in 1913 was represented by approximately 13,000 Soviet roubles). It is not surprising that the State in 1920 ceased to charge Government departments for such services as electricity, water, posts and telephones and that municipal services, such as the trams, were also made free later on in the same year. Thus money in the period of War Communism ceased to be of any importance as the instrument of accounting and supervision which Lenin had defined as its role in his speech of April 29th, 1918. It must be borne in mind, of course, that the fate of the currencies issued by the White Governments was just as bad or even worse, in spite of their sometimes extensive support in goods from abroad: embezzlement and other forms of corruption on a huge scale here had the same effect as the blockade and the strain of war had in the Soviet Republic.

## 11. STEPS TO SOCIALISM

Nevertheless, when all these difficulties are taken into account, one cannot understand the spirit of the Soviet people in these terrible years unless one also takes into account the measures which were taken as a promise of profound social transformations, looking beyond the passing hardships of Soviet Russia's fight for life.

Thousands of schools were opened, so that, whereas in 1913 only eight million children had been receiving education in the whole of Russia, the Soviet Republic in 1920, with a considerably smaller

population, had ten million children at school. The change in this respect was particularly important in the villages, where the penetration of newspapers, opening up entirely new horizons to the peasants, was also a powerful factor for victory. Workmen's clubs as centres of warmth, of study and recreation and of political discussion, what might almost be called the mass opening of theatres, however poorly equipped, were an earnest to the Russian people that the best achievements of culture would be theirs. The great classical writers, Russian and foreign, were reproduced, often on execrable paper and badly printed, but in hundreds of thousands of copies at nominal prices, which made them available for the poorest peasant and worker learning to read. While the arts could not flourish in such conditions, the poets Blok and Mayakovsky produced some of their best work – *The Twelve* (1918) and *'150,000,000'* (1920) respectively – and the political satire in verse of Demyan Bedny helped to keep up morale to a remarkable extent.

Communal dining rooms of all kinds, free meals for school children, the setting up of children's colonies for the increasing number of war orphans and homeless children, rigid application of equal pay for equal work from the very beginning, all brought the working-class housewife the first promise of a better life in the material sense. The introduction of a free State medical service, with the requisitioning of many of the best palaces and large private houses of the rich as hospitals and clinics, crèches and kindergartens, were another tangible piece of evidence of the same tendency, however poor their equipment, however great their shortage of drugs and sometimes of foodstuffs.

Furthermore, fundamental changes were beginning in the economic basis of society. This was most difficult, of course, in the countryside, where the peasants were still desperately conscious that they were fighting for their own piece of land, and the vast majority could not be expected to accept Socialist ideals, in the absence of practical evidence that Socialism could bring them more than the small proprietorship for which their sons were still giving their lives. But here and there, particularly in the poorest agricultural districts, the poor peasantry, under the leadership of town workers, and with the help of special bonuses and credits from the State, set up State farms and collective or communal farms. In 1920 there were no more than some 18,000 of such new ventures in agriculture, which be-

tween them accounted for just over 6 per cent of the total cultivated area.

The VIII Congress of Soviets (December 1920) laid down that the State was to supply livestock and equipment, repair shops and expert advice, to peasants who would undertake to sow areas and maintain yields to the State's requirements. This was the first effort in peace conditions at State guidance of small-scale peasant production on planned lines.

Perhaps the most significant evidence of the determination of the Soviet leaders to resume the steady advance to Socialism, directly there was the slightest opportunity, was the insistence with which their minds turned to the question of Socialist economic planning whenever the tiniest breathing-space at the fronts seemed to justify it.

Thus, in March, 1919, the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party adopted a resolution insisting on the importance of preparing a single economic plan, relying on the fullest participation of the trade unions in the management and development of industry, and drawing on the services of bourgeois technicians, but based essentially on voluntary labour discipline. For this the workers were to be enlisted by mass production discussions. Small handicraft producers were to be given maximum support by the State placing firm orders with them for their output; and distribution was to take place primarily through the co-operative movement, into which the whole population should be enrolled. Above all, it was laid down that the task of the moment in the country as a whole was to achieve a practical working agreement with the middle peasantry, who now constituted the substantial majority in the countryside as a result of the division of the land, and needed to be won away from the kulaks for good. For this purpose a far-reaching programme of assistance to them by the State and the industrial workers was adopted.

In these decisions the reader will recognize without difficulty the continuation of the line of policy set forth by Lenin in April, 1918. The military campaigns of the rest of the year held up the application of most of this programme; but the first signs of a new breathing-space revived them. In February, 1920, the Council of Defence was transformed into a Council for Labour and Defence, to exercise those functions of a supreme economic coordinating body such as it had been hoped in 1918 the Supreme Economic Council would become. At the Third All-Russian Congress of Economic Councils a little while before (January 27th, 1920) Lenin had promised 'an ex-

tensive plan for the reconstruction of Russia', adding that for this 'we have enough resources, materials, technical possibilities, enough of everything to begin this work of reconstruction from every side, drawing in all the workers and peasants'. This aim was immediately given concrete form in a resolution of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets (February, 1920), directing that a State plan for the whole of the economy, based on the electrification of the country, was to be worked out, particularly by the S.E.C. and the People's Commissariat for Agriculture. A special State Electrification Commission, comprising 200 of the best experts in the country, was appointed to work out the basis.

These decisions were followed up at the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party in March and April, 1920. It decided that priority must be given to the reconstruction of transport and the fuel, power and iron and steel industries in the creation of an economic plan. One-man management in the factories and in each workshop, now that trained personnel was available, coupled with production propaganda and emulation among the workers, with the introduction of production themes into general education, was essential. For the first time since the revolution, that autumn, a 'mobilization' of the Communist Party took place, not in order to provide men for the forces or for some propaganda campaign, but to send 5,000 people with some business experience into the economic machinery of the State.

In December, 1920, the State Electrification Commission submitted its plan to the Eighth Soviet Congress. It provided for the construction of thirty large regional power stations in the course of ten years, and the reconstruction of all the basic industries parallel with this work, with the object of restoring output to the pre-war level and then approximately doubling it within the next ten to fifteen years. Lenin called this 'the second Party programme', saying that 'Communism is the Soviet power plus electrification of the whole country'. Stalin called it, in a letter to Lenin, a 'masterly outline of a truly *single* and truly *State* economic plan, without quotation marks'.

The Congress issued a stirring appeal to the workers and peasants of the Soviet Republic to play an independent part in securing the success of this plan. It established a new decoration – the Order of the Labour Red Banner – for distinction achieved in economic reconstruction.

The exceptional role of the Communists in organizing and stimulating the struggle for victory in the civil war had shown itself in a new form the previous spring. On Saturday, May 10th, 1919, as a result of a meeting of Communist railwaymen in a marshal-ling-yard of the Moscow-Kazan railway, several hundred workmen, both Communist and non-Communist, had turned out to do five hours' free work 'for the defeat of Kolchak'. They repaired trucks, cleared away rubbish, loaded and unloaded long-overdue freights. Their average productivity was two or three times that of normal working days. Notice had been given of their intentions in the press in the preceding days, and that day there were already a number of other such 'Communist Saturdays' (in Russian, 'Subbotniks') worked. A report of the success of this piece of initiative was published in *Pravda*, and aroused a spirit of emulation, so that scores more Subbotniks were worked the following week. Lenin wrote one of his most brilliant pamphlets, *A Great Beginning*, a few weeks later, in which he underlined the new spirit manifesting itself in this shape – a spirit which looked upon work for the public good as a matter of individual concern, discipline in labour which was entirely voluntary in character. This spirit, he said, foreshadowed the future Communist attitude towards work in the society that was coming to replace capitalism. Emulation in work for society would take the place of competition for profit if this spirit were developed and encouraged.

In fact every effort was made to encourage it by publicity, by extending technical knowledge and training, by giving material rewards where they were available; but the movement spread much more rapidly than any incentives of a material character could account for. By the autumn of 1919, many hundreds of thousands of workers in industry, and of office workers and intellectuals as well, were taking part in these 'Subbotniks', which were necessarily confined to the simplest kind of work, such as indicated earlier.

It was not without significance that the Seventh All-Russian Congress of Soviets in December, 1919, when decreeing the formation of a new People's Commissariat – for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection – to combat bureaucracy, breaches of the law and unnecessary waste, provided that it was to rely particularly on volunteer inspectors, drawn from working folk in their spare time. When the statute for the new organization was adopted on February 7th, 1920, it provided that delegates to take part in such work of public control, through planned supervision as well as by single mass surveys, were

to be elected at the factories, at rural district meetings and at non-Party conferences of sections of the people such as housewives, handicraftsmen, etc. Already 7,000 people had been elected as delegates for this work, nearly three-quarters of them not members of the Communist Party; and many thousands more were forming 'aid groups' to help the delegates in their work of inspection. By the end of 1919, tens of thousands of workers (60,000 in Moscow alone) were giving voluntary help to the State Control Department.

The Ninth Congress of the Communist Party also decided that May Day, 1920, should be an occasion, not for demonstrations of the ordinary kind, but for an 'All-Russian Subbotnik', in which the Soviet people could show their will to victory on the economic front. Millions of workers and peasants took part that day, Lenin and other leading members of the Government unloading timber from the freight trains with the rest.

Thus the appeal of the Eighth Congress of Soviets, the following December, fell on ground which had been thoroughly prepared.

## 12. THE FREEING OF NATIONALITIES

In November, 1918, writing in *Pravda*, Stalin had shown that in the former colonial borderlands of the Tsarist empire the mass of the people were in conflict with the national bourgeoisie of their respective territories, and that this conflict had brought the respective sides into a natural alignment with the Russian workers and peasants on one side and the foreign invaders on the other. The whole experience of the war, Stalin was writing two years later (October 10th, 1920), had shown that 'unless Central Russia and her border regions mutually support each other, the success of the revolution and the liberation of Russia from the clutches of imperialism will be impossible'. Russia needed raw materials, fuel and foodstuffs in order to hold out: the border regions needed the political, military and organizational support of more advanced Russia if they were not to fall under foreign bondage. In fact, it was quite clear – as Stalin was to emphasize a few months later (February, 1921) – that 'the Russian workers could not have defeated Kolchak and Denikin... without the elimination of national enmity and national oppression at home'.

This basic concept found expression in the course of the civil war in an extremely flexible policy of federation, ranging from autonomy for peoples territorially embedded within lands inhabited by Russians, to alliances between Russia and independent Soviet Republics.

It also included special measures to protect national minorities scattered within Soviet Russia without any definite territory, such as the Jews, small colonies of the Baltic and Polish peoples, etc.

Thus, Soviets which had been established in the first months of 1918 throughout the so-called 'steppe provinces', which lay between Siberia and Turkestan, consisted chiefly of representatives of the half-nomad Kazakhs under the leadership of Russian workmen. For the next twelve months they were under constant assault both from Kolchak's forces and from Russian and native kulak conspiracies from within. When Kolchak was finally driven back in the summer of 1919, a 'Revolutionary Committee' for the establishment of Soviet power throughout what is now called Kazakhstan, then known as the Kirgiz territory, was set up. On June 29th, 1920, the Central Committee of the Communist Party resolved that lands of the Russian colonists must be confiscated and given back to the Kirgiz tribesmen, who should be encouraged with State subsidies and scientific aid to settle down on the land. This decision was followed up by a decree establishing an Autonomous Kirgiz Soviet Socialist Republic, which held its first constituent Congress of Soviets in October, 1920.

Turkestan, which also held out throughout the Civil War, was able to convene its Ninth Congress of Soviets the previous month. By this time the feudal Governments of the ancient Central Asian States of Khiva and Bokhara, lying between Turkestan and the Caspian, had been overthrown by popular risings (in February and August, 1920, respectively), which had called in the Red Army. No attempt was made to force a Socialist economy upon Khiva and Bokhara. They were proclaimed 'People's Republics', outside Soviet Russia but allied with it, with the land divided among their peasantry but with freedom for private trade, handicraft and manufacture.

In Bashkiria, the call for a Constituent Congress of Soviets had only just been issued (June 8th, 1918) when the rapidly extending Czechoslovak revolt overthrew any organized authority. In response to an appeal from Lenin to 'all working Mussulmans' to form a 'Mussulman Socialist army' (July 16th), a number of partisan units were formed by the Russian workmen and poor Bashkir peasants, and had 50,000 in their ranks by the beginning of 1919.

The Russian Whites, by agreement with the Bashkir bourgeoisie, formed native units, totalling 5,000 men, for Kolchak's army: but on February 18th, 1919, all these units went over in a body to the Red Army, and even the native bourgeois leader Validov recognized the



Soviet power. In March, 1919, the Soviet Government issued a Statute setting up an Autonomous Soviet Republic for Lesser or Eastern Bashkiria, which held its Constituent Congress in July, 1920. All White Bashkirs had been amnestied, and Validov himself with his followers had been included in the governmental bodies of Soviet Bashkiria; but as a result of an intense political struggle during preceding months, the overwhelming majority at the Congress was composed of Bashkir Communist delegates, and Validov, after a futile attempt to provoke a rising, fled abroad. The Congress ordered nationalization of the land as in Soviet Russia, its distribution among the peasantry and the setting up of a Socialist regime.

After the defeat of Denikin the Allies, who had previously supported his pretensions against the claims to independence of the Transcaucasian Republics (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan), changed their front. These little States, ruled by anti-Bolshevik parties, were now the last citadels of counter-revolution on the shores of the Black Sea and the Caspian; and accordingly they were officially recognized by the Allied Supreme Council (January, 1920). Their regime in no way differed from those of the other White Governments, except that in Azerbaijan the country districts were still in a state of feudalism, and the peasants there were even worse off than in Georgia and Armenia.

However, the Red Army pushed further and further into the Caucasus. At the end of March, having reoccupied the mountain districts of the Northern Caucasus, it helped in the establishment of an Autonomous Soviet Republic of Dagestan – the mountaineers whose heroic struggles against foreign invaders, Turkish and Persian and Russian alike, had given rise to endless legend and poetry in the 18th and 19th centuries. In April the industrial workers of Baku – whose traditions of revolutionary mass struggle dated back to the 19th century – rose in revolt against the Nationalist Government, which was simultaneously attacked by the Red Army. On April 27th Azerbaijan was proclaimed a Soviet Republic. The same happened in Armenia, but after an insurrection lasting many weeks, in November, 1920.

Georgia was the only territory which remained under Menshevik rule; but in other respects its regime was precisely the same as that in the other White territories. Punitive expeditions against the peasantry and the bloody suppression of strikes were its characteristic features, together with a policy of territorial aggrandisement and economic blockade directed against Armenia. In May, 1920, on the initiative of

the Mensheviks, peace was concluded between Soviet Russia and Georgia. In January, 1921, a peasant insurrection broke out in the districts annexed from Armenia in 1919, and spread to Georgia, where in mid-February the workmen of Tiflis and elsewhere rose in support. The provisional revolutionary committee sent an appeal to the Red Army, which was the more ready to respond because throughout the operation of the peace treaty the Georgian Government had placed its territory freely at the disposal of counter-revolutionary conspiracies, directed against Soviet Russia. By the end of March the whole of Georgia was ruled by its own Soviets – two autonomous Republics coming into existence on its Black Sea coast (Abkhazia and Adzharistan), founded by smaller peoples of a different racial stock and cultural traditions from those of the Georgians.

In their economy and social structure, the various national States thus created differed widely. But in all of them there were certain fundamental principles – the wiping out of feudalism or its economic survivals, the widest powers for elected peasants\* and workmen's Soviets, the conduct of public business, education and the press in the native language – as the starting point from which each could develop at its own pace, according to historical conditions, towards Socialism.

This was 'an experiment without parallel anywhere in the world', Stalin wrote in the article of October 10th, 1920, already quoted. In order to ensure its success, he said, the Soviet Government must be comprehensible to the people of these former colonial territories. This meant not only abolishing the privileges of the Russians among them, but also enabling the masses 'to taste of the material benefits of the revolution'. For this purpose it was necessary that 'all Soviet organs in the border regions – the courts, the administration, the economic bodies, the direct organs of government (as also the organs of the Party) – should as far as possible be recruited from among local people acquainted with the customs, life, habits and language of the native population; that the best people from among the native masses should be got to participate in these institutions; that the local toiling masses should be drawn into every sphere of administration of the country, including military formations, in order that the masses may see that the Soviet Government and its organs are the products of their own efforts, the embodiment of their aspirations'.

This policy stood the Soviet Union in good stead in after years.

## *Invasion and Civil War*

### *Further Reading*

To the works mentioned in the previous list, and to those mentioned in the text, may be added Stewart, *The White Armies of Russia* (1933). For life on both sides of the front see the Report of the British Labour Delegation to Russia (1920); also C. E. Bechofer, *In Denikin's Russia* (1921) and Sir Stephen Tallents, *Man and Boy* (1943) – only two of many similar works. For internal conditions in the Soviet Republic, Lenin's writings and speeches for this period are invaluable (in English, *Selected Works*, vol. VIII, and *Collected Works*, vol. XXIII). The texts of many Soviet diplomatic documents of the period are to be found in *The Soviet Union and Peace*, edited by Henri Barbusse (1928). The text of Mr Bullitt's testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *The Bullitt Mission to Russia*, was published in New York in 1919. Many more secret documents of the time have now been published officially in the U.S.A., in volumes bearing the general heading, *Foreign Relations of the U.S.A., Paris Peace Conference, 1919*: and in *Documents of British Foreign Policy, First Series* (1919), vols. I and II.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Rebuilding and Industrializing*

#### 1. THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

Soviet economy emerged in a desperate condition from the trials and efforts imposed by three years of foreign invasion and civil war. Agricultural output was only half what it had been in 1913; the level of industrial output was even lower: there were acute shortages of primary necessities like fuel, clothes, soap, matches, kerosene, gas and electric power: these shortages and mass unemployment were causing a widespread drift of industrial workers to the villages. At the same time, the peasants were discontented at the lack of manufactured goods, and above all at the continuation of the wartime system of requisitioning their surplus produce, now that the war was ended. In approaching the task of substituting plenty for scarcity – and doing so on a new basis of social, instead of individual, property in the means of production – the Soviet State was faced with vast destruction of the productive resources of the country. The loss in lives as a result of intervention was estimated at 1,350,000, and the permanently crippled at 3 millions.

There were many storm-signals indicating that a change of policy was necessary. At non-Party peasant conferences held in Moscow, Petrograd, Kharkov and other cities, from the autumn of 1920 onwards, there were moments when the delegates refused to listen to representatives of the Communist Party discussing subjects on the conference agenda until they had had an assurance that other questions, in which the mass of delegates were interested – such as the grain requisitioning or cartage duty, or the lack of manufactured goods – would also be discussed. The writer was present at one such conference in Moscow, in October, 1920, at which Anarchists (in this case installed in the leadership of the Bakers' Union) took full advantage of the uproar to preach hostility to the Soviet power.

The culmination of such discontent was the rising at the island fortress of Kronstadt (March 2nd, 1921). The old sailors and workmen of the great base, who up to 1917 had made it a citadel of advanced revolutionary thought and particularly of the Bolsheviks, were gone, scattered far and wide throughout Russia as leaders of local Soviets and other organizations, when they had not been killed in the civil war. The crews of the warships so long confined by the

British blockade, and the workers in the factories which for safety's sake had had their main production transferred to the less vulnerable interior, had been recruited from peasants or less essential workers in the secondary trades during the civil war, and politically were a far less stable element. Reflecting the feelings of the countryside with which they were connected, the majority fell an easy prey to Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary agitation. Even so, the leaders of the rebellion did not come out openly for capitalist restoration: their programme was 'Soviets without Communists', and freedom of trade from all wartime controls and prohibitions. But the true significance "of the rising was well understood abroad, where the anti-Soviet press – in other words, the vast majority of the newspapers – proclaimed this event to be the beginning of the end, the 'Thermidor' of the Russian revolution, which would mark the end of the Russian Robespierres and Marats as 1794 had marked the end of the French Jacobins. Large-scale collections in aid of the rebels were hastily begun in France and the U.S.A. The revolt was crushed, but its lesson remained, to give additional point to Lenin's proposals for a change of policy, which he made to the Tenth Congress of the Communist Party (March 8th to 16th, 1921).

The Congress had before it a question which showed that the sense of something being profoundly wrong had penetrated deeply into the ranks of the Communist Party itself. This was the so-called 'trade union controversy' which had been raging since November, 1920, spreading from comparatively restricted discussions among Party leaders to the general mass of Party members.

Nominally the discussion was whether the trade unions in Soviet society were to be voluntary mass organizations, enlisting the active interest and efforts of the workers in planned Socialist construction by methods primarily of persuasion (as Lenin, Stalin and the majority of the Central Committee considered): or whether they were to be governmental bodies controlled from above, their leaderships largely imposed by the Party (as Trotsky openly demanded, saying the trade unions ought to be 'sandpapered', and the so-called 'buffer group' led by Bukharin implicitly, by preaching compromise with Trotsky, accepted); or whether on the contrary the trade unions were to be syndicalist bodies, each controlling its own industry and bargaining with the State (as a group styling itself the 'Workers' Opposition', and led by Alexandra Kollontai and Shlyapnikov, demanded).

Actually what was involved was the Communist Party's whole conception of the situation created by the victorious end of the civil war, and the necessity of Socialist reconstruction in conditions the like of which no Socialist writer in the past had ever foreseen – in one of the poorest and least developed of the Great Powers, and in an environment of bitterly hostile capitalist States, large and small. The problem of the Party's relations with the mass of the people was decisive in this situation. Actually, therefore, what the three groups were discussing was whether the Bolsheviks were aiming, above all, at having a working class organized in unions in which it had confidence, and in which it might gain practical experience of public affairs, enabling it to manoeuvre successfully for the preservation of the all-important alliance with the peasantry; or whether they were trying to continue the methods of War Communism in peace-time conditions; or whether they were prepared to give up altogether any attempt at centralized planning of reconstruction on Socialist lines, leaving the future to spontaneous action of the workers.

The overwhelming majority of the Congress decided in favour of Lenin's position (by 336 votes, to 50 for Trotsky and 18 for the 'Workers' Opposition'). At the same time it accepted his view that there must be a return to the principles which he had set out in his speech of April 29th, 1918, adapting their application to the new circumstances created by three years of war experience. It was necessary to concentrate the small resources of the State on reviving the largest and most productive industrial enterprises. It was necessary to raise the productivity and the labour discipline of the working class. To provide the food essential for this purpose, and to break the back of discontent among the vast majority of the population, it was necessary to restore the alliance with the middle peasantry by a real concession which they would appreciate. In this way it would be possible to restore production and a new balance between industry and agriculture, and thus prepare for a more rapid advance to Socialism in more favourable conditions at a later stage. The sum-total of measures taken for these purposes, principally in 1921 but partly also the following year, constitutes what has come to be known as the New Economic Policy (NEP).

Only the main provisions of this policy can be summarized here. The system of requisitioning of foodstuffs was abolished, and a foodstuffs tax substituted, by a decree of the A.R.C.E.C. (March 21st, 1921). The tax was to be smaller in its total than what had been col-

lected by requisitioning. It was calculated in such a way as to cover only the most essential requirements of the armed forces, the town workmen and the non-agricultural population. It was to consist of a percentage of the produce, taking into account however the size of the family and its resources in cattle; and it was to be progressive in its character. The amount was fixed before the beginning of spring, so that each household knew precisely what it would have to pay. The entire produce after payment of tax was to be at the full disposal of the peasantry, to sell freely if they chose.

Some four thousand small factories and workshops of all kinds (averaging seventeen workers each) were de-nationalized and leased to co-operatives and private individuals or companies. The large factories and big State-owned commercial enterprises were deprived of budget support, and made self-supporting autonomous units. Their equipment, buildings, raw materials, stores, etc., remained the property of the State, and their directors were appointed by the State. But they had to fend for themselves in securing further materials and labour and in disposing of their finished products in such a way as to make a profit for the State.

A drastic reduction of State expenditure became possible, the staffs of Government institutions falling from seven-and-a-half millions to four-and-a-half millions. This in its turn began to bring within sight the balancing of the Budget. The State reintroduced payments for all public services, and for the rations which were still supplied to workers in industry and some Government departments. Railway transport charges were re-imposed, and taxes reintroduced. By 1922, it became possible to go on to the first State loan. One was for 150,000 tons of rye, repayable in six months in kind. The bonds were issued at a price 5 per cent below the average price of rye, and the peasants were able to use them to pay off their taxes. The second was for 100,000,000 roubles, backed by gold of the State reserve, and bringing in 6 per cent interest. In turn these measures made possible preparations for currency reform and stabilization.

Of very great importance was the abolition of compulsory trade unionism. The trade unions became voluntary organizations which collected their membership dues, not by deductions from wages at source, but through stewards in the normal way. They were encouraged to build up considerable unemployment funds, with the help of which they assisted their members thrown out of work by the peacetime reconversion measures already described. At the same

time, labour exchanges were introduced, which were broadly under trade union control, although formally under the management of the People's Commissariat for Labour. From these the unemployed received out-of-work benefit, free tickets for public canteens and restaurants, orders entitling them to remission of rent, etc.

It is noteworthy that, when drafting the new Criminal Code (May 25th, 1922), the CEC of Soviets unanimously agreed that strikes in the Soviet Republic were not prohibited (as they are not today). In fact, many strikes took place, quite legally, in after years – 538 in 1922 and 1923, 463 in 1924 and 1925, etc.

Other measures of importance which must be mentioned were the formation of a number of State, co-operative and municipal banks, and even of two small private banks; the formation by the principal industrial trusts of special trading organizations (syndicates) for more efficient marketing; and the publication of a far-reaching plan of concessions which would be offered to foreign capital willing to take on the opening-up of undeveloped national resources of timber, minerals, fertile lands, etc. The concessionaires would have their profits guaranteed by the Soviet State, on a scale large enough to ensure a handsome net dividend even after they had returned their enterprises to the Soviet State, intact and in working order, at the end of a term of years. In return, they would have to observe the Soviet labour laws. In point of fact, a decree establishing the principle of such concessions had been adopted even earlier, on November 23rd, 1920 – not without protests from many workers – when the first prospects of normal trading relations with the rest of the world had appeared. Here, too, was a return to 1918 precedents.

To ensure that the inevitable revival of small private capitalism under this system would have the least possible effect on the policy of the Bolshevik Party, and at the same time that the ranks of the Party would be confined as far as possible to those whose political understanding was equal to the complex tasks imposed by this tremendous manoeuvre, unprecedented in world history and unprovided for by Socialist theory, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party ordered a 'cleansing' of the ranks. This was carried out by small groups of the oldest Party members, for the most part workmen tested in underground activity during the old regime and in the civil war: but not by their judgment alone. In every factory, office or other place where groups of Communists were working, the general mass of their non-Party fellow-workers was invited to take a full part in the



discussion of the work and life of each individual Communist, at public meetings where these could be subjected to question and criticism. Only after thorough discussion of this kind did the 'cleansing commissions' make their recommendations for expulsion or retention in the Party ranks. Nearly 170,000 members of the Communist Party were expelled in this way during 1921 and 1922 – some 25 per cent of the total membership.

## 2. THE GREAT FAMINE

The application of the New Economic Policy was terribly complicated by a serious drought in the spring of 1921, affecting the south-eastern provinces of European Russia and the western steppe provinces of southern Siberia. The peasants had very little in the way of reserves to meet such a situation, either in food or in cattle fodder. Russian agriculture in these areas – known for many years to be subject to periodical droughts – had never acquired the necessary technical resources or routine required to combat them, either by irrigation or otherwise. By the summer of an area inhabited by thirty-two million people was involved, of whom some twenty millions could be classed as famine-stricken. A vast effort on the part of the State and the Soviet people fed and saved fourteen millions of these, and provided seeds for the 1922 sowings. Voluntary collections abroad, with small grants from a few Governments, reminded the Soviet people that friendship and charity still existed, here and there, in the outside world. But more than five million people perished of hunger and disease, at a time when huge surpluses of breadstuffs existed in other countries. This experience, together with the unashamed efforts which were made to take advantage of Russia's difficulty in order to force her to surrender the fruits of the revolution, have never been forgotten by the Soviet people.

On August 20th, 1921, the Soviet Government had signed an agreement at Riga with the American Relief Administration for distribution of help from outside by the A.R.A. under supervision of the Soviet authorities. A week later a similar agreement was signed with Dr Nansen, the famous explorer and great humanitarian, as High Commissioner of the League of Nations, based on a plan for an international relief loan of £10,000,000. This proposal was violently denounced in the leading newspapers of Britain, France and America as a concealed form of aid to the Bolsheviks; and the Allied Supreme Council showed where the principal Governments stood by creating

an 'International Aid Committee' under the chairmanship of none other than M. Noulens, that same French Ambassador who in 1918 had been the main organizer of subversion and invasion, and including leading former Allied business men in Russia who had lost by the revolution. On September 4th this Commission issued a demand that, as a preliminary to any assistance, a special investigating committee should study conditions in Soviet Russia. The Soviet Government, difficult as was its position, rejected this and similar proposals; and on September 29th the League of Nations Assembly rejected Nansen's demand for famine relief credits, after a debate in which the intention of the majority of the Powers to use the famine in order to force the Soviet Government to its knees was openly proclaimed. An Inter-Governmental Committee formed at Brussels at the beginning of October issued an appeal for private aid to Russia, which carried little conviction because it made governmental help depend upon the admission by the Soviet Government of the proposed international committee of enquiry.

All through the summer it was obvious that the famine had revived belief in the effectiveness of further pressure on the Soviet Government. From Poland, Rumania and Japan came reports of preparations for renewed military action against Soviet Russia. These caused such disquiet in the British Labour movement that influential unofficial deputations of M.P.s and trade union leaders, organized by the 'Hands Off Russia' Committee, visited the Ambassadors and Ministers of these countries in London to protest against such plans. In October there was a large-scale raid from Finland into Karelia. In September, just before the League met, Lord Curzon, then British Foreign Secretary, sent a menacing Note to the Soviet Government, protesting against alleged propaganda against British interests by Soviet diplomatic representatives, particularly in Persia and Afghanistan. Most of the 'documents' mentioned in the Note were in fact forgeries, produced by a special 'lie factory' which had been set up in Berlin by monarchist emigrants.

As a further indication that the trade agreements concluded earlier in the year must not be regarded as a sign of reconciliation with the Bolsheviks, the Soviet Government was not invited to the Washington Conference on relations with China, held in December, 1921: and was arbitrarily excluded from the two Danube Commissions which had existed since 1856 and 1920 – an act which was to

bear fruit more than twenty-five years later, when the balance of forces in Europe was reversed.

Nevertheless, the Soviet Government went steadily ahead with its efforts to make its relations with other countries more normal, parallel with the struggle for economic reconstruction at home. On October 28th, 1921, it took a step of profound political importance, by sending a Note to the British, French, United States and other Governments, offering in principle to recognize the Tsarist pre-war debts, on condition that credits were made available for the restoration of Russian economy – the only way in which to make payments on the debts possible. It also proposed that, to settle this and all other outstanding questions between the Soviet Government and the rest of the world, an international conference should be called.

In the third week of December, the Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets approved this policy; at the same time it made big allocations of foodstuffs for famine relief, endorsed proposals to reduce the Red Army to one-third of its then size, and decreed measures for simplifying and reducing burdens on the peasantry. In a special resolution on nationalized industries, the Congress insisted that they must reduce costs and introduce proper methods of accountancy, particularly in the coal, oil, iron and steel industries, and combat private enterprise in the open market by superior efficiency. Measures for reducing bureaucracy, and likewise for cutting down the extraordinary powers of the Cheka, were also decided on.

### 3. THE GENOA CONFERENCE

The consequence of the Soviet offer of October 28th, and of the far-reaching interest which it aroused among the British people, was a decision by the Allied Supreme Council on January 6th, 1922, to convene an international economic conference at Genoa, with Soviet Russia as one of the thirty-four Powers invited. The possibility that at Genoa prosperity might return to the world through co-operation between capitalist States and Soviet Russia aroused public excitement for weeks before the Conference opened on April 10th.

The most significant event in its preparation, however, was the • unanimous report of an Anglo-French Commission of experts (published on March 28th) to the effect that the Soviet Government should be required unconditionally to recognize the Tsarist debts, both pre-war and contracted during the war; that it should restore nationalized enterprises, and pay full compensation for all losses

caused to foreigners by the revolution or its consequences (even during the period of the Provisional Government): that it should abolish the State monopoly of foreign trade: and that a system of capitulations should be set up, under which foreigners in Russia should not be liable for trial by Soviet courts except with the consent of their consul. At the Conference itself, the Allies presented a memorandum (May 2nd) on much the same lines, demanding in addition that the Soviet Government should renounce its counter-claims against the war debts, based on the frightful devastation caused by Allied invasions from 1918 to 1920. 'Restitution or compensation' was the formula of the Allied Governments.

The Soviet delegates refused both, as a matter of right; but they offered to grant concessions, or long leases on their former property, to former owners, or priority right to participate in Soviet trusts which included their former establishments. Russia would renounce her counter-claims for intervention, if the debts incurred by Tsardom from 1914 onwards, to wage a war alien to the Russian people, were cancelled. As for pre-war debts, the conditions laid down in the offer of October 28th were maintained, with the condition of a substantial delay in payment to enable economic recovery to take shape.

The Allies knew that the Soviet Government could not and would not accept their demands: consequently they were calculating that the monstrous economic and political difficulties with which the Soviet Government was faced would get the better of it, sooner or later. The Soviet Government might hope that its offers would attract practical-minded people taking the view that half or a quarter of a loaf was better than no bread; but it also had no illusions about the temper of its opponents. Therefore it, too, was taking a long view, namely, that if need be it could overcome its difficulties, and build Socialism unaided and despite sabotage. In the long run it was the Soviet calculation which proved right, and the adamant policy of the Allied Governments which proved wrong.

This becomes particularly clear if we study the concrete proposals made in the speech of Chicherin, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, on the opening day of the Conference. These words, forgotten for many years, even today throw a flood of light on Soviet economic policy in the years that followed, as well as on what might have been;

To meet the needs of world economy and the development of the general productive forces, the Russian Government is ready deliberately and voluntarily to open its frontiers for the creation of international transit routes: it is ready to release for cultivation millions of ? hectares of the most fertile land in the world; it is ready to grant forest concessions, coalmining and mineral concessions of infinite wealth, chiefly in Siberia, and concessions of all kinds throughout the territory of the R.S.F.S.R.

It is projecting collaboration between Western industry on one side, Russian and Siberian agriculture and industry on the other, calculated to enlarge the base of European industry in respect of raw material, wheat and fuel, in proportions far surpassing the pre-war level...

The capital which would have to be invested each year in the work of guaranteeing the future of European production would constitute only a small fraction of the annual expenditure of the countries of Europe and America on their armies and navies.

This proposal was rejected out of hand, for the reasons indicated. The Conference rejected Chicherin's further proposal, made in his speech, for a general limitation of armaments, with the prohibition of gas and air warfare – although these had been promised by the Treaty of Versailles, and were to be the subject of an international conference ten years later. Equally unacceptable was Chicherin's suggestion of a universal peace congress, representing all nations, and including working-class organizations. The Soviet delegation declared itself ready to join in 'revising the Covenant of the League of Nations in order to make it a genuine league of peoples, without domination or distinction of victors and vanquished' – a proposal which would have brought Soviet Russia into the League many years before it entered, and would have cut the ground from under revisionist propaganda in many countries. Equally far-sighted, and equally vain, were Chicherin's proposals for a re-distribution of the gold reserves of the world, in their pre-war proportions, by means of long-term credits; and for an international plan of allocation of fuel resources and manufactured goods, in order to revive world commerce.

It was on this occasion, too, that Chicherin formulated the specific Soviet doctrine of foreign policy to which Soviet statesmen

reverted again and again in after years, and which will be seen to follow directly from the principles expounded by Lenin at the beginning of the revolution:

While itself maintaining the point of view of Communist principles, the Russian delegation recognizes that in the present period of history, which permits the parallel existence of the old social order and of the new order coming into being, economic collaboration between the States representing these two systems of property appears imperatively necessary for general economic reconstruction ... The Russian delegation has come here, not with the intention of making propaganda for its own theoretical views, but to engage in practical relations with the Governments, the commercial and industrial circles of all countries, on the basis of reciprocity, equality of rights and full and complete recognition.

The Soviet proposals for international collaboration proved equally unacceptable at the conference of economic experts called (as a result of a Soviet suggestion) at The Hague {June 15th to July 28th, 1922). Restitution of former properties was the demand, here too, that torpedoed the discussions.

Yet to the discerning eye there might well have been grounds for doubt whether the Allied position was as strong as it seemed. During the Genoa Conference itself, the equally harsh attitude taken up by the Allies towards the German Republic, 'reliable' it was in respect of the capitalist system (at all events by comparison with Soviet Russia), forced its statesmen to turn to Russia for political support and an outlet for their industry. On April 16th, 1922, the Treaty of Rapallo between the two countries, establishing normal diplomatic relations between them and creating a basis for broad economic intercourse by cancelling mutual claims, created the impression of a diplomatic thunderbolt. Yet it was clear and unmistakable evidence, not only that practical business men of at least one great European country saw opportunities for profitable affairs in Russia, but also that the Soviet Government had other grounds for confidence in its internal strength. This was reinforced in October, when it refused to ratify an agreement signed the previous month by Krassin, its People's Commissar for Foreign Trade, with Mr Leslie Urquhart for the return of the Jatter's £56,000,000 mining concessions in Siberia –

partly on the ground that the terms were not advantageous enough to the Soviet Government, partly because of the hostility shown by the British Government to the Soviet request to be invited to the Lausanne Conference for a peace treaty with Turkey (September 14th, 1922).

In August, after two months' hearings, there ended in Moscow a trial of the Right Socialist-Revolutionary leaders. This trial was memorable, not only because it showed that the Soviet Government was not prepared to overlook espionage and sedition merely because the persons concerned bore a 'Socialist' label, but because the entire archives of the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, secured by a daring coup in Paris and brought secretly to Moscow, were produced at the trial and subsequently published, with full facsimiles, for the world to see. These documents made it perfectly clear that Ministers and institutions of Governments supposedly at peace with Soviet Russia – like the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Benes, the French General Staff and others – were in reality financing and in other practical ways assisting terrorist and espionage work by the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

On December 2nd, on the invitation of the Soviet Government to its neighbours, there assembled in Moscow a Conference for the Limitation of Armaments, attended by the three Baltic States, with Finland and Poland: Rumania had been invited, but refused. The Soviet Government proposed to reduce the Red Army from 800,000 to 200,000 (i.e. more than had been offered at Genoa) within two years, if the others reduced proportionately: and to fix maximum expenditure for defence in the several Budgets. When this offer was rejected, it suggested a reduction of its own forces to 600,000 within twelve months, asking for suitable offers in reply. All the other countries, with the exception of Lithuania, made 'offers' which turned out to involve no reduction whatsoever on their existing figures; and the discussions closed on December 12th without reaching agreement.

Nineteen-twenty-two ended, however, with two substantial achievements in the international field. In November the Japanese, at loggerheads with the United States and Great Britain, felt that the time was ripe to complete evacuation of the Far East.

In November, also, Soviet Russia was invited to attend the forthcoming Lausanne Conference on peace with Turkey and the

regime of the Straits – after the British Government had for two months been trying to keep her out.

On December 30th, a Congress of Soviets composed of delegations from the four principal Soviet Republics – the Russian Federation (RSFSR), Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Transcaucasian Federation (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan)\* adopted a treaty of union establishing a single confederate State – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In a report on the subject, given at the Congress of the Russian Federation four days before, Stalin had given the reasons for this act. They fell into three groups.

The first related to the internal economic situation – the meagreness of economic and financial resources after seven years of war, the economic division of labour which had been established in the course of history between the different parts of the country, and the need for maintaining efficient unity of communications.

The second group referred to the international situation – the need for the greatly reduced army to be united in face of external danger, the peril of economic isolation revealed at Genoa and The Hague, and the diplomatic boycott which still existed.

The third group of reasons sprang from the natural tendency to co-operation between countries where collective property and hostility to exploitation of man by man were the basis of society.

The formation of the U.S.S.R. meant that the economic programme outlined by Chicherin at Genoa would be achieved by very different means.

#### 4. ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND POLITICAL DISPUTES

In spite of the trials and sufferings of 1921, which had lowered the purchasing power of the peasantry and adversely affected industrial production, the New Economic Policy began to show tangible results. The food tax for 1922 was collected in its entirety, and a good harvest brought agricultural output that year up to 70 per cent of the pre-war level. Although industry lagged far behind – reaching the level of 25 per cent of pre-war – this itself was an increase of nearly one-third over the output level of 1921, and confirmed the soundness

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\* On the initiative of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party in November, 1921, the three Transcaucasian Republics in March, 1922, had established a Federal Union.



of the general economic policy. At the XI Party Congress (March 27th to April 2nd, 1922) Lenin drove home the lesson.

In so far as the New Economic Policy had involved a certain freedom for revival of capitalism, it was a retreat: and the time had come when the retreat could be ended. But it was necessary more than ever to strengthen links with the peasantry, and for that above all the Communists must 'learn how to trade'. Trade was now the all-important problem. The old contemptuous attitude to trading ('they didn't teach us in prison how to trade'), natural enough among revolutionary workers in a capitalist society, was entirely out of place in a country where a Socialist State was trying to establish proper economic relations with a mass of peasant small producers, in order to lead them later to Socialism when its economic resources were much larger.

The Congress laid greater emphasis than ever on the new tasks of trade unions in this situation – to divest themselves of the last traces of wartime preoccupation with the management of factories, and to concentrate on organizing the workers for defence against the encroachments of private capital, and against 'bureaucratic distortions' of policy by the managers of State enterprise. For this the members must be alert, active and interested in production problems: and this in turn required full transition to voluntary membership.

In fact, at the end of the year Lenin was able to report with some satisfaction, in one of his last public speeches made at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International (November 13th), that State investments in industry, procured by the utmost economy in all directions, had made a small beginning, to the amount of twenty million gold roubles (£2,000,000). It was a sign of the times that the Soviet Government had felt its position strong enough to introduce, by the side of its still depreciating paper currency, a new monetary unit bearing the old Slav title of chervonetz, equal in value to ten roubles gold, backed both in reserves of precious metal and by stocks of easily realizable commodities, and issued by the new State Bank (October 11th).

Two other events of political importance in 1922 require mention. One was the appointment of Stalin as General Secretary of the Communist Party, on Lenin's suggestion, in April (after the XI Congress). The other was the culmination of the long and serious conflict with the Orthodox Church. Its Patriarch, Tikhon, had called for resistance to a decree (February 16th) requisitioning Church gold

and silver and jewellery, not used in services, for famine relief. In a number of local conflicts between congregations and militia, about twenty people were killed. Tikhon was tried in 1923, but released on abjuring his political struggle against the Soviet Government. Henceforth the Orthodox Church gradually accepted its exclusion from temporal and State affairs.

But the fundamental problem was still that of economic and political relations between the working class and the peasantry. Already in 1922 the relatively abundant harvest, combined with a slow rate of recovery of industry, had led to a fall in agricultural prices and a rise in those of industrial manufactures. In 1923 agriculture showed even better results, while industry, although increasing in output by 35 per cent in one year, was still lagging behind. This was natural: the factories required capital overhaul of their equipment, and industry as a whole needed a much larger volume of production to meet rising demands by the people. For this the resources were as yet not available; whereas, at the comparatively low technical level in which agriculture had been left by Tsardom, recovery was relatively easier and quicker. This difference in rates of recovery led to the so-called 'scissors', in which the prices of agricultural produce and manufactured goods showed a wider and wider divergence from the average index of prices – agricultural produce *BELOW* that average, industrial prices *ABOVE*. At the end of August, 1922, agricultural prices were still 3 per cent above the general index: by the beginning of October, 1923, they were 46 per cent below that level. Industrial goods, on the other hand, had been 15 per cent below the general index in August, 1922, and were 72 per cent above it by October 1st, 1923. This meant that the peasants were unable to buy goods, and commodity stocks piled up. State trusts were unable in consequence to meet their financial obligations, and in particular, in the autumn of 1923, delays in payment of wages in many factories led to strikes. The situation was aggravated by instructions given by Pyatakov, chairman of the Supreme Economic Council and a member of the Trotsky group, sharing its specific opinions on Soviet economy, to raise prices of manufactured goods intended for the peasantry in order to make up for deficits by 'primitive Socialist accumulation' at their expense.

A number of other problems made matters worse. The reduction of staffs in public offices, demobilization and the natural influx of poorer peasants from the villages gradually raised the number of unemployed in the towns until they reached one million by the end of

1923. Continuing deficits of the State Budget, and the fall in the value of the treasury paper rouble, made proper calculation of prices impossible and disorganized attempts to regulate the market. At the same time, lack of experience in State wholesale and retail trading gave big opportunities to the private trader. In industry private capital held an insignificant position: although by the end of 1923 it had taken over more than half of the 5,500 denationalized enterprises, they employed an average of two or three workers each, and were responsible for barely 4 per cent of total industrial output. In retail trade, however, private shops, far outnumbering both State and co-operative shops, accounted in 1923 for three-quarters of the total turnover.

Economic problems were complicated by difficulties of a political character. There were no Socialist blue-prints or works of reference, to guide a Socialist State in a huge sea of small peasant enterprise and restricted small-scale capitalism. The internal obstacles to recovery evidently had encouraged foreign enemies of the U.S.S.R., as the 'Curzon ultimatum' and the assassination of Vorovsky in May, 1923 (to be dealt with in the next section) seemed to indicate. Lenin's guiding hand had been absent from the helm of State since the late autumn of 1922, when he had had his first stroke. Some leading Bolsheviks began to show signs of giving way before the difficulties.

Early in the year Bukharin, editor of Pravda, and Sokolnikov, People's Commissar for Finance, had proposed the abolition of the State monopoly of foreign trade, in the hope of encouraging private capital to develop further. Trotsky had suggested the closing down of big enterprises in the heavy industries, like the Putilov (now Kirov) engineering works and shipbuilding yards at Petrograd, on the ground that they were unprofitable. At the Twelfth Congress of the Communist Party (April, 1923) Krassin, People's Commissar for Foreign Trade, and Radek, one of the leading Party journalists, had proposed offering works in the basic industries as concessions to foreign capital, and encouraging foreign investors to take these concessions by unconditional recognition of Tsarist debts. All of these proposals were strongly opposed by Stalin, and were rejected by the Congress.

One essential aspect of the peasant question dealt with by the Congress was that of the economic and cultural inequality still remaining among the various peoples of the U.S.S.R. Stalin's report on

this subject, and his outline of the measures required to bring the sixty-five million people concerned – the overwhelming mass of them peasants – into fully effective alliance with the Russian workers and peasants, remain fundamental documents for the understanding of the nationalities policy of the Soviet Union.

As conditions continued to worsen in the summer, the attack on Central Committee policy was renewed by Trotsky and other dissatisfied leaders, together with other oppositionists, in the form of a 'Declaration of the Forty-six' (the number of its signatories), insisting on the policy of 'dictatorship of industry', i.e. of accumulating resources at the expense of the peasantry, and opposing stabilization of the currency. They saw a falling currency as an additional device for pumping material values out of the peasants while giving them very little in return. The Opposition also favoured 'commodity intervention', or big imports of consumer goods, in order to lower prices. This scheme was rejected, and a firm policy, aimed at tackling the 'scissors' problem from every angle, began to be applied, on lines decided by the XII Congress.

Heavy price reductions of manufactured goods were ordered: and in fact they were reduced by 25 per cent between October, 1923, and February, 1924, when the peasants were best able to buy. The policy of increasing the export of corn was put into effect in order to relieve pressure on the home market, raise prices of grain in the interests of the peasantry and at the same time secure foreign currency for essential imports. In fact, grain exports rose from under one-and-a-half million tons in 1922 to over three million tons in 1923-4, which brought up grain prices by 60 per cent in the course of 1924. Drastic steps were taken to reform the State marketing organizations formed in the first years of the N.E.P., which, owing to their unwieldiness, had pushed up overhead charges far above pre-war levels – e.g. by 60 per cent for textiles 200 per cent for pig-iron, etc. At the same time financial and other measures were taken to encourage trading by the village co-operatives, which accounted for 26 per cent of retail turnover in 1923-4, as against 10 per cent the previous year. Special provision was made to expand the light industries, in order to provide more consumer goods for the peasantry. In April, 1924, a special Government department was set up for the encouragement, study and organization of home trade. A financial reform began to be urgently prepared by reducing expenses to make the Budget balance and by substituting the chervonetz for all trans-

actions in Treasury roubles. The latter were replaced, once the Budget had been balanced, by a new issue of paper money serving only as small change. This reform was completed in the course of 1924.

Nevertheless, a further attack on Government policy was launched by Trotsky (December, 1923) in a widely-published pamphlet entitled 'The New Course'. In this he concentrated attention on the 'degeneration' of the Party leadership, through its supposed bureaucratic estrangement from the members. A full and free discussion raged throughout the Communist Party for the next two months, culminating at the Thirteenth Conference in January, 1924, at which the defeat of the Trotskyists in the vast majority of Party groups was reflected by a resolution endorsing the policy of the Party leadership, adopted by 125 votes to three. The defeat of the Opposition was even more overwhelming at the Thirteenth Congress held in May, when the effectiveness of the measures taken was now unmistakable. The industrial revival had brought with it a substantial increase in the purchasing power of wages (from 40 per cent of the pre-war level in 1922 to 65 per cent in May, 1924). The area under cultivation that summer was 80 per cent of the pre-war level. Though iron and steel output was still only 15 per cent of pre-war, coal and oil production was 50 per cent and railway freight loadings 40 per cent of the pre-war figure. It was clear that the worst difficulties were over.

This explains why the death of Lenin (January 21st, 1924), which was felt throughout the country as a painful and irreparable loss, nevertheless did not bring the wholesale panic and confusion which had been expected by many politicians and journalists in other countries. On the contrary it brought a characteristic response, recalling the experience of the 'Party week' at the height of the Civil War. When the Central Committee offered an opportunity to tried and experienced industrial workers to fill the gap in the ranks caused by Lenin's death, by joining the Party, 240,000 applied for membership.

## 5. EXTERNAL DIFFICULTIES, 1923-4

By this time, the tide seemed to have turned once again in foreign relations, at all events for the time being.

The difficulties of the spring of 1923 had as before brought encouragement to the Soviet Government's enemies. Already as early as March 30th, 1923, an attempt by the British Mission in Moscow to

interfere in legal action taken by the Soviet courts against a Polish spy (the priest Butkevich, whose death sentence had been confirmed by the highest authority of the U.S.S.R.) had led to a sharp exchange of Notes. On May 8th the British Mission | presented a ten-day ultimatum, couched in the strongest terms and threatening a rupture of relations unless satisfaction were given to a series of demands. These included the withdrawal of the Soviet diplomatic representatives in Persia and Afghanistan, apologies from the Soviet Government for alleged anti-British activities by these representatives, compensation to British subjects who had suffered in Russia during the wars of intervention, liberation of British trawlers arrested within the Soviet twelve-mile limit off Murmansk (the British Government recognized only a three-mile limit) and the withdrawal of the Soviet Notes in connexion with the British Mission's intercession for Butkevich.

The Soviet Government in its reply (May 12th) pointed out the apocryphal character of the evidence quoted in the Note, and reminded the British Government that it had ample documentary evidence of anti-Soviet activities by British agents in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Far East. Soviet citizens had suffered immeasurably more at the hands of the British forces during the Civil War than British agents at the hands of the Soviet Government. However, it declared its readiness to pay compensation to British citizens if the British Government did the same for Soviet citizens ; it withdrew the Notes complained of, as in fact the British interference had not altered the Court decision; and it accepted the *de facto* limitation of territorial waters for the time being to three miles. It did this expressly because of the international situation, highly explosive at the time on account of Anglo-French differences in connexion with the Ruhr, and recognizing that 'a rupture of relations would be pregnant with new perils and complications representing a threat to peace'. Its offer of a conference to discuss all outstanding questions, the moderation of its reply, and the arrival of Krassin in London on May 14th with a large list of orders for British industry, found a cordial response in Great Britain, where public opinion had already, through the Liberal and Labour parties, declared its alarm at the violent action of the then British Government. The Soviet Government, however, insisted on its counter-claims for British intervention and on its refusal to accept one-sided criticism of its diplomatic representatives.

Its stand was all the stronger because the news of the 'Curzon Ultimatum' had aroused popular indignation throughout the U.S.S.R.

at a pitch unequalled since the Polish invasion of 1920, and this indignation had expressed itself in mass demonstrations and collections for national defence. The British Government, finding itself isolated on the international arena (the French Government selected this moment for the demonstrative invitation to France of a Soviet commission for the repatriation of soldiers of the former Tsarist army) at first prolonged its ultimatum, and finally agreed not to insist on it. It was agreed that mutual complaints would henceforth be discussed privately, before other measures were resorted to.

Two days after the presentation of Lord Curzon's Note, a Russian White emigrant, Conradi, had shot dead the Soviet representative at the Lausanne Conference, an old Bolshevik and distinguished literary critic, V. V. Vorovsky. It was characteristic of the atmosphere in Europe at the time that the Vaud cantonal court allowed the prosecutor at the ensuing trial to conduct the case as though he were Conradi's defender, and to secure his acquittal – an act which, in the absence of any opposition by the Swiss authorities, led to the imposition of a Soviet boycott of Switzerland. At the Conference itself, to which the Soviet delegation had secured admission only with the greatest difficulty, a remarkable diplomatic duel between Chicherin and Lord Curzon over the latter's proposals giving foreign warships free access to the Black Sea – obviously directed against the U.S.S.R. – could not change the actual balance of forces. Turkey was obliged to alter the regime of the Straits which had existed for many years, and to admit the right of foreign warships to penetrate into the Black Sea. The Soviet delegation signed the final convention on August 14th only under protest, and the U.S.S.R. refused to ratify it.

But the steady hand with which internal economic and political difficulties were manifestly being dealt with in the summer and autumn of 1923 had their effect upon external relations also. The Conservative Government of Great Britain was defeated in the elections, and it became obvious that the Labour Party, although with only a relative majority, would be called upon to form an administration. Not without an eye on this, Mussolini announced in Parliament on November 30th that the Italian Government, which was then negotiating with the U.S.S.R. about a trade agreement, had decided to recognize the Soviet Government *de jure*. Nevertheless it was only on February 1st, 1924, that the British Mission in Moscow sent a Note in the same sense, on behalf of the Labour Government which had been formed ten days before. This was due to the extreme

reluctance of the new Prime Minister Macdonald and his immediate colleagues to break the continuity of British foreign policy; and only the most direct threat of public protest demonstrations by their rank and file forced the Labour Party leaders to break with Conservative foreign policy on this occasion. Even so, Macdonald refused to exchange ambassadors, appointing only a charge d'affaires until an agreement should have been reached on outstanding questions – particularly on mutual claims, credits for Russia and alleged propaganda.

British recognition was followed by similar action on the part of a number of other countries – Italy, Norway, Austria, Greece, Sweden, Denmark, Mexico, Hungary and, in October, France. On May 31st an important agreement was signed with China, not only establishing normal diplomatic relations but also confirming the Soviet Government's renunciation of all special rights and privileges, such as concessions, extra-territorial rights for Russian institutions and consular jurisdiction for Russian subjects, which had been extorted by Tsardom from China in the past. This renunciation had been proclaimed unilaterally by the Soviet Government on June 25th, 1919. Simultaneously an agreement was signed for the joint management of the Chinese Eastern Railway (built on a specially-leased belt of territory across Manchuria under pressure from Tsarist Russia) – thus giving practical evidence to the Chinese of the Soviet abandonment of the 'unequal treaties'.

Throughout the summer of 1924 negotiations proceeded in London for an agreement which would settle the questions outstanding between Britain and the U.S.S.R., and thus create a basis for the development of trade on a larger scale between the two countries. The Treaties finally worked out and signed on August 8th provided, among other things, for the satisfaction of the claims of British holders of Russian bonds (except those bought for speculative purposes after March, 1921). This did not include claims arising from war loans which, together with claims arising from the British invasion of Russia, would be discussed separately. Claims against the Soviet Government for loss of property owing to the revolution, i.e. nationalized factories, bank accounts, etc. would be met by the payment of a lump sum by the Soviet Government to the British Government, the latter to distribute it among the claimants. The British Government recognized that the financial and economic position of the U.S.S.R. made it impossible to satisfy the claims of the



bondholders fully; and agreed that the terms on which such satisfaction should be made would be the subject of special negotiations with the bondholders. Similarly there would be negotiations with the claimants for nationalized properties. When and if the two sets of subsidiary negotiations were completed, they would be embodied in a second treaty, in connexion with which the British Government would ask Parliament for authority to guarantee a loan, which the U.S.S.R. would issue on the British market. Thus reasonable compensation for British creditors of all kinds would go hand in hand with the provision of economic assistance by Britain to the U.S.S.R., in order to enable the latter so to develop its economic resources as to make the compensation a reality.

It must be noted that this arrangement did not involve one penny of public funds: subscriptions to the Soviet loan would have been taken up entirely by private firms and persons. But with all these safeguards, the Treaties did represent the success of the principle first set forth by the Soviet Government in its Note of October 28th, 1921: and as such it was unacceptable to the Conservative Opposition. For that very reason it was most distasteful to the leaders of the then Labour Government; and only the threat of a Labour parliamentary 'revolt' forced Macdonald to sign the Treaties, after negotiations had already come to a breakdown (August 5th). Shortly afterwards the Labour Government was overthrown, and by the judicious use of a forgery, the notorious 'Zinoviev Letter', the Conservative Party returned to power. The authenticity of this document was investigated by a special commission of the Trade Union Congress General Council, which visited the U.S.S.R. in November and December, 1924, and had full access, with its own expert translators, who had held important diplomatic and consular posts for Great Britain in Tsarist Russia, to the archives of the Communist international, from which the document was supposed to have come. They concluded that it was beyond all doubt a forgery – as indeed was quite obvious from the gross blunders and ignorance of Communist terminology which its compilers displayed; and this conclusion, embodied in a formal report, was accepted by the Trade Union Congress in 1925 and by the Labour movement at large. But the forgers had launched the document into British politics through the Foreign Office; the draft of a Note, drawn up on the assumption that the document was genuine, had been amended if not initialled by Macdonald; although afterwards he complained that he had not formally sanctioned its

despatch, he refused to accept the Soviet Note of protest which offered arbitration; the British Note was cleverly sent and issued to the Press by the permanent officials of the Foreign Office when Macdonald was away electioneering: and thus it became an official British document, on which the incoming Conservative Government of Mr Baldwin took its stand. On September 21st the new British Government sent a Note to Rakovsky, the Soviet representative in London, who had disclaimed and exposed the forgery, insisting on its genuineness: and at the same time a letter notifying him that the Government found it impossible to recommend the Treaties for ratification.

This failure of a promising initiative, which would have had immeasurable consequences for the knitting together of Europe in economic co-operation, was followed up by a series of violent public attacks on the Soviet Government by British Ministers, such as Lord Birkenhead, Mr Churchill and Mr Amery, of a virulence probably unequalled in the history of States maintaining diplomatic relations with one another. It lasted all through 1925. But by this time new economic and political difficulties within the U.S.S.R. were once again giving encouragement to its enemies.

Before considering these new problems, mention must be made of the report of the T.U.C. Delegation mentioned earlier. Published at the beginning of 1925, it became a landmark in the history of relations between British and Soviet workers. The Delegation, men of great trade union experience and for the most part of extremely moderate views, made a careful and systematic investigation of the economic and social conditions in various parts of the U.S.S.R., studying in particular with a practised eye the position of the working class. As previously mentioned, they had at their disposal interpreters familiar with Russia and the Russian language. Their conclusions even today can be read with advantage by most people wishing to know something more than their newspapers tell them about the U.S.S.R. In particular, their memorable finding, that 'in Russia the workers are the ruling class; they enjoy all the privileges of a ruling class; they are beginning to exercise some of its responsibilities' has been modified in the subsequent twenty-five years only in respect of the single word 'beginning'.

## 6. PROBLEMS OF CONSTRUCTION

One of the outstanding methods by which the Russian workers were 'beginning to exercise the responsibilities of a ruling class' was through their production conferences. These were meetings of workers in the same factory, together with representatives of the management and technicians – either mass meetings of all who desired to come, or else conferences of delegates from different parts of the factory – which discussed the general economic situation and problems arising in the current work of the factory. Their first appearance coincides with that turn of the tide, that overcoming of the acute crisis of the 'scissors', which took place in the winter of 1923-4, when an obvious improvement in living conditions brought a stiffening of working-class morale. At first the initiative to form such production conferences was taken by Party groups in the factory. But by the spring of 1924 it was obvious that, if they were to attract all potentially interested workers, they must be convened by a body with a wider appeal – the elected factory committee. In March and April 'production commissions' were formed by the factory committees in a number of Moscow establishments, and the movement spread elsewhere. In September, 1924, *Trud*, the trade union newspaper, published model regulations for their working, and by February, 1925, production conferences were meeting in 545 factories of the capital, with a total attendance of some 35,000 workers, with like developments elsewhere.

This growing interest in public affairs as the industrial revival proceeded also showed itself in the increased trade union membership – to six millions in 1924 and over eight millions at the end of 1925: as many on the basis of voluntary membership as had been enrolled compulsorily during the period of War Communism. There were solid grounds for this increasing confidence in the trade unions. The Labour Code was being applied with more and more effectiveness. Thus, average working hours had been reduced to 7.6 per day by the end of 1925; paid holidays actually taken amounted to 13.9 days per annum in 1925, more than double what they had been in the last year of the Civil War; non-contributory social insurance was really bringing effective benefits in the shape of increasing health services, prevention of accidents, better maternity benefits for women. The purchasing power of wages had reached 95 per cent of the pre-war level by the end of 1925, rents in particular taking no

more than 5 to 8 per cent of average earnings. Compared with 1922, the consumption of staple foods per head in a worker's family was over four times as great in 1925 in the case of wheat flour and sugar, nearly five times as great in the case of meat, and nearly double in the case of butter. And, if there were still a million unemployed, only 25 per cent of them were industrial workers, and most were peasants who were leaving the village because its low-grade individual economy offered them less prospects than expanding industry in the towns.

Politically also there were signs of growth. The percentage of voters which took part in the elections of town Soviets was 38.5 per cent in 1923, and over 40 per cent in 1924-5. Those participating in the election of village Soviets also rose from 37 per cent to 41 per cent. In a number of territories inhabited by previously subject nationalities, where education, social services and peasant organization had made much progress, further self-governing Soviet units appeared. Autonomous regions were set up for the largely pastoral peoples of the Nagorny Karabagh in Azerbaijan (1923), North Ossetia in Georgia (1924) and Kara-Kalpakia in Uzbekistan (1925). Autonomous Republics were created in more advanced areas, such as Karelia in the north-west and Buryat-Mongolia in the Far East (1923), Moldavia on the western border of Ukraine and Nakhichevan within Azerbaijan (1924). In 1924 also an historic delimitation of national territories took place among the nations of Central Asia (seventeen million people living in an area of over one-and-a-half million square miles), intermingled and dispersed during ages of conquest from east and west, and continually falling throughout the later centuries under the dominion of one feudal potentate or another. These nationalities were to be found both in the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Turkestan which had stood firm, as we have seen, throughout the civil war, and in the recently feudal semi-independent States, now People's Republics tolerating a measure of capitalism but allied with the U.S.S.R., Khorezm (Khiva) and Bokhara. Their basic nationalities were now (December 5th, 1924) given their true ethnical frontiers, by the establishment of the Turkmen and Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republics, the capitalist elements being expropriated; and the two new Soviet States in 1925 entered the U.S.S.R. as constituent or Union Republics, with a Tadjik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the borders of Uzbekistan, and a Kirgiz (later Kazakh) Autonomous S.S.R. within the

Russian Federation, for the time being. Later, as their economy and culture developed, they became Union Republics in their own right – Tadjikistan in 1929 and Kazakhstan in 1936. For several years now factories, mines and power stations had been built in these former colonies, in order to raise their living standards, at the same time as hospitals, schools and libraries. Russians working there had been sent “not as teachers or nursemaids, but helpers,” in Lenin’s words (July, 1921).

At his public trial that summer a well-known White leader, Boris Savinkov, captured after 6 years’ terrorist activity, declared that his long struggle had been futile: the facts showed “that the Russian people stands not behind us but behind the Russian Communist Party”.

However, the difficulties of building Socialism in a backward agrarian country were still to be felt. A bad harvest in 1924 and the still too high prices of industrial goods, together with the lack of experienced organizers in the countryside, led in many parts of the country to widespread abstention from voting in the village elections in the autumn, so that, while overall results showed the improvement just mentioned, there were some districts where no more than 10 per cent of the voters took part in the elections. In Georgia, the difficulties among some sections of even the poorer peasants were so obvious that a group of expropriated nobles and Mensheviks even attempted (in August, 1924) a desperate rising, at the manganese centre of Chiatury, suppressed, it is true, without difficulty by local forces composed of armed mountaineers and oil-workers.

It became more and more obvious that it was necessary to extend the Socialist element in Soviet economy to the entire structure – in other words, to transform the agriculture of the country on Socialist lines. This was all the more essential because it was evident that, while poor peasants were far fewer in numbers than before the revolution, and the middle peasants had finally taken their place as the characteristic figures in the Russian countryside (two-thirds of the total peasantry in 1925-26), the kulak or exploiting peasant still represented a factor to be reckoned with. Although the kulaks represented only 1\ per cent of the peasantry, as against 13 per cent in 1910, they were employing the labour of many poorer neighbours, and renting some of their land. Among the three million seasonal workers who at that time were the main labour force in Russia’s building industry, the kulaks employed about half a million, con-

tracting to supply gangs of their fellow- villagers for building jobs under the State and making profit on the transaction.

In order to effect the Socialist reorganization of agriculture, machinery was needed on a massive scale; and for this a drive for industrialization was essential, since the light industries, which had accounted for most of the industrial revival after 1921, were not able themselves to supply the necessary equipment for a transformed agriculture.

This great problem, which the leadership of the Communist Party faced at the end of the period of restoration of Russia's shattered economy, brought out into the open once more the opposition within the Party. In the autumn of 1924 Trotsky resumed his attack on the majority of the Communist leaders, in the shape of a tract on 'The Lessons of October' (1917), in which he suggested that they had failed Lenin on that historic occasion. The greater part of 1925 was passed in the struggle both against the Trotsky groups and against a so-called 'New Opposition', led by Zinoviev and Kamenev. The struggle found outward expression at the XIV Party Conference in April and the XIV Party Congress in December.\* At the latter meeting Zinoviev and Kamenev had succeeded in rallying a majority of the officials of the Leningrad organization of the Party, which in Bolshevik history had always been a citadel of support for the Central Committee. They were defeated at the Congress by 559 votes to 65, with 41 abstentions. The Congress took the unprecedented step of replying to defiance of its decisions by the Leningrad officials by sending a large group of Party leaders to fight the oppositionists at mass meetings of the Party groups in every factory of the city. In an unparalleled campaign lasting for many days, Molotov, Kalinin, Andreyev, and many others challenged the oppositionists before the rank and file, and thrashed out the issues in hours of searching and heated discussions. The campaign ended with an overwhelming victory for the Central Committee policy, no more than 3 per cent of the membership voting for the oppositionists.

The dispute had begun on practical questions, as to whether Russia could produce the necessary resources for industrialization,

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\* Both Conference and Congress are delegate meetings: but the first can only advise the Central Committee of the Party, whereas the second adopts decisions binding on the whole Party.

particularly machinery, without such recourse to foreign manufactures as would make her entirely dependent upon them; or whether it was safe to injure the interests of the kulak in the process, rather than encourage him to 'grow peacefully into Socialism' by continuing to enrich himself, at the price of perhaps rather heavier taxation for the benefit of the State (a formula used by Bukharin, which was seized upon by the Zinoviev-Kamenev group). But very rapidly the discussion shifted to the underlying issues – whether the State industries being built up in the U.S.S.R. were really Socialist in character, or 'State-capitalist'; whether the middle peasant really did represent a substantial and permanent ally of the working class in Socialist constructive effort, or was not fated ultimately to become a drag on Socialism, and an enemy whom the working class would have to fight, in a process which the Trotskyists called 'permanent revolution'. And these questions themselves merged into the fundamental issue of whether victory was possible for Socialism in the U.S.S.R. alone, granted so much help from the workers abroad as would enable the U.S.S.R. to gain time by its diplomacy and, in the event of any armed attack, defeat it.

The Central Committee majority took its stand upon the principle that there would have been no point in taking power in 1917 if the Bolsheviks had not believed in the possibility of using that power to build Socialism, and to complete its building; and, in denying this possibility, the Opposition was going back to the doctrines of the Mensheviks. At the same time, the Central Committee was convinced that, so long as capitalism existed in the major countries surrounding the U.S.S.R., the danger to even a completely-built Socialist society would continue. Only the workers in other countries could solve that problem; and they would be encouraged first and foremost by the very success of Socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. To deny this, and to reject the links which the U.S.S.R. maintained with both capitalist States who for the time being were friendly, and with foreign working class organizations who were interested in preventing a new war, as the Opposition proposed, was not 'a policy of world revolution' but a policy of gambling, adventure, irresponsible demagoguery and ultimately suicide.

The XIV Congress endorsed the policy of the Central Committee and heavily defeated the Opposition. The external peril had been well symbolized in October, 1925, by the conclusion of the Locarno Pact between France, Germany, Britain, Italy and Belgium – an ar-

rangement which the Bolsheviks were not alone in understanding as an attempt to lock and bar the door to war in the West, while leaving it invitingly ajar for Germany in the East. The Pact was the corollary of the Dawes Report of 1924, which had regulated German reparations payments by establishing American and, to a lesser extent, Anglo-French control over German economy. Mr Baldwin, the Conservative Party leader, had declared it in October, 1924, to be a barrier 'for the defence of West European civilization' against 'destructive ideas' from the East. Of the Pact itself, one of Mr Baldwin's followers and Government colleagues, the Rt. Hon. W. G. A. Ormsby Gore, now said (October 24th, 1925) that it was detaching Germany from Russia, which wanted 'the destruction of Western civilization'. The solidarity of 'Christian civilization', he said, was necessary 'to stem the most sinister force that has arisen, not only in our lifetime, but previously in European history'. As though to point the moral, on September 28th, Sidney Reilly, the organizer of the conspiracies of 1918 and still a noted British secret service agent, had been shot by Soviet frontier guards while attempting to cross the border back into Finland.

The same autumn, however, saw the British Trade Union Congress at Scarborough endorsing the formation of an Anglo-Russian Joint Advisory Council by the respective trade union movements, in order 'to promote international good will among the workers as a means of more adequately safeguarding the interests of international peace', and particularly to consolidate friendship between the British and Soviet working classes.

## 7. THE STRUGGLE FOR INDUSTRIALIZATION

The next three years, from 1926 to the beginning of 1929, were a period of simultaneous struggle in a number of fields, at a pitch which had never before been reached. The tremendous effort to find the resources for industrial development without alienating the mass of the peasantry had to be made in an atmosphere of political crisis, involving the repudiation of leaders with considerable prestige, during long months of intense ideological conflict: and the policy of the capitalist Great Powers seemed to threaten a new war.

During the first months of 1926 the economies necessary for the new industrial development policy were jeopardized by some mistakes in planning capital expenditure and imports which brought a shortage of goods, excessive currency issues, a rise in prices and a



consequent fluctuation in the purchasing power of the rouble. Some months of strenuous effort were necessary before stabilization of prices was achieved, with a wage-rise for the lower-paid workers, by the end of the summer. This was enough, however, to encourage a new outburst of opposition by the Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky groups, who fused their activities in the course of the year. In September they attacked the Central Committee at party meetings in Moscow, Leningrad and elsewhere, and only temporarily abandoned the struggle when overwhelmingly defeated in the voting. At the XV Conference of the Communist Party (October 26th to November 3rd) they once again renounced their opposition, while declaring that they retained their point of view. This had included violent criticism of the Central Committee on a number of questions of external policy.

In March, 1926, the forces of the revolutionary Kuomintang Government of Canton, built up with the help of the Chinese Communist Party and with the counsel of advisers sent from Moscow on the invitation of Sun Yat-sen, began its historic Northern Expedition, which brought the greater part of the country under its rule. This caused violent reactions in those countries which had great investments in China, particularly Great Britain, where the Conservative majority in Parliament interpreted the expedition as a further stage in the world revolution. Hostility to the U.S.S.R. in these quarters was made still more acute in May, by the General Strike, and particularly by the sending of large sums (£380,000 up to the middle of June) to the British miners for their strike funds (the T.U.C. had declined the offer), as the result of collections in the Soviet trade unions, on the basis of one quarter of a day's wage for one day from each member. The hostility aroused found expression in a series of accusations by leading British Ministers, including the Foreign Secretary, the Home Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer – then Mr Winston Churchill – couched in the most unmeasured terms, and accompanied by threats to break off the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement.

A Franco-Soviet conference for the settlement of outstanding questions between the two countries, which opened in Paris in February, proved fruitless as a result of the worsening international atmosphere; and in September the bandit General Chang Tso-lin seized all the vessels of the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchurian waters, thus visibly provoking a conflict. Successes of Soviet diplomacy in creating certain obstacles to war in the course of 1926 – by pacts of non-aggression concluded with Germany (April), Afghanistan

(August), and Lithuania (October) – were not enough to dissipate the growing tension.

Nevertheless, the industrial construction decided upon at the XIV Congress went ahead. Power-stations opened in Central Asia and in Armenia in May, the production by a Leningrad works of the first Russian-made cotton-ginning machine, and the beginning of construction of the first tractor works in the U.S.S.R. at Stalingrad in the summer, were among the many indications that industrialization was meant in earnest. By the end of the year the output of industry had increased by over 40 per cent in comparison with 1925, heavy industry developing faster than light and consumer industries. There had been a substantial increase in capital investment in industry – double what had been made the previous year – partly as a result of assignments out of the State Budget from the revenues of other branches of economy, partly by increased profits within State industry itself. These had multiplied more than four-fold within two years. Wages had also risen during the year – approximately by nearly 12 per cent – and membership of the trade unions rose to over nine millions.

The output of agriculture had increased by 23 per cent in 1925, and a further increase took place in 1926 as the result of a good harvest. This made possible substantial increases in grain purchases by the State from the peasants, and an expansion of exports. And the share of private capital in home trade fell from nearly half the total in 1922-3 to just over a fifth in 1925-6, under the pressure of heavy increases in taxation (1926).

Nevertheless, the undoubted advance of Socialist economy was accompanied by many practical difficulties, due to the immense effort involved in industrial construction in a country extremely short both of resources and of experience in economic planning. Retail prices of manufactured goods had increased by about 10 to 11 per cent in the year, whereas it had been planned to reduce them by that amount; and there had been some rise in the costs of production. There had been wasteful building of unnecessary factories by some regional authorities; there had been some cases when costly foreign equipment had been bought before the buildings or Russian-made equipment were ready; while the machinery of industrial management, worked out by experience in the first years of the New Economic Policy, had already served its purpose and was becoming cumbersome. There were also difficulties with the foreign trade

balance, owing particularly to inadequate production of 'industrial crops' and raw materials such as wool and leather.

These were some of the main problems dealt with at the XV Party Conference, and their open discussion provided not a little material for attacks from the Opposition within and for jeering without. But the policy of proceeding with industrialization was firmly maintained, special attention being directed to overcoming the new problems, above all by drawing in the mass of the workers themselves, through the trade unions and production conferences. In this respect there was already something to go upon. By December, 1926, half a million workers in Moscow alone had taken part in the election of delegates to the production conferences. Twenty per cent of all Soviet metal workers were attending such conferences. Many thousands of workers were taking part in inspections aimed at reducing waste in public institutions.

However, if 1926 had already been a year of tension, 1927 was a year of crisis – perhaps just because of Soviet economic success.

On February 21st, in reply to an interpellation by a group of members of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets about Anglo-Soviet relations, Litvinov made a short statement confirming that not only in Britain but also in some other capitalist States the practice has been established of putting responsibility on the U.S.S.R. for all mishaps and convulsions in internal and external affairs'. In Britain, the inspiration came from Russian emigrants and a small but wealthy group of foreign creditors of Tsarist Russia; but, Litvinov said, there was reason to believe that the campaign was encouraged by the British Government itself, some members of which openly took part in it. Although general accusations had frequently been made, both publicly and privately, every proposal by the Soviet Government that, in accordance with the agreement of 1923, the British Government should submit concrete evidence of any breach by the Soviet Government of its obligations had always been refused.

Two days later there followed a Note from the British Foreign Secretary, containing a number of extracts from speeches by Soviet leaders welcoming revolutionary movements throughout the world, which the Note interpreted as 'almost intolerable provocation' and 'interference in purely British affairs'. In its reply on February 26th the Soviet Government pointed out that Sir Austen Chamberlain had not given a single case of 'incitement to discontent or rebellion in any part of the British Empire' (i.e. any breach of the Trade Agreement of

1921), and reminded him that there was no agreement between the two countries to limit freedom of speech and of the press in either country. Litvinov quoted a number of violent attacks by British Ministers already mentioned on the Soviet Government, and said that British diplomatic representatives in Moscow had never been subject to such public insult at the hands of the Soviet press as Soviet representatives in London were daily suffering from the Conservative newspapers. The British Foreign Secretary had hinted at a possible rupture of the Trade Agreement and even of diplomatic relations: Litvinov replied that that would be the British Government's responsibility, but that 'threats in relation to the U.S.S.R. cannot frighten anyone in the Soviet Union'.

From this public exchange it was clear that matters were coming to a head, and others drew the conclusion even before the British Government. On March 11th the Chinese police raided the Soviet Trade Delegation at Harbin, allegedly on the ground of its 'propaganda' in China. This was followed by a raid on the Soviet Embassy in Peking, in the course of which property was stolen and the diplomatic staff maltreated. On May 12th, the British uniformed and secret police followed the example of the Chinese authorities, raiding the Soviet trading organizations in London, breaking into the diplomatically immune office of the Trade Delegation and seizing its cyphers, and maltreating a Soviet clerk who attempted to defend his papers. The precise excuse offered by the Home Secretary – that an important British document was missing – was of little interest. It was clear that the purpose was to provoke a rupture in circumstances facilitating the widest possible anti-Soviet propaganda: and this purpose was duly achieved. On May 27th diplomatic relations were broken off, and a flood of anti-Soviet materials filled the Conservative press: but the one thing which was still missing, after several days of breaking open safes in the Soviet offices, was the 'missing' document. It proved as shadowy an excuse for the rupture as the never-discovered original of the notorious 'Zinoviev Letter'.\*

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\* In a speech to the Moscow City Soviet on June 1st, the Soviet Premier read out an extract from an intercepted letter of the British Consul at Leningrad to the British Mission in Moscow, referring to 'Russian birds', whom he sent out to get secret economic information, running the risk 'of being hanged and quartered by the G.P.U. for espionage'. The

However, the signal had gone out to the world. On June 3rd Canada broke off relations with the U.S.S.R. On June 7th a Russian White emigrant, leader of an organization enjoying official Polish patronage, shot dead Voikov, the Soviet Minister to Poland. On June 10th an organization was discovered in Paris engaged in issuing forged Soviet bills. In July the Soviet Trade Delegation in Berlin was raided, and the Soviet bank and other offices at Shanghai were raided by the Chinese police. In September a Russian emigrant attempted to enter the Soviet Legation at Warsaw to murder the Charge d'Affaires. At the beginning of December, following a workers' insurrection at Canton, the Chinese police raided the Soviet Consulate and shot dead several Soviet officials; after which the Nanking Government broke off relations with the U.S.S.R. By this time the French Government had also insisted on the recall of the Soviet Ambassador, on the original pretext that he held oppositionist views in the discussions within the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. It should be recalled that at this time there were no diplomatic relations with the United States, with Belgium or Holland, with Yugoslavia or Bulgaria, with Hungary or Czechoslovakia. It seemed as though the Soviet Union was being returned to the condition of isolation in which it had found itself in 1920.

The diplomatic horizon was not entirely dark. In March a Trade Agreement had been signed with Turkey, and another in June with Latvia. On October 1st a Treaty of Non-Aggression and Neutrality had been signed with Persia. At the International Economic Conference held at Geneva by the League of Nations in May, the Soviet Delegation secured the adoption of a resolution recognizing the possibility and desirability of the peaceful coexistence of countries based on different forms of property. At the end of November, also at Geneva, the Soviet Government submitted proposals for universal disarmament within four years to the Preparatory Commission of the Disarmament Conference. These proposals aroused great enthusiasm in many countries, as was shown by the flood of telegrams and letters which Litvinov received from women's and youth organizations, trade unions, and co-operative and peace movements in all parts of Europe and America.

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Soviet press published a facsimile of the letter: it was written on April 22nd, 1924- during the Labour Government!

Neither these messages nor the May resolution, however, could be a sure guarantee of peace. All over the Soviet Union, after the rupture of Anglo-Soviet diplomatic relations, huge demonstrations of support for the Soviet Government and mass subscriptions for the purchase of squadrons of aeroplanes, named: 'Our Reply to Chamberlain', showed the temper of the Soviet people. The murder of Voikov, understood as a direct intimation that the use of arms would follow diplomatic ruptures, found an immediate response: twenty outstanding Russian Whites, members of former noble or millionaire families, who were serving prison sentences for counter-revolutionary activities, were shot.

This situation was most unfavourable for the Trotskyists' efforts to resume their attack on Central Committee policy – except on the assumption that they shared the belief abroad in the instability of the Soviet power. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1927 a new 'platform' of the Opposition began to be circulated, in which, apart from attacks on alleged bureaucracy in the Party, they charged the majority with worsening the conditions of the workers, permitting the growth of the kulak element in the country at the expense of the middle and poor peasants, retarding industrial development, and reducing the Soviets to a mere sham.

In reality, the Soviet local elections in the spring had already revealed unprecedented political activity and enthusiasm on the part of the electors: over 48 per cent of the country voters and nearly 60 per cent of town voters had participated. Substantial reductions of retail prices in the summer had been achieved by a campaign for mass inspection of shops, in which tens of thousands of city dwellers, chiefly the industrial workers, had taken part, and had enforced price-lowering measures for which the Government and the trade unions were struggling.

This did not promise any good results for the Opposition; and when a two months' period of discussion was opened before the Congress of the Communist Party, as provided by the rules, this was proved beyond doubt. In full and free discussions, held in thousands of factory, office and village groups of the Communist Party, 4,000 votes were cast for the Opposition and 724,000 against. The Opposition made matters worse by using the demonstrations on the revolutionary anniversary (November 7th) to address the vast crowds in Moscow and Leningrad from hotel windows – an attempt which proved a fiasco. It was, indeed, difficult to present the Soviet Gov-

ernment as one of degeneration into capitalism, or of 'Thermidorian reaction', when the Central Executive Committee of Soviets had just celebrated the tenth anniversary of the revolution by introducing the seven-hour day into industry for the first time in history, and releasing the poor peasants from all taxation.

When the XV Congress of the Communist Party met in December, it had no difficulty in expelling the leading Trotskyists from the Party (Trotsky and Zinoviev themselves had been expelled a fortnight before by the appropriate authorities, under the Party rules). The Congress further showed its confidence in mass support for Soviet policy by deciding to publish the so-called 'Testament' of Lenin, with which the Opposition had made great play in the previous two years, both at home and abroad. The document in question was a letter sent by Lenin from his sick-bed on December 25th, 1922, and January 4th, 1923, discussing the individual strength and weakness of leading personalities in the Party leadership. It had criticized Stalin for being 'too rude' – a quality which, Lenin said, was not desirable in a general secretary, although in all other respects he suited the position. But the letter also spoke of the 'non-Bolshevism' of Trotsky, and criticized his overweening ambition and self-confidence; together with equally searching criticisms of other leaders. The letter had been read to each regional delegation at the XIII Congress of the Communist Party in May, 1924, and all delegations (including Trotsky and his friends) had unanimously agreed that the letter should not be published, as it had not been intended for publication, and that Stalin should remain at his post. Thus there could be no question of it having been 'concealed from the Party'. In fact, Stalin had offered his resignation repeatedly (on receipt of the letter and the following year), and each time had been unanimously confirmed in his post by the Central Committee – including many of those now Trotskyists. The essential facts were published by Trotsky himself (*Bolshevik*, September, 1925).

What gave the Soviet leaders such confidence, in face of foreign danger and the final break with many well-known political figures of the Soviet State? Above all, it was the now indubitable success of the policies laid down in December, 1925.

Industrial output was now not only substantially greater in volume than before the war, but accounted for 45 per cent of the total output of the country. In 1913 it had been 42 per cent. Not only was Russia coming closer to the point at which she would be primarily an

industrial country, but the Socialist quality of her economy was making progress. Over 85 per cent of industrial output came from the socialized sector; 95 per cent of the wholesale trade and 68 per cent of the retail trade was also in the hands of either the Socialist State or the co-operative societies. Only 8 per cent of the national income was still in the hands of the capitalist elements in town and country—the petty traders and the rich peasantry. The real wages of the workers were now 28 per cent above the 1913 level, and there were more than ten million trade unionists.

The proportion of workers in large-scale industry taking a personal part in the production conferences had reached 15 per cent; and new forms of public discussion by the workers of production problems were making their appearance, on the initiative of factories in different parts of the country.

The Congress proceeded to discuss proposals for a Five Year Plan of economic development in a spirit of great optimism.

## 8. THE ATTACK ON RURAL CAPITALISM

The very successes of the policy of industrialization were now bringing to a head the problem of what was to happen in the Russian countryside. Output of industrial crops, the numbers of livestock, the area under cultivation, had all exceeded the pre-war level. But the output of grain, on which the towns depended for the staple food of the Russian workmen at that time, was only 91 per cent of its pre-war level; and the amount of grain disposed of to the State and through other channels by the peasantry had been no more than half the pre-war quantity in 1926, and only just over one-third in 1927. There was a shortage of grain for consumption outside the rural areas, just when grain consumption was rising.

The reason for this lay in the very character of the agrarian revolution which had taken place in the winter of 1917-8. The land hunger of the peasants had been satisfied, and they had divided up among themselves most of the land of the former enemy of their class; but this had meant that the number of small households had risen from fifteen millions to twenty-four millions. The poor and middle peasants among them accounted for 85 per cent, of the output: but they and their families were themselves consuming far more than they had done in Tsarist days, now that there was no crushing burden of rent, mortgages and other debts oppressing them.



Three-quarters of all the grain that came on the market was theirs: but this represented only 11 per cent of their output. The kulaks had a more efficient economy, because it was on a larger scale; and, although their farms accounted for only 13 per cent of the national output, the quantity they put on the market was proportionately much higher – one-fifth of the total, and 20 per cent of their output. There were some thousands of collective (co-operative) and State farms, which combined agriculture on a large scale with a non-capitalist mode of conducting it. Their superior efficiency was obvious; they marketed nearly half of their output. But they represented only a tiny fraction of Soviet agriculture – 2 per cent of all the output, 6 per cent of the grain marketed.

It was already clear at the XV Congress that this situation spelt crisis for industry and the State, unless a radical change were made in the system of agriculture. Both kulak and collective farm results showed that the way out was to adopt large-scale farming-and, of the two the collective farm method showed greater efficiency, as measured by the proportion of output marketed. But, in addition, a Socialist State which was faced with such an alternative could choose only collective farming. Further toleration of the kulak meant the encouragement of a surviving small but vigorous element of capitalism: whereas the adoption by the mass of the peasantry of a collective form of agriculture would be for them a step away from individualist methods.

This was not a novel idea for the Soviet Government. In February, 1919, regulations on socialized agriculture had proclaimed its advantages, and made possible the first steps. But now that industry was expanding the Soviet Government could do what had been beyond its powers before – it could come to the aid of intending collective farmers with machinery, chemicals, credits and other material inducements.

The XV Party Congress, therefore, decided to press forward with the formation of collective farms – which began to grow in numbers and size. There were 33,000 of them, embracing 1.7 per cent of all peasant households, on June 1st, 1928, and 57,000, covering 3.9 per cent of all peasant households, twelve months later. The Congress decided on more large credits to village cooperatives – and as a result their membership grew from nine-and-a-half million peasant households at the end of 1927 to nearly twelve million by 1929. Taxes, which had been abolished in November for the poorer peas-

antry, were substantially lowered for the middle peasants. The practice of Government forward contracting with the peasants, through their co-operative society, for bulk delivery of their produce, in exchange for guaranteed deliveries of manufactured goods, was to be extended, and by the summer of 1929 nearly all the industrial crops and about 20 per cent of all grain crops were being handled in this way. At the same time as these inducements to the peasants were preparing the way for collective methods in production, a policy of restricting the development of capitalism in the countryside was decided upon. Its first step was to put an end to the leasing of land to the kulaks.

Already in the winter of 1927-28 the Government had had to take extraordinary measures to collect a bare minimum of the grain necessary for the towns and the army, because partial crop failures in Ukraine and Northern Caucasus gave the kulaks, with their higher surpluses of grain, the opportunity to hoard it in the hope of securing higher prices. When the Government decided to discover these surpluses by house-to-house visits, and to requisition them at fixed prices, where they exceeded thirty tons, the kulaks replied by acts of terrorism. At the same time they spread among the middle peasantry with whom they were in contact every kind of rumour hostile to collective farming – that the land was to be taken away from the peasants, that they were to work under military control, that in the collective farm all blankets were to be sewn together and all families to sleep together on one huge bed, etc. In the course of the summer of 1928, it became clear that the resistance of the kulaks was far from broken, and that in some areas they were succeeding in their purpose of inciting the middle peasantry also to refuse to sell their surplus grain, except at higher prices. Moreover, the winter sowings in Ukraine and elsewhere perished in 1928, creating an additional shortage.

Once again emergency measures were taken. All arrears of taxation and credits enjoyed by the kulaks were urgently called in, which forced the kulaks to sell large quantities of grain. Furthermore, where the kulaks refused to sell at fixed prices, they were made liable to be prosecuted for speculation, and an article of the Criminal Code authorizing the courts to confiscate the surpluses in such cases was put into effect, after being allowed to lie dormant for many years. In order to encourage the poor peasants to combine against the kulaks in this struggle, they were to receive 25 per cent of confiscated sur-

pluses on credit. This measure, recalling the methods of 1918, meant the resumption of the full battle of classes in the countryside, in which the poor peasantry were backed by a State enormously stronger in material resources and experience than ten years before. Its results were decisive. By the end of the year, the State had at its disposal all the grain it required, and the way was clear for the final blow at the existence of the kulaks as a class.

At the height of this campaign in the countryside, the efforts of the State were complicated by the discovery of a group of ‘wreckers’ – technicians, most of them of pre-revolutionary training, and including some foreigners, who in the Donetz coalfield had set themselves the task of promoting sabotage in many different ways and hindering the expansion of coal output. They were connected with the German military intelligence service, and expected that the success of their efforts would be crowned at some stage in the future by military intervention. When this group was discovered and put on trial (May – July, 1928), it was not known that other groups, better disguised and working more subtly, were already at work in other branches of industry.

The arrest of the wreckers in March led to an interruption in German-Soviet trade negotiations. At the same time, trade difficulties arose in the United States because the Banque de France began legal action for the arrest of \$5,000,000 worth of Soviet gold which had been sent to America for commercial purposes. The same month, the Soviet disarmament proposals at Geneva were finally rejected; and, although the Soviet delegation at the Preparatory Commission immediately tabled an alternative scheme of partial disarmament, to be effected by percentage reductions specified for each Power, the debate which ensued showed unyielding and implacable hostility of the other major and minor European Powers, headed by Great Britain, to the Soviet Union in April, replying to agitation by pacifists and others in the United States, Mr Secretary Kellogg issued a statement renewing his Government’s flat refusal to establish diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. On August 28th the Briand-Kellogg Pact, renouncing war as an instrument of national policy, was signed at Paris by fifteen States; the U.S.S.R. had been excluded from their number. Only after many public protests was the U.S.S.R. allowed to adhere to the Pact (August 31st) – which it was the first to ratify.

It was in these circumstances that a new opposition, this time of openly right-wing elements in the Communist Party, made itself felt. It was headed by Rykov, chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (Prime Minister), by Bukharin, editor of the Party newspaper Pravda, and by Tomsy, chairman of the Central Council of Trade Unions, all three of them members of the Political Bureau. They were alarmed at the conflict with the kulaks, which they thought would bring in its train a conflict with the greater part of the middle peasantry. The gigantic expenditure on building large-scale industry, moreover, frightened them because it involved self-denial which they believed 'the people would not stand'. Proposals for ensuring a kind of guaranteed income in grain to the State, by setting up large State farms on virgin prairie lands (April, 1928), aroused further violent opposition on then- part, on the ground that the scheme had no chances of success. Less investments in State farms, restraint in promotion of collective farms, less interference with the kulaks, more expenditure on light industry which would meet the needs of the peasantry, abandonment of 'grandiose' plans for the development of heavy industry like the Dnieper Power Station – these were the practical proposals of the Right Opposition. The alternative they saw was that of a general peasant insurrection (Trotsky in October was also threatening "civil war"), with foreign intervention at its heel.

The reply of the majority, headed by Stalin, was that this policy was one of capitulation before the admitted difficulties of building Socialism in one country alone; that these difficulties were well known long ago, and at bottom were those which had led to the original cleavage between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks; and that the policy of surrender and drift, of taking the line of least resistance, was the very negation of the Marxist conception of the working class and its Party as the moulders of history, and not its playthings. It was not accidental that the main theoreticians of the Right Opposition had already on previous occasions shown the same readiness to capitulate at critical moments – Rykov in the first days after the establishment of Soviet power in November, 1917, when the Bolsheviks were refused the support of any other Party in the Soviets: and Bukharin during the discussions on the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and again in the trade union discussions at the end of the Civil War.

The debate, confined for several months within the leadership in an attempt to persuade the Right Opposition and their chief followers

to accept majority policy, broke out into the open in the winter, and raged violently during the next twelve months – particularly when, at the beginning of 1929, it was found that Bukharin and Trotsky had come to an agreement for co-operation in their fight against the majority. In hundreds of discussions throughout the country, the Opposition was left in a hopeless minority. This was not only because its theory of the kulaks ‘growing into Socialism’ revolted the majority of Communists: it was also because, in the course of 1929, the policy laid down at the XV Congress went on winning tangible successes. The output of large-scale industry went up by 25 per cent in 1928, and even more the following year, reaching in its gross value a level nearly double that of 1913. The State and collective farms, which had marketed only 500,000 tons of grain in 1927, marketed a million tons in 1928 and over two million tons in 1929. At the beginning of 1929, the initiative of workers at a number of factories, the previous autumn, in forming groups (‘brigades’) pledged to produce more, better and more cheaply, was taken up by the newspaper of the youth, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, in an appeal for ‘Socialist emulation’ throughout the U.S.S.R. The appeal was responded to, far and wide. Meanwhile, Trotsky was expelled from the U.S.S.R. (February).

## 9. THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

These were the conditions in which there assembled in April 1929, the XVI Conference of the Communist Party, for the purpose of discussing a draft Five Year Plan of national economic development which the IV All-Union Congress of Soviets had decided upon in April, 1927, and for which the Party Congress of December, 1927, had laid down broad guiding lines. One of the subjects of controversy with the Right Opposition had been whether this programme should be based on a ‘minimum’ or ‘optimum’ series of targets – the Right campaigning for the lower aims, involving a lesser financial strain. On the eve of the Conference, the Soviet Government adopted the ‘optimum’ programme. It aimed ‘to create an industry able to re-equip and re-organize not only the whole of industry, but also transport and agriculture, on the basis of Socialism’. The amount to be invested in national economy – 65 milliard roubles – far exceeded total investments during the eleven years since the Revolution, and was to absorb from a quarter to a third of the national income. In more concrete terms, it meant building many hundreds of new fac-

tories, mines, power-stations, railway lines, shipyards, etc., and re-constructing or re-equipping many hundreds of old industrial establishments. It also meant organizing a number of well-equipped State farms and developing the production of agricultural machinery for the use of the collective farms. It would involve a 30 per cent increase in the number of workers in industry over the five years, with a 40 per cent increase in the output of consumption goods and the raising of the collective farms' share in the output of grain to 43 per cent.

Already a number of the plants were under construction. Already, also, a remarkable wave of 'labour enthusiasm' was sweeping through the factories in response to the call for Socialist emulation. The Moscow Pravda had followed up the suggestion of its junior contemporary by holding a 'public inspection of production conferences', in which its own correspondents and workers at many factories described the shortcoming or achievements of the production conference with which they were acquainted. The publicity stimulated the conferences to further efforts. In two months 300,000 suggestions, many of them extremely valuable, came from workers during the Pravda 'inspection'. Thus there was ground for belief that, whatever the difficulties of fulfilling the plan – and it involved very great economies and self-denial, by exporting foodstuffs and raw materials so that machine tools and factory equipment could be bought abroad – the spirit of the people would not be found wanting. Convinced of this, the XVI Conference, after adopting the plan, went on to issue a manifesto calling for Socialist emulation on a vast scale in order to make fulfilment possible. In May, the Five Year Plan, worked out in detail in the form of a law, was adopted by the V Ail-Union Congress of Soviets.

The first year's working of the Plan justified this confidence. The immense increase in industrial output has already been mentioned: by the end of 1929 it represented nearly 50 per cent of the total national product, and the U.S.S.R. was thus approaching the dividing line from its primarily agrarian past to its primarily industrial future. The first year's programme in fact had been overfulfilled. Productivity of labour per worker went up more than had been planned, and costs of production also went down more than was anticipated. The main reason for these successes had been the great increase in the number of shock brigades and the improvement of the work of the production conferences. By the end of the year, out of twelve million wage workers, some 10 per cent were shock brigaders, and 80 per

cent of all workers in industry were attending or sending their delegates to production conferences. Over-fulfilling plans for their department or factory was becoming a subject of competition among the workers. The atmosphere was one of a Socialist offensive.

In the countryside the term could be applied even more literally. For one thing, the spring of 1929 saw the formation, in many parts of the country, of State-owned machine and tractor stations – depots of the most important agricultural machinery, which was lent out to the peasantry of the surrounding districts who joined collective farms. The eruption of these steel messengers of the Socialist State into a countryside which for centuries had been accustomed to see masses of dwarfish farms, with primitive equipment and starveling draught animals, in truth seemed like the offensive of a modern army. Moreover, the result was very obvious. While, as we have seen, the number of collective farms was doubled in twelve months, the crop area was more than trebled. The gathering of the 1929 harvest was the signal for the beginning of a mass formation of collective farms by the peasants. Experience had reinforced propaganda from outside the village. Whole rural districts and regions were becoming areas of unbroken collective farming. As Stalin pointed out in a famous article (November 7th, 1929), this meant that ‘the middle peasant has joined the collective farm movement’. At the end of the year the offensive passed into its decisive stage. The laws permitting the renting of land and the hiring of labour, which had been adopted at an early stage of the New Economic Policy, were repealed on February 1st, 1930. Thus the kulak at one blow was deprived of the main economic weapons of exploitation.

Nineteen-twenty-nine had also been a stormy year in foreign affairs, yet it seemed as though the undoubted triumph of the Five Year Plan in its first stage was having a stabilizing effect. At the beginning of the year Central Asia had been much troubled with raids from Afghanistan, by bandits whose equipment and occasionally well-lined purses showed that their inspiration came from further afield than Kabul. A big raid by the Chinese police on the Soviet Consulate-General at Harbin in May was followed by the seizure of the Chinese Eastern Railway by the Manchurian authorities, and by ill-treatment of many of the Russian technicians and workmen employed on this Soviet-owned enterprise running through Chinese territory. Protests and the withdrawal of commercial and consular representatives from China brought no redress, and on the contrary

military attacks across the Manchurian border into Soviet territory became frequent. On August 6th Soviet troops in the Far East were constituted into a 'Special Far Eastern Red Army'. After a series of preliminary operations it began an advance into Manchuria on November 17th. Several crushing defeats inflicted on the Chinese forces, the occupation of important north Manchurian towns – and perhaps also the significant distribution to the poor of the contents of the warehouses of the rich in these towns, by the Soviet military authorities – speedily ended the conflict on December 3rd. The protocol of December 22nd exacted no indemnities, only restoring the status quo.

Meanwhile a no less important success had been won on the diplomatic field. The British Labour Party had made the restoration of diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. one of the main planks of its programme in the General Election of 1929, and once again secured a relative majority. This did not prevent the new Labour Government from attempting to bargain with the Soviet Government as to the conditions on which relations were to be restored. But firm resistance by the Soviet Government was reinforced by strong protests from Labour M.P.s and affiliated organizations, and a protocol for the resumption of diplomatic relations was signed on October 3rd and endorsed by the House of Commons on November 5th.

Thus military and diplomatic victory alike seemed to reinforce the lesson that it was only through resolute industrialization and Socialist reorganization of agriculture that the Soviet Union could raise its living standards and assure itself respect and tranquillity in its international relations.

On December 5th the Autonomous Republic of the Tadjiks in the heart of Central Asia, on the borders of Afghanistan, was elevated to the status of Union Republic, thus becoming a constituent member of the U.S.S.R. The basis for this change was the economic, social and cultural transformation which had taken place during recent years in this country of former illiteracy and tribal barbarism, remote from the civilized world. This was not by chance. The changes in Tadjikistan had been part of a great programme of 'land and water' reform in Central Asia since 1925, affecting not only the Uzbek SSR – of which the Tadjik Autonomous Republic was then a part – but also the Turkmen and Kazakh Republics. The division of the estates of the great landowners had left dais (rich farmers), clan elders and mullas (priests) in control of the best lands, all-important water supplies in



### *Rebuilding and Industrializing*

cotton-growing Uzbekistan and the largest tribal herds in cattle-breeding Kazakhstan. These were gradually expropriated between 1925 and 1929, for the benefit of scores of thousands of poor and landless peasants, as well as of collective and State farms. Water supplies passed under the control of the public authorities. Thus by 1929 the economic foundations of exploitation of man by man had begun to be destroyed in this, one of its earliest strongholds in human history – Central Asia. Collectivization could begin here with as great promise of success as in Russia.

### *Further Reading*

For Soviet foreign relations, Fischer, *op. cit.*, vol. II, Coates, *History of Anglo-Soviet Relations* (1943) and K. W. Davis, *The Soviets at Geneva* (1934), now become invaluable for their many extracts from original documents: in addition to Barbusse, *op. cit.* For economic affairs, Dobb, *op. cit.*, chapters 6-9, and the relevant sections of Baykov, *Development of the Soviet Economic System* (1947), are fundamental. Two reports by visiting delegations of experienced British trade unionists are most useful for the position of the workers – that of the T.U.C. Delegation of 1924, *Russia* (1925), and that of a larger Workers' Delegation, including many trade union officials, *Soviet Russia Today* (Labour Research Department, 1927). Basic statements of Soviet policy for this period are in Lenin, *Selected Works*, vol. IX, to which must be added Stalin, *Leninism and Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*. Walter Duranty, *I Write as I Please* (1935) is a descriptive account by a journalist of standing. Important factual booklets issued by the Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee during this period are worth consulting – *Attacks On Russia During 1921*, *The Anglo-Russian Treaties* (1924), *Russia's Counter-Claims* (1924) and *Tory Lies About Russia* (1926). On disarmament, the Soviet documents and statements can be found in *L'URSS à la Conférence du Désarmement* (Paris, 1932).

## CHAPTER V

### *Foundations Completed*

#### 1. A NEW REVOLUTION

The three years from 1930 to 1932 might well deserve a chapter to themselves. In the U.S.S.R. they were a period of truly gigantic effort to complete the first Five Year Plan in four years, and the effort in the main ended successfully, by laying the foundations of a Socialist economic and social system. Moreover, this took place in an era of worldwide economic crisis outside the Soviet boundaries, unparalleled since the appearance of modern machine industry.

In the U.S.S.R. the new feature of economic development was the great collectivization of agriculture, bringing with it the expropriation of the rich peasantry (kulaks), numbering some 5 or 6 per cent of all peasant households, whom Lenin had once described as 'the last capitalist class in Russia'. But there was a fundamental difference between this expropriation and that of the first capitalist class to be expropriated in the countryside – the landowning gentry, whose estates had been divided among the peasantry (including the kulaks) in 1917-8. The holdings of the kulaks were not divided among their neighbours, but merged into the new big agricultural enterprises in which the poor and middle peasantry were merging their own holdings of land and their cattle – the collective farms. It was the same village meetings which decided on the formation of collective farms for the whole neighbourhood and on which peasants were to be expropriated.

Kulaks and their families were deported to other areas of the U.S.S.R. – chiefly the timber regions of the Urals and the forest areas of Northern Russia – where, in special settlements or at the ports, the able-bodied among them were offered the opportunity, by manual labour as ordinary wage-workers, to work themselves back in a few years to the status of ordinary citizens. They could take their personal effects, poultry, etc., with them.

The collective farms were not, as has often been suggested, State enterprises: they did not involve taking away the land from the poor and middle peasantry: they were not a means of 'regimenting' the peasantry under some outside control. They were, and remain, *co-operative societies for agricultural production* – with this difference from any such societies formed in other countries, that they

were working on State-owned land, since the whole of the land had been nationalized at the very beginning of the Revolution. Paying no rent for their land, the collective farms pay the State a kind of tax, in the shape of a compulsory sale at fixed prices of a small quantity of their output. They are encouraged by material advantages, such as special delivery of manufactured goods, to sell a further proportion of their produce, at higher prices, to the State or to the Co-operative Union (Centrosoyuz). But in all their normal activities they are self-governing bodies of co-operators, electing their management committee and other officials at annual meetings, where they also lay down the plan of their work for the year and the distribution of the produce; and they control the fulfilment of these decisions at further periodical meetings. As all men and women in the collective farms are equal members, they do not pay one another wages. Remuneration for labour on the collective farm was from the first on the basis of a division of the *net* proceeds – after deliveries to the State, taxes and other outside payments, and after setting aside funds for expenditure on collectively-owned buildings, social services, reserves, etc. – according to the quantity and quality of work done by each member, measured in ‘work-days’.

In order to help the peasants with the organization of these new large-scale enterprises, for which there was no precedent in history, a movement had begun as early as the autumn of 1929, in the largest factories of the country, for volunteers among experienced trade unionists to go into the countryside as practical organizers. In November this movement was given national recognition and encouragement by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and within a very short time some 75,000 workers had thus volunteered. Some 25,000 were selected and trained, and began to reach the countryside in February and March, 1930.

By this time many millions of the peasantry had joined the collective farming movement, and as Stalin put it the latter had ‘assumed the character of a mighty and growing anti-kulak avalanche’. Whereas by the autumn of 1929 barely 8 per cent of the peasants had joined collective farms, by the end of February, 1930, this figure had risen to almost 50 per cent. In March, four-teen-and-a-quarter million peasant households were organized in 110,000 collective farms. But this avalanche had brought with it an unexpected and serious problem.

At the beginning of January the Central Committee of the

Communist Party had adopted a resolution on the rate at which different zones of the U.S.S.R. should be encouraged to proceed with collectivization. This provided that the North Caucasus and the Middle and Lower Volga regions might complete the process in the main by the spring of 1931; other grain areas like the Ukraine, the Central Black Earth Region of European Russia, Siberia, the Urals, Kazakhstan had until the spring of 1932; while the others had until 1933. But as a result of what Stalin in a famous article in *Pravda* (March 2nd, 1930), called 'Dizziness from Success', these sober perspectives had been swept aside – above all by over-enthusiastic Communists among the local Party and Soviet leaders whom Stalin plainly called 'blockheads'. By methods of administration and compulsion, without preparatory discussions and consultations among the peasantry themselves, they had stampeded, and in many cases bullied, village meetings into adopting decisions to form collective farms. Moreover, in many areas they attempted to form 'giant' farms, beyond the strength of the peasantry to manage; or had formed artificial 'communes', in which not only the land and cattle used for market production were collectivized, but also poultry, cows and goats kept for household milk, and even dwelling-houses. The effect was to create unreal collective farms in many areas, which because they were not formed with the understanding and assent of the peasantry were doomed to inefficiency and failure. This played into the hands of kulak opponents of collective farming, providing them with effective arguments on which they did not hesitate to 'improve'. One very serious material consequence of this was the mass slaughter of livestock by the peasantry, as a result of which the number of cattle and pigs had fallen by one-third by 1931, and of horses by a quarter (and went on falling for several years).

The reaction of the Party's leadership to these disastrous errors is to be found in a series of documents (Stalin's article mentioned above, a resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on March 15th, and a further article by Stalin, *Reply to Collective Farm Comrades*, on April 3rd). Scores of regional and lower leaders (some of whom were members of the Central Committee of the Party) were removed from their posts, not only from above, but also by urgently-convened Party conferences. The essentially voluntary character of the collective farms was publicly stressed and stressed again. As a consequence, the unreal collectives began rapidly to collapse, owing to the withdrawal of many unwilling members. By

### *Foundations Completed*

June only 25 per cent of the peasantry were left in collective farms, and by September 21 per cent. But the success of those which were left (still, it will be seen, numbering over three times the number of households that were in collective farms in 1928), showed itself in the fact that they marketed six-and-a-half million tons of their grain – more than six times as much as the previous year. The Government had in the meantime given substantial rebates of taxes for two years to the collective farms, and had advanced credits on a very large scale in order to help the poor and middle peasants in stabilizing the collective farms. In its resolution of January, before the ‘exaggerations’ had taken place, the Central Committee had planned that some seventy-five million acres of land were to be sown by collective farms that spring. In fact, when all the exaggerations and the reaction against them had had their full effect, nearly ninety million acres were sown.

The collective farmers discovered that they were able, not only to market far more grain, but to retain in their own households much more for their own consumption than in previous years. The result was a new intake of households into collective farms, and the formation of new collectives – more slowly and more soberly, but also more surely. By December, 1930, 24 per cent of the peasant households had joined. By October, 1931, after a further harvest, there were thirteen million households in 200,000 collective farms – well over half of all the peasant families in the country – and the collective farms and State farms between them were responsible for two-thirds of all the grain crops of the U.S.S.R.

Thus the worst crisis was over. But experiences in 1931-32 showed that new problems were arising in the very process of growth. The Soviet peasantry had had no experience in management of large-scale agricultural enterprise, or in the proper technique of division of labour in such enterprise – any more than any peasantry anywhere in the world had had. There were no reserves of trained technical personnel (book-keepers, store-keepers, etc.) – since what large-scale enterprises had existed in agriculture before the Revolution had been capitalist, not co-operative in their character, and the staff of the capitalist landowners were quite unsuited for the 200,000 collective farms. Still less had there been any practice in the distribution of the proceeds of co-operative labour on the land according to the quantity and quality of work put in: or in organizing voluntary labour discipline in these farms. Lack of experience led to mistakes,

and mistakes gave opportunities to the remnants of the kulak class. Many of these had not yet been dispossessed, while others had begun to find their way back from the timber districts, to spread rumours, organize sabotage and even to form gangs to commit terrorist acts against the chairmen of collective farms and local Communists.

Their attacks were met by repressive measures. In the Ukraine, where the percentage of kulaks had from pre-revolutionary days been higher than in most other parts of Russia (reaching 15 per cent in some districts, where poor labourers from the northern areas used regularly to migrate for summer employment), kulak resistance to collective farming succeeded in enlisting a proportion of the better-off middle peasants in a policy of passive resistance, by failing to fulfil programmes of sowings. This led to inadequate crops, or partial failures, in a number of places, and widespread distress as a result, which the State had to relieve by large-scale despatch of foodstuffs and seeds in the summer. The whole population of several villages, which had been centres of this kind of active sabotage, were deported. In August, 1932, the law protecting public property against sabotage and destruction, by penalties which included capital punishment in extreme cases, was extended to cover the collective farms.

But the basic method of coping with the problems of growth was to introduce better forms of management. The years 1931 and 1932 offer a rich variety of experience in this respect. In 1931 the 'old' collective farms – those with more than a year's experience -- sent 20,000 organizers into the areas where the movement was only now spreading on a large scale, to help the new farms. An immense increase took place in the number of State machine and tractor stations, partly as the result of extensive imports of tractors and other machinery, partly because the new factories were beginning to provide agricultural equipment. From 158 M.T.S., as they were now currently called, in 1930, the number grew to 2,446 in 1932. Not only did these tractor stations provide service in ploughing and harvesting, but their skilled workmen provided technical aid in a variety of subsidiary agricultural works. They helped particularly to work out a system of piecework. In 1932 the 'brigades' or teams, into which the collective farmers were divided by their management committees for the different jobs, were made responsible for those jobs for at least one year, or longer where rotation of crops was practised. Every collective farm household was encouraged and assisted to maintain its own cow, poultry and pigs on the small allotment of half to 1 acre

which, under collective farm statutes, the individual members retain for their own family needs. Finally, in May 1932, the collective farms and their individual members were authorized to sell their surplus produce freely, at special markets established for the purpose on the outskirts of towns, once they had met all their obligations to the State. The collective farm market proved a permanent and valuable incentive to efficient working on the collective farms.

The year 1932 was also notable because of the demonstration which it gave of the superiority of large-scale and mechanized farming over that of the individual peasant. The seven million collective farmers served by M.T.S. sowed nearly twelve-and-a-half acres per head: the eight millions not served by M.T.S. sowed under ten acres per head: and the ten million individual peasants sowed under five acres per head. These figures, given by Molotov in January, 1933, explained why the overwhelming majority of the peasantry had accepted collective farming – even though many collective farms, and State farms as well, had not yet begun to pay, through lack of experience.

## 2. PROBLEMS OF EXPANDING INDUSTRY

One of the memorable aspects of life in the Soviet Union during the period of the first Five Year Plan was the way in which, for all their material hardships and external perils, the average town-dweller and factory-worker became intensely aware of the economic problems with which the expansion of State-owned industry faced the country. Most editorials in most newspapers were devoted to the difficulties of particular industries or other branches of economy, and how to overcome them by drawing on the experience of successful groups of workers or factories in various parts of the country. Works newspapers, wall-newspapers, huge tables and charts on giant notice-boards outside factories or in their yards, innumerable discussions in factory clubs and study-circles, a flood of booklets written by practical technicians or skilled workmen, all served the same purpose. Already in February, 1930, a State Loan entitled 'The Five Year Plan in Four', echoing the slogan which had been adopted for their own factory by many bodies of workmen, proved a great success and gave a national echo to the slogan. It was adopted by the XVI Congress of the Communist Party in July.

By this time industry was already turning out 53 per cent of the gross output of the country, and three-fifths of industrial output was

in the industries producing means of production – coal, iron, steel, machinery, chemicals, oil – which the plans promised to make available for industries producing consumer goods before many years were over. During the first six months of that year important industrial achievements had been announced. In February a large auto works at Nizhni-Novgorod and a pipe-line from the Baku oil wells to the port of Batumi on the Black Sea had been opened, in May a railway connecting cotton-growing Turkestan with the wheat-fields of Siberia, and the tractor works at Stalingrad, had gone into full operation, and in June a large factory producing agricultural machinery had been completed at Rostov-on-Don.

But quantitative improvements were not enough. It was necessary greatly to enlarge the output of machinery, and therefore of the iron, steel and coal industries. Still more was it necessary to improve the management of industry, by introducing more rational industrial methods, which the old managers had never learned.

It was these problems which led to two important speeches by Stalin, in the course of 1931, devoted to questions of industrial management, and forcibly presenting a series of suggestions entirely novel and startling for many managers of public enterprises.

In the first, at a conference of industrial managers (February, 1931), Stalin insisted that, unless Russia increased the tempo of her development, she would fall behind the rest of the world as she had done so often in her history – with the result that she would be beaten, as she had been beaten by the Mongols in the 13th century and by the Turks and Swedes, Poles and Lithuanians, British, French and Japanese in later ages. ‘We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or they crush us,’ said Stalin. For this it was necessary for factory managers, and particularly Communists, to master the technique of every part of their factory. In this period of reconstruction, technique decides everything.’ It was difficult, but ‘there is no fortress the Bolsheviks cannot take’.

In June, at a conference of economic organizers, Stalin set forth the ‘six conditions of development of industry’ which the new type of factory and the new developments in Soviet economy were imposing.

First, it was no longer possible to rely on an influx of labour from the countryside, because collective farms had ‘given the peasants the opportunity to live and work like human beings’, and unemployment



had been completely absorbed in the course of 1930. It was now necessary to begin contracting with the collective farms for the supply of labour in an organized fashion, and at the same time to introduce mechanization in many industries which would economize manual labour.

Next, old wage-scales were quite inadequate to interest the worker in mastering the high degree of skill demanded by the new machinery and new processes. This was leading to a heavy turnover of labour. To prevent this it was essential to bring wage-scales into closer relation to the principle, first formulated by Marx, that under Socialism – as distinct from Communism – remuneration must be according to the precise quantity and quality of work done, and not according to some average need. More must also be done by managers to improve living conditions of the workers.

Third, the introduction of the continuous working week had led to a disappearance in many factories of personal responsibility of each technician, each foreman, each workman for particular machines or groups of machines and for particular jobs. It was essential for factory directors, ‘instead of making speeches and incantations’, to master every detail of labour organizations by personal\*attention and to work out remedial measures.

Fourth, the old administrative and technical personnel of Soviet industry was limited in numbers: tens of thousands more were required if Socialist industrialization of the U.S.S.R. was seriously intended. For this the human material was to hand – in the shape of vast numbers who were active in Socialist emulation of all kinds. They should be promoted, without distinction of whether they were Party members or otherwise, and given every facility for their technical education.

Fifth, the old technicians, some of whom who had begun to wobble in their loyalty during the years of active industrialization from 1927 onwards, under the combined impact of the grain difficulties and threats from abroad, as well as of first Trotskyist and then Right-wing propaganda, had now begun to see the futility of such hesitations. In a series of trials, some of them who had been recruited by counter-revolutionaries and foreign agents to form wrecking conspiracies in Soviet industry, agriculture and planning had been completely exposed. But the attitude of intense distrust of the technical intelligentsia which had arisen during the period when ‘wrecking was a sort of fad’ was still persisting, when there was no

need for it. It was necessary to be more friendly to the old technicians, and to enlist their help more boldly.

Finally, it was necessary to fight inefficiency by more systematic cost-accounting in industry, by rationalizing its organization so that unwieldy combinations of factories could be broken down into more manageable groups and production costs reduced, to provide new sources of accumulation. No country had hitherto been able to develop its industry on modern lines without external aid – but that was denied to the U.S.S.R. It was only from its own economy that the U.S.S.R. could draw the vast resources needed.

It is no exaggeration to say that these two speeches made an epoch in Soviet economic development. This was due partly to direct practical measures adopted, arising from Stalin's suggestions. Organized recruiting of labour by contract with the collective farms was greatly extended. The trade unions and managements in each industry drastically overhauled existing wage-scales and piece-work systems, in order to increase incentives. The fight developed in each factory against 'anonymity', or absence of personal responsibility for each job. Technical education was in principle transferred to the Government departments in charge of the several industries, and courses of industrial training began in the factories. The unwieldy economic bodies were broken down into workable trusts, planned by the People's Commissariat (Ministry) concerned, but not directly interfered with in their daily activity. A number of important credit reforms, already begun in 1930 in order to ensure closer banking supervision of the working finances of the new industrial undertakings, were extended to ensure control of the expenditure on capital investment as well, i.e. to ensure that the money assigned for building new factories, mines, elevators, State farms and municipal enterprises was spent by the building organizations as had been planned. These measures were supplemented by a system of direct business agreements between the State enterprises themselves, specifying delivery dates, quantities and qualities, only supervised and planned from above by the respective Government departments and Trusts.

It was in this period that the main contours of a Socialist, i.e. publicly-owned, system of business relationships emerged, as it was to remain, with minor changes, for a number of years to come. But no less important was the way in which Stalin's remarks became part and parcel of the national consciousness, and particularly of that of the workers and managers in industry, by being 'worked over' and

discussed, at countless meetings and study-circles, in the light of the particular circumstances prevailing in each factory. The absence of commercial secrecy in the Soviet system, the long practice of regular discussion and self-criticism by managements and workers alike which had now begun to be a tradition, and the vast wave of Socialist emulation that had now become a leading factor in industry, were all of great importance in putting Stalin's 'six conditions' into effect.

Before proceeding to the role of Socialist emulation in particular, it should be noticed that more important projects of the Five Year Plan began to come to fruition in the second half of 1931 and during the following year. The Stalin motor works in Moscow, a big new tractor factory at Kharkov, and the first blast-furnace at the 'Magnet Mountain' iron and steel works in the Urals, were opened in October, 1931. In November the Putilov shipyards and engineering works at Leningrad completed their Five Year Plan in three years. In March, 1932, the construction of the first ball-bearings factory in the U.S.S.R. was begun at Moscow. In May the first Soviet nickel plant began its operations in the Urals. In October, 1932, the great power-station at the former Dnieper rapids, the site of the biggest dam in Europe, went into full operation. There was visible proof that the Soviet Union was becoming an industrial country. And all through 1932 work went on in connexion with the draft of the second Five Year Plan, adopted in February by the XVII Conference of the Communist Party, and aiming at still vaster transformations in economic and social life.

### 3. THE HUMAN ELEMENT

It must not be supposed that enthusiasm in construction or in fulfilling plans came easily, or that material conditions were improving so rapidly that the individual worker was, as it were, intoxicated by prosperity. Such was very far from being the case. The period of 1930-32 was one of severe austerity in very many ways. But what made the austerity a stimulant to enthusiasm, instead of a deterrent, was the consciousness of a profoundly social purpose in the common effort. It was the sense that class conflict lay not so much *within* the boundaries of the U.S.S.R. as *along* those boundaries; and the increasing evidence for the workers that the work of their hands was bearing fruit all round them, in the shape of a growing crop of first-class economic enterprise, instead of being frittered away to private advantage or for remote foreign adventure.

The austerity was tangible enough. The shortages experienced in the struggle against the kulaks had already (1928-9) led to the gradual introduction of rationing in the towns.

In order to ensure that the supplies available were used to the best advantage from the point of view of the national economy, the Government introduced a system of special ('closed') shop assigned to particular groups of the population, according to where they worked or lived – which, many years later, the British people came to know in their years of stress, in a slightly different form, through the system of registered customers'. To have access to the special shop of a factory in those days, and still more to the special shop of the relatively pampered foreigners living in the big cities, was a great privilege. In 1931 special worker-co-operatives were set up at the factories, more efficiently than in 1918, in order to encourage initiative in procuring supplies for the factory workers from the surpluses of the countryside. In 1932 factory managements themselves were obliged to set up 'departments of workers' supply', in order to ensure that consumer goods of which there was a deficit should be available in the first instance to factory workers, but in strict accordance with their achievements in production. Meanwhile in 1931, as agricultural produce of all kinds began to flow in larger quantities from the collective farms – but not enough to warrant abolition of rationing – the surpluses were made available through 'State commercial stores', at which people with money to spend (i.e. first and foremost successful shock-brigaders and technicians from the factories, and to a lesser extent writers or artists) could buy additional quantities of rationed goods, but at prices five, ten or more times those of the rationed quantities of such goods.

With all this ingenuity and flexibility, the years 1930-32 were a period of severe shortage. Bread – the Russian staple food, particularly when it is rye – was always available, and so was fish when meat was scarce. Fats and sugar were available in most inadequate supply. Sweets and chocolate were reduced to a thin trickle, and their quality was low; the same could be said of the soap (although perfumes at extremely low prices were plentiful). Boots and shoes, knitted goods, underwear and ready-made clothing appeared in the shops in infinitesimal quantities, snapped up within a few hours or even minutes. To give a pair of shoes to be repaired meant not seeing them again for at least two months, if not longer. This was not only because some raw materials were scarce, but because they were

channelled off from the start to the new State factories, instead of going on to the small workshops and handicraft producers. And from the State factories the finished goods went straight to the big works co-operatives or departments of workers' supply – often many miles away from the main towns.

Above all, however, everyone knew that Russian timber and flax, wheat, barley and tobacco – and finally even such things as sweets, matches, butter and perfume – were being exported in immense quantities to pay for the essential machinery on which the industrial and agricultural developments of the Five Year Plan depended. This began to hurt as the world economic crisis developed and extended, at the end of 1930 and throughout 1931. For the amounts realized by selling Soviet raw materials in the world markets were lower than had been expected, and the gap had somehow to be covered if import plans were to be fulfilled. As it was, from 1929 to 1932 exports totalled 15.5 milliard roubles, while imports were valued at 17.3 milliards.

The difference was due to the average two years' credit on which the Soviet Union insisted for its imports of machinery (although Britain, the country of whose machinery the Soviet importers had the highest opinion, for political reasons gave far less advantageous credit terms than Germany, Italy, Denmark or Sweden). The Soviet Government overpaid heavily for its credits, thanks to the operation of these political reasons. Foreign banks (notably in London) pretended to disbelieve the credit capacity of the Soviet Union, and therefore refused to discount Soviet bills offered to foreign manufacturers dealing with the U.S.S.R. The latter had to turn to the Governments concerned for then guarantee, which was given as a rule only for part of the bills, and at a very high rate of interest (5½ per cent). The remainder of the bills, usually for some 40 per cent of the total price, were discounted by unofficial or 'black market' brokers, quite often of Russian extraction, who had no illusions about the 'instability' of the Soviet Government, and therefore knew that they were assuring themselves of a fantastic profit in six or twelve months' time, by discounting the bills at 25 per cent or 30 per cent.

All these operations, naturally, greatly raised the price; and it was not much consolation to Soviet purchasing organizations in London to discover that, as time wore on and the profits made by the private brokers began to leak out, some of those very banks which in public were affecting disbelief of the word of the Soviet Government

that its bills would be met, punctually and in full, were privately buying up the bills from the black marketeers and thus assuring themselves of a share in the profits!

With all this, however, the foreign trade operations were essential and worthwhile. Machinery imports increased during the Five Year Plan from 28 per cent of the total to 54 per cent, and the rarer metals necessary for producing capital equipment increased from 15 per cent of the total to 23 per cent. Thus more than three-quarters of imports fell on these two staple requirements for increasing the Soviet output of means of production. And although the world economic crisis had in this way sharpened anticipated shortages, and forced the Soviet people to pull their belts in a hole or two tighter than had been planned, at least they were spared the experience of tens of millions unemployed and starving, the immense queues at labour exchanges and soup-kitchens, the epidemic of suicides and high infant death-rate, which raged even in the most advanced industrial countries elsewhere during the years of the 'economic blizzard'.

Consciousness of these things also played an important part in producing the truly astonishing wave of Socialist emulation that developed from the beginning of 1930 onwards. By the end of 1931, out of 19,400,000 wage-workers, about two-and-three-quarter millions were members of shock brigades; by the end of 1932 there were four millions out of a total of 22,900,000 wagemakers. Nor was it only a quantitative increase. The initiative and inventiveness of the workmen themselves led to the appearance of all kinds of improvements on the original shock-brigades.\* Of this period Mr. Duranty wrote (April 8th, 1932) that it might become 'an argument for Socialism of which Karl Marx never dreamed', and that it 'contrasts somewhat curiously with talk abroad about "forced labour".' The trouble, one American told him, was that 'labour here is too darned free'.

The Government and the factory managements had to make their contribution, both negative and positive, to the success of this movement. The acute shortage of skilled workers during these years, for example, led to a certain competition among factories, outbidding

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\* An account of these developments can be found in the present writer's *Man and Plan in Soviet Economy*, ch. 3.

one another with inducements to such workers; and this encouraged 'flitting' from factory to factor}', or elsewhere absenteeism. Measures had to be taken to penalize industrial slackness of this kind, although the loss of certain privileges, and even some legal responsibility, were by no means adequate to root them out completely. Nothing in the nature of 'direction of labour', or of tying the workers to particular factories by law, could be or was attempted. More effective was the system of progressive piecework – i.e. increasing the price paid per unit of output as the latter increased, instead of decreasing it as is usual in piece-rate systems practised elsewhere; or the system of bonuses in the shape of extra rations, particularly effective at a time of shortages.

However, it would be quite wrong to imagine that it was these prohibitions and inducements that were the prime origin of Socialist emulation. No one who took the trouble to study the documents of that movement – reports of factory meetings in particular – and much less anyone who had seen it in operation, as did many hundreds of experienced trade unionists from the most advanced industrial countries in these years, could have any doubt that the origin of the movement was in the growing sense of responsibility for the entire economy of their country which the workers themselves were feeling – a sense of ownership and of vigilance also which virtually isolated counter-revolutionaries and the right-wing Opposition alike, almost from the start, when they attempted to take advantage of the obvious difficulties of the time.

#### 4. WRECKERS

It is necessary in this connexion to give some brief account of the counter-revolutionary activities which were discovered and exposed in these years, if only because, quite apart from the intrinsic damage they did, they were a constant object-lesson of where the logic of opponents of the policy of building Socialism in one country was leading.

In January, 1930, a group of monarchist conspirators was put on trial and sentenced at Leningrad. In March a secret 'Union for the Liberation of the Ukraine' – an organization promoted among former Tsarist officers and officials by agents of the Polish military intelligence department – was brought before the courts at Kharkov. In April employees of the foreign company operating the Lena Gold-fields under concession from the Soviet Government were tried and

sentenced for espionage and counter-revolutionary activities.

These were only a preliminary to the sensation caused by the trial in Moscow of several leading Soviet technicians and their subordinates, in November, 1930, which became known as the trial of the 'Industrial Party'. This was the name the conspirators had given themselves. They were experts of the old regime who had been given important posts in Soviet industry, and had accepted these, at the time when the New Economic Policy was being introduced, in the belief that it meant the gradual restoration of capitalism. Their leader, Professor L. K. Ramzin, was an exceptionally gifted scientist who had had a special Institute of Thermo-Dynamics constructed for him, and had had great marks of confidence given him by the Soviet Government. When the period of industrialization had begun, and the prospects of capitalist restoration began to evaporate, they were influenced by the propaganda of the opposition within the Communist Party into believing that the regime was politically in a state of crisis, and therefore that shrewd blows at its vitals would overthrow it. For this purpose they began a policy, not merely of simple sabotage, but of distorting and consciously 'misplanning' industrial development in the spheres in which, as responsible experts, they had a voice. By the time the misplanning was discovered, they expected that the consequent economic disproportions and difficulties would have created enough discontent to bring about the overthrow of the Soviet power.

In order to assure themselves of every possible aid, they established contact with the leading organization of emigrant Russian business men expelled by the revolution – the 'Trade and Industrial Committee' in Paris – and with the French and British military intelligence organizations. They were able to do this because, as trusted Soviet citizens, several among them were sent abroad on business missions for the Soviet Government. When they were arrested, the conspirators already had prepared a list of the future 'Russian Government' which they hoped to install when rebellion of the discontented people and invasion by foreign enemies had cleared the way.

The whole picture was unfolded to its last detail in a public trial in Moscow by the Supreme Court, in the presence of foreign diplomats and many foreign journalists. What was most impressive about the trial was not merely the coincidence of depositions by different agents and victims of the conspirators, but the confessions of the conspirators themselves.



It is true that in other countries these confessions – not produced spontaneously upon arrest, it must be remembered, but after months of preliminary investigation and confrontation of witnesses – produced a storm of jeers and accusations. Torture, truth-compelling Chinese drugs, and the Russian soul were all pressed into service, to explain why persons who had committed high treason should confess their crimes in court. Yet the real reason was perfectly clearly stated by the accused themselves, and is on record in the verbatim account of the trial. It was that, faced with the irrefutable evidence of the adverse consequences of their misplanning and sabotage to the economy of their country and the standards of living of their people, they could not possibly hope to represent these in any attractive light in the future to the people themselves. Yet their whole aim had been, in provoking misery and discontent, to come forward as leaders of a popular rebellion in the name of ‘liberation from Communism’. This pose was henceforth for ever closed to them. They could not even go down to posterity as fighters for some ideal. This was why, after weighing in the solitude of their cells all the consequences of their activities, they made up their minds not only to make a clean breast of it, but to expose in public what ordinarily is kept within the discreet confines of diplomatic conversations – the aid and encouragement they had received from foreign Powers. It is significant that all the foreign representatives who attended the trial were convinced of the guilt of the accused, and several well-known British and American journalists even said so in public.

All the leading accused were sentenced to death, but in the light of their sincere repentance and of the exposure of their plans had their sentences commuted to various terms of imprisonment. In accordance with Soviet practice, they were given employment at their own speciality: which meant, in the case of a man like Ramzin, that after a short interval he resumed lectures at that very Institute from which he had been removed as a prisoner. It was authentically reported in Moscow at the time that the students had violently protested when Ramzin first made his appearance, but had quietened down when he reminded them that the Ramzin against whom their just indignation was directed as a traitor had been sentenced to death by the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R., and no longer existed: the Ramzin before them was an entirely different man, whom the Soviet Government had directed to share with them the knowledge and experience he had acquired in its service! Within the next two years Ramzin earned a

decoration and a remission of part of his sentence for successful handling of a breakdown in an important industrial plant; and in 1943 he was publicly awarded the Order of Lenin and one of the Stalin prizes for outstanding scientific work, on the occasion of the official adoption of his new 'uniflow boiler'. Thus the method of correction through work – underlying all Soviet penal policy – found an unmistakable vindication; moreover, one of his fellow-accused of the 1930 trial, V. A. Larichev, was in the same honours list.

In March and April, 1931, two further public trials before the Supreme Court revealed the machinations of other groups of wreckers, drawn from the relics of former political parties. One, calling itself the 'U.S.S.R. Bureau of the Mensheviks', and in fact connected with emigrant Menshevik leaders abroad, consisted of well-known former members of that party who had made their peace with the Soviet Government years before, and had been given responsible positions in the State Planning Commission, the Supreme Economic Council (at this time, it will be remembered, virtually the same as a Commissariat for Industry) and in other economic organizations. The second group, calling itself the 'Working Peasants' Party' consisted of a number of former members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, all of them economists, statisticians or agronomists employed in the People's Commissariat for Agriculture. Just as both groups followed the example of the 'Industrial Party' in misplanning rather than direct individual sabotage, so they had their connexions with foreign governments like the Ramzin group. In their case, too, complete exposure was followed by relatively mild sentences.

## 5. ALARUMS WITHOUT

Throughout these three years the Soviet people were made to feel that they were working in this most decisive period of their history with one eye warily glancing at a world of economic disasters and raging hostility beyond the Soviet borders.

True, in April, 1930, the new British Labour Government signed a temporary trade agreement with the U.S.S.R., to replace that which had been broken by the Conservative Government of 1927. This was followed by agreements with Italy for a loan to cover Soviet orders (July) and for commercial relations (August). In July, also, the appointment of Litvinov as People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs was understood abroad as the sign of a genuine desire to reach

businesslike relations with all countries. But it was not these events which were most characteristic of relations with the Soviet Union during the next eighteen months.

Already in the first part of the year a number of preliminary pinpricks, as it were, showed that some new round of the struggle over the Soviet Union's right to exist was coming. In January, 1930, Mexico broke off diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R., and Russian Whites in China attacked the offices of the Chinese Eastern Railway. In February Pope Pius XI made a public attack on the Soviet Government and called for 'a day of prayer for the Russian people', that they might be delivered from its rule. In April a bomb plot against the Soviet Embassy in Warsaw was discovered, and the Polish Government of the day showed by its scarcely disguised protection of those responsible, in a series of diplomatic Notes, that something more important was brewing. The deepening of the world economic crisis in the summer brought out into the open the nature of the new anti-Soviet campaign. It was nothing less than a world-wide attempt to organize the economic blockade and boycott of the U.S.S.R. The variety and extreme unreality of the excuses advanced for the campaign suggested that its prime reason was that the peoples of other countries, suffering from the rigours of unemployment and hunger, should not have before their eyes the spectacle of very different conditions in a Socialist country.

The general slogan in the leading countries of Europe and America was directed against alleged 'Soviet dumping', i.e. the sale of Soviet wheat, timber and oil abroad at prices allegedly far lower than their home prices, and in quantities large enough to undermine the world markets for these materials. In Britain particularly the campaign was reinforced by the allegation that the timber and oil were 'stolen', i.e. that the forests and oil-wells concerned had before the revolution belonged or been leased to foreign companies. In Britain and the U.S.A. there was a further accusation, originating from those Dominion and American interests in the timber business which competed with Soviet softwoods in the British market, that the timber was produced by 'slave labour', i.e. allegedly by the work of some millions of 'prisoners' in timber camps, working under frightful conditions. Finally, in Great Britain the whole campaign was elevated at the beginning of 1930 to a high moral plane by allegations of 'religious persecution', with prayers ordered in the churches and at compulsory religious parades in the armed forces

(modified, after much public protest, to 'voluntary' church parades).

What was the truth of these allegations? It was not difficult to show – and in fact the British and other importers of Soviet materials found no difficulty in showing – that the imports of Soviet timber were far smaller, and had increased since 1920 to a much lesser degree, than imports from other countries. In fact they had kept prices down for the British building industry for many years, because Soviet exporters were not in any 'ring'. As far as exports of wheat were concerned, they played an infinitesimal part in the world market compared with the supplies coming from other sources. In fact, whereas Tsarist Russia's share in world exports was no more than 3.5 per cent of the total, the Soviet Union's share in 1930 was only 1.9 per cent – 'yet in 1913 nobody was lamenting that the exports of Tsarist Russia were the cause of an economic crisis in the capitalist countries', as Molotov sarcastically commented in a speech at the VI Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. (March, 1931). Letters from the leading British timber importers in particular, which appeared in *The Times* at the end of 1930, ridiculed the suggestion that Soviet exports constituted dumping, and exposed the interest of other exporting countries – not including Canada, whose timber was quite unsuitable for British building purposes – in blocking Soviet softwoods.

A London newspaper had previously (1927-8) run a campaign on the subject of 'stolen oil', covering the British Isles with posters adjuring the motorist not to buy Soviet oil merely because it was being sold at a few pence per gallon cheaper than that of the great British and American monopolies. The only effect of this campaign, however, was to reveal to the small motorist the existence of cheaper petrol, which he had not heard of previously because of the much smaller advertising activities of the Soviet oil-selling organization in this country. The authentic result of this unlooked-for and gratuitous advertisement of Soviet oil was to double its sales within twelve months.

The campaign about 'religious persecution' speedily collapsed; but that about alleged 'forced labour' in the U.S.S.R. had a somewhat longer run. It is worth while examining here a little more closely, because, as things turned out, it died in 1932 but was resurrected in different circumstances some fifteen years later.

On the subject of timber, it should be noted that, apart from extensive materials which appeared in the *Timber Trades Journal*, the *Manchester Guardian* and other British papers (February/March,

1931) from Soviet business men and British trade union leaders, many British and other experts also publicly demonstrated the unreliability of the story. Thus one such writer, a former medical inspector of lumber camps in Northern Canada, wrote of one of the alleged 'affidavits' (*Manchester Guardian*, February 11th, 1931), that it 'appears to have been written by someone who knows nothing of lumbering or lumber camps', instancing its unconscious suggestion that the convicts were 'working for eight hours in total darkness, and that in a dense forest', or that they were cutting down thirty-five trees a day in a Russian winter. Similarly, an American engineer with thirteen years' experience in American lumber camps and saw-mills, who had been working for several weeks at a timber base some thirty miles from Archangel, gave an interview (*Izvestia*, January 31st, 1931) calling the talk of forced labour and violence against the timber workers 'a silly story', giving many details of the normal and humane conditions in which they were employed and emphasizing that he had not found any compulsory labour. An Englishman who had returned after nine months' work in and around Archangel, during which he visited every saw-mill and superintended the loading of over 100 cargoes, also exposed the ridiculous statistics of prisoners engaged in loading the timber, as well as the story of the wood being cut by prisoners (*Manchester Guardian*, January 2nd, 1931).

Perhaps the most striking evidence was that of a British consulting forest engineer who had travelled thousands of miles through the Soviet forests on behalf of a British company. He testified that the camps for the timber workers were 'mostly a good deal better than I have often built for my men and myself in other countries': they were well heated, and, while he was not impressed with the food, 'it seemed all the food the people expected, and I must say they looked well'. The work was not 'unduly trying to a healthy man who is used to it', but in any case it was 'not quite accurate' that there was no medical attention. He had been in hospitals in the forest villages which were well-equipped, excellently managed, spotlessly clean 'and in their small way were the last word in efficiency'. The writer did not mention any sign of slave labour, confining himself as a cautious Scotsman to the statement that he 'did not intend to express any opinion' (*Manchester Guardian*, February 10th, 1931).

On the broad principle involved, Molotov made a statement in the speech already quoted which calls for reproduction:

Let me say at once that in those timber camps about which so much is now written abroad there are now engaged during this season 1,134,000 workers, all of them employed on the usual conditions of free labour, no convict labour whatever being employed.

Nevertheless we never intended to conceal the fact that we do employ the labour of healthy and able-bodied convicts on some communal and road work. We have done so before, are doing so now and shall continue to do so in the future. This is only to the advantage of society. It is also to the advantage of the criminals, who are thus taught to do useful work and to be useful members of society.

In a number of northern districts about which so much is being written by the capitalist newspapers, in connexion with the campaign against 'forced labour', we have indeed employed and are employing the labour of convict prisoners. But the facts to be stated below will clearly demonstrate that the labour of the convict prisoners has nothing whatever to do with our export products.

Let us enumerate the objects on which convict labour is employed.

In Karelia, the road from Kem to Ukhta has already been built by convicts, having a stretch of 208 kilometres, and also the Parandovo-Kiksh highway with a length of 190 kilometres. Such work is unquestionably essential to the country.

Of exceptional importance is the present work of digging the White Sea-Baltic Canal in Karelia. This Canal, having a stretch of 914 kilometres and embracing the Ladoga and Onega Lakes, is to unite the Baltic Sea with the White Sea. The digging of this Canal involves extensive work on excavation and draining operations on the lakes and rivers forming part of the Canal system. At the present time there is work going on in the district of the Vyg Lake. The digging of the Canal is to be completed in the course of two years.

So much for the employment of convict labour in Karelia. Whatever howl be raised in the capitalist press abroad, we are not going to give up this work, nor the employment of convict labour on such essential public work. May the labour

### *Foundations Completed*

of the convicts contribute its share to the benefit of the peoples of the U.S.S.R.!

In the Northern District we are also carrying out a number of important road-building and railway construction works. Thus in the Northern District the Siktivkar-Ukhta road is being built, having a stretch of 313 kilometres, of which 160 kilometres have already been completed. The road leads to the Ukhta district, where oil-prospecting operations are in progress. Moreover, in the same district there is being constructed the Siktivkar-Pinyug railway with a stretch of 305 kilometres, which is done entirely by convict labour; 97 kilometres of this railway track have already been completed. This work may play a big role in building up the oilfield in this district. The Ukhta oilfield is going to be of importance both to the surrounding districts and to the whole of the Union.

Upon all these works in the aforesaid districts there are about 60,000 people employed.

I should like to add a few words about the working and living conditions of the convicts in those districts. In all the camps the working day has been set at 8 hours for the convicts. While receiving ample rations, and also monthly wages of from 20 to 30 roubles in cash, the amount of work required from the convicts does not exceed that of the free labourer. The convict camps constitute settlements of free people, who walk about unescorted and enjoy perfect freedom of motion over the territory of the respective works. There is a vast amount of cultural-educational activity going on among the convict labourers: books and periodicals are received, and so on. Thus in the autumn of 1930 there were about 10,000 people in the Northern Districts enjoying the benefits of craft and technical education. To the shame of capitalism, it may be said that many thousands of the unemployed might envy the working and living conditions of the convicts in our Northern Districts.

Molotov added two specific offers. One was to foreign diplomats and journalists resident in Moscow, inviting them to visit the timber districts and convince themselves that no compulsory labour was employed in connexion with export goods. There is no record of

either diplomats or journalists accepting the invitation. The other offer was that foreign delegations elected by the workers of any country could come to the U.S.S.R. and study labour conditions there, on terms of reciprocity, i.e. that 'similar facilities might be extended by foreign Governments to workers of our country to study conditions in their respective countries'. There is no record of any Government having accepted such an offer, although workers' delegations freely visited the Soviet Union for several years afterwards. In at least one foreign country well-known to the readers of this history, the Foreign Office refused to grant facilities for a Russian workers' delegation.

However, the bottom was knocked out of the campaign about 'forced labour' for many years to come. By this time, however, considerable damage had been done to international trade relations with its assistance. In France, at the beginning of October, 1930, certain imports from the U.S.S.R. had been prohibited, and Rumania and Belgium followed suit. The Soviet Government replied with regulations restricting trade with countries which adopted such prohibitions. In November the Tariff Commission of the United States demanded certificates from importers of Soviet timber products to the effect that they had not been produced by forced labour. In January, 1931, this was followed up by the formation in the U.S.A. of a 'Protection Committee' against the alleged dumping of Soviet goods. In February the United States prohibited the import of Soviet timber, and Canada imposed partial restrictions on imports from the U.S.S.R. In Great Britain leading members of the Conservative Party formed a 'Trade Defence Union' to combat trade with the U.S.S.R. In March, 1931, Yugoslavia imposed a partial limitation of Soviet imports, and the trade representative of the U.S.S.R. in Japan was shot at and seriously wounded. On March 12th, however, the Sixth Soviet Congress already mentioned had instructed all Soviet institutions to impose embargoes on the trade of any country discriminating against Soviet products; and on April 18th, in conformity with this decision, the purchase of any goods produced in Canada and the use of Canadian ships for transporting Soviet cargoes was prohibited. A steady worsening of relations between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world seemed probable.

At this point the front of the non-Soviet countries broke. On April 14th a Soviet-German agreement providing for a credit of 300 million marks, for the purchase of German machinery, was signed in



Berlin. A fortnight later a similar agreement, to the value of 350 million lire, was signed with Italy. Evidently, in conditions of universal trade slump, those manufacturing countries which had least reserves could not afford the luxury of losing a large and reliable customer. In May an agreement for the sale of one million tons of Soviet oil was signed in Madrid.

At the Committee for European Union, which the League of Nations had convened in Geneva the same month, Litvinov strove to hammer home the lessons of this experience. European Union, he underlined, 'cannot base its work upon a campaign, or upon incitement to a campaign, against any country or group of countries, without contradicting its own declared principles and aims'. It was possible to remove unnecessary aggravation of the conflicts within the capitalist system underlying the world crisis. The Soviet Union was prepared 'to adhere as before to the principle of the peaceful coexistence of the two systems at the present stage of history'. For this purpose he proposed (May 18th, 1931) a 'draft Protocol of Economic Non-Aggression'. After proclaiming the principle of peaceful economic co-operation of States, irrespective of their political and economic systems, the Protocol obliged its signatories to forego any measures of discrimination against one or more of the other signatories. So deep was the impression created that a special committee of the League endorsed the general idea of the Protocol, but recorded that it did not seem likely to secure unanimous acceptance (November 5th, 1931).

The Soviet Government did not confine its offers of co-operation to the Geneva committee-rooms. Later on in May, at the International Wheat Conference held in London, it offered to join in co-ordinated limitation of exports, to prevent catastrophic falls of wheat prices; and, although this offer was rejected at first, it was accepted later. In July, after negotiations lasting over a month, the French Government agreed to simultaneous cancellation of the mutual embargoes on trade which it had been the first to introduce. In November, negotiations for a further extension of trade with Germany began, and were crowned by the signature of a trade agreement in December. By this time the United States Government had also removed its embargo on Soviet goods. The collapse of the anti-Soviet campaign in the sphere of trade was almost complete.

The one exception was in Great Britain. The formation of the second National Government after the General Election of 1931,

with its triumphant Conservative majority, was swiftly followed by a reduction in the average period of credit for Soviet purchases, guaranteed by the Board of Trade, from two years to one year. This effectively excluded nearly all British manufacturers from any chance of securing Soviet orders where they had to compete with German, French, Italian, Danish, American or other suppliers.

Since the early summer, the Soviet Government had been reinforcing its demonstrations in the diplomatic field that co-operation with the U.S.S.R. as it grew stronger was more promising than a policy of hostility. Between 1925 and 1927 the Soviet Government had signed pacts of non-aggression – obligations to refrain from attacking the other party if it were attacked by some other Power – with Germany and Lithuania in the west and Turkey, Afghanistan and Persia in the east. These pacts were for five years, and in the second half of 1931 they were demonstratively prolonged, or recast in a still more binding form, for another like period; and accompanied in the case of Persia (November 27th, 1931), by a Trade and Navigation Agreement. Throughout 1932 this policy was continued. Pacts of non-aggression were signed with Finland (January 21st), Latvia (February 5th), Estonia (May 4th), Poland (July 25th) – after hesitations on the Polish Government's part lasting six months, owing to strong outside pressure – and France itself (November 27th). By this time Japan had signified its postponement of any warlike action against the U.S.S.R. in the near future by signing an agreement over her fishery concessions in Soviet waters (August 13th). Other indications of the success of Soviet foreign policy in this phase of its history – perhaps it would be truer to say, of the success of the first Five Year Plan – were the voting of additional export credits for trade with the U.S.S.R. by the Norwegian Parliament (June 28th) and the resumption of diplomatic relations, after five years' interruption, with China (December 12th).

Only in Great Britain did relations steadily move from bad to worse, culminating on October 7th, 1932, in the denunciation by the British Government of the Trade Agreement signed in 1930. This action, however, had less significance for Soviet economy than it had as an indication of the trend of British policy.

One other sphere of Soviet diplomatic activity in 1932 needs to be recalled. From February to July there sat at Geneva the long-awaited Disarmament Conference, promised by a special clause of the Versailles Treaty in 1919, refused at Genoa in 1922 when the

Soviet delegation, as we saw earlier, pressed for it, and prepared by a special commission which had sat in Geneva for some four years. In the first round of introductory speeches at the opening of the Conference the Soviet delegation through Litvinov reminded the Conference of the proposals for universal total disarmament it had made in December, 1927, and reaffirmed its alternative scheme for partial disarmament which it had put forward when its first offer was rejected. It offered the abolition of tanks and long-range guns, of warships over 10,000 tons, of aircraft-carriers and naval guns over twelve inches calibre, of heavy bombers and all stocks of bombs, and the prohibition of chemical, bacteriological and flame warfare as well as of air bombing. Litvinov also recalled his earlier offer of a flat 50 per cent cut in all armaments.

These proposals aroused considerable sympathy among the smaller countries, on whom the cost of armaments at a period of profound economic and financial difficulties was an intolerable burden. But the sympathy was less marked among the Great Powers, each of whom had offered reductions of those armaments in respect of which it was particularly vulnerable, while insisting on the retention of those arms in which it predominated. From the private negotiations in hotel bedrooms, lasting many weeks, which then followed among the greater Powers, the Soviet Union was rigorously excluded. In June President Hoover sent a message to the Conference attempting to move it out of its state of deadlock, by borrowing an idea already advanced (as we have seen) by the Soviet Government – that of a flat, all-round cut in armaments. Whereas the Soviet offer had been for a 50 per cent cut, the American suggested a 33 1/3 per cent reduction. Many speeches were made extolling the nobility of the President's proposal: the Soviet delegation adopted it for practical guidance. When, at the end of July, an omnibus 'pious resolution' was worked out by the Great Powers, full of vague generalities and promises of what some future convention might adopt, the Soviet delegation moved the Hoover proposals in the shape of an amendment. This caused consternation, particularly when the Soviet delegation pressed the matter to a vote. All the Great Powers and their satellites voted against the amendment – including the United States delegation, which thus rejected its own proposal: and it was defeated by thirty to five, with sixteen abstentions. After this, it only remained for the Soviet delegation, when the vote was taken by roll-call on the monumental collection of platitudes worked out by the Great Powers,

to answer in Litvinov's sarcastic words: 'For disarmament, against the resolution!'

## 6. RESULTS OF THE PLAN

By this time, beyond any doubt, the U.S.S.R. was able to rely on its own strength in case of need. It had become primarily an industrial country. More than 70 per cent of the total national output – itself more than doubled during the four-and-a-quarter years since October, 1928 – was accounted for by industry, as against 42 per cent in 1928. Some 1,500 new factories had been built, and another 900 reconstructed and modernized. More than three-fifths of the equipment of Soviet industry consisted of new machinery. Moreover, the output of the means of production – machinery, coal, oil, iron and steel – was far larger than in 1928. Entirely new industries had been created, and moreover on a basis of social ownership which accounted for 99 per cent of all Soviet industry. It was now clear that the aim of creating the machinery with which the entire economy of the country could be transformed, if required, had been attained.

This was far from saying that there were no shortcomings. The total output of Soviet industry, measured in fixed (1926-27) prices was 96.4 per cent of the level planned. This was because in 1931 and 1932 a number of factories had had to be switched over to defence needs, delaying fulfilment of their output programmes. Moreover costs of production were much higher, and the quality of output in many spheres much lower, than was anticipated. This was due to the immense influx of previously unskilled labour – which also accounted for the fact that output per head at the end of 1932 had increased by much less over the 1928 level than had been hoped for (41% instead of 110%). But in return the machinery of up-to-date large-scale production had been created, and millions of workers had learned the technique of industry by practical experience – a school which, although costly, had nevertheless yielded results entirely without parallel in world history in such a short time.

In agriculture, the aim of reorganizing this vast branch of the national economy had in the main been achieved. The collective farms, now grouping more than 60 per cent of all peasant families, accounted for nearly 70 per cent of all the sown area of the country and nearly 80 per cent of all the grain marketed. The State farms accounted for another 10 per cent of the sown area and a further substantial proportion of the marketed output of grain. Thus public

ownership of one kind or another – either by the State or by the collective farms – dominated agriculture, for the first time in history in any country. The kulak class was almost entirely eliminated from the countryside.

The number of workers had been doubled (from over eleven millions in 1928 to nearly twenty-three millions in 1932), the seven-hour day was in general operation, unemployment had completely disappeared, and real wages had gone up by 50 per cent. Compulsory education, introduced after a long period of preparation in August, 1930, had doubled the numbers in elementary schools and trebled those in secondary schools, during the period of the Plan – ‘a decisive step in the cultural revolution’, Stalin called it. Especially striking had been the effect of the first Five Year Plan upon the nationalities rescued from colonial status by the revolution. They had made much progress during the years of reconstruction. This was particularly marked in the social and cultural spheres, such as those of public health, the spread of literacy, the emancipation of women, the abolition of barbarous treatment of children. Then had come the ‘land and water reforms’, already mentioned, accompanied in many areas by the bodily transfer of entire factories from more developed areas in Russia. From 1925 onwards, moreover, many workers from these Republics were trained for the purpose in the Moscow and Ivanovo factories. More advanced Soviet Republics, like Ukraine and Belorussia, had restored their industry as fast as the Russian Federation, and in addition had solved in the main the problem of reorganizing their public services and law-courts on the basis of their own language, the development of a vast network of schools, and the promotion of native-born workers, peasants and intellectuals to the highest position in the Government. A striking example of progress was that of the Gypsies of the U.S.S.R. Only in 1925 had they received a written alphabet and grammars of their own. By 1930 there were many published Gypsy books – poetry, plays and prose literature.

The Five Year Plan had greatly accelerated this programme, and indeed had launched many of these recently backward nationalities upon the road of rapid industrial and cultural development. Their industrial output increased over 350 per cent (against the doubling of output in European Russia). Large engineering, chemical, and textile factories made their appliance in Central Asia, with mines of all kinds; new works of every kind in Transcaucasia; sawmills, canner-

ies, and glassworks elsewhere. Collective farming had been welcomed with enthusiasm by the overwhelming majority of the peasantry, whose colonial status in the old Russia had shown itself in most of these areas, among other respects, by the high percentage of extremely poor and landless peasantry among them. Economic development had been accompanied by a rapid increase in literacy: it had varied from 5 to 15 per cent of the adult population in these Republics in 1928, while by 1933, as a result of intensive adult education, the figures stood at from 50 to 80 per cent. Nor were these simply 'statistical' achievements : a tenfold increase in the daily circulation of the newspapers in non-Russian languages during the period of the first Five Year Plan – from 850,000 to nearly nine million – was evidence of that, and the numbers of children at school increased four-, eight- and even thirteen-fold in Central Asia over the four years.

Both for the internal policy of the Soviet Government and for the reinforcement of its prestige in foreign relations, the fulfilment of the Five Year Plan in four-and-a-quarter years had meant a striking success. Stalin declared that, in spite of 'plenty of defects and mistakes', it had been the enthusiasm and initiative of the millions of workers and collective farmers that was primarily responsible, through Socialist emulation and shock work, for defeating the many predictions of failure, abroad and at home. It was now clear, he said, that the working class was as well able to build as to destroy, and that under Communist leadership it was quite capable of building a Socialist society in one country, taken alone: for 'the economic foundations of such a society have already been laid in the U.S.S.R.' (speech of January 7th, 1933).

## 7. WAR ON THE HORIZON

But it seemed as though history had been preparing a retort to the successful fulfilment of the Five Year Plan. In January, 1933, three weeks after Stalin's report at a joint meeting of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission of the Communist Party on that success, Hitler was placed in power in Germany. This meant that a party which had, through his lips, openly proclaimed its intention to carve out a new empire for Germany in Eastern Europe was now in control of the biggest industrial potential on the Continent. Moreover, Nazi Germany was able to secure without delay the renewal by the London banks of the 'standstill agreement' under which 4,000

million marks' worth of credits, which had fallen due, were renewed for the convenience of the German financial and industrial magnates who were well known to be the prime forces supporting Hitler.

When, at the beginning of February, 1933, Litvinov submitted to the Disarmament Conference a draft convention for the definition of an aggressor – specifying the precise conditions which constituted physical aggression, and brushing aside the usual pretexts on which in the past aggression had been justified – the British delegation took the lead in opposing it. From March to June, on the initiative of Mussolini but with the warm support of the British Government, negotiations took place for the conclusion of a Four-Power Pact (Britain, Germany, France and Italy) which pledged the signatories to collaborate in all international problems and to recognize the right of Germany to equality in armaments. This Pact, signed on June 7th, 1933, reinforced the Locarno Treaties of 1925 so far as bolting the door to war in the West was concerned. But this served only to underline the unspoken permission given to Germany, by recognizing her right to rearm, to use her arms in some other direction – and what that direction ought to be, was just as well understood in 1933 as it had been in 1925.

By this time, too, the bad relations between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain had taken a further turn for the worse, in connexion with the arrest of a group of British engineers working in the U.S.S.R. on the charge of espionage and sabotage (March 12th). Without waiting for the trial, the British Ambassador immediately suggested to London that the Soviet Government should be threatened with a rupture of trade negotiations: and three days later the British Prime Minister announced in the House of Commons that the British Government was convinced that the charges could not be justified, and had demanded that the proceedings should be stopped. This attitude was supported by a determined campaign in the British Conservative Press; and the campaign continued in spite of a warning by Litvinov (March 17th) that the British demand amounted to

a proposal for the exemption from Soviet jurisdiction of all British subjects, granting them immunity for any crime or delinquency and providing that, in the event of any Englishman being accused of a crime, the proceedings against him shall be stopped immediately, in spite of the available data and proofs, even the accused's own depositions, as soon

as his Government expresses a conviction of his innocence. It is sufficient to formulate such proposals to make it obvious to the Government of an independent country that they are unacceptable and cannot be discussed.

Undeterred, the British Ambassador attempted to impress Litvinov (March 28th) by reading to him an account of the Bill for an embargo on Anglo-Soviet trade which was to be introduced unless the trial was stopped; and the Bill was duly announced by the Prime Minister on April 3rd. Nevertheless, the trial was held (April 12th to 18th) – in public, and before a large concourse of foreign diplomats and journalists. Several Russian defendants and one of the British pleaded guilty, while another admitted that he had made written depositions confessing guilt, but withdrew them in court. All the British accused admitted that they had been well treated in prison, and that the stories to the contrary were false. Mr A. J. Cummings cabled from Moscow (April 30th, 1933):

For my part I was frankly surprised at the judicial deficiencies which were observed in the conduct of the trial; at the absence of crude methods of trickery; at the latitude allowed the prisoners ... The interrogators do not appear to have employed exceptionally severe methods – according to their own standards of practice – or even to have approached the third-degree methods familiar in the United States of America.

However, within a few hours of the sentence (which involved deportation from the U.S.S.R. for three of the accused, acquittal for one, and prison sentences for two) the British Government issued an embargo on Soviet goods. This naturally produced a counter-embargo on all purchases from Great Britain, all chartering of British ships and all rebates for British ships on port dues in Soviet waters.

The situation thus created continued until the beginning of July, when both embargoes were called off and the two British engineers serving prison sentences were amnestied and expelled.

This caused much relief among British firms anxious for Soviet orders, particularly as the Italian Government had seized the opportunity, as always, to sign customs and credit agreements with the U.S.S.R. promoting 'liquid credits for the purpose of exporting Ital-



ian goods to the Soviet Union' to the value of 200 million lire during the rest of the year. These goods were machinery, chemicals and metals of a kind which British firms well knew they themselves could supply.

In the meantime, however, the bad relations between the U.S.S.R. and Britain had encouraged a leading German delegate at the World Economic Conference in London, the Nationalist Hugenberg, to put forward (June 15th) the demand that, as a condition of economic stability in Europe, the 'energetic race' of his country should be granted the opportunity to secure 'new lands in the east'. The suggestion was replied to with some severity by the Soviet delegation, and, in view of the negotiations which were already in progress for a liquidation of the embargoes on Anglo-Soviet trade, Hugenberg received no open support.

The Conference itself was a fiasco, because of the contradictions between Britain and the U.S.A. over the questions of tariffs and depreciation of currencies, which at that time seemed irreconcilable. The Soviet delegation to the Conference proposed (June 21st) a draft pact of economic non-aggression, under which all the signatories pledged 'the peaceful co-operation of all States in the economic field irrespective of their politico-economic systems', called off all discriminatory customs duties and similar measures, and undertook not to impose such measures for the future. At the same time, Litvinov gave an earnest of the Soviet Government's seriousness by stating that it was prepared – at a time when every other country was doing its utmost to cut down imports and expand only exports – to increase its own import programme of non-ferrous metals, iron and steel, textiles, leather, rubber, engineering material, consumer goods, etc., to the value of 1,000 million dollars, on condition that credit terms were granted. The offer was brushed aside, although in fact the Soviet Government was increasing its imports of manufactures from those countries which were willing to grant credit terms, and notwithstanding the fact that, while the embargo was still in force, Soviet bills to the value of tens of thousands of pounds were being punctually met.

One positive achievement of the Soviet Government at the Conference showed that the coming to power of Hitler was alarming the smaller countries, even if the Great Powers still professed indifference. On July 3rd, 4th and 5th the U.S.S.R. signed pacts for the definition of an aggressor, on the lines of its February proposals, with

its eastern and western neighbours (Finland adhered later), and with the States of the Little Entente (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania) – whose Governments, in the case of the latter, had not even yet established diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. Later that month diplomatic relations were established with the Spanish Republic, and in September, on the initiative of Mussolini, a treaty of friendship and non-aggression was concluded with Italy.

But perhaps the most important event of the year in Soviet foreign policy was the establishment, on November 17th, of diplomatic relations with the U.S.A. For sixteen years the United States Government had refused to enter into normal connexions with the Soviet Union, although a considerable trade had developed between the two countries: and this element of hostility had added continuous uncertainty to the international scene, since actively anti-Soviet forces in Europe and Asia could always find encouragement in the State Department. It was on the initiative of Franklin D. Roosevelt, in face of the growing aggressiveness of Hitler's speeches, that Litvinov came to America in October for the preliminary negotiations.

At this time relations with Nazi Germany were steadily deteriorating. The eyes of the world at this time were fixed on Leipzig, where Georgi Dimitrov was conducting his heroic attack on the Nazi regime during the trial of himself and his co-accused on the trumped-up charge of burning down the Reichstag. The Germans selected this moment for arresting and maltreating Soviet journalists on their way to report the trial. This immediately led to the expulsion of German journalists from the U.S.S.R. It was this moment that was selected also by Lord Rothermere, the then proprietor of the *Daily Mail*, to write in his paper (November 28th, 1933), that 'the sturdy young Nazis of Germany are Europe's guardians against the Communist danger', and to urge their claims to 'elbow-room' in Western Russia. 'The diversion of Germany's reserves of energies and organizing ability into Bolshevik Russia', wrote his lordship, 'would help to restore the Russian people to a civilized existence, and perhaps turn the tide of world trade once more towards prosperity. By the same process Germany's need for expansion would be satisfied, and that growing menace which at present darkens the horizon would be removed for ever.'

Lord Rothermere was not regarded in the U.S.S.R. as distinguished for the responsibility and weightiness of his utterances, although his connexions with the active diehard element in the Con-

servative Party were not underestimated. *What was significant was that no leader of that party, which firmly held the reins of power within the National Government, uttered a word to disclaim this sagacious analysis.*

In January, 1934, Hitler was able to win over the rulers of Poland, and to sign an agreement with them, which, still further encouraging the delusions of those who believed that Western Europe could be spared by arranging for German expansion at Russia's expense, in the long run brought disaster on Poland. It was a demonstration of Soviet self-confidence that the capital of the Ukraine was transferred on January 21st from Kharkov, the industrial city in the East from which the first Ukrainian Soviet forces had advanced in December, 1917, during the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, to the ancient Slav mother-city of Kiev, 250 miles nearer to the Polish border.

At the end of January, in his report to the XVII Congress of the C.P.S.U., Stalin warned the world against attempts to organize a war between Germany and the U.S.S.R. He reminded the Nazi's, with their ideas of a German 'superior race' destined to rule the 'inferior' Slavs, of the fate of the Roman Empire, which once upon a time looked upon the ancestors of the modern Germans and French as barbarians – until the latter overthrew her. The question arose, said Stalin, whether similar claims today might not lead to the same deplorable results. 'What guarantee is there that the Fascist literary politicians in Berlin will be more fortunate than the old and experienced conquerors in Rome?'

But Stalin had words of warning also for those who hoped to gain from such a conflict. A war, he said, 'is sure to unleash revolution and jeopardize the very existence of capitalism in a number of countries', as it had done in the war of 1914-18. In that war the victors had succeeded in creating a 'revolting mess' in Germany, which they had not even yet been able to clear up. 'But they did get the smash-up of capitalism in Russia, the victory of the proletarian revolution in Russia, and – of course – the Soviet Union. What guarantee is there that the second imperialist war will produce "better" results for them than the first? Would it not be more correct to assume that the opposite will be the case?' A war against the U.S.S.R. would be most dangerous to the bourgeoisie of the world, and not only because the Soviet peoples would fight to the very death to preserve the revolution; it would be waged behind the enemy lines as well. 'And let not Messieurs the bourgeoisie blame us if some of the Governments

so near and dear to them, which today rule happily “by the grace of God,” are missing on the morrow after the outbreak of such a war.’ One such war had already been waged fifteen years ago:

As is well known, the universally esteemed Churchill clothed this war in a poetic formula – ‘the march of fourteen States’. You remember, of course, that this war rallied the working people of our country into one united camp of heroic warriors, who stalwartly defended their workers’ and peasants’ homeland against the foreign foe. You know how it ended. It ended in the ejection of the invaders from our country and the establishment of revolutionary Councils of Action in Europe. It can hardly be doubted that a second war against the U.S.S.R. will lead to the complete defeat of the aggressors, to revolution in a number of countries in Europe and in Asia, and to the destruction of the bourgeois-landlord governments in those countries.

At the same time, Stalin gave a plain warning against any speculation, either in Germany or elsewhere, on a supposed readiness of the U.S.S.R., because of its Socialism, to go to war under all circumstances with Germany, i.e. to play the game of other States who might have a bone to pick with Germany, irrespective of whether the interests of the U.S.S.R. were served or injured thereby. Stalin said:

Of course, we are far from being enthusiastic about the Fascist regime in Germany. But Fascism is not the issue here, if only for the reason that Fascism in Italy, for example, has not prevented the U.S.S.R. from establishing the best relations with that country. Nor is it a question of any alleged change in our attitude towards the Versailles Treaty. It is not for us, who have, experienced the shame of the Brest-Litovsk Peace, to sing the praises of the Versailles Treaty. We merely do not agree to the world being flung into the abyss of a new war on account of this Treaty. The same must be said of the alleged new orientation taken by the U.S.S.R. We never had any orientation towards Germany, nor have we any orientation towards Poland and France. Our orientation in the past, and our orientation at the present time, is towards the U.S.S.R., and towards the U.S.S.R. alone. And if the interests of the U.S.S.R. demand rap-

prochement with one country or another which is not interested in disturbing peace, we take this step without hesitation.

The implications of all these statements by Stalin require to be carefully studied, if the whole trend of Soviet foreign policy in the following years is to be understood. It may be remarked, however, that the last passage just quoted was fully in keeping with the Marxist view held by the Soviet leaders of the nature of modern imperialism. Compared with the terrorist Fascist regimes of Germany and Italy, the democracies of Western Europe might seem angels of light – and indeed, in so far as their rulers did not engage in any of the charitable schemes for promoting a German- Soviet war to which Stalin had alluded, the Soviet leaders were prepared to treat them as such. But they never forgot that, looked at from the standpoint of an Indian or an African, a native of Indo-China or Madagascar, Western democracy might look like something very different.

Meanwhile, the steady consolidation of the Soviet position in international relations began to have its effect even in the most stubborn quarters. The success of the First Five Year Plan had made it possible for the U.S.S.R. to confine itself to very small imports, except on better terms than it was granted during those painful years. As a consequence, the U.S.S.R. was able in the course of 1934 to refuse to take advantage of either British or German guaranteed credits. On December 25th, 1933, the total foreign indebtedness of the U.S.S.R. was no more than 450 million roubles, as compared with 1,500 million roubles two years before.

Moreover, industrial exports and technical assistance to Asiatic countries began to play a noticeable part in Soviet foreign trade. At the end of January, 1934, a protocol was signed with Turkey under which the latter received a twenty-years credit of eight million gold dollars, interest-free, for the erection and equipment of the first modern textile mills in Turkey.

Between February and July of the same year, diplomatic relations were established successively with Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria. It was evident in Europe that the growing menace represented by Nazi power in Germany was by no means certain to explode in a strictly eastern direction.

Soviet diplomacy provided a number of object-lessons, during these months, for those who were hard of understanding. On March

28th, 1934, the Soviet Government proposed to Germany that the two Powers should jointly guarantee the independence or integrity of the Baltic States. Germany, on April 14th, rejected the proposal: which would of course have created a certain obstacle to war between the two Powers. Then, on May 29th, the French Foreign Minister Barthou worked out with Litvinov a scheme for an 'Eastern Locarno', under which the Soviet Union, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Baltic States would sign a pact of mutual assistance against aggression. France would guarantee her assistance to the U.S.S.R. and Germany in the event of an attack on either arising out of a breach of the Pact, and the U.S.S.R. would give a similar guarantee to France and Germany in respect of any breach of the Locarno Pact of 1925. This would have meant that the door to war in the east was barred almost as effectively as it was in the west. Almost – because the British Government would not have been formally committed to action in the event of France going to war over a German breach of the Eastern Locarno. However, the arrangement would have thrown up a very great obstacle in the way of German aggression eastward, and thereby would have reinforced European peace. Germany refused the offer (September 12th). There can be little doubt that one of the reasons was the lukewarm way in which the British authorities had, through the Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon (July 13th, 1934) proclaimed it 'well deserving of support of the British Government and of the British people', without undertaking any further commitments. The Germans naturally compared this coyness with a statement by a 'prominent English Conservative statesman' published by the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna, one of the leading newspapers in Europe, on May 17th, 1934. This interview caused a great political sensation in Europe – particularly when it became known that the 'statesman' was none other than Lord Lloyd. The statement ran:

We give Japan freedom of action with regard to Russia ... whereby the export policy which Japan is compelled to pursue at present would be radically changed ... We give Germany the right to rearm; we conclude an alliance with France so that, as a result of Franco-British co-operation, an expansion by Germany to the west will be impossible. On the other hand, we open to Germany the way to the east by giving it a possibility of expansion. By this means we divert

Japan and Germany, and keep Russia in check.

No Conservative statesman ventured to challenge or repudiate this doctrine, just as none had said anything against Lord Rothermere six months before. In the same month of May, when Litvinov at the Disarmament Conference had proposed, in view of the urgent peril of war, that the assembly should be reconstituted as a permanent Peace Conference, to deal immediately with any menace of war, the British delegation was among the foremost in rejecting the scheme. Was it surprising, after these eloquent silences and refusals, that the Nazis should not have drawn any adverse conclusions for their own policy from Sir John Simon's carefully-worded statement – or that the Soviet Union should also have drawn its conclusions?

The Soviet Government went on pursuing its policy of using anything 'that could, even to a certain extent, hinder the business of war and help in any degree to further the cause of peace'. Stalin had used these words of the position of the League of Nations, in the new conditions created by German and Japanese aggression, during a talk with the *New York Times* correspondent in Moscow on December 25th, 1933. Barthou discussed this question in detail with Litvinov in the following months. In September, 1934, the U.S.S.R. joined the League, on the invitation of thirty States.

The German reply was equally characteristic. Through its Croatian agents, the Nazi Government on October 9th murdered Barthou, as the principal architect in Western Europe of a bloc against aggression, together with King Alexander of Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, on December 5th, France and the Soviet Union signed a protocol at Geneva, undertaking to bring about an East European Pact.

## 8. THE BASIS OF SOVIET CONFIDENCE

At the same XVII Congress of the Communist Party, in January, 1934, at which Stalin had given his trenchant indications of Soviet foreign policy, he had made another observation on the sources of Soviet confidence in internal matters:

It is said that in some countries in the West Marxism has already been destroyed. It is said that it has been destroyed by the bourgeois-nationalist trend known as Fascism. That is nonsense, of course. Only people who are ignorant of history can say such things. Marxism is the scientific expression of the fundamental interests of the working class. If Marxism is

to be destroyed, the working class must be destroyed. And it is impossible to destroy the working class. More than eighty years have passed since Marxism came into the arena. During this time scores and hundreds of bourgeois governments have tried to destroy Marxism. But what has been the upshot? Bourgeois governments have come and gone, but Marxism still goes on. Moreover, Marxism has achieved complete victory on one-sixth of the globe – has achieved it in the very country in which Marxism was considered to have been utterly destroyed. It cannot be regarded as an accident that the country in which Marxism has fully triumphed is now the only country in the world which knows no crises and unemployment, whereas in all other countries, including the Fascist countries, crisis and unemployment have been reigning for four years now.

The success of collective farming became unquestioned in 1933. There was a turn for the better in the output of the chief crops that year, there was a marked increase in the yield of grain (compared with the preceding five years), and the decline in the number of livestock began to slow down.

This was no chance success, but the result of a number of practical measures. It was in February, 1933, that all jobs done on collective farms were divided into seven groups, with remuneration in the shape of work-days at rates rising from 0.5 to 2 work-days for every day actually worked, according to the complexity of the work done. In the spring it was also announced that grain deliveries would be required on the basis of every hectare cultivated, not of the gross output: so that the collective farmers knew before sowing how much grain they must deliver, and were interested in pushing yields to the highest level. In that one year the number of tractors engaged in agriculture increased from under 150,000 to over 200,000. To make the best possible use of this and other equipment, more than 17,000 Communist workmen were sent into the countryside, to form 'political departments' in the machine and tractor stations and State farms – partly to help the relatively few Communists among the peasantry in their political work, but primarily to give direct help to the mass of the peasantry in solving the many problems which the expansion of collective farming was raising. This was the first year, too, in which collective farm trade became fully effective as an incentive to the



### *Foundations Completed*

peasants – to produce as much and deliver their quota to the State as soon as they could, in order to take advantage of the right to dispose of their surplus freely.

In fact, deliveries were completed in 1933 six weeks earlier than the previous year. Another important contributory factor to the success of agriculture was the organization of 136,000 livestock units within the collective farms, which made necessary greater specialization and efficiency.

In the heavy industries, mechanization of coal-cutting, iron-smelting and engineering, and the extension of piece-rate methods to cover nearly 70 per cent of all hours worked, expanded production by nearly 9 per cent in one year. But this was only just over half of what had been planned, and a number of branches were still lagging behind, particularly iron and steel and consumer industries of all kinds.

These circumstances determined the main features of the second Five Year Plan, which came up for final adoption in January, 1934, at the XVII Party Congress, after nearly two years of elaborate study.

The aim of the Plan was declared to be ‘to complete the reconstruction of the whole national economy on modern technical lines’ – which meant not only saturating industry with modern equipment and mastering its use, but also mechanizing agriculture, which could not be done without completely eliminating the capitalist elements that still remained in the countryside. Industry almost completely in the hands of the State, with the rest controlled by the co-operative handicraft organizations; agriculture freed from survivals of capitalist ownership; trade completely in the hands of State and co-operative or collective farm organization; a big increase in output to make possible ‘a considerable growth of real wages and a two to three-fold rise in the level of consumption’ – these aims, set out in the second Five Year Plan, would, if achieved, bring within the bounds of possibility the aim, in its turn, of ‘overcoming the survivals of capitalism in economic life and in the minds of men’.

The practical forms in which these general objectives are set out in the bulky volumes of the second Five Year Plan can only be summarized here. Investments were to be double what they had been in the first Plan. The output of industry was also to be more than double in 1937 what it had been in 1932 – or eight times as much as in Tsarist Russia’s best year, 1913. Four-fifths of the output were to come from new and reconstructed enterprises. Output per worker was to rise more than 60 per cent during the five years, and the costs

of production over all industry were to fall by more than 25 per cent. By providing nearly four times as many tractors for agriculture as there had been at the end of the first Five Year Plan, the machine and tractor stations were to be able to serve all collective farms (in the summer of 1934 they served just under 46 per cent).

Although these aims called for gigantic exertions, one achievement of enormous importance, reported by Molotov at the Congress, suggested that the task was not too heavy. This was the complete social transformation of the Soviet people, reflected in the following figures:

<i>Percentage of nation constituted by:</i>	<i>1913</i>	<i>1928</i>	<i>1934</i>
Manual and clerical wage-workers	16.7	17.3	28.1
Collective farmers and artisan co-operators	-	2.9	45.9
Individual peasants (excepting kulaks) and handicraft workers	65.1	72.9	22.5
Bourgeoisie	15.9	4.5	0.1
(of whom kulaks)	12.3	3.7	0.09
Students, pensioners, armed forces	2.3	2.4	3.4

These figures (all inclusive of families) of course reflected the great economic changes since 1917. The column for 1928 showed already the effect of expropriating all the big and middle capitalists, leaving only the smallest capitalists in town and country: the other side of this picture was the increase in the number of individual peasants, and the appearance of a very small group of peasant and industrial co-operators, with a slight increase in the number of wage-workers. By 1934 it was industry that was making a big leap forward, parallel with the historic transformation of the mass of the peasantry into collective farmers and the almost complete disappearance of the last relic of the capitalist classes.

Of the five forms of economy traced by Lenin in 1918, patriarchal economy, producing only for its own needs, which had then reigned over vast areas of Russia, was now gone, together with State capitalism and practically all private capitalism, said Stalin. Petty commodity production by individual peasants was now secondary. Socialist production 'now holds unchallenged sway, and is the sole commanding force in the whole national economy'.

As the year went on, grounds for confidence increased. Deliveries by the peasantry to the State in 1934 were completed six weeks

earlier than in 1933, or a full three months earlier than two years before. High yields and increased sowings had practically doubled the net amount of grain left per collective farm household at the end of the autumn, after meeting all obligations, compared with 1932. This led to a decision to abolish the political departments mentioned earlier, because it was now clear that the peasantry appreciated the full value of collective farming, and required no special propaganda for the purpose.

The volume of trade on the home market was 50 per cent higher than in 1932, while prices were substantially lower. Exports of agricultural produce were reduced in 1934 to a quarter of what they had been in 1930; and indeed the U.S.S.R. was so little dependent on imports by now that it stopped using any foreign credits at the end of the year. The greater abundance of every kind of foodstuffs led to a decision in November to end the rationing of bread and flour as from January 1st, 1935.

It was a reflection of the greater confidence in all matters – despite the growing burdens of defence which will be mentioned later – that in July, 1934, the O.G.P.U. – the State Political Department, with its extensive powers of independent investigation of political as well as common crime, and of arrest and sentence as well – was abolished. It became a branch of the People's Commissariat for the Interior, without the power to arrest except by a magistrate's warrant, and no powers at all of holding its own trials.\* Its 'secret' – or plain-clothes – police became a part of the normal machinery of the Commissariat, like the Special Branch of the British C.I.D. or the *Sûreté Générale* in France.

The elections to the local Soviets that autumn and winter also gave grounds for confidence. An average of 83 per cent of the country voters took part, with 91 per cent in the towns. In the U.S.S.R., where the political parties whose programmes had presupposed or openly advocated the existence of various forms of private property in the means of production had disappeared, the participation of the electorate in voting was an important means of

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\* In specially grave cases, a special inter-departmental committee (its composition defined by statute) has powers to order administrative exile – such powers as those conferred by Orders in Council on the British Home Secretary in national emergencies ('L8B').

testing the citizen's interests in public affairs. The figures had been 70 per cent and 80 per cent respectively, four years before.

Only in one respect was there a tangible sign of disquiet. This was the increasing allocation of national expenditure to defence purposes as relations with Germany became more threatening. The defence estimates rose from 1.4 milliard roubles, representing 3.5 per cent of all Budget expenditure, in 1933 to 5 milliard roubles, representing 9.5 per cent of total expenditure, in 1934. At the end of the year it became known that the strength of the Red Army had been increased from the figure of 562,000, at which it had stood for over ten years, to 940,000, by the retention of a larger proportion of the contingent of young men annually called to the colours. Nevertheless, no alarmist or war propaganda was carried on by the Soviet leaders or the press. At most the newspapers repeated and re-emphasized Stalin's declaration at the January Congress:

Our foreign policy is dear. It is a policy of preserving peace and strengthening commercial relations with all countries. The U.S.S.R. does not think of threatening anybody – let alone of attacking anybody. We stand for peace, and champion the cause of peace. But we are not afraid of threats, and are prepared to answer the instigators of war blow for blow. Those who want peace and seek business relations with us will always have our support. But those who try to attack our country will receive a crushing repulse, to teach them not to poke their pigs' snouts into our Soviet garden. Such is our foreign policy. The task is to continue this policy persistently and consistently.

In the main, in fact, the Soviet citizen was very conscious of cultivating his garden. This was the year of the remarkable and unprecedented mobilization of technical resources for the rescue of the 'Chelyuskin' scientific expedition from the ice in the Arctic Ocean, after the sinking of its ship in the ice floes (March-April). It was the year of the establishment – not without an eye on the inhuman anti-Semitic policy of the Nazis – of an Autonomous Jewish Region in the Biro-Bidzhan area of the Far East, with the declared policy at a later stage of elevating it to the status of a Republic (May). That same month, navigation began on the Baltic-White Sea Canal, the giant enterprise of which Molotov had spoken three years before. It was revealed at the same time that 72,000 of the 100,000 convicts,

### *Foundations Completed*

common and political, who had worked on the Canal had earned their freedom or substantial remission of sentence by their exemplary work, carried on essentially under normal technical conditions, without any prison regime or direct supervision by armed guards: and that many had been awarded high decorations for particularly outstanding examples of public spirit. It was the year of the first All-Union Congress of Writers (August), which became the main topic for many days in the Soviet newspapers. Half the 600 delegates were non-Russian writers: fifty-five distinct national literatures were represented. The speeches of Maxim Gorky, Zhdanov and others suddenly made the Soviet citizen in town and country aware of the links between literature and his daily life as never before. It was the year in which the 'movement of wives of business managers and technicians in industry' began-for social service as organizers of cleanliness and order in canteens and clubs, crèches and kindergartens, or teaching workers' wives to read and write. It was also the year that a Soviet pilot, Gromov, broke the world record for a non-stop long-distance flight; a year of the opening of new factories and power-stations, and of the first trials of the new Moscow Underground, destined to be one of the adornments of the Soviet capital.

Even the sudden news of the assassination of Kirov, secretary of the Leningrad organization of the Communist Party and a member of the Political Bureau of the latter's Central Committee (December 1st), and the discovery in the course of the trial of the murderer that he had been a supporter of the Zinoviev Trotskyist opposition, although it aroused great public anger and suspicion, was not sufficient to distract attention from the growing fruits of Socialist planning that were now being gathered.

But mass meetings in all the factories expressed the workers' approval when, in the course of the next few weeks, over 120 White terrorists were brought before the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R., sitting in camera, and charged with crossing the Soviet frontiers illegally from Finland, Latvia, Poland and Rumania, armed with false passports, revolvers and hand grenades for the purpose of assassinating Soviet leaders. Most of them were shot: the first heavy blow at Hitler's agents.

### *Further Reading*

Stalin's *Leninism* (his report to the XVI Party Congress of 1930 is published separately in English), and the works of Mr Dobb and Dr

Baykov provide the essential information on economic, social and political changes. S. and B. Webb, *Soviet Communism* (1935), vol. II, pp. 258-272 (or, in the one-volume edition, pp. 199-209), examine the reports of a famine in the U.S.S.R. during 1931-2. Emile Burns, *Russia's Productive System* (1930), Calvin B. Hoover, *Economic Life of Soviet Russia* (1931), J. Freeman, *The Soviet Worker* (1932), discuss their subject from differing points of view. On 'forced labour', see *Forced Labour in Russia?* (British-Russian Gazette, 1931), Molotov, *The Success of the Five Year Plan* (1931), and Gorki, *The White Sea Canal* (1934). Reports are available in English of the 'Industrial Party' trial (*Wreckers on Trial*, 1931) and of the trial of British and Russian engineers (*Wrecking Activities at Power Stations in the U.S.S.R.*, 1933, and A. J. Cummings, *The Moscow Trial*, 1933). Maurice Hindus, *The Great Offensive* (1933) is critical but fair journalistic reporting, like the book by Walter Duranty already mentioned. For Soviet foreign relations during this period, in addition to the works of Coates and K. W. Davis already noted, there are useful chapters in Arthur Upham Pope, *Maxim Litvinoff* (1943). On everyday life in the U.S.S.R. at this time, an illuminating testimony is A. Wicksteed, *Ten Years in Soviet Moscow* (1933). The principal speeches at the Writers' Congress were published in English under the title of *Problems of Soviet Literature* (1935). A Stationery Office publication (Cmd. 3775) in 1931 gave selected *Documents relative to Labour Legislation in the U.S.S.R.*

## CHAPTER VI

### *The New Society*

#### 1. COMING-OF-AGE YEAR, 1935

‘According to Soviet law a man “comes of age” at eighteen, and this is the eighteenth year of New Russia’s existence,’ wrote one of the most sagacious of the foreign journalists in the U.S.S.R., in the middle of 1935, after many years spent in observing Soviet life. He saw many signs of that coming-of-age, but none more striking than this:\*

It is only in the last two years that the word *Rodina*, meaning birthplace or homeland, has been allowed in the Soviet Press in speaking of the U.S.S.R. Before that they always used phrases like the ‘Socialist Fatherland’ to emphasize the idea of internationalism, but now they are encouraging not so much the pride of the country where they were born as the feeling that they all have a pride and share in what their country does – the subway is *their* subway; the new buildings which are transforming Moscow from an overgrown village into a magnificent modern city are *their* buildings; the rescue of the *Chelyuskin* is *their* rescue; the *Maxim Gorky* disaster is a disaster for *them*. This, I say, is the greatest achievement of Bolshevism in its eighteen years of existence, to have permeated the lowest depths of the Russian people with a spirit of joint and universal effort.

Duranty might have found that spirit much earlier, had he been then in the mood to look for it. For example, the veteran British miners’ leader, Herbert Smith – a moderate among moderates – told the present writer in December, 1924, of a miner he met at the coal-face in the Donetz Basin, a few weeks before. It was in an old pit with narrow seams, poorly ventilated and not at all mechanized: and Smith through an interpreter had told the hewer so, contrasting it with a modern pit the British T.U.C. delegation had just seen at Gorlovka. The miner replied: ‘Yes, it’s not much of a pit – but it’s our own.’

Nevertheless, it was quite true that in 1935 the Soviet people

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\* Walter Duranty, *I Write As I Please* (1935), p. 314.

began to feel that some fundamental change was taking place – that the effort and sacrifice of many years were at last bearing fruit.

For one thing, the abolition of rationing was completed and the system of registration at special shops disappeared. Home news columns in the Soviet press began to occupy themselves with more than triumphs in production. The fact that the U.S.S.R. in 1935 consumed more than four times as much chocolate and confectionery as in pre-war days; that that year she took first place in the world in the output of sugar; that in her large cities 60 different varieties of bread, and more than 110 different sorts of the Russians' beloved sausage, could be bought; that three times as much butter was sold on the home market as in 1932; that 85,000 acres were under tea plantations, as against 2,000 acres in 1913 and 15,000 acres in 1925 – these and similar results of more attention to consumer industries came to be just as prominent.

No less significant of much that had changed in Russian society was the reduction of the sales of vodka to 3.6 litres per head, as compared with 4.4 litres in 1931 and 8.1 litres in 1913. Although the population of the territory of the U.S.S.R. had increased by more than 25 per cent since 1913, the total consumption of vodka was less than 60 per cent of the pre-war level.

The essential condition of all this was the rising prosperity of the countryside. A second Congress of Collective Farm Shock Workers in February recorded the improvements already achieved, and adopted new model rules for collective farms which gave further encouragement to efficient management. The collective farms were guaranteed perpetual tenure of the land they held. Shortly afterwards they began to receive engrossed parchment certificates of this from the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets – the collective Head of State in the U.S.S.R. The new regulations made more precise provision for the small household allotments within the collective farm. As had been promised in 1931, when the kulak class was expropriated, the new regulations provided for the admission of former kulaks who had redeemed their exploiting past by work in industry, together with their families. To take one example: the report of the Soviet of Igarka – a timber port within the Arctic Circle, which had grown up on the river Yenisei since 1929 – presented to the Soviet Government in the summer of 1935, showed that 300 such deported kulaks had in 1934 earned as workmen the restoration of their full civil rights. Thousands began to come back to the country-



side in the course of 1935. That year the State farms and collective farms between them produced more than 96 per cent of all grain put on the market.

The Soviet countryside in 1935 showed such a big increase in purchasing power that, at the end of September, the co-operative movement was by decree turned towards the village, where its 40,000 consumers' societies were given the monopoly of retail trade; while for the time being it lost the right to trade in the town.

For industry also, 1935 was a year of wonder. The planned increase in gross output was 16 per cent over 1934: actually, it proved to be 20 per cent. Productivity per head rose, and costs of production fell, more than had been planned in each case. This was partly the result of the improved living conditions; but it was above all the result of the appearance of the Stakhanov movement.

The essence of this movement was that workmen who had mastered the most up-to-date machinery used in mass production became dissatisfied with old methods of division of labour, based on out-of-date types of machinery. Alexei Stakhanov, a hewer in a Donetz colliery, set the example on August 31st, 1935, of rearranging the workers in his particular job and thus ensuring that the main productive machinery – in his case the mechanical pick – was used to the best possible advantage for the whole of his seven-hour shift. As a result, he cut 102 tons of coal during the shift, instead of the previous quota of seven tons. Rearranging the work throughout his colliery – after much opposition had been overcome among the technicians trained on obsolete equipment – had the effect of trebling aggregate output. Similar initiative in the textile, leather, engineering and other industries, on the railways and ultimately in agriculture, resulted in a startling increase in output per head. Not only did this movement break through previous standards of output in the U.S.S.R., by raising productivity to a level worthy of the new machinery, but also in many cases it surpassed levels of output with the same machinery reached in the countries from which it (or its prototypes) had been imported, such as Germany or the U.S.A.

Thus the Stakhanov movement presupposed the complete re-equipment of Soviet industry with up-to-date machinery. It also presupposed the existence of a large and influential group of skilled workers who had mastered the new machines. But most of all it required, both in them and in the less skilled workmen whom they drew into the reorganization of their job, a sense of ownership, of respon-

sibility, of absence of any private exploiter. This explains why the movement was not, and could not be, started by managers: it also explains why the movement spread throughout the country like a hurricane or a 'conflagration', in Stalin's words. In fact in all branches of economy the way had been prepared for it.

In passing, it may be noted that the Stakhanov movement involved neither the lengthening of the working day, nor any noticeable increase of exhaustion at the end of it.

It was not surprising that in August, 1935 the famous scientist Pavlov, after the International Congress of Physiologists in Moscow, told an audience at his native city of Ryazan: 'Science is now honoured by the broad masses of the people of our country ... Science in former days was separated from life and alien to the population. Now I see that science is esteemed and appreciated by the entire nation'. It was all the more piquant that Pavlov for a number of years after the Revolution had been a bitter enemy of the Soviet Government, and had used his lectures on biology as an occasion for vindictive and sarcastic diatribes against the Soviet power and Communism.

Nor was it only science that interested the nation. 'Everything interests our people, all of Nature, the entire human world and, first of all, Socialism', said Molotov closing the session of the Central Executive Committee of Soviets in January, 1936. During 1935, over 3,300 new schools were built. The national Republics of the U.S.S.R. were covering their country with schools, colleges, newspapers, clubs, theatres, art schools, and all the other apparatus of civilization which previously had been foreign to their submerged peoples. Shakespeare, Balzac, Pushkin and other great figures of world literature were being translated into the languages of Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Far East. For the first time, too, the ordinary working folk of the Soviet Union were becoming aware of the natural beauties of their country outside their own district. The 'Society of Proletarian Tourism' began to increase the number of its members by hundreds of thousands. Mount Elbruz, which had been climbed only fifty-nine times between 1829 and 1914 (and forty-seven of the climbing parties were foreigners), was climbed more than 2,000 times in 1935 alone. 'In the past the hard life of the workers did not allow them to think about such things as fascinating ascents of high mountains', commented Molotov.

In the past, it might also be added, hard conditions in the Soviet Union had provided the pretext for many a foreign politician to resist

popular demand for better relations with the U.S.S.R. In 1935 its swiftly-growing strength and the rising menace of Hitlerite Germany began to reverse the picture, at any rate for a time. On February 3rd an Anglo-French Agreement in London decided to invite the Western Powers to conclude an air pact for mutual assistance against aggression, and simultaneously declared the desirability of a general pact of mutual assistance in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Government immediately replied (February 20th) underlining the importance of organizing security throughout Europe, on the basis of recognition that it was impossible to localize a war started at any one point on the continent. Seventy per cent of the European population was represented by the Governments which had now declared their faith in pacts of mutual assistance against aggression, it pointed out. The announcement on March 7th that the then Lord Privy Seal (Mr Eden) was going to Moscow was followed by Hitler's decision (March 16th) to reintroduce universal military service, which had been prohibited by the Versailles Treaty. A communiqué issued at the end of the Moscow conversation (March 31st) declared the necessity of building up 'a system of collective security in Europe', of Germany and Poland entering the Eastern Pact, and of friendly co-operation between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. as 'of primary importance' for the promotion of collective security.

By this time, the U.S.S.R. had given an earnest of its peaceful intentions in foreign relations by signing an agreement with Japan for the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway (March 23rd) – although Japan was still refusing to conclude a pact of non-aggression with the U.S.S.R. On May 2nd, in the absence of any agreement with Germany, the French and Soviet Governments concluded their pact of mutual assistance, providing it, however, with a rider that 'both Parties continue to regard as desirable' agreements which had been the object of the negotiations which had led to the Pact – namely an Eastern Locarno and a 'Treaty of Mutual Assistance between the U.S.S.R., France and Germany'. A treaty with Czechoslovakia, in the same terms, was signed at Prague on May 16th. It is worth noting – because of later events – that the obligations in this treaty, at the request of the Czechoslovak Government, were made binding only if France gave help to the party subjected to aggression. The then Czechoslovak Government did not wish to be bound to help the U.S.S.R., should the latter be attacked by Germany in some other circumstances, which might not bring France to her aid. In this res-

ervation was reflected that secret unwillingness to give up the mirage of a German- Soviet war, without other complications, which still haunted the statesmen of the Western democracies.

There were disquieting signs of such illusions all through the year. It did not escape public notice that the February communiqué issued in London was much more precise and explicit about an air pact in the West than it was about the forms of regional security in the East. More serious was the naval agreement between Britain and Germany, negotiated in secret and announced in June without securing the consent even of France, under which

Germany, by securing the right to build up to 35 per cent of the tonnage of the British Navy, multiplied her permitted tonnage five-fold – enough to dominate the Baltic, in the then state of Soviet naval armaments. The Franco-Soviet Pact took an inordinate time to be ratified by the French side: not until February 27th, 1936, did the Chamber do so somewhat grudgingly, by 353 votes to 164, with 100 abstentions. The staff conversations which were an essential corollary of the Pact never took place at all, despite repeated requests by the Soviet Government.

There was no concealment in Britain itself that the idea of Germany becoming a ‘one-way gun’ was far from dead. It was not everyone who preached a bloc with Germany against the U.S.S.R. so explicitly as Lord Rothermere or Lord Lloyd. But it was noteworthy that on February 6th, 1935, the more responsible *Times* said that a Western air pact involved the possible consequence ‘that, as a breach is being closed in the West, so a breach in the East is being widened’. The main political commentator of the *Sunday Times* – which was well known to have close personal connexions with the most influential circles in the Conservative Party – wrote (February 24th) that Germany was determined to get what she wanted in the East at the first convenient opportunity, which ‘might be a war between U.S.S.R. and Japan’. For this reason he opposed any Eastern Pacts, holding out the prospect that the best way out might be ‘a federation of autonomous States under the hegemony of Germany’. The *Daily Herald* also attacked those who wanted security for the East simultaneously with an Air Pact in the West. ‘It is obvious that every aspect and every section of the problem cannot be discussed simultaneously’, it wrote: provided there was a general honourable understanding that everyone wanted a general settlement, ‘squabbling over priority becomes near sabotage’ (February 20th).

Equally significant was the fact that, after Hitler had flatly rejected the Eastern Pact in March, the same commentator in the *Sunday Times* (March 31st, 1935) was interpreting this as meaning that 'the same Germany which wants peace on her western borders also has eastern frontiers where, though her immediate intentions may be peaceful, she has political ambitions which it may be impossible to satisfy without war'. The influential *Round Table* wrote (March, 1935) that the Powers in Eastern Europe could make what arrangements they liked; the 'vital function' for Great Britain was to take the initiative in bringing Germany back into the comity of Europe – while taking steps to prevent Germany striking westwards, by an Anglo-Franco-German-American understanding. The Labour Party official organ added its contribution by writing, at the first week-end in April, 1935, that 'suggestions that there is an immediate danger of a German aggression against any neighbour State are grossly exaggerated'. It naturally welcomed the announcement at the conference of western Powers at Stresa (April 14th) that Hitler had told Sir John Simon he was prepared only for a Non-Aggression Pact in the East – not for one of mutual assistance. The British Government accepted this proposal, which had the effect of showing its readiness to draw whatever teeth there might be in an Eastern Locarno.

*But it was not the connexion of this or that newspaper (however influential) with the Government, or the Foreign Office, or with the leadership of the opposition Labour Party, which mattered in itself: what was important, in estimating the international situation, was that these pronouncements produced no categorical and unmistakable clarification of policy, much less a denial, on the part of the British authorities.*

On the contrary, all the newspapers on April 12th, 1935, published an anonymous 'authoritative statement' according to which British policy was to leave other countries to make regional arrangements if they could, but to concentrate herself on the Air Pact as an extension of the 1925 Locarno Treaty – thus notifying the Nazis that the door to expansion, locked in the West, would be open in any other direction. It was common knowledge that the author of this statement was none other than Mr Neville Chamberlain, then Chancellor of the Exchequer : and the embarrassed corrections issued by the Foreign Office carefully confined their condemnation to the time and the manner of the statement, not touching its substance.

More explicit language could hardly be expected – except perhaps from back-bencher Conservative M.P.s who, not holding official positions, saw no reason for restraint: like Mr Victor Raikes, M.P., who explained: ‘Germany had to expand, and he did not see why they should try to prevent her expanding to the East. They did not want to see Germany fight, but if she wanted to go to war it would be better if she fought Russia and had a go at the Communists’ (*Southend Standard*, April 11th, 1935).

But this engagingly frank exposition of what was common talk in the clubs, both political and military, was in its way no more explicit than the position of the *Daily Herald*, which had on June 19th greeted the Anglo-German Naval Pact as ‘a quite real contribution both to armament limitation and to general pacification’; whereas on July 10th it criticised the pacts signed by France and Czechoslovakia with the U.S.S.R. – specifically left open for German adherence as they were, and subject to all the League Covenant’s provisions – saying that “Mutual Assistance” and “Regional Pacts” are pretty phrases to cover the ugly realities of old-fashioned alliances’.

The Soviet Government thus found itself faced with a strange duality of policy on the part of the Western Powers – for the examples quoted in the British Press could find parallels in that of France. On the one hand, the British and French Governments were certainly alarmed at the visible growth of aggressive power and intentions in Hitlerite Germany; and their peoples were still more alarmed, as was shown by the result of the famous Peace Ballot held in Britain in the summer of 1935, with its ten million votes cast in favour of effective collective security. On the other hand, the most influential circles in both the National Government and the Labour Party leadership scarcely took the trouble to conceal their eagerness for some arrangement with Hitler which would spare the West an attack at the expense, above all, of the U.S.S.R. At this time U.S. Ambassador Dodd recorded in his diary (May 6th, 1935) after talking with Lord Lothian, one of the leading figures in British politics and later Ambassador to the U.S.A.: ‘He favours a coalition of the democracies to block any move in their direction, and to turn Germany’s course eastward. That this might lead to a war between Russia and Germany does not seem to disturb him seriously. In fact he seems to feel this would be a good solution of the difficulties imposed on Germany by the Versailles Treaty.’

This dualism had its reflection in the situation created in the last

months of the year, in connexion with the Italian attack on Ethiopia. It is not necessary to discuss the details of this struggle, so characteristic of the period immediately preceding the second World War. The Soviet Union took its full part in applying the sanctions against Italy which had been decided with its concurrence by the League of Nations. But when, on November 25th, it proposed the application of coal, oil, iron and steel sanctions, to reinforce the less effective embargoes which had been imposed on trade with Italy – a proposal which by the middle of December had been endorsed, as far as oil was concerned, by such important suppliers as Rumania, Iraq and Holland – the British Government, jointly with France, secured postponement of consideration of the proposal. In private conversation with the Soviet representative at the League, a leading British diplomat assured him that Britain would not take any steps like stopping oil to Italy, because this might precipitate a war; although it was painfully clear that Italy could not dream of war without oil.

## 2. THE STALIN CONSTITUTION

In these international circumstances, the Soviet Union had every encouragement to press ahead with its economic construction as rapidly as possible. In the course of the next two years, the second Five Year Plan was fulfilled and in fact more than fulfilled. Industrial output in 1936 increased by the record figure of 30.2 per cent, and previously low standards of output could be increased in all the basic industries, by 20 to 30 per cent, without detriment to the workers – so extensive had been the growth of the Stakhanov movement and the numbers engaged in the shock brigades. By the end of 1937 industrial output was more than double what it had been in 1932, more than four times as much as in 1928, eight times what it had been in 1913. All the essential provisions of the Plan – with the exception of costs of production – had been fulfilled; in particular, productivity of labour had risen 82 per cent, instead of the planned figure of 63 per cent. The light industries had not had a chance of expanding to quite the same extent, for reasons to be touched upon shortly, but nevertheless they had doubled their output, and there had been a big increase, from two-fold to seven-fold, in the production of cameras, bicycles, gramophones, and similar things necessary to a rising standard of comfort.

With more than three times as many tractors in the countryside as there were in 1932, the gross agricultural output in 1937 was half as

much again as that of 1928, and one-third higher than in 1913. Allowing for the 21 per cent increase in population between 1913 and 1937, and taking into account the much smaller proportion of grain now being exported, the average grain consumption per head in the country was (as Mr Dobb has pointed out) at least 50 per cent above the amount available in 1913. The quantities of sugar and potatoes consumed per head were now double the 1913 figure.

As a result of these changes, real wages had doubled, as had been intended, and the income per household of the collective farmers, measured in cash and kind, had increased from 2,132 roubles in 1932 to 5,843 roubles in 1937 (or, in the grain-producing districts, from one ton of grain *net* to two-and-one-third tons), precisely the increase provided for under the Plan. Nearly 99 per cent of the means of production of the Soviet Union were now socially owned; and so were nearly 100 per cent of its industrial output, nearly 99 per cent of its agricultural output, and almost 100 per cent of its retail trade (including collective farm trade). Under the influence of these facts, the Stakhanov movement had grown to include nearly 30 per cent of the workers in the iron and steel industry, 33 per cent of those in the heavy engineering industry and even more in some others. In a number of branches of production, the Soviet Union was now first or second in the world.

This did not mean that there were no weak spots. In average output per worker, the Soviet Union was still below several of the advanced countries of capitalism, producing for example only 40 per cent of the American output of coal per worker, and 50 per cent of the amount of iron. If measured by head of population, the output was even lower. There were still big deficiencies in the organization of industry, and in agriculture too. Only one-eighth of the collective farms, for example, were practising scientific rotation of crops, and yields were low as a result. The number of livestock had not yet recovered from the losses of 1930 and the years immediately after it, although it was growing. The supply of consumer goods was still inadequate – which was only to be expected in view of the fact that expenditure on defence, standing in 1937 at seventeen-and-a-half milliards of roubles, represented 17 per cent of the national Budget (almost five times as much as at the beginning of the second Five Year Plan). The Red Army now numbered 1,300,000. So the complications of the international scene had their bearing on the work and welfare of the individual Soviet citizen.



Yet the citizens of the Soviet Union felt the strength of their country, during these years, in a way that they had never felt it before; and all visitors to the U.S.S.R. were quick to remark on it – from the thousands of tourists and hundreds of delegates to the May Day and November 7th celebrations, elected in the factories and trade union branches of many West European and American countries, to the British Military Mission which, in September, 1936, attended the Red Army manoeuvres in Byelorussia, and saw Soviet mechanized troops and aircraft at work in numbers and with an efficiency which they had not previously suspected. One of the signs of this confidence was the way in which a series of trials of former politicians and military men of high rank, on charges of treason, espionage, wrecking and assassination were held, for the most part in public, with the fullest publicity for the evidence, without any wavering in public morale.

On the contrary, morale seemed to grow stronger with the sense that hidden dangers were being rooted out.

Here there can be listed only the most important of these conspiracies and trials. In January, 1935, Zinoviev, Kamenev and several other associates of theirs were brought to trial on the charge of complicity in the murder of Kirov. They were acquitted of such complicity, but it was established that they had set up a counterrevolutionary organization, the activities of which encouraged the terrorist group at Leningrad, and that moreover they were aware of the latter's existence. Zinoviev and Kamenev were sentenced to ten years' and five years' imprisonment respectively. Then, in the late spring of 1936, a series of arrests of Nazi agents and Trotskyist conspirators revealed the existence of a much wider organization – a central terrorist committee which included, not only Zinoviev and Kamenev, but several leading Trotskyists. Preliminary investigations and evidence given at their trial (in August, 1936) revealed that, through Germans who had been sent to the U.S.S.R. by Trotsky himself, the organization was in close contact with the German Gestapo. Zinoviev, Kamenev and their associates were sentenced to be shot.

Within the next two weeks a number of other outstanding Trotskyists – Pyatakov, Radek, Sokolnikov, Serebryakov and Yagoda, head of the People's Commissariat for the Interior – were also under arrest, as a result of confessions which the Zinoviev- Kamenev group had made. They were put on trial in January, 1937. The revelations

which they made, and their confessions in Court, showed that, after pretending for so long that they were animated by concern for the Soviet people, on the contrary their policy had been one of complete subordination to the plans of Hitler. The organization of wrecking on the railways and in the coalfields, at important chemical works and power stations, in agriculture and livestock breeding, was revealed to be only subsidiary to their main purpose. This was to call in outside assistance – from the German and Japanese intelligence services – to redress the balance when their efforts inside the U.S.S.R. were failing. In the words of Sokolnikov (who had been Ambassador in Great Britain at one time), ‘we considered that Fascism was the most organized form of capitalism, that it would triumph and seize Europe and stifle us. It was better therefore to come to terms with it’. These terms included territorial concessions in the Ukraine and the Far East, and economic concessions to German industrialists, in return for large-scale subversive activities in the event of war between the U.S.S.R. and Germany and for the establishment of a Trotskyist Government after a German victory.

It is worth noting that, as a well-known American journalist who attended the trial wrote later, ‘the impression held widely abroad that the defendants all told the same story, that they were I abject and grovelling, that they behaved like sheep in the executioner’s pen, isn’t quite correct. They argued stubbornly with the prosecutor; in the main they told only what they were forced to tell’. Radek in his final evidence said, ‘For two and a half months I compelled the examining official, by interrogating me and by confronting me with the testimony of the other accused, to open up all the cards to me, so that I could see who had confessed, who had not confessed and what each had confessed.’ Nearly all the foreign diplomats in Moscow who had attended the trial, as U.S. Ambassador Davies reported to Secretary Hull on February 17th, 1937, were convinced with him that the defendants were guilty.

The Supreme Court sentenced the leaders of the conspiracy to be shot, while Radek, Sokolnikov and others who had played a minor part were sentenced to terms of imprisonment.

In May, 1937, yet another group of conspirators, whose existence had been revealed in the course of investigating evidence secured during the previous trial, was arrested. This consisted of two Deputy People’s Commissars for Defence, Tukhachevsky and Gamamik, and several other generals. They were brought to trial before

a court-martial consisting of the highest military leaders of the U.S.S.R., and charged with espionage for the intelligence service of a country 'which is carrying on an unfriendly policy towards the U.S.S.R.' Later it was revealed that Tukhachevsky and his associates had reached the same point in their dealings with Germany as the Trotskyites primarily because they believed that there was no power on earth with a strength comparable with that of Germany, and that it was necessary to come to terms with her and with Japan. For this purpose they plotted a military *coup* – although the problem had been how to find the rank and file for such an enterprise as the seizure of Government buildings and the killing of Soviet leaders. On this, in fact, it broke down; and their trial in June, 1937, led to their conviction and execution.

There was yet one further group which was to be dealt with before the danger from within could be thought eliminated. It was announced in May that the Right-wing leaders Bukharin, Rykov and Tomskey were under suspicion of treason, as a result of evidence during the earlier trials. The first two were arrested, while Tomskey committed suicide. Other well-known Trotskyists were also taken into custody during the year – Rosengoltz (former associate of Trotsky in the War Department, later representative in London and People's Commissar for Foreign Trade), Rakovsky (former pre-1914 associate of Trotsky, later head of the Ukrainian Soviet Government, and later still Ambassador in London), Krestinsky (formerly one of the secretaries of the Central Committee of the Party, and later People's Commissar for Finance and Ambassador in Berlin), and several others. But the trial of this final group was not to be held until March, 1938.

A broad, these trials aroused volumes of speculation, invention and abuse: abuse so sharp, indeed, that it was commonly regarded among ordinary Soviet citizens, as those who met them in these years could testify, as the most convincing proof that the Soviet Government had really struck a crushing blow at plans which had been hatched outside its borders, and that those who were responsible for the hatching were squealing. Be that as it may, the general verdict in the U.S.S.R. was well reflected in the remark of Stalin, at the XVIII Congress of the C.P.S.U. in March, 1939: 'To listen to these foreign drivellers, one would think that if the spies, murderers and wreckers had been left at liberty to wreck, murder and spy without lee or hindrance, the Soviet organizations would have been far sounder and

stronger.'

It is an open secret that, in the course of the investigations during these years, particularly in 1937, there were large numbers of arrests among suspected persons in responsible positions. Foreign journalists and diplomats, accustomed to judge of the strength of a regime by the fortunes of persons in authority, were quick to interpret these arrests as indicating and intensifying a profound lack of confidence. In reality the uncertainty did not exist among the broad mass of the population; and even among those small sections of the intelligentsia where gossip and the consciousness of past waverings caused misgivings, these began to be allayed from 1938 onwards, when large numbers of those who had been under investigation began to be released and returned to their normal occupations.

The supreme expression of the confidence of the regime, however, and an important factor in its further strengthening, was the decision to make radical changes in the Soviet Constitution, first announced in February, 1935, when the Central Committee of the Communist Party decided to propose to the forthcoming VII Congress of Soviets drastic amendments, 'replacing not entirely equal suffrage by equal suffrage, indirect elections by direct elections, and the open ballot by the secret ballot.'

When the first Soviet Constitution (of the R.S.F.S.R.) was adopted in 1918, and even when it was remoulded in 1924 to provide for the establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, many large factories were already publicly owned, but in fact were far from their pre-war level of productivity, and in Soviet economy as a whole still represented a weak element. Small capitalism still existed in industry, in the bulk of retail trade and – in the shape of the kulaks – in very advantageous positions in agriculture. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of agricultural producers were small peasants, with an individualist rather than a collectivist outlook. Outside the Soviet Union, the capitalist governments which had attempted to overthrow the Soviet Government by force of arms from 1918 to 1920 were defeated but by no means undaunted, nor yet without agents, busily engaged within the Soviet Union among those classes which seemed most promising material for anti-Socialist organization and propaganda.

The old Soviet Constitution, based as it was on forms of organization of the workmen and peasants brought into being while capitalism still ruled Russia, during the period from March to November,

1917, had therefore preserved and emphasized all the features which made the Soviets a weapon of combat, in the hands of the class primarily interested in Socialism – the industrial proletariat.

But by the middle of the second Five Year Plan the determining economic conditions had completely changed. Industry was now the decisive force in the country, and moreover it was an industry which in the volume of its output and the up-to-date character of its equipment was the most powerful in Europe. Moreover, it was an entirely Socialist industry. In agriculture mechanized, large-scale, socially-owned production was now overwhelmingly predominant, with petty peasant production reduced to less than 5 per cent of the total and the kulak farms completely eliminated. The whole of home trade was in the hands of the State, the collective farms and the co-operative societies. Socialist economy, therefore, ruled unchallenged, and was steadily raising living and cultural standards for the mass of the people.

This fundamental change in material conditions had brought far-reaching social change. Landlords, capitalists, kulaks, and private traders had disappeared. Soviet society consisted of a working class which was no longer proletarian in the old sense of the word, since it was vested with ownership of the means of production and, by Socialist emulation, was displaying its awareness of that ownership. Soviet society included a peasantry which had also taken a shape entirely new in history – that of collectives working on nationally-owned land. The Soviet intelligentsia was a section of society quite different from that of the old people of education, who had either come from the former property-owning classes or had served them. The new intelligentsia had come from the ranks of the workers and the peasants, and had no other master to serve. Thus Soviet society was immeasurably more homogeneous than that of Russia before 1917, or indeed before the Five Year Plans.

This more homogeneous quality was enhanced by the transformation which had taken place in relations between the nationalities, large and small, inhabiting the territory of the U.S.S.R. The old colonies and subject nations of the Russian Empire were now equal peoples, not only legally but in the reality of economic, political and cultural opportunity. The literacy of three quarters of the population, i.e. all but the older generations; the appearance of modern industry and mechanized agriculture among the formerly backward peasants of Central Asia and the Caucasus; the complete wiping out of en-

demic disease in huge areas of Asia; the settling of millions of former poverty-stricken nomads in flourishing agricultural or industrial communities; the rescue of the dying nationalities of the Far North – all these by 1935-6 were unmistakable signs of the multi-national unity and homogeneity of the U.S.S.R.

It was this which found reflection in the new draft Constitution, which was published in June, 1936, by the Constitutional Commission appointed by the Central Executive Committee of Soviets on February 7th, 1935. The new Constitution established a single franchise for all citizens at eighteen, other than lunatics and criminals serving sentence, and without class distinction. It provided the *direct* election of all organs of State power – rural Soviets (covering usually a group of villages) and district Soviets in the countryside, town Soviets, regional Soviets, Supreme Soviets of the Autonomous Republics, and of the Union Republics of which they form part, and finally a Supreme Soviet of the whole U.S.S.R. The ballot was made secret. The nomination of candidates was put into the hands of working-class and peasant organizations and of their branches. The candidates themselves had to be eighteen years of age (the first years of experience subsequently led to raising this age to twenty-three), but no other qualification was necessary. No candidate could be deemed elected unless at least half the electorate had voted, and unless at least half of those voting had done so in his favour. All deputies, from local Soviets up to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., were liable to recall by their constituents if they failed to give them satisfaction. In the Supreme Soviet there were to be two Chambers of equal status – one the Soviet of the Union, representing the common interests of the Soviet people irrespective of nationality, and elected on the basis of one deputy per 300,000 inhabitants: the other the Soviet of Nationalities, representing the interests of the several nationalities by distinct representation, as before. The consent of each Chamber was necessary for the adoption of any legislation.

Criticism abroad was levelled at the clause providing for the existence of the Communist Party only, on the ground that this prevented freedom of discussion and criticism. In reality, the *masses* of the people in the U.S.S.R. were probably taking a more active part in discussion and criticism of their machinery of government than anywhere else in the world. But there was also the question of

whether other parties could in fact exist in a society as homogeneous in its nature as that of the U.S.S.R.\* On this subject Stalin said, at the Eighth (Extraordinary) Congress of Soviets in November, 1936, which adopted the Constitution:

A party is a part of a class, its most advanced part. Several parties, and consequently freedom for parties, can exist only in a society in which there are antagonistic classes whose interests are mutually hostile and irreconcilable – in which there are, say, capitalists and workers, landlords and peasants, kulaks and poor peasants, etc. But in the U.S.S.R. there are no longer such classes as the capitalists, the landlords, the kulaks, etc. In the U.S.S.R. there are only two classes, workers and peasants, whose interests – far from being mutually hostile – are on the contrary friendly. Hence there is no ground in the U.S.S.R. for the existence of several parties, and consequently for freedom for these parties. In the U.S.S.R. there is ground for only one party, the Communist Party. In the U.S.S.R. only one party can exist – the Communist Party, which courageously defends the interests of the workers and peasants to the very end. And that it defends the interests of these classes not at all badly, of that there can hardly be any doubt.

The draft Constitution was printed in 60 million copies, and subjected to a vast national discussion, at 527,000 meetings in town and country, attended in all by over thirty-six million people. Even some foreign writers have noticed that these discussions were a tremendous political education in themselves, not only because every section of the constitutional machinery provided was subjected to examination, but because the statement of the rights and duties of the Soviet citizen which was included in the Constitution was even more elaborate and explicit than its predecessor. Like the earlier declaration of such rights, the new text accompanied each statement of a right by a list of the material conditions making possible the exercise of that right – and thus enabled every citizen to check whether in fact he or she had the opportunities which were guaranteed him. Thus, to

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\* Compare Prof. H. J. Laski, *Parliamentary Government in England* (1938), pp. 80-84, 93-95, 98.

take two examples:

Article 122. Women in the U.S.S.R. are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, State, cultural, social and political life.

The realisation of these rights of women is ensured by affording women equally with men the right to work, payment for work, rest, social insurance and education, and by State protection of the interests of mother and child, maternity leave with pay and the provision of a wide network of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens.

Article 123. Equal rights for citizens of the U.S.S.R., irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, State, cultural, social and political life, shall be an irrevocable law.

Any direct or indirect limitation of these rights, or conversely any establishment of direct or indirect privileges for citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as any propagation of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, shall be punished by law.

In the course of the discussion, the citizens were invited to submit amendments, and in fact over 150,000 amendments were sent in to the Constitutional Commission. Naturally they included many repetitions, but they were grouped and dealt with by Stalin in his speech mentioned above. His survey should be read by everyone trying to understand the nature of Soviet public life. Here we can only note that several amendments were adopted – as, for example, one proposing an equal number of members in both Chambers of the Supreme Soviet, and another proposing that the Soviet of Nationalities should be elected by direct vote.

The new Constitution came into force with its adoption on December 5th, 1936, and on the same day the Kazakh and Kirgiz Autonomous Republics become fully-pledged Union Republics, members of the U.S.S.R. in their own right, as did also Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Throughout 1937 preparations for the first general election went on. Millions of ‘agitators’ – the majority of them non-members of the Communist Party – enrolled as volunteers to explain to citizens their opportunities and duties in the forthcoming election. The campaign was used as the occasion for general discussion of the Communist Party’s policy and that of the Soviet Gov-



ernment in all spheres of its work: and aroused a further wave of Socialist emulation in the factories. Great advances in science, technique and the arts seemed at this time to bring home with particular force the growing role of the individual in Soviet society, on which the new Constitution laid emphasis. Only a few of them can be noted here – festivals in Moscow of Ukrainian and Kazakh art in March and May, 1936, and of Georgian and Uzbek art in January and May, 1937; striking nonstop flights by Soviet airmen (Moscow-Far East in July, 1936, Moscow-North Pole-U.S.A. in June and July, 1937); sweeping successes of young Soviet musicians at international contests in Vienna (1936) and Brussels (1937); the brilliant Soviet pavilion at the Paris Exhibition (1937); the opening of the Moscow-Volga Canal (July, 1937). By the end of the year books were being published in 110 languages of the U.S.S.R.

Thousands of candidates, both Communist and non-Communist, were nominated for the Supreme Soviet; but selection conferences, similar in principle to those held by the British Labour Party, were convened before final nomination day, at which all bodies which had put forward candidates were represented, and the nominations were discussed one by one in order to arrive at a single nominee, who should represent the united movement of Communists and non-Communists. It was in this way, and not in any occult fashion, that a single candidate was arrived at in each constituency. It must be noted, however, that the Constitution had not laid down any procedure to this end, and this introduction of ‘primaries’ or selection conferences was merely a matter of usage.

In the polls on December 12th, 1937, ninety-one millions voted (over 96 per cent of the electorate), the candidates securing over eighty-nine millions of these votes (the striking out of the candidates’ name on the ballot paper, or its spoiling, was equivalent to voting against him).

Of course this enormous percentage of participants in the polls had a quite different significance from voting in countries where class divisions between owners and non-owners of the means of production existed, and where contending political parties represented in the last analysis the economic interests of different social groups. But then no other country could point to population statistics, as the Soviet Union could, which showed on the eve of the 1937 election that 90.2 per cent of the people were employed in public-ly-owned enterprises – 34.7 per cent wage workers with their fami-

lies, 55.5 per cent collective farmers with their families. To this total must be added 4.2 per cent of the population who were students, pensioners and members of the defence forces, i.e. all drawn from the same classes. Only 5.6 per cent of the entire population of the Soviet Union was now living by individual enterprise – and that the small-scale, non-exploiting enterprise of individual peasant farms or independent artisans.

### 3. THE STRUGGLE FOR COLLECTIVE SECURITY, 1936-7

Throughout the last two years of the second Five Year Plan the world was filled with growing apprehension of the ever more open and brazen violations of international peace by Hitler and his confederates in Japan and Italy. These two years also saw the Soviet Union pressing more and more insistently for an association of peace-loving Powers which should warn off the aggressor bloc from further attacks on the selected victims of its policy of expansion. At the same time, in view of the persistent evidence that the Western Governments were still toying with the idea of turning Hitler eastwards and Japan westwards in a 'one-way war', the Soviet Government took active steps in diplomacy to reinforce the military preparations for its own defence, single-handed if need be.

In March, 1936, Hitler reoccupied the Rhineland with his armed forces, and proclaimed its militarization. A meeting of the League Council was hastily summoned in London. Litvinov made a public review of Hitler's aggressive acts and his threats, particularly against the U.S.S.R., and underlined strongly the fact that the League of Nations itself would not be preserved if it accustomed aggressors 'to ignore all its recommendations, all its warnings and all its threats'. He declared on behalf of the Soviet Government that it would be ready to take part in all measures that the signatories of the Locarno Treaties of 1925 might propose to the Council and which the other members of the Council would adopt.

However, no action was taken. It was then credibly reported by well-informed journalists, and has been subsequently confirmed from the German archives, that Hitler's advance into the Rhineland was a gamble, against the advice of his generals, and that a determined front would have forced his withdrawal. The front was not presented. At this time, faced with a series of provocative border raids by the Japanese on Soviet and Mongolian territory, the Soviet Government concluded (March 12th) a Protocol of Mutual Assis-

tance with the Mongolian People's Republic – the democratic successor of that feudal Outer Mongolia which by Tsarist intrigue had been effectively detached from China before 1914. On March 19th the Soviet Ambassador in London repeated in public that the Franco-Soviet Pact was not directed against Germany, and the proof was that it was still open for Germany to adhere to it, which would cause no greater pleasure anywhere than in Moscow and Paris.

In June an international conference was convened at Montreux to discuss Turkey's demand for a revision of the Lausanne Treaty of 1922 demilitarizing the Dardanelles. Her claim in this respect was agreed to; but a stubborn struggle followed about the consequences of this refortification. The Soviet Government insisted on the right of its warships to pass through the Dardanelles, in the event of war and on the understanding that Turkey was neutral, so that the U.S.S.R. could have the same freedom of communication between the different seas in which its warships were stationed that other naval Powers enjoyed. This was strenuously opposed by the British Government. Agreement of course would mean that the U.S.S.R. could at will reinforce its navies in Baltic waters – where Germany had been promised virtual dominion by the Anglo-German naval agreement.

A second subject of disagreement arose when the Soviet delegation demanded, with the support of France and Rumania, that (always subject to Turkey's being neutral) only warships proceeding to the Black Sea to fulfil agreements arising out of the Covenant of the League and reinforcing it should be free to enter. The British delegation strongly opposed this demand, provoking an open accusation from the Rumanians that this was to prevent the French Navy coming to their assistance against a German attack; and it was quite clear to all at the Conference that the real reason was to avoid hampering Germany in any action it might take eastwards. It was interpreted as such by the Soviet delegation, and at a critical point of the negotiations Litvinov let it be known that, in the absence of any agreement, he was leaving for Moscow the next morning. This caused consternation, and a rapid change of front. Agreement was reached on the Soviet- Franco-Rumanian formula, and the new Convention was signed on July 20th. But there had been yet one more demonstration that it was no longer merely publicists and politicians in Britain, but the British Government itself which disliked the idea of warning off Germany from aggression eastwards.

One minor but equally significant feature of the Conference was

that, once the Turkish delegation had secured the right to fortify the Straits, it completely changed the policy of collaboration with the Soviet Union which it had pursued ever since, in the hours of danger to the young Turkish Republic (1919-22), the Soviet Government had given it military, material and diplomatic support. For the greater part of the Montreux Conference the Turkish delegation was working in close association with the British, particularly on the question of the entry of foreign warships into the Black Sea – a position which could only be understood as signifying that the Turkish Government also was not averse to the weakening of the other Black Sea Powers in face of a German (the only possible) attack, and was relying on its own ability to come to terms with the aggressor in that event. This was the beginning of a more and more pronounced turn in Turkish foreign policy, which was likewise not lost upon Soviet diplomacy.

In July, 1936, the perils overhanging international peace, in the absence of a firm front of those Powers which were not interested in war, received further tragic confirmation – far outweighing an Anglo-Soviet Agreement on July 30th, which provided for the placing of Soviet orders for British manufactures to a total value of £10,000,000, with payment by Soviet Government notes guaranteed by the British Government 100 per cent, and saleable through the banks. At any other time this would have been the opening of a vast consolidation of relations between the two countries.

But on July 1st the Assembly of the League of Nations gathered in Geneva to close a page in its history, in Litvinov's words, 'which it will be impossible to read without a feeling of bitterness'. This was to end sanctions against Italy for her invasion of Ethiopia. Further discussions in March and April had revealed once again a flat refusal by the Western Powers to accept oil sanctions against Italy. Moreover, on various pretexts a movement had developed for legalizing the refusal of several League members – particularly in Latin America – to apply sanctions at all. This was to be done by 'reforming' the Covenant so as to exclude those clauses which bound them to preserve the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League against external aggression (Article 10), and which laid down the obligation of League members to take various measures against a Covenant-breaking State (Article 16).

This was an occasion for Litvinov once again to point out the danger of the policy pursued so far of encouraging aggression in the belief that war could be localized. In particular he strongly de-

nounced the idea that by such 'reforms' of the Covenant it would be possible to secure the return of Germany and Italy to the League, and thus make it universal. 'In other words, let us make the League safe for aggressors', said Litvinov sarcastically; and he opposed to this the necessity of making the Covenant stronger rather than weaker, by making at least economic sanctions obligatory on all, and supplementing the League Covenant by regional obligations subject to its provisions. These proposals were followed up by the Soviet Government in a memorandum, sent in reply to a circular enquiry from the League Secretariat (August 30th, 1936).

On July 18th the so-called Spanish Civil War began: in reality, an attack on the independence of Spain by Germany and Italy, behind the mask of a rebellion of Fascist-minded army officers. It would not have survived the first weeks of struggle against the legitimate (and recently-elected) government of the Spanish Republic, but for the material support, in armaments and men, which it received from the outset from the German and Italian Governments, with whom the whole operation had been planned. Italian planes were assisting the rebels from the beginning, while German planes began to arrive on July 28th. While Hitler and Mussolini did their part, the British Government played its own. At the beginning of August, as was revealed the following year by the well-known French conservative journalist Pertinax, the French Prime Minister was informed that 'the guarantee given by Great Britain to maintain the frontiers of France would not remain valid in the event of independent action beyond the Pyrenees' ; and that, if France should find herself in conflict with Germany as a result of having sold war material to the Spanish Government, 'England would consider herself released from her obligations under the Locarno Pact and would not come to help'. It is scarcely surprising – although very much in character – that even before this the French Government had decided to prohibit exports of arms; the warning from Great Britain came in consequence of mass protests in France which made it possible that the French Government might waver in its determination to leave the ground clear for German and Italian intervention. The whole arrangement was masked by an international agreement, against which the Soviet Union protested, to prohibit the export of arms to either side and to set up a 'Non-Intervention Committee'.

The activities of this Committee, in face of the flagrant and impudent violation of its decisions by the German and Italian Gov-

ernments which were represented in it, were a striking illustration of the famous explanation by Talleyrand that 'non-intervention is a diplomatic phrase which means intervention'. On October 7th, after repeated protests, the Soviet Government declared that unless the violations were discontinued it would resume freedom of action; and when it became clear that the Committee would do nothing to enforce its own nominal decisions, the Soviet representative Maisky announced the resumption of its freedom (October 28th). That week, as the Foreign Minister of the Spanish Republic, Alvarez del Vayo, subsequently testified, the first Soviet war material reached Spain: on October 29th, Soviet tanks and artillery made their first appearance on the Republican front. On November 11th the first Soviet plane appeared.

Soviet aid continued until the end of the war, although it was very far from reaching the volume of material aid supplied by Germany and Italy. This was not because the Soviet authorities were trying to influence the Spanish Government. 'At no time', writes del Vayo, 'did the Russian Government attempt, as certain persons have charged out of their ignorance or bad faith, to make use of the fact that we were dependent on the Soviet Union for arms to interfere in internal Spanish politics' (*Freedom's Battle*, 1940, pp. 67-77). The simple reason was that Soviet ports were nearly 2,000 miles away from the Spanish coast, and the Soviet Union had not the naval strength adequate to convoy its commercial ships through the Mediterranean. As early as December 14th, 1936, an Italian submarine set fire to a Soviet cargo ship, the *Komsomol*, off the coast of Africa, and other ships were sunk later on; with the result that shipments depended entirely on transit through France – which the French Government for most of the time refused. It was lack of material, much of it already despatched, that led to the final overthrow of the Republic in the winter of 1938-39.

From the beginning it was clear that what was at stake was not the possibility of 'ideological blocs' emerging in Europe – the reason advanced more than once by Lord Halifax and Mr Eden at League of Nations meetings – but whether Hitler would be allowed to consolidate his power in the West by establishing a permanent menace to France on yet another border, and thus weakening her as much as possible should she be called upon to implement the Franco-Soviet Pact. Hitler's growing confidence, in view of the attitude on this question above all of the then British Government, was already dis-

played in September, when, at the Nazi Congress at Nuremberg, he spoke of what Germany could do with the raw materials of the Urals and fertile plains of Ukraine. Such a declaration was not calculated to arouse any alarm in those Foreign Offices and politicians and newspaper proprietors in Western Europe who thought that this was an ideal direction for Hitler's expansion to take.

Already at the VII Congress of Soviets, in January, 1935, Molotov had reiterated the point made the previous year by Stalin that 'the Soviet Union desires the establishment of good relations with all States, not excluding even States with Fascist regimes.' Litvinov, in his speech at the League Assembly on September 28th, 1936, underlined this point when denouncing the sham of non-intervention. 'Recognizing the right of every people to choose any political and social order for itself, the Soviet Government does not practise discrimination between States according to their internal regime. While it considers National-Socialism and racialism the mortal enemy of all working people and of civilization itself, the Soviet Government, far from preaching a crusade against the countries where these theories prevail, has attempted to preserve normal diplomatic and economic relations with them as with other countries'.

But this did not prevent more charges of promoting 'ideological blocs' on the part of those who believed in a German-Japanese attack on the Soviet Union, and on November 25th, 1936, the German and Japanese Governments did in fact announce the conclusion of an 'Anti-Comintern Pact', which was generally understood to be the cover for a military alliance against the U.S.S.R. Again offering co-operation with other nations which would be willing to join in protecting peace and setting a term to Fascist aggression (in a speech at the same VIII Congress of Soviets which adopted the new Constitution), Litvinov once more underlined the fact that 'the Soviet Union does not call for the creation of an international bloc to struggle against Fascism, which rejects democracy and freedom. We as a State are not concerned with the internal Fascist regime of this or that country. Our collaboration with other countries and our participation in the League of Nations are based on the principle of the peaceful co-existence of two systems – the Socialist and the capitalist – and we consider that the latter includes the Fascist system. But Fascism is now ceasing to be an internal affair of the countries which preach it.' In March, 1937, a 'prominent Soviet personality' told newspaper correspondents in Moscow that only collective action

could stop Hitler, and that that depended primarily on Britain. If there was a Fascist rising in France, and German troops crossed the French border to help it, the Red Army would fulfil its obligations without hesitation. But the essential thing was international action. 'It is high time a peace conference was called' added this spokesman of Soviet foreign policy – making a proposal which was to be renewed vainly each spring during the next two years.

But in May, 1937, Mr Neville Chamberlain became Prime Minister. His dislike of the U.S.S.R. had never been concealed even from its official representatives – as, for example, upon the occasion when he was asked by Ozersky, the then Trade Representative of the U.S.S.R., whether, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he would not help in promoting Anglo-Soviet trade, and replied: 'But why should we assist our worst enemy?' From now onwards the kindly tolerance of German and Italian aggression in Western Europe became even more a matter of settled policy; and this was duly noted by the Japanese. In June and the beginning of July, 1937, they provoked a series of incidents on the Amur, which serves as boundary for a long stretch between the U.S.S.R. and North China. It turned out that this campaign itself was only the preparation for the new large-scale attack by the Japanese on China which began on July 7th. As the Japanese had anticipated, the promise of a conflict with the U.S.S.R. which seemed to lurk in their Amur demonstration proved sufficient, on this occasion also, to dissuade the Powers most interested in restraining Japan from taking any action whatsoever.

Only the Soviet Union took positive action, by concluding a Pact of Non-Aggression with China on August 21st – an agreement which was immediately followed by the beginning of the despatch of material aid to the Chinese Government. At the Assembly of the League of Nations in September, 1937, when China demanded that Japan should be declared an aggressor and that moral and material aid be granted to her victim, Britain and France opposed this, while the U.S.S.R., supported by Mexico and Republican Spain, supported the Chinese demand. Litvinov urged the League to take steps to bring China 'moral and material aid'. Similarly in November, at the Brussels Conference of the Powers who had signed the Washington 'Nine Power Treaty' guaranteeing China's integrity and independence (February 6th, 1922), the Soviet Government opposed the American and British pressure for offers of mediation and conciliation to Japan. Its representative Potemkin promised support of 'any



concrete proposal' for effective and united action by the Powers in support of China.

It might have seemed an anti-climax, but for being so strangely in line with the policy of the 'one-way gun', that the only concrete action suggested was one advocated (behind closed doors) by M. Spaak, as President of the Conference – that while Britain and America should make a 'naval demonstration' in Far Eastern waters, the Soviet Government should mobilize its land forces along the Chinese border and send its air squadrons over Tokyo. This ingenious proposal, which would of course have had the immediate effect of precipitating a Soviet-Japanese war while committing Britain and America to precisely nothing – since the Japanese knew that a naval demonstration so far from the bases of the respective fleets had no significance – was rejected by the Soviet delegation. The U.S.S.R. went on, however, supplying material assistance to China.

In the meantime, a serious situation had arisen also in Western Europe. Encouraged by the impunity with which they had sunk Soviet commercial vessels, 'unknown submarines' began attacking British and French ships in the Mediterranean. Almost with lightning speed, an international conference of all the Mediterranean and Black Sea Powers – with the significant exception of Republican Spain – was called on the initiative of the British and French Governments. Although it had previously been asserted that any warlike threat to Italy or Germany would bring down upon Europe the horrors of a general war (when the question of stopping oil for Italian use against Ethiopia was involved), a decision was now adopted within thirty-six hours that the British and French navies were to patrol the Mediterranean, and that submarines attacking merchant ships other than those of the warring sides in Spain would be hunted down and destroyed. Litvinov agreed, with a protest against the exclusion from protection of the commercial vessels of the legitimate government of the Spanish Republic.

This agreement, signed at Nyon on the Lake of Geneva on September 11th, 1937, was the nearest that, under the sudden pressure of events, the Western Powers came to that essential agreement with the U.S.S.R. for resistance to the aggressor which would have stopped the second World War. Agreement of this kind was being prayed for throughout the world, and the smaller countries were discreetly pressing for it. They eagerly seized on even the slightest sign of its approach. At the League Assembly in September, 1937, they were

greatly encouraged, for example, by the news that the 'Second Committee' of the Assembly – dealing with economic and financial questions – had adopted a resolution, on the joint motion of the British, French and Soviet delegations, urging that 'States which are anxious to maintain peace' should practise the closest co-operation in the economic and political field, and that 'such co-operation must be based on the renunciation of recourse to violence and war as instruments of policy, and on the strict observation of international obligations'.

However, as the subsequent discussions on China showed, these declarations were no more than talk. By the end of the year, in a bitter speech to his electors at Leningrad, Litvinov was to describe the international arena as the scene of 'a division of labour, where some States take the offensive while others ask questions and wait for confirmation and explanation'. He described how this had happened in connexion both with Spain and with China; in consequence of which the aggressive countries were constantly acquiring new positions for further aggression, and 'the feeling that international law can be broken with impunity'. This, his audience might think, meant that 'under cover of negotiations for confirmations and explanations, they are groping for a deal with the aggressor'. Events in the next eighteen months were not likely to disabuse Litvinov's audience of this impression.

However, they probably took comfort from the remarks with which Litvinov concluded his speech (November 27th, 1937) – that 'the defensive capacity of the Soviet Union does not depend on international combinations but is grounded on the unfailing, growing power of the Red Army, Red Navy and Red Air Force', and that the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs would not allow espionage and fifth column organizations to be created in the U.S.S.R. similar to those which had, a few days before, been discovered in Czechoslovakia and in France. 'It is vigilant and strong enough to destroy the Trotsky-Fascist organizations of spies and wreckers in embryo.'

#### 4. THE YEAR OF MUNICH

The first months of 1938 opened with a series of quite unmistakable proofs, to those who were not wilfully blind, that the U.S.S.R. did in fact intend to protect itself – by its own unaided efforts in any case, by co-operation against the aggressors if possible.

On January 11th the Soviet Government made a demand for

parity in consular representation within its territory, i.e. that no State should have more consulates there than the Soviet Government maintained in the territory of the country concerned. As the Soviet Government maintained a Consulate-General in London only, all that would have been necessary to maintain friendly relations was that the British Consulate-General at Leningrad should be transferred to Moscow. This the British Government flatly refused to do, and simply closed down its Leningrad establishment, preferring to leave Britain without any consular representation in the U.S.S.R. for the next three-and-half-years. The motives for this action on the part of the British Government need not concern us; but it was quite well known at the time that the Soviet Government was rapidly developing Leningrad as a naval base. Such a base could of course have significance only against the Germans; and the reason for the Soviet Government's wishing all unnecessary foreigners out of Leningrad was as transparent as the reason for the British Government wishing to maintain a permanent establishment there. In fact, the U.S.S.R. had already, in November, obliged the Germans to close their Consulates at Leningrad, Kharkov, Odessa, Tiflis and Vladivostok as well.

The same month, at the League Council meeting on the 27th, Litvinov declared that the League ought itself to become a 'bloc or axis of peaceable States', one prepared to offer 'ideological and, when necessary and possible, material resistance to individual and group aggression'. A few days later at the League's 'Committee of Twenty-Eight', set up to discuss reform of the Covenant, Litvinov insisted that 'there are no States nor any bloc of States that could defy the united forces of the members of the League even in its present composition': and that the aggressive countries did reckon with the League and with Article 16 of its Covenant, even though the latter had not been applied in all cases of aggression hitherto. Aggression was now beginning to threaten 'States which a few years ago could have been considered quite sequestered and secured' against it.

It may be remarked in passing that this argument fell on deaf ears, as well it might. Hitler was on the eve of seizing Austria; and the captured German diplomatic archives published by the Soviet Government in 1948 represent the late Sir Nevile Henderson, British Ambassador in Berlin, as telling Hitler on March 3rd that he himself had often declared in favour of Austria joining Germany; and as raising no objection to Hitler's insistence that Europe should be

united "without Russia." It could not be supposed that the Ambassador was taking a different line from his Government.

On March 17th, in a statement to the press in Moscow which was delivered simultaneously by the Soviet Ambassadors to the Foreign Offices in London, Paris, Washington and Prague, Litvinov pointed the moral of the seizure of Austria, as creating in the first place a menace to Czechoslovakia, and declared:

The Soviet Government is, for its part, as heretofore, prepared to participate in collective actions, the scope of which should be decided in conjunction with the Soviet Government, and which should have the purpose of stopping the further development of aggression and the elimination of the increased danger of a new world slaughter. The Soviet Government is prepared to begin immediately, together with other States in the League of Nations or outside it, the consideration of practical measures called for by the present circumstances.

The reply which came from Lord Halifax on March 24th stated that if an international conference could be assembled which all European States would attend (i.e. including the aggressor Powers), and which could therefore settle the most threatening questions peacefully, the British Government would be in favour of it. But evidently in present circumstances this was impossible. A conference at which only some of the European Powers would be present, and which would concern itself primarily with taking concerted measures against aggression, would 'not necessarily' have a favourable influence on the prospects of European peace. In the House of Commons the Prime Minister underlined that the British Government were 'unwilling to accept ... mutual undertakings in advance to resist aggression'. It required neither a skilled intelligence service nor the powers of telepathy, after this, to understand what had been going on in the private discussions between the British and German Governments.

The Soviet attitude on Czechoslovakia had already been made clear, the day before Litvinov pointedly raised the matter by his Note, by a high official in Moscow, than whom 'no one could speak with greater authority' (according to British press correspondents there). He told the foreign journalists that the Soviet Union would fulfil all her pledges to Czechoslovakia, on condition that France did the

same. This was irrevocable. When reminded that there was no common frontier between the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia, the official (Litvinov himself) replied: 'Where there's a will, there's a way'.

That the will was there was shown in the first half of March on a very different field – at the final and biggest of the trials of foreign agents among the former politicians – right-wing like Bukharin and Rykov, Trotskyists like Krestinsky, Rosengoltz and Rakovsky, the former chief of the O.G.P.U., Yagoda, and many others. An immense mass of evidence collected over many months, tested by confronting the accused with one another in the course of the preliminary investigation (as is the custom in many European countries, including France, Belgium and Italy), was fully confirmed in the course of the Court proceedings, although by no means without efforts on the part of the accused to avoid certain conclusions. The charges on which they were convicted were that in 1932-33 they had formed a conspiratorial group to conduct espionage on behalf of foreign States who intended to attack the U.S.S.R. and dismember it, and that they had fulfilled their undertakings by conducting espionage, wrecking, sabotage and terrorist activities.

The accused confessed their motives, but not because of alleged torture or mysterious drugs, as was rumoured abroad. Foreign diplomats of the highest rank, and many foreign journalists, who attended the court, could see quite clearly the reason for the confessions. Fundamentally it was the same as it had been in the trials of 1930-31. If their plots had succeeded, there would have been no one to question the virtuous construction which they would have put upon such ugly and obvious activities, culminating in the establishment of a new government relying upon terror and foreign bayonets (like that of Franco in Spain or, two years later, of Petain in France). But, as they had failed, there was no possible colour by which they could make murder, treason, organized disruption of industry, agriculture and transport attractive to the victims – the ordinary citizens of the U.S.S.R. If they were not to go down as common criminals or maniacs – and no one would believe them maniacs – they had to give a rational explanation of their conduct. And no flights of oratory or twists of political logic could possibly present that conduct as patriotic, in face of the millions of the Soviet people and of the peoples of the world represented in the Court room.

This was why, once the main facts were established – and only

then – the accused did not venture to challenge the Court and the whole proceedings, but made full confession.

The result of the trial resounded throughout the world. The execution of the conspirators was a blow of a decisive nature to the German apparatus in the U.S.S.R.: at the same time it was a signal – to all but the blind – that the Soviet Government knew its strength, and if necessary could defend itself alone.

The same was the lesson taught shortly afterwards when (April 4th) the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow protested against the increasing Soviet aid to China. Litvinov reminded Japan that many countries were already selling arms to her, and consequently ‘the sale of arms, including aircraft, to China is entirely in accord with the standard procedure of international law’. By this time there had been a number of smaller incidents between the U.S.S.R. and Japan, arising out of Japanese detention of a Soviet mail-plane and Soviet ships, and delay in payments by Japan for the Chinese Eastern Railway. But these pin-pricks did not achieve their aim. In May, at the 101st session of the League Council, all eyes turned to the Soviet representative when Wellington Koo, on behalf of China, said: ‘The League members, with one exception, have done little or nothing to aid China in her struggle against aggression’.

The beginning of May was noteworthy for two other declarations bearing on the position of the U.S.S.R. in face of the tactics of agreement with the aggressors practised in Western Europe. One (May 11th) was by Kalinin, President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, to the leader of a Czechoslovak workers’ delegation. He said that the Soviet Union would honour all its obligations to Czechoslovakia in the event of unprovoked aggression against the latter. The other was a warning on May Day by the People’s Commissar for Defence, Voroshilov, that ‘the flames of war are blazing in two continents’ and that the raising of the fighting capacity, political consciousness and technical level of the Red Army was the most urgent task facing the nation. ‘The Soviet Union must rely first of all on its own forces’, said an editorial in *Izvestia* the same day.

This was to be proved true before very long by a big attack which the Japanese made at the end of July west of Lake Hassan, in the mountainous strip where the borders of Manchuria, Korea and the Soviet Union join. The Japanese had trained a special division for these operations, aimed at conquering, by a surprise attack, important strategic positions on Soviet hilly territory which the Red Army had

established. The initial surprise attack was successful. The only approach from the Soviet side was over extremely unfavourable ground, once the Japanese were ensconced in the hills. Yet by a crushing combination of artillery fire and accurate mass bombing from the air, coupled with heavy and repeated infantry charges, the Soviet forces regained the heights between 5 p.m. and sunset on August 6th. During the next five days they withstood twenty Japanese counter-attacks, until an armistice was signed with the Soviet forces in possession of their original positions.

This practical test should have shown that the Soviet Union not only meant business when it said it would defend itself, but that it was a formidable opponent whom even the most hardened aggressor might hesitate to attack in future – and was therefore a formidable potential ally for anyone who really intended to try to stop aggression by concerted international action. This, however, was the very conclusion which was ignored by the Governments of Western Europe, when the future of Czechoslovakia was being discussed from March until September, 1938.

The course of those discussions, and the growing determination of Hitler to impose complete surrender of the Czechoslovak defences, as a preliminary to absorbing the country itself, need not concern us here. What is important is that the Soviet Government left both the world at large, and the British and French Governments in particular, in no doubt about its own readiness to help in the defence of the Czechoslovak Republic.

The reader will have noticed that the Soviet statement on March 16th, 1938, had made the fulfilment of pledges dependent on France. This was because, under the Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty of 1935, mutual aid, as we have seen, was conditional on the coming into force of the French-Czechoslovak treaty. It was not the Soviet Government but the Czechoslovak Government which had insisted on this qualification (Litvinov publicly revealed at Geneva on September 23rd). In April the Soviet Government privately informed France that it would immediately honour its obligations if France went to Czechoslovakia's help. But the Soviet Government did not leave the question of its obligations in this indeterminate form. During the second week of May, at the session of the League Council, the French Foreign Minister Bonnet asked Litvinov what measures the U.S.S.R. would be prepared to take in the event of Germany attacking Czechoslovakia. Litvinov reminded Bonnet that, when the

Franco-Soviet Pact and the Czechoslovak-Soviet Pact had been signed in May, 1935, staff conversations between the respective countries had been agreed upon, but that in spite of Soviet demands this agreement had never been fulfilled. He therefore proposed immediate conversations between the Soviet, French and Czechoslovak General Staffs. Bonnet 'took note' of this proposal – and nothing more was heard of it.

On May 25th, the Soviet Ambassador in Washington told American newspaper men that the Soviet Union would come to the aid of Czechoslovakia if the latter were attacked: and the following day similar statements appeared in *Izvestia* and other newspapers. On May 31st a Reuter message from Bucharest reported Soviet requests to Rumania to allow Soviet planes to pass over Rumanian territory in the event of a German threat to Czechoslovakia. In fact, as anyone who was in Prague at the beginning of June, 1938, could testify, the first Soviet aeroplanes did begin to appear in broad daylight, to the great enthusiasm of the people.

On August 21st, when the German Ambassador in Moscow asked Litvinov what the Soviet attitude would be in the event of a German-Czechoslovak war, he was told that Soviet obligations would be fulfilled immediately and to the letter. This became public through the British and French press at the end of August and the beginning of September.

It is hardly necessary to mention that throughout the summer months the Soviet Government was never consulted by the Western Powers, either about the despatch to Prague of the Runciman Mission, or about its steadily increasing pressure which forced greater and greater concessions to Hitler from the Czechoslovaks, at the expense of their national sovereignty and defensive capacity. Yet in August the Soviet Ambassador in London had told Lord Halifax that, if Germany attacked Czechoslovakia, the U.S.S.R. would 'certainly do their bit'.

On September 2nd Litvinov was asked by the French Charge d'Affaires in Moscow the same question which had been put by the Germans. Litvinov replied in the same terms, adding that the U.S.S.R. intended 'together with France, to afford assistance to Czechoslovakia by the ways open to us'. The U.S.S.R. was ready for immediate staff talks with France and Czechoslovakia. The question should also be raised at the League, to mobilize public opinion and find out the position of certain other States 'whose passive aid might



be extremely valuable'. Furthermore, to use every means of averting an armed conflict, the European Great Powers 'and other interested States' should hold an immediate consultation, to decide if possible on the terms of collective representations. These proposals were notified by the Soviet Ambassador in London to Lord Halifax on September 8th. Neither from Paris nor from London was there any response.\*

By this time the Kiev and Belorussian military districts had been reorganized and their forces strengthened almost as much as if war were imminent. It was revealed in Finland on September 21st, 1944, that the Soviet Government about this time had urged Finland to remain neutral, in the event of a Soviet-German war, offering substantial inducements. The Finns refused.

On September 19th the Czechoslovak Government for the first time formally asked the Soviet Government whether it was prepared to render immediate and effective aid, if France were loyal to her obligations and did the same. The Soviet Government 'gave, a clear reply in the affirmative'. This was all that Litvinov could reveal, in his speech in the League Assembly on the 21st: the international situation was too troubled for him to do more, since the attitude of the French and British Governments was never clearly defined. But it has since been revealed by the Czechoslovak Communist Party that 'on September 20th a representative of the Soviet Government declared to our Ambassador in Moscow, then Zdenek Fierlinger, that the Soviet Union was willing to come to our aid *in any circumstances*. The only stipulation was that Czechoslovakia should defend herself, and not capitulate'. The Soviet Government in 1948 also published its telegram of September 20th, 1938, to the Soviet Minister in Czechoslovakia, instructing him to inform President Benes (in reply to two questions he had put), first, that the U.S.S.R. would fulfil its obligations if France did the same: secondly, that the U.S.S.R. would help Czechoslovakia as a member of the League, on the basis of

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\* By a strange omission, the editors of *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-39* (Third Series, 1938) do not mention the Soviet proposals of staff talks, either in May or in September (I, 304, II, 219) – although they were published respectively by the *Manchester Guardian* on May 18th, 1938, and by Maxim Litvinov in his speech at the League Assembly on September 21st, 1938: in 1948 by Mr Churchill also.

Articles 16 and 17, if she were attacked by Germany and Benes appealed to the League Council, asking for these Articles to be applied. This second promise was of the utmost importance, since it did *not* make Soviet help depend upon France remaining loyal to her obligations. President Benes was also told that the French Government was being informed of these two replies. He himself published the truth in the U.S.A. later (*Chicago Daily News*, April 15th, 1940). Benes had been informed by Stalin that the U.S.S.R. would render military assistance even if Poland and Rumania refused transit to Soviet troops.

This *unconditional* pledge was allowed to stand even after the Czechoslovak Government had accepted what Litvinov called (in a Geneva speech of September 23rd) 'the German-British-French ultimatum', known as the Berchtesgaden terms of September 21st. These terms included repudiation of the Czechoslovak- Soviet Pact.

Fearing however that there might be further German demands which would make war inevitable, the Czechoslovak Government asked the U.S.S.R. (September 22nd) what it would do in that event. The reply was that (i) in the event of France granting assistance to Czechoslovakia, should she decide to defend her frontiers with arms against new demands by Germany, the Soviet- Czechoslovak Pact would be regarded as once again in force; (ii) if France were indifferent to an attack on Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union might come to its aid, either in virtue of a majority decision by the League of Nations or "*in virtue of a voluntary decision on its part*". It may be recalled that the Soviet Union had already been helping Spain since 1936 and China since 1937, 'in virtue of a voluntary decision on its part'.

After Litvinov had made this statement in the Sixth Commission of the Assembly on the 23rd, much interest was aroused by the demonstrative approach to him by the British delegate, Lord De La Warr, and by the subsequent long meeting which they held. Fanciful accounts were widely circulated of the significance of this talk, reputable correspondents going so far as to say that Litvinov had a mission of twenty military experts with him. This was pure fancy: no such mission – or even one-twentieth of it – existed, and the interview was only one more of the series already painfully familiar. Lord De La Warr asked what the Soviet attitude would be if the Germans came to blows with Czechoslovakia in spite of the Berchtesgaden agreement. Litvinov once again declared the Soviet intention and

readiness to help Czechoslovakia. Lord De La Warr asked about the military aspects of this, and Litvinov pointed out that he was no military man, but that staff conversations ought and could be held immediately to consider the question. Litvinov again urged a consultation of the Powers, as he had proposed on September 2nd, in Paris or London. Lord De La Warr promised to report this 'important' conversation-and, once again, nothing more was ever heard of it.

That same day, in Moscow, the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Potemkin, informed the Polish Charge d'Affaires at four a.m. that if Polish troops entered Czechoslovakia, as seemed probable from the violent campaign raging in the Polish press, the Polish-Soviet Pact of non-aggression would automatically be cancelled. At the time of this warning, foreign observers (the Riga correspondent of the *New York Times* and the Warsaw correspondent of *The Times*, on September 26th), were reporting that the U.S.S.R. had concentrated near its western borders over 330,000 infantry, five corps of cavalry, 2,000 planes and 2,000 tanks.

So certain was the British Government, in particular (notwithstanding later reports to the contrary) that it now took the unprecedented step of using the Soviet Union's name, in a threatening statement addressed to Germany, *without consulting the Soviet Government!* A statement was issued that evening from the Foreign Office, urging 'settlement by free negotiations', and declaring: 'If in spite of all efforts made by the British Prime Minister, a German attack is made upon Czechoslovakia, the immediate result must be that France will be bound to come to her assistance, and Great Britain and Russia will certainly stand by France'. It is an historical fact that the first intimation of this statement to any Soviet diplomat (including Litvinov at Geneva) was when it was published – according to Mr Churchill, on his initiative.

It was clear, as far as the Soviet Government was concerned, first, that the British and French Governments intended to surrender Czechoslovakia to Hitler – by easy stages: secondly, that the last thing they wanted was any agreement with the U.S.S.R. to restrain aggression: thirdly, that they were not averse to using the *name* of the U.S.S.R., and the undoubted fact of its military power and readiness for action, in order to coerce Hitler into giving up any enterprise which would involve him, on account of pledges given or material interests involved, in war *with the West*.

Even so, on September 28th, when the Counsellor of the United States Embassy in Moscow asked whether the Soviet Government was ready for international action to avert war, he received the reply that the Soviet Government was ready as before to take part in an international conference, called to give effective collective aid to Czechoslovakia.

Nothing, of course, was further from the thoughts of those responsible for the Munich agreement than to bring the Soviet Union into the discussions. But this did not prevent a curious manoeuvre being carried out simultaneously in London and Paris immediately after that agreement. Foreign journalists in Paris were informed that the British and French Governments had kept the Soviet Government regularly abreast of what was going on, and that 'long conferences' had been held between the French and British Foreign Ministers and the Soviet Ambassadors accredited in their countries. *The Times* diplomatic correspondent enlarged on this, to the effect that Lord Halifax 'was understood to have explained to M. Maisky the reasons why the conference at Munich was confined to the four other Great Powers, and their conversation is believed to have been most friendly'. In reality no such explanations were made, and the Soviet Ambassadors concerned never received any information going beyond what had been published in the press. At no time was the Soviet Government consulted about the proceedings which led to the Munich Agreement.

Needless to say, these attempts after the event to throw part of the odium for Munich on to the Soviet Government were well understood in Moscow, and could not mitigate the impression that the ultimate cost of any settlement with Hitler (called 'appeasement' in order to disguise its very different character) was to be at the expense of the U.S.S.R.

Indeed, this impression was reinforced by the Anglo-German declaration signed by Mr Chamberlain and Hitler at Munich on September 30th, and by a further similar declaration signed by Bonnet and Ribbentrop on December 6th. It was after this that an acute observer, the then Polish Ambassador in London, wrote to his Foreign Minister in Warsaw on December 16th: 'Conflict in the east of Europe, threatening to draw in Germany and Russia in one form or another, in spite of all declarations on the part of active elements of the Opposition, is *universally and subconsciously considered here to be a "lesser evil", which may put off for a more protracted period*

*any peril to the Empire and its overseas component parts*'. Of course this despatch was not published for several years. But the impression which it reflected could just as well have been formed in Moscow – not only from the course of events, but from further writings in the British press.

Thus, on October 17th *The Times* (chosen mouthpiece of Mr Chamberlain all through 1938) wrote of the necessity of acknowledging the 'peculiar interest (of Germany) as an industrial power in the agricultural and other markets of Central and Eastern Europe'. A week later the same paper published an editorial welcoming the 'costly failure' of the French system of interlocked alliances beyond Germany's eastern frontier, and explaining that there were many who held that both the security of France and the peace of Europe would be better served by a settlement with Germany and Italy 'than by any attempt to hold Germany in check by building up counter-forces on her eastern frontier'. On November 23rd it again congratulated itself on the breakdown of France's 'artificial system of equilibrium' and 'policy of encirclement'.

While this campaign was proceeding, an effort was made to create the impression that the Soviet Union would in any case be incapable of standing the strain of war. On October 25th *The Times* published an extraordinary article on Soviet economy, which attracted international attention. The U.S.S.R., it explained, was 'prostrate', the planning system had 'broken down', the situation of the iron, steel, coal, timber and cotton industries, and that of Soviet agriculture, was worse than it had been before 1914. For the benefit of anyone who might be interested, *The Times* obligingly added that 'if the Union were engaged in a major war, agriculture would very soon be paralysed'.

### *Further Reading*

For economic matters, the same works as in the previous period. A number of special studies give some idea of the new and wider life which began to open out in 1935 – Kingsbury and Fairchild, *Factory, Family and Women in the Soviet Union* (1935), F. Williams, *Soviet Russia Fights Neurosis* (1936). J. G. Crowther, *Soviet Science* (1936). H. L. Sigerist, *Socialised Medicine in the Soviet Union* (1937), E. D. Simon, *Moscow in the Making* (1937), H. P. Smolka, *40,000 Against the Arctic* (1937), Pat Sloan, *Soviet Democracy* (1937), Bertha Malnick, *Everyday Life in Russia* (1938), Maurice

Edelman, *G.P.U. Justice* (1938). S. R. Allan, *Comrades and Citizens* (1938). F. Halle, *Women in the Soviet East* (1938). Stalin's speech introducing the new Constitution is printed in *Leninism*. Reports of the trials are available in English – *The Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre*, 1936 (abridged), *The Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyist Centre*, 1937 (verbatim), *The Case of the Anti-Soviet 'Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites,'* 1938 (verbatim) – and a legal analysis, Dudley Collard, *Soviet Justice and the Trial of Radek and Others* (1937). On Soviet foreign policy, in addition to Coates and Pope, a collection of Litvinov's speeches, *Against Aggression* (1939), a Soviet volume of captured German documents for 1937 and 1938, *Documents and Materials on the Eve of the Second World War* (1948), vol. I, Ambassador Joseph E. Davies' book, *Mission to Moscow* (1941), and F. L. Schuman, *Europe on the Eve* (1939) are all very important. Some chapters in G. Bilainkin, *Maisky* (1944) are also most useful, and likewise in Robert Dell, *The Geneva Racket* (1940). For one special aspect, Harriet L. Moore, *Soviet Far Eastern Policy 1931-45* (1945) is very full.

## CHAPTER VII

### *The Road to Communism 1939 – 1941*

#### 1. THE THIRD FIVE-YEAR PLAN

In fact, Soviet economy had never been in such a flourishing condition as in 1938. Its gross output of industry was more than nine times what it had been in 1913 – and almost 100 per cent of output now was in publicly-owned factories and mines. There had been a bigger increase in output of consumer goods such as woollens, footwear and sugar that year than in heavy industries such as coal, iron and steel. Gross agricultural output, in comparison with that of 1913, varied from nearly 19 per cent more in the case of grain to over 260 per cent more in the case of cotton. Whereas in 1913 out of a total output of eighty-one million tons of grain less than a quarter had been marketed, in 1938 out of a harvest of 105 million tons over one-third had been marketed. Since 1933, the number of cattle had increased by 60 per cent, of sheep and goats by over 100 per cent, and of pigs by over 150 per cent. Milk yields had been trebled, and the average weight of cattle doubled.

A steady increase in the volume of home trade throughout the year was an index of rising prosperity – particularly as the number of wage-workers increased in twelve months from twenty-seven to twenty-eight millions. Not only was there a substantial rise in wages, but also the average quantity of grain retained in each collective farm household, after all outgoings, showed a big rise.

It was on the basis of these successes that the Stakhanov movement won the support of still greater numbers of the industrial workers, reaching 41 per cent of all employed in the iron and steel industry, 42 per cent in the heavy engineering industry, 47 per cent in power stations, etc.

Nor was there any lack of striking events in other spheres to justify in the eyes of the Soviet people Molotov's remark at the anniversary meeting in Moscow on November 6th that 'culture, technology, science and art are developing ever more rapidly'. The remarkable series of Moscow festivals of the national art of various Union Republics was continued with a display of Azerbaijan music, opera, ballet and drama in April; the historic scientific expedition (May, 1937 – February, 1938), on a drifting ice-floe, of Papanin and his companions aroused world-wide interest (their daily meteorological

logical reports faithfully recorded in *The Times* itself); another great long-distance flight, from one end of the Soviet Union to the other, of three leading women pilots, Valentina Grizodubova, Paulina Osipenko and Marina Raskova, took place in September, 1938; in October there appeared the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, edited by Stalin, which for the first time presented in a form accessible to every citizen an authoritative exposition of the entire history and principles of the Bolshevik Party; the U.S.S.R. celebrated, on a truly national scale, the fortieth anniversary of the world-famous Moscow Art Theatre (October 27th); and an immense outburst of constructive activity in every sphere of culture and the arts took place on the occasion of the elections to the Supreme Soviets of the Union Republics in June – the second stage in applying the new Constitution. All these were events calculated to make Soviet men and women feel not only that their country was going from strength to strength, but that their life was becoming fuller and richer month by month.

However, dizziness from success was no more popular than before. A reminder of shortcomings was given in December, 1938, in a series of measures for the improvement of labour discipline, announced over the joint signatures of the Council of People's Commissars, the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Central Council of Trade Unions. Habitual late-coming, leaving work before lime, idleness at work, were a dishonest treatment of one's obligations to a Socialist community, said the manifesto. The vast majority realized this, but a minority did not. Penalties were introduced for excessive absenteeism without justification – reprimand, transfer to a worse-paid job, or dismissal. Social insurance benefits, instead of coming to all wage workers equally, must now depend upon the length of time worked in the place of employment. In particular, the minimum paid annual holiday of a fortnight would accrue only after a full eleven months' work in the same enterprise, instead of by instalments of a week after five-and-a-half months, as had been the practice hitherto. These measures were particularly designed to restrain those 'flitters', as they were commonly called among the workmen, who took advantage of the shortage of labour, and consequent high inducements (cash bonuses, travelling allowances, etc.), offered to new employees by the ever-increasing number of big factories in out-of-the-way places, to flit from job to job without any disadvantage to themselves. At the same time, a system



of work-books was introduced, in which, apart from the usual details of job held, wages, bonuses, etc. – usually entered only in the factory books – the reason for leaving previous employment was also to be entered. It must be remembered, in this connexion, that under the Labour Code the Works Committee elected in each factory could protest to a higher trade union authority against any contravention of the individual worker's rights. The work-book, it was laid down, should have entered in it any praise or distinctions won by the holder at his work but no contraventions of regulations or law. This was done in order to ensure that the work-book should serve strictly as a record for the holder and as a restraint on 'flitting', without becoming an oppressive instrument in the hands of some bureaucrat.

The Soviet Union's Communists gathered for their XVIII Congress at the beginning of March, 1939, to consider the problems of further economic expansion in the next five years.

The third Five Year Plan had a new and specific purpose of its own. In *volume of output* the Soviet Union, as has already been noted, was one of the leading countries of the world: but in *output per head* of the population it still lagged far behind Britain, Germany and the United States in a number of branches of production. To catch up in this respect the U.S.S.R. required a volume of output far greater still. This was what Stalin called outstripping the principal capitalist countries economically. Only if this were done, he said, 'can we reckon upon our country being fully saturated with consumer goods, on having an abundance of products, and on being able to make the transition from the first phase of Communism to its second phase'. This would involve more than two or three years. It would be the task of two or three Five Year Plans, said Molotov. Subsequent calculations estimated that Germany and the United Kingdom might be caught up by the end of the fourth Five Year Plan in 1947, and the United States, if there were no untoward interruptions, by the end of the fifth Plan, i.e. in 1952.

There were to be a number of new, very large enterprises, on a scale which fired the imagination. One was a 'second Baku' – a new oilfield in the Volga-Urals basin. Another was the creation of a new coal, iron and steel base in the Far East (Tsarist Russia had had one, in the Donetz Basin of the Ukraine: the Soviet power had added a second, in the Urals and Western Siberia, during the first two Plans: the new base would make a third). A further vast undertaking would be a great power station at Kuibyshev, on the Volga, to solve the

problem of irrigating the droughty steppes of that region. But there were new features in the Plan as well. One was, as a general rule, to cut down the construction of giant enterprises – a form of concentrating skilled labour and equipment which was not needed, now that modern industry was to be found all over the U.S.S.R. A second was that regional plans were to be drawn up in such a way as to develop production of consumer goods in each region, which would thus supply itself with bricks and furniture, clothes and haberdashery, potatoes, meat and dairy produce. Every big city was to possess its own vegetable supply. Universal secondary education in the towns from seven to seventeen, universal continued education as a minimum in the country (from seven to fourteen) were the new targets taking account of the mounting resources of the nation. In keeping with this, technical standards or indices of quality were to be worked out for the main commodities produced in most industries. More could be expected in this respect from the Soviet workman than five or ten years before.

In agriculture there was an important decision (May 27th) on breaches of the collective farm statute. The growing productivity of agriculture, and the high prices secured on collective farm markets, had led to some illegal transfers of land within the collective farms, from the area collectively cultivated to the household allotment, from which the surplus produce was usually sold on the market. This produced a tendency to reduce working days put in on collective farm lands: in 1938 nearly a quarter of the collective farmers in specimen farms had put in less than fifty working days during the year. A general review of land allocations within collective farms was ordered, and a minimum of sixty to one hundred working days per head, according to zone, required from each member of collective farms. This was no hardship for the majority, but it did catch the speculating minority. It may also be mentioned that the total area of land which had been wrongly withdrawn from collective administration was no more than six million acres, out of some 285 million acres of cultivated land. That year, by an adjustment in the basis on which meat deliveries were to be made to the State, a great impetus was also given to livestock-breeding by the collective farms, and they set up 194,500 new livestock farms under their management in 1939 alone.

However, it would be wrong to suppose that the Congress was concerned only with economic matters. Stalin reported that the Party

membership, which had been 887,000 at the XV Congress in 1927, 1¼ million at the XVI Congress in 1930, and 1,874,000 at the XVII Congress in 1934, had been reduced by 270,000 since that year, by ‘weeding out chance, passive, careerist and directly hostile elements’. This had improved the quality of the membership. It had been accompanied during the period under review by the promotion of over half a million members of the Party and active people close to it – sharing its views but not asking for membership – to leading posts in the State and the Party: this at a time of a great expansion of economy and ‘a veritable cultural revolution’.

Again, Stalin drew attention to the position of the new Soviet intelligentsia, numbering between nine and ten millions of educated people in all walks of life, which by now had come from the ranks of the workers and peasants. They were no longer separated from the people in their outlook and even their social origins, as the old intelligentsia of Tsarist days, who depended for their livelihood on the propertied classes, and ministered to the propertied classes, had been. The vast majority of the old intellectuals, with much heart-searching, had over a period of years come to throw in their lot with the new world of Socialism. But it was wrong not to notice the difference between the old and the new in this sphere: in fact, the remnants of the old intellectuals had been dissolved in the new Soviet intelligentsia, which deserved greater solicitude, respect and co-operation.

There was a great moral and political unity in Soviet society, without class conflicts and without clash of nationalities, Stalin declared. In fact the local Soviet elections which were held in December, 1939, showed strikingly to what extent the Communists in the U.S.S.R. were relying for co-operation in the management of the State and all public affairs upon ‘active’ Soviet citizens, as determined as the Communists to improve the working of socially-owned enterprise and to raise living standards. Over one-and-a-quarter million deputies were elected to the 68,000 local organs of authority, from the rural and town Soviets to the regional Soviets. Just under a million of them were elected to the rural authorities, and three-quarters of these were non-Communists; 143,000 were elected to town Soviets or the Soviets of wards within the towns – and about half of these were not members of the Communist Party. Only in the higher planning bodies – district and regional Soviets – where considerable preliminary experience was expected, did the Communists constitute a majority. Women over the whole country made up about

one-third of all the deputies elected.

The greatest interest was aroused, both in the Soviet Union and in many other countries, by Stalin's analysis of the international situation in his Congress report. True, this section of the speech was not fortunate enough to find much echo in the British press, from the columns of which, in fact, it was almost completely excluded. Stalin said that a new imperialist war was already raging. It had 'stolen imperceptibly upon the nations' but had already drawn over 500 million people into its orbit – from China to Spain, with Abyssinia, Austria and Czechoslovakia. The main reason for its spreading was that there was not the least attempt at resistance, and even 'a certain amount of connivance', on the part of non-aggressive States like Britain, France and the U.S.A. They were anxious not to hinder the aggressors, and would even welcome Japan and Germany fighting the Soviet Union, in a war in which the belligerents might weaken and exhaust one another – in order 'when they have become weak enough, to appear on the scene with fresh strength, to appear of course "in the interests of peace" and to dictate conditions to the enfeebled belligerents'. This was the basis of the policy of non-intervention which had been practised in China, in Spain, in Austria and in Czechoslovakia. It was a 'big and dangerous political game,' however, and it might end in 'a serious fiasco' for those practising it.

The Soviet Union, Stalin said, while doing a great deal to increase its preparedness for defence, was vitally concerned in preserving peace. It would answer aggressors with two blows for every one, and it stood for the support of nations which became the victims of aggression and fought for the independence of their country. It wanted 'peaceful, close and friendly relations with all the neighbouring countries which have common frontiers with the U.S.S.R.', so long as they maintained similar relations with the Soviet Union: and it wanted peace and the strengthening of business relations with all countries who would do likewise. Setting forth the factors, internal and external, upon which the Soviet Union relied in its foreign policy, Stalin concluded with a reference to the moral support of working people in all countries vitally concerned in the preservation of peace, and 'the good sense of the countries which for one reason and another have no interest in the violation of peace'. This peace policy must be steadily pursued; but at the same time the U.S.S.R. must 'be cautious, and not allow our country to be drawn into con-

flicts by warmongers who are accustomed to have others pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them’.

This was the programme with which the Soviet Government entered upon a new phase of its international relations in March, 1939. On the very day on which Stalin spoke, German troops were already heavily concentrated on the Czechoslovak frontier, and the French Foreign Minister the following morning made a special confidential communication to the British Government on the subject.

## 2. THE MOSCOW NEGOTIATIONS OF 1939

On March 9th, Mr Neville Chamberlain had received lobby correspondents to give them what became universally known as a ‘sunshine talk’. The prospects of peace in Europe were better than ever before, and there was good hope of a new disarmament conference by the end of the year. All the newspapers the next day enlarged at great length on this theme, which was itself a programme of Hitlerite expansion in the east, after all that had happened. The impression was not softened in Moscow by a speech made on March 10th by Sir Samuel Hoare, announcing that ‘a golden age of peace is in sight’. It was not surprising that Stalin’s analysis of the European situation the same day was barely mentioned by most newspapers on the morning of March 11th, and that on March 12th the Sunday newspapers again enlarged on the ‘sunshine’ prospects, and almost completely suppressed the unpleasantly realistic analysis of the Soviet leader.

As a result, when Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia and occupied Prague on March 15th, it came like a bolt from the blue to the British public. At first Mr Chamberlain said he did not wish to associate himself with any ‘charges of breach of faith’ which were being made against Hitler (March 16th). But when, the following day, Rumania notified the British Government of the prospect of a German ultimatum, there was a threat of revolt by Tory M.P.s, and Mr Chamberlain, in a speech that night at Birmingham, condemned the occupation of Czechoslovakia, promised that Britain would consult with the Dominions and France, and added that ‘others too, knowing that we are not disinterested in what goes on in South Eastern Europe, will wish to have our counsel and advice’.

In fact, the British Ambassador in Moscow on March 18th told the Soviet Government that there were serious grounds for apprehending an act of violence against Rumania, and asked what the Soviet Government would do. Litvinov replied suggesting an im-

mediate consultation of the representatives of six Powers (Britain, France, U.S.S.R., Rumania, Poland and Turkey), to be held at Bucarest, in order to concert resistance to further aggression. The following day, Lord Halifax told the Soviet Ambassador in London that the proposal was 'premature'; and instead suggested on March 21st that the British, French, Soviet and Polish Governments should issue a declaration of their readiness to 'consult' in the event of a threat to the independence of any European country. It was quite obvious that such a declaration involved no obligation for mutual assistance – indeed, the British Ambassador said as much. This meant that Poland would be breaking her five years' alliance with Germany without any real guarantees: a proposition she would hardly favour. Nevertheless, the Soviet Government accepted the proposal, since there was no other. But as the British newspapers had begun announcing that a far-reaching change in British policy had taken place, and that a joint declaration for mutual aid against an aggressor was in preparation, the Soviet Government refused to be a party to such deception, and published the facts (March 21st).

As it had anticipated, Poland refused to adhere to the declaration – particularly as Germany moved first, by invading Lithuania and occupying Memel on March 23rd, forcing Rumania to sign an extremely unfavourable economic agreement the same day and raising the demand, in negotiations with Poland, that the latter should return Danzig. Behind a smoke-screen of press assurances about 'close contact' with the Soviet Government (in reality, there was not a single meeting, either in Moscow or in London, between March 23rd and March 29th) British talks with Poland went on with less and less conviction, and finally on March 27th it was generally admitted in the British press that the proposed declaration was dead. *Pravda* commented (March 23rd):

All the talk heard in recent days in London and Paris about a change in the foreign policy of those countries remains so far mere talk. Instead of adopting practical measures to stop the further pressure of the Fascist aggressors, the leisurely gossips of London and Paris are still guessing from the tea-leaves which way the aggressor will jump next – East or West?

On March 30th the Cabinet decided to give a British guarantee to Poland, and the following day, two hours before it was announced to

Parliament, the Soviet Ambassador in London was called in by Lord Halifax and asked if he would authorize Mr Chamberlain to say that the Soviet Government associated itself with the guarantee of Britain and France. Although the Soviet Ambassador naturally refused, on such short notice, this did not prevent the Prime Minister from telling the House of Commons that doubtless the principles on which the British Government was acting were ‘fully understood and appreciated’ by the Soviet Government. The effect of this ambiguous statement, after the untruthful stories in the press about close contact between the two Governments, was to create the impression that the Soviet Government might be in some way a party to the guarantee – while in reality it was presented with an accomplished fact.

The following day *The Times* printed an editorial on the guarantee, telling Germany she could get all she wanted by ‘free negotiation’ on problems where ‘adjustments are still necessary’, and that the keyword in the Prime Minister’s pledge was ‘not integrity but independence’. Thus both the Prime Minister himself and a newspaper known to be his mouthpiece at this delicate moment made it clear to Germany that there was no agreement with the Soviet Union, and that, provided Hitler could peacefully persuade Poland to enter upon some arrangement which did not involve Britain in war, he still had a free hand in the east.

This gesture was very well understood both in Moscow and in the Axis capitals. It explains why, on April 7th, Italy invaded Albania with the certainty that there would be no restraining action.

On April 11th the Soviet Ambassador visited the Foreign Office to urge again concerted action to restrain aggressors. Instead, on the 13th, British guarantees to Greece and Rumania were announced. Mr Chamberlain this time informed Parliament that he was ‘keeping in the closest touch with the representatives of the U.S.S.R.’; but in spite of a misleading campaign which, inspired from Downing Street, had been raging in the British press for several days about imaginary negotiations for a ‘Grand Alliance’, there was widespread mistrust in the House of Commons, and protests were made about the omission of any reference to the U.S.S.R. in the official announcement about Greece and Rumania. Only in winding up the debate, when replying to pointed questions about an Anglo-Franco-Soviet agreement against aggression, did Sir John Simon state that ‘the Government is raising no objection in principle to any such proposition’.

In reality, however, the British Government was about to raise

quite stubborn objections to that precise proposition. On April 15th the British Ambassador in Moscow asked whether the U.S.S.R. would issue a declaration promising Soviet assistance in the event of aggression against any European neighbour who resisted the aggressor. The whole London press announced, by strange coincidence and with a great flourish, that the 'Grand Alliance' was under way. On April 17th Litvinov gave the Soviet reply, which showed that the Soviet Government perfectly understood the idea behind the British proposal. The latter meant that, if Poland or Rumania, instead of proclaiming themselves attacked by Germany, came to an agreement with Hitler, and allowed his troops to pass *unopposed* through their territory, and still more if they willingly co-operated with him (as Finland and Rumania actually did in 1941), then Britain would be free to practise 'non-intervention'. And she would be equally uninterested if Hitler decided to attack the U.S.S.R. through other neighbours, who had not received any British guarantee at all!

The Soviet reply was that any guarantee must be based on reciprocity. Litvinov proposed that there should be an Anglo-Franco-Soviet Pact of mutual assistance, staff arrangements between the military authorities of the respective countries, joint guarantee to all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (i.e. not only to Poland and Rumania), the political and military agreements to be concluded *simultaneously*, and an undertaking that, in the event of hostilities, there would be no separate peace by any of the three signatories.

Then began a period of procrastination the like of which can scarcely have been seen in diplomatic history, bearing in mind the urgent situation in Europe.

From April 17th to May 8th the Soviet Government received no reply whatsoever to its proposal. There was a good deal of misleading information in the London newspapers about 'proposals and counter-proposals' allegedly passing between the Governments, and the Prime Minister misled the House of Commons on May 2nd by stating: 'We are carrying on discussions'. In reality discussions *with the French Government* only were going on – about the particular form in which the Soviet proposals were to be *rejected*. The Soviet Government was not, of course, aware of the despatch sent by the Polish Ambassador in London on April 26th, describing his conversation with Sir Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, which has since been published. In that conversation it was made clear that 'England wishes for Russia's partici-



pation, but does not want a formal or close connexion': the Russian proposals were 'unacceptable to Great Britain and not desired by France'. At the same time, the British Government did not 'want to cause irritation through a negative reply'. In other words, the British Government wanted to have the advantage of a *seeming* understanding with the U.S.S.R., in order to bring pressure to bear on Hitler in Anglo-German negotiations: but it did not want irrevocably to commit itself to an alliance with the U.S.S.R. which would close the door to war eastward. Yet again, it did not want openly to let the Soviet Government understand this, since the Russians might naturally feel 'irritation' at the role which was being reserved for them by British diplomacy.

The conversation itself was not known to the Soviet Government. But, in view of preceding events, Moscow observers would indeed have been naive if they had not accurately put just that construction upon a series of acts and statements by the British Government or its chosen mouthpieces during the period of silence over the Soviet proposals. On April 18th *The Times* printed a leading article again suggesting that Germany could get all she wanted by negotiations. In April also, royalties payable to Czechoslovakia for use of the Bren gun – a Czech patent – were paid over to the occupying Power – the Germans. On April 24th the British Ambassador, who had been withdrawn from Berlin on March 18th, after Chamberlain's Birmingham speech, was suddenly sent back to the German capital – forty-eight hours after the Foreign Office had been assuring journalists that there was no question of the Ambassador returning until May. Mr Chamberlain explained in the House of Commons (April 26th) that the purpose of the return was to make clear that 'the British Government would be ready to take part in discussions with the German Government with a view to a general settlement'. But privately, as we now know, the Ambassador was to assure the German Foreign Office on April 26th that the British Government 'did not mean to let themselves be drawn into aggression by others'. As it was well known that Hitler regarded as 'aggression' any action preventing his own aggression in any direction, this was a signal to Hitler that he must not take the talk of Anglo-Soviet agreement seriously.

In case there were any doubt of this, the British Government arranged for the handing over to Germany, through the Bank of International Settlements, of the gold of the Czechoslovak State con-

quered by Hitler, to the value of £6,000,000. Meanwhile when, by an unexpected leakage in a Conservative newspaper on April 29th, the Soviet proposals were revealed to the British public for the first time, the Sunday press, inspired by the Government (April 30th), did its utmost to create an impression that a 'basis for negotiations' had been reached.

Hitler meanwhile showed unmistakably what he thought of these manoeuvres. On April 28th he denounced the Anglo-German Naval Pact and the German-Polish Treaty of Friendship, and announced his demand for Danzig in public. The Soviet Government also showed that it was taking stock of the situation. On May 3rd it replaced Litvinov as People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs by Molotov, in order to have, in charge of foreign relations at this critical time, a leading member of the Communist Party, with the widest experience and authority in the country. The only response by the British Government was a sneer by Mr Chamberlain in the House of Commons, on May 5th, at the suggestion that direct contact with the Soviet Government should be resumed; he did not know whom the questioner had in mind, 'because personalities change rather rapidly'.

At long last, on May 8th, the British Government replied to the Soviet proposals, rejecting them – in spite of Sir John Simon's smooth assurances of April 13th. Poland was afraid of the consequences, and once more the time was 'not yet ripe'. Once again the Soviet Union was asked to give, instead, unilateral guarantees to the countries which Britain had selected for that favour already – not only Poland and Rumania, but also Greece, Turkey and Belgium. As though to underline the point that this guarantee was to suit British and French convenience, not at all to protect the U.S.S.R. against aggression, the Soviet guarantee was not to operate until the British and French Governments decided to operate their own. Thus, once again, the U.S.S.R. would be left isolated if Hitler succeeded in *persuading* Poland and Rumania to join him.

The following day a TASS communiqué revealed the full difference between the Soviet proposals and the British, and insisted on full reciprocity if there was to be any agreement. On May 10th, in the House of Commons, Mr Chamberlain was still affecting not to understand why the Soviet Government was not satisfied with the unilateral guarantee he suggested. The following day an editorial appeared in *Izvestia* on the whole question. It pointed out the inequality

of the position in which the Soviet Government would find itself if it accepted the British proposals. Because Britain and France had chosen to guarantee Poland and Rumania, the Soviet Government was to come to their aid if they were involved in hostilities, without any corresponding aid on their part to the Soviet Union if it became involved itself in hostilities over guarantees to some other European States. Moreover, *Izvestia* drew attention to ‘the highly interesting fact that under this arrangement the actual resistance to aggression, and the time when this resistance shall be started, are left to be decided only by Great Britain and France, although the brunt of this resistance would fall principally on the U.S.S.R., owing to its geographical situation’. Thirdly, the Soviet newspaper exposed the absurdity of the argument that, by defending Poland and Rumania, Britain and France would be defending the western frontiers of the U.S.S.R. This was untrue. The western frontier was not confined to Poland and Rumania. Furthermore, both Poland and Rumania were *obliged* by existing treaties to help Britain and France if they were attacked; whereas the Soviet Union was not to have any guarantee of help in the event of ‘aggression directly aimed at the U.S.S.R.’ – not only from Britain or France, but even from Poland and Rumania.

It was perfectly clear that the situation so far was precisely the one of which Stalin had spoken on March 10th – of the British and French Governments expecting the Soviet Union to ‘pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them’. Underlining this point, on May 14th, the *Sunday Times* (mouthpiece of Mr Chamberlain’s closest friend Lord Kemsley) was made the vehicle of a flat statement that the British Government was against any triple pact and any direct pledges to the U.S.S.R. On that day, the Soviet Government rejected the British proposal, and reiterated its own offer of April 17th. Meanwhile, in Moscow, Soviet military aid against German aggression had been offered to the Polish Government: which had rejected it.

By this time there had been widespread leakages of the proposals of the Soviet Government; and, although the Prime Minister on May 19th declared in the House of Commons that ‘we are not concerned merely with the Russian Government: we have other Governments to consider’, this was not regarded as satisfactory by the critics. There was a large-scale attack on the Government by members of all parties. This led to some alarm at Downing Street, and consultations between Lord Halifax and the French Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in Paris on May 20th, before a meeting of the League

Council in Geneva. As a result of these conversations, the British and French Ambassadors in Moscow on May 27th were instructed to say that they accepted the principle of a triple pact – six weeks after the Soviet Government had offered it. But this pact had to be operated in conformity with League procedure – and the League of Nations had already shown what that reservation meant, in the cases of Spain and China and Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union was to give immediate aid only to Poland and Rumania: as far as other States were concerned, there was to be only consultation if it was asked for, should other States be attacked. Furthermore, there was no promise of assistance if Germany attacked the Baltic States. And military discussions were to begin only *after* the Pact had been signed – although the Soviet Union had already experience of the Franco-Soviet Pact, which had been signed in 1935 on the same understanding, and which even yet, in May, 1939, had not been followed up by any staff talks.

It was hardly surprising that Molotov told the Ambassadors that this was no plan for effective mutual assistance on a reciprocal basis, and it did not even suggest that the British and French Governments were interested in a Pact with the U.S.S.R. On the contrary, it led one to suppose that the British and French Governments were ‘not so much interested in the Pact itself, as in talk about the Pact’. This conclusion, as we have seen, might have been drawn on a number of previous occasions.

On May 31st Molotov had occasion to express the same doubts in public, when reporting on foreign policy to a meeting of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. He insisted that full reciprocity was the basic condition for an agreement, which the Soviet Government did not force upon anybody, but on which it would insist as a minimum condition. The absence of any guarantee of help for the Baltic States and Finland, unless they asked for such help, was ‘almost a direct invitation to Germany to leave Poland and the other countries alone for the time being, and to attack instead the other States on the Soviet borders, by the time-honoured Nazi methods of instigating and financing internal disturbances and revolts, and then marching in on the “invitation” of a puppet Government’. At Geneva (May 27th) Maisky had announced Soviet interest in a pact with Finland for

‘security in the Baltic’. \*

On June 2nd the Soviet Government replied to the latest British proposals, once again insisting on simultaneous political and staff agreements, on the inclusion of the Baltic States as well as the other East European States mentioned by Britain, and agreeing to the inclusion of Belgium.

But this offer was only the signal for a further five weeks’ delay. It was not until July 1st that the British and French Governments agreed to the inclusion of the Baltic States. In the meantime, the German Government had induced Mr Chamberlain to agree to *de facto* recognition of the occupation of Czechoslovakia, by the appointment of a British Consul-General at Prague; and the situation at Danzig became more and more threatening.

The proceedings during these five weeks suggested even more strongly – always in the light of the constant and clearly-expressed Soviet demand for full reciprocity – that the procrastination was carefully planned. On June 7th, Mr Chamberlain had explained in the House that it was ‘impossible to impose a guarantee on States which do not desire it’. Mr Churchill replied to this point that the Russian claim was ‘well founded’, and that, whatever the wishes of the Baltic States, their independence was of the highest consequence to Poland, who must fight if their independence or integrity were compromised. Therefore it was certain ‘that if Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were invaded by the Nazis, or subverted to the Nazi system by propaganda and intrigue from within, the whole of Europe would be dragged into war’. But this appeal fell on deaf ears. The following day Lord Halifax, in the House of Lords, promised Germany that, if she would only confer instead of using military action, her claim to ‘living space’ would be considered, and rival claims would be adjusted; and he expressly disclaimed any desire for the world’s ‘division into potentially hostile groups’. This was understood in Moscow as another pronouncement against a bloc of peace-loving States to stop aggression, and an invitation to Germany to expand in any direction which Britain was not for the moment interested in protecting against war.

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\* During the 1935 negotiations for the Franco-Soviet Pact, the U.S.S.R. had offered its guarantee for Belgium in return for a French guarantee for the Baltic States. Laval refused.

It was about June 12th that the Soviet Ambassador in London suggested to Lord Halifax that he should visit Moscow himself in order to accelerate the negotiations. British Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries had frequently visited Berlin, Rome and Paris in recent years, and the suggestion was not therefore an extraordinary one – if the negotiations were regarded seriously in London. Lord Halifax promised to report the matter, and nothing more was heard of it. Instead, a permanent Foreign Office official was sent on June 12th, without any authority to decide matters on his own. On the very day of his arrival, the German Government announced troop concentrations in Slovakia.

During the second half of June negotiations were concerned primarily with the question of indirect aggression in the Baltic States, which has already been mentioned. The British and French Governments flatly refused to accept the Soviet proposals for defining such indirect aggression. These were based on careful analysis of the methods used by Germany for undermining resistance from within in a number of countries – Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Danzig – all cases, of course, in which the British and French Governments had avoided any action to restrain aggression. When Mr Strang, on June 15th, suggested a somewhat ludicrous alternative to a plain guarantee for the Baltic States – that the three Great Powers should *consult* if they were threatened by a menace of attack through the territory of any other State – the Soviet Government replied the next day that, as evidently the British and French Governments did not want a real guarantee to smaller States, it would be simpler to confine negotiations to a three-Power agreement between France, Britain and the U.S.S.R., of course with its military counterpart.

As luck would have it, on June 18th the Director-General of the British Territorial Army, General Sir Walter Kirke, who was on an official visit to Finnish military establishments, underlined the British attitude by describing Finland at an official banquet as ‘a pretty girl who is not eager to get a partner for the next dance ... Everybody in Great Britain appreciates her attitude, and nobody wants to disturb her maidenly modesty’ (*Times*, June 20th). This was highly appreciated by the pro-German rulers of Finland, who had openly spoken of their common destiny with Nazi Germany in ‘defending Europe against Bolshevism’, and in fact followed up General Kirke’s visit with another from the Chief of the German General Staff, General Haider, on June 29th.

Although many other formulas were suggested in the course of the next few weeks, all those put forward by Mr. Strang avoided the plain question of a fool-proof guarantee against indirect aggression in the Baltic States; and this was still the position when the negotiations finally broke down, seven weeks later.

On June 29th Zhdanov, one of the Communist Party leaders, pointed out in an article in *Pravda* that, out of the seventy-five days of negotiations, sixteen had been taken up by the Soviet Government in replying to Anglo-French suggestions, while the Anglo-French side had taken fifty-nine. What was the reason? On this, he said, he frankly differed from some of his 'friends', i.e. from fellow-members of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party. He was of the opinion that Britain and France had created an artificial stumbling-block over the Baltic States; whereas when Britain was interested in guaranteeing a country, she did not even wait for them to ask for such a guarantee. Thus Poland and Great Britain had mutually guaranteed their assistance in war should Lithuania or Holland be attacked. It seemed to him, he said, that the British and French Governments were out, not for a real agreement, but only for talks about an agreement which would 'facilitate the conclusion of an agreement with the aggressors'. It will be recalled that Molotov had already made the same point privately on May 27th.

As though to underline this point, Lord Halifax made a speech at Chatham House on the very same day, offering far-reaching concessions to Germany on the question of 'living space', the colonial problem, etc., if only she would accept peaceful relations with her neighbours. But Lord Halifax repudiated any wish for the 'encirclement' of Germany, or for 'a divided Europe', i.e. for a peace bloc which recognized the fact of the German-Italian war bloc. On the contrary, he delicately hinted at a revision of the League Covenant, with its 'indefinite but universal obligations of Articles 10 and 16' – i.e. the very Articles which guaranteed collective action against an aggressor!

Needless to say, the significance of this speech was not lost on Moscow.

On July 1st the British and French Governments at last accepted the inclusion of the Baltic States in the guarantee – to be listed in a special protocol – but still insisted on *direct* aggression only being mentioned, and brought in for the first time Holland and Switzerland as countries to whom the Soviet Union should extend its guarantee.

In fact both Holland and Switzerland were so hostile to the U.S.S.R. that no diplomatic relations between them existed! It was hardly credible, therefore, that the question had not been introduced merely as a means of dragging out negotiations. However, in its reply on July 3rd the Soviet Government said it was willing to include them, on condition that Britain and France helped it to get pacts of mutual assistance with Poland and Turkey, without which its own guarantees, now very extensive, could with difficulty be operated.

It should be noted that the Polish Ambassador in Moscow had already (May 11th) proclaimed that his Government was against any mutual assistance pact with the U.S.S.R. – which might make senseless any obligation taken to Britain. And in the absence of clarity about Turkish intentions, there was nothing in the Montreux Convention to prevent much superior German and Italian naval forces being admitted in wartime into the Black Sea to attack the Soviet southern coast, if the Turks so decided.

Only when faced with this demand did the British and French Governments – after another fortnight (July 17th) agree to drop references to Holland and Switzerland.

But by this time, in addition to insisting on their refusal of a guarantee against indirect aggression, the British and French negotiators had (July 9th) found another obstacle – the Soviet demand for the simultaneous conclusion of military and political agreements, which, as we have seen, the Soviet Government had made *in its very first proposals of April 16th*. Only after yet another fortnight of delay (July 23rd) did Mr Strang and his colleagues agree on this.

It was on that same day that Mr Lloyd George wrote openly in the *Sunday Express* that the conduct of the Moscow negotiations led only to one conclusion: ‘Mr Neville Chamberlain, Lord Halifax and Sir John Simon do not want any association with Russia’.

What *did* they want? A sensational answer was given the very next day, on July 24th, by the *Daily Express*. It stated that Mr R. S. Hudson, Secretary of the Department of Overseas Trade, had been engaged in private conversations in London with Hitler’s economic adviser, Wohltat, about a far-reaching economic agreement, with ‘long term credits on a huge scale’ and joint exploitation of colonial markets. There was a great scandal, particularly as it was now general knowledge that Germany was gathering huge forces round the Polish borders and a violent campaign was raging already against Poland. The Danzig police had been reinforced by large numbers of German



storm-troopers; Goebbels had delivered violent anti-Polish speeches at Danzig; the German Government in a Note to France had threatened to ‘annihilate the Polish Army’ in the event of any ‘provocation’. In these circumstances, to offer Germany large-scale economic assistance, instead of immediately closing with the Soviet offers, was a signal to the whole world, and to Germany in particular, that the Moscow talks were indeed intended only to ‘facilitate the conclusion of an agreement with the aggressors’.

Naturally, Mr Chamberlain – who had already in September, 1938, practised the policy of threatening Hitler in public, while privately pleading with him to take what he wanted from Czechoslovakia by peaceful methods ‘without war and without delay’ – strongly denied, on July 24th, that anything was known about it by the Cabinet or by any other Minister, or that the precise matters suggested by the newspapers had been discussed with Wohltat by Mr Chamberlain’s most intimate adviser, Sir Horace Wilson. In reality, according to German documents published in 1948, when Mr Hudson first saw Wohltat at the former’s request, on July 20th, a first meeting with Sir Horace had already taken place. In a second meeting, for which Sir Horace Wilson had prepared a document beginning: ‘On condition that’ – and leaving a blank space – the British representative (according to the German documents) laid before his German colleague a proposal for a British- German Non-Aggression Pact, a pact delimiting living spaces between the Great Powers, particularly Britain and Germany, a Defence Pact for the limitation of armaments, an economic agreement arranging for German participation in the development of Africa, German colonial activity in the Pacific, raw materials and industrial markets for Germany, and an ‘exchange of financial facilities’ which would involve a ‘German financial reorganization of Eastern and South Eastern Europe’. Sir Horace Wilson made it plain (wrote the German Ambassador) that a broad Anglo-German understanding on these lines would give Britain a chance to free herself from her obligations to Poland.

It must be observed that this and similar documents of German Nazi origin are naturally tendentious, being intended to present events as seen through Hitlerite eyes. In publishing them with that reservation, however (*Falsifiers of History*, “Soviet News”, London, 1948; and *Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War*, Moscow, 1948), the Soviet Government was but replying to earlier action with similar documents, taken by the U.S.

Government (*Nazi-Soviet Relations*).

At all events, the strongest possible impression existed (not only in Moscow) by the end of July that the negotiations were not being pursued by the British and French Governments with any real idea of creating mutual obligations by Britain, the U.S.S.R. and France to protect one another and all Europe against Nazi aggression – which events ever since 1935 had been desperately calling for – but were intended primarily as a bogey, with which to frighten Hitler into some extensive deal that would leave Western Europe and its interests untouched.

The Soviet Government, however, decided that it was necessary to make yet another effort, and to test out the British Government's intentions to the full. At the meeting on July 23rd already mentioned, it proposed that the staff talks should open at once. It believed that if they proceeded satisfactorily political agreement could still be reached, i.e. that the issues outstanding would not in that event be insuperable.

On July 25th the British and French Governments signified their agreement, and on July 31st announced that they were sending negotiating missions to Moscow. On July 19th General Ironside (Inspector-General of the Overseas Forces) had been sent to Warsaw for staff talks; and he had gone to Warsaw by air, just as the Chief of the Air Staff went to Turkey, a little later, when it was a question of negotiating with the Turks. Very different was the arrangement made for negotiations with the Soviet Union, the country with the largest potential army on earth. The British and French Missions were not despatched until August 5th – eleven days after the proposal had been accepted – and they went by an ordinary cargo-boat chartered by the Board of Trade, not even on a warship. As a British historian of the negotiations, by no means friendly to the U.S.S.R. has drily remarked: 'A couple of big seaplanes could not be found or spared'.

But even more significant, in the light of all previous negotiations, was the composition of the Missions. The Soviet Government appointed as its representatives the People's Commissar for Defence, the People's Commissar for the Navy, the head of the Soviet Air Force, the Chief of the Red Army General Staff. The British Government sent a group of worthy and experienced but in no way first-rank officers – an Admiral whose main jobs had been command in a port and aide to the King, a Major-General who until lately had been a military attaché at a British Embassy, and an Air Marshal in

charge of training, not of operations or strategy. Equally unimpressive was the French Mission. The impression created on the Germans – and in Moscow they were well capable of guessing what that impression would be – can best be illustrated by a despatch sent on August 1st by the German Ambassador in London to his Foreign Office:

As regards continuation of negotiations for a Pact with Russia, in spite of the despatch of a Military Mission – or rather because of it – the attitude here is sceptical. Evidence of this is the composition of the British Military Mission. The Admiral, up till now commandant at Portsmouth, is in practice retired and never was on the Naval Staff. The General is similarly a simple serving officer. The Air General is an outstanding pilot and flying instructor, but not a strategist. This is evidence that the Military Mission is intended to ascertain the fighting capacity of the Soviet Army, rather than to conclude operational agreements.

As might have been expected from the composition and the method of transport of such a mission, it was found on its arrival that it had no powers to conclude a military convention at all, and both missions had to refer back to their capitals for instructions on every occasion. They were mandated only to discuss help for Poland – and they knew that the Poles, on the eve of the departure of the Mission for Moscow, had once again refused any idea of co-operation with the U.S.S.R.!

Before proceeding to what is known of the military conversations, there is one other matter that is worth attention. On July 30th it was revealed in London that the British and French representatives in Moscow had proposed to Molotov that there should be a joint statement about agreement on essentials having been reached. Molotov had refused, on the ground that the British and French Governments were still rejecting a pledge of mutual support against 'indirect aggression'. This provoked questions in the House of Commons the next day, and Mr R. A. Butler, the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, answered that the main question of difference 'has been whether we should encroach on the independence of the Baltic States'. This meant that a guarantee by Britain and the U.S.S.R. to protect that independence, even without a formal request from the Baltic States themselves – which they dared not make in face of

German threats – was an ‘encroachment’, while leaving them without such a guarantee, with German invasion as the only possible threat, was ‘independence’. This was the point made in a TASS communiqué issued on August 1st, which declared that Mr Butler had ‘distorted the attitude of the Soviet Government’. The question was not whether there should be any encroachment, but whether ‘no loophole should be left, in the formula covering indirect aggression, for aggressors making an attempt against the independence of the Baltic States’. Such a loophole was left by the British formula, said the statement.

The military discussions in Moscow opened on August 11th. When the question came up of what the respective sides would contribute to the common cause in the event of war, the Soviet delegation said it was prepared to send to the front immediately 136 divisions, 5,000 medium and heavy guns, up to 10,000 tanks and whippets and over 5,000 war planes. The French Mission ‘answered with prudent generalities’, in the words of Professor Namier. The British Mission reported that it could supply five infantry divisions and one mechanized division. Thus it was fairly clear that the main tribute of blood in a war would be paid by the U.S.S.R. But even this was a secondary issue in the negotiations.

The Soviet Government pointed out that, having no common frontier with Germany, it could give assistance to its allies only if its troops were allowed to pass through Polish territory – just as British and American forces could not have joined in the war of 1914-18, if they had had no opportunity of operating in French territory. For this purpose two lines of passage were indicated; but there was no question of the Red Army taking over control of the territories through which it passed. It would indeed be ridiculous to imagine that the Red Army, passing through the territory of a friendly country in order to face in combat the huge military machine of Nazi Germany, would have turned aside in order to engage in ‘Bolshevization’ of Poland. The demand in itself was obviously reasonable, as Mr Churchill pointed out in a broadcast on October 1st, 1939, when he referred to a line passing from North to South through the middle of Poland and added: ‘We could have wished that the Russian armies should be standing on their present line as the friends and allies of Poland, instead of as invaders. But that the Russian armies should stand on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace’.

The French and British Missions, however, said they could not discuss this question – although, with about two million German troops concentrated on the Polish borders or in strategic places throughout Germany, it might have been expected that they would have reached Moscow with such authority. It was agreed that they should consult their respective Governments, and that the latter would take the question up with Poland. On August 17th the Missions reported that no reply had come; and in fact it is known that the Polish Government had flatly refused.

The British and French Governments explained that they had no power to oblige Poland to accept. Yet the same Governments had, in 1938, by threatening that Britain and France would disinterest themselves in the further fate of Czechoslovakia, coerced President Benes into accepting the cession of the Sudeten districts to Germany (the British and French Ministers got him out of bed for the purpose at 2.30 a.m. on the morning of September 21st, 1938) – when both he and they knew that this meant a death blow to the Czechoslovak Republic. *Thus pressure could be used in 1938 to force Czechoslovakia to surrender to Hitler, but pressure could not be used in 1939 to force Col. Beck to join in resisting Hitler!*

The Soviet Government had repeatedly declared that it would not be content to leave the Red Army on the Soviet border should it be at war, and wait for the aggressor's army to conduct the war on Soviet territory. Yet, in the absence of Polish agreement to give right of transit to Soviet troops, this would be the precise situation – since a sweeping German victory in Poland would in that case be inevitable. Hence refusal to coerce Poland on this point was equivalent to refusal of a military convention with the U.S.S.R.: and signature of a convention, as the Soviet Government had frequently made clear, and the British and French Governments themselves had agreed, was an essential condition for the Pact itself. Consequently once again the conclusion was forced on the Soviet Government that the British and French Governments had wanted only talk about a Pact, not the Pact itself.

In reality, instructions to the British Mission were not to 'tie our hands' (§15, German text, printed in *Bolshevik*, No. 8, 1948).

A third question which came up during the negotiations, and on which quite extraordinary falsification was subsequently spread far and wide, was that of joint naval action in the Baltic. It was widely asserted in after years that the Soviet Government had asked, as the

price of agreement, that the Baltic States should be put under its control. In reality, what the Soviet Government suggested was that the British and French Governments should establish naval bases in the Baltic States and in Finland, and that *subsequently* the small Soviet naval forces might be allowed the use of these bases as well. This proposal was an obvious necessity, if the powerful German naval force built up behind the screen of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935 was to have some effective reply in the Baltic. But it also served a political purpose – to test out whether the British and French Governments were really serious in their concern for protecting the independence of the Baltic States, and in agreeing to bar the way to a German attack through those States as much as they were pledged to do through Poland and Rumania. And that political purpose was achieved, only too convincingly.

The Soviet offers were rejected. At a time when, in the words of the British Ambassador in Germany, the anti-Polish campaign there ‘was in full swing’, this could have only one meaning – that the British and French Governments were prepared to see Poland suffer inevitable disaster. In other words, the real obstacle to that disaster was removed, not by the subsequent Soviet-German Pact of Non-Aggression, but by the refusal of effective Soviet military aid. But there was more to be considered in Moscow. Why should the British and French Governments be ready to face the overwhelming of Poland, when they had pledged themselves to go to war if Poland were attacked? Obviously because they were relying on the Polish-German war rapidly developing into a Soviet-German war, when the victorious Nazi forces arrived at the Soviet border knowing that no mutual assistance agreement existed between Britain and France, on the one hand, and the U.S.S.R. on the other. Hitler would know that in those circumstances, if he attacked the U.S.S.R., it would have been as much a ‘one-front war’, without the immediate likelihood of any attack from behind, as the ‘one-front war’ with which the British and French Ministers had threatened President Benes in 1938 with such equanimity.

Diplomatic journalists in touch with the Foreign Office blurted out the feelings which everyone familiar with the subject knows existed. ‘Even though the Pact with Russia was not signed, the view’ was widely held that in the event of hostilities the Russians would aid the democracies’, wrote the diplomatic correspondent of the *Daily Express* on August 22nd, in the first burst of candour after the an-

nouncement that Ribbentrop was going to Moscow to sign a Pact of Non-Aggression. There was no doubt in British quarters, wrote the diplomatic correspondent of the *Daily Herald* on the same day, that 'if aggression took place before the treaty was signed, the Soviet Union would join in resisting it.' By a curious coincidence, a British diplomat in Moscow admitted on that self-same August 22nd, in conversation with Soviet representatives, that the British Government's calculation had been that the Germans, on arriving at the Soviet frontier, would find the Red Army ready to fight them anyhow.

Thus the Soviet Government found itself in precisely the position against which Stalin had warned the world in his speech of March 10th – that of being expected to 'pull the chestnuts out of the fire' for people who would not do it the same favour. A speech by Molotov (August 31st) showed that it had decided to draw the obvious conclusions. If the British and French Governments were so set upon a war, they could make their own arrangements for it. The Soviet Government for its part would take advantage of the offers which the Germans had been eagerly making for months past, but which the Soviet Government hitherto had steadily refused to entertain. A Pact of Non-Aggression with Nazi Germany was far from being a real guarantee against attack: only the Red Army could serve for that purpose. But it did mean that Germany would find it difficult to attack the Soviet Union in the immediate future – and every month gained meant more effective preparations against the Nazi attack when it did come.

It is at this point that one should notice the charge that the Soviet Government had been negotiating a Pact with the Germans, simultaneously with its other negotiations, for months past – a charge which the State Department of the U.S.A., in collaboration with the British and French Foreign Offices, attempted to substantiate in January, 1948, by publishing a collection of selected documents (*Nazi-Soviet Relations*) from the Hitlerite archives. Although these documents are far from full, and in any case present the facts through the eyes of Nazi diplomats anxious to show their zeal and success in fulfilling the wishes of their master, the documents so one-sidedly compiled prove, in point of fact, the exact opposite of what they were intended to show. They prove that, on *all* the occasions during the Moscow negotiations when the general problem of relationship between Germany and the U.S.S.R. was discussed, the Soviet repre-

sentative confined himself to generalities such as every diplomat uses to evade discussions, and to home truths about Nazi policy: while it was the Germans who were eagerly, anxiously offering to open negotiations. Only when what the Soviet Government considered the perfidy of the British and French Governments had become manifest, i.e. in the middle of August, 1939, did any agreement to open discussions with the Germans come from the Soviet authorities. Here is the sum-total of all such occasions:

April 17th, 1939. The Soviet Ambassador at Berlin, in his first visit to the State Secretary in the German Foreign Office, suggests that Soviet-German relations 'ought to be normal', and 'might become better'.

May 20th. The German Ambassador at Moscow asks for trade talks. Molotov replies that for this purpose the necessary 'political basis' must be constructed: but refused to specify further.

May 31st. Molotov in a *public* speech at the Supreme Soviet says that 'while conducting negotiations with Britain and France, we by no means consider it necessary to renounce business relations with countries like Germany and Italy' – and reports that 'to judge by certain signs', negotiations on German credits may be resumed.

June 28th. The German Ambassador offers 'a normalization of relations'. Molotov replies that the U.S.S.R. would welcome it, but 'it was not the fault of the Soviet Government if those relations had become bad'.

July 26th. German officials take the Soviet Charge d'Affaires and the Deputy Soviet Trade Representative in Berlin to a private dinner, and for four hours try to persuade them of the need for a general settlement with Germany. The Soviet representatives confine themselves to repeating what Molotov has said.

August 3rd. The German Ambassador at Moscow repeats Ribbentrop's assertions (to Astakhov the previous day) that 'there is no problem from the Baltic to the Black Sea which cannot be solved'. Molotov replies that 'proofs of a changed attitude of the German Government are still lacking'. The German Ambassador ruefully reports that 'the old mistrust of Germany still persists', and that the Soviet



Government is still ‘determined to sign with England and France, if they fulfil all Soviet wishes’.

August 12th (i.e. *the day after the Military Missions in Moscow have shown their hand*). The Soviet Charge d’Affaires tells the German Foreign Office that the Soviet Government is now willing to start political discussions, by degrees.

August 15th/16th. Ribbentrop sends successive messages, in the most humble and obsequious terms, begging to be allowed to come to Moscow to start these discussions. Molotov confines himself to sounding out German practical suggestions.

August 18th (*the day after the final self-exposure of the Military Missions in Moscow*). Molotov makes a full statement to the German Ambassador, saying that the Soviet Government ‘up till very recently’ had had the impression that the German Government was preparing for war with the U.S.S.R. and adding: ‘It is understandable that such policy on the part of the German Government compelled the U.S.S.R. to take serious steps in preparation of defence against possible aggression on the part of Germany against the U.S.S.R. and also to participate in the organization of a defensive front of a group of States against such aggression’. If the German Government is now really changing its policy, the Soviet Government is prepared to improve relations – first of all by a trade and credit agreement, and then by a non-aggression pact.

August 21st. After a telegram from Hitler imploring Stalin to allow Ribbentrop to come to Moscow, the Soviet Government agrees.

Thus it is clear that the Soviet Government in fact made the Germans keep their distance throughout the months of negotiations with Britain and France, and listened to the Germans only when the negotiations had demonstrated clearly, in its view, that the British and French Governments had not the slightest intention of concluding an agreement.

With this picture should be contrasted that presented by the events summarized above, and particularly by the sudden return of the British Ambassador to Berlin on April 23rd, the speeches of Lord

Halifax on June 8th and June 29th, and the Hudson- Wilson-Wohltat negotiations in July. The subsequent revelations made by the British Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Neville Henderson, must be added. On May 27th, the very day of the formal Anglo- French acceptance of a Three-Power Pact, he had told Goering that Britain wanted an 'amiable arrangement' between Germany and Poland in respect of Danzig, and that neither the Prime Minister nor the Foreign Secretary 'had yet abandoned hope of a peaceful solution *either* as between Germany and Poland or as between Germany and Great Britain' (our italics). On August 23rd Henderson told Hitler himself that 'if an agreement had to be made with Moscow ... I had rather Germany made it than ourselves' (according to the German record of the talk, Henderson said: 'He personally had never believed in an Anglo-French-Russian Pact', and in fact the Ambassador made this quite clear in his later book *Failure of a Mission*). But perhaps the most striking fact is that even on August 28th the Ambassador told Hitler that Britain 'would be willing to accept an alliance with Germany', if the latter pursued a friendly policy.

Thus the publication of such documents as have been allowed to appear from both sides indicates that, unlike the Soviet Government, the British Government was most anxiously pressing the Germans for a separate agreement, and holding up the Moscow negotiations in the meantime, except so far as was necessary to 'persuade' the Germans to listen to the British plea. This was very much in keeping with the British Government's policy in preceding years.

On August 19th, a Soviet-German commercial agreement was concluded. On August 23rd Ribbentrop arrived in Moscow, and a Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was signed. This was not, of course, an alliance, as was widely asserted at the time. It was only an undertaking not to attack each other, or to support any third party in such an attack. The Soviet Union knew that Hitler would observe the Pact only so long as it suited him. Yet it was unquestionably a severe diplomatic defeat for British Government policy – not the policy of a peace bloc against aggression, for that policy had never been pursued; but the policy of setting Hitler on to the U.S.S.R., masquerading as a policy of 'appeasement'.

In a separate Protocol, the two Governments delimited their spheres of interest in Eastern Europe – an act the practical importance of which, in the circumstances of the time, was that it kept the German Army out of the Ukrainian and Belorussian territories seized by

Pilsudsky in 1920: and also warned it off the Baltic States. The Protocol was kept secret.

### 3. SOVIET NEUTRALITY, 1939 – 41

On September 1st the German attack on Poland involved the major European Powers in the second World War, which had begun with the Italian attack on Ethiopia in 1935. In this war, which the Soviet Government had vainly attempted to arrest at various stages of its development, the U.S.S.R. now proclaimed itself a neutral. At the same time it took urgent steps to protect its interests. Already, parallel with the Moscow negotiations, it had been involved in a fairly large-scale frontier war with the Japanese in the territory of the Mongolian People's Republic. The Japanese had invaded that territory at Khalkhin Gol with an entire army (the 6th, specially formed for the purpose), near Lake Buir, and the operations developed on a larger and larger scale, until considerable forces of bombers, tanks and artillery were involved. Finally the Japanese were forced to ask on September 15th for an armistice, after suffering the loss of 60,000 men, 25,000 of them dead, and 600 planes (the Japanese War Office itself, in a statement on October 3rd, had called it a 'disaster'). In the first week of September 1st, 500,000 Red Army men were called to the colours, over and above those already serving, to guard against any further unforeseen events.

The complete defeat of the Polish armed forces within a fortnight brought urgent work for the Red Army. 'The Polish front has collapsed completely, and it is plain that little more remains for the Germans to do except mop up' cabled *The Times* correspondent on September 17th, from the town on the Polish-Rumanian frontier at which the Polish Government had already left the country. This created the prospect that the seven million Ukrainians and three million Belorussians who had been forcibly annexed by Poland in 1920, after as flagrant a war of aggression as any in history – and contrary to the ethnographical demarcation line drawn by the Allies themselves at the time (the 'Curzon Line') – might now just as forcibly come under German rule. Under Polish domination there had been ample evidence by British and other visitors that they were treated as colonial subjects; under the Germans there was every prospect that they would be exterminated altogether. The Red Army was accordingly sent across the frontier, and speedily occupied the area up to the Curzon Line, the Germans in many places retreating before them.

The advancing Soviet troops were hailed by the peasants as deliverers.

Torrents of abuse were poured out in London and elsewhere about this Soviet action – as though someone was anxious that the Germans should have occupied these areas, and thus created a permanent source of contention with the U.S.S.R. But unless the events of 1920 were to be regarded as the beginning of all history – their outcome immutably fixed for all time – there was no more reason why the Ukrainian and Belorussian minority in Poland should not have been reclaimed for their countries than there was why France, after 1918, should not have re-annexed Alsace-Lorraine, taken forcibly from her by the Germans in 1871. It is also worth noting that, while much ink was spilt over references in the Soviet press to the ‘former Polish State’, and reference to the same thing in an agreement (September 29th) under which Germany recognized the accomplished fact, the Soviet press never suggested at any time that Poland as a State was never to be revived. It was the State of the Polish landlords and capitalists which, in the eyes of the Soviet people, had disappeared. The question of some other State of the Polish people was left open. As far as the redeemed territories were concerned, plebiscites by secret ballot held in October led to their incorporation in the Ukrainian and Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republics respectively.

The next urgent task was to prevent the Baltic States becoming a base for German aggression. Mutual assistance treaties were signed with Estonia in the last week of September and with Latvia and Lithuania in the first ten days of October, under which, apart from advantageous commercial relations, the Republics concerned agreed to place certain bases in their territory at the disposal of the Red Army. The latter were to be confined to these bases, and on no account to interfere in the internal affairs of the Baltic Republics: they were described by Voroshilov, in a public speech on November 7th, as ‘the advance covering detachments on the approaches to these countries and the Soviet Union’. As will be clear from what we know of the Moscow negotiations in August, these bases were but a substitute for what Britain and France had been asked to create; but the Soviet Government came in for much abuse in the Western press, all the same.

The government of the Republics concerned was undisguisably Fascist, in the case of Latvia and Lithuania – the former indeed had

boasted of being a model ‘corporate State’ – and was a terrorist military dictatorship in the case of Estonia. Profoundly hostile to the U.S.S.R., and fearing lest their own working people might recollect the Soviet Republics they themselves had set up in the years 1917-19, the rulers of the three States could not rest content with the situation which had been imposed upon them. The Soviet Government ascertained in June, 1940, that secret staff negotiations between the three Governments, directed against the U.S.S.R., had reached an advanced stage. Moreover, as German documents published by the U.S. Department of State in 1948 have confirmed, in the first months of 1940 Germany had signed secret agreements with all three, under which they were tied still more firmly than in pre-war years to the Nazi war machine. Seventy per cent of their total exports of grain, pigs, dairy produce, flax, timber and oil were to go to Germany. Notes from the Soviet Government (June 14th) demanding guarantees against a continuation of this policy, by enlarging Soviet military dispositions and a change in the composition of the respective Governments, met a mass response in an upheaval of the workmen and poorer peasants, against which the mass of the troops refused to take action. Popular Governments came into being, and subsequent elections in all three States in July, 1940, returned parliaments which resolved on the restoration of the Soviet power, overthrown in turn by the Germans and the Allies twenty-one years before. On August 1st the three Baltic Soviet Republics, too, were admitted to the U.S.S.R.

On June 26th, 1940, the Soviet Government also reclaimed from Rumania the territory of Bessarabia. This had been forcibly occupied by the Rumanians in January, 1918, when the Soviet Government was too weak to resist, and, despite a solemn pledge by the Rumanian Prime Minister Averescu (February 23rd, 1918) that the territory would be evacuated within two months, had remained under direct military occupation ever since. As the Bessarabians are kindred of the Moldavians, who already had their autonomous Soviet Republic within the larger Ukrainian Republic, across the river Dniester, so the people of North Bukovina are of undoubtedly Ukrainian stock. They had struggled throughout 1918 for freedom to join Soviet Ukraine, but were retained in Rumania by the same methods as those practised in Bessarabia. These two were now ceded by the Rumanian Government to the U.S.S.R. – North Bukovina to be incorporated in the Ukraine, and the greater part of Bessarabia to be amalgamated with

autonomous Moldavia in a new Constituent or Union Republic.

In September and October negotiations took place for a mutual assistance pact with Turkey, which already had a draft pact with Britain and France. But the negotiations broke down when it turned out that Turkey wanted to be free to stand aside if Britain and France attacked the U.S.S.R., but would not agree to the U.S.S.R. standing aside if Germany attacked Turkey.

By far the greatest outcry, however, was aroused by the measures taken by the Soviet Government to protect itself against possible attacks through Finland. The Finnish frontier passed within twenty-five miles of the great city of Leningrad, the second industrial and cultural centre of the U.S.S.R. The city was only two or three minutes' flying time from Finnish aerodromes. We have seen earlier the intimate relations which existed between Nazi Germany and the military leaders who ruled Finland from behind a screen of parliamentary 'democracy' – one from which the mass of the workers were excluded by severe police and middle-class Security Corps control of their organizations and press. In wartime, such a situation was most threatening to any country (as Britain herself recognized in the case of Persia, three years later). The Soviet Government, therefore, suggested to Finland the conclusion of a Treaty of Mutual Assistance, under which the Finnish frontier would have been moved back in the Karelian Isthmus some tens of miles, and a base leased for thirty years to the Soviet Union on a peninsula projecting into the Gulf of Finland. In return, the Soviet Union was prepared to cede territory more than three times as great to Finland.

By loud outcries of indignation in the Western press, the Finnish Government was induced to reject these terms. Frontier incidents such as had occurred in 1921, 1923, 1930 and 1936, when the international relations of the U.S.S.R. were extremely critical, now took place; but on this occasion the Soviet Government was far stronger than in those earlier years. The Red Army crossed the Finnish frontier at a number of places, and hostilities began.

It would have been necessary to go back to 1919 for parallels with the fantastic anti-Soviet inventions which were then poured out, in a gigantic and stupefying flood, upon the luckless readers of the Western press and radio audiences during the next two months. The wildest absurdities – gigantic Finnish air-raids on Murmansk, Soviet cruisers sunk, alleged large-scale Soviet air bombardments of open towns, fake photographs of Soviet prisoners, women's battalions

formed in desperation by the Soviet authorities – filled the British, French and American press. Even more misleading were the solemn accounts of sensational Finnish victories over entire Soviet divisions, sent back by war correspondents who were in reality dozens of miles away. When a company was cut off in the course of patrols, it was immediately magnified into a division; when a Soviet regiment found its tanks and other motorized units immobilized by an unforeseen drop in temperature overnight from -25° Centigrade to -40°, this too rose to the dimensions of ‘overwhelming disaster’.

In reality, the bold strategists of the newspaper offices failed to point out to their readers that never before had a large-scale war with modern weapons been fought over a frontier more than 800 miles long, in the depth of a winter compared with which the conditions of the later expedition to Norway in the spring of 1940 were child’s play, and with a vast network of small lakes guarding great parts of the frontier as effectively as the ‘Mannerheim Line’, with a depth equalled only by the Maginot and Siegfried Lines in western Europe, protected the entry into Finland over the Karelian Isthmus. The Soviet forces had the problem of accumulating enormous artillery, munitions and tank reserves in the forward zone of the Mannerheim Line (occupied within the first week) – a task which took over two months. During this whole period, the Soviet forces carried out feint attacks and incursions into Finnish territory at many places up and down the vast border, losing small numbers in the process but effectually stringing out considerable Finnish forces away from the main road and rail communications of Finland. Recognition of a government of emigrant revolutionaries reminded Finland’s rulers, meanwhile, that defeat might bring social upheaval. When all was ready, in the second week of February, a vast attack was launched against the Mannerheim Line, which was smashed and pierced by frontal assault, unique in the history of warfare, within one month. By March 11th the Finnish port of Vyborg was by-passed and the way into Finland lay open. By that time the Finns had already, through Sweden, opened negotiations.

The Soviet Union now offered Finland less favourable terms than in October. Vyborg and the north and south banks of Lake Ladoga were annexed, and the peninsula mentioned earlier taken on long lease, without any territorial compensation (but with an annual rental payment in gold). However, the ice-free port of Petsamo in the north, which had been voluntarily ceded to Finland as a gesture of

friendship in 1918 and occupied during the fighting, was returned to the Finnish Government. The Soviet forces were not sent to occupy Finland, as could easily have been done without anyone being able to lift a finger.

This circumstance is all the more worth noting because a violent campaign in the Western countries, and particularly in Great Britain, had been waged in favour of intervention in the war. In December, 1939, the same States which had assisted Hitler, Mussolini and the Mikado to conquer Ethiopia, the Spanish Republic, Austria, Czechoslovakia and large territories in China now rose up in their wrath at Geneva and expelled the U.S.S.R. from the League of Nations (amid torrents of oratory which, for at least one observer, will always remain a memory of the richest comedy). At the beginning of January the British Ambassador was recalled from Moscow. Later in that month, volunteers for service with the Finnish Army were invited. Later again, a British General told selected American correspondents in London on January 19th, at a dinner party specially arranged by a well-known Conservative political hostess, that General Mannerheim was asking for only 30,000 men from Britain: but that he, on his part, thought it would be safer to send 60,000, beginning on March 15th, so as to make sure that Red Army opposition would be broken. The inconsiderate haste of the Finns to conclude peace, three days before this generous assistance was due to begin, luckily prevented the testing in practice of his wise and wonderfully-informed strategy.

But the despatch to Finland of over 100 aeroplanes and as many guns, of 185,000 shells and 50,000 hand-grenades, with masses of minor stores, and of similar supplies from France, were a sign of the British and French Governments' desire at least to impress the Finnish Government with their good intentions. It was also significant that when, on February 22nd, the Soviet Ambassador in London told the British Government that Finland had asked for peace talks and invited the British Government to act as mediator, the reply was a refusal. It appeared in Moscow as though the British Government was almost anxious to keep the U.S.S.R. involved in at least a small war, having failed to involve it in a large one.

This impression could only be heightened by the general character of the relationships between Britain and the U.S.S.R. after the war with Germany had begun.

On September 23rd, Lord Halifax asked the Soviet Ambassador what was the Soviet attitude on the European war, and whether there



was any use in opening trade negotiations. The Soviet Government replied four days later that it intended to remain neutral, and was in favour of trade negotiations. Apart from a limited agreement on October 11th, under which Soviet timber was exchanged for rubber and tin, no trade negotiations were opened, and instead the British campaign over the Baltic States and Finland was launched. It is hardly surprising that, when the British Government did offer to open negotiations, on October 25th, the moment was not judged propitious.

The incident with the Soviet offer to accept British mediation at the end of February has already been mentioned. Throughout February and March, 1940, the British press was openly discussing a blow at the U.S.S.R. through the Caucasus. On February 20th, for example, *The Times* called the U.S.S.R. an 'unwieldy German supply ship operating under a neutral flag', and advised bomber raids on Baku.

On March 27th the Soviet Government, through its London Ambassador, again agreed to a British proposal of nine days before that trade negotiations should be opened, at the same time asking for the release of two Soviet ships carrying valuable metals to Vladivostok, which had been arrested by British warships in the Pacific on suspicion of the goods being intended for Germany. The reply to this offer came only on April 19th, with the offer of a trade agreement on condition that Soviet trade with Germany was restricted, and a guarantee that Soviet imports were required for Soviet consumption only. Molotov in a public speech at the Supreme Soviet on March 29th had already made it clear that the U.S.S.R. desired as good relations with Britain and France as it had with Germany, being a neutral; and this was reiterated in the Soviet reply of April 29th. It was ready to give a guarantee that British products would not go to Germany, and wanted a trade agreement with Britain on a reciprocal basis: but it would not make its trade relations with Germany in its own products the subject of negotiations with any third Power. The positions of the two sides were reaffirmed in further memoranda – from the British Government on May 8th and from the Soviet Government on May 20th.

Relations with France were just as bad. On February 5th, 1940, the Soviet Trade Delegation in Paris had been raided, and three days later the French Government announced that it had 275,000 troops in the Near East – which could be intended either for use against a

possible German incursion into the Balkans or against the U.S.S.R. On March 27th the Soviet Ambassador in Paris was recalled at the request of the French Government on a purely formal pretext. A British journalist who visited the French General Headquarters in the Near East in April, however, was left in no doubt about French plans against the Caucasus. General Weygand, in command of French forces in Syria, showed a *News Chronicle* correspondent, Mr Philip Jordan, early in 1940, that he was much more concerned to have an Allied attack on Russia than to beat the Germans, and excitedly showed him aerial photographs of Baku and Batum, with maps showing 'how best and most easily British and French troops could move up to the Armenian plateau and attack the oil wells of Baku'.

Subsequent publication by the Germans of captured French staff documents revealed that (i) at the beginning of March Air Marshal Mitchell and General Weygand discussed plans for air attacks on the Soviet Republics of the Caucasus; (ii) operations by the British and Turkish armies against the U.S.S.R. were also discussed; (iii) the French Ambassador at Ankara had discussed with the Turkish Foreign Minister British and French plans for bombing Batum and Baku from Syrian and Iraqi bases – which would involve flying over Turkish and Persian territory. In fact, the Soviet observer service were able to establish the crossing of the Soviet frontier in March and April from Turkey and Persia, by French and British reconnaissance planes, flying over Batum and Baku respectively.

With Germany relations were hardly better, in spite of appearances. The guarantees of deliveries of German industrial goods under the trade agreement were not being fulfilled, and in consequence the Soviet Government was restricting its sales of grain and other goods contracted for. In April, after the successful German operations in Denmark and Norway, the German press opened a violent campaign against Sweden. At the same time the German Government demanded of Sweden that telegraph and telephone lines should be placed at the disposal of Germany, and transit rights given to her for reinforcements to be sent to Norway. At this moment (April 13th) the Soviet Government intervened, requiring a consultation in accordance with the Soviet- German Pact of Non-Aggression, and told the Germans that it was concerned for the maintenance of Swedish neutrality. As a result there was a complete change of front, and Ribbentrop agreed that that was in the interests of both countries. There is no reasonable ground for doubt that Sweden was saved from

German invasion on this occasion.

Such was not the case, however, with Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and France. Beginning with the German attack on Belgium in the middle of May, all these countries were overrun and their armies forced to capitulate. Marshal Petain signed the final articles of surrender on June 22nd: the British Army had been evacuated from Dunkirk at the beginning of the month.

It is not without significance that the Soviet press was alone in the world in discounting talk of the early overthrow of Britain. *Izvestia*, commenting on the evacuation of Dunkirk as a remarkable achievement, said that the Germans were going to meet with firm opposition. So long as the British Fleet was in being, wrote the leading economist Varga in *World Economy and World Politics* at the beginning of June, Britain could continue to wage war and would do so for a long time. So also the most authoritative political journal in the U.S.S.R., the *Bolshevik*, published in its issue for the first half of July an analysis of the war situation pointing out that the outcome of the war was far from settled by the German victories on the continent, and that Britain had great powers of resistance still.

The Soviet Government gave evidence of this confidence in connexion with the proposal, made on May 23rd, to send Sir Stafford Cripps as 'special envoy' to discuss trade relations. It firmly insisted that there was no need for such an official, but that Cripps could come as Ambassador; and, when he was appointed on June 5th, it refused to accept him without his credentials – an extraordinary position for an Ambassador to be in – and they had to be telegraphed for. When the Foreign Office reluctantly cabled the credentials on June 21st, the Soviet Government showed its good will by Stalin's receiving him ten days after his arrival – the first time any British Ambassador had had such an opportunity on his own – and trade talks were begun immediately. On July 3rd the arrested Soviet ships were released, on condition that their cargo was sold to France.

But almost immediately the promise of an improvement of relations came to nothing. On July 18th the Burma Road into south China, over which the Soviet Union had been sending large quantities of war supplies shipped from Vladivostok, was closed at the demand of the Japanese, and without any consultation with the U.S.S.R. It should be borne in mind that in November, 1939, Dr Sun Fo had stated that the U.S.S.R. had given China ten times the amount of credit that Britain had done. In April, 1940, the Chinese Amba-

sador publicly stated that the U.S.S.R. was giving more help to China than all other States put together; and, he added, *after* the closing of the Burma Road, this was 'without any political conditions whatsoever'. For most of this time Britain and the U.S.A. had been sending enormous quantities of scrap iron and oil to Japan. Thus the closing of the Burma Road was a direct encouragement to Japan in every respect.\* To make matters worse, Mr Churchill borrowed a leaf out of Mr Chamberlain's book by accompanying the announcement in Parliament with the ambiguous statement that the British Government had given 'full consideration' to the attitude of the U.S.S.R. – which had in reality not even been told that the Burma Road was being closed (as a TASS communiqué plainly revealed the next day).

Even more adverse to the fortunes of Sir Stafford Cripps' negotiations was the refusal of the London banks, on instructions from the Treasury, to carry out a decision by the central banks of the Baltic Republics that their gold balances in London were to be transferred to the Soviet bank there: and the seizure of a number of ships of the Baltic States in British ports. No protests by the Soviet Government were of any avail. On October 10th the Soviet Ambassador was personally informed by the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that an arrangement had been made to settle the question of the ships – and the very next day the Ministry of Shipping seized another twenty-three! This action was the more decisive because Sir Stafford Cripps had succeeded in beginning trade negotiations in Moscow, on the understanding that the Baltic questions would be settled if the negotiations were successful.†

It is hardly surprising that the negotiations did not come to anything. On October 22nd the British Government offered to grant *de*

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\* This did not prevent the Soviet Ambassador in Tokyo informing the Japanese Government, on December 6th, that the Soviet attitude to China was unchanged: and the Soviet Government making good these words, in January, 1941, by increasing the credits granted to China by another 100 million dollars.

† On October 6th a mild sensation in diplomatic circles, first in Moscow and then abroad, had been created by the Soviet newspapers, which published a two-column TASS message from London describing a night spent at an anti-aircraft battery and underlining the high morale and keen trade union spirit of the soldiers.

*facto* recognition of the Baltic Soviet Republics – with the proviso that the whole question would be reopened at the Peace Conference. In the circumstances, this offer had of course no chance of acceptance.

Relations with Germany at the same time were continuing to deteriorate. At the beginning of September, the Germans announced that they were calling an international conference on the subject of the Danube; and the Soviet Government immediately told Germany that it must, as a State whose territory bordered on the great river, participate in any discussions regarding it. Germany accepted this position, and came to an agreement with the U.S.S.R. on October 26th that a single Danube Commission would be set up, composed of all the States using the Danube as a trade channel or bordering on it. By this agreement the two Commissions set up previously – in 1856 and 1920 – to deal with separate parts of the river's course were abolished. Britain had played a leading part in 1919 in excluding the Soviet Union from both of these Commissions (and also in admitting Nazi Germany in 1939): but this did not prevent the British Government protesting against the Soviet action (October 29th), and even going so far as to call it a breach of neutrality. The protest had no effect.

By this time German troops had been despatched to Rumania, in order to counter the profound political effect in the Balkans of the Germans giving way to the Soviet demands. The Soviet Government told the Germans in September that this was disloyal conduct, and on October 16th took the opportunity to show clearly its distinct and different policy, by denying a story in a Danish newspaper that this had been done with the full knowledge and consent of the U.S.S.R. The same was the purpose of a statement issued on November 21st, in reply to a Nazi newspaper story that Hungary had joined the Axis, 'with the collaboration and full approval of the Soviet Union'.

A few days earlier Molotov, on the invitation of the German Government, had visited Berlin, and, despite the obvious lessons of the German-Soviet friction already noted, the wildest stories were circulated in the press about 'far-reaching political and economic agreements' for the partition of the world between Germany and the U.S.S.R. In reality, Hitler had urged the Soviet Union to attack Iran, to come to an agreement with Turkey and to keep out of the Balkans. The Soviet Government consequently drew the conclusion that Germany was not interested in Iran, but did intend establishing 'close

ties' with Turkey, and was determined on controlling the whole Balkan peninsula – which would mean either buying over the Governments of Yugoslavia and Greece as those of Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary had already been bought over, or conquering their countries by force of arms. 'Having drawn these useful conclusions, the Soviet Government never again resumed any talks on these questions, despite Ribbentrop's repeated reminders,' runs the official Soviet record of the conversations.

It was after these talks that the statement about Hungary was issued. More striking still, on November 25th the Secretary-General of the Soviet Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, paying an official visit to Sofia, made a most important offer to the Tsar of Bulgaria – of either a unilateral Soviet guarantee against attack from any direction, or else of a pact of mutual assistance, whichever he would prefer. This proposal could be directed only against the danger of a Nazi attack; and it became public almost immediately in Bulgaria, arousing great public enthusiasm.

However, no change took place in Anglo-Soviet relations, the British Government continuing to stand firm on the question of the Baltic Republics and their property detained in Great Britain.

On January 10th a further trade agreement was signed by the U.S.S.R. with Germany, settling a number of mutual claims in the Baltic Republics, uprooting the age-old German colony which had dominated the politics of these territories since the early Middle Ages, and providing for an exchange of Soviet foodstuffs and raw materials for German industrial equipment. In reality, up to the German attack on the U.S.S.R. in June, 1941, less than one million tons of grain and a few hundred thousand tons of oil had gone to Germany from the beginning of the war – far less than Germany had secured from Rumania alone – with tiny quantities of cotton, manganese ore, and other goods. This agreement was denounced in Britain as a further proof that the Soviet Union was a German 'supply ship'. The importing of a quantity of copper from the U.S.A. in 1940 was declared to be definite proof that the U.S.S.R. was using American imports to replace Soviet exports to Germany; whereas in fact the United Kingdom itself had before the war been exporting to the U.S.S.R., for its own needs, more than half as much again as America was now exporting, and British supplies were of course now closed. Thus the imports from the U.S.A. could not possibly have any bearing on the exports to Germany: and the same applied to other

material. However, the outcry about this question served effectively to block any prospect of successful trade negotiations between Britain and the U.S.S.R. in 1941.

This was all the more remarkable because Soviet differences with Germany soon became more acute. On January 12th a Soviet communiqué made it clear that the German troops which were now arriving in Bulgaria – Tsar Boris having declined the Soviet offer – were not there with Soviet knowledge or consent. On March 3rd Vyshinsky told the Bulgarian Minister (in a statement immediately made public) that the Soviet Government did not approve of the Bulgarian invitation to these Nazi troops. A week later, now that Turkey, after all her flirtations with the Germans, was beginning to be alarmed at their close propinquity, the Soviet Government issued a reminder that it stood by its obligations under the 1925 Soviet-Turkish treaty. On March 24th a joint Soviet-Turkish communiqué made it clear that, if Turkey were attacked and defended her territory, she could ‘count on the complete understanding and neutrality of the U.S.S.R.’ The same obligation, in the form of a Pact of Neutrality and Friendship, was undertaken to Yugoslavia on April 5th – the eve of the German assault on that country. Although this was clearly the prelude to open German hostility to the U.S.S.R., on April 12th the Soviet Government expressed its public disapproval of the jackal attack on Yugoslavia by the Hungarian dictator Horthy.

By now the most circumstantial reports of German military concentrations in Eastern Europe, in preparation for an attack on the U.S.S.R., were in circulation; and Mr Churchill openly spoke of them in the House of Commons on April 9th. Yet the continued absence of any progress towards Anglo-Soviet agreement (publicly confirmed in the House of Commons on April 24th) was most likely, just because of these circumstances, to encourage and accelerate a German attack. This the Soviet Government perfectly understood. The only doubt was, would the attack, if it took place, be followed by an attempt at a settlement in the West-as would have been certain in 1939? Or had the balance of forces within British politics shifted so far away from the point at which it stood in 1939, owing to the political bankruptcy of the Munichites, that such an attempt could not and would not be made?

It was obviously to find out the reply to this very question that Rudolph Hess was sent to Britain in a simulated ‘flight’ on May 10th, with his offer of a general division of the non-American world be-

tween Britain and Germany, on condition that Hitler were left alone to go East. The silence of the British Government after the landing of Hess, in the light of all that went before, was very likely to encourage rather than discourage Hitler's attack on June 22nd. Hitler miscalculated: but of this, naturally, the Soviet Government could not be sure before the event.

However, the Soviet Government made it clear that it was aware of what was going on, by publishing statements about the despatch of German troops to Finland, and by issuing a statement on June 13th which, under the guise of denying rumours of a forthcoming German attack, underlined that the Soviet Government was aware of the despatch of German troops to the eastern and north-eastern districts of Germany, 'which is now taking place'.

#### 4. PREPARATIONS AT HOME

From the conclusion of the Soviet-German Pact of Non-Aggression onwards, and particularly with the great reinforcement of the armed strength of the country, a new sense of urgency began to impose itself more and more in all branches of Soviet life. The big call-up and the lengthening of service in the Air Force, in the autumn of 1939, met with a direct response in the factories, in the appearance of a new form of the Stakhanov movement. Skilled workmen began to try and manage more than one of the automatic machine-tools with which hundreds of Soviet factories were now equipped; and in this way the 'multi-lathe movement' began, to ensure that no machine stood idle through its skilled attendant finding himself in the forces. At the Stalingrad Tractor Works – destined to play a world-famous part in the defence of that city three years later – there were 2,000 of these 'multi-lathe minders' by December. With a similar purpose, a movement for 'combination of trades' also took shape where there was particularly acute shortage of labour, and where the work of clerical or administrative employees could be crowded into half the day or half the week, enabling them to take on production jobs for the rest of the time.

Yet it was not only problems of work that filled the public mind that autumn, for in May and June there had been a festival of Kirgiz art in Moscow. A remarkably varied All-Union Agricultural Exhibition which opened, in Moscow, on August 1st, demonstrating the outstanding achievements of collective farming and of Soviet agriculture generally since the first Exhibition, which was held in 1923,



attracted over 3,500,000 people and stimulated new methods, new emulation, and once again a great pride in the progress of so many different nations within the Soviet borders. In October and November it was the turn of Soviet Armenia to hold a festival in Moscow. To mark Stalin's sixtieth birthday on December 20th the Soviet Government instituted the Stalin Prizes – for outstanding work in the fields of science, technical invention, history, the arts and literature. The campaign in the last two months of the year for the election of the local Soviets has already been mentioned.

Nineteen-forty saw a series of measures for the reinforcement of the industrial strength of the U.S.S.R., now on a war footing even though its troops were not yet in battle.

In April the Supreme Soviet, by adopting a defence budget totalling fifty-seven milliard roubles out of a total expenditure of 180 milliards, underlined the urgent need for defence. In May the Council of People's Commissars issued regulations giving increased authority in the workshop to foremen and charge-hands. On June 26th the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet instituted a system of prosecutions for the 3 or 4 per cent of habitual absentees, 'Sitters' from factory to factory and other slack workers. It was also announced that, on the initiative of the Central Council of Trade Unions, and in consequence of the greater demands on the national economy in a situation of world war, the eight-hour day was to be re-established, after ten years during which seven hours or less had been worked in Soviet industries. The six-hour day for miners was correspondingly increased to seven hours. On July 10th directors and technicians of factories issuing for sale defective goods, or equipment incomplete in all its details, were made liable to prosecution and to sentences of from five to eight years' imprisonment. In October a system of two-year trade schools for boys and girls at fourteen to fifteen, and six-months railway and vocational schools for young people at sixteen or seventeen, was established. The pupils in these schools would be assured of full maintenance and a general education, in addition to their special technical course, which was to fit them to become skilled workers in the basic industries. On finishing the schools, they were obliged by contract to work for at least four years in the industry of their choice, and were granted exemption from military service on this condition.

The aim was to secure a first intake of 800,000 to 1,000,000, chiefly from young people in the collective farms, and quotas were

fixed for the various regions, to be enforced by compulsion if necessary. But in fact there was a rush of over 1,100,000 volunteers, many of whom had to be rejected because all vacancies had been filled: and in the end only 49,000 were called up on a compulsory basis, in a few areas where enough volunteers had not come forward. During the next two years, Soviet industry and transport secured millions of skilled young men and women for their main trades in this way.

Nineteen-forty was also marked by a striking new movement in Central Asia, the 'people's building jobs'. It began in the Fergana Valley of Uzbekistan, where for centuries the idea of constructing a large irrigation canal had been talked of, and in latter years written about. On the initiative of the Uzbek Communists, 160,000 collective farmers volunteered for work to dig the canal while the State undertook to provide the necessary machinery, living and cooking equipment, and simple tools. Artists, educational workers, and newspaper-men volunteered to make the temporary camps which were planned along the route of the canal centres of intelligent leisure as well as of work. For seven weeks 220 miles of the valley saw an immense and unique concourse of people, living in tents and huts, working, eating and amusing themselves together, publishing newspapers printed on the spot, holding folk-dances, play and poetry readings and concerts in the evening and excavating huge stretches of the canal, building locks, pouring cement, all in accordance with modern technique, during the day. In forty-five days the entire enterprise was complete. This was the first of several such collective undertakings in after years.

In the Soviet Union nowadays 1940 is the 'pre-war year'. It has pushed into the background that other 'pre-war', now dim and remote – 1913. In 1940, industrial output (measured in comparable prices) reached a figure more than six times as great as in 1928 on the eve of the first Five Year Plan. Even compared with the end of the second Five Year Plan – the year 1937 – the expansion was something like 45 per cent. This was due particularly to a big increase in the output of iron, steel and coal. Production of these basic requirements of modern industry, and of oil and raw cotton, was now three or four times as much as it had been in 1913. The output of agriculture was now well over 50 per cent greater than it had been in 1928. This was reflected in a substantial increase of retail trade, and particularly of free marketing by the collective farmers of their surplus produce. In

every sphere there were mounting successes for the Socialist method of industrialization and for collective farming. Soviet economy was beginning to be distinguished by that increasing abundance which was the pre-requisite for Socialism passing gradually into Communism.

So unmistakable was the rate of progress that on February 22nd, 1941, Government instructions were published to the State Planning Commission to begin drawing up a general fifteen-year economic plan. It would aim at fulfilling in that period the purpose spoken of by Stalin in March, 1939, i.e. of catching up with and outstripping the leading Great Powers in output per head of such essentials as iron and steel, fuel, electric power, machinery and consumption goods. At the XVIII Conference of the Communist Party, held the same month to consider current economic problems and adopt the plan of development for 1941, it was revealed that membership of the Communist Party, which had stood at over one-and-a-half millions in March, 1939, was now nearly four millions. Thus earlier experience had once more been repeated: at times of danger the Communist Party could always be sure of extending its organized influence.

By June, 1941, the economic results of nearly three-and-a-half years of the third Five Year Plan were available. They showed that fulfilment was running almost exactly to schedule. Industrial output reached 86 per cent of the level fixed for 1942, grain output 91 per cent, railway goods traffic 90 per cent, retail trade 92 per cent, wages 96 per cent and the number of wage-earners 98 per cent. It was clear that the third Five Year Plan would be carried out on time, with all its far-reaching implications, provided the Soviet Union remained at peace.

The preparedness of the Soviet Union for all eventualities, however, was brought out most sharply on May 6th, when Stalin, hitherto General Secretary of the Communist Party's Central Committee, was appointed in addition Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. For the same reason that Molotov had replaced Litvinov as People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs two years before (and still continued in that capacity after Stalin's appointment) – namely, to emphasize the political importance of a personal link between leadership of the State and leadership of the Party at a time of grave international crisis – Stalin took his place as Prime Minister when war was clearly imminent, just as Lenin from the November Revolution onwards had combined headship of the

Government with leadership of the Party.

When the German armies crossed the Soviet border, and German air fleets began bombing Soviet towns, without any warning or grounds for complaint, in the early hours of June 22nd, 1941, the Soviet Union stood ready to receive the enemy in far different conditions from those of Tsarist Russia when Kaiser Wilhelm II declared war. Wage-earners in Socialist enterprise numbered 48 per cent of the population, and collective farmers with artisan co-operators another 46 per cent. Thus the overwhelming mass of the population was united in its way of life, instead of being profoundly divided and antagonistic, like the classes of Tsarist Russia. The output of Soviet large-scale industry was twelve times what it had been in the best Tsarist days: indeed, in the war years that followed, those eastern regions of the U.S.S.R. which were never reached by Hitler's armies produced seven times as much in their factories and mines alone as all Russia had done in 1913. The great increase in agricultural output since those years had already been noted. But for the waging of a great national war it was no less important that, whereas in 1913 more than 70 per cent of all grain put on the market was in the hands of landlords and village capitalists, the U.S.S.R. entered the war with almost 100 per cent of its marketed grain in the hands of the collective farms and State farms – which meant far greater manoeuvring capacity for the State.

The U.S.S.R. could arm itself, feed itself and maintain a high standard of cultural activity, throughout the terrible trials that lay ahead. Its constituent peoples, large and small, in their overwhelming majority were conscious of changes in their status and way of life which they did not even dream of, thirty years before. Pushkin, the great Russian national poet, had during the reign of the last of the Tsars (1894-1917) been published in eleven languages of the Russian Empire – and those all major European languages. Between 1917 and 1940 his works appeared in seventy languages of the U.S.S.R. So also with Chekhov, published in 600,000 copies and five languages under Nicholas II, in fifteen million copies and fifty-six languages from the November Revolution to 1940. For English readers it is not without interest that Shakespeare was translated into seventeen Soviet languages, and Dickens into fourteen; while before the Revolution they appeared in no more than three or four. The same story could be told of Maupassant and Balzac, Heine and Schiller – as well as of Voltaire and Diderot, Bacon and Aristotle. No achievement of

the human spirit was too remote for the people once ruled by Tsardom.

Hitler's great miscalculation was due to the fact that he did not suspect the significance of these changes, or even believe they had taken place. But in this he was not alone.

*Further Reading*

Economic and social conditions in 1939 – apart from the general authorities already cited – are very fully described in the report of the XVIII Party Congress, published in English as *Land of Socialism Today and Tomorrow* (1940). A survey for 1940 was given by Voznesensky at the XVIII Conference in 1941, and is reprinted in *The U.S.S.R. Speaks for Itself* (one-volume edition, 1943); it can be supplemented from his *War Economy of the Soviet Union*. The new labour legislation was fully summarised by the International Labour Office (1939-40) in its weekly *Industrial and Labour Information*. Stalin's political report at the XVIII Congress is also printed in *Leninism*. For the diplomatic negotiations of 1939 and 1940, reference must be made, apart from Coates and Bilainkin, op. cit., to D. N. Pritt, K.C., M.P., *Light on Moscow* (1939) and *Must the War Spread?* (1940); Prof. L. B. Namier, *Diplomatic Prelude, 1938-1939* (1948); the Soviet publications *Documents and Materials on the Eve of the Second World War*, vol. II. (1949) and *Falsifiers of History* (1948); to the newspapers and periodicals of the time, which are particularly valuable in the absence of full 'Blue Books' from the British and Soviet sides: and to V. M. Molotov, *Soviet Peace Policy* (1941). General accounts, in a useful setting of past history, can be found in Prof. F. L. Schuman, *Night over Europe* (1941) and Prof. A. B. Keith, *The Causes of the War* (1940). S. and B. Webb, *The Truth about Soviet Russia* (1942), is stimulating on the Soviet political system. A hostile summary, giving however many quotations from foreign works not otherwise easily obtainable, is Max Beloff, *The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia*, vol. II. (1949).

## CHAPTER VIII

### *The Soviet Union at War*

#### 1. THE FRONT

It is now known from the revelations of the leading German generals that Hitler expressly forbade them to attack the British Army at Dunkirk, and never had the remotest intention of attempting to invade Britain (e.g. Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, pp. 42-3, 49-52). At the end of July, 1940, moreover (*ibid*, pp. 53, 61, and the testimony of General Jodi at Nuremberg), Hitler had begun active preparations to invade the U.S.S.R.

While Britain had been standing alone – in the sense that only her Government and armed forces remained intact among the enemies of Germany (though the Albanian, Yugoslav and French people had in 1940 already begun an armed struggle against the invader) – the Soviet Union had held immobilized in the east, without firing a shot, scores of German divisions – more than had sufficed to overrun Western Europe.

But on June 22nd, 1941, the Red Army was attacked on a front of 1,900 miles by 170 picked divisions, which not only had enormous bases of munitions and other supplies, but also had battle experience in victorious campaigns against many other European armies. Moreover, the armies of Finland, Hungary, Rumania and Italy were under German command at the Soviet front. The slave labour and industrial resources of 250 million inhabitants of occupied Europe were still at the disposal of the invader.

Thus Russia alone had to stand up against a force exceeding what the Kaiser had launched in all directions in 1914.

In these conditions, the war strategy of the U.S.S.R. had to be of a special nature. The plans for an offensive campaign worked out in previous years, which would have been applied, for example, had an Anglo-Franco-Soviet Pact been signed in 1939 and called into effect, had to be abandoned. The rest of 1941, and the greater part of 1942, became years of ‘active defence’, in which the enemy was able to advance only by using up and exhausting his enormous strength at a high rate of expenditure of men, armour, guns and planes, thus reducing the tremendous advantages he had had at the outset.

The essential condition for later victories was the self-sacrificing stubbornness of defence in these first two years. As the Germans

advanced, they found themselves involved in giant tank battles and air combats, with many hundreds of machines on each side, such as history had never seen. Moreover, strongly-fortified zones and the tiniest snipers' posts alike were defended with a violence and resolution that aroused the astonishment of the whole world. Brest-Litovsk was defended for nine days, Smolensk for thirty days, the port of Tallinn was held by the Baltic Fleet for a month before the warships withdrew to Kronstadt, Odessa was held for seventy days, and the base at Hango, in Finland, for six months. This phase of the war was also distinguished by such feats as that of Lieutenant Gastello, who drove down his burning aeroplane into the midst of a large group of tanks, many of which he set on fire; of the twenty-eight guardsmen of the Panfilov division, who held out for four hours on November 16th against fifty tanks on the road to Moscow, crippling many, and themselves, all but one, dying under fire; and of the partisan feats of village youths and girls like Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, hanged by the Germans for refusal to betray her comrades.

Tank for tank, the Soviet K.V. (heavy) and T.34 (medium) machines proved more powerful and manoeuvrable than the German tanks. The Soviet automatic rifle, with its range of 200 metres for aimed fire against the fifty metres of the German tommy-gun, was also superior. The Soviet air forces threw into battle the tank-smashing II 2 ('Stormoviks'), with their rocket guns, long before the Germans possessed anything of the sort. The same was true of the rocket mortars, affectionately called by the Soviet soldiers 'Katyusha', which continued to spread terror among the German infantry throughout the war. But of all these weapons the Red Army for many months had far from enough; and the re-equipment and expansion of Soviet war industries, and the very thin trickle of Allied supplies, could not at first catch up with the demand.

So, in the first ten days, the Germans were able to occupy Lithuania, most of Latvia, and considerable areas in Belorussia and Western Ukraine. Later they broke through to the outskirts of Leningrad and Moscow, and overran the Donetz Basin and the Crimea. In October they mounted an offensive against Moscow with thirty-five divisions, and on November 16th, a further attack with fifty-one divisions (thirteen of them tank divisions) and 1,000 planes. By the beginning of December, however, the German offensive was worn to a standstill, although in the north it had succeeded in cutting off Leningrad by occupying the railway junction of Tikhvin, and in

the south had occupied the great port of Rostov-on-Don.

On June 30th all public power had been concentrated in a small supreme body, created specially for the purpose, the State Committee of Defence, headed by Stalin, who was later appointed People's Commissar for Defence. On July 3rd, in a broadcast, Stalin had warned the Soviet people that it was a war for their life or death, and called upon them to rise in defence of their country and of Socialism, as their forefathers had risen in the days of the Teuton invaders of the 13th century, the Polish invasion of the 17th century and Napoleon's attack in 1812. The people answered by a gigantic display of initiative, taking with them everything they could remove, destroying or burning what could not be moved from the invaded territories, setting up in record time the factories they had moved to safe areas, beating their own records at mass production, and developing a partisan movement of vast extent in the enemy rear, blowing up bridges and railway lines, raiding and destroying German dumps, killing Germans in every possible way.

In the threatened areas a volunteer army was raised, the Opolcheniye, organized in divisions of modern type with modern weapons. Moscow alone, in the first month of the war, provided 160,000 such volunteers, and Leningrad 300,000. Men and women went into these 'People's Battalions', which were apart entirely from the vast forces of young men liable to military service who were called to the colours.

On December 6th a patiently-prepared Soviet counter-offensive struck the Germans north and south of Moscow, inflicting upon them the first heavy defeat they had suffered since Hitler had launched them against Poland in 1939. In this offensive, which lasted until the end of January 1942, the Soviet forces drove back the Germans 250 miles, destroying and capturing large quantities of their armour, guns and munitions, and burying 300,000 German dead. For the first time since Hitler came to power, a decisive blow had been struck at the myth that the German Army was invincible – and that 'the Russians can't stand up to a modern force'. The lesson was driven in by further defeats – of the German tank general, von Kleist, at Rostov; by the liberation of Tikhvin; and by successful landing operations by the Black Sea combined forces in the eastern Crimea. Large areas of northern and north-western Russia were freed from the Germans for good. In order to bring the Soviet advance to an end, the German High Command was obliged to transfer thirty divisions from various



parts of Europe to its eastern front. This front had already come to be known among the Germans, unaccustomed to such experiences, as 'the mincing-machine'.

In the summer of 1942, after concentrating an enormous force of 240 divisions against the U.S.S.R. (179 German and 61 satellite divisions) – by reducing their forces in the West to no more than 30 divisions in all – the Nazis found themselves twice as strong in the east as the German Army had ever been during the years 1914-18. They broke through on the southern sector of the front, and their tank divisions and mobile forces penetrated far to the south-east. They retook Rostov and the other great southern port of Novorossiisk, occupied nearly the whole of the rich Northern Caucasus and the oil fields of Maikop, and entered the approaches to the oil centre of Grozny. At the end of August, further northward, they reached the outskirts of Stalingrad, the key junction of rail and water routes in the eastern part of European Russia. On July 3rd the heroic garrison of Sevastopol had been evacuated by sea, after a siege lasting 250 days, in which German casualties had reached 300,000 men. The Nazis thus completed their occupation of the Crimea. Further to the north they advanced almost as far as Voronezh. Tens of millions of Soviet citizens passed under the German yoke, to be subjected to a period of prolonged mass murder, torture, rape, starvation and plunder, on a scale which even the German armies had never attained before.

In September, 1942, the Germans began their series of assaults on Stalingrad, with thirty-six divisions (twenty-one of them German) and 2,000 planes. The workmen of the city formed volunteer battalions to defend their famous factories – the Stalingrad Tractor Works, child of the first Five Year Plan, and others – making fortresses of them which gave much assistance to the 62nd Soviet Army of General Chuikov, supported by the Volga Flotilla. The motto of the Soviet forces clinging to the west bank of the Volga (which the Germans managed to reach in one or two places, thus dividing the defenders) was: 'There is no land across the Volga'. While they performed prodigies, enormous reinforcements composed of the divisions which had only begun to be mobilized after June 22nd, 1941, and armed with abundant weapons from factories which had brought war output up to pre-war level only in March, 1942, were accumulated in the rear. On November 19th they went over to the offensive north-west and south-east of Stalingrad, destroying many divisions of the enemy and closing the ring round two entire German armies

three days later, south-west of the city. The Germans refused to capitulate, and a stubborn process of their reduction began, while a tank relief force from the south-west was defeated and destroyed. When Field-Marshal von Paulus surrendered at last on February 2nd, 1943, only 91,000 of his original force of 330,000 men remained alive to lay down their arms. The Red Army had to bury the rest.

There was another and more terrible proof of Soviet morale before the eyes of the whole world – the stubborn resistance of the city of Leningrad to a siege by the German and Finnish armies, who were bombarding it with heavy artillery at short range, and throughout the winter of 1941-2 had kept it cut off from supplies and reinforcements. The citizens that winter were receiving five ounces of bread and two glasses of hot water a day. Tens of thousands of them died of hunger. But lectures, studies in the universities, concerts and plays and scientific research, went on without interruption. A 70-mile “Pluto” pipeline under Lake Ladoga passed undetected.

By the time of the Stalingrad victory, in February, a three months’ winter campaign on an immense scale, over a front of 900 miles in the south-east, and over hundreds of miles in the north-west, had begun. In blizzards and deep snow, the Red troops in January broke through the blockade of Leningrad, and in March pushed the Germans far back to the west. On the south-western front the Germans during the same months were driven out of the North Caucasus and Rostov-on-Don, Voronezh, Kursk and the great Ukrainian industrial city of Kharkov. The Germans still proved strong enough by a counter-attack to recapture Kharkov, and prevent the Red Army forcing its way into the Donetsk coalfield. But in that three months’ campaign the Germans lost 850,000 killed, 343,000 prisoners, 20,000 guns, 9,000 tanks and 5,000 aircraft. In that one series of battles between November 19th, 1942, and the end of March, 1943, the Germans lost as many tanks as the Allies supplied to the U.S.S.R. throughout the four years of war. The enemy was driven back in five months over 400 miles towards the Dnieper.

In the late spring of 1943 the Germans, ‘scraping the barrel’ for trained formations, were still able to maintain some 200 German and thirty satellite divisions on the eastern front, intending to take their revenge.

By June 22nd, 1943, Soviet losses in the war, in killed and missing, were already 4.2 millions. Total British Empire losses at this time were 319,000 (92,000 of them killed); and four months later

total United States losses were estimated at 81,000. To the Soviet figures have to be added millions of Soviet citizens done to death in barbarous fashion, ranging from fusillades of thousands at a time, as at Odessa, to extermination in gas vans and burning alive.

On July 15th the Germans opened an attack from north and south upon the Kursk salient, a deep wedge into the centre of their huge front which was held by the Red Army. Thirty-eight divisions, seventeen of them armoured and three motorized, were launched on narrow sectors of the front, piling up 3,000 tanks, 2,000 planes and 6,000 guns for the assault. After minor advances, the offensive was brought to a dead stop by sheer mass destruction of the enemy forces eight days later. The 'mincing machine' operated as never before. A few days later the Soviet troops went over to the counter-offensive, capturing the German bases from which the attack had been launched, Oryol and Belgorod, on August 5th. The Germans had lost 120,000 men, and more than a quarter of their guns, in one month.

This victory was developed at once into a vast counter-offensive. From Voronezh the Soviet troops went on to the liberation of Kharkov and the Donetz coalfield. The southern forces at the end of August reoccupied the port of Taganrog and, advancing over the southern Ukraine to the Dnieper, which they reached towards the end of September, cut off large German forces in the Crimea. Novorossiisk and the eastern shores of the Black Sea were liberated. By a remarkable feat of combined operations, and completely to the surprise of the enemy, the Red Army forced the nearly half-mile wide Dnieper at various places along its middle course of 450 miles, using rafts and small boats, or swimming across under fire. By the beginning of November they were able to reoccupy the Ukrainian capital, Kiev, and the Belorussian city of Gomel. Further to the north the Red Army had on September 25th reoccupied Smolensk. Polish and Czechoslovak units fought that year for the first time under their own generals, brigaded with Soviet units under the Soviet Army commanders.

On November 6th Stalin was able to report that, on a front of 1,250 miles that year, the Red Army had gone forward, on an average, 200 to 250 miles. An area the size of Italy had been liberated, with a population approaching that of England and Wales. The Germans had in twelve months lost one-and-three-quarter million dead alone. The Red Army had shown that it could fight in summer as well as in winter – much to the surprise of friend and foe – just as

earlier it had astounded them by showing that it could take the offensive as well as fight in defence. Stalin called it a year of 'radical turning-point in the course of the war'.

In September, 1942, there had been no more than forty to forty-five German divisions in the whole of occupied Europe and facing the West. The total enemy forces in Libya had numbered fifteen divisions (four German and eleven Italian). When the battle of Stalingrad was at its height, in November, 1942, the Allies had landed in North Africa. During the height of the struggle in the Kursk salient, they landed in South Italy, and by September the defeats they had inflicted on the Italians had led to the overthrow of Mussolini. Although as early as May 1st, 1943, Stalin in his Order of the Day had spoken of the Allied operations in North Africa and the air attacks on Germany as the first 'joint blow' with the Soviet forces since the beginning of the war, it was still a fact that the Red Army, by fixing the overwhelming bulk of the German forces in the East, was continuing to relieve the pressure on the West. This situation, discussed at Teheran (November 28th to December 1st, 1943) by Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, led to the decision to open the Second Front in the West at last, the following summer.

With the knowledge of the decisive losses which the Germans had suffered at the hands of the Red Army alone, the Soviet Government and people were now convinced that they could finish off the German Army by their own strength (we shall see later how far that had been materially reinforced by Allied supplies), and could occupy the whole of Germany and liberate France, if necessary, unaided.

In ten mighty blows, echeloned over a huge front, the Red Army in 1944 drove the Germans back to their own territory and overthrew their satellites in Rumania, Hungary and Bulgaria.

In the first blow, inflicted in January, the Red Army completely smashed the German forces on the Leningrad front, captured the ancient Russian city of Novgorod and drove the enemy back towards the Baltic.

Hard on the heels of this offensive came, at the end of January, attacks in the Southern Ukraine which brought the Soviet forces to the river Pruth, boundary between the U.S.S.R. and Rumania (March 26th) and to the Carpathians, the boundary of Czechoslovakia, a few days later. At the beginning of April the Red Army entered Rumania.

In the third offensive, in April and May, the Soviet forces oc-

cupied the whole of the Crimea, thus depriving the Germans of a political as well as a military foothold on the Black Sea.

On June 6th the Leningrad front opened the fourth offensive against the Finns, breaking through to Vyborg within a fortnight, liberating Soviet territory to the north and forcing the Finns to sue for peace. They signed an armistice on September 19th.

In June the fifth offensive began, against the main German defences on the road to Berlin, in Belorussia and Lithuania. Vitebsk, the Belorussian capital Minsk, and the Lithuanian capital Vilnius, were occupied by the middle of July. Within a short time the Red Army had crossed the river Niemen and reached the frontier of East Prussia in the north, and Polish territory in the south. It was in July that the ill-fated Warsaw insurrection was launched, by the commander of Polish underground forces in the city, without prior consultation with the Soviet High Command,\* which was unable to break through to the city.

Immediately following came the sixth blow, at the Western Ukraine. At the end of July its main city Lvov was occupied, and after a protracted struggle the whole of Ukrainian territory was liberated by October 14th. A great part in this campaign, as in that of Belorussia, had been played by a vast partisan movement, in which the original local detachments had by now formed entire partisan divisions (there were 300,000 partisans in Belorussia alone), directed by a 'Central Staff of the Partisan Movement,' under one of the most famous Soviet marshals.

In August the seventh blow had been struck in south-west Ukraine, clearing the Moldavian Soviet Republic and occupying the Rumanian capital of Bucarest within a fortnight. The Fascist Government which had made Rumania an obedient tool in German hands was overthrown. The new Government cancelled Fascist legislation, concluded an armistice and declared war on Germany.

On September 5th the Soviet Government had declared war on Bulgaria on account of its long and persistent aid to Germany against the U.S.S.R., and within the next three days several of the main towns of Northern Bulgaria had been occupied. On September 9th the Bulgarian people, led by the underground Fatherland Front and its

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\* And without any 'incitement' by the Soviet radio to the city to rise, despite assertions to the contrary, after the event.

partisans – which had been courageously fighting the Germans for three years and had suffered tens of thousands killed in the struggle – rose in revolt. A democratic government of the Fatherland Front was set up. The new Government also called the people to war against Germany.

In September the eighth blow fell upon the forty German divisions holding the Baltic republics. By a series of successful operations the Red Army first cut off the Germans from East Prussia by breaking through to the Gulf of Riga, and then took in turn the Estonian capital of Tallinn and the Latvian capital Riga. Some thirty divisions of the enemy remained shut up in Latvia, to be disposed of at leisure.

The ninth blow, in October, was struck at Hungary, and simultaneously at the remaining German troops in Yugoslavia and the easternmost parts of Czechoslovakia, across the Carpathians, inhabited by Ukrainians. By the beginning of November, Belgrade and most of Transcarpathian Ukraine had been liberated. After further struggles in Hungary, Budapest was stormed on February 13th, 1945. A provisional government concluded an armistice, and declared war on Germany in its turn. The Yugoslav Army was enabled to capture 150,000 Germans, and equipment sufficient for 10 divisions was handed over to it.

The tenth blow was struck at the Germans in Northern Finland. They were driven out of Petsamo, the northern base from which Allied shipping had been harassed. The Soviet Army then proceeded, fighting all the way, into Norway, and on October 25th liberated the port of Kirkenes, from which the Norwegian authorities had taken ship in 1940. By agreement with the Norwegian Government signed the previous spring, Norwegian civil authorities were immediately set up. The Red Army gave practical aid to the Norwegian population in the shape of food supplies, clothing and reconstruction work.

Thus, in the course of 1944, the basic forces of the Germans had been broken and a vast territory of some 600,000 square miles between the Black Sea and the Arctic had been liberated. Since Stalingrad the Germans had been driven back 1,200 miles. On October 23rd troops of the Third Belorussian Front, commanded by Army-General Chemyakhovsky, invaded East Prussia.

From June 6th a second front in the West had at last come into being. Yet even in November, after five months of bitter fighting in France, there were still only seventy-five German divisions in the

West, as against 204 German and Hungarian divisions in the East. Part at least of the western divisions were composed of personnel from the older age-groups, and men who had been sent to France for rest from the Russian front, as their commander Rundstedt confessed later in interrogation. By June 22nd, 1944, while the Allied invasion of France was only being consolidated, and before the eastern campaigns of the year were half-way through, the Soviet Union had lost 5,300,000 soldiers killed or missing, while British and American losses were not much greater than they had been a year before.

Nineteen-forty-five saw the end of the great straggle. In January the Soviet forces in Poland, including by now a substantial Polish Army raised and equipped on Soviet territory during the war, freed Warsaw, Cracow, Lodz, and the Dombrowa coalfield. In East Prussia, as part of the same offensive, the age-old Junker strongholds of Insterburg, Tilsit, Tannenberg were occupied. While these troops reached the shores of the Gulf of Danzig and others went on into Pomerania and Brandenburg, others again occupied the great coal- and iron-working region of Silesia.

Only in 1948 was it revealed that the Soviet offensive, engaging 150 Soviet divisions, was advanced from January 20th to January 12th, 1945, in response to a direct and urgent appeal on January 6th to Stalin from Churchill, who was anxious about the German break-through in the Ardennes at the end of December. Churchill had asked Stalin to 'tell me whether we can count on a major Russian offensive on the Vistula front or elsewhere during January', in view of the 'very anxious' position in the West, where the battle was 'very heavy'. The very next day Stalin replied that, although low mists were hampering full use of Soviet superiority in artillery and aircraft, 'in view of the position of our Allies on the Western front, the headquarters of the Supreme Command has decided to complete preparations at a forced pace and, disregarding the weather, to launch wide-scale offensive operations against the Germans all along the central front, not later than the second half of January.' Churchill cabled back on January 9th saying he was 'most grateful' for Stalin's 'thrilling message' and concluding: 'May all good fortune rest upon your noble venture'. The very day the Soviet offensive opened, the Germans on the western front – including two tank armies – stopped their offensive, and many of them during the next few days were withdrawn and transferred to the east. By January 17th Churchill was able to cable thanks and congratulations on behalf of the British

Government, 'and from the bottom of my heart'.

In March the Soviet forces took Danzig, and broke a desperate attack by eleven tank divisions south-west of Budapest. In April the Soviet armies in Germany took Königsberg and Stettin, on the Baltic coast, and on April 16th, under the command of Marshal Zhukov, began a drive on Berlin with 22,000 guns and mortars, 5,000 planes and 4,000 tanks. They completed the encirclement of the city on April 25th – the same day that on the Elbe they linked forces with the British and American troops coming from the West – and began the final assault of the city. In the last stages of the battle the powers of destruction wielded by the Soviet Army reached stupendous dimensions – 41,000 guns and mortars, 8,400 planes and more than 6,300 powerful fast tanks.

Meanwhile, in Central Europe, the Slovak capital of Bratislava and Vienna had been liberated. At the very end of April, two Soviet infantry sergeants hoisted the Red Flag over the Reichstag; and on May 2nd the surviving Berlin garrison of over 130,000 men surrendered, raising the total captured during the siege of Berlin to well over 300,000.

Prague was liberated (May 9th) by a sudden dash of Soviet tanks through the night over the mountains of northern Czechoslovakia. On May 8th a delegation of the German High Command, headed by Von Keitel, had signed an act of unconditional surrender in the presence of the representatives of the four main Allies. In a special Order of the Day, the next morning (May 9th), Stalin was able to proclaim that the historic day of the final defeat of Germany had come, that the great sacrifices, incalculable privations and sufferings of the Soviet people during the war, the intensive work in the rear and at the front, had not been given in vain. The age-old struggle of the Slav peoples for their existence and independence had ended in victory over the German plunderers and tyranny. 'Henceforth over Europe will wave the great banner of freedom of the peoples and peace between the peoples'.

The material basis of Soviet victory had been laid entirely within the U.S.S.R. During the whole war the Soviet Union had received just over 16,000 aircraft from the Allies: in the last three years of the war alone it manufactured over 120,000. It had had somewhat over 10,000 tanks from Britain, Canada and the U.S.A.: from its own works, in the last three years, it had received more than 90,000 tanks. It had received from overseas less than 5,000 guns, and those an-



ti-aircraft guns only: it had manufactured more than 360,000 guns in its own works. While total supplies of shells from its Allies amounted to just forty millions, it manufactured over 775 millions itself. Throughout the war it received about 1,300 million cartridges from its Allies: it manufactured 7,400 millions in one year of the war alone.

In the winter offensive of 1941, the Red Army captured 33,000 German lorries. From the U.S.A. 8,500 were despatched – but many never arrived. In 1942 the U.S.A. sent 80,000 lorries (some were sunk) : but in the six months' fighting November, 1942– April, 1943, the Red Army captured 120,000 from the Germans.

Nor were the bulk of the Allied supplies sent at the most critical moment for Soviet industry – the months of November and December, 1941, when the war factories moved from the invaded western regions had not yet been set up again in the east, and the U.S.S.R. had lost territory in which before the war 63 per cent of all its coal output, 68 per cent of all its pig-iron, 58 per cent of all its steel, and 60 per cent of all its aluminium had been produced. Not more than one-sixth of all the supplies sent by Britain and the U.S.A. to the Soviet Union during the war arrived within the eighteen months from July, 1941, to December, 1942: the quantity delivered in the first six or eight months was infinitesimal.

In fact, reckoning all Allied supplies together – armaments, munitions, some 400,000 lorries, other machinery, metals and food-stuffs together – their total volume amounted to no more than 4 per cent of the amount produced in Soviet factories and works. Thus, while the Soviet Union was grateful for whatever supplies were sent it in furtherance of its war effort, its citizens could have no doubt but that, without a single cargo from their Allies, they could have defeated Germany unaided.

Against this view it has been urged that it ignores the allegedly decisive effect of Anglo-American air bombing, in interfering with German war production, distracting the attentions of the German air force and disorganizing communications. In fact, however, total German production of aircraft and tanks, as well as total war production, went on increasing until the summer of 1944 – and faster than British. It was only in 1944 that German communications began to be seriously disorganized. And the main Soviet victories were won when the bulk of the German air force was still on the eastern front – in 1943 (Germany manufactured under 80,000 aircraft in 1942-4,

against 120,000 in the U.S.S.R.).\*

It remains to note that throughout the war the Soviet Union had maintained very large forces and war supplies on its eastern borders, and Japan had kept more than half its army along the Soviet frontier. The Allies had agreed that it would not serve their cause if the Soviet Union were involved in war with Japan, so long as Germany remained unconquered, and had subsequently agreed that the U.S.S.R. would intervene in the Far East three months after any German capitulation. Accordingly, on August 8th the Soviet Government declared itself at war with Japan. On the following day three main armies crossed the Soviet frontier, one of them in combination with the army of the Mongolian People's Republic. By the 23rd the principal cities of Manchuria had been occupied, and after a series of stubborn battles the Japanese Kwangtung army surrendered. Even after Japanese unconditional capitulation had been signed on an American battleship on September 2nd, Japanese troops went on fighting against the Red Army. In all, the Soviet forces took prisoner in battle nearly 600,000 Japanese troops.

On June 22nd, 1945, thirteen of the older age-groups of the Red Army had been demobilized. After the end of fighting in Japan, another ten groups were immediately released (September 26th).

## 2. BEHIND THE FRONT

On the field of production and distribution the Soviet Union's war effort was no less stupendous.

The Germans had occupied by far the most economically developed parts of the U.S.S.R. In addition to the 33 per cent of all Soviet industrial output which had been produced in occupied territory, another 33 per cent were in the war zones. Vast agricultural resources were also lost or directly threatened in the same way: by November, 1941, alone, before the great German drive into the Ukraine the following year, the Soviet Union had lost territory producing nearly 40 per cent of its pre-war output of grain, and containing the same percentage of its large homed cattle, as well as 60 per cent of its pigs and 84 per cent of its output of sugar. Hence, immediately war broke out, millions of people, huge quantities of

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\* Cf. Blackett, *Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy*, ch. 2.

foodstuff reserves of all kinds, over a million trucks carrying the equipment of 1,360 large works, great herds of cattle and sheep, began to move by rail, water, road and across open country into the rear. No such vast transfer of resources in organized fashion had ever been effected in the past. By March, 1942, the eastern areas of the U.S.S.R. alone were producing as much war material as the entire Soviet Union had been producing in June, 1941. This was only possible thanks to skilful planning and the still more remarkable devotion of the workers, old and new, in the re-erected and already existing factories.

Other problems of war economy were similarly complicated. The eastern areas of the U.S.S.R. were most thinly supplied with railways. Large stretches of line had to be built in the course of the war itself- over 6,000 miles in all – in addition to a total length of more than 15,000 miles of railway which were restored upon the liberation of occupied territories in 1943 and 1944. The shortage of labour produced by the vast mobilization required to fight an army like that of the Germans also necessitated special measures. Compulsory paid overtime of three hours a day was introduced in all industries; and short-term industrial training of unskilled and semi-skilled workers expanded at an astonishing rate – in special training courses within the factories, at the trade schools for youth already mentioned, and by means of individual apprenticeship. As a result, 3.2 million workers were trained in 1941, 4.3 millions in 1942 and 5.7 millions in 1943.

In order to ensure adequate grain output, the minimum number of working days required by law from individual members of collective farms – ranging from 80 days to 150 days per year according to circumstances – was increased by some 40 per cent in April, 1942. In addition, very large numbers of townspeople not engaged in industry were directed into agricultural labour in the summer months; in 1943, out of 7.6 millions who were directed, half went into the countryside. As a result of these measures, and of the way in which the collective farmers tackled their war duties – under the leadership chiefly of women – cultivated areas in the unoccupied zones increased, compared with the previous year, by five-and-a-quarter million acres in 1942, sixteen million acres in 1943 and twenty million acres in 1944. Whereas in the first World War the Tsarist Government, operating through capitalist companies, had been able to buy 22.5 million tons of grain from the countryside, and in the years

of Allied invasion (1918-21) the Soviet Government, by methods of requisitioning, had secured no more than fifteen million tons, the Soviet authorities between 1941 and 1944, using the method of bulk purchase by State organization from the organized peasantry, were able to buy seventy million tons of grain. The same in principle holds true for other essential foodstuffs and raw materials.

There was an important result of these achievements in production, and of State economic planning which continued throughout the war. The Government was able to maintain retail prices of all basic rationed goods (except for alcoholic liquor and tobacco) and also for its main public services like gas, water and electricity, unaltered throughout the war. The people underwent severe privations at various times, but on the whole the supply of essential foodstuffs was maintained to nearly seventy-seven million people, registered for rationing in one way or another during the war (for the country population only manufactured goods were rationed). In 1944 State 'commercial shops' and restaurants were opened, in which available surpluses of various rationed foodstuffs and other mass consumption commodities were disposed of to those earning higher wages (particularly skilled workers in industry, superior officers, technicians, artists and professors) at much higher prices. This disposed of quantities which would have added very little to the general ration if distributed among the population, and served at the same time to draw back into the Treasury large sums of currency paid out to the higher grades of worker. A certain amount of speculation, however, also took place, on the part of some townsfolk and many peasants, who disposed of small quantities of surplus produce either through the collective farm markets or by direct deliveries at the back door. The quantities of currency accumulated in private hands in this way could not be dealt with until after the war.

As a result of the high degree of economic organization, however, there was no such disastrous financial crisis as had marked the first World War in Russia – when the rouble fell in purchasing power enormously – and also the period of the Allied invasion – when it fell to one thirteen-thousandth of its previous value. The finances of the U.S.S.R. in the second World War remained fundamentally stable. This was in spite of the fact that the volume of currency had increased by 1944 some two-and-a-half times (as against fourteen times in the period between 1914 and 1917). There was a certain deficit in Budget revenues in the first years of the war, amounting to

10 per cent of total expenditure in 1942 and 4 per cent in 1943. By 1944 the Budget had been balanced, and the following year war-time deficits began to be wiped out. Yet even here the system of Socialist planning had made itself felt: part of the deficit every year on ordinary revenues was covered by the disposal of Government stocks of raw materials and goods of all kinds, carefully laid up as a reserve fund in years of peace.

The 'war economy plans', which were adopted from the fourth quarter of 1941 onwards, had to cope not only with the problems of winning the war, but also with the problems of restoring factories, buildings, agriculture and communications directly any area began to be liberated. Thus, the Moscow coalfield in 1941 had been completely occupied by the Germans, its main pits flooded and destroyed, and its villages burned to the ground. On the eve of the German invasion, its output had been 35,000 tons of coal a day; in January, 1942, immediately after the Germans had been cleared out, the daily production was no more than 590 tons. By May the output had been raised to 22,000 tons a day, and by October of the same year the pre-war output level had been regained. The following year, output was increased to more than 50,000 tons a day.

Such successes required not only self-sacrificing work but also careful planning of supplies, new equipment and labour. In 1943, the first general reconstruction plan, for ten regained regions, was published on August 22nd. It provided for the building or repairing of 326,000 houses, the supplying of nearly a million head of cattle to the peasantry, the reconstruction of railway lines and stations, the erection of factories producing prefabricated houses, and all other forms of goods required to restore minimum living standards for the millions who still had to exist in dug-outs. The plan was more than carried out by the end of the year. All through 1943 and 1944, State plans had to provide for vast repair work in mines and blast furnaces, power-stations and other factories, over the huge belts of devastated territory left behind by the Germans, as well as for setting up State machine and tractor stations once again to help the collective farms, which the peasants rapidly began to restore.

In all, during the three decisive years of the war (1942-4), while the Soviet Government built and set going in the eastern unoccupied zones of the U.S.S.R. 2,250 large industrial undertakings, its economic plans secured the rebuilding of over 6,000 industrial establishments in the liberated areas. It must be remarked that this was

only a fraction of the nearly 32,000 factories and works completely or partially destroyed and plundered by the Germans on Soviet territory.

In the fulfilment of its economic plans the Soviet Government was greatly helped, now as before the war, by Socialist emulation. Foreign journalists who were afterwards to write, many of them, a very different story about the spirit of the Soviet people, were profoundly impressed at the time by these signs of labour enthusiasm. One outstanding case may be mentioned. On January 1st, 1942, a letter signed by one million workmen, technicians, employees and collective farmers of the Urals was sent to Stalin, pledging various percentage increases in their output of arms, munitions and food-stuff's in the next six months. It had been discussed, improved and adopted at hundreds of factory and village meetings. A further letter on July 25th of the same year, signed this time by 1,275,000, reported the fulfilment of their pledge and the adoption of a still higher programme of increases for the coming six months.

To take another example: in March, 1943, engineering workers collected about 20,000 suggestions for increasing output, and 8,000 of these proved feasible and were adopted. Throughout the war years groups of workers and whole factories went on challenging one another to produce more and better goods. By 1944, in spite of the fact that the vast industrial labour force of the Soviet Union had been considerably diluted by the influx of women, young people and unmobilized collective farmers, between 80 and 90 per cent of workers in the armaments industries were engaged in Socialist emulation of various kinds. More than a third of them were Stakhanovites. Young factory workers played a particularly outstanding part. Half a million of them were organized in 70,000 'front-line brigades', i.e. in teams pledged voluntarily to fulfil more than their output quotas, as devotedly and efficiently as if they were in the front line.

Never had Soviet economy undergone such a stern test as it did in these four years, and never had it emerged so victorious. In some respects it was even stronger than it had been before, particularly by the railway developments mentioned above, and also by the notable industrial development of the eastern regions of the U.S.S.R. These former colonies became real arsenals for the Red Army.

And yet, when the cost of German invasion came to be calculated – the enormous number of factories wrecked, nearly half the

State farms and machine and tractor stations destroyed, 98,000 out of the 236,000 collective farms wrecked and plundered of all their property, the tens of thousands of railway stations, hospitals, clinics, schools and libraries burned down or blown up, the millions of horses, cattle, sheep and pigs killed or driven off by the Germans, the 4,700,000 dwelling houses they destroyed in town and country – it was a fearful burden with which the Soviet peoples were left. Not reckoning the more than 7,000,000 dead, or those losses which could not be calculated exactly in price, the net value of direct destruction wrought by the Germans was 128,000 millions of United States dollars. This was two-thirds of all the national property of the U.S.S.R. in the occupied areas before the war.

The total claim for reparations made by the U.S.S.R. in 1945, on account of this destruction, was 10,000 million dollars – some 8 per cent of the total damage. In fact, the amount of industrial equipment secured by the U.S.S.R. subsequently as reparations was no more than 0.6 per cent – less than a 150th part – of the ruin and desolation spread by the Germans, and directly calculable in cash terms.

Among the damage which could not be calculated was that wrought by the frightful mass atrocities of the Nazis and their soldiery – by hundreds of thousands, be it noted – against the Soviet civil population. In 1942 four separate official statements by the Soviet Government – in January, April, October and December – had enumerated the various types of diabolical cruelty of which millions of Soviet people were the witnesses, and in many cases the victims. On November 3rd, 1942, an Extraordinary Commission for the Ascertainings of Nazi Atrocities was established, under the chairmanship of the Secretary of the Central Council of Trade Unions, and including one of the highest authorities of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Chief Surgeon of the Red Army and several writers, scientists and other public figures. In 1943 there was a further record of Nazi atrocities published in April, and in December the first public trial of war criminals was held in Kharkov. Three Germans and one of their Russian tools were tried for mass extermination of thousands of men, women and children by starvation, shooting, gas-vans, and burning alive in their villages. The accused, who had counsel and had full freedom to speak for themselves, in the presence of foreign representatives, were found guilty and sentenced to death. They were publicly hanged before a huge crowd on December 19th.

For the Leningrad region alone, at the end of the war, a list of 231

villages which had been almost completely burned to the ground or blown up by the Germans during their years of occupation was published, with circumstantial accounts of hundreds of Soviet citizens shot, hanged and tortured to death, women raped and mutilated, Communists torn asunder by armoured carriers and crushed under tanks, people turned out in hundreds in mid-winter over a wide area, in which all villages were simultaneously set on fire so that there was the least possible chance of finding shelter, and enormous quantities of property of all kinds looted, collectively or singly, by the German soldiery.

When the Commission presented its final report on German atrocities, on September 13th, 1945, it was as a result of painstaking compilation and sifting of evidence in which over seven million workers, collective farmers, technicians and scientists took part. Apart from the demolitions and destructions already mentioned, far too numerous to summarize adequately in these pages, it may be noted that the Germans burned down or otherwise demolished 82,000 elementary and secondary schools, over 600 research institutes and several hundred institutions of higher education. They carried off vast quantities of equipment, archives, manuscripts, and other property from these and other places of learning. In the schools and public libraries alone they destroyed more than 100 million volumes. They blew up, after stripping bare of all their valuable scientific equipment, the two famous Russian observatories at Pulkovo, near Leningrad, and Simeiz, in the Crimea. Many hundreds of museum and art galleries, and 44,000 theatres and clubs, were destroyed by the Germans. They also looted the former Imperial palaces near Leningrad, and desecrated the Pushkin and Tolstoy museums, at the country seats which had once been the homes of the great writers, using furniture, books and rare manuscripts as fuel. They did the same at the house of the composer Tchaikovsky. Twelfth-century churches and monasteries at Novgorod and Chernigov, monuments of ancient Slav architecture before the coming of the Mongols, the world-famous Church of the Assumption at the Kiev monastery built in 1073, and many hundreds of other churches of all Christian denominations, as well as synagogues, were levelled to the ground.

These mass outrages against humanity and culture, of which only the faintest picture can be conveyed by these few examples, were all the more shocking because they were in complete contrast to the



efforts made in the Soviet Union to maintain and expand a high level of culture in spite of the adverse conditions of war. A graphic picture of these efforts has been given by several writers who saw the Soviet Union during the war – for example, Alexander Werth in *Leningrad* or Margaret Wettlin in *Russian Road*. In 1942, the most difficult year of the war, March saw the first performance of the Seventh Leningrad Symphony of Shostakovich and the first performance of Schiller's *William Tell* by an Ukrainian theatre which had found refuge in Kazakhstan. In April there was a three days' Shakespeare commemoration festival in Moscow, and a Darwin exhibition, organized by the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., at the Kirgizian capital of Frunze. In March, 1943, 500 scientists, writers, inventors, actors, painters, musicians and other gifted men and women were awarded Stalin prizes. In October the same year an important educational reform – the separation of boys and girls in secondary schools between the ages of twelve and eighteen – was initiated. That autumn also saw the establishment of official and friendly relations between the Soviet State and the churches, beginning with the Russian Orthodox Church, which had been thwarted in the first years after the revolution owing to the intervention in politics of Patriarch Tikhon. The Russian Orthodox Church elected a new Patriarch on September 12th, 1943, and the Moslems of the U.S.S.R., assembled in congress, a President-Mufti, on October 15th.

During the years since Patriarch Tikhon's abjuring political struggle against the Soviet Government, a gradual reforming process had taken place within the Russian Orthodox Church. In 1927, Archbishop Sergius, *locum tenens* of the Patriarchate, had enjoined Orthodox priests to take an oath of allegiance. In 1929, however, many of the older village clergy (frequently relatives of the kulaks) took an active part in resisting collectivisation; and the Government retaliated with amendments to the law on Church and State, prohibiting any religious propaganda (apart from Church services, training schools and seminaries, and Church conferences). In 1930, nevertheless, special measures were taken to prevent vexatious closing of churches; other relaxations followed; and in 1936 the new Constitution enfranchised priests for the first time since the Revolution. By 1940 there were in the U.S.S.R. 30,000 religious communities, 8,000 churches of various denominations, and 60,000 officiating priests. Scores of thousands of foreign tourists who visited the U.S.S.R. in these years were amazed to discover that religion was not persecuted,

as they had been led to believe it was.

That year also, in December, the 'International' ceased to be the official Soviet anthem, and reverted to its original role of a Party and working-class hymn. It did not reflect 'the basic changes that have taken place in our country as a result of the success of the Soviet system, and does not express the Socialist nature of the Soviet State', explained the edict. Indeed, it was no longer to slumbering 'starvelings', or to 'criminals of want', that an appeal was needed: 'reason in revolt' had thundered loudly from 1917 to 1921, and its victory had built up a state of society which masses, 'servile' in the olden days, now knew they were defending as their own.

One tremendous political fact bore witness to the morale of the Soviet people. In the first and most dangerous year of the war, 750,000 joined the Communist Party – three times as many as in the last peacetime year, and many of them soldiers at the front. From 1941 to May, 1945, the membership rose from 3,876,000 to 5,700,000, despite the loss of hundreds of thousands in battle. To be a Communist in wartime meant taking the most arduous and perilous jobs. Thus the traditions of 1919 had grown stronger still.

In 1944 the Supreme Soviet at its January session drew an historic conclusion from the great economic, social and political transformations which the constituent Republics of the Union had undergone since they had established it twenty-one years before. A decree introduced by Molotov restored their right to form separate Foreign Offices, conducting foreign relations directly with their neighbours beyond the Soviet frontier, within the framework of the general foreign policy of the Union. This continued to be handled by the Union People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. Their industrial and educational advances, and the appearance of large contingents of intelligentsia in all the sixteen Union Republics, made it possible to establish separate People's Commissariats for Defence in each, with the right to train and equip their own armies. In fact, Estonian and Latvian Army Corps, under their own generals, and a Lithuanian National Division, took part in the liberation of their respective countries.

There were some dark spots, however, on the general picture of unity of the numerous nations, large and small, making up the U.S.S.R. On the eve of the German attack, it transpired that Nazi agents, particularly active among the Volga Germans – descendants of a colony established in the 18th century, and maintained in privileged condi-

tions by Tsardom, with a high percentage of kulaks among its peasantry, using cheap labour of seasonal migrants from the poorer Russian provinces, until 1934 – had met with little resistance from the population. During the war the same occurred among the older Crimean Tartars, whom the German forces recruited in large numbers into their auxiliary units. The Tartars were a minority in the peninsula (some 25 per cent), but had been given the political privilege of a majority, by the establishment of an Autonomous Republic, in recognition of their historic past; and some effort had been made, in this essentially holiday region, to develop their agriculture and industry. A similar disconcerting tendency showed itself in another small national group, one of dozens scattered in the Caucasus valleys – the 500,000 Checheno-Ingushi, with their centre at Grozny. Their rise from the status of two separate autonomous regions, formed in 1922 and 1924, to that of an Autonomous Republic in 1936, had evidently not been sufficient to overcome the heritage of a century of Tsarist oppression. In all three cases the peoples concerned were resettled elsewhere in the U.S.S.R., with land allotments and State economic aid, and their Autonomous Republics were abolished.

In July, 1944, a measure was taken to try and counteract the fearful consequences of the vast slaughtering of Soviet citizens by the invaders, and the gigantic losses suffered by the Soviet forces. An Edict encouraged motherhood by the increasing of child allowances, the extension of paid maternity leave to eleven weeks, the granting of regular monthly allowances to unmarried mothers (or free maintenance of their children if they preferred), the institution of special decorations for mothers who successfully brought up large families, and the tightening of divorce regulations.

All through the war, new theatres (ninety in all), new branches of the Academy of Sciences (or new separate Academies) in the various republics constituting the Union, new schools and research institutes, went on springing up throughout Soviet territory. Hardly had the last guns fallen into silence in Germany when, on June 12th, newspapers, magazines, public lectures and ceremonial sessions of literary institutions, reminded Soviet citizens that it was the seventy-fifth anniversary of the death of Charles Dickens – a favourite author of the Soviet people – and, four days later, scholars and research workers from many countries gathered with their Soviet colleagues in Leningrad for the 220th anniversary session of the Academy of Sciences.

### 3. STALIN'S LEADERSHIP

Even this brief account of the Soviet Union during the war would be lacking an essential element without some survey of the main political statements made by Stalin. As usual, they were marked by a plain, blunt, earthy quality, a compelling and realistic fixing of the mind on essentials, which the Soviet man in the street appreciated because they told him precisely what he wanted to know. Stalin's public statements in war-time were a mobilizing and encouraging factor, with all their harsh realism, which it would be difficult to overestimate.

The broadcast speech of July 3rd, 1941, has already been mentioned. Stalin pointed to the temporary superiority of the fully-mobilized German Army over Soviet troops who had still to effect their mobilization and move up to the frontiers. The main forces of the Red Army would come into action before long. The Non-Aggression Pact with Germany of 1939 had secured eighteen months for preparations 'to repulse Fascist Germany should she risk an attack'. Now it was necessary for the Soviet people to 'reorganize all their work on a new war-time footing' – providing all-round assistance to the Red Army, strengthening its rear, fighting panic-mongers, cowards and spies, withdrawing every possible piece of valuable property in the event of retreat, and organizing partisan warfare in the enemy rear.

On November 6th, 1941, Stalin gave the usual anniversary speech, which this year became a survey of four months of war. He announced that the U.S.S.R. had already lost 350,000 killed and 378,000 missing. But the Germans' *blitzkrieg* had failed, because their calculations that the Soviet Union would be isolated, that dissensions would break out among its peoples and that the Red Army would prove weak, had all been mistaken. The reasons for Soviet reverses were two – that 'the Germans are not compelled to divide their forces and to wage war on two fronts', owing to the absence of British and American armies from the Continent, and that the Germans still had more tanks and aircraft than the Red Army. Britain and the U.S.A. had recently promised help in this respect; but Soviet factories must produce ever-increasing quantities of these and other war materials. Stalin proclaimed that the war aims of the U.S.S.R. would not include the seizure of foreign territories or subjugation of foreign peoples.

In his Order of the Day to the Soviet armed forces on February

23rd, 1942, Stalin referred to the victorious counter-offensive of the winter, but underlined that 'it would be unpardonable short-sightedness to rest content with the successes achieved'. Stalin firmly declared that the Red Army 'does not and cannot feel racial hatred for other peoples, including the German people.' Its aim was to liberate Soviet soil, and that would probably lead to the destruction of Hitler's clique: but this clique should not be identified with the German people or the German State. 'The experience of history indicates that Hitlers come and go, but the German people and the German State remain'.

In a further Order of the Day, on May 1st that year, Stalin spoke of the developing struggle of the enslaved peoples of Europe in the German rear, and the strengthening of the Red Army as it gained experience and became convinced that 'idle talk about the invincibility of the German troops is a fable invented by Fascist propagandists'. It was now not so much weapons that were lacking – thanks to the ever-increasing flow from the Soviet factories – but 'the ability to utilize to the full against the enemy the first-class equipment with which our Motherland supplies the Red Army'.

On October 3rd, Stalin replied to some questions put to him by the Moscow correspondent of the Associated Press. In these he stressed the fact that the possibility of a Second Front in Western Europe occupied 'a place of first-rate importance' in Soviet estimates of the situation, and that 'as compared with the aid which the Soviet Union is giving to the Allies, by drawing upon itself the main forces of the German Fascist armies, the aid of the Allies to the Soviet Union has so far been little effective'.

In his anniversary speech of November 6th, 1942, Stalin reported that, in spite of war-time difficulties, the factories, collective farms and State farms were now fulfilling their obligations to the people and to the Red Army, and slackers were becoming fewer. 'Taking advantage of the absence of a Second Front in Europe', Stalin twice declared in his survey of the military situation, the Germans had been able to take the initiative and pierce the front in the south-western direction. If there had been a Second Front diverting sixty German and twenty satellite divisions, the German Army would have been on the verge of disaster. Instead, the Red Army found twice as many troops facing its front as in the first World War. There would be a Second Front 'sooner or later', because the Allies 'need it no less than we do.' Stalin then proceeded to contrast the respective pro-

grammes of action of the Italo-German coalition and of the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition, and to show that one was leading to the growing isolation of the aggressors in a Europe 'burning with hatred', while the other was 'progressively winning millions of sympathizers ready to join in the fighting against Hitler's tyranny'. He refuted those who doubted that the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition could achieve victory because of different ideologies. The war of liberation which the Soviet Union was fighting had three tasks, said Stalin – 'to destroy the Hitlerite State and its inspirers ... to destroy Hitler's army and its leaders ... to destroy the hated "New Order in Europe" and to punish its builders'.

In his Order of the Day to the Soviet forces the following morning Stalin underlined that it was the Soviet system which had stood the test of the war: 'Socialist industry, the collective farm system, the friendship of the peoples of our country, the Soviet State, have displayed their stability and invincibility.'

Less than a week later Stalin sent another reply to the A.P. correspondent, who had approached him on the subject of the newly-announced Allied landings in Africa. Stalin said it was 'an outstanding fact of major importance, demonstrating the growing might of the armed forces of the Allies.' It was too early to say whether it had 'been effective in relieving immediate pressure on the Soviet Union'; but by awakening France from her lethargy, and making it possible to begin putting Italy out of action, 'it creates the prerequisites for the organization of a Second Front in Europe nearer to Germany's vital centres, which will be of decisive importance for organizing victory over the Hitlerite tyranny.' On February 23rd, 1943, the Red Army was celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of its foundation, after the great victory of Stalingrad and in the midst of an advance 'in hard winter conditions' over a front of 1,500 kilometres. The balance of forces at the front had changed, said Stalin in his Order of the Day, and gave figures of the gigantic German losses in material and manpower. But once again there must be no toleration of conceit. Red Army men must remember that 'millions of Ukrainians still languish under the yoke of the German enslavers. The German invaders and their vassals still lord it in Belorussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, in Moldavia, in the Crimea, in Karelia'.

By the time May Day had come round again, the victories at the Soviet front had been reinforced by the Allied routing of the Axis troops in North Africa, 'while the valiant Anglo-American air forces

strike shattering blows at the military and industrial centres of Germany and Italy' – Stalin added in his Order of the Day on May 1st, 1943. This was only a 'foreshadowing' of the formation of a Second Front, however, and more powerful blows were needed for complete victory over the Hitlerite brutes.

On May 4th he replied to Ralph Parker, *The Times* correspondent, who had asked whether the Soviet Government wished to see 'a strong and independent Poland' after the war. 'Unquestionably it does', answered Stalin, adding that, if the Polish people wished, there could be an alliance for mutual assistance against the Germans after the war.

The situation had taken a decisive turn for the better when Stalin spoke once again at the anniversary celebrations on November 6th, 1943. The great victories of the Red Army that summer had liberated nearly two-thirds of all occupied territory, and inflicted immense losses on the Germans. Fascist Germany 'is facing disaster', Stalin proclaimed. In his tribute of thanks to the various sections of Soviet society, he underlined that 'during the war the Party has increased its kinship with the people, has established still closer links with the wide masses of the working people'. Allied help, by military operations in the Mediterranean, air bombing of Germany and regular supplies of various armaments and war materials, had 'considerably facilitated the successes of our summer campaign'. The present Allied operations could not yet be regarded as a Second Front, 'but still it is something in the nature of a Second Front'. If a real Second Front in Europe were opened it would considerably hasten victory. This was re-emphasized in his Order to the troops the following morning, which called for 'blows dealt from the West by the main forces of the Allies.' He told the Red Army that, in addition to the endless stream of supplies flowing to the front, successful restoration of the liberated areas was in progress. 'Factories, mills, mines and railways are being restarted. State and collective farms are being restored and the resources of the liberated areas are being enlisted to serve the front.'

In his Order of February 23rd, 1944, Stalin was able to report that nearly three-quarters of the occupied territory had now been won back, although 'the main forces of Germany are still engaged on one front against the Soviet Union' which, fighting single-handed, had inflicted 'decisive defeats' on the German armies. Nevertheless the Hitlerites were 'resisting with the ferocity of the damned'. There was no room for arrogance or complacency. All ranks and units of the

Red Army should study the battle experience of the most advanced among them.

By May Day the Red Army had reached the Soviet frontiers over a stretch of 250 miles. Stalin proclaimed in his Order of the Day that 'the wounded German beast must be pursued close upon its tracks and finished off in its own lair'. In doing so the Red Army would deliver from German bondage 'our brothers the Poles and the Czechoslovaks, and the other peoples allied to us in Western Europe'. This required the combined blow from East and West which Stalin knew was shortly to be delivered.

He paid tribute in an interview on June 13th, 1944, to the Anglo-American forcing of the Channel on a large scale and the invasion of Northern France, which he said history would record 'as an achievement of the highest order'. The history of warfare 'knows no other similar undertaking in the breadth of its conception, in its giant dimensions and the mastery of its performance'. The Allies had succeeded where Napoleon and Hitler had suffered fiascos.

This tribute was repeated in his address of November 6th, 1944, when the German aggressor 'squeezed in a vice between two fronts', had proved, Stalin said, unable to withstand the combined blows, and had been driven back to his frontiers.

Stalin spoke at some length on the economic foundations of victory – 'the Socialist system born in the October Revolution'. The strength of Soviet patriotism lay in the fact 'that it is founded not upon racial or nationalist prejudices, but on profound loyalty and devotion of the people to its Soviet Motherland, and brotherly partnership of the working people of all the nations of our country ... Soviet patriotism does not divide, on the contrary, it welds into a single fraternal family all the nations and nationalities of our country'. Stalin asserted for the Soviet people the claim that 'by its self-sacrificing struggle it has saved the civilization of Europe from the Fascist savages'. Preparations for organizing security after the war, in the conference of the three Great Powers at Dumbarton Oaks, had revealed some differences; but these did not go beyond what was tolerable in the interests of the unity of the Great Powers. 'The surprising thing is not that differences exist, but that they are so few'. Vitally important and long-term interests were the foundation for the alliance of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the U.S.A. Germany, said Stalin, would of course try and recover from defeat; history had shown that 'a short period of twenty or thirty years' was enough for



this. The creation of a new international organization for the defence of peace, with the necessary armed forces and the right to use them in case of necessity, could prevent the repetition of German aggression. But Stalin concluded:

Can one reckon upon the actions of such an international organization proving sufficiently effective? They will be effective if the Great Powers who have borne on their shoulders the main burden of the war against Hitlerite Germany will continue to act in the future in a spirit of unanimity and agreement. They will not be effective if this essential condition is infringed.

In his Order next morning, Stalin congratulated the Soviet forces on the fact that 'the Soviet State frontier, treacherously violated by the Hitlerite hordes on June 22nd, 1941, has been restored in its entirety, from the Black Sea to the Barents Sea'. He announced that 'the Red Army and the armies of our Allies have taken up their positions of departure for the decisive offensive against the vital centres of Germany.'

Seven months later Stalin was able to make his victory broadcast on May 9th, 1945. Germany had signed the act of unconditional surrender, and that morning 'the German troops began to lay down their arms and surrender to our troops *en masse*'.

That statement, like every Order of the Day throughout the war, ended in the invocation of 'eternal glory to the heroes who fell in the struggle against the enemy and gave their lives for the freedom and happiness of our peoples!'

The memory of those millions of Soviet dead in the war, exceeding more than twelve times the dead of Great Britain and the United States combined, was and remains by far the most important factor in understanding the foreign policy of the Soviet Government during the war years, to which we now turn.

#### 4. FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1941-2

As far as the mass of the people in the Allied countries was concerned, this was well understood. Never, in all probability, in the history of mankind has there been such a spontaneous and enormous outburst of gratitude and sympathy towards a suffering nation as that which occurred in Great Britain and the occupied countries of Western Europe – and even in the United States of America – during

the autumn and winter months of 1941- 2. The feeling of admiration was made all the sharper because the British people knew that the reason why they were spared another ordeal of mass bombardments from the air was that the main striking force of the Luftwaffe was concentrated in the East. The peoples of occupied Europe very soon saw the best divisions of the occupying German armies withdrawn and replaced by convalescent, or training, or over-age units. Events gave the lie to the widespread belief in Whitehall and Washington that the Red Army could only hold out for a few weeks.

Innumerable examples could be quoted of the clearness with which the common people, particularly in Great Britain, understood these things. The programmes of the 'Anglo-Soviet weeks' organized on the almost simultaneous initiative of well-wishers at Cambridge and Glasgow, which swept Great Britain like a tidal wave from September, 1941, onwards, are one reminder of the unanimity with which business men and workmen, the religious of all denominations, political parties of every colour – with the notorious exception in many cases of the local Labour Parties, acting on strict instructions from their National Executive Committee – scholars and writers, young people at school and in the forces, joined in these tributes and these reflections. It was the writer's frequent experience to hear them uttered from the public platform, and to be told of them by unknown, ordinary men and women at every turn.

Particularly impressive and moving were some of the expressions of opinion made in private. 'You can't mistake the character of the war in Russia' said one very high-ranking officer of the R.A.F., bearing one of the names most distinguished in the organization of the Battle of Britain the previous year, to the present writer in October, 1941. 'Such a war can only be fought with the heart of the people. It's clear to me, and to all of us, that our papers have systematically told us lies for many years about the character of the Red Army and its strength. But what I want you to tell me is, haven't they been telling us lies about the nature of the Soviet system itself? I don't believe that a system of tyranny could produce such a people or such a struggle'.

The *Manchester Guardian* itself said as much on September 15th, 1941, when it wrote: 'The behaviour of Russia has given most people a new insight into Russian politics ... A people which can so exhibit its mettle compels some revision of the judgments passed by the West on its institutions'. It recalled the words of Fox about the

strength of democracy as proved by the French Revolution, and said: 'A people that can make the kind of war that Russia has been making for thirteen weeks possesses the inspiration that Fox found in democracy'.

In saying so, the newspaper was not doing more than echoing a profound feeling of the British people as a whole. On February 23rd, 1942, it published a letter from the Bishop of Bradford and many other signatories, addressed to the War Cabinet and dealing with the experience of those who had to do public speaking, particularly in the war factories. The only reference that immediately evoked enthusiastic applause, they wrote, was a reference to Russia. Why? Not because many in the audience were Communists, but because here was a supreme war effort that they could understand, 'a people fighting and toiling heroically for all they had created and owned themselves'.

Relying upon the compelling force of such popular feelings, as well as upon that of common interests, the Soviet Government during the first twelve months of the war concluded a series of agreements with other governments at war with Nazi Germany. On July 12th, 1941, there was an agreement for joint action with Great Britain. On the 18th there was an agreement with the Czechoslovak Government in London, providing in addition for an exchange of Ministers and the formation of Czechoslovak military units, under their own commander, in the territory of the U.S.S.R. A similar agreement was signed with the Polish Government in London on July 30th, including furthermore a declaration by the Soviet Government that it regarded the Soviet-German Treaties of 1939 regarding territorial changes in Poland as having lost their validity, and the repudiation by the Polish Government of any anti-Soviet agreement with any third Power. A military agreement was concluded with the Polish Command on August 14th. Two days later an Anglo-Soviet agreement was signed in Moscow for commodity exchanges between the two countries, for a £10 millions credit at 3 per cent for five years by Britain to the U.S.S.R., and for clearing arrangements. On September 24th, at the Inter-Allied Conference in London, the Soviet Ambassador proclaimed the agreement of his Government with the Roosevelt-Churchill declaration known as the Atlantic Charter, underlining that 'the Soviet Union defends the right of every nation to the independence and territorial integrity of its country, and its right to establish such a social order and to choose such a form of govern-

ment as it deems opportune and necessary, for the better promotion of its economic and cultural prosperity’.

In an exchange of letters between the Soviet Ambassador, Maisky, and General de Gaulle in London on September 27th, the Soviet Government recognized him as ‘the leader of all Free Frenchmen, wherever they may be, who have rallied around him in support of the cause of the Allies’. Maisky emphasized the Soviet Government’s determination after victory ‘to assure the full restoration of the independence and greatness of France’. On the same day, in Moscow, a military agreement was signed by the Soviet and Czechoslovak High Commands. From September 29th to October 1st a conference in Moscow between Lord Beaverbrook, A. V. Harriman and V. M. Molotov, on behalf of their respective Governments, provided for Anglo-American supplies of raw materials, machine tools and munitions to the U.S.S.R., and of Soviet supplies of large quantities of raw materials urgently required in Great Britain and the U.S.A. An American offer of an interest-free loan to the value of one milliard dollars, repayable during a period of ten years beginning five years after the end of the war, was gratefully accepted by the Soviet Government on November 4th.

On December 4th a joint declaration was signed in Moscow by Stalin and Sikorsky, the Polish Prime Minister, renewing the pledges of war-time collaboration and declaring that ‘the forces of the Polish Republic in the territory of the Soviet Union will wage war against the German brigands shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet forces’. The total strength of the Polish Army to be raised on Soviet territory, which had been fixed in August at 30,000, and had reached a figure of 41,500 by October 25th, was now, on Sikorsky’s proposal, raised to 96,000. On December 31st the Soviet Government agreed to place a loan of 100 million roubles at the disposal of the Polish authorities for aid to Polish civilians in Soviet territory. On January 22nd, 1942, a preliminary interest-free Soviet loan to the Polish Government of sixty-five million roubles, to finance the formation and maintenance of the Polish Army, was raised to 300 million roubles.

On January 30th, 1942, the Soviet Government, together with the British Government, signed a treaty of alliance with Iran against Germany. Both Great Powers had sent their troops into Iran to clear out the Nazi espionage organizations rife in that country – the Soviet Government in virtue of a clause in the Soviet-Persian treaty of 1921, the British Government without any basis in international law or

treaty at all. Such a basis was created only *post factum* by the new treaty.

Diplomatic relations had already been restored between the Soviet Union and Norway (August 5th, 1941) and between the Soviet Union and Belgium (August 7th). On February 5th and February 21st, 1942, the Soviet Government established consular relations with two countries which had never recognized its existence before the war – Canada and the Union of South Africa. This was followed by the establishment of diplomatic relations with Canada on June 12th, and with another previously ‘non-recognizing’ State – the Netherlands – on July 10th. By this time the Anglo-Soviet ‘Treaty of Alliance in the War against Hitlerite Germany and her Associates in Europe, and for Collaboration and Mutual Assistance after the War’, to be in force for 20 years, had been signed in London on May 26th. On June 11th an agreement was signed between the Soviet Government and the United States, providing for mutual supplies of defence requirements and information, and for a settlement of mutual claims in respect of such aid after the war, in such a way ‘as not to burden commerce between the two countries, but to promote mutually advantageous economic relations between them and the betterment of world-wide economic relations’.

In the official statements issued simultaneously in London, Moscow and New York, on the visits of V. M. Molotov to these two capitals which had resulted in the signature of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty and the Soviet-American Agreement, an almost identical phrase was inserted, to the effect that complete agreement (in the British case ‘full understanding’) was reached ‘with regard to the urgent tasks of the creation of a Second Front in Europe in 1942’.

On September 28th, 1942, the Soviet Government signified its agreement to recognize the French National Committee in London as the sole body ‘qualified to organize the participation in the war of French citizens and French territories, and to represent their interests before the Government of the U.S.S.R.’ On October 13th diplomatic relations were established with Australia, and four days later with Cuba.

These and a number of other steps indicated the wish of the Soviet Government to enter into the closest possible relations with all other states at war with Nazi Germany, thus responding to popular feeling. But almost immediately a series of disconcerting incidents began to force upon the Soviet Union the impression that, entrenched

in important positions in the State machine of its Allies, and particularly in Great Britain, there were powerful official elements whose hatred of the U.S.S.R. was such that it got the upper hand of their discretion, and of the normal decencies imposed by the spectacle of a war like that which the U.S.S.R. was fighting.

At the beginning of July, it became known that the directors of the B.B.C., which had played the national anthems of the Allies before the Sunday evening news throughout the war, were now omitting the Soviet anthem – the *International* – with the support of the Foreign Office representative at the B.B.C., and that this attitude in turn was due to a Cabinet decision.

In the public discussion which immediately broke out – the South Wales Miners' Federation publicly protested – the Government on July 8th let slip the opinion that 'Russia is not at present, in the accepted sense of the word, an Ally of this nation'. Enquiries soon established that this view had come from the Foreign Office, which had endeavoured to suggest that the U.S.S.R. was only a 'co-belligerent' – to which of course Britain would not have the same obligations after the war as it would have to an Ally. This had to be corrected by Mr Churchill (July 15).

A few days later the new High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in Australia, a former Minister of the Crown (Sir Ronald Cross), gratuitously made a statement on his arrival in Sydney to the effect that 'the Russian system of government is hated throughout England. Only a tiny minority think it better than the Nazi dictatorship'. Violent protests by Australian public opinion, including a Nationalist Cabinet Minister, produced only the half-hearted defence that the remark was 'quoted out of its context'.

On August 1st, 1941, the Commander-in-Chief in the Middle East issued a circular to all officers which, although it was not published until the Italians had captured and reprinted it in one of their newspapers on October 28th, should be mentioned in this sequence. The circular referred to 'undoubtedly genuine surprise and disgust' which many officers and soldiers might feel at finding the British Empire an ally of Bolshevik Russia. The C.I.C. reassured them by declaring that, in the first place, 'there is no good reason to suppose that an Anglo-Russian victory over Germany would result in an expansion of Communism. In fact, the result of a victorious war would be rather to alienate the Russian people from those hateful doctrines, to which they allowed themselves to be attracted in the

despair of military defeat.'

But these successive evidences of anti-Soviet feeling in the B.B.C. and Foreign Office, the War Office and the upper hierarchy of government, paled into insignificance with what now occurred. Two days after the German invasion of the U.S.S.R., the *New York Times* had prominently printed on its front page a statement by one of the Senators from Missouri to the effect that the United States now ought to help 'whatever side seemed to be losing. If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany, and that way let them kill as many as possible'.

No one could tell, of course, that the author of these amiable sentiments, whose name was Harry S. Truman, would one day become President of the United States – and that before the war was fully won. In any case, in those days the U.S.S.R. had its mind fixed on the tremendous task of holding the invaders. But it turned out that a member of the British Government apparently held the same views. At the Trades Union Congress on September 2nd, 1941, Mr Tanner, the President of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, said:

In high places there are people who declare that they hope that the Russian and German armies will exterminate each other, and while this is taking place we, the British Commonwealth of Nations, will so develop our Air Force and other armed forces that, if Russia and Germany do destroy each other, we shall have the dominating power in Europe. That point of view has been expressed quite recently by a Cabinet Minister – a member of the present Government – a gentleman who holds a very important position – none other than the Minister for Aircraft Production, Colonel Moore-Brabazon.

To this Mr Tanner added subsequently that the speech had been made at a dinner on July 14th in the Manchester area, at which Union officers as well as employers were present. The only defence made by the Minister, and ultimately by Mr Churchill, was that the speech was 'extempore', that it was made at a private gathering, that the words taken from their context did not express their author's real sentiments, that the Minister was in full accord with the Government's policy, and that he was 'ardently at work sending hundreds of fighter aircraft to Russia.'

It did not require any 'Russian suspiciousness' to understand that

all this meant only that the Minister had made some indiscreet statements, when he thought they would not be published, that his hard work did not at all conflict with the policy of helping 'whichever side seemed to be losing', and that it left open precisely the point of what was the policy of the British Government. Although no protest was made by the Soviet Government on this occasion, it could hardly have failed to notice that the Minister remained a member of the Government until February, 1942. That very month an incident occurred during the visit of Lord Beaverbrook and Mr Hardman to Moscow, which threw an additional light on some conceptions of how the war might be fought. According to Mr Robert Sherwood, the editor of the private papers of Harry Hopkins, President Roosevelt's personal representative, Stalin suggested that the British might send troops to the Ukraine in order to co-operate with the Red Army at the front. Lord Beaverbrook made the counter-suggestion that British forces might be moved from Persia into the Caucasus, thus releasing Soviet troops for the front. To this friendly proposal Stalin replied : 'There is no war in the Caucasus, but there is war in the Ukraine'. (*White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins*, I, p. 389).

It is perhaps not surprising, in these circumstances, that the British and other missions in Moscow during these first terrible months of strain on Soviet strength and resources found themselves denied access to the front as observers, or to vital information about the strategic disposition of Soviet forces. And it adds particular import to the Soviet insistence on so many occasions on the need for a Second Front in Europe. The Second Front was primarily a question of relieving the frightful strain on the Red Army: but thereby it also became a test question of whether the Allies were prepared to shed *their* blood in quantity comparable with that which the Russians were shedding.

Probably the Soviet Government had only a general inkling of the long struggle, from April to August, 1942, which began with President Roosevelt's approval of a plan for the invasion of Northern France in mid-September with thirty American and sixteen British divisions, against which Mr Churchill and his military advisers fought tooth and nail, and successfully. The story has been told – perhaps not yet in full – only by Mr H. L. Stimson, Mr Sherwood, General Eisenhower, Mr Cordell Hull, Mr Elliott Roosevelt and Captain Harry Butcher. The Russians could not know that, while at first the American leaders were consoled with the promise of 'basic



agreement' on an attack in the West in 1943, by the end of the period the American diarists were recording with alarm that the idea of a 1943 invasion was being postponed also; and that every possible alternative was being suggested from the British side – the Middle East (April), Northern Norway (May), North Africa (June).

What is known is that, at the end of May, 1942, Molotov was pressing Roosevelt only for such action in the West as would draw off forty enemy divisions from the East, and that in the middle of August Stalin asked for six to eight American divisions to be landed on the Cherbourg Peninsula. We also know that on August 12th, 1942, in Moscow, Mr Churchill suggested that an Allied air force be sent to the southern end of the Soviet front, that Stalin said it would be gratefully accepted – and that it was never sent. Why, we shall see a little later.

Thus the net result of Soviet diplomatic relations with its Allies in 1941-2 was that it went on receiving some war materials, but no military aid which would stop the Germans in the east killing 'as many as possible'.

It is convenient at this point to record that, while the Soviet Government did not publish *statistics* of tanks or aircraft imported from Allied countries at this time, this was for the same reasons of security that it did not publish its own production figures of such war materials. On October 2nd, 1941, however, the Soviet press published most prominently the communiqué and speeches of the Three-Power Conference in Moscow on war deliveries, with Molotov's expressions of thanks for the 'extensive and systematic' character of the promised deliveries of 'planes, tanks and other armaments, equipment and raw materials'. On November 7th, 1941, all Soviet newspapers published in large type Stalin's speech in which, after referring to the Conference, he said: 'As is well known, we have already begun to receive tanks and planes on the basis of that decision. Even prior to that, Great Britain arranged for providing our country with such materials in short supply as aluminium, lead, tin, nickel and rubber', and that in addition the U.S.A. had decided to grant the Soviet Union a billion-dollar loan. In his Order of the Day on May 1st, 1942, prominently published by all Soviet newspapers, Stalin again referred to the 'ever-increasing military assistance' which Great Britain and the U.S.A. were rendering. The Soviet-American and Soviet-British communiqués published on June 12th in the Soviet press mentioned that Molotov had discussed in

London and Washington measures 'for the increase and acceleration of deliveries of aircraft, tanks and other armaments to the Soviet Union'. At a session of the Supreme Soviet held in Moscow on June 18th, 1942, to ratify the Anglo-Soviet Treaty, Molotov dwelt at length on the increase in deliveries of 'tanks, planes and other armaments, and likewise material in short supply like aluminium, nickel, rubber, etc.... in accordance with the extensive programme of supplies drawn up at the Moscow Conference', which he called 'an essential and important supplement to those arms and supplies which the Red Army receives, in their overwhelming bulk, from our internal resources'. He also stressed the difficulties in delivering these supplies by sea, owing to German attacks. Further in his speech he aroused applause by announcing that, in the second half of 1942, 'munitions deliveries and supplies to the U.S.S.R. by the Allies will be increased and accelerated'. On October 10th, 1942, the Soviet press announced the signature of an Anglo-American-Soviet protocol, four days before, providing for uninterrupted fulfilment of the programme of supply of armaments, munitions and raw materials.

Anyone familiar with Soviet life knows that such statements by leaders of the Soviet Government and Communist Party are commented upon by newspapers and wireless, and discussed at thousands of meetings and study circles, for weeks afterwards.

Thus there is no foundation for the legends which became current in after years about the Soviet Government having 'concealed' from its citizens the aid in materials given by its Allies.

But in the course of 1942 also the Soviet Government became aware of a series of unfriendly activities by British Government departments and Government-subsidized bodies which seemed to carry on the tale from 1941, with the difference that for the most part these activities were surreptitious. In order that they should be seen in the proper perspective, it is necessary to bear in mind the indisputable fact that, from the moment that the Soviet Union found itself engaged in a common war with the great capitalist Powers against Hitlerite Germany, its press, its theoretical journals and its educational institutions ceased publishing any critical or hostile studies of British or American institutions, economic and social systems, colonial policies, etc. This was not because Soviet writers and ordinary citizens had not as least as much to say on these subjects as their British counterparts might wish to say about the Soviet Union. It was because it was against the old Russian conception of alliance and

friendship that one should blacken the character of one's friend.

In public, Allied leaders seemed to agree. 'The hopes of civilization rest on the worthy banners of the courageous Russian Army' said General Mac Arthur on February 23rd, 1942 – one of many such statements. But behind the scenes it was a different story, as several foreign correspondents who frequented Allied Embassies in the U.S.S.R. openly wrote in their books. In Britain it was the same.

In January, 1942, the department of the Ministry of Information responsible for issuing speakers' notes prepared for distribution to its lecturers a document containing so much distortion of historical, economic and social facts about the U.S.S.R. that it had to be hastily withdrawn when by accident it came into the hands of a Soviet correspondent. In February a body subsidized by the Government during the war, and working in close collaboration with the Foreign Office, issued a pamphlet on Soviet Russia, intended specially for the armed forces, containing so many distortions of history, and such misinformation about social and political conditions in the U.S.S.R., that it aroused the most violent protests in the press.

In July, 1942, it was discovered that in a confidential but printed review of the foreign press, circulated to editors and many others by an institution working on Government money, the section dealing with the Soviet press was almost constantly couched in sarcastic, vixenish and unfriendly tones suggesting some rabid Die-Hard for whom the U.S.S.R. was a more disgusting subject of study than the Nazis. This impression was heightened when a comparison was made with the calm, objective, scholarly and detached tone in which the press of the Nazis was surveyed. Only after vigorous complaints had been made in the highest quarters was the publication of this quaint contribution to mutual understanding brought to an end, at least in this form.

In October, 1942, it was reported in the press that a well-known woman writer, lecturing officially to the troops on behalf of the War Office, had made violently anti-Soviet statements; and the significance of this incident was heightened all the more when the censorship stopped the cabling of the newspaper report in question to the Soviet press. Thus the British Government's machinery put itself in the position that it was no offence for one of its branches to spread anti-Soviet propaganda, while another of its branches did what it could to prevent such news reaching the Soviet people!

This was not the only occasion on which this latitude to poison

minds within British territory against the U.S.S.R. was combined (in the name of free speech) with a reluctance to let the ordinary Soviet man in the street know that this was going on. Throughout 1942 the Polish emigrant press in Great Britain – under licence from one British Government department, and securing paper from another – published a stream of anti-Soviet propaganda. More than once that year – though, it must be admitted in fairness, not continuously – censorship prevented the acquainting of the Soviet newspaper-reading public with the very fact of such publication.

In the final stages of the Stalingrad battle, on January 20th, 1943, the War Minister, under pressure from Mr D. N. Pritt, M.P., in the House of Commons disclosed a list of books recommended for reading and study in the forces in which, side by side with one or two works which might be recognized as attempting to be objective (like Sir Bernard Pares' *Russia* or Maurice Hindus' *Broken Earth*), there was a long series of violently anti-Soviet works, giving a distorted picture of either Soviet internal conditions or Soviet foreign policy.

Thus, while the Soviet Union was engaged in the most critical struggles of the war, not only did the mutual killing of Germans and Russians proceed on a scale which must have satisfied Senator Harry S. Truman, but efforts were made to prevent the British public, wherever it could safely be reached, 'going to the other extreme' (in the phrase of the time) in new-found affection for the Soviet people, and in attempts to make up for the years during which it had been flooded with torrents of misinformation about the U.S.S.R.

There was also an eloquent incident (autumn 1942) in quite a different field. Perhaps it can best be described by giving the two versions which have appeared, in Britain and in the U.S.S.R. The first was given in 1947 by Lieut.-General Martel, the British military attaché in Moscow at the time, in his book *The Russian Outlook* (pp. 43-4):

We looked round to see how we could help the Russians in preventing the Germans from penetrating the Caucasus. After discussion with America we thought that the best chance would be to send an Anglo-American Air Force to land on Russian soil and operate against the Germans who were advancing in that direction. Very friendly meetings took place between our senior Air Force officers and the Russians, but it soon became apparent that they had no in-

tention of allowing such a large force to be established on their soil. The position was very critical for Russia at that time, and yet they preferred to risk disaster rather than allow a large party of foreigners to land on their soil ... It seemed almost impossible to us that any nation should take such foolish risks. As it turned out, the Germans did not make much headway, and the line stabilized in the autumn of 1942.

The reader will probably be puzzled by the Russians not wishing 'a large party of foreigners to land on their soil'; when, as he knows, in 1941 Stalin would have welcomed British troops fighting in the Ukraine, and in 1942 expressed his gratitude in advance for any such aid. Moreover, there was already a foreign air force on Soviet soil – the French 'Normandie' squadron – and its doings were widely publicized in the Soviet press. In any case, as the reader knows, the risks did not turn out to be 'foolish' after all.

The riddle will be solved if he turns to the Soviet account of the same proceedings, given by Major-General Galaktionov, in *War and the Working Class* (September 1st, 1943, p. 7).

In spite of repeated proposals from the Soviet side, the Allies ... did not once express a desire to maintain their forces, side by side with our army and air force, on the Soviet-German front. And if, in the autumn of last year, there was a proposal to establish an Allied air force at Baku and Tbilisi, where no front existed and there could be no battles with the Germans, is it not clear that it would have been more correct to establish it somewhere nearer the front, in North Caucasus, or on the central Soviet-German front, where it would have been in a position to help our forces – which, however, the authors of the above-mentioned proposals declined?

Or take such an example as the proposal to withdraw Soviet troops from all Transcaucasia, and send these troops into battle on the Soviet-German front, on the understanding that other troops should be introduced into Transcaucasia, i.e. foreign, non-Soviet troops in place of Soviet troops. Can such a proposal be really considered evidence of a desire to fight side by side with the Soviet forces?

Thus the actual Anglo-American proposals bore an uncanny

resemblance to those which had been mentioned by Lord Beaverbrook a year before. They would have ensured the maximum number of Russians falling at the front and the maintenance of Anglo-American forces intact in the Soviet Caucasus, to save at least the oil-wells from the wreckage of the U.S.S.R., should the Germans, as some feared, sweep all before them. The existence of the surreptitious anti-Soviet campaign among the fighting forces and political hierarchy, already described, made the position all the more irritating.

The Soviet Government had even more food for meditation on these lines because this period was the very one selected by the Polish Government in London to withdraw from the U.S.S.R. the army of nearly 100,000 men which had been raised and trained on Soviet soil, and at Soviet expense, since 1941. By February, 1942, the six divisions, mentioned earlier, had already come into existence and numbered over 73,000 men. The Polish Government had originally stated that it thought expedient to despatch the divisions to the front in turn, as their formation was completed (clause 7 of the Soviet-Polish Military Agreement of August 14th, 1941). As the Polish authorities showed no interest in sending the troops to the front, the Soviet Government in February suggested that the 5th Division, which had already completed its training, might go. The Polish Commander-in-Chief flatly refused, but promised that the whole Polish Army would be ready to take part in operations by June 1st. The Soviet Government thereupon stated that only those troops who could be certain of being sent to the front could receive full combat rations: the remainder, being rear troops, would have smaller rations. As a result, the Polish Government demanded the withdrawal of all Polish troops except for 44,000 to Persia, and in fact 31,500 were moved out of Soviet territory in March, 1942. As the Polish Government continued refusing to send its troops to the front, the remaining 44,000 were evacuated in August, 1942, together with 37,750 members of their families.

No publicity was given at the time to this probably unprecedented operation in the history of warfare, undertaken at a time when the Germans were making a tremendous drive on the very front at which the Poles might have been expected to join in combat by the side of the Red Army. An Order of the Day issued by Sikorski, stating that 'the presence of Polish armed forces in the eastern theatre of operations may prove salutary for Allied war operations', was

suppressed in Britain by the censorship. Otherwise the British public and forces, which at that time were seething with impatience at the spectacle of the gigantic struggle of the Red Army, might well have asked what the 'Allied war operations' in the Middle East were. It would have been difficult to provide an answer.

The Soviet Government had no wish to add to the strain on its people by enlarging on these events, with their ugly implications. No counter-campaign about British life and institutions was undertaken. No immediate exposure of the friendly proposals mentioned by Galaktionov, or of the strange withdrawal of the Polish forces, was made. It was on the last day of Mr Churchill's visit to Moscow in 1942, in fact, that the first issue of a British weekly, designed to impress the Soviet public with the war effort of the British people, appeared in Kuibyshev. Perhaps the sole public reflection of the Soviet Government's meditations on the lessons of the year was the omission from Stalin's speech on November 6th of any direct reference to the war supplies coming from the Allies, for which such publicity had been made during the previous fifteen months.

## 5. STALINGRAD – THE TURNING-POINT

The whole situation underwent a radical change with the historic Soviet victory at Stalingrad, which revived the demand for a Second Front. On this we have the most authoritative and least suspect of evidence, that of the Director-General of the Political Warfare Executive and Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at the time – Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart – in his book, *Comes the Reckoning* (p. 231). The agitation, he writes:

caused considerable anxiety among the Russian experts in this country, to whom a new danger had now presented itself. This was that, whereas until two months ago both the British and the American Governments had assumed that Russia would need abundant Allied help during and after the peace because, although she would have been the main instrument of victory, she would be badly crippled, there was now at any rate a possibility of her winning the war without us and not needing our help at all.

If this engagingly frank statement be compared with that attributed to Colonel Moore-Brabazon at the beginning of the war, it will be seen that, with the sole substitution of the demure reference to

Russia's need of 'Allied help' after the war for the more open hope that Britain would become 'the dominant power', the material calculations of the 'Russian experts in this country' of January, 1943, were the same as those attributed to the Minister of Aircraft Production in 1941. Moreover it would be a mistake to think that those who watched the press in Britain and America at the time needed to wait for Sir Robert's characteristic indiscretion to know of the frank dismay aroused by the Soviet victory at Stalingrad among large sections of the official hierarchy. Indeed, this dismay began to reflect itself in the press. One of the most significant of such reflections was an editorial in the *New York Times* (February 14th, 1943), devoted to 'fears and suspicions about Russia' aroused by the fact that 'swiftly, inexorably, the Russian armies continue to drive towards the West'. Not a campaign for relief to the suffering Soviet peoples and those of the occupied Continent was the concern of the paper, but examination of means for preventing the possibility 'that the Power which has the greatest share of victory will also dictate the peace'.

'It is no use ignoring this feeling towards the Soviet,' wrote one of the leading correspondents of the *Daily Mail* (March 20th, 1943), after a visit to Washington. While President Roosevelt and Vice-President Wallace were utterly opposed to plans for United States domination of the world after the war, 'acquiring bases right and left, building up a large standing army, navy and air force', there were (he said) far too many people in high places, if not in the Government, who were, 'on the slightest provocation,' ready to abuse Russia. 'While there is vast admiration among the great mass of people for the Red Army, the men of money and power still seem suspicious, even hostile, to the Soviet.'

But it was not only from such evidence, of which a great deal appeared beginning with the month of February, 1943, that the Soviet Government could form its judgment of the change in the policy of its Allies. A few months afterwards, owing to several official indiscretions, there became known in London the gist of an exchange of opinions which the British Ambassador in Spain, Sir Samuel Hoare, had had with Foreign Minister Jordana, in that same month of February, 1943. The full text of the exchange, published five years later in London by the Spanish Government itself (*Spain*, March 22nd, 1948), fully confirms the information.

Jordana expressed the fear that the Soviet advance brought the danger of a Soviet victory in the war and a Soviet-controlled Ger-



many. This would mean that nobody could withstand Soviet ambitions, and this would mean 'the destruction of European civilization and Christian culture'.

In his reply Sir Samuel Hoare, of course, declared his conviction that Nazism, not Russia, was the great danger to Europe, and discounted the likelihood of any future conflict between the British Empire and the U.S.S.R. But it is his analysis of future prospects as he saw them that carries most conviction. At the end of the war, he said, 'Russia at least will need a long period of reconstruction and recovery, in which she will depend greatly upon the British Empire and the United States of America for economic help'. Jordana should study dispassionately the position as it was likely to be at the moment of an Allied victory:

There will then undoubtedly be great British and American armies on the continent. These armies will be equipped with the finest modern munitions. They will be composed of fresh-line troops, *whose ranks have not been previously devastated by years of exhausting war on the Russian front.*

As for ourselves, I make the confident prophecy that at that moment Great Britain will be the strongest European military Power. The British Air Force will be the most powerful in Europe. Our new armies will be certainly as efficient as any other European armies, and for the first time for many years they will be strong numerically as well as in quality. Moreover the British Army and the British Air Force will have behind them the British Navy, at that time the most predominant Navy that Europe has ever seen in the hands of a single European Power.

Sir Samuel disclaimed any intention 'of using this military strength for dominating other European Powers'. But, he said, '*we shall not, however, shirk our responsibilities to European civilization*'.

If the Soviet Government had formed the impression, from the treatment of the Moore-Brabazon incident and the events of 1942, that what the Minister had incautiously blurted out was in fact British Government policy, which had been hastily concealed again because the British public would not tolerate it, would it not have found ample confirmation in this edifying discussion with the Foreign Minister of

a Government which had sent a division of bandits, ravishers and murderers to co-operate with the Nazi Army against the Soviet people?

It was not yet known, of course, that Mr Churchill had already, in October, 1942 (as Mr Harold Macmillan revealed on September 4th, 1949), circulated a memorandum as Prime Minister, advocating the formation of a United States of Europe after the war – including Spain and Turkey – to prevent the ‘measureless disaster’ if ‘Russian barbarism overlaid the culture and independence of the ancient States of Europe,’ *i.e.* to act as an anti-Soviet bloc.

In April, 1943, another event occurred which was calculated to reinforce the impression that, as the possibility of the Soviet Union ‘winning the war without us’ was swiftly increasing, hidden enemies of the U.S.S.R. were throwing off the mask.

In December, 1941, during the visit of General Sikorski to Moscow, it had been agreed that, in the interests of Allied amity, it would be best not to raise the question of the future Soviet-Polish frontiers until the end of the war. All through 1942, however, this agreement was broken by the simple expedient of creating an ‘unofficial’ Polish press in London, of which the Polish authorities could wash their hands in public, and which not only raised the question of frontiers but also attacked the U.S.S.R. on numerous other counts. The Soviet Government maintained silence on this question throughout the year. Finally an official Polish institution in London – the State Council – came out into the open in December, 1942, by itself adopting the ‘unofficial’ attitude on the frontiers advocated all through the year, with much reviling of the Soviet Government, by the ‘unofficial’ press. This was a flagrant breach of the 1941 agreement. It was replied to – ‘unofficially’ – by a well-known Ukrainian writer Korneichuk, in the first article in the Soviet press which had dealt with the subject. On February 25th, 1943 – again the fatal month after Stalingrad – the Polish Government adopted and published a resolution insisting on the pre-1939 frontiers, thus once again breaking the agreement of 1941. The Soviet Government replied with a moderate TASS comment that ‘Ukrainians and Belorussians are entitled to the same right of self-determination as Poles’ – an allusion to the fact that the Polish frontier of 1921 had been established in flagrant defiance of the Curzon Line laid down by the Allied Supreme Council in 1919. A Polish official statement in reply, issued on March 4th, said that the declaration of February 25th was

‘backed unanimously by the entire Polish nation’, but that it had not been intended to produce controversy, ‘which would be so harmful at the present moment’.

Then, on April 12th, the Germans issued a communiqué to the effect that they had discovered the bodies of 10,000 Polish officers who had been massacred in the Katyn forest, near Smolensk, that examination showed this to have happened in April, 1940 – before the German invasion of the U.S.S.R. – and that this was ‘a stirring warning to Europe, and a roll-call for an unrelenting struggle against the most terrible enemy humanity had ever encountered.’ The Soviet Information Bureau issued a statement calling this story a ‘vile fabrication’. But instead of approaching the Soviet Government on the subject, the Polish Minister of National Defence issued a statement which was published on April 16th, detailing the history of alleged Polish Government efforts to ascertain the whereabouts of its officers in the U.S.S.R., and announcing that the Polish Government ‘is asking the International Red Cross to send an investigating committee to Poland to investigate the graves’. On the same date the Polish Prime Minister and Foreign Minister spent the day in the country with Mr Churchill and the Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs: and the following day, April 17th, the Polish Government officially confirmed the announcement that the International Red Cross had been asked to investigate the German statement. The Germans had already declared on April 16th that they were also appealing to the International Red Cross; and in fact on Monday, April 19th, that body stated that it had received the two ‘appeals’.

The Soviet Government from the beginning pointed out numerous examples of provocation of a similar character carried out by the Germans, particularly at Lvov in 1941. It exposed numerous details of the German allegations as obviously fabricated, and said that the Poles who accepted these German lies were accomplices of Hitler. This charge was reiterated in a *Pravda* editorial of April 19th, and on April 21st a TASS statement endorsed the article, pointing out the simultaneous outbreak of an anti-Soviet campaign in the German and Polish press. No change being made by the Polish Government in its attitude, the Soviet Government broke off relations with the Polish authorities in London on April 25th, on the ground that, ‘far from offering a rebuff to the vile Fascist slander against the U.S.S.R., the Polish Government did not even find it necessary to address to the Soviet Government any inquiry or request for an explanation on this

subject'. An investigation by the International Red Cross, 'in conditions of a terrorist regime, with its gallows and mass exterminations of the peaceful population', could not arouse any confidence. The Polish Government in London, it concluded, had actually ceased to be an ally of the U.S.S.R. and had 'slid on to the path of accord with Hitler's Government'.

Two days later the International Red Cross announced its refusal to take part in the investigation unless the Soviet Government gave its agreement – which both inviting parties, and the International Red Cross itself, must have known from the beginning would never have been given, in the circumstances referred to; and on April 30th the Polish Government announced that it regarded the appeal as having lapsed.

Thus the net result of the whole affair had been to strengthen German morale, by revealing the existence of open or covert hostility between the Allies, and at the same time to launch a further propaganda campaign in Allied territory against the U.S.S.R. It was only after these events that, on May 6th, 1943, M. Vyshinsky gave the foreign correspondents in Moscow full details of the Soviet-Polish negotiations over the Polish armed forces in the U.S.S.R., as well as of some other matters which did not reflect particular credit on the Polish civilian authorities there.

It was less as a Polish-Soviet matter, however, than in its bearing on the turn in Allied relations created by Stalingrad, that the whole affair needs to be judged. And in this respect the merciless distortion and mutilation in the newspapers of Vyshinsky's statement has its particular significance. It was the first time that a Soviet official statement had been mishandled in this way since 1939 (the 'sunshine' statements in March and the Finnish war in November-December, that year). Thus it seemed to herald a return to pre-war relations with the U.S.S.R., and to pre-war treatment of information about the U.S.S.R.

Such was not the feeling, it was well known in Moscow, among the common people of either Britain or the U.S.A. And at this time, too, the Soviet public, according to the testimony of a correspondent of *The Times* (June 19th, 1943), were being inspired with 'confidence in their Allies, not only as co-architects of victory but also as partners in the establishment of political security in Europe and fellow-promoters of economic rehabilitation ... Evidence of British goodwill and British military and industrial capacity is now freely

offered to Russian readers and listeners.' British films, British exhibitions, news of the British war effort and of the R.A.F. in the Soviet press, were given great prominence in this campaign.

Yet it was just after this, in August, 1943, that Sir John Anderson repaired to the United States of America in order to begin those negotiations, completed a week or two later by the Churchill-Roosevelt agreement at Quebec, which led to the joint elaboration of the atom bomb – in complete secrecy from their ally the U.S.S.R. As the assumption of the alliance was the defeat of Germany and its rendering harmless for years to come, the assumption behind the secret manufacture of the atom bomb was obviously its possible use against the Soviet Union.

On September 7th, at the Trade Union Congress, Mr Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour and National Service and a member of the War Cabinet, in endeavouring to allay the agitation for a Second Front, explained:

Our policy in war has been to keep down casualties and to provide the best equipment, and overwhelming equipment, on the theory that metal is cheaper than men.

The Government was determined to resist what he called German policy – 'to bleed Britain white in the second World War'.

Up till then, total casualties in dead and missing throughout the *British Empire*, including both service personnel and the mercantile marine, had been some 320,000. The Soviet losses in service personnel alone, apart from the vast army of civilians murdered behind the German lines, had been 4.2 millions *before* the giant offensives of the summer. Thus if anyone could speak of being bled white, it was the U.S.S.R. Mr Bevin was not precise as to whose casualties were being 'kept down', and whose men were regarded as dearer than metal; but as matters stood at the various fronts (or potential fronts), the objective meaning of his statement was that the British Government was keeping down British casualties by piling up overwhelming British equipment, on the theory that British metal was cheaper than British men – and that Soviet men (and women and children) were cheaper in their turn than British metal, since they went on being killed.

These were not the only words uttered at this time in praise of such strategy. 'A marvellous economy of life', the *Observer* called it (August 29th) – as though British life were the only kind that

counted. Roosevelt and Churchill 'were sparing of the blood of their peoples', and would be remembered for it in history, said the *Yorkshire Evening News* (October 1st). What the other peoples might remember them by, however, was indicated by Mr Paul Winterton, a special correspondent of the *News Chronicle* in Moscow (October 7th):

I doubt if anybody will ever succeed now in convincing any Russian that we could not have opened the Second Front earlier. The Russian view is that we did not do so because we wanted to fight this war cheaply. We preferred to wait and make sure, even though it meant the Russians went on dying.

The Soviet people consider their point of view confirmed when – after many warnings by British statesmen of the inevitable high cost of establishing Continental bridge-heads – they find that Sicily was taken with fewer losses than Russia had suffered in almost any week since the war started, and that the hard-fought Salerno battle cost us about as many men as the Germans have frequently lost on the Russian front in a single day.

Nobody likes drawing up a balance-sheet of blood, but you have to do it if you are going to understand the Russian view of us. If we had been prepared to lose a million men, say the Russians, we could have established the Second Front and the war would have been over by now.

No victories won by us in the Mediterranean, however spectacular, will distract the attention of the Soviets from the small number of German divisions we are engaging.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that years afterwards Lieut.-General Martel, in the work quoted earlier, admitted, when discussing the arguments used against a landing in the West in 1942, that now 'we know that these landings are not quite so difficult as we feared' (p. 157). As for the choice of Italy as the scene of attack in 1943, instead of the Second Front in the West, General Martel wrote that 'it will not be easy for the Chiefs of Staffs and the political chiefs to explain away the accusation that the summer of 1943 was largely wasted', (p. 162).

General Smuts was chosen to draw the logical political conclusions from the situation which might be created by the unwelcome Soviet victory of which Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart subsequently

wrote. On November 25th he made a speech at the Empire Parliamentary Association (published only some weeks later when Churchill had got away from his conference with Stalin and Roosevelt at Teheran), in which he dealt with the position of Europe after the war. The world would be dominated by 'two partners of immense power and resources', the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., with Britain a poor third. Then followed an awesome forecast of the Soviet Union's position. It would become 'the new Colossus that bestrides the Continent', its 'mistress', its hands stronger 'because the Japanese Empire will also have gone the way of all flesh'. The U.S.S.R. would be 'in a position which no country has ever occupied in the history of Europe'. He drew the conclusion that Britain should form 'a great European State', by coming 'closer together with those smaller democracies in Western Europe which are of our way of thinking'. In the South African Parliament, exactly two months later, General Smuts explained that the U.S.S.R. was becoming nationalistic, and perhaps imperialistic. The situation in Europe was changing. 'They should consider well whether it was not possible to form a free association of small countries of Western Europe about Britain, which was till now the bulwark of Western civilization'.

*Thus, many months before the frictions which developed between the Great Powers after the war, and as the outcome of a year in which the U.S.S.R., by incurring further gigantic losses, seemed about to reap the fruits of victory, it found itself denounced as a "Colossus" threatening 'Western civilization' and this by a Dominion Prime Minister who was officially a member of the British War Cabinet.*

It was too much to suppose that that body, or its presiding genius, had not had some inkling of what General Smuts was going to say. This was clear even without knowledge of Mr Churchill's memorandum of October, 1942. It was not entirely out of his own fantasy, therefore, that Mr E. N. van Kleffens, the Netherlands Foreign Minister, replied in a broadcast from London on December 28th, 1943, to General Smuts' speech with a proposal even more uncannily 'prophetic' – if you believe in prophecy. Mr van Kleffens advocated 'a strong formation in the West with America, Canada and the other British Dominions as the arsenal and vast reservoir of power, with England as the base, especially for air power, and the west of the European mainland – by which I mean the Netherlands, Belgium and France – as the bridge-head'.

In the meantime, it is true, the Soviet Government received notable reassurances, first and foremost, at the Eden-Hull-Molotov conference at Moscow from October 19th to 30th, and at the four-day Stalin-Roosevelt-Churchill conference at Teheran which ended on November 1st.

At the first, the three Governments, together with China, proclaimed their determination to co-operate after the war in the interests of peace and security, setting up an international organization for the purpose, 'based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States, and open to membership by all such States, large or small, for the maintenance of international peace and security'. The three Foreign Secretaries also issued a 'Declaration on Italy', stating that 'Allied policy towards Italy must be based upon the fundamental principle that Fascism and all its evil influence and emanations shall be utterly destroyed'. Detailed provisions were made to ensure this. There was another Declaration on Austria, proclaiming the desire to re-establish its freedom and independence.

At the same time, Austria was reminded 'that she has a responsibility which she cannot evade for participation in the war on the side of Hitlerite Germany, and that in the final settlement account will inevitably be taken of her own contribution to her liberation'. This provision might have been grimly present in the minds of the Soviet soldiers in later months, when they were fighting their way into Vienna and through Austria, without the slightest semblance of any 'contribution' by the Austrian people to this end – apart from the anti-Fascist refugees in the Allied countries.

Lastly there was a Declaration on Hitlerite Atrocities, promising that German officers and men and members of the Nazi Party 'who have been responsible for, or have taken a consenting part in, the above atrocities, massacres and executions' would be sent back to the countries where their abominable deeds were done to be judged and punished according to the laws of those countries. The three Allied Powers would 'pursue them to the uttermost ends of the earth' to 'deliver them to the accusers'.

At the Teheran Conference, as we now know from the papers of Harry Hopkins (vol. II, p. 783), Mr Churchill made a last attempt to avoid a Second Front by offering an Anglo-American invasion of the Balkans; but when Stalin asked if the British really believed in an invasion, the British opposition collapsed. In the upshot, according to the communiqué published on December 1st, the three war leaders



reached complete accord in their plans for the destruction of the German forces, and endorsed the general lines of the agreement reached by their Foreign Secretaries the previous month. It was perhaps a sign of the better atmosphere created by these engagements that President Benes, who had been for months prevented by the British Government from going to Moscow, was allowed at last to go there in December and to sign (December 12th) a Treaty of Mutual Assistance between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, in the event of either signatory becoming 'involved in hostilities with Germany resuming her "drang nach Osten" policy, or with any of the States which may unite with Germany directly, or in any other form, in such a war.'

By the beginning of 1944, Soviet relations with the Polish people had moved out of the purely negative state of lack of official relations with the Polish Government in London. On May 9th, 1943, it had been announced that the first Polish unit formed on Soviet soil, the Kosciusko Division, was fully trained and at the front. Three days later those Poles in the U.S.S.R. who had refused to follow the lead of the London Government, many of them Communists but far more non-Communists, formed a Union of Polish Patriots, with the express aim of raising further armed forces to fight for the liberation of their country. On December 31st, 1943, at a secret conference held in Warsaw, a National Council of Poland was set up.

Evidently fearing an imminent Soviet agreement with the new body, the 'London Poles' now again took a hand. On January 5th they issued a statement refusing unconditional co-operation with the Red Army, and laying claim to the Belorussian and Ukrainian territories which had been annexed in defiance of the Curzon Line, in 1920. This statement was worked out in close contact with the British Foreign Office, and those spokesmen of the latter who habitually dealt with the press hailed it as 'a useful contribution to the United Nations war effort'. On January 11th the Soviet reply was issued through TASS, reiterating the desire for a strong and independent Poland with whom it could maintain 'durable good-neighbourly relations', with an alliance for mutual aid against the Germans if desired. Poland would have to be reborn, however, 'not by the seizure of Ukrainian and Belorussian lands, but by the restoration to Poland of lands belonging to her from time immemorial and wrested from Poland by the Germans'. It offered the Curzon Line, not the 1939 frontiers, as the basis for agreement.

This Soviet reply was treated with frigid reserve by the British Foreign Office, and only under pressure of questioning from journalists did it admit that the document might be helpful, although 'it contained points of controversy'. On January 15th the Polish Government issued a new statement, flatly rejecting the Curzon Line, and omitting any reference to Polish-Soviet cooperation. Thus the breach was made permanent; but once again the statement was welcomed by the Foreign Office directly it was issued.

On January 24th, 1944, a special commission of distinguished Soviet medical men and others published the result of its investigations of the Katyn massacre, in the course of which over 100 witnesses were questioned, and vast numbers of bodies examined. The investigation proved irrefutably, from documents found on the bodies such as letters and receipts, that the victims had not been shot in 1940 as the Germans had asserted, but had been alive until after the Germans had reached Smolensk in September, 1941. It was also discovered that the Germans had used a special military organization for the massacre, which bore a precise resemblance to those carried out elsewhere. Medical examination of the bodies proved beyond question that the executions could not have taken place earlier than the period from September to December, 1941.

The Polish Government in London, however, did not dissociate itself from the German charges against the U.S.S.R., in spite of the fact that on January 17th, 1944, an official Soviet statement had emphasized that diplomatic relations had only been 'interrupted' because of its active part in publicizing those German charges.

As a consequence, on May 22nd, 1944, Stalin received representatives of the National Council of Poland who had made their way across the front into the U.S.S.R., and on July 26th signed an agreement with a Polish Committee of National Liberation which had been established in May, providing that in Polish liberated territory the civil authorities should be Polish and not Soviet. This at last brought representatives of the London Poles to Moscow in August, to confer first with the Soviet Government and then with a delegation of the National Council of Poland and the Polish Committee of Liberation. No agreement was arrived at between the two groups, even after the Polish question, among others, had been discussed during a visit in October by Mr Churchill and Mr Eden; and on December 31st, 1944, the Polish Committee of National Liberation at Lublin was proclaimed the Provisional Government of Poland. The basic obsta-

cle to agreement had been the refusal of the London Poles to repudiate the dictatorial Polish constitution of 1935.

Throughout the autumn, relations between the Soviet Union and the Allies had been further poisoned by an outcry over the abortive rising in Warsaw, launched by supporters of the London Poles without previous contact with the Soviet forces, and at a time when the latter were held up by the Germans. Nor was the atmosphere improved by the steady propaganda in Great Britain, following the initiative of General Smuts, for a European bloc or series of blocs after the war, to the exclusion of the U.S.S.R., which was carried on by the Conservative Party headquarters (in the shape of an officially-boasted pamphlet, *Foreign Policy After the War*, published in February), and by the leading Liberal politician, Sir Walter Layton, Chairman of the *News Chronicle* (in an Oxford lecture and subsequent writing in March).

A forerunner of the type of problem that might arise after the war, if this attitude were persisted in, appeared in connexion with the International Conference on Civil Aviation convened in Chicago at the beginning of November, 1944. In June and July Soviet-American preliminary conversations had taken place, and agreement had been reached on the desirability of organizing an international commission for the purpose after the war. But, without consulting its Soviet ally, the United States Government signed a civil aviation agreement on July 14th with the Government of Franco Spain, whose troops had been actively engaged in military operations and numerous atrocities on Soviet territory. Already at the end of May Mr Churchill had been severely criticized in the Liberal and Labour press of Great Britain for making complimentary references to Franco in a public speech on foreign affairs. This was followed up on October 24th by the announcement that Spanish delegates had been invited to attend the Chicago conference, as well as delegates from Portugal and Switzerland – States which had no diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. As a result, the Soviet Government cancelled its decision to attend the conference, making it quite clear why this was being done. No attempt was made by the United States and other convening Governments to give the Soviet Union satisfaction.

Other serious issues between the Allies were also arising through the fear of Russia 'winning the war without us' – apart from not very subtle newspaper propaganda, of which a number of examples could also be quoted. In August, 1944, the British and American Govern-

ments began separate negotiations with the Bulgarian Government for an armistice, through a delegate whom the Bulgarians had sent to Ankara. For months past the Soviet Government had been attempting to stop the more and more blatant co-operation between the Bulgarian Government and the Germans, warning the former of the consequences if it persisted. The opening of negotiations by the Allies – when the summer offensive of the Red Army and the landings in France and Italy had brought Germany face to face with disaster – only had the effect of encouraging the Bulgarian Government to resist a Soviet demand that it should break off relations with Germany (August 12th). The Allies, however, continued to negotiate with the Bulgarians, and towards the end of August, as Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart has since revealed, even put out through the Political Warfare Executive propaganda machine the false statement (recalling the manoeuvres of 1939 and 1940) that ‘the armistice terms for Bulgaria had been drafted in consultation with Russia’ – arousing a protest from the Soviet Government. The purpose of the negotiations became more and more clear – that an agreement with the Bulgarian Fascists should be reached if possible before the Russians broke through the Rumanian front and reached the Bulgarian frontier. The obvious reply followed. On September 5th the Soviet Union, faced with a new Bulgarian Government which had proclaimed once again a policy of ‘neutrality’ – i.e. one of direct aid to Germany against the Soviet Union as before – broke off all relations with Bulgaria, declared itself in a state of war with that country, and sent its troops over the border.

This news, Sir Robert records, ‘was disturbing, if indeed not sinister’: but from the Soviet point of view, the manoeuvres with the Bulgarian Fascist Government, as they have since been partially revealed, might not unjustifiably have had the same adjectives applied to them.

But both in Bulgaria and in Rumania, when the Soviet troops arrived, they ‘were welcomed by the majority of the inhabitants as liberators’, and the armies of the countries concerned ‘began to fight alongside the Russians against the Germans’. While ‘there had to be, of necessity, a clearance from both Governments of those who had collaborated with the Germans’, National Governments – including men of all non-Fascist parties – were established, ‘without particular regard to their political outlooks’. There was no adoption of Communist policy – except in so far as the Rumanian and Bulgarian

Communists favoured such coalitions. As a result, wrote the Foreign Editor of the *Daily Herald*, from whose survey (December 7th, 1944), the passages in quotation marks have been taken, the Soviet occupying authorities had had 'no experience such as ours in Greece'. There, said the Foreign Editor, the British reputation 'where only seven weeks ago we were hailed as liberators, has fallen dreadfully in the past seven days. Things have gone wrong there.'

He was alluding to the opening of hostilities by the British-controlled Greek police, composed largely of men who had collaborated with the Germans, against an unarmed crowd on December 3rd (accidentally witnessed and described in a 'five' broadcast by a B.B.C. commentator); followed up by hostilities of the Monarchist forces against the partisans – the E.A.M. – who had borne the brunt of the fighting with the Germans. In this conflict the British forces had already begun to intervene with all their strength by land, sea and air; and the only possible outcome of their victory was bound to be the reinstatement in power of the wealthy classes who, for several years before the war, had ruled Greece by Fascist machinery and methods.

The Soviet Government rigidly abstained at the time from making any such comment on the events in Greece. But the use of fire and sword to suppress the partisans, and to restore the authorities who had suppressed the labour movement and ruled Greece as a police State from 1936 to 1941, was too much in keeping with the favours shown to Franco at the other end of the Mediterranean, with the propaganda for a European bloc excluding the U.S.S.R., and with the strategy of delaying the Second Front in Europe, for its significance to be lost in Moscow. It was only after the struggle in Greece had begun that mass demonstrations in Rumania and Bulgaria to remove the more reactionary elements from the new Governments were allowed to develop without interference by the Soviet occupying forces.

This did not prevent attempts to improve relations. At Dumbarton Oaks, from August 21st to September 29th, 1944, an Anglo-American-Soviet conference had discussed and agreed upon a wide range of proposals for the establishment of a general international security organization, to be known as 'The United Nations'. At the end of November General de Gaulle arrived in the U.S.S.R., and on December 10th the French and Soviet Governments concluded a treaty, providing that they would jointly take, after the war 'all the

necessary measures for the elimination of any new threat coming from Germany' and 'any new attempt at aggression on her part'; and would help each other should either be involved in military operations against Germany as a result of the treaty. They also undertook 'not to conclude any alliance and not take part in any coalition directed against either of the High Contracting Parties'.

Nineteen-forty-five brought renewed efforts, indeed, to establish working partnership with Britain and the U.S.A. after the war on a new basis. These efforts took the shape, in particular, of the Crimea (Yalta) Conference (February 4th to 12th) and the Potsdam Conference (July 17th to August 2nd); with the San Francisco Conference in May and June, for the establishment of the United Nations.

The Crimea Conference made detailed plans for the final military blows, and for the repatriation of liberated prisoners of war. A scheme was worked out for joint control of Germany through four Allied zones. It declared: 'It is our inflexible purpose to destroy German militarism and Nazism, and to ensure that Germany will never again be able to disturb the peace of the world.' For this purpose, not only were all German armed forces, their General Staff and their military equipment to be eliminated, war criminals brought to justice, the Nazi party and its laws and institutions wiped out, but also there was to be 'exact reparation in kind for the destruction wrought by Germans'. Nazi and militarist influences were to be removed 'from public offices and from the cultural and economic life of the German people', and there was to be elimination or control of all German industry that could be used for military production. 'Only when Nazism and militarism have been extirpated' could there be a place for the Germans in the comity of nations.

Agreement was also reached on the general lines of the United Nations Organization, particularly by an American proposal that agreement between the five permanent members of the future Security Council was essential on all questions other than those of mere procedure (the provision which became afterwards known as that of the 'veto', although no such phrase had been used in the days of the League of Nations, when agreement on similar questions required unanimous consent of some fifty nations, one adverse vote being sufficient to nullify any decision).

A Declaration on Liberated Europe insisted that the establishment of order and rebuilding of national economic life 'must be achieved by processes which will enable the liberated peoples to

destroy the last vestiges of Nazism and Fascism, and to create democratic institutions of their own choice'. Agreement was reached on fusing the various Polish authorities, inside and outside the country, in a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity, pledged to hold free elections, and laying down that 'the eastern frontier of Poland should follow the Curzon Line', with slight modifications in favour of Poland, while the latter should receive 'substantial accessions of territory in the north and west'. A similar agreement to that arrived at over the Polish Government was made in the case of Yugoslavia. A conference of the three Foreign Secretaries, meeting every three or four months, was set up.

By July, when the Potsdam Conference met, the situation had been radically transformed by the unconditional surrender of Germany. There were some features of this capitulation that showed the Germans were determined to take advantage of the divisions between the great Allies that had already made themselves noticeable. This particularly applied to the policy of mass surrender in the West, while continuing to struggle violently to the end against the Red Army. A *DAILY MAIL* correspondent with the Third American Army reported (March 31st) that the Germans were 'waiting in groups for someone to accept their surrender' and that in one voice they were telling him: 'There is practically nothing now to stop you from going straight through to Berlin ... We are holding the Russians and letting you come in'. On the same day a similar interpretation was given by the Paris correspondent of *The Times* to the 'overpowering velocity' with which the Allied armoured columns were thrusting into Germany – that the enemy was virtually broken in the West, or that 'faced by perils even more imminent on the Russian front, he is ready to accept the advance of the Western Allies as the lesser calamity'.

The purpose of this campaign of planned resistance in the east and surrender in the west had already been made clear very soon after the Anglo-American landing by a German General Staff officer, Baron von Gleicher, who was allowed to make a statement to journalists at an army hospital near London. He said: 'Our hope is that English and American troops reach Germany before the Russians, to assume protective control' (*Daily Herald*, September 8th, 1944). This was the precise opposite of what the British man in the street was saying, all over the country in 1943 and the first months of 1944 – 'I hope the Russians get to Berlin first' – and for the same reasons.

Both the average Briton and the Nazi general knew that, if the

Soviet forces occupied Germany completely, they would eradicate the Nazi and Fascist elements in the sense intended at the Crimea Conference. This meant destroying the economic power of the great landowners, the industrial magnates and the banking and merchant kings, which had been the force behind the Kaiser as behind Hitler. Whether the Western Allies would do the same, both had their doubts. But it was significant that, a few days after unconditional surrender, General Guderian, who commanded the German tank forces which overwhelmed France and Poland in 1940, and was responsible for many war crimes in Poland and the Soviet Union, was allowed to inform a representative of the British United Press at Berchtesgaden that 'a soldier after a battle feels at home with the other soldiers. It is like a football match, when you shake hands and wish each other luck'.

That he was counting on support in this attitude with some justification was shown almost immediately when it became known that a nominal head of the German State, Admiral Doenitz, was still in control of a *de facto* German Government at Flensburg, with his own Foreign Minister and other subordinates, with his own wireless station in full operation, and with more than 150,000 fully-armed German service personnel living in barracks under their own officers. Not only so, but the B.B.C. was permitted to record a long interview, which it repeatedly transmitted, with the Admiral's 'Foreign Minister', in which the latter warned the Allies against 'chaos' which might lead to a big swing to the Left. Although this aroused violent protests in Britain, as well as in the Soviet press, Mr Churchill on May 16th made a comment which the *News Chronicle* called 'ambiguous and disturbing', to the effect that 'it is our aim that the Germans should administer their country in obedience to Allied directions'. The implication – that prominent Nazis could be recognized as representative 'Germans' – was only too clear.

At the opening of the United Nations Conference at San Francisco on April 26th, Molotov, calling for co-operation between the democratic and peace-loving powers in the post-war period as the basis for an effective international organization, had already warned the Conference that the opponents of such an organization 'have not laid down their arms. They continue their subversive activities even now, though mostly in a hidden veiled form'. The question of tenderness to Fascists arose in the course of that conference, when it came out that representatives of the Polish Provisional Government



functioning in Warsaw, as the leader of the main popular forces which had fought by the side of the Allies for the liberation of their country, were refused an invitation, while Argentina, which was branded by the United States Secretary of State on September 7th, 1944, as 'the headquarters of a Fascist movement in this hemisphere and a potential source of infection for the rest of the Americas', and was a country where, according to President Roosevelt on October 1st, 1944, there was 'the increasing application of Nazi-Fascist methods', was invited – without consulting the U.S.S.R.

In spite of these disagreeable revelations of differences between the Allies, the San Francisco Conference succeeded in working out a United Nations Charter which was adopted unanimously.

## 6. POTSDAM

The Potsdam Conference, which met between July 17th and August 2nd, formally established a Council of Foreign Ministers of the United Kingdom, the U.S.S.R., China, France and the U.S.A., with its permanent seat in London. The Conference reaffirmed the previous declarations on the trial of war criminals, and agreed on the transfer of German populations remaining in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. It also agreed on procedure for the preparation of peace treaties with Italy and the other satellite countries. It declared that the conclusion of peace treaties with recognized democratic Governments in those States would enable the three Powers to support applications from them for membership of the United Nations. The three Powers also took note of the formation of a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity, as provided by the Crimea decision, and accepted the Oder-Neisse line as the boundary of the former German area to be 'under the administration of the Polish State', pending the final delimitation of Poland's western frontier by the peace settlement.

But the most important decisions at Potsdam were those relating to Germany, and this just because, in the eyes of the Soviet Union at any rate, they provided a precise and satisfactory basis of compromise for co-operation in European and world affairs between the three Great Powers. In this sense they represented a negation of all the disquieting features in relationships with those Powers which had shown themselves during the war years, and which have been mentioned earlier. This was because the Potsdam decisions not only provided for the destruction of the *immediate* attributes of German

militarist and Fascist aggression – the armed forces and their equipment, the General Staff and its institutions, the Nazi Party and its laws and organizations – but also struck at the *roots* of these phenomena, the permanent forces in Germany making for aggression and attempts at world domination, namely, the great trusts and the militarist Junkers. At the same time, they by no means demanded the elimination of capitalism or private property.

The preamble to the Potsdam Agreement stated precisely:

The purpose of this Agreement is to carry out the Crimea Declaration on Germany. German militarism and Nazism will be extirpated and the Allies will take in agreement together, now and in the future, the other measures necessary to assure that Germany never again will threaten her neighbours or the peace of the world.

Only after stating this cardinal principle did the preamble go on to speak of the ‘eventual’ reconstruction of the life of the German people on a democratic and peaceful basis, and of their taking their place ‘in due course’ among the free and peaceful peoples of the world.

Then followed a long statement of political and economic principles. The first ten sections dealt with such matters as complete disarmament and demilitarization of Germany and ‘elimination or control of all German industry that could be used for military production’, the destruction of the Nazi Party and its institutions, the repeal of Nazi laws, the prosecution of war criminals and internment of Nazi leaders, supporters and officials, the elimination of Nazi doctrines from education and justice, the restoration of local self-government and of certain essential central German administrations, freedom of speech, press and religion and the formation of trade unions. Of great importance was Clause 6, laying down that all Nazi Party members who were more than nominal participants in its activities, and all other persons hostile to Allied purposes, would be removed, not only from public and semi-public office but ‘from positions of responsibility in important private undertakings’. They were to be replaced by persons capable of assisting in developing genuine democratic institutions.

This in the Soviet Union was understood as meaning the replacement of all who had played a key part in big business, industry and the banks under Hitler, whether nominally Nazis or not, by an-

ti-Fascists.

This impression was heightened by the clauses, nine in number, dealing with economic principles. These laid down that 'production of metals, chemicals, machinery and other items directly necessary to a war economy shall be rigidly controlled and restricted to Germany's approved postwar peace-time needs'. Productive capacity not needed for this purpose would be removed as reparations or destroyed. The next clauses were particularly important in Soviet eyes:

At the earliest practicable date, the German economy shall be decentralized for the purpose of eliminating the present excessive concentration of economic power as exemplified in particular by cartels, syndicates, trusts and other monopolistic arrangements.

In organizing the German economy, emphasis shall be given to the development of agriculture and peaceful domestic industries.

Only then, under Clause 14, came a provision which was to be made much of in succeeding years – that during the period of occupation 'Germany shall be treated as a single economic unit'.

Coming where it did, the provision about economic unity was a logical consequence of the earlier provisions. Without them it had no sense. If the political and economic measures ensuring that German militarism and Nazism would be 'extirpated' were carried out throughout Germany, then there was a basis for treating her 'as a single economic unit'. Obviously there could be no such basis if the policy of 'extirpation', particularly in regard to monopolies and Nazi personnel, were not carried into effect everywhere.

A separate agreement provided for reparations, in the shape of industrial capital equipment, of which the amount and character would be determined by the Control Council 'under policies fixed by the Allied Commission on Reparations', and subject to the final approval of the zone commanders concerned.

For the Soviet Union, Potsdam meant the destruction of the forces which had twice in thirty years spread vast devastation in its territories. In the Soviet zone, therefore, the large landed estates were broken up among the landless and poor peasantry. All known large and small supporters of the Nazi regime and its war machine were removed from their posts in private enterprise as well as public office. Works committees and trade unions were freely formed by the

workmen. They were encouraged to demand, and successfully to press upon the various provincial governments which were set up, nationalization without compensation of the most important branches of industry, and the banks. The result of these measures, and of the reparations removals which at once began, was to destroy over a large part of Germany the power of aggressive Junkerdom and war-making monopoly capital.

In the meantime the Soviet Union concluded a Treaty with Czechoslovakia on June 29th, 1945, under which the Transcarpathian Ukraine, which had made least advances during the period of the first Czechoslovak Republic to which it was attached after 1919 (despite the overwhelmingly Ukrainian and Russian character of its population), was ceded to the U.S.S.R., in accordance with petitions signed by the vast majority of its people in November and December, 1944. Treaties of friendship were concluded with Yugoslavia on April 11th and the Provisional Polish Government on April 21st.

A particularly important treaty of friendship was concluded with China on August 14th, under which the Soviet Union undertook to withdraw its forces from Manchuria within three months of the Japanese surrender, and various provisions were made for special Soviet rights in management of the Manchurian railway (formerly in great part Russian property), in a naval base at Port Arthur and in a free port at Dairen – all for a period of thirty years only. China in return undertook to recognize the independence of Outer Mongolia (the Mongolian People's Republic) if a plebiscite there showed that the people wanted such independence.

These provisions were carried out by both sides – except that the Soviet Union, which had intended to withdraw its troops from Manchuria by December 3rd, agreed at the Chinese Government's request to postpone this withdrawal for some time.

The Soviet troops which had entered northern Norway in the autumn of 1944, and had earned high praise from the Norwegian authorities for their co-operative spirit and aid to the population, left at the beginning of October, 1945, despite a furious campaign in the American, Swedish and West German press alleging that they intended to stay permanently in the country. Similarly in October, 1945, the Soviet forces evacuated the Danish island of Bornholm, occupied by Soviet troops earlier in the year owing to the continued resistance of German forces there. This had also been the occasion of a campaign of insinuations in the newspapers of many countries,

particularly those of Sweden, the United States and Great Britain.

In September, 1945, many British and other newspapers had begun a campaign of denigration of the Red Army, on the ground of its alleged outrages against the Berlin population: and also on account of the alleged 'childlike' wonder of its soldiers at the abundance of such things as wrist-watches, fountain-pens and other small accessories of civilization. In reality, while there were some individual excesses by troops who had fought their way for many hundreds of miles, seeing evidence of the most fiendish mass atrocities by the German Army on a calculated and gigantic scale, particularly against women, the number of such incidents was grossly exaggerated, and a great many stories on investigation proved to have been launched by Nazi agents. Moreover, both the British and American newspapers were well aware of similar incidents in the other zones of occupation, where the soldiers had not had many months of provocation. As for fountain-pens and wrist-watches (not to speak of silks and cutlery), while it was true that Soviet economy was not turning out such things in anything like an Anglo-American scale, it would have been enough to follow in the tracks of the British and American armies as they entered the undevastated areas of Germany, particularly in the towns, to have received an adequate reply to the campaign against the Soviet troops. Moreover, again, the British and American soldiers had not the excuse of knowing that their home countries had been swept bare by the robber army of Hitler, not merely of small personal belongings of the kind mentioned, but of children's shoes, women's underwear, pots and pans and every other piece of movable property, from village and town alike.

What was disturbing, however, was not that commercially-owned newspapers thought such sensations would interest their readers, even at the price of blackening the reputation of an Ally. The serious feature of these campaigns was that neither the High Commands of the Allied armies nor the Governments of Britain and the U.S.A. thought fit publicly to contradict them.

So also with the Potsdam Agreement, against which a violent campaign began in responsible sections of the press of Britain and America. Most striking was a full-scale attack in the *Economist* (August 11th, 1945), on what it called the 'large-scale de-industrialization of Germany', by the proposed system of reparations. The transfer of equipment to countries which had been savagely devastated by the Germans, and particularly to the Soviet

Union which had had more than 31,000 factories destroyed by them, was denounced by this leading British business journal as transforming Germany into an 'economic slum'. Incredible as it might seem to Soviet readers, and therefore all the more dangerous, not one word of sympathy with the devastated Soviet Union, or with those numerous countries in Eastern Europe which for many years had been under German economic domination just because of her disproportionate industrial development for war purposes, was to be found in that article. On the contrary, the scheme to transfer the German industries mentioned in the Potsdam Agreement in order to redress the economic balance in Europe – a course which had been suggested even by such an unimpeachably moderate institution as the Royal Institute of International Affairs during the war – was denounced as 'the Russians' determination to loot Germany'. Reconciliation with the Germans, and not the crying needs of Eastern Europe and particularly of the U.S.S.R., was the criterion taken by the newspaper; it actually went so far as to declaim against the Potsdam Agreement as calculated to 'reinforce autarky in Russia', i.e. to reinforce Soviet economic independence by healing at least some of the wounds inflicted on its economy by German destruction.

Obviously the *Economist's* ideal was a Russia left in the grievously stricken condition on which Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart's 'Russian experts' had been banking, and of which Sir Samuel Hoare had, two years before, held out such alluring hopes to Count Jordana. Obviously the conception of a just economic settlement in Europe held by the *Economist* was that, if there were to be industrial destruction and weakening in Europe as a result of the war, it should be the Soviet, Yugoslav and Polish peoples that suffered them, rather than the poor Germans.

Against this conception no voice was raised by the Labour Government which had come into office in the course of the Potsdam discussions.

However, it was still possible that the victorious Labour Party would have something different to say, once it realized what the implications of the *Economist's* policy meant, and perhaps when it learned that in the British and American zones the generals who had shown such energy since D-Day on June 6th, 1944, began to display the most unaccountable lassitude and impotence when it came to removing Nazis from big business posts and public office, dismantling war factories and encouraging the workmen to form trade unions.

For had not the Labour Party Conference, in December, 1944, adopted after eight months of discussion a memorandum on 'The International Post-War Settlement' issued by its Executive Committee the previous April? Had not this memorandum declared that the power of the military caste, the German landowners and the industrialists, 'must be destroyed'? Had it not declared that reparations should take the form of deliveries in kind, or of German labour in the ravaged territories? Had it not urged that members of the Gestapo, S.S. and other Nazi organizations should be sent 'for a period' to work in the U.S.S.R. and elsewhere? In other words, had not the common man, whose victory at the General Election in July, 1945, over Mr Churchill's Tory home and foreign policy startled the world, embodied in this programme the idea, referred to earlier, that it would be a good thing if 'the Russians got to Berlin first'?

For these reasons, when Molotov was reporting on November 6th, 1945, at the first peacetime celebration of the revolutionary anniversary, he was not unhopeful. The Potsdam decisions on reparations by Germany had not yet 'made satisfactory headway', he said. The forces of Fascism had not been 'finally crushed' yet, and much still remained to be done to 'enable the liberated peoples to destroy the last vestiges of Nazism and Fascism', which the Crimean declaration had promised. The London Conference of Foreign Ministers in the late summer had ended in failure, owing to differences in applying the Potsdam Agreement which had made themselves manifest; and Molotov said that this failure 'was a certain warning'. Moreover, he pointed out, 'there is also quite a lot of noise going on in connexion with the creation of blocs and groups of States, as a means of safeguarding certain interests in foreign relations'.

Nevertheless, Molotov reminded his hearers that in the Allied countries, as a rule, 'the reactionary forces have been to a considerable extent dislodged from their former positions, clearing the road for democratic parties, old and new.' The reforms being carried out in many European countries, and the nationalization of big industry planned in others, were lending 'a new spirit and confidence to the growing ranks of the democratic movement in Europe and outside of Europe'. The Soviet Union would do its utmost to develop trade, economic and cultural relations with other countries. As for difficulties among the three Great Powers,

the Anglo-Saxon-American coalition encountered difficulties during the war as well. However, the coalition of the three Powers proved able to find, though not always at once, the correct solution of the immediate problem, in the interests of the entire anti-Hitler coalition of large and small States.

It was this coalition, Molotov said, which had taken the initiative in setting up the United Nations and thereby assuming 'chief responsibility' for its results. Those results would be successful if the three Great Powers co-operated with each other; in particular, 'the new organization should not become the tool of any Great Power, since for any single Power to claim a leading role in general world affairs is just as inconsistent as for it to claim world domination'. At the end of a full review of the grave damage suffered and the enormous inner strength revealed by the Soviet Union in the course of the war, Molotov said:

#### *Further Reading*

In addition to the various war memoirs mentioned in the text on Soviet foreign relations the reader can refer with advantage to the two volumes of documents entitled *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Patriotic War* (1946 and 1947). For Soviet economy during the war, Mr Dobb has an important final chapter in his book: some details may be found in the present writer's little book, *Man and Plan in Soviet Economy*. The most extensive work in this sphere so far has been of N. A. Voznesensky's already mentioned *War Economy of the U.S.S.R.* For informative accounts of the life of the Soviet people in wartime, the books of Alexander Werth – *Moscow '41*, *Leningrad, The Year of Stalingrad* – and Maurice Hindus, *Mother Russia*, are of great value, in addition to Margaret Wettlin's account, mentioned in the text. But no less important, to understand the Soviet spirit, are books like *Soviet Documents on Nazi Atrocities* (two volumes, 1942 and 1943), and Nikitin and Vagin, *Crimes of the German Fascists in the Leningrad Region* (1946). *Stalin's War Speeches* (containing also his military Orders of the Day) gives useful references for military events, apart from its documentary importance. William Mandel, *Guide to the Soviet Union* (Dial Press, New York, 1949) is an exceptionally informative and scholarly reference book. An interesting account by the well-known American political writer, Mr Lippmann,



of how in 1942-3 he supported the 'Churchillian strategy' of invading southern Europe, but changed over to support of a front in the West 'once it became evident that Germany would be invaded,' by the Soviet forces, appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* (March 1950).

Lastly, about our part in foreign policy. The Soviet Union has always been given first place to promoting peace and co-operation with other countries, for the sake of universal peace and the development of international business relations. While we are living in a 'system of imperialist States', and while the roots of Fascism and aggression have not been finally extirpated, our vigilance in regard to possible new violators of peace should not slacken, and concern for the strengthening of co-operation between the peace-loving Powers will continue to be our most important duty.

## *Epilogue*

This is a convenient point at which to interrupt the history of the Soviet Union. From the autumn of 1945 onwards, a new era opened in that history, and indeed in the history of the whole world. The Soviet leaders confidently proclaimed it to be an era of peaceful construction. From then onwards Soviet history belongs to the post-war period, of which the main contours are only beginning to emerge, in the roughest outline, several years later.

If we look back over the whole period since 1917, what could the Soviet citizen say to himself about the twenty-eight years which had passed?

First and above all, the Soviet peoples had been the first in the world to build a Socialist society – one, that is, in which there was public ownership of all the means of creating wealth, and exploitation of man by man had been abolished; a society which would have been recognized as Socialist by Robert Owen and Etienne Cabet, by Marx and Engels, by Paul Lafargue and Antonio Labriola, by William Morris and Eugene V. Debs. Socialism had been built in a country which in all material respects, and in most others – except for the overriding factor of the conscious will of its working class – was least prepared for the change from capitalism. Russia had been a country in 1917 in which the relics of feudalism were still alive and potent, particularly in the ruthless barbarism of its autocracy and landowning classes, and in the historic abnegation of the struggle for individual liberty on the part of the bourgeoisie. Consequently Socialism had been built in Russia under Russian conditions – and not those of Britain, France or the United States. It was conditioned in its externals and its machinery by the past, as scientific Socialism had always said it would be in every country.

But it was Socialism. No one in the Soviet Union could derive an unearned income from stocks and shares, from debentures or colonial investments, from ownership of estates or family factories. And this system of common and collective ownership had brought Russia in less than a generation into the front rank of industrial Powers. For the first time in history, a huge peasant majority engaged in the petty production of bare subsistence, or of small surpluses of commodities for sale on the market, had stepped out into a system of collective production, which had borne tangible fruit in the shape of growing abundance for community and individual alike. In the Soviet facto-

ries, mines and offices, methods had been devised of expanding democratic participation in management and planning, which again satisfied both individual initiative and the need of the community for ever larger output of all kinds of manufactures. Women were now equal with men, economically and socially, beyond all question; and this equality was real and not only legal. All children had equal rights to the highest education and to whatever vocation they chose, and the main distinction in this respect inherited from the past – that between town and country – was being eliminated as fast as the money and materials could be found. Peoples who had been subjected to racial, political, social and economic inequality were now the equals of the Russians, and discrimination against a man on account of his colour or past status was strictly punishable by law. Unemployment was only a dim memory, health standards were rising at a rapid rate, every achievement of culture and science throughout the world was open to the Soviet citizen, young and old, man and woman, who might wish to raise his intellectual stature or widen his spiritual horizon.

The U.S.S.R. was far from the perfect society or the perfect life, as yet – but it was moving *faster* in its improvement than any previous community in history. The speed of progress was due particularly to the way in which Lenin's advice – that 'every cook should be able to manage the State' – was being acted upon. The collective farms, managing most of Soviet agriculture, depended for their success upon active discussion of their work by their members. In Soviet industrial enterprise, the freely expressed opinions of its workers were an essential ingredient of the drafting and fulfilment of the plans. Two vast sides of life in the modern community – social insurance and factory inspection – were entirely controlled by something like two million volunteers. The one-and-a-quarter million members of local authorities had their work criticized and their efficiency multiplied by about ten times that number of voluntary spare-time members of their commissions or committees. In every sphere of public work this criticism and self-criticism was the motive force of the new society. Like Pericles in his *Funeral Oration* at Athens, the Soviet citizen could say with truth: 'Our citizens attend both to public and to private duties, and do not allow absorption in their own various affairs to interfere with their knowledge of the City's. We differ from other States in regarding the man who holds aloof from public life not as quiet but as useless'. Unlike the citizens of ancient Athens, however, the Soviet citizens included all the

population, both men and women, and they had no slaves to do the arduous essential work for them, (whatever the malicious rubbish talked about ‘millions in labour camps’).

Moreover, for the thinking Soviet citizen this was the achievement of Marxism – that Marxism which had been derided and exploded hundreds of times over, as well as banished and persecuted, in Russia before 1917 as in many countries since. The political party which led in the securing of these achievements founded itself upon Marxism. Its programme, in which the results achieved during these twenty-eight years could be found first in the shape of aims and objects, claimed no divine or mystical inspiration : it took its stand upon the analysis of historical development and economic trends to be found in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *Capital* (1867), in Lenin’s *Development of Capitalism in Russia* (1899), his *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), and his *State and Revolution* (1917). The economic planning for which the Communist Party of the Soviet Union bore prime responsibility, and with which the name of its leader Joseph Stalin was primarily associated, was based from beginning to end upon that same ‘outdated’, ‘19th century’, labour law of value, ridiculed in the universities of the whole world, including Tsarist Russia, of which Marx had sketched out the application in a Socialist society in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875).

Moreover, this Socialist State, this Socialist community run according to the principles of Marx, had emerged victorious from the struggles and sufferings of the most gigantic war in history, one in which some four-fifths of the population of the globe took part, in various degrees, and in which more than 110 million people were mobilized for war service in the two camps. The Soviet Union, after all that had been written about it from 1917 to 1939, had won the war against an even more terrible and powerful enemy than that which had laid Tsarist Russia low in 1915 – one which had overthrown every other country on the continent of Europe which it had attacked since 1936. And whereas Tsarist Russia had had protective military help from its Allies for more than two years, the Soviet Union had won its main victories without any appreciable relief from its Allies. The Soviet Army and Soviet citizens – and in their heart of hearts many foreign statesmen – were convinced that the Soviet Union could have won the war alone, just as it had ‘torn the guts’ out of the Nazi Empire practically unaided.

As a result of this growth of strength, however, the Soviet Union had had as allies in the supreme test of 1941-45 some of the greatest Powers in the world, headed by statesmen who for many years had consistently hated it and vilified it. During the war words of friendship and admiration were frequent on their lips. But experience of the deeds of the war, as distinct from the words, had left the Soviet citizen with a bitter feeling strikingly expressed in an official Soviet communiqué published some years later:\*

The Soviet people believe that if an ally is in trouble, one should help him out by all available means, that one should not take an ally as a temporary fellow-traveller, but as a friend, and should rejoice in his successes and in his growing strength. British and American representatives do not agree with this, and consider such morality naive. They are guided by the notion that a strong ally is dangerous, that the strengthening of an ally is not in their interests, that it is better to have a weak ally than a strong one, and that if the ally nevertheless grows stronger, then measures should be adopted to weaken him ...

There was nothing fortuitous about the policy of postponing the opening of the Second Front. It was fostered by the aspiration of those reactionary circles in Britain and the U.S.A. who pursued their own aims in the war against Germany, aims that had nothing in common with the aims of the war of liberation against German Fascism. Their plans did not call for the utter defeat of German Fascism. They were interested in undermining Germany's power, and mainly in eliminating Germany as a dangerous competitor on the world market, in conformity with their own narrow, selfish aims. They did not, however, at all intend to liberate Germany and other countries from the rule of the reactionary forces which are a constant source of imperialist aggression and of Fascism, or to carry out fundamental democratic reforms.

At the same time, they calculated that the U.S.S.R. would be weakened, bled white, that as a result of the ex-

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\* *Falsifiers of History* (1948).

hausting war it would for a lengthy period of time lose its importance as a great and mighty Power, and would after the war become dependent on the U.S.A. and Great Britain.

The Soviet Union, naturally, cannot consider such an attitude towards an ally as normal.

However bitter these conclusions – and, in spite of the iron self-restraint imposed upon itself by the Soviet Union during the war, in its attitude to the social systems and traditional policies of its allies, such conclusions probably did not come entirely as a surprise – the Soviet citizen had faith in the future. His faith was based upon the unmistakable and towering strength of his country. His faith was based upon Molotov's warning in November, 1945, that even the discovery of atomic energy should not encourage 'fancies concerning the utilization of this discovery in the international play of forces', since no such technical secrets of great importance 'could remain the possession of any single country or any narrow group of countries'. The Soviet citizen was encouraged in his confidence by the certainty that, after the horrors of war, there were no nations in Europe or Asia whose broad masses would for a single moment contemplate with indifference the still greater horrors of another, and particularly of a war of aggression. The Soviet citizen was reinforced in his confidence, finally, by the certainty that the working class in countries like Britain and France, which in every strike and other partial struggle had learned to its cost that there was no lie and no slander which enemies of the workers would not use, had discovered during the long years of the Soviet Union's struggle for life that this was even more applicable when the workers of an entire country had put an end to the system which produced strikes and class conflict. He believed, therefore, that workingmen and women of other lands would not be led by the nose into a war against their natural friends and comrades, the peoples of the U.S.S.R.

The aim of the Soviet citizen was to rebuild what the Germans had destroyed, to develop the national economy still further beyond what had been planned before the war, and to improve the living standards of the people. In these aims he thought himself marching in step with the common people of all countries.

The struggle to preserve and fulfil these aims became the real content of the years that followed.

## INDEX

[These page numbers correspond to the original edition, not to this edition. Please use an electronic search for these topics.]

- Agriculture (Russian), 11-12: (Soviet), 72, 132, 135-6, 144, 149, 156, 157-8, 160, 173, 178-9, 185, 191-3, 226, 238, 243, 268, 271, 309, 326. *See also* Collective farming, Peasantry
- Allied supplies in 2nd World War, 314, 317, 323-4, 335, 342, 347-8, 352
- American-Soviet relations, 42, 78-9, 83, 85-6, 112, 122, 123-7, 149, 151, 176, 182, 205, 209-10, 212, 218, 254, 265, 288-9, 291, 305, 323, 335, 342-3, 346-8, 353-4, 364, 366, 369, 374
- Baltic Republics (provinces), 18, 35, 42, 59, 112, 115-6, 118, 125, 128, 155, 211, 222, 229, 280-4, 288, 290, 296, 303-5, 320, 333
- Bessarabia, 60, 79, 297
- Bolsheviks (party), 31-8, 43, 55-6, 113-4, 117, 134, 137-8, 146, 148-9, 246-7, 271-2, 310, 322
- Brest-Litovsk, 41-2, 44, 47, 74-7, 81, 101, 220
- British policy towards U.S.S.R., 78, 84, 93-4, 96-7, 111-5, 118, 119-20, 121, 123-7, 129, 150, 155, 161-2, 163-5, 170-1, 172, 174-5, 181-2, 186, 199, 204-5, 210-11, 215-7, 222-3, 234-5, 249, 251-2, 254, 256-7, 258, 264-6, 274-7, 282, 285-6, 293-4, 299-300, 305, 343-6, 348-351
- British trade unions and U.S.S.R., 129, 150, 164-6, 171, 230, 345
- Bukharin, 43-4, 74, 76, 145, 158, 182-3, 241
- Bullitt Mission, 126-7
- Capital, foreign, 14-15, 68, 148, 151-3, 154, 159, 163-4, 201  
Russian, 23, 25-6, 32, 61-2, 64-5, 72, 81, 148, 158, 173, 178, 202
- Central Asia, 12, 18, 22, 25, 45, 60-1, 111, 119, 140, 167-8, 172, 185-7, 214, 309
- Cheka *see* Extraordinary Commission
- Chicherin, 78-9, 86, 123-4, 125, 128, 152-3, 156, 162
- China, 150, 163, 172, 175, 185-6, 211, 254-5, 260, 303, 372-3
- Church, 20, 46-7, 50, 109, 157, 331-2
- Churchill, 123, 126, 165, 172, 220, 282, 303, 307, 319, 322, 345-7, 352, 355-6, 359-61, 363, 369, 375
- Collective farming, 179-80, 185, 188- 93, 213, 224, 231, 239, 271, 311.  
*See also* Peasantry
- Collective security, 222-3, 233-4, 237, 248-55, 257-8, 260, 265, 286, 339, 360-1
- Committees of Village Poor, 98, 108
- Confessions in Court, 202-3, 216-17, 241, 259

*A History of the U.S.S.R.*

- Congresses (Conferences), Communist Party, 43, 77, 113, 137, 139, 145, 156, 159, 169-70, 172-3, 177-80, 183-4, 193, 197, 219, 223, 225, 242, 270, 271, 310  
Social-Democratic, 30-1, 31-2  
of Soviets, 40, 42, 43, 46, 49, 52-3, 57-9, 100, 101, 111, 123, 128, 131, 136, 137-41, 151, 155, 183-4, 209, 242, 245, 253
- Constituent Assembly, 54-7, 85
- Constitution, Soviet, 57, 100, 107-9, 242-7, 269, 332
- Cooperatives, 68, 71, 129, 136, 160, 180, 198, 231-2
- Counter-revolutionaries, 81, 88-90, 99, 105, 116-17, 155, 175, 181, 195, 201-4, 229
- Curzon Line, 121, 295, 356, 362, 367
- Czechoslovak Legion, 83-6, 95-6, 99-100, 102, 104, 110-11, 113-14, 119, 123  
Republic, 85, 154, 176, 221-2, 234, 257-8, 260-5, 274, 278, 289, 361-2, 372  
units with Red Army, 318, 341
- Danube, 150, 304
- Democrats, revolutionary, 16, 26-7
- Diplomats, Allied, in 1918, 78-9, 81, 83-4, 85-6, 87-94, 104-5
- Disarmament, 153, 155, 176, 181, 211-12, 215
- Duma, State, 21-3
- Economy, (Russian), 15; (Soviet), 72, 144, 156-60, 168, 173, 188, 226, 243, 266, 268, 309, 329
- Education, (before 1917) 16; (after Revolution), 50-2, 60, 110, 135, 213-14, 233, 271, 308, 331
- Emulation, 74, 137-8, 183-5, 196, 200-1, 232, 239, 247, 268, 328-9
- Extraordinary Commission, 48, 81, 87-8, 101-2, 105-6, 151
- Financial policy, 51, 67-8, 71, 109, 110, 134, 147, 157-8, 160, 171, 177, 180, 196, 221, 327
- Finland, 20, 42, 59, 81, 128, 150, 155, 171, 211, 229, 262, 277, 283, 290, 297-300, 307, 313, 317, 319-20
- Five Year Plans, 183-4, 188, 199, 212-15, 221, 225, 238, 270-1, 310
- Food difficulties, 35, 47-8, 51, 79-80, 97-9, 104, 130, 132-4, 149, 151, 197-8, 227, 230, 317, 326
- Forgeries, 46, 107, 150, 161, 164-5
- France, relations with, (Tsardom), 25-6; (Soviet), 78-9, 81, 84-5, 89-93, 124-5, 162, 172, 175, 209-11, 222-3, 234-5, 261-2, 301, 366
- Franchise, (under Tsar), 19, 22; (Soviet), 107, 242, 244
- Germany, relations with, (Tsardom), 245; (Soviet), 41-2, 44, 83, 102, 154, 172, 181, 209-11, 257. *See also* Hitlerite policy  
1945 plans for, 367-72, 374-5, 381



## *Index*

- Hitlerite policy, 215, 217-9, 222-3, 236, 240, 248, 252, 257, 261, 273-5, 278, 285, 291-4, 296, 301-2, 304-6, 310, 313, 330-1
- Industry, (Tsarist Russia), 12-15, 23, 25, 35; (Soviet), 64-7, 70-1, 100-1, 129-33, 137, 147, 151, 156-8, 160, 168-9, 172-3, 178, 183-4, 193-7, 212-13, 225, 232, 238, 243, 268, 270-1, 309, 311, 325, 328
- Initiative, mass, 69-70, 71, 138-9, 166, 173-4, 178, 183, 232, 307, 315
- Invasions, Allied, 78-9, 83-6, 88, 104, 152, 161, 326-7
- Japan, relations with, 78-9, 83, 85-6, 90, 110, 112, 114, 122, 150, 155, 211, 234, 248, 254-5, 259-60, 294, 303, 324-5
- Kadets, 24-6, 34, 46
- Kulaks, 12, 17, 28, 32, 62-3, 72, 79-80, 81, 97-9, 110, 117, 168-70, 179-81, 185, 188, 191-2, 213, 231, 333
- Land, division of, 52-3, 54-5, 62-3, 98-9, 141
- League of Nations, 149-50, 154, 223, 237, 250, 252, 254-5, 257, 280, 284, 299
- Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, 42, 44, 48, 53-4, 55-6, 101-2, 117
- Lenin, 30, 31, 34, 36, 40, 42-3, 48-9, 51-2, 55, 57-8, 67-75, 77, 80, 99, 100, 104, 107, 126, 127, 130, 132, 134, 137, 139, 145, 156-8, 160, 168, 177-8, 310, 379-80
- Litvinov, 41, 78, 123-4, 126, 128-9, 174, 176, 204, 209-12, 215-16, 218, 222-3, 248-51, 253-9, 261-5, 274, 277, 279
- Loans, (Imperial), 14, 25, 125, 151, 159, 163; (Soviet), 164, 193
- Losses in 2nd World War, 317-18, 321, 324-5, 327, 329-31, 333, 334, 339, 353-4, 358
- Marxism, 30-1, 49, 61, 63, 77, 182, 195, 221, 223-4, 380
- Mensheviks, 31-8, 46, 80, 96-7, 99-100, 141-2, 203
- Molotov, 169, 193, 205, 207-8, 225, 233, 253, 268, 270, 279, 281, 283, 287-8, 291-3, 300, 304, 310, 346-8, 375-6, 381-2
- Nationalities, subject, 12, 17-18, 20-1, 33-5, 45, 58  
emancipation of, 58-9, 139-42, 167-8, 214, 228, 244, 332-3
- Nationalization, of industry, 57, 65-7, 73, 100-1, 130, 151, 164  
of banks, 67-8  
of land, 62
- Nicholas II, 20-2, 24, 36, 100, 102-3
- 'One-way gun' theory, 215-16, 219-20, 222, 234-7, 248, 252, 254, 265-6, 274, 276, 290
- 'Peaceful coexistence', 76, 124, 151-4, 165, 176, 210, 217-18, 228, 253, 273, 376
- Peace offers, 40-1, 112, 123-9, 153
- Peasantry, (under Tsardom), 11-12, 16, 17, 22; (after Revolution), 52, 60, 62-3, 132-3, 135-6, 144, 158, 168, 179, 243-4. *See also* Agriculture, Collective farming

*A History of the U.S.S.R.*

- Penal reform, 109, 203, 228  
Persia (Iran), 59, 129, 176, 211, 297, 342  
Planning, 136-7, 310, 326-7. *See also* Five Year Plans  
Plekhanov, 29-30  
Poland, 18, 22, 42, 81, 112, 115, 119-21, 150, 155, 204, 211, 219, 222, 229, 264, 275, 280, 284, 287, 289, 294-5, 337, 367, 369-70, 372  
Poles, in London, 341, 349, 351-2, 355-7, 362-3  
    in U.S.S.R., 318, 322, 342, 362-3  
Prinkipo proposals, 124-6  
Red Army, 49, 83, 85, 89 -90, 101, 104, 110-22, 133, 140-2, 151, 155, 227, 239, 260, 262, 264, 288-9, 294-5, 296, 314-25, 340  
Revolts, peasant, 16-18, 27, 34, 69  
Right Opposition, 182-3, 201. *See also* Bukharin, Trotsky  
Second Front, 319, 321, 335-8, 346, 358-9, 361, 381  
'Slave Labour', 203, 205-9, 379  
Social-Democrats, 31, 35  
Socialism in one country, 75, 170, 182, 378-9  
Socialist-Revolutionaries, 28, 36, 46, 53-5, 62-3, 80, 93, 95, 97-102, 154, 204  
Soviets, 34-6, 38, 48, 50-2, 57, 59, 61, 94, 98-9, 107-8, 133, 140, 142, 167-8, 177, 227, 244, 272  
Spain, Republican 251-2  
Stalin, 18, 31, 34, 43, 51, 58, 60, 111, 113-4, 117-8, 120, 137, 139, 142, 145, 155, 157, 159, 177-8, 182, 185, 189-90, 194-6, 215, 219-21, 223-4, 226-8, 232, 242, 245-6, 269-73, 280, 291, 302, 308, 310, 315, 318-19, 322-3, 334-9, 346-7, 352, 360-1, 363, 380  
State capitalism, 72-3, 170  
State farms, 179, 182, 213  
Strikes, 18-19, 21, 34-5, 69, 148, 159  
Supreme Economic Council, 57, 65-7, 70, 101, 130-1, 137, 203  
Supreme Soviet, 244-7, 269, 308, 332  
Switzerland, relations with, 162, 284  
Trade Unions, 19, 21, 38, 50, 57, 64, 71, 94, 134, 136, 145, 147, 156, 166, 172-3, 178, 196, 269-70, 308  
Trotsky (Trotskyists), 34, 41-3, 78, 90, 117-18, 120, 145, 158-60, 169-72, 176-8, 183, 239-42, 258-9  
Turkey, 59, 129, 154-5, 162, 176, 211, 221, 249-50, 297, 301, 306  
Western civilization, 14-15, 93-4, 150, 171, 354-5, 359-60  
White forces, 44-5, 78, 83, 94, 96, 104, 110-22, 126-7, 140, 168  
Workmen's Control, 47, 57, 64-5, 70, 74, 131  
World revolution, 74-7, 170