

Tripurani Bhadravati

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THE RUSSIAN PEASANT:
AND OTHER STUDIES





A MODERN TARAS BULBA PLANS A GUERILLA ATTACK
(From *Krokodil*, Moscow)

THE RUSSIAN PEASANT : AND OTHER STUDIES

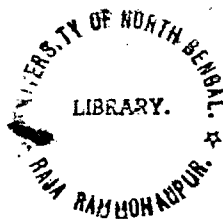
by

JOHN MAYNARD

Author of Russia in Flux : before October

With a Foreword by

ERNEST BARKER



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FOREWORD

IT WAS in 1918, twenty-four years ago, that I had the honour of writing an introduction to a volume published by the Oxford University Press on the history of Russia from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks. Today, nearly a quarter of a century afterwards, I am honoured by my old friend, Sir John Maynard, with an invitation to write a foreword to this volume, with its study of the Russian peasant and its other essays. Friendship imposes on me a command to obey. A deep respect for the learning and the judgment of the author adds an incentive to that command. He brings to the volume which he has written singular gifts both of experience and of sympathy. A long experience in India, and particularly in the Punjab, from 1886 to 1926, has given him a background and a basis of first-hand knowledge of peasant life. He has seen and studied—and not only studied, but also helped to administer—what he described in a previous volume (*Russia in Flux*, published in 1941) as “another great agricultural Empire, having some remarkable resemblances to the Russia of the opening twentieth century”. This experience is reinforced, and quickened, by a natural gift of social sympathy. An old member of the Fabian Society, who has more than once contested a constituency as a Labour candidate, Sir John Maynard brings to his studies of the Russian peasant, and of Russian labour, an instinctive and understanding spirit of sympathetic comprehension. Wherever he touches social life, and especially the social life of the peasantry, this spirit rings as true as a bell. There is an unforgettable passage in his *Russia in Flux* which shows this spirit of comprehension—a passage in which, after describing the peasant mother philosophically resigned to her daughter’s death (“She’ll die; and there’ll be less cost”), he adds the moving words, “. . . It is the deer, smelling her dead fawn, and, assured of its death, springing away into the forest—but the deer that has learned to speak and count”.

There is another great qualification which Sir John Maynard brings to his interpretation of Russia, besides his gifts of experience and social sympathy. He has studied, with a quiet patience and an unflagging industry, both the literature and the social philosophy of Russia (so great and so influential) and the process of her historical development. In his Oxford days, at St. John’s College, he was a student of history; and he still remembers the necessity, and the value, of an historical approach to our modern problems. Too often we begin our study of Russia with the triumph of the Communist Party in the November Revolution of 1917; too often we forget that Russia, with all her changes, still largely remains the same. To study this volume is to receive a valuable lesson in depth—the depth which comes from an historic outlook added to personal experience and enriched by social sympathy. It is this combination of qualities which makes the author so safe a guide. The historic outlook,

by itself and in itself, might lead to mere conservatism. Social sympathy, by itself and in itself, might lead to uncritical laudation. When the two are mixed, and personal experience is added to both, the reader can feel a just confidence.

Some words may be quoted from the author's preface, and from the last page of his last chapter, which will illustrate admirably what has just been said. "Russia is in flux; but it is the same Russia, though with a new and important psychological addition made by the Revolution. . . . A single example will show the continuity of the agrarian problem. . . . The *Mir* dipped under the surface, and again reappeared in the form of a Collective Farm Committee . . . an example of democracy on the lower plane, which may yet prove to be one of the germs of democracy on the higher." That is well said. Equally well said are these words which come at the conclusion of the volume. "There is no real danger of this people becoming obsessed by dogma, despite the rigidity of their quasi-philosophers. *When they find that a rule does not fit life, they give the preference to life*; in other words, they fall back on more primitive and more enduring convictions. Their gift for breaking rules will save them from being pedantic. For the same reason planning will not hurt them, for they will change the plan whenever it has gone amiss. . . . Fate gave to this people a great inheritance; and they have learned to believe that they can dominate it."

The reader will observe that more than half of the chapters in this volume (some twelve out of twenty-two) are concerned with the peasant. That is natural and just when the author is dealing with a "great agricultural Empire". But there are other riches; and it is permissible, and even proper, for the writer of this foreword to draw the reader's attention to the chapter on "Religion in the Revolution" (for here is a vital issue), to that on "The Nationalities" (another vital issue), and perhaps most of all to the concluding chapter on "Personality out of Collectivism" (perhaps the most vital of all issues). Not that these are the sole "other riches" that deserve the reader's attention. He will do well to study the chapters on "The New Respectability" and "The Constitution of 1936"; and indeed he may be advised, if his time is brief and he is eager to get to fundamentals, to begin at the end and to read the last five chapters first. He may well find that his appetite grows; that his time is less brief than he thought; and that he ends by beginning at the beginning and paying the whole body of studies the whole compliment which they deserve.

"I have sought to banish from these pages", the author writes in his preface, "wolves, angels, and predatory fat gentlemen with a gift for arithmetic." There are no wolves, capitalist or communist, in these pages; there are no angels, communist or capitalist; there are not even any predatory fat profiteers. The author has written *Sine ira aut studio*, loving, indeed, his theme ("the tolerance and the all-humanitarianism in a melting pot of peoples in the illimitable spaces of Europasia"), but loving most of all justice.

ERNEST BARKER.

PREFACE

IT is inevitable that one who writes about Russia in the very crisis of the struggle now convulsing the world should have his mind focussed upon the ultimate relations of the Western Powers with the vast federation of peoples who form the bridge between Europe and Asia. Whatever these relations are to be, certain things are plain. Neither group must try to force its own ideas, political, economic, or social, upon the other. Propaganda by example is all very well. Propaganda by argument is merely irritating, unless a near platform of agreement can be found. The nagging bitterness of Marxian controversy is to be compared only with that of the Christological disputations of the early Church. People do not believe what they do not wish to believe, particularly where questions of property rights are involved, and logic is only fuel for quarrel. There must be complete self-determination in the sphere of what is now called ideology.

On the other hand, there must be agreement upon foreign policy: not agreement upon basic ideas, for the attempt at reaching that leads straight back to the wrangling of the philosophers: but agreement, if I may so describe it, upon the necessity of agreement. If, for instance, there should be a struggle in Germany between a Marxian and a Fascist group, there must be agreement between the West and the U.S.S.R. as to the limits of intervention. It is not beyond the powers of diplomacy to achieve this, while securing guarantees against the return of the Nazi régime. Without this kind of agreement on practical principles of joint political action abroad—a sort of *solvitur ambulando* rule—the danger of serious clash is evident.

Association in war and in the beneficent tasks of rebuilding is the path to peaceful co-operation. At present there is a long history of ignorance and misunderstanding in the relations of England and Russia. I think it must have been the statecraft of Bismarck—that astute sower of dissension—which created the atmosphere of suspicion. With the present knowledge of facts, it is easy to see what a lantern in a hollow turnip was the fear of Russia on the north-west frontier of India. The wretched organisation of the Russian Empire was a complete guarantee against a successful attack across the Hindu Kush.

Sheer ignorance has helped the task of those who wished to keep the two countries apart. England was to Russia "*kovarnaya Angliia*", a sort of Slavonic edition of *perfidie Albion*. Her exploits in the Napoleonic Wars became something which had been done "*dyenizhkami, dyenizhkami*" by the eternal doles of pence, to induce others to fight her battles for her. Then followed the picture of the Englishman "ready to fight to the last

drop of Russian blood", and still later the hideous caricature of the monied city man, the "burzhui", oppressor of his own and all other peoples: which filled the pages of *Krokodil* till yesterday.

On the British side, an assortment of queer stories formed the stock of popular information about Russia. There was the peasant settler, travelling to his new home with a hat full of bugs from the old one, so that all might be friendly and familiar. And there was the traveller in the cold, suddenly seized by the friendly passer-by, who rubbed his nose with snow to avert frostbite. And there was the imaginary figure of the dispenser of "Russian gold", dating from Crimean days: and the "bear" whom we had fought before and who—while we were Britons true—"should never have Constantinople": though why the German was to be preferred, few took the trouble to enquire. Finally, there was the torch and the dagger, and all the histrionic accompaniments of bloody and godless revolution, and the horrors of the Zinoviev letter.

Russians have an immense appreciation, on a wider and more popular scale, of Shakespeare and Dickens, than we of Gogol and Tolstoy: but they keep their literature in a separate compartment from their sense of national character: and it is a myth that they know more of us than we of them. Both are extremely ignorant and extremely prejudiced: and the ignorance and the prejudice are very likely to do harm, and ought to be dispelled.

It has been my ambition to contribute to the lessening of British ignorance and prejudice about Russia, and the federation of peoples which—as is now made plain—share a Soviet patriotism with the Great Russian people. And this is my apology for publishing a second book.

In the earlier chapters of these studies I have touched ground already partly covered in my *Russia in Flux: before October* (Gollancz, 1941). This is because I wanted to give some account of the Russian peasant, who, till a century ago, and even later than that, *was* Russia: and it could not be made intelligible by starting it at the Revolution. A single example will show the continuity of the agrarian problem. The legislators of 1861 were doubtful whether they would make an end of the characteristic institutions of peasant life, the *Obschchina* or *Mir*, familiar to us as the Russian village community, and an influential section of them was disposed to individualise landed property. Those of 1893 were still discussing the same question, but inclined rather to the opposite solution of it. When Peter Stolypin assumed the task of establishing a new order after the Revolution of 1905 he went a long way in the direction of destroying the *Mir* altogether. It went, as it were, underground, in about one-tenth of European Russia; and in 1917 it once again emerged with every sign of renewed vitality, sweeping away the landlords, but also reasserting its traditional authority as against the individualist peasant land-holder. In the epoch of the New Economic Policy the claim to separate proprietorship was again to the fore. The Right Wing of the

Communist Party did not, indeed, speak of the "strong and sober", as Peter Stolypin had done: but they favoured the leasing of land and the employment of wage labourers on it, and their theoretician Nikolai Bukharin called on the peasants to "enrich themselves". It was Peter Stolypin without the title of Excellency and without the Court uniform. Another turn of the kaleidoscope sent the strong and sober, under the new name of *kulak* (or the new application of that name), into exile, gave their land and houses and cattle to the poor and middling peasantry, and made an end of small-scale cultivation and, externally at least, of the *Mir* also. But the *Mir* dipped under the surface, and again reappeared in the form of a Collective Farm Committee. It was, and it remains, subject to the superposition of the Communist Chairman (nominally elective, but actually an official nominee), an example of democracy on the lower plane, which may yet prove to be one of the germs of democracy on the higher.

What sort of a picture of the peasant would it be, then, which began with the Revolution? Russia is in flux: but it is the same Russia, though with a new and important psychological addition made by the Revolution. What this psychological addition to the old Russia is, will be one of the aims of these studies to show.

The treatment of religion in the Soviet Union is a vital question with the nations who are allied with her in the present battle against aggression. For something like forty generations, two great religions have inter-twined themselves with the thoughts and lives of the vast majority of the peoples of the Union. Character and habits are profoundly affected by the conceptions which these religions—both of them congregational and collectivist rather than individualistic in their outlook—have introduced or perpetuated; I have therefore described the official treatment of them, and have sought to forecast the possibilities of a more cordial attitude.

On the ceiling above the grand staircase of the House of Archives at Buda Pesth is a painting which represents the episode of the Communist revolt in Hungary. A mother draws to her heart the frightened children whom snarling wolves attack. Above the group are angels bringing the protection of Heaven to the threatened family.

The angels are capitalist angels, and the wolves are Communist wolves.

If the Communists had won, the angels would be Communist angels—possibly decorated with the whiskers of Karl Marx—and the wolves would be capitalist wolves—unless, indeed, they were fat men, with silk hats, greedy leers, and gigantic cigars.

I have sought to banish from these pages wolves, angels, and predatory fat gentlemen with a gift for arithmetic.

Such statistics as were necessary have generally been put into the appendices. I have used the New Style dates, and have therefore called "the February Revolution" *the March Revolution*, and "the October Revolution" *the November Revolution*. As to place-names, which have been

changed in large numbers, and in some instances more than once, as individuals came into favour or fell out of it, I have found it impossible to observe any uniform principle. But I have called Peter the Great's capital St. Petersburg up to the outbreak of the first World War: Petrograd from 1914 to the death of Lenin: and Leningrad thereafter.

I am indebted to the Lenin Library at Moscow for access to studies of peasant economy, to Dr. Yakobson, the former Librarian of the London School of Slavonic Studies, for helping me to this access: and to Mr. Jacob Miller for the loan of books from his collection of recent official publications of the U.S.S.R., and for information about the technique of planning. With the kind permission of Monsieur Paul de Hevesy, the author of *World Wheat Planning* (Oxford University Press, 1940), I have made use of statistics of prices in the U.S.S.R. collected by him. I have the permission of George Bernard Shaw to republish an extract from his letter to *The Times* on the subject of collectivisation of the farms, and of the editors of the *Political Quarterly* to republish portions of Chapters XVII and XVIII which have already appeared in that Magazine. Dr. Ernest Barker of Cambridge University has done me the honour to write a foreword.

JOHN MAYNARD.

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“Our teaching is not dogma. . . . Life will show us. . . . We know the direction. . . . But only the experience of millions, as they move to the task, will discover the road.”—LENIN.

“From the intellectual and the moral point of view I react antipathetically to the Soviet Government. That Government has stained itself with cruelty and inhumanity: it is steeped in blood: it holds the people in a deadly grip: but, at the present moment, it is the one power which provides some sort of defence for Russia against the dangers which threaten it.”—BERDYAEV, *Origins of Russian Communism*.

“I accept all: just as it is, I take it.
I am ready to travel the newly broken road.
I give my whole soul to October and May.
Only my beloved lyre I will not give.”

S. A. YESENIN.

“I don’t suppose any group of men ever tried to do so many things at once in any other period of history, unless perhaps in war-time.”—LITTLEPAGE AND BESS, *In Search of Soviet Gold*.

“I’ve never been so uncomfortable in my life, I’ve never seen such privations or horrors, I’ve never seen such idealism or enthusiasm.”—LOUIS GOLDING, quoted by Archibald Lyall in *Russian Roundabout*, 1933.

“As soon as we have smashed Hitler, we shall again turn our attention to planning. We shall create even more splendid Soviet towns and villages.”—BORIS M. IOFFAN: winner of the competition for the design of the new Palace of the Soviets, speaking at Moscow in November, 1941.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

"I'm awfully fond of forging metal. In front of you is the red formless mass, malicious, fiery. To beat the hammer on it is a joy. It spits at you with fizzing, blazing sparks, seeks to burn out your eyes, blind you. It is living, malleable, and with mighty blows from the shoulder you make of it what you need. . . . I know I'm no hero, only an honest healthy man. And yet I say: Never mind! we shall win. And with all the powers of my soul I satisfy my desire to plunge into the very depth of life, to knead it this way and that, to prevent this and help the other. This is the joy of life."—GORKY's Nil in *Townfolk*.

"It is time to make an end of the pretext of bad weather. The true cause of the backwardness of the sowings is bad leadership."—*Pravda*, April 25th, 1938.

"Neque semper arcum tendit Apollo" (Apollo does not forever bend the bow).—*Odes of Horace*.

IF ANYONE should open this book with the expectation of finding in it definite forecasts of future developments, he would better close it at once. It is enough that there is a new dynamic at work in Russia. For the rest, I refer the reader to that declaration of Lenin which is quoted on the opposite page: "Our teaching is not dogma. . . . Life will show us. . . . We know the direction. . . . But only the experience of millions, as they move to the task, will discover the road." The leaders themselves do not know each turn in that road.

Why do I sometimes quote from the story-writers and the satirists when I want to show what manner of men they are who pass across the stage of my story? I am inclined to answer with another question. Why did the Imperial University of St. Petersburg make Nikolai Gogol, the author of *Taras Bulba* and *Dead Souls*, its professor of Russian History? Not for any learned work, but for his memorable pictures of Russian character and manners. Statistics may (and do) lie. They may be (and are) suppressed. But the picture of manners by the hand of a master outlives brass. The artist holds up his mirror to nature. It is his own mirror that he holds up: for it is the *ownness* of the mirror that makes him an artist. By means of it he shows to the others a facet of the truth which they would otherwise miss. And that is, at bottom, the reason why the artist must be free. He can only discharge his function by his use of that particular private mirror with which nature has endowed him. Different obstacles, in different conditions, run athwart of his attempts to use it as he should: and, in the outcome, much of the gift is certainly wasted, as was the seed in the parable of the sower. What is here said of the freedom of the artist is true of the freedom of every original teacher—of every one, that is, who makes, or seeks to make, an addition to human knowledge, whether to man's knowledge of himself or to his knowledge of his environment. The

gift is precious and the garnering of it up means progress, and the wasting of it means stagnation. The waste happens everywhere: but it is least where freedom is greatest, freedom economic and social as well as political.

A thesis of these studies, in so far as they can claim to have a thesis, is that freedom is divided between the Western democracies and the U.S.S.R., part to the one and part to the other. It is incomplete in both.

What does a Russian mean when he says—and he does say it—that the Revolution has made him *free*?

Free? And what of the passport and the penalties for “fitting” and the difficulties put in the way of visiting foreign countries? It is an observation of the present writer that the Russian is a natural-born roamer, a sort of land-sailor, who was galled by serfdom into a suppressed irritation, which occasionally issued in outbursts of anarchical violence. How do these contradictions find a synthesis?

Russia is wide and the obstacles to foreign travel do not affect more than a very limited number. But this explanation does not solve our problem.

There is no privileged class, except in so far as superior brains or working power confer privilege. The career is open to the talents, and the advantage with which an individual can start (over and above his natural advantage, if any) is reduced to the minimum. Anyhow, there is no born gentleman to take the wall of the ordinary man, and labour is honoured. The white-collar bureaucracy is something of a fly in the ointment, and recent measures for the discouragement of the literary courses of education suggest that the desk begins to make an appeal greater than that of mechanical skill.

But here we are perhaps talking of equality rather than of freedom. What does the Russian mean by his *freedom*? Is it merely freedom from subjection to another class, or a common servitude which looks like freedom because all share alike in it? These things are part of it, I think. Equality has always made a great appeal.

But there is more than this in the idea of freedom: and it seems to have been Marx—Marx, apparently so unintelligible to the ordinary man—who brought the conviction of it, and ended the domination of fate. Man is not bound to a pitilessly revolving wheel, but can contribute to the making of his own history. Put that thought into his mind and he is awakened to new hopes. It is with deliberate intention that I have repeated more than once this explanation of the dynamic of the October revolution.

The simpler an idea, the wider its potential operation. The Prophet Mahommed gave the Arabs a great empire by implanting in them the notion of unity to replace that of the perpetually recurring feud. The idea which came into action in Russia in 1917 was capable of being exalted into a conviction that science gave creative powers. That is why

I have prefaced this introductory chapter with the quotation from *Pravda* which declares that nature can be *compelled* to yield a crop to the cultivator: and with the declaration by Gorky's Nil of his favourite pastime of moulding red-hot metal. It is the very essence of the new Russia, of its invincible optimism, of its condemnation of despair, of its readiness to undertake the impossible. Man can fashion nature to his purposes: he can even remake himself. He translates the conception into the task of education: and naturally condemns the pedologists who divided the children into capable and incapable, and sent the latter into special schools suitable to their weakness. He translates it again into the language of the controversy between nature and nurture, and finds for the economic botanist Lysenko against the biologist Vavilov. He translates it again into the enormous undertaking of the Five-Year-Plans and, of course, pitches the task according to his hopes rather than narrows it down to the merely possible. He is in a hurry for practical results, and feels that a thing is as good as done when he has planned to do it.

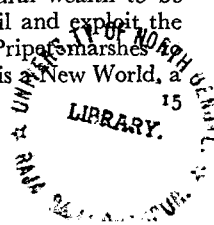
It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the business of the Bolsheviks—in contradiction to doctrinaire conceptions of what a revolution should be—was reconstruction, not destruction. It is true that the ruin which they found grew worse in the first three years of their domination. If there had been no civil war, or no foreign intervention on behalf of the opponents of the revolution, it is likely that the myth of destructiveness would not have established itself. Russia fell to pieces, shaken down by its own internal weakness. The task of rebuilding was delayed by the attempt, aided by foreigners, to restore upon the old foundations. But the true rebuilding began as soon as this attempt was abandoned. How solidly the work was done, we now begin to see.

The theologians, the philosophers, and the poets, have set the pillar of guiding flame alight for the builders.

Ivanov Razumnik, and the "Scyths", decried, in the spirit of Ibsen's Brand, the middling aim, the small and petty deed. Shestov declared that God demands everywhere and always the impossible. The Bolsheviks, rejecting the transcendent source of the demand, pitch the scale of their effort no less high. The fear of the Lord is no longer, for them, the beginning of wisdom. It is Man himself who is set upon the pinnacle. Vladimir Mayakovsky, in his *Mystery Bouffe*, showed us the Host of the Unclean clambering upwards into the Seventh Heaven and defying the lightnings which threatened them there. The spirit is like that of the builders of Babel, represented as awakening the jealousy of the Gods by the arrogance of their claim.

A spirit of confidence such as this is made possible by the sense of unlimited space in which to grow, of boundless natural wealth to be developed, of endless human fertility to work the soil and exploit the riches. Hope and energy once released, from the Pripiat marshes, Kamchatka, from Novaya Zemlya to the Oxus, there is a New World, a

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new North America, to be occupied and tamed : and optimism is fortified by new sources of conviction.

Are we to dread the possible consequences of some great setback to the extravagance of these expectations? Is there a risk that the dashing of high hopes will be succeeded by a corresponding mood of depression? On the contrary, the imminent peril of a German conquest having been staved off by the valour and sacrifice of this awakened people, it seems that they are confirmed in their unmeasured anticipations. After the devastation of this new war there will inevitably be widespread suffering, famine, and disease : but this is a people which has learnt fortitude in the school of recent adversity and has patience as well as hope.

One thing seems plain. You cannot reproduce the conditions of the U.S.S.R., ancient and yet in a sense still virgin, in older and more fully developed lands by an attempted inoculation with those ideas which are quickening her to conception. A Communist Revolution in France or Germany or Italy would be something different from what it has been in Russia of the open spaces.

The American West of a century ago, with its forests and prairies, made accessible by motor-car and aeroplane, its arctic partly conquered by meteorological stations, ice-breakers, and anti-scorbutic science, is the truer parallel. But neither the material conditions alone, nor the revolutionary idea alone, would have achieved the result. It is the combination of the two that has made this new world.

It would be a fanciful picture which omitted to show the intervals of weariness and relaxation which have from time to time suspended the heroic strain of reconstruction in the U.S.S.R. They have recurred and are likely to recur. They reflect quite naturally the fluctuations of the seasons in a country of primitive agriculture and a climate of extremes : where tremendous back-breaking toil was succeeded by sleep on the stove. The leading example of relaxation is the period of N.E.P. But youth is for ever arriving and renewing the wasted energy. In the most literal sense of the word, Russia is *young*. The Census of 1939 showed that over 45% of the population of 170 millions were under 20 years of age. 61 millions were children under 15, and 71 millions were men and women between 15 and 39. This left only 38 millions for the middle-aged and the old.

There are dangers, of course, in the immense self-confidence which is characteristic of the Bolshevik régime. At intervals it leads to the perpetration of grave mistakes, as when the Red Armies were hurled to disaster at Warsaw in 1920 : or the channels for the irrigation of the food supply were dug up and levelled for the growth of cotton before the Turk-Sib Railway was ready to carry the food : or the cattle were despatched in thousands to ranches as large as provinces, without arrangements to shelter and feed them. It leads sometimes to the merciless punishment of failures : and even to the making of scapegoats : and so to

the fear of responsibility which co-exists alongside of it. For the two things, over-confidence and dread of being called to account, are mutually compatible, according as character takes the one or the other turn: and each type tends to exaggerate the other. The centralisation of authority which is a marked feature of the Soviet system does, however, in fact not exclude the existence of a great deal of initiative from below.

The supreme example of willingness to stake all upon the success of an untried course is to be found in the field of agrarian policy: and this is one of the reasons why I dwell so insistently upon the part played by the peasant in Russian history. He is no strategist and lacks the qualities of leadership: but he has shown more than once that he can say No with conclusive emphasis. When Stalin decided upon general collectivisation and on the liquidation of the *kulaks* (who, despite their unpopularity, came nearest to being leaders) the peasantry, because of the influence which their material resources gave them and a sneaking admiration of their success), he incurred the risks of that incalculable No from the provider of food: and the history of the early thirties shows how real these risks were. He succeeded—at a cost greater than he had calculated—but how easily a less unbending resolution, sustained by a less invincible self-confidence, might have accepted failure or have shrunk from the final cost!

I would not be understood to suggest that this enormous achievement was the result of a reckless gamble. As will be seen from a later chapter, the policy had been before the Social Democrats, and later before the Bolsheviks, for many years, and the discussion on the precise issue had lasted for three. The pre-war level of agricultural and industrial production had been reached before the blow was struck. Ruthless and violent though it was, it was not unconsidered: and it is easy now to see that the dangers of external attack which furnished the occasion were not baseless pretexts, but solid realities.

All Russian régimes have been sudden and arbitrary: and, in their dealings with the land, in particular, have been entirely free from scruples regarding the sacredness of property. A more cautious and less self-confident administration would have seen to it, before five million human beings were taken from their homes and sent to labour in exile, that something more reliable than popular sentiment should make the choice of the victims, and that steps should be taken to minimise the wholesale destruction of livestock which repeated itself in successive waves over the length and breadth of the Union, and for a whole decade neutralised the gains of agriculture. Ivan the Terrible, or Peter the Great, might have done the same things, but Catherine the Great would have shrunk from them: and the reasons for this difference suggest an interesting reflection. Catherine the Great was less supremely confident of herself. She would have considered what Voltaire, or Grimm, or Diderot, would say about it. It is partly because Catherine was so sensitive to European opinion, while the Bolsheviks have isolated themselves from it, that the

European reputations of the two vary so widely. And that reticence of the revolutionary régime, which has grown upon it so markedly during the past decade, alongside of its propagandist activities, has been aggravated by the feeling that the squeamish West will be shocked by policies that are inevitable in Russia.

Russia has her own ethical standards, and her rulers must conform to them, but they are not those of the West. The West can tolerate the slow ousting of a class from common rights in land by a century of Enclosure Acts, because it was gradual and because the process was decent and regularised by law. It would be shocked by an Ukaz which carried out the change at a stroke. To the Russian it seems that he who cultivates the soil is entitled to the fruits of it. The ruler must have his share because he has his task to perform. There was nothing shocking in the assignment of a task, along with land and souls to help in the performance of it, to a service noblesse. But rent and serfs, without service, were an outrage to his conception of God's law, and the injustice remained when the serf had become a legally free man, if he paid for his freedom, and if the landlord was a mere rent-receiver, as he often was.

When the Communist Party ousted the *kulak*, it came very close to the edge of a violation of popular standards, because the *kulak* was himself generally a cultivator. The line between him and the middling peasant was very fine. In practice there is little doubt that the line was sometimes crossed. That is why the struggle was so long sustained and its issue sometimes seemed doubtful. I do not doubt that the label *kulak*, with its hateful associations, helped to turn the scale, or that the material gains of collectivisation to the mass of the poorer peasants, in particular the supply of machines and the ending of indebtedness for horses and equipment, made it easy to ignore questions of right and wrong.

The peasant—the true peasant with the mentality to which it is natural to obey the quiet order of the seasons—does not easily acquire that self-confidence which is characteristically Bolshevik. Too often he has seen drought, flood, or pest, destroy the fruit of his toil, and learned from it patience and submission. His is a minute economy to which a small loss means ruin. He dares not take risks. The complacent assurance of the clever townee may be something for him to gape at with admiration, or there may be a covert sneer on his lips, for he has a wisdom of his own: the "Jat Vidya" clodhopper's wit, of India.

There is a Russian story, which exhibits to us something between the gape and the sneer at the novelties which the Bolsheviks have brought to the countryside. There are plenty of camels in Asiatic Russia, two-humped, hairy, Bactrian beasts, and they ply on the sands beside the lower Volga; but are little known in Europe. Some of them were brought in to help in the earthwork of some new construction. The peasants stared at them, and cried: "Look what the Bolsheviks have done to the horses!"

But the Russian is not quite the normal peasant. I have already tried to convey an idea of the distinction by calling him something of a land-sailor. The Bolsheviks want to bring the town to the village, and to turn this quondam nomad, and later agriculturist, into a factory hand labouring in the open. It is part of their scheme of making Man in a new image. If you believe some of our informants, the thing is largely done already. A lady diarist writes of fashion-books among the village women: but I think this village must have been very easily reached from Moscow, and probably had a colony of *dâchas* (summer holiday huts) very near at hand. The village that was "dark" and "deaf"—a "bear's corner", as Russians used to call it—is very far from having ceased to exist, but the buses do not pass it, and the postman—if he visits it at all—does not carry fashion-books in his bag. And yet there is truth in the boast that the city is spreading to the country. The blessings of the *bourgeois* civilisation—strange that the Bolsheviks should be the agents of spreading anything that is *bourgeois*—with tooth-brushes, pocket handkerchiefs, newspapers, cigarettes, are taking a wider sweep, and the village co-operative shops are offering bicycles and sewing-machines and gramophones and tinned provisions and patent medicines; and the sarafan and the caftan are beginning to give place to shirt-waist and frock and trousers and collar and tie. Much of this is the work of the machine tractor stations and of the tight lads who operate the machinery, and begin to make the peasant boys machine-minded. Some peasants even think of prudential restrictions upon the size of the family: and these, in Russia, are a very novel notion indeed. Not everyone will welcome these changes. *Embourgeoisés* was Trotsky's word for the result.

The Marxists expected the middle class to adopt the ideals of the proletariat. In Russia, at least, it has turned out the other way. And why not? The middle class had learned many good things, and Stalin has shown himself determined to take the good things wherever he finds them. Even profit-making, or profit-calculating for the purposes of cost-accounting, has been made to serve his turn: and the older cultures receive full honour in the practice of today. These revolutionaries have a sense of the continuity of history and of their inheritance from the past.

These heirlooms from earlier ages are being welded on to the novelties, and there is plenty that is fire-new from the mint of revolutionary invention or the accidental discovery of revolutionary necessity. Is the organisation of fear, the practice of systematic *Terror* by the Government, as distinct from the normal *deterrence* of every penal jurisprudence, to be classified among the new or among the old?

Old Russia was always rough, with its Siberian exiles, its judicial floggings, and its free use of the knout. But its penal law in the nineteenth century was mild, or at any rate respectful of life. Something like *Terror* made its appearance with "Stolypin's neckties" in the repression which followed upon the revolution of 1905: and, with intervals of relaxation

and complete suspension, has continued ever since. It reached its worst after December, 1934, when the murder of Stalin's right-hand man (and perhaps designated successor) Kirov, followed by the intervention of the Italian and German dictators in Spain and by Trotsky's announcement of the intention to make a new revolution in Russia, gave solid grounds of fear for the Stalin régime. It was more indiscriminating than it needed to be: but war is indiscriminating too: and when civil strife reaches a certain pitch of bitterness, it must be classed along with war, and justified—or condemned—on similar grounds. In one respect, civil strife is the worse of the two, because it obliterates the plain distinction between friend and enemy, and sets up the barriers of suspicion for all. In Russia years of bitter political controversy have turned every difference into a desperate struggle. The Russian people is not naturally intolerant or cruel, whatever crimes may be committed in the heat of passion. Stalin himself, half Georgian, half Ossetian mountaineer, has no regard at all for the individual human life, and the idea of sparing an enemy is quite strange to him. But it is my considered opinion that a more merciful ruler would have made greater dangers for his people.

Terror on the scale of 1936–38 is a new thing in Russia.

Planning, on the other hand, a characteristic feature of the new régime, is not as new as at first glimpse it looks to be. Minute regulation of human activities on some sort of traditional plan was, in fact, normal to mediaeval Europe. The agricultural routine of the three-field rotation is only one of many instances. What was new was the recent abandonment of regulation and its replacement by *laissez-faire*, *laissez-aller*. The Bolsheviks have gone back to the principle of regulation, and put a new content into the idea. It is done on behalf of the community generally instead of being directed to the advantage of particular classes: it is scientific instead of being traditional: and it is deliberately varied according to circumstances instead of being fixed for an indefinite period. The execution is as yet in arrear of the idea: thus far, it has taken the form rather of a production drive than of a co-ordinating plan: and it is in part responsible for the growth of an excessive official apparatus. But it points the way to a satisfactory technique for the administration of the world's wealth in the interests of those who produce it: and is a contribution of extraordinary value to those gradually accumulated devices—the wheel, the arch, the internal-combustion engine, the representative system, the financial budget, and the rest of them—which make life easier for Man.

Even the "Party"—that unique misnomer of the vocation of leadership—is not really new: but rather a new application of an ancient institution: the priesthood. Think of it as a lay Church: beside which all rivals are but heretics: having a monopoly of teaching, supplying the personnel of many offices of State, as the mediaeval Church did: bound to certain abstinences, as were the mediaeval Churchmen: accessible to

ability from all social strata, as was the Church: marked off from the rest by the dedication to particular tasks, as were the priests: liable to be unfrocked, as perhaps the Churchmen were not. The parallel extends even to insignificant details such as the marking of the head by the shaving of a portion of it. The Communist shaves the face as the priest shaved the crown.

Like everything else, the "Party" is in flux, and it has seemed to me during recent years that the direction in which it has been moving is towards a stricter authoritarianism. The loopholes remaining for freedom of discussion have been narrowed and the occasions for its exercise have been limited. There is nothing corresponding to the attitude of Lord Acton bitterly opposing the dogma of Papal Infallibility, after its establishment by the Vatican Decrees, and yet declaring in private that it had never occurred to him to doubt any single dogma of the Church. He distinguished between the authority, and the authorities, of the Church, and respected the former, but questioned the latter. I do not think the present-day Communist makes any such distinction. The fact that a particular decision comes from the office of the Third International is sufficient: he must accept and obey, even though acceptance and obedience involve the eating of yesterday's words.

This is not of good augury for freedom in Russia, if we are thinking of the political half of freedom when we use the word.

The "Party" is the leader of the Russian people, and the "Party" is bound to obey—not a Congress of its members, for such meetings are rare but—a bureaucratic machine: which, in turn, takes its directions from the Head of the Russian State.

There is one indication that this analysis may not, after all, be complete. This is the emphasis which has been laid in all the proceedings under the Constitution of 1936 on the alliance between "Party" and "non-party". Many of those who have been elected to the new Soviets were "non-Party" men and women. True, there has been a tendency to bring them into the "Party": but the choice of them seems to enlarge a little the loophole for political freedom.

In the meanwhile the hope that closer association with the peoples of the West, and the ending of the fear of foreign attack, may give to the U.S.S.R. the missing political half of freedom to supplement the economic half which it has secured, remains a wish rather than a firm expectation.

But there is another way of looking at this question, and that involves the frank admission that the Russian peoples need a longer political education before they are freed from tutelage, and that the leadership of the "Party" is a necessary condition of such an education. In so far as it is possible to regard that leadership as coming from within, it is not essentially contradictory of the growth of the conditions of democracy: and on the lower planes, where each man's and woman's daily experience

serves to guide them, democracy exists already. If we ask ourselves whether a truly democratic system in all the Russias would have given to these peoples the achievements of the past fourteen years—the rapid industrialisation without foreign debt, the agrarian revolution which made the industrialisation possible by ensuring the delivery of the necessary food and materials, and the effective defence of the country against the greatest military power in the world, I think the answer must be no. There are emergencies to which the untrained democracy is unequal: and the question, how long a particular emergency is to last, is one of practice, not of theory.

At least a half of the population of the world consists of women, and the influence of this half upon the remainder, both in the period of childhood and in later years, is so great as to be incalculable. This enormous potential force has been generally stunted by the denial of opportunity. In Russia it has been relegated to the cradle and the cooking-pot with back-breaking tasks in the field in the seasons of heaviest agricultural work. Woman's life, except for a limited class, has been a domestic slavery: from which only now it begins to emerge, with a measure of economic as well as of social liberty. Would a democracy of men, left to its own untutored devices, have discovered its duty to these much-enduring partners in the task of creation, or even have realised that woman took an unintended revenge upon man by creating a citadel of darkness for him in his home?

Every vegetable has its season, said Lenin: and there were preparatory tasks to be discharged before democracy could become more than an aspiration and a name.

CHAPTER II

NOMAD AND SERF

“Thinkest thou, my daughter,
The peasant is no hero?
His life is not the soldier's life:
His death is not recorded
In the lists of battle: but a hero he is.”

N. NEKRASOV

IT is natural to think of the Russian as a peasant. But he is a peasant with a difference: a peasant in whom the nomad survived till yesterday, as much at home in Asia as in Europe: as well he may be, seeing that the distinction between the two continents is little better than fancy of bookish geographers. There is something in him of the land-sailor, with a range from Minsk to Vladivostok, and with some of that flexibility of mind which a sailor acquires. The land led him on, as the inland sea led on the sailor, from headland to headland, till he learned to explore the

deep and master the oceans: and at each new advance his mind jumped, till imagination came into existence, and with it those wider sympathies which have no corner for the narrowness of race. It is a part of the nomad spirit which makes it so easy for him to blend with any and every class and type of humanity. His own thinkers have recognised it, and called it his all-humanitarianism.

With what tenacity the nomad spirit survives today we see in that persistent "flitting" which is a characteristic feature in the comparatively settled life of the factory. But Russia's history has been full of evidences of something wild and half-tamed which asserted a primitive liberty. Apart from the periodical rebellions recurring in each century, the Syech at the rapids of the Dnieper was a chronic revolt against order and State power, till the Tsars enlisted the Cossacks as defenders of their own authority. The discipline of the Syech under its own *atamans* was a compromise between liberty while the camp was at peace, and submission to military control when a raid had begun.

How came it that such a people could accept, and for so long endure, the bondage of serfdom? There were slaves in the older Russia—a limited class, some of which at least were victims of debt—but it was not from these slaves that serfdom originated. It began as an indirect inheritance from the period of nomad raids and Mongol conquest. The Moscow State could exist only as an organised system of universal service. There were free wandering tenants and landowners "having the right of departure". In the middle of the fifteenth century service grants made their appearance as the means of payment for military and other duty. In an ill-populated country such as Russia then was, their value depended upon the labour available on the land. But the peasant had the habit of "flitting", of passing from one principality and from one estate to another. The story of the growth of serfdom is the story of the limitation of this "flitting", and of the organisation of the people for service, military and agricultural, under the control of a service squirearchy.

At the end of the sixteenth century Boris Godunov forbade the kidnapping of the peasants from the smaller estates to the larger. Perhaps it was really kidnapping. Perhaps it was merely an "invitation" to more attractive lands, similar to the proclamation of which we hear in the seventeenth century as being sent out by the rich Veneventinov family for colonists for their lands in the Don Valley. The land was wide and hands were short, and the Time of Troubles which followed upon the death of Ivan the Terrible had still further depleted them. A series of laws fixed and altered the limits of time within which the service gentry might recapture fugitive or kidnapped cultivators. In 1646 the limit was abolished and the obligation of the peasant became hereditary. In 1658 flight was made a criminal offence. In a couple of centuries the process was completed by which the cultivator became a virtual slave.

There was justice, of a rude sort, in universal service graduated accord-

ing to rank. A Tsar leveller, exacting duties alike from noble and peasant, each in his own degree, was still the father of his people. If the peasant must serve the squire, the squire in turn must serve the Tsar. In the rebellion of Stepan Razin there was a fierce struggle to throw off bondage. But submission was less galling while the semblance of equal obligation remained.

Then a link in the chain broke: and the justification of serfdom was annulled by the release of the gentry from their obligation of service. This happened in the reign of Peter III. (1762.) Catherine the Great, who succeeded him, was divided between the wish to be a good European and the necessity of retaining the affections of the Russian noblesse. She was a German princess, having no hereditary claim to the throne. On the subject of serfdom she compromised on the basis of the prohibition of the sale of serfs by public auction. It had been widely believed among the people that a supplementary charter cancelling the obligations of the serfs to the squires was being suppressed.

The peasantry rose in a bloody revolt: but serfdom was extended to Ukraine, and a few years later also to Crimea and Caucasus. (1773-1775.) Alexander I dreamed of emancipation and released the serfs of the Baltic provinces without land, but not those of Russia. Nicolas I, martinet though he was, took a step in the direction of making the obligations of masters and serfs reciprocal, when he allowed the dues and duties of the latter in Southern Russia to be formally recorded.

Lay the two aspects of Russian rural life side by side: the peasant who has the restlessness of the nomad in his blood, and the police-state which enforces upon him the static obligations of the serf status: the urge to be up and moving on the one hand, and the passport and the pursuing authority on the other: and you have the key to some of the contradictions of Russian history. We understand why it was necessary to tie the Chuvash peasants to their ploughs and drag them over their emancipation allotments to make them "accept" them: and why, in one of the stories of rural life, the Superintendent of Police rode after the retreating villagers like Pharaoh with his chariots after the children of Israel. Except on the Black Earth (and, so long as land was plentiful, sometimes on the Black Earth too), land was often a thing to escape from, not a treasured possession. We have a glimpse, too, of the underlying causes of that chronic *malaise* which reveals itself in the occasional outbreak of a horrifying violence. It no longer seems entirely unintelligible that the much-enduring, tolerant, humorous tiller of the soil should burn and hamstring and murder and destroy. He was, as it were, condemned to the restraints of an intolerable misfit.

Let us not exaggerate the cruelties of serfdom. More than half of the peasantry were not serfs in the ordinary sense. They were Crown peasants under a special administration, free to move about on payment of a moderate passport fee. Serfage radiated from Moscow and diminished

with the distance from the old capital. North Russia, Siberia, and at first Ukraine also, were free from it. Of the twenty-three millions of true serfs, many were allowed to commute their service for a money payment (*obrok*). Some grew rich, as Turgeniev's story which I have inserted in the following chapter shows. Some, by connivance with their nominal masters, became themselves owners of serfs. Many—probably most—of the remainder cultivated the land with their own implements and animals on condition of paying over the produce of a stated fraction of it to the master, along with certain other dues in kind and cash, were owners of their own houses and gardens (*usádba*), and shared in a system of communal self-government. Some were house-serfs, perhaps even pampered house-serfs, perhaps trained as actors, perhaps employed in an industry which the master exploited. We hear of a lady landowner who kept dwarf serfs, and had a scheme of breeding from them. Sometimes it was a punishment to be transferred from the work of the house to the coarser work of the fields. Sometimes it was comparative liberty.

Cruel and sadistic punishments there sometimes were. But it is not to exceptional evils such as these that we must refer when we judge the institution. The unforgivable sin in every system which subjects one human being to the will of another is the relegation of personality to the rôle of tool or plaything. It is palliated when the superior has a duty of his own, to the performance of which the inferior makes his contribution; when the two in mutual interaction form necessary parts of a living whole. Russian serfdom in its final stage made the serf the object of the master's caprice, and sacrificed the inferior while demoralising the superior, without yielding any product from a mutual function of the two. The effects on character are apt to remain for generations after the evil institution has passed away. Evidence abounds of the higher type of man produced in the non-agricultural north where serfdom played an insignificant part. It was noted by investigators of the revolutionary epoch, sixty years after the Emancipation Edict, that the northerners held their own against petty officials better than the people of the agricultural centre of Russia.

There was nothing—except the inconvenience of having untrained labour—to prevent the transfer of house servants to industry or agriculture and vice versa: and the capricious use of the available labour supply was certainly a source of economic waste.

The influence of the squires was directed to maintaining the joint patriarchal family because it facilitated control. There were economic advantages in the joint family, in which three or even more generations lived together under one roof. When it broke up, after the emancipation, the expensiveness of the separate households became evident. But it was plain enough what the young people preferred when they had the chance. The tyranny of those patriarchal households was a terror. The daughters-in-law suffered many things: they were household slaves to the mother, who passed on to them the pains which she herself had suffered. Marriage

was valued because it brought a pair of strong young arms into the house. It was a common practice to marry the young sons to strapping wenches who might be seen carrying their little husbands in their arms. There is no difficulty in imagining the results to which this practice led in the crowded homes.

Turgenev, whose story of *Hor* and *Kalinich* is translated in the next chapter, spares us the coarser and more barbarous sides of the serf life, and would be condemned for these omissions by a more modern school of literary artists. He is always the cultivated gentleman, looking at his humble friends with the eyes of the honoured guest.

“He touched the hem of Nature’s shift:
Felt faint; and never dared uplift
That closest, all-concealing, tunic.”

But they really are friends to him, and he actually is the honoured guest to them, not merely the wandering gentleman with the gun. He looks, sympathises, describes with exquisite delicacy, and leaves his readers to draw their own inferences. I do not know of anything like his thumbnail sketches to catch the very spirit of this bygone epoch, not merely among its squires, but also among its peasants. He had eaten of their bread and honey and drunk of their *kvas* and slept in their barns. He came and went, deliciously irresponsible.

We see the cross-grained, jealous lady landowner, spoiling out of sheer caprice the romance of the young squire, who wishes to buy the serf-girl and honourably marry her. The girl is sent away to field-work in a remote village, the young man slides into a round of aimless and feeble dissipations, after a momentary burst of energy in which he carries off his love, only to be robbed of her again and pursued by the police. There are two pictures of whipping administered by two different types of landowners. They had legal authority to whip to a certain limit; but there was no effective legal machinery to make certain that the limit was not exceeded. One of these gentlemen is of the old school—a patriarch who chastises because he loves. He listens with satisfaction to the regular sound of the blows from outside. “*Chiuki, chiuki, chiuk! Chiuki, chiuki, chiuk,*” he repeats, nodding his head and beating his hand in time to the blows. But the best is to come, when the author meets the victim of the chastisement the same afternoon and asks why he was beaten.

“It was for a reason, sir, for a reason. At our place they don’t punish for trifles: that’s not the custom with us. No, no. Our gentleman is not that sort: our gentleman . . . you won’t find such a one in the whole province.”

“There’s old Russia for you,” says the author to himself, as his driver puts his *troika* to speed.

The other whipping is administered by the orders of a highly civilised gentleman of a newer school. His housefolk look at him from under their

brows, but in Russia you can't tell a sulky man from a sleepy one. He speaks in a gentle and agreeable voice, with a slight drawl, from between his exquisite perfumed moustaches, and uses many French phrases—"Mais c'est impayable": "Mais comment donc": and the like. There's a queer, uncomfortable feeling in his house. Even the comfort (the English word is used) does not make you comfortable: and whenever the impeccable valet in the blue livery with stamped buttons appears before you in the evening and cringingly proposes to pull off your boots, you feel how much pleasanter it would be if a ruddy, round-faced, snub-nosed, young Ivan straight from the plough-tail, who had already found time and opportunity to burst the seams of his new caftan, would put your leg in peril of being torn off to the knee-joint along with the boot.

Host and guest sit down to breakfast next morning, and when they have finished eating, the host pours out a glass of claret, puts it to his lips, and suddenly frowns.

"Why isn't the wine warmed?" says he sharply, to one of the waiters.

The wretched man starts, and turns pale.

"Now I ask you, my friend?" quietly continues the gentleman, without taking his eyes off him.

The culprit wriggles in his place, twists his napkin, and says not a word. The master lowers his head and looks fixedly at him from under his brows.

"Pardon, *mon cher*," he says with a pleasant smile to his guest, and a friendly tap on his knee: and then again fixes his eyes on the waiter. "Go out," he adds after a moment's silence, and rings his bell.

Enters a stout, swarthy, black-haired man, with a low brow and glaring eyes.

"As to Fyodor . . . do what is necessary," says the gentleman, in a low voice, and with complete self-possession.

"Aye, aye, sir": and the stout man goes out.

"*Voilà, mon cher, les désagrémens de la campagne*," says the gentleman gaily. (This civilised talk in French is essential salt.)

These are the preliminaries to the whipping.

In another of the stories we see the children spending the night in the paper-mill where they are employed, because the foreman says they must be on the spot early next morning. They get a fright and talk of pixies and goblins. But the picture is not complete at that. For the same boys, with some older ones, spend a glorious summer night in front of a huge bonfire by the river, looking after the horses: and gallop home next morning as though such things as paper-mills, and ghostly visitants to them, had never existed or been imagined.

The pictures of serf-owners in Gogol's *Dead Souls* convey an impression of economic and moral waste. That is to say, they paint a society in which the sacrifice of human material involved in serfdom does not seem to be in any way compensated by the creation of a class of leaders. It is as

though Peter III, when he released the gentry from their legal obligation of service, had also put an end to their sense of a moral obligation. No doubt there were some good farmers, and perhaps others who set a useful example in other directions. But the results were not, I think, comparable with those attained, for instance, in Britain, from the creation of a landlord class, where the country gentleman is at all events by way of being a leader, even though not a very good leader, and does recognise the existence of a duty. Gogol's serf-owners are mere consumers of the fruits of the earth, and too poor and petty and untaught to be anything better. The tales must have contributed substantially to the conviction that serfdom was an unmitigated evil, and the lesson is the more effective because it includes no exaggerated stories of cruelty or crime.

In old Karamazov (Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*) and in Arina Petrovna (*The Golovlyov Family* by Schedrin Saltykov) we have glimpses of another type of serf-owner: the man, or woman, in whom the habit of absolute domestic despotism has developed something monstrous and tyrannical: as in the old male of the monkey horde.

The inquisitive Baron Haxthausen, one of our earlier "European" authorities, took serfdom for granted, and says very little about it. Perhaps he felt that his Imperial hosts (he travelled under the hospitable auspices of the Russian Government) would not welcome a discussion of the subject. But he has told us how the land was distributed and described particular villages for our edification. At the time he wrote—it was before the developments in the Black-Earth area and in south-eastern Russia—agriculture was not a favoured pursuit, the wages of industry were on a higher scale, and many whole communes were entirely given up to cottage industries. The extensive development of this type of industry was itself an indirect result of serfdom, and also a step towards the ending of it. It was organised by merchants who had no command of serf-labour, and therefore set up cottage industries by making cash advances to commutation-paying serfs.

He notices the disproportionate wage of industry, which is indicative of an economic change already making impossible the effective working of serfdom. Napoleon's measures for the exclusion of British trade from Europe had started the process of industrialisation even in backward Russia. The use of serfs for factory labour had ceased to satisfy the requirements of employers. A Technological Institute had been formed, followed by technical schools at St. Petersburg. It had been found necessary to emancipate a few serfs to meet the demands for free labour, and a law of 1840 had forbidden the recall of permission to work in a factory before the expiry of the term for which the serf had been engaged. In the meanwhile landowners were becoming embarrassed and indebted, while some serfs were rising to prosperity and even to wealth. In 1842 contracts between landowners and serfs were authorised by law. All the signs of decay were present: for forced labour had *ceased to pay*.

The Baron undertook his scholarly journey in the years which immediately preceded the emancipation. It was he who first revealed to the West the existence of the Russian village community, briefly known to us as the *Mir*: and I suspect that the Slavophiles were considerably indebted to him for some of their enthusiasm over that interesting institution. He also gives us a picture of the latter stages of that secular process of agricultural colonisation, which more recent studies have shown in operation over the whole of Europe, ultimately extending to the settlement of North America by the European races, which is only now being completed. Starting with the semi-nomadic clearing in the forest, soon to be deserted for a new one when the fertility of the first was exhausted, it made the change from the nomadic to the settled life, and inaugurated the early germs of the industrial age by the growing needs of the axe, the plough, the cottage loom, and the water-mill. Towns were a slow and feeble growth in Russia: and the industrial village and the cottage industry were features which attracted special notice from the German traveller accustomed to the richer urban life of his own land. Industry itself was very largely rural in the days which went before the Emancipation: and the rural handicraftsmen worked for a market which was not merely local.

The Baron noticed the frequently recurring use in popular speech of such denominations as Mother Novgorod, Mother Suzdal, Mother Moscow, and infers something like a perpetual succession of colonies, swarming off like bees from a dozen parent hives. The remarkably sustained identity of the language over hundreds of leagues, where considerable variations of dialect might be expected, confirms the impression of a not very distant identity of origin or of a frequent renewal of association. In the Middle Ages the migration had been directed to the north and the north-east: almost in our own day it turned in particular to the south, soon to be known as New Russia and to become the principal granary of the Empire: and, in the first decade of the twentieth century, to Siberia. Some of it was spontaneous or invited by enterprising landlords, with colonists sending emissaries to spy out the land ahead of them. Much of it was organised by Russian rulers, and included Poles, Germans, Finns, Greeks, Swedes, Armenians, Bulgarians, Serbs, and Vlaks: who enjoyed the privileges of religious liberty, exemption from service, ultimate equality in respect to taxation with Crown Peasants, and autonomy under a special authority. In earlier days the Church had often led the way, voluntarily or involuntarily, by establishing monasteries in the wilderness, which the people followed, partly for religious reasons, partly by way of escape from the claims of the State.

The Baron supposed the *Mir* to be sprung from the patriarchal family, tilling the land by common labour: and says that these conditions were actually found at that time (in 1853) in certain communes of the Old Believers, which had retained primitive institutions in their early form.

If this be true, the *Mir* was originally in some degree analogous to the modern Russian Collective Farm, where the agriculture is conducted in common, and the produce divided according to the number of days of work done by each partner. However this may be—and the Baron is not the safest of interpreters—it is certain that there was an earlier stage in which the agricultural economy was individual, not communal: and the original significance of the word which later meant a village appears to have been the single patriarchal household. How and when the village community, having a common tenure, but cultivating the arable in separate lots, enjoying the produce by separate households, and exercising a local self-government of its own, came into existence, enquiry has not been able to establish. But when we catch our earliest glimpse of it, it already has religious or mystical associations, which almost justify the translation of the word *Mir* by *Congregation*, and suggest an echo of the saying that the voice of the people is the voice of God. The idea that a congregation of the faithful, not necessarily including ecclesiastics, is the repository of truth, enters deeply into Russian thought, is the origin of the conception of *sobornost*, perhaps the most characteristic and fundamental doctrine of Russian orthodoxy, and has passed by strange and unexpected ways into the mental equipment of the modern Communist.

Baron Haxthausen tells us that, in the communal life, the word *Mir* has in it something venerable and holy, signifying at once the commune and the universe, and can only be translated into a foreign language by the Greek word *κοινον*. He quotes proverbs which show the mystical sense attached to it—"God alone is judge of the *Mir*": "Throw all upon the *Mir*, it will bear all": "The sigh of the *Mir* breaks down the rock": "All that the *Mir* decides must be done". The respect paid to the decisions of the *Mir* in all the affairs of village life is a commonplace with all our authorities: and, whatever its actual source and beginnings, it has generally been credited by Russian themselves with being something other and greater than a mere administrative device born of practical needs.

I have seen a shepherd, in the waste places above the Indus valley, who led out his flock to their waterless pastures, not every day, but every other day, returning to water them below on the second evening. His face had caught the wild look in the eyes of his animals. When such a stranger to the familiar daily intercourse of his human fellows catches the rare glimpse of brother man, it seems to him to have a miraculous quality, something that terrifies and yet allures. I think that the solitary wanderer in the limitless forests was like that, and that the meeting with fellow man, when fellow man was not an enemy, suggested something like a communion of Christian brethren.

It is otherwise with certain other features of Russian life: which can, with something like conviction, be traced to their historical origins and assigned to their causes. One of the annalists of peasant life tells a story

to which he gives the title of *The Power of the Land*. Its theme is the fate which the tilling of the soil enforces upon its cultivator. To bring a subsistence from his land, man must obey from moment to moment the call of the seasons, sacrificing himself and his family and his beasts to the imperious demand. There is no forgiveness for laxity or failure, no pity for thwarted love, no breathing space for recovery from weakness. Marriage is a matter of business, and the household a labour association. The land utters the call, and the penalty for disobedience may be famine. The conquest which man makes each year of a precarious subsistence is won at the price of allegiance to a tyrant who never overlooks an offence against the order which he prescribes. At a certain stage of knowledge, and with certain limits in the control over material things, the order which the Land demands seems unalterable. The common tenure, the common exploitation of wood and water and pasture, the rotation of summer-field, winter-field, and fallow, the separate cultivation of the arable by each family in a dozen or more of separate strips, the common authority which determined the dates for sowing and mowing and harvesting, which prevailed for so many centuries over most of Europe: must have seemed to be permanent laws of an unchanging Nature. The household was a primitive labour association—man, woman, and beast: and the village community was another and a more elaborate one, organised for a larger and more complex task. The needs of agricultural work shaped it: even though it was rough-hewn by other influences. The Power of the Land proclaimed the edict: and what was man that he should presume to say it nay?

Bez etogo nel' zya. It cannot be otherwise, says the reasonable peasant in Uspensky's story called the *Power of the Land*. You can only govern by obeying, he might have said, if his tongue had had a more bookish turn to it. The discovery that there are more ways than one of obeying nature, and that some of them are less troublesome, and more profitable, than others, comes later. In the meanwhile the land is the peasant's master: and it imposes itself upon him like a fate.

Here is another key to some of Russia's history. The peasant life was overshadowed by a sense of destiny against which he must struggle—if he elected to struggle—in vain. Not only was he in the power of the State and of the landowner, and bound to obey them in their incalculable demands, but another great impersonal force held him in its inexorable grip. The power of the land, and of all those institutions of the commune inseparably bound up with the power of the land, crushed him relentlessly, unless he yielded an absolute obedience.

That is one half of the story. But let us picture to ourselves the sense of release which the ending of this burden of fatality must bring with it. Amid all the pseudo-philosophical jargon which Marxian studies have imported into Russia there was one gospel intelligible to the ordinary man and comparable in its redeeming influences with the half-dozen

great ideas which from time to time have changed the current of men's lives. It was the idea that man could make his own history. Fate was no longer fate. In that thought lies the dynamic that has set Russia free. Not for the first time faith has moved mountains.

But we have left behind our Baron and his learned travels. Before we leave him finally, let us see what he has to say of a particular village which he visited. It lay on the road from Saratov to Penza, and consisted of 12,225 acres of land. The inhabitants were occupied almost exclusively with agriculture, but a few towed barges on the River Volga or did other industrial work between hay-cutting and harvest. Woods and pastures were exploited in common by the whole village. In the arable, the three-field system was observed. Each household (or perhaps each *tyaglo*—that is to say, each unit of labour) was supposed to have 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres: and there must have been some of them who for one reason or another (probably a deficiency of labour-power) had not the full allotment. The soil did not tolerate manure—that is to say, it lacked moisture, probably. They ploughed the winter field twice for rye: the summer field once for oats, buckwheat, and millet. Each household had seven strips in each of the three fields, making twenty-one in all, according to a centuries-old practice, by no means limited to Russia, and closely intertwined with every conservative instinct of the peasant heart, which almost certainly prefers equality to convenience and even to economic advantage (except when the inequality is in favour of the individual concerned). There were 400 horses, 400 horned cattle, and 300 sheep. The Baron says the Magdeburg horses are three times as strong, but the Russian horses have to suffice for twice the area. There is redistribution of the land at each census revision, or oftener, according to changes in the labour capacity of particular units: for it is this which in practice regulates the allotment of land. Like other communes, this commune has its own surveyors, who measure the varying categories of land by means of staves of varying length (and doubtless on a traditional assumption of the varying value of each category). Great lots having been formed by the surveyors (whose work generally commands confidence, as work done on the spot by men who have known one another all their lives generally does), lots are cast for them.

The peasants did not carry their own products to market from this village, but waited for buyers to come and take them in exchange for iron and salt. The *Mir* distributed and re-distributed the land, fixed the seasons for sowing, manuring, ploughing, and all important agricultural operations, and exercised the functions of village self-government. Its decisions commanded great respect. But we hear hints of corruption as inequality begins to creep in. Some squires left it to manage everything, but there were others who interfered, and even exploited their power to extort advantages. Beside the redistribution of land (which was rare in Ukraïn, but very common elsewhere in agricultural Russia) the *Mir* had

wide functions. The Government, or the squire, used it to select the quota of recruits. The squire employed it to collect the taxes, for which the Government made him responsible. It gave or withheld permission to leave the village, subject to the squire's rights. There was no legal definition of its powers, but it had a sort of residuary obligation to deal with anything and everything—an excellent groundwork for a traditional democratic system. As we shall see on a later page of this study, there has long existed, and still exists, in Russia, democracy upon the lower or the local plane, a living constitution, with no formal procedure, for those things which come within the range of the experience of the ordinary man. And this was true even for the serf, except when he happened to have a particularly meddlesome master. With due allowance for this occasional obstacle, natural tolerance—natural indolence, perhaps—left the *Mir* to itself. It is a picture which with minor variations repeated itself for centuries over hundreds of thousands of village communities, and has been replaced by a different one within the life-time of the school-child of today: but the old still peeps out from under the new.

CHAPTER III

HOR AND KALINICH

(Translated from I. S. Turgeniev: first published in the *Contemporary* at St. Petersburg in 1847.)

ANYONE WHO has travelled between the two provinces must have been struck by the difference of man in Orel and Kaluga.* The peasant of Orel is of low stature, round-shouldered, sullen, downward-looking, lives in a tumbledown hut of poplar wood, does personal service to his squire, does no trading, eats poorly, wears birch-bark sandals. The Kaluga peasant commutes his service for cash, lives in a spacious cottage of pine, is tall, has a bold and jolly look and a clean, bright face, deals in greases and tar, and wears boots on holidays. In the eastern part of Orel the village generally lies among cleared fields, near a ravine which has been somehow turned into a dirty pond. Except a few bushes which serve every purpose, and two or three gaunt birches, you won't see a tree for a mile round; cottage clings close to cottage; the roofs are thatched with rotting straw. The Kaluga village, on the contrary, is generally surrounded by wood; the cottages stand free and plumb, roofed with scantlings; the doors close tight, the fence at the back has no gaps and is not tumbling outwards and does not invite each passing sow to enter. The sportsman too does better in the Kaluga province. In Orel the last woods and large thickets disappeared five years ago, and the swamps

* This is the country over which Germans and Russians were fighting in November, 1941, and again in January, 1942.

don't survive even in memory. In Kaluga the woodlands stretch for hundreds, the swamps for dozens, of miles; that noble bird the woodcock has not perished, the generous snipe is frequent, and the busy partridge rejoices and startles gunman and dog with his whirring flight.

When shooting in the Kaluga province, I met and made friends with a petty squire of that neighbourhood, Polutikin, a mighty sportsman, and, by consequence, a good fellow. True, he had some weaknesses; for instance, he courted all the heiresses of the province, and, when he was turned down, confided his sorrows to all friends and acquaintances, and continued to send to the parents of the girls presents of sour peaches and other fresh garden produce; he loved to repeat one and the same anecdote, which pleased *him*, but failed to raise a laugh in anyone else; he admired bad novels; he stuttered; he called his dog *Astronomer*; he said "*be out*" instead of "*but*"; and he had a French chef, whose art and mystery, according to the Russian cook, consisted in changing the natural flavour of every food; from this artist's hands, meat was like fish, fish was like mushrooms, macaroni was like gunpowder; not one carrot entered the soup except in the form of a rhombus or a trapezium. But, save for these few and trifling defects, Polutikin was, as already stated, a capital fellow.

On the first day of my acquaintance with him, Polutikin invited me to spend the night.

"It is five miles to my place," he added: "too far to walk. We'll drop in first on Hor." (The reader will permit me not to reproduce his stutter.)

"Who is Hor?"

"He's my peasant; quite near here."

We walked off. In a cultivated clearing in a wood was the solitary farmhouse of Hor. It consisted of some frame-houses of fir, connected by fences; in front of the principal building there was a verandah supported by thin props. We entered. A twenty-years-old lad, tall and handsome, met us.

"Hullo, Fedya! Is Hor at home?" asked Mr. Polutikin.

"No, Hor has gone to town," replied the lad, showing a row of snow-white teeth: "shall we harness the waggon for you?"

"Yes, my boy, the waggon: and bring us some *kvass*."

We went in. Not a single daub was stuck on the clean beams of the walls; in the corner, before a heavy ikon in a silver frame, a lamp glimmered; the limewood table was freshly scoured and scrubbed; between the beams and on the window-posts no active cockroach scurried, no pensive spider hid. The young man soon appeared with a great white crock filled with good *kvass*, with a huge lump of wheaten bread and a dozen salted cucumbers in a wooden basin. He set all these provisions on the table, leaned against the door, and looked at us with a smile. We hadn't finished our luncheon when the waggon rattled into the porch. We went out. A fifteen-years-old boy, curly haired and rosy cheeked, sat

in the driver's place and held with difficulty a well-fed piebald colt. Six young giants stood round the waggon, the images of one another and of Fedya.

"All Hor's children," remarked Polutikin.

"All Hor's," chimed Fedya, who had come out behind us to the porch; "and these are not all: there's Potep in the wood, and Sidor has gone with old Hor to town. Look out, now, Vasya," he added, turning to the driver. "Go quick: thou'rt driving gentlefolk. But carefully over the ruts, or thou'llt spoil the cart and upset the gentry's insides."

The rest of Hor's youngsters burst out laughing at Fedya's sally.

"Put Astronomer in!" said Mr. Polutikin with a majestic air.

Fedya, looking as though he liked the job, lifted into the air the constrainedly grinning dog, and put him at the bottom of the waggon. Vasya gave the horse the rein, and we were off.

"There's my counting-house," said Mr. Polutikin suddenly, pointing to a little low building. "Would you like to see it?"

"Yes, please."

"It's empty now," said he, getting down: "but you may as well see everything."

The counting-house consisted of two empty rooms. The watchman, a bent old man, ran up from the yard.

"Good-day to you, Minyaich," said Mr. Polutikin. "Bring us some water."

The bent old man disappeared and returned with a bottle of water and two glasses.

"Taste it," said Polutikin to me. "It's good spring water."

We drank a glass apiece, while the old man bowed to us down to his waist.

"Now I think we can be off," said my new acquaintance. "At this counting-house I sold eleven acres of woodland to the merchant Allelyuev for a good price."

We took our seats, and in half an hour entered the yard of the Squire's house.

"Tell me, please," I questioned Polutikin after supper, "why this Hor of yours lives apart from all your other peasants?"

"I'll tell you why. He's got a head on his shoulders. Twenty-five years ago his cottage was burned down. He comes to my deceased father and he says: 'Nikolai Kuzmich, allow me to settle in your wood on the marsh. I'll pay you a good commutation fee.' 'Why dost thou want to settle on the marsh?' 'It suits me, only be so good as to set me to no work, but fix the fee that suits you.' 'Fifty roubles a year.' 'As you please, sir.' 'And no arrears, mind.' 'Certainly, no arrears.' . . . And so he settled on the marsh. From that day they called him Hor (Weasel)."

"And he got rich?" I asked.

"Got rich. Now he pays me a hundred silver roubles: and I'll make it

more, perhaps. I've said to him more than once: 'Buy thyself off, Hor!' But he, the brute, assures me that he hasn't the money. . . . A likely story. . . ."

Next day, directly after morning tea, we went out shooting. Passing through a village, Mr. Polutikin told the driver to stop at a little low cottage and cried sonorously: "Kalinich."

"Ready, master, ready," said a voice from the yard. "I am fastening my sandal."

We went on at a foot's pace.

Beyond the village we were overtaken by a man of forty years of age, tall, thin, with a little head carried rather to one side. This was Kalinich. His good-tempered, swarthy face, marked here and there with pockmarks, pleased me at the first glimpse. Kalinich, as I afterwards learned, went shooting every day with the Squire, carried his bag and sometimes his gun too, watched where the bird came down, brought water, picked strawberries, made shelters, ran behind the carriage; without him Mr. Polutikin could not stir a step.

Kalinich was a man with the merriest, pleasantest ways, forever humming under his breath, carelessly glancing all about him, talking a little through his nose, smiling and wrinkling up his bright blue eyes, and often putting his hand to his scanty, wedge-shaped beard. He walked, not fast, but with long strides, leaning slightly on a long, thin stick. During the day he spoke to me more than once; was helpful to me without servility, but he looked after the Squire like a child. When the unbearable heat of noontide forced us to seek shelter, he took us to his beehives in the very depths of the wood. Kalinich opened a little hut for us, hung with bundles of dry, sweet-smelling grasses, made us lie down on the fresh hay, put on his own head a sort of bag of netting, took a knife, lit a splinter, and went to a hive to cut us some honeycomb. After a sup of clear, warm honey, we drank some spring water, and went off to sleep to the monotonous buzzing of the bees and the prattling whisper of the leaves. A light breath of wind awoke me. . . . I opened my eyes and saw Kalinich: he was sitting on the threshold of the half-opened door and carving a wooden spoon. I looked long with admiration at his face, benignant and clear, like an evening sky. Mr. Polutikin also awoke. We did not at once get up. It was pleasant, after the long walk and the deep sleep, to lie moveless on the hay; the body relaxes and yields to weariness, the face glows with a slight warmth, a sweet drowsiness seals the eyes. At last we got up and went out to tramp till evening.

At supper I talked again about Hor and Kalinich.

"Kalinich is a good peasant," said Mr. Polutikin: "a zealous and a serviceable one, but he can't keep his farm in order. I distract him from it. He goes shooting with me every day. . . . What sort of farming is that?—judge for yourself."

I agreed with him, and we lay down to sleep.

Next day Mr. Polutikin had to go to town on business with his neighbour, Pichukov. Pichukov had trespassed on his land and slapped his serf woman. I went shooting alone, and returned at evening to Hor. An old man met me on the threshold, bald, short of stature, broad shouldered and stout; Hor himself. I looked at him with curiosity. The shape of his face recalled Socrates: the same high, lumpy brow, the same little eyes, the same snub nose. We entered the cottage together. My friend, Fedya, brought me milk and black bread. Hor sat on a bench, and, quietly smoothing his curly beard, entered into talk with me. It seemed that he was conscious of his dignity; he spoke and moved slowly and smiled occasionally behind his long moustaches. We talked of the sowing and the harvest and of the peasant life. He said 'yes' to it all; but presently I had an uneasy sense that I was not getting home to him with my talk. It sounded somehow unnatural. Hor expressed himself indirectly sometimes, probably from caution. Here's a bit of our talk.

"Tell me, Hor," said I. "Why dost not buy thyself off from thy gentleman?"

"Why should I buy myself off? Now I know my gentleman, and I know my fee. . . . He's a good gentleman."

"It's better to be free," said I.

Hor looked at me sideways. "That's certain," said he.

"Well, why dost not buy thyself off?"

Hor cocked his head a little. "What wouldst thou have me pay with, sir?"

"Oh, come. I can't believe that."

"If Hor became one of the free folk," he continued under his breath, as if to himself, "every man with a shaven face would be a bigger man than Hor."

"Then shave thy beard too."

"What's a beard?" said Hor. "A beard is grass; one can mow it."

"Well, what then?"

"Seems as though Hor would just be one of the merchants. The merchants do well enough with their beards."

"Well, isn't buying and selling thy job too?" I asked.

"We deal in a small way in grease and tar. Shall I bid harness the waggon, sir?"

You've got a tight hold on your tongue and keep your thoughts to yourself, thought I. "No," said I, aloud. "I don't need the waggon. I shall be round thy farm tomorrow, and I'll spend the night in thy hay-barn, please."

"Welcome to thee. But will it be quiet for thee in the barn? I'll tell the women to make a bed and lay a pillow. Ho, women!" he cried, getting up from his place. "Here, women. Go with them, Fedya. Truly women are silly things."

A quarter of an hour after, Fedya with a lantern led me to the barn. I

threw myself on the sweet-smelling hay, the dog rolled himself up at my feet. Fedya wished me good night, the door creaked and slammed. For a long time I could not sleep. A cow came to the door and breathed loudly twice; the dog growled at her with a sense of decorum; a sow passed, grunting pensively; a horse somewhere near began to munch hay and whinny. . . . At last I nodded.

Fedya woke me at dawn. I liked the gallant lad; and so far as I could see he was a favourite with old Hor too. They chaffed one another in a friendly way. The old man came out to meet me. Whether because I had spent the night with him or for some other reason, Hor behaved more friendly to me than yesterday.

"The samovar is ready for thee," said he with a smile. "Let's have tea."

We sat round the table. A wholesome woman, one of the daughters-in-law, brought a crock of milk. All his sons entered the cottage in turn.

"What a well-grown lot!" said I to the old man.

"Yes," said he, sucking a tiny lump of sugar. "They've no cause to complain of me or my old woman."

"And do they all live with thee?"

"All. They all wish it, so they live with us."

"And they are all married?"

"There's one young scamp won't marry," he replied, pointing to Fedya, who was leaning against the door. "Vaska is young yet. He can wait."

"Why should I marry?" objected Fedya. "I'm all right as I am. What should I want a wife for? To squabble with her, is it?"

"Thou—I know thee! Wearest silver rings. . . . Runnest after the house-wenches. Ha' done with thy impudence!" continued the old man, mimicking the chamber-maids. "I know thee for a whiteheaded lazy-bones that thou art!"

"What good is there in a woman?"

"A woman is a woman-worker," said Hor with dignity. "A woman is servant to a peasant man."

"And what do I want with a woman-worker?"

"Aha, wouldst fain rake out the hot ash with another's hands. We know thy sort."

"Then, find a wife for me, if it be so. Aha! Why dost thou say nought?"

"Enough, enough, thou jester. Now we're disturbing the gentleman. I'll marry thee, maybe. Don't be vexed, sir. Thou seest, 'tis a young child. I can't get sense into his head yet."

Fedya shook his head. . . .

"Is Hor at home?" I recognised the voice at the door; and Kalinich came in with a handful of wild strawberries which he had picked for his

friend Hor. The old man greeted him genially. I looked with surprise at Kalinich. I admit I did not expect such delicacy from a peasant.

That day I went shooting four hours later than usual, and spent the next three days with Hor. I was taken up with my new acquaintances. I do not know how I earned their confidence, but they talked to me now without constraint. I was glad to listen to them and observe them. Hor was positive, practical, a business head, a rationalist; Kalinich, on the other hand, was one of the idealists, of the romantics, of the enthusiasts and the dreamers. Hor understood reality, made a place for himself, saved a bit, got on with the Squire and the other powers; Kalinich wore birch-bark sandals, and rubbed along anyhow. Hor fathered a large family, obedient and united; Kalinich had a wife once, whom he was afraid of, and never had a child. Hor looked askance at Mr. Polutikin; Kalinich venerated his master. Hor liked Kalinich and patronised him. Kalinich liked and respected Hor. Hor said little, smiled and talked to himself; Kalinich expressed himself with warmth, but did not talk your head off like a bold factory lad . . . but Kalinich was gifted with excellences which Hor himself recognised: for instance, he charmed away giddiness, hysterics, and the horrors; drove away worms; bees yielded themselves to him: he had a light hand. I was there when Hor asked him to lead a new-bought horse into the stable, and Kalinich with unassuming assurance did as the old sceptic asked. Kalinich stood nearer to nature; Hor to men and to society. Kalinich did not like argument, and believed all blindly; Hor rose to the ironical view of life. He saw and knew much, and I learned much from him. For instance, I learned from his stories that every summer before hay-cutting time there appears in the villages a little cart of a particular appearance. In it sits a man in a caftan and sells scythes. For cash he charges a rouble and twenty-five copecks; for paper a rouble and a half; for credit three roubles of paper and one of silver. Two or three weeks later he appears again and asks for his money. The peasant has just cut his oats, and probably has the money to pay; he goes into the liquor-shop with the merchant and settles with him there. Some landlords had the idea of buying scythes for cash and selling them on credit to the peasant for the same price, but the peasants didn't like it and turned shy; they were deprived of the pleasure of tapping the scythe, listening to the sound, turning it over, and asking the rogue of a townec a dozen times: "Now, lad, isn't there something wrong with this scythe?"

The same game is played at the buying of sickles, with this difference only, that the women take part and sometimes worry the dealer into giving them a slap for their own good. But the thing which gives the women most to do is this. The suppliers of material to the paper factories entrust the buying of rags of a particular kind to men who, in some parts, are called *eagles*. An *eagle* gets a couple of hundreds of roubles from the merchant, and sallies out for his quarry. But, in contrast to the noble bird from whom he got his name, he does not attack openly and boldly, he has

recourse to stratagem and cunning. He leaves his cart somewhere in the bushes round the village, and himself goes by back ways, like a casual arrival or a loungeur. The women scent his approach and steal out to meet him. The deal is made in high haste. For a few coppers, the woman gives to the *eagle* not only all her useless rags, but often also her husband's shirt and her own petticoat. Latterly the women have found it profitable to steal from themselves and dispose in this way of the hemp crop and even their bits of finery, which adds a great deal to the *eagle's* business. The peasants, in their turn, wake up to the job, and, on the least suspicion, the remotest whisper, of the *eagle's* appearance, set to work to get their own back and be even with their wives. And is it not a real challenge? It is their business to sell the hemp—and they do sell it—but not in town, for that means a long tramp; but to travelling dealers, who, having no scales, reckon a *pud* as forty handfuls—and you know what sort of a handful and what sort of a palm a Russian has, particularly when he puts his heart in it!

Such stories I—an innocent creature and a “furriner” (as our Orel people say)—heard galore. But Hor did not only tell me much, he also asked many questions. He learned that I had been abroad, and his inquisitiveness was excited. Kalinich was not backward in his curiosity, but he was more interested by descriptions of nature, of hills, of waterfalls, of extraordinary buildings, of great cities. Hor was taken up with questions of administration and of state. He went over every point in order:

“Now do they do this as we do, or in another way? Tell me, sir, yes?”

“O Lord, thy will be done!” cried Kalinich when I was speaking; Hor was silent, knitted his thick eyebrows, and only occasionally observed:

“Seems like this wouldn't work with us, but that other is good, and that is the way to keep things straight.”

I cannot repeat all his questions; it's not worth it; but from our conversation I was convinced of one thing, which my readers would probably never suspect; that Peter the Great was *par excellence* a Russian, Russian particularly in his reforms. The Russian is so convinced of his own strength and power that he is ready to risk a fall, he cares little for his past and looks boldly forward. He likes what is good; give him what is reasonable, he does not mind where it comes from. His good sense makes easy fun of the dry-as-dust German reasoning; but Germans, says Hor, are clever people, and he is ready to learn a bit from them too. Thanks to his exceptional position, to his practical independence, Hor talked to me of much which, as the peasants say, you wouldn't lift out of another man with a lever, or grind out of him with a millstone. He thoroughly understood how the land lay. Talking to Hor, I heard for the first time the plain, wise speech of the Russian peasant. His ideas were broad enough in his own way, but he could not read; Kalinich knew how to read;

“This lazy fellow knows his books,” said Hor, “and he never lost his bees.”

"Did you teach your children to read?"

Hor was silent for a moment. "Fedya knows how."

"And the others?"

"The others don't know."

"Why is that?" ●

The old man did not reply and changed the conversation. But however wise he was, he had his prejudices and his fixed ideas. For instance, he despised women from the bottom of his heart, and in merry moments laughed at and mocked them. His wife, old and cross, never left the stove, and constantly grumbled and scolded; the sons paid no attention to her, but she kept the daughters-in-law in the fear of God. Not for nothing does the mother-in-law sing in the Russian ballad: "What sort of a son art thou, what sort of a father . . . that beatest not the wife, that beatest not the young one?"

I once thought to intercede for the daughters-in-law and tried to awaken Hor's sympathy; but he quietly stopped me, saying:

"Thou art pleased to trouble thyself with trifles; let the women squabble. . . . Why separate them? It makes things worse. It's not worth soiling thy fingers."

Sometimes the cross old thing left the stove, called the housedog from the passage, saying: "Come here, dog," and brought the poker down on its thin back; or stood under the eaves and scolded at all who passed, as Hor expressed it. But she was afraid of her husband, and went back to the stove when he ordered her.

It was particularly interesting to hear the dispute between Kalinich and Hor when they spoke of Mr. Polutikin.

"Now don't thou say anything against him," said Kalinich.

"Why doesn't he give thee a pair of boots?" Hor objected.

"Boots! What would I do with boots? I'm a peasant."

"Well, am I not a peasant too?"

With this word Hor raised his foot and showed to Kalinich a boot cut out of belly leather.

"Art thou and I of a piece?" replied Kalinich.

"He might at least have given thee enough for sandals. Surely, thou goest shooting with him; and a pair of sandals is gone in a day."

"He gives me enough for sandals."

"Yes, last year he granted thee a ten-copeck piece."

Kalinich turned away vexed, and Hor burst into a laugh so that his little eyes disappeared completely.

Kalinich sang sweetly and played on the balalaika. Hor listened, listened, suddenly turned his head on one side and began to hum in a doleful voice. He particularly liked the song: "Thou art my fate, my fate." Fedya never missed a chance of chaffing his father.

"What art thou grieving for, old man?"

Hor rested his cheek on his arm, closed his eyes, and continued to regret

his fate. . . . But at another time not a man was more practical than he ; he was perpetually at some job : mending the cart, propping up the fence, looking after the harness. But he did not keep things particularly clean, and to my remarks he once replied that it was "necessary for a cottage to smell of life."

"Just look," said I, "how clean it is at Kalinich's hives."

"The bees would not put up with this," he sighed.

"Hast thou an estate of thine own?" he once asked me.

"Yes."

"Far from here?"

"A hundred versts."

"Dost thou live on thy estate, sir?"

"Yes."

"But the gun is thy chief pleasure?"

"I admit that it is."

"That's good, sir. Shoot woodcocks for thy health and change thy steward often."

In the evening of the fourth day Mr. Polutikin sent for me. I was sorry to part with the old man. I got into the waggon with Kalinich.

"Good-bye, Hor ; good health to thee," said I. "Good-bye, Fedya."

"Good-bye ; don't forget us."

We started off. The sunset glow began to redden.

"It will be fine weather tomorrow," said I, looking at the bright sky.

"No, there will be rain," objected Kalinich ; "the ducks are splashing, and the grass smells too strong."

We went into the wood. Kalinich hummed under his breath, bumping on the driver's seat, and gazed, gazed, on the red glow.

Next day I left the hospitable roof of Mr. Polutikin.

CHAPTER IV

THE GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT

"That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope."

SHAKESPEARE, *Macbeth*.

NICHOLAS I held Russia's *troika* too tight. Alexander II sought to slacken the reins, failed to keep a runaway team together, upset the chariot, and perished in the catastrophe. No task is more delicate and dangerous than the task of reform, and nothing is more certain than that the reformer will not be forgiven. Vested interests tend to become part of the order of nature. The inevitable compromise is an outrage to all. The instruments by which the reformer must act are not dead things, but living. They have claims, and will give a bias to the direction which they will take in the hands of the master. For he is not a master, but himself

an instrument. Even his material is stuff that has blood and nerves and will shriek and groan in his quivering grasp.

Both serfs and serf-owners were disappointed by the Edict of Emancipation, or the first were disappointed and the second injured and alarmed. The onlookers, the thinkers, who had hoped for so much, felt that they had been cheated of a cherished dream. Some of the peasants thought that the true edict was being kept back from them by their late owners; there were disturbances, and even cases of bloodshed in the restoration of order.

The essential facts were simple. The plan of emancipation *without land* had been adopted in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire. Alexander II decided that the peasantry should not be an agricultural proletariat, such as has been created in Great Britain, but should enjoy rights in the land which it tilled. The law said that the land—or that part of the land which did not belong to the Crown or the princely appanages—belonged to the squires; and justice forbids that owners be ousted without compensation. The peasantry believed—and believed it with their blood, as something which God's law and eternal tradition made self-evident—that the land belonged to those who worked it. Compensation, if there was to be compensation, could only be taken from the people, and most justly from the peasantry. The peasantry must pay; and to them it inevitably seemed that they were to pay for their freedom; buy back what it was the gracious will of the Tsar that they should receive as a gift. The fact that the name given to the payment—*obrok*—was identical with that formerly borne by the serf's commutation fee, such as old Hor paid to Mr. Polutikin in the story which is translated in Chapter III of this book—must have confirmed the impression that the gift was taken back.

The legislation—there was more than one law—provided that the redemption dues might be commuted for annual payment on a 6% basis, and that the credit of the State should be employed for the discharge of the obligations to the landlords in the form of scrip negotiable on the Stock Exchange. Ultimately commutation became compulsory. The peasant could avoid the payment of redemption dues by accepting one of the pauper lots of one-fourth of the normal, and nearly two-thirds of a million households took this course in the expectation of improving their holdings later on.

The land was distributed by local commissions on principles which varied in different parts of Russia. In the outcome the average allotment for each male soul was, in acres, roughly 23 for the State peasants, for the most part outside of the fertile black earth, 15 for the Appanage peasants, and 9 for the serfs who had been owned by private landlords. These areas, or rather the differing local areas which together made up these average totals, were supposed to represent the normal peasant holding; and the theory was that the norm should be completed out of the landlord's estate when land was otherwise insufficient. Generally

speaking, the serfs received less land than they had held before Emancipation. In Russia as a whole the reductions amounted to a fifth. These reductions (the *otryezki*, or "cuttings") played an important part in subsequent history. In the north-central part of Russia, where meadows were the most valuable part of the estate, the "cuttings" consisted largely of pasture land. The balance of a holding is as important as its size, and the fact that the landlords controlled so much of the area which was essential to balance, either prevented the peasant from putting his arable to its most effective use, or helped to make him dependent on the squire who held the pasture. Often he had to labour for the squire in order to have access to the pasture which was essential to a balanced holding.

Since the later agrarian history centres upon the land-hunger of the peasant, and the disturbances which arose out of it in the most fertile portion of Russia, it will be well to look more particularly at the allotments made under the emancipation law in the latter. The Black-Earth zone is a strip of rich soil varying from 230 to 500 miles in width, which runs across Russia from west south-west to east north-east, and is prolonged into Siberia. A curved line with many projections and indentations, drawn from near Kiev to the confluence of the Kama with the Volga, indicates the direction of its northern limit. Rain failures are acute, particularly in its eastern half; its need is moisture rather than manure. Its period of vegetation is from 180 to 220 days. Despite the favourable soil, it is very liable to failures of crop, which are worst in the east. At the time of the Emancipation this zone was still not fully cultivated. Afterwards it filled up rapidly, owing to general economic conditions which favoured the spread of agriculture.

Peasant holdings were already small in this rich zone, and the landlords used their influence with the local commissions to keep them small. The subtraction of the "cuttings" was particularly felt where holdings were small. To these facts we must add that pauper holdings of one-fourth of the norm were very numerous in the Black Earth. In Orenburg they are said to have been nearly three-quarters, in Ufa and Samara nearly half, in Taurida, Saratov, Viatka, and Perm one-third of the whole. All these conditions were at their worst in the northern half of the zone and the adjoining areas, and it will cause us no surprise to find that it is in this quarter that we have to look for the more violent ebullitions of agrarian discontent.

Where the serfs' obligations had already been commuted for cash, there was no immediate economic change. In those wide areas in which dues had previously been rendered in labour, the change both to landlord and peasant was great. The landlord who did not desire to get rid of his land had to find new means of pressure or inducement in order to obtain labour. The emancipated serf had to handle two entirely new and puzzling instruments, his own liberty and the mystery of the cash nexus, without any preliminary preparation in the way of instruction for either.

But the liberty was a qualified liberty, and it is the qualifications that compel attention.

In the first place, there was the pressure of economic necessity. The historian of pre-revolution agriculture in Russia assures us that even the owner of an average-sized holding of 20 to 30 acres of good agricultural land in the Black Earth had to look for outside earnings. Many had to bind themselves in advance to labour at seasons when distraction from their own fields was inconvenient, and, on the other hand, complaints of the shortage and indiscipline of labour were rife. "You cannot eat land," the great revolutionary leader was wont to say, and the Tsar Liberator's forethought in supplementing freedom by land did not make an end of economic servitude.

Then there was that corporate entity, the *Mir*, to put limits on the liberty of the peasant. That he was generally conscious of the restriction is open to question. No doubt many took the control of the community for granted and gave no thought to the matter, unless some check on individual enterprise brought the servitude home to them. But the control was close, and its limits were uncertain. For instance, the Courts of Law were themselves uncertain who was the owner of the land in the interval between emancipation and the discharge of all the obligations of redemption. What was certain was that the liability for the dues was (till 1903) a joint one, and, that being so, the *Mir* was virtually the master, whatever the law might decide. In Great-Russia it continued to re-distribute the land, and to do it according to labouring capacity, as indeed seems to be the logically inevitable consequence of the enforcement of joint responsibility for dues. In Ukraïn the joint liability extended only to the common, but even then the open-field system must have involved a considerable degree of control by the community, and everywhere the *Mir* was a species of residuary authority for all questions affecting village life.

But the most intimate and comprehensive of the restrictions upon the freedom of the liberated serf was the absence of any demarcation of his legal rights and legal duties. He was as completely at the command of every representative of the executive power, as the bullock or horse which he drove to the fields was at the command of the switch which he carried. There was virtually no legality and no illegality for him. He was expected to do what he was told, and he was beaten if he failed to do it. And yet he was a juror in the new Courts; and in that capacity passed judgment upon the doings of his fellow men.

There is plenty of evidence of the reality of this semi-servile status in the stories of peasant life which begin to pour from the literary world in the ferment of thought following upon the epoch of the emancipation. And now the irony of circumstance presents us with an amazing contrast, an even more amazing contrast than that furnished by the arbitrary whipping of men who exercised quasi-judicial functions. This poor

and ignorant being, as an individual, despised and slighted, became, in his corporate capacity, the mystical object of a sort of mass pilgrimage from a class of cultivated persons who sought to find in him the repository of truth, the source of a salvation which was of this world, not of the next. Was there ever anything more startlingly bizarre and unpredictable than this movement of "going to the people" which came upon the intelligentsia of Russia—irreligious or at least unchristian to a man and to a woman—within a decade of the emancipation? The serf has become something holy, a source of inspiration and prophecy. But has not this transformation had something like a parallel in a world-shaking event of the past, with which we are too familiar to see it in its true perspective and proportions; the change which placed the obscure felon, agonising on the gallows, at the right hand of God the Father Almighty coming to judge the quick and the dead? To this transcendent image, to the likeness of the Christ upon the cross to the tormented and suffering people, the poets of Russia for ever revert, and neither sin nor sordidness obscures the vision for them.

The idea of "going to the people" begins with the Slavophiles. But the root of it is something older. It is that, in the words of the prayer of St. Chrysostom, "when two or three are gathered together Thou wilt grant their requests", that in the congregation assembled together in love there resides also truth. The "intelligents" felt that they had lost something of a primitive inspiration when they parted with their primitive simplicity, and they went to the people, as one might go to an oracle, to find the truth which was in them. But they went also to render a service, to instruct and help, and the attention which this movement drew to the villages (or of which it was a sign) produced results in the sphere of Government, both central and local. In 1880 the salt tax, in 1882 the poll tax, were repealed. Soon after the Peasant Bank was established to facilitate the purchase of additional land. In 1893 a special Ministry of Agriculture was set up. Along with these favourable measures, the Government, upon which the demoralising effects of emancipation were being pressed by agricultural employers, established in 1889 a new type of rural official, the *Zemsky Nachalnik*, or Land Captain, whose particular task it was to keep the people in order.

In the sphere of local government there were developments of high promise. Alexander II established elective, provincial and district councils (*Zemstva*) which preceded by some dozen years the county councils of Britain. These bodies gave a great impetus to the energies of local reformers, and the causes of education, agriculture, and health administration received in some areas substantial benefit. The Soviet Government has recently republished a volume which illustrates the nature of the work undertaken and forms an impressive record of rural conditions in the Black-Earth zone in the neighbourhood of Voronezh in the Don Valley at the beginning of the twentieth century.

A certain Dr. Shingarev, employed by the Voronezh Provincial Council, supervised a local investigation and published a report of it in a brochure to which he gave the name of *The Dying Village*. His description of two villages on the river-bank is of great value to the economic historian, though he deliberately omits from it all information about the local gentry and what he calls the "large-scale economy" of their business affairs, which, it is obvious, played a considerable part in the lives of the peasantry of the neighbourhood.

There was a school building capable of holding a hundred pupils and even a few boarders, but it was poorly attended, and, whoever it was who presented the building, he did not complete his gift by providing any books or educational apparatus, nor did the *Zemstvo* itself, it seems, think of making such arrangements.

Reading between the lines, I guess that the employee of a local body, who found occasion to criticise the impoverished circumstances of the people and the inadequacy of their holdings, was judiciously taciturn about the rich proprietor who enjoyed the rents and the proceeds of the "large-scale economy".

The family had held the property since A.D. 1619, and it was one of their earliest acquisitions on the River Don. They were probably non-resident. All particulars about ecclesiastics, church servants, and the few town craftsmen who lived in the villages, are also excluded from the report.

The description is very minute, but I have summarised its main features in the paragraphs which follow: because of the light which it throws on the life of the peasant of the Black-Earth zone in the beginning of the twentieth century. Two adjoining villages are concerned, one of which was economically somewhat better off than the other; but, for the sake of brevity, I have made no distinction between the two.

They lie on the left bank of the Don, 16 miles from the town of Voronezh, where the nearest railway station is, and they are close to a main road. For this and other reasons (particularly the amount of outside employment which the people obtained) they were not typical rural villages. By the Census of 1897, there were 161 households with 1063 persons. They were Orthodox Great Russians, but they were collected together by a proclamation of the proprietors inviting tenants to present themselves, and they were of various origin. This proclamation probably dated from the early eighteenth century. At the Emancipation of the Serfs they accepted "pauper holdings" of one quarter of the norm, and therefore never paid any redemption dues and never lived entirely by agriculture; at all events, never by cultivating their own land. The total "pauper" allotment for the two villages amounted to 864 acres, for 395 census "souls"; perhaps 800 persons. Though the area is in the Black-Earth zone, the soil is river-sand over clay and limestone. Between the date of the Emancipation (1861) and 1884 the people did not plough

their own land at all. They used it for rough pasture, for hay and wood-cutting. They rented their arable from the local landowner at less than a rouble an acre; say, 1s. 8d. In 1884 rents rose suddenly by 150 per cent. in consequence of the general development of the Black-Earth zone, which was now filling up with colonists. The margin of cultivation went down, and the people of these two river-side villages began to plough up their waste and to reduce their hayfield and their wood (and, with these, also their cattle).

An unusual feature which made its appearance in 1894 was that, in one of two villages, the communally owned arable land was entirely merged in the individually owned yards and gardens, which Russians call *usadba*. The lands of this class have recently played an important part in agrarian history because they threatened to monopolise the labour which Communist policy desired to direct to the collectivised farms.

The rough pasture, the hayfield, and the wood (that is to say, the peasants' wood) continued, when Dr. Shingarev wrote, to be enjoyed by the two villages jointly; but they did not make much out of these sources of subsistence. According to the Report, each "soul" obtained, every second or third year, half a load of small brushwood, five to ten thin stakes of wood, 3 to 6 cwt. of hay. The last was of poor quality, because the cattle were admitted, by the decision of the *Mir*, to the common hayfield till May 9th, and it was only after this date that the grass was allowed to grow.

The rye grown on the arable came to $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $4\frac{1}{2}$ cwt., the millet to 1 to 3 cwt. for three or four "souls". A small area of the better land which had been mortgaged grew melons.

A working man's daily ration being at least 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of rye, it will be seen how small a contribution to the needs of these villages was made by their allotment of land. But Dr. Shingarev, who wishes to prove that increased allotments will cure the troubles of the Russian cultivator, demonstrates by statistics the superior economic position of the family which has the larger area of allotment land—as opposed to rented land.

The direct taxation due from each "soul" to the State and the *Zemstvo* was less than a rouble (say 2s.) annually. But State Insurance charges were heavy, and amounted in 1901 to more than the whole of the other direct charges. At that date there were heavy arrears on the taxes due to the *Mir*. These arrears were mostly a legacy from the past, when the *Mir's* rate, formerly one rouble per revision soul, had been reduced to one-eighth of that amount without the remission of arrears. They amounted to over 2,400 roubles for the *Mir's* rate and over 900 for insurance payments. Fire insurance has always been important in Russia, owing to the prevalence of wooden buildings and the frequency of conflagrations, and it had recently been made compulsory.

Except for rent of land, there was very little indebtedness to private persons. Presumably there was very little credit to be had. At this period

there were no co-operative societies or co-operative banks. There were two small retail shops, having a trifling turnover and an annual fair.

Increasing impoverishment since 1884 was indicated by the figures for horses and cows. In the former year 133 owners had 222 horses and 182 cows: in the latter year 158 owners had 209 horses and 129 cows. The only kind of animals which increased in this interval was sheep.

The obvious deficit in grain was made up partly by renting land. The standard rent was rather less than 2 roubles an acre (say 4s.), or a slightly smaller amount in cash, plus about $7\frac{1}{2}$ loads of manure delivered on the landlord's land. These payments in manure had considerable importance in an area in which animals were few and sufficient moisture present in the river valley to make manure valuable, if not essential. Manure was so scarce that none of it was used for fuel, though this use of it is normal in a great part of Russia, where wood is as deficient as it is in the Don valley.

The deficit in straw—a very important commodity where it is the main source of fuel, bedding for humans and animals, and roofing—was partly made up by buying the stubble from the landlord's estate, at the rate of about 20 kopeks an acre. Wood is necessary to the baking of bread, and the people had not enough wood for this daily need. But there was a large "Economic Forest" belonging to the landlord; and the villagers, heckled by the investigator on this subject, could only tell him with sheepish grins: "The baking must be done: so we go to the *Bdrin* (gentleman) in the forest: he has got wood rotting." In other words, they stole wood.

There were seventeen households only, out of 159, whose grain lasted from the end of one harvest to the time for sowing the next. All the rest had to buy grain, and thirty-nine households did not cultivate their allotments at all.

It is hardly necessary to explain that most of the livelihood was derived from wage-earning occupations. Nearly a third of the men were so occupied in the neighbourhood, and about one-sixth of them outside it. A much smaller number of women were thus employed: but in both sexes the numbers tended to rise. The large-scale agriculture of the landlord gave occupation both to men and women: but stone-quarrying, a dangerous and unhealthy occupation, with no sort of provision for occupational disease or accident, was the main local industry apart from agriculture. Grain- and wood-carrying was common, and some had recently taken to dealing in these commodities on their own account in a small way.

An agricultural labourer by the year received 60 roubles (say £6) for a male, 36 roubles (say £3 12s.) for a female, plus food. Day labourers who found their own food got from 20 to 40 kopeks (say from 5d. to 10d.) for males, from 15 to 30 kopeks (females): according to the season: the

summer day, at harvest time, being eighteen hours, with three hours off for food. The figures sound unbelievable, but they are correctly reproduced from the report, and I do not doubt them. The stone-quarries worked by the piece, and part of the pay was given in kind. This makes it difficult to say what the earnings were.

A peculiar feature of the village life was the practice of taking foster-children to nurse, either at breast or bottle, from the *Zemstvo's* Orphan Asylum at Voronezh. Our medical investigator traces an increased mortality among the children of the foster-parents to this practice. Syphilis plays a considerable part in his report. High mortality among the foster-children seems to be due rather to ignorance than to criminal neglect. Up to 1897 the *Zemstvo* had no inspectors to ascertain how its nurselings were doing. Adult food was always given at six months of age—presumably to all the children: and, our doctor says, no wonder that many died. Some were adopted by the foster-parents, and a few were accepted as full members by the *Mir*, “for a drink of vodka”—an incidental observation which illuminates the practical working of the village community and the small value attached to the share of a “soul” in the economic advantages of its land.

A detailed investigation of the dietary in comparison with the theoretical norm, worked out for the Voronezh Province as a whole (itself by no means a high one), showed a great deficiency of fats. The doctor considered that one of the two villages was suffering from fat-hunger. He was surprised to find that many households had to go entirely without cabbage, cucumbers, and milk. The lack of meat did not surprise him: but these three items did, and considering the large part played by cabbage and cucumber in the Russian village, there was ground for surprise. The consumption of sugar per person per annum was $2\frac{1}{2}$ oz.; that of tea less than $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. There was no drink-shop in either of the villages, and the consumption of vodka per person per annum was two-fifths of a gallon. Evidently these things were luxuries for an occasional holiday.

The history of the villages was marked by occasional famine (*e.g.*, 1891), conflagration, and epidemics among human beings or animals. Diphtheria and abdominal typhus were the principal forms of infectious disease. On the opposite side of the Don, and 3 miles away, was the hospital for in- and out-patients, at which our friend the investigating doctor was stationed. Even in the flood seasons boats plied across the river. But the hospital had no accommodation for syphilitic patients, who had to go to another place 8 miles away, and often could find no free beds there. A crèche was established at the instance of the Russian Society for the Protection of the People's Health, and in 1900 a special branch was added by the Society for Resistance to Contagious Disease for syphilitic children. The distribution of milk to children under 3 years of age was also begun under the auspices of the first-named society. The people were suspicious of the crèche, and the charitable societies apparently

wearied of well-doing. It is noticeable again that the *Zemstvo* did not take up the work.

Malaria was common in both villages. Along with this fact we read that each village has a pond formed by damming a small stream on its way down to the Don. It is in these ponds that the cattle drink. The dam is formed of dung (*sic*), which all the householders bring each spring when the floods have gone down. Dead horses and cows are skinned, and sometimes carried out and left to the dogs, but sometimes buried in the house-yard. A horseless house-owner lost seven cows in succession—from an unspecified disease—and on each occasion buried the carcase in his yard.

In one of the two villages there were *no* privies: in the other there were eight. Excrements were left in the outer passages of the house (*izba*, generally of wood), and *eaten by swine, dogs and fowls*.

General features of the living-houses were that they were closely packed together, small in air-space, smoky and yet not sufficiently warm, poorly lighted, entirely without ventilation, and in many cases old. There were only two beds (both wooden) in the whole of one village; one belonging to a carpenter and one to a stone-mason. The stove, benches, shelves, and the floor were the sleeping-places. In the vast majority of the *izbas* the cattle wintered inside.

Our doctor has the true scientific passion for statistics. The ordinary red and the Eastern black cockroach were observed in 90% of the dwellings, but bugs only in 15.5%. This fact gives occasion for an interesting observation. *The bug is a natural aristocrat*. He does not like the miserable bedding of the poor man. The black beetle is most democratic. But there is a point at which he too draws the line because there is too little food to be got. The peasants have a saying about the most extreme poverty: "There are no black beetles there."

Of the male population rather less than one-third in one village and less than one-sixth in the other could read and write. The proportion of literate women was far smaller, and in one village there was not even one. But, it must be added, these figures are a good deal higher than they would be in a similar Indian village. As in India, the people did not believe in the value of instruction for women. Otherwise those who are familiar with the Indian village will recognise many resemblances.

The doctor says that these are typical villages of the Black-Earth zone at the beginning of the twentieth century. This is true, I think, with one reservation. The people made a bad choice when they accepted the "pauper" allotment of one quarter. They took it for granted that the low standard of rent would remain unaltered and that there would be a chance for renting more land for new mouths. But their population increased from the time of the Tenth Census in 1858 to the investigation made in 1891, from 828 to 1,151, and their expectation of cheap land was disappointed. In other respects these villages, being near to sources

of non-agricultural employment, were rather favourably situated, and there are signs of an urban, or rather a suburban, habit.

A casual observation informs us of the existence of a higher standard of comfort in the "manufacturing" villages; by which the doctor means those in which cottage industries were practised. He says that the rural villages investigated by him lack "the window curtains, photographs, and flowers in vases" which are seen in the industrial villages. The absence of all decoration (except the Ikons in the corner above the table) is a feature which strikes him.

In a note written by way of preface to the edition of his report published in June, 1907, after he had taken part in the work of the Duma and had witnessed what he calls "the intrigues of those interested in the maintenance of private property in land", Dr. Shingarev quotes from the report of a Committee which dealt with the overcropping of the lands of the Black-Earth zone. "Since the Emancipation, the woods have been cut down (owing to the extension of cultivation), the streams have become shallow or have disappeared, drifting sands have invaded the fields, the hay-fields have been ploughed up, the fields have broken away into ravines, and, instead of once fertile lands, gullies, water-courses, landslips and even precipices, have made their appearance: the land has lost fertility, its productiveness has fallen, the natural wealth is exhausted, and the people are impoverished." The contrast, he said, was marked between the brilliant financial condition of the Empire, and the progressive ruin of the peasant masses. A writer in the magazine *Russian Wealth* said that many of the peasants who lacked land or had non-economic holdings were in similar conditions: "which represent a whole section of the lower strata of our economy".

The historian of *Agricultural Russia on the Eve of Revolution*, taking a more general and wider view than the doctor, has analysed for us the economic troubles of the peasant at this time. Perhaps they could be attributed compendiously to the lack of a more intensive agriculture, having more scientific rotations, and that in turn to inchoate, but as yet insufficient, industrialisation to provide the demand for a greater variety of crop. Where dairying or flax-growing had established itself, there was a comparative local prosperity. Pavlovsky says that a great rise in population was accompanied by an increase, but not a proportionate increase, in the productivity of peasant agriculture. To these facts let me add, quoting the words from the report of an Official Commission of 1897, that "nowhere are the relations between employer and employed so strained as in agriculture".

The rise of agricultural prices which began in 1896 should have been beneficial to those who produced in excess of their requirements: but most peasant cultivators, particularly in the area of deficit cereal production, are outside that category, and suffer, in a greater or less degree, from high prices. Every peasant tends to sell after harvest, when prices

are low, and to buy at sowing time, when they are higher. Only a high development of co-operation, which was still lacking, can save him from the consequences of the attempt to combine marketing with agriculture, which is the normal lot of every farmer who has left subsistence agriculture behind. The cash nexus is inevitably cruel to those to whom arithmetic is still a mystery.

The peasants themselves, and many of their champions like Dr. Shingarev, believed that they were robbed of their land and that more land was the remedy for their troubles. Their purchases of land, with and without the help of the Peasants Bank, were enormous, as the figures of ownership of different categories in 1877-8, and 1905, show.

The totals in millions of acres are :—

	1877-8	1905
Area held as peasants' allotments (Nadyel)	314	347
Area held by gentry	194	125
Area held by peasants (other than allotments dating from the time of emancipation)	12½	78

After 1905, when there was a panic among the gentry and a great increase in sales of land, this passage of land to the peasant class became even more rapid, and it was accompanied by very extensive emigration to Siberia, assisted by the State.

But the figures will convey a misleading impression unless it is understood that the category of "peasant" represented a legal, not an economic status. Many of the purchasers who figure as peasants in the statistics were well-to-do holders who were peasants only in name : as was Hor in Turgeniev's story.

The troubles of the peasant in the period preceding the revolution of 1905 were not only economic. A good deal of the "black" status of a social inferior had survived the Emancipation. A memorandum recorded in 1898 by Count Witte for the information of Nicolas II gave a list of his grievances. They included arbitrary punishment (generally corporal), arbitrary restrictions on leaving the home-village, the lack of legal definition of rights and duties, and even of laws of peasant inheritance, and oppression by the Land Captains and other officials, who treated him literally as they pleased. He was not precisely a member of a depressed class like the lower castes of India, for there was no religious distinction and no barrier to intermarriage even while serfdom still existed : but in some respects his case was worse than theirs and urgently demanded a radical amendment.

CHAPTER V

THE EXPERIMENT IN SEPARATE PROPERTY

"The dream of the peasant is the possession of a profitable farm of his own."—
TUGAN-BARANOVSKY.

THE FIRST serious ebullition of agrarian discontent occurred in the Black-Earth zone in 1902, where the practice of short leasing to peasants who cultivated with their own stock and equipment had encouraged the impression that the landlords discharged no useful function. Some of them had, in fact, made valuable contributions to agriculture and stock-raising, and the average productivity of the gentry's land was above that of the peasants, probably because more capital was generally available. In these outbreaks there was no murder, but there was much arson, and the aim of the rioters was to drive the squires from their estates. In 1905 there was a much more menacing and more widespread outbreak. Two thousand estates were wrecked in that year, there was a separate revolt in the Baltic provinces by the Lettish population against their German masters, and rural rioting was resumed in 1906 and 1907 in defiance of drastic measures of repression.

The scandalous adventure, and still more scandalous failures, of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 foreshadowed in many respects the events of 1917. But the army, in spite of much indiscipline, was not revolutionary in temper; and peace—a not too honourable peace—had been made before the disorders were in full swing, so that the running sore of an unpopular war was not present. It is significant of the defeatist temper of the Russian official machine—defeatist in respect to the renewal of disturbances among the peasants—that the Emperor's own entourage was terrified into discussing the compulsory expropriation of the large estates. If we are to understand this, we must recall other instances of the drastic treatment of property in fairly recent Russian history: the confiscation of Church lands by Catherine the Great; the summary settlement of the question of land in the Edicts of Emancipation; and (going somewhat in advance of the moment now under consideration) certain features of the Stolypin legislation which aimed at the creation of individual property in land. *The Tsars themselves were revolutionaries* upon occasion: and the peasants, in whose interests they had acted at some crises of Russian history, though obviously not with any uniformity of principle, expected them to be levellers, and demanded a patriarchal justice, which should conform to standards quite outside of the law, to God's law, perhaps, as they understood it. The Court, and the official world in general, were instruments of the Tsar's will when his will was a firm one. In 1905 many of them were frightened, if we may trust what

Count Witte tells us, and ready to sell their lands and take refuge in the towns.

That the peasants, without the leadership and backing of the towns, and of the towns organised for actions, and with an army still generally loyal to the régime, need have been a cause of acute alarm to the State, we may take leave to doubt. The "power of the land", of which Gleb Uspensky, the story-teller of peasant life, speaks so impressively, limits very narrowly the revolutionary activities of the land-workers. They must do the right thing at the right time or perish of starvation. It is only in the slack seasons that they are at liberty to rebel: and a punitive force can destroy or remove the crops which are the fruit of their labours. They can indeed make life difficult for the landlords who live among them: but that is not revolution.

Among the stout hearts of the Russian squirearchy were certain landlords of the Saratov district on the Volga, and Peter Stolypin, its Governor. They were not the originators of the scheme which is associated with the name of Stolypin: but it was he who planned the details of its execution and might perhaps have carried it through if his Imperial master and mistress had shared his courage. The plan designed by him was nothing less than the conversion of the Orthodox Tsardom into a sort of Louis Philippe monarchy resting upon political and economic nationalism, a prosperous society of yeomen farmers, and a *bourgeois* constitution. It seems that the Tsaritsa could not forgive what seemed to her a degradation of the Orthodox autocracy and a diminution of the inheritance of her beloved son.

Before I turn to the agrarian side of Stolypin's scheme, let me summarise some of the other results of the revolution of 1905. The peasants themselves called it the *ravneniye*, the "levelling", and the name shows that they appreciated some of its social consequences. It created the Imperial Duma, and the Duma—an elective parliament—did actually become a forum for the ventilation of grievances, so that corrupt and incompetent persons took alarm and desired to stifle its proceedings. The peasants ceased to be debarred from the higher institutions of learning and were admitted to posts from which they had hitherto been excluded. There was a real relaxation of the censorship: co-operative societies ceased to be under the official ban, and there was an extraordinary flowering of them among the more enterprising and well-to-do of the peasants. Trade Unions were less fortunate, but they received legal authorisation. Some relief was given to Roman Catholics, Jews, and the non-orthodox sects: and self-government was granted to the Universities. Active measures of Russification were generally withdrawn from the non-Great Russian peoples, and autonomy was—for a time—restored to Finland.

It is arguable that half-way reform, or reform which vacillates between giving and taking away, is more dangerous than unqualified re-

pression. That apparently is what was meant by the Japanese observer quoted by Mr. Maurice Baring when he said that "an incompetent Government is being opposed by an ineffectual Revolution". But there was no lack of directness and vigour in the agrarian policy which I am now to describe. To explain its genesis I must turn back to the Emancipation Edict, in which the germ of it was contained. The peasant lands (the so-called *Nadyel*, which had a legal status different from that of other landed holdings) were held on a tenure which gave to the *Mir*, or village meeting, control of the rotation of crops, and of the dates of the commencement of each important agricultural operation throughout the village. In three-fourths of European Russia the *Mir* had also the authority to redistribute the land among the right-holders, and it generally did this in accordance with the labouring capacity of each unit. In the remaining quarter, located in western Russian and mainly in Ukrain, it did not possess this authority. The tenure in the larger area was known as communal: that in the smaller as heritable household tenure. What we may conveniently call the individualisation of land-tenure had made an important step forward in the west, by making an end of redistribution and its uncertainties; but communal control over the choice of crops and of times and seasons remained, and the system of strip cultivation was similar in both. In both cases there was an exception to the general rule of communal control in the farmhouse lots (*usadba*) which everywhere were at the disposal of the family (not, be it noted, so far as the law went, of the house-father or head of the family). The communal control had some obvious drawbacks for the expert and enterprising cultivator: but it supplied the less expert and less enterprising with a rough-and-ready substitute for knowledge and energy of his own. It enabled the moderately efficient to guide the inefficient: but it prevented the particularly efficient from achieving any progress. It tended to prevent any serious regression and to preserve equality at a not very high standard.

There was room for a good deal of difference of opinion regarding the system. Questions of agricultural efficiency were complicated by questions of Slavophil or Populist sentiment. It was possible to hold that the arable cultivation should be individualised, while the pastures, woods, and ponds should be held in common. Common pasture, in particular, had champions even among those who desired completely separate tenure for the arable. The introduction of stall-feeding would have meant a considerable agricultural revolution: and the poorer cultivators would have sacrificed a disproportionate share of their livelihood if the pasture had not been open to them.

The framers of the Statutes of 1861, which dealt with the peasants, and the redemption of their dues, clearly contemplated a step towards the individualisation of peasant property in land. Whole communes were authorised, by decision of a two-thirds majority of the village meeting,

to abandon communal tenure, and adopt heritable household tenure : and individuals were authorised to effect premature redemption of their allotment lands, which thereupon became the household property of their redeemers. It is important to note that the household, and not the head of it, would become the owner if the condition of premature redemption was fulfilled ; because the Stolypin legislation made a change in this respect and provided for complete individualisation in the hands of the house-father. These rights under the Statutes of 1861 were actually exercised in a certain number of cases in the provinces of Mogilev and Poltava, where, as throughout the west of Russia, the tendency to individualisation was stronger than in the east.

By 1893 the Russian Government had modified its predilection for heritable household over communal property : apparently because it had been impressed with the danger of extensive alienations of peasant land if the acquisition of separate proprietary rights were facilitated. In June of that year the *Mir's* authority to make general redistributions was limited : but in December a check was put on the acquisition of heritable household property rights by requiring the sanction of the village meeting and the previous dividing out of the allotment as conditions of the premature redemption of the emancipation dues. It was said that this restriction could be nullified by "treating" the members of the meeting—that same "drink of vodka" of which we learned something in a preceding chapter. The mortgaging of allotment lands was entirely prohibited. The general effect must have been to stop both sale and mortgage, except in so far as the restrictions were evaded : and to do so by the partial abandonment of the individualising tendency of 1861. The abolition in 1903 of the joint liability of the village community for taxes and redemption dues was a turn in the other direction.

In the first Duma the Constitutional Democratic Party put forward its own plan for the settlement of the agrarian question by the expropriation of the squires at a fair price. The author of this Bill, Herzenstein, was afterwards murdered—an evident victim of the hate which differences of agrarian interest engender. The case has its parallel : in the murder of Dr. Shingarev, the author of *The Dying Village* and afterwards Minister of Agriculture in the Provisional Government, whose vigorous advocacy of agrarian reform did not save him from punishment for his share in the vacillating policy of his associates. The one was the victim of the proprietors, the other of those who claimed to displace them.

In the meanwhile the Government—still looking for a solution in the direction of a general increase in peasant holdings—had appointed (in March, 1906) a Committee of Land Settlement Affairs. It was this Committee which in November of the same year developed into the Land Settlement Commissions for the removal of anomalies in peasant economy. 171 District Commissions were set up, and their number gradually increased to 463, operating over almost the whole of European Russia. The

principles of the legislation were gradually extended till it constituted a comprehensive plan for the individualisation of peasant land tenure, purporting to do in a single set of operations, and in a limited period, something similar to what was spread by hundreds of Enclosure Acts, in the far smaller area of Great Britain, over a succession of generations. The audacity and vastness of the design are typical of Russia, whether it be Russia of the Tsars or Russia of the Bolsheviks. Such comparative trifles as the replacement of family property by the property of the head of the family, over which a more cautious government would boggle, are taken by the legislator in his stride.

Nicolas II was at first much interested in the scheme, and it is said that he disliked to have it attributed to the Duma. Peter Stolypin found an instrument of individualisation as zealous as himself in a Dane named Kōfōd, who has left a record in some detail of the proceedings of his department. The area under the operations of the Commissions amounted to 320 million acres and 12 million households. The properties were mostly very small. 5½ million households held not more than 5½ acres apiece, and 2¼ millions more between 5½ and 13 acres. Many of these very small holders had no active interest in agriculture and lived mainly by outside earnings, but the task of survey and settlement was none the less troublesome for that. How complicated it was we gather from M. Kōfōd's description of one case in which the lands of twenty villages were interstripped together.

Operations were presently extended to all holdings belonging to the peasant type of economy, whether the law assigned them to the peasant category or not: for peasantry was to this extent a caste category that it represented a particular legal status. For the purposes of M. Kōfōd's work, holdings of a certain maximum area, which varied in different parts of Russia, were thus reckoned as peasant holdings. By another extension of scope made in 1910, the law gave heritable household property rights to all holders in communes which had made no general redistributions since the time of the Emancipation allotment: and abrogated the condition requiring a two-thirds majority of the village meeting to approve an application for separation: with the result that all of these became entitled by the decision of a bare majority to leave the *Mir* and claim individual property rights.

In some cases (but, it seems, in very few) the common pasture was divided. Normally the settlement officers dealt with arable land and with farmhouse property, the so-called *usdaba* (and only rarely with the second of these two). There were three stages in the proceedings. The first was the establishment of separate property rights in the arable lots, involving separation from the *Mir* and the end of its authority in the determination of rotations and the fixing of seasonal dates, but leaving separate strips, which were the characteristic and most obvious feature of peasant land-tenure, *in statu quo ante*. No one who has seen this strip cultivation

or a picture of it can forget the peculiar appearance—that of an embroidered pattern—which it presented when the crops were nearing maturity. It was extraordinarily inconvenient and wasteful of land and labour, but it had the merit of being egalitarian. The second stage was the consolidation of the arable holdings wholly or partially into integral blocks by the elimination of the strips. The third was the inclusion in the consolidation of the farmhouse lots (*usdaba*), and of the residential houses: involving the removal from the common village site, in and about which it is the normal custom in most parts of Russia for all to live. It will be remembered that Hor (see Chapter III) got his nickname (Weasel) from his unusual choice of a solitary dwelling-place. Hor was what would later have been called a *kulak*.

In theory there was no compulsion. But certain matters could be decided by bare majority in village meeting: to which the minority had to submit: and it is easy to see that the right of one holder to divide out and consolidate his holding would come very near to the compulsion of another holder to accept an exchange. In practice a great deal of pressure was evidently applied to obtain agreement to the individualisation of landed property, and the influence of the Government and of the settlement staff was directed to the same end. M. Archangelsky, who lectured on the subject in the Kazan University in 1917, tells us that there was a struggle over the settlement in many, but not in all places: that ordinarily the *Mir* refused its consent: that in such cases the "Land Captain" decided in favour of the "separator": and that those who remained behind in the village community ordinarily got the less good lands (in order to teach them to co-operate with Government in its plans of agrarian reform). M. Köföd himself admits that adverse sentiment to the breaking up of the *Mir* was strong, particularly among those who were more interested in industry than in agriculture. But the genuine cultivator, he says, was glad to have his separate integral holding free from interference, and those who wished to emigrate to Siberia welcomed the chance of improving the market value of small plots which they hoped to sell.

The coincidence of extensive Siberian emigration with the individualisation of peasant landed property in European Russia was no mere accident. Between 1906 and 1915 more than 3½ million souls emigrated, and four-fifths of the European holdings of these were "settled" by M. Köföd and his staff. Among general obstacles to the acceptance of the services of the settlement staff he mentions the existence of disputes over the boundaries of land: the complications involved in the "servitudes",—the charges upon the land—which in south-western Russia are often worth as much as the original peasant-right: and the expenses of the change, which, when there is a question of establishing a new farmhouse and separate water supply, may be considerable.

The way was smoothed for the "separators" by loans and grants: and many parties of peasants were sent at Government expense to White

Russia in order that they might familiarise themselves with the west Russian custom of living out on the arable land. But apart from the difficulties of water supply (sometimes met by Government grants for well-sinking) and the difficulty of access to the common pasture, distance from church and school and fear of isolation, particularly among the women, were adverse to the completion of the third stage of the proceedings.

The proceedings were brought to a close in 1916, because the troops were nervous of interference with their landed rights. At that time, according to such figures as I have been able to obtain, out of 12 to 13 million householders involved in the scope of the Commission's operations, about one-fifth had obtained separation of their proprietary rights in the arable land, and one-half of this fifth had consolidated the whole or part of their holdings. The number of those who had included their farmhouse lots in the consolidation and moved out of the village site was small. An authority who has given much attention to the subject puts it at 3% of the total number of households. Trotsky tells us in his *Revolution in Russia* that large numbers more were demanding separate proprietary rights when the proceedings came to an end, and that there was a great boom in land, with much buying and selling. The legal restrictions upon alienation had not, however, been removed: and had actually been strengthened by the limitation of the maximum area of peasant land which a purchaser could acquire in any one district.

There were wide variations in different parts of Russia in the degrees of success which the Stolypin policy attained. It was coldly received in central Russia and generally in those areas where agriculture was not commercialised for the export trade in cereals. In these parts the so-called "separators" (their enemies called them "seceders") were often peasants with non-economic holdings or persons who wished to emigrate. Along the trade routes and in the maritime belt agriculture was taken very seriously, the desire to make the best of the land was powerful, and the motive for separation was to get rid of the restrictions imposed by the *Mir*.

The percentage of holdings consolidated varied from 29.2 in New Russia, 16.2 in the Eastern Region, 12.9 in Ukraine, 16 in Western Region, 17.3 in Petrograd, 8.3 in Moscow, 2.7 in Northern Region to 1.7 in the north-east. These are figures given by Pavlovsky, the historian of agriculture in Russia, up to January 1, 1917.

What the ultimate issue of the movement for individualisation would have been must remain a matter of speculation. The "strong and sober" among the peasants, upon whom Stolypin proposed to build, appeared to be benefiting, as the strong and sober—fortified by the science of arithmetic—usually do, in their dealings with those who are neither strong nor sober, or not arithmetically minded. The Provisional Government repealed the Stolypin legislation: and in the disturbances of 1917 the

“separators” were being forcibly reabsorbed in the *Mir*: which showed itself stronger than had been expected. Pavlovsky, who was a strong supporter of the individualisation of landed property, says that “the movement of consolidation started again spontaneously in 1921 and forced its legal recognition on the reluctant Communist Government”. What I understand to have happened during the currency of the New Economic Policy, to which M. Pavlovsky refers, is that the old conflict of interest in the peasantry reappeared in the comparative freedom of that epoch. That is to say, the “strong and sober”—and arithmetically minded—desired separate individual property in land, for excellent reasons of their own: and the others, for reasons not less convincing to themselves, desired the contrary. The former saw that they could do better alone: the latter dreaded the rise of new masters and the end of the old egalitarian order, and of the opportunities of livelihood which the communal system promised. The conflict ended—for the time being at all events—in the liquidation of the “*kulak*”—a less complimentary method of describing the “strong and sober”—and indeed in the liquidation of most of the separate individual rights in land.

The long struggle in Communist circles which reached its apparent end in the collectivisation of the farms was one in which Nikolai Bukharin—who exhorted the peasants to enrich themselves—and the Communists of the Right wing generally, took a line parallel in general direction (though apparently widely separate from it) with that of Peter Stolypin and M. Köföd. Both wanted a prosperous individualised peasant agriculture, as a means of building up the economic power of the State: and the aims of both must, if successful, have eventuated in the creation of an agricultural proletariat alongside of a strong body of peasant cultivators tending in the direction of a new landlordism. But this belongs to a later chapter of these studies. In the meanwhile it is to be noted that a real increase of agricultural prosperity characterised the years immediately preceding the first World War, and that the advocates of the individualisation of landed property are entitled to claim the Stolypin Settlement as one of its causes. This fact is compatible with the contention that the Stolypin policy was not the right solution for Russia’s problem. In other words, the larger aggregate product may be secured by an agrarian policy which reduces a section of the cultivators to the status of landless wage-earners as in Great Britain.

Two great movements are so closely connected with the Stolypin policy for the “strong and sober” that they must not be passed over without mention here: I speak of Co-operation and of State-aided emigration to Siberia.

Co-operation of the type which had its origin in Great Britain appealed to the Populists as a means of evading, in Russia, the dreaded stage of western Capitalism. After early failures, partly due to the unfavourable attitude of the Government, the famine of 1891–92 led to the decision to

permit its revival. In 1914 there were 33,000 societies in Russia, of which 12,000 were consumers' co-operatives and 13,000 credit societies. The remaining 8,000 were presumably producers' co-operatives. Of the 2 million families in the consumers' co-operatives, four-fifths were resident in rural localities. There was a Union of consumers' co-operatives doing business to the extent of 10 million roubles annually.

Agricultural societies of the type which did not hold land in common increased rapidly from the beginning of the twentieth century, and numbered 6,000 in the first World War. The most famous of them was the Siberian Creamery Association, which came into existence after the completion of the Trans-Siberian Railway, to counteract speculation in the butter trade. Credit Associations, which had 10 million members in 1914, like rural co-operative banks everywhere, had the function of circumventing the village usurer and palliating the evils of peasant indebtedness. But M. Daudé Bancel, the author of *La Reforme Agraire en Russie*, tells us that the number fell steeply during the War, owing to the mobilisation of instructors and the decay of national economy.

During the War many producers' associations were formed to supply the troops with boots, warm garments, and other articles. Cottage industry co-operatives are said to have contributed 150 millions' worth of goods to the armies. The service was a great one: but the Tsarist Government was apparently unable to make up its mind to give whole-hearted support to the Co-operative movement. The Bill for its organisation, prepared in 1914, was passed by the Duma in 1916, but rejected by the Council of State. The Provisional Government, on the contrary, gave to the movement an effective impulse. The first Pan-Co-operative Congress was held at Petrograd in August, 1917, and 100 representatives of co-operative organisations attended the meeting of M. Kerensky's Parliament.

There are many incidental references to rural co-operation in the village monographs which were numerous in the early revolutionary period: and there is an ominous refrain which runs through them, evidently echoing the actual conversation of rural life. "Co-operation is all very well for the well-to-do." Left entirely to itself, in a system of *laissez faire, laissez aller*, co-operation, like other institutions, is likely to benefit the poor less than it benefits the well-to-do. For instance, the former can be almost shut out from participation in its benefits if they are called upon to give security of the kind ordinarily demanded by the joint stock banks for their loans and advances. But they can be helped by a system which organises the personal security of individuals into the joint security of groups: and the tradition of the *artel* in Russia lends itself to such a system.

We have a glimpse of another aspect of agrarian history in the period preceding the first World War, in the great boom in emigration to which the State lent its powerful support. It was the completion of the Trans-

Siberian Railway which gave the opportunity. A Committee for the encouragement of colonisation was set up in 1892, with the Grand Duke Nicolas (not yet Nicolas II) as President: and he retained this chair after his accession to the throne. The practice (evidently of considerable antiquity in European colonisation, and not new to Russia) of sending emissaries to spy out the land before the emigrants left their homes, became general. It has a parallel in the colonisation of the canal-irrigated areas of northern India. Joshua and Caleb exercised a similar function when the children of Israel were about to enter the promised land. The State's control both of transport and of unoccupied land facilitated operations. When easily-accessible land began to run short, the State did not hesitate to reduce the area of older holdings, or to withdraw surplus land from nomad Kirgiz: a measure which led to revolt and drastic repression in 1916. This is one among many instances illustrative of the attitude of the pre-Revolution Government to rights in land. Expediency, and not any conception of the sacredness of property, as Britons understand it, was as much the guide of the Tsars as of the Bolsheviks.

The great scale of the movement to Siberia is shown by a comparison of the figures of population of the territory in 1897 and 1914. There was an increase from 13½ to 21 millions. The exodus began to diminish after 1909, perhaps because there was an improvement in conditions nearer home: or because the most conveniently situated land had been largely taken up.

CHAPTER VI

THE PEASANT IN REVOLUTION

"To whom, dear Nicolas, should belong
The land, the fields, and the villages?"

"To you, my brothers and sons, to you alone."

BORISOV. The peasants' talk with St. Nicolas the Miracle-worker.

WHEN WE approach the crucial date of 1917, with fourteen millions or more of Russians under arms, we become conscious that the soldier is only the peasant in uniform. It is he whose reactions to agrarian change put an end to the proceedings of the Stolypin settlement; he who, cantoned in restless idleness in the capital, makes the first abortive essay of revolution in October, 1916; who finally tilts the unstable balance of the State in March, 1917; who discusses thereafter in his committees the dangerous question whether it remains necessary—after three years of war—that he shall die; who figures in September in the mobs which seize land or prevent the removal of food, murder landlords and their agents, and destroy property and stock.

But it is with the peasant—this time the peasant without the uniform—that the stirring of the Titan begins. The economic machinery for the

satisfaction of the primal needs of man falls somehow out of gear. As it were, the driving-belt of the conveyor slips from its place, and the wheels which convey the grain to the hungry cease to function.

The process is so simple, and has become so familiar, that we have almost forgotten to ask ourselves what it is which keeps the towns alive, and what are the forces which cause the cultivator to produce more food than he and his family can eat. Partly, of course, it is the compulsion of tax and rent and mortgage payments. These items seem to have forced some 18% of the Russian peasants' gross production into the market. Export being stopped by war, there should have been a larger surplus than ordinary for internal consumption, but the peasant in uniform ate far more than the peasant out of it, and military consumption, due to waste and loss of territory, far more than counterbalanced the gain to internal resources. What was the peasant's motive for producing or for delivering more than the machinery of compulsion could extract from him? Normally it was his need of certain commodities and minor luxuries (including vodka). By a self-denying ordinance the sale of vodka (at least of licit vodka) had been stopped at the beginning of the war. For the rest, the Government had fixed the price of grain—the peasant's real currency—but had left the price of manufactured articles—the subject-matter of the peasant's demand—to the higgling of the market. The normal motive ceased to operate on the peasant because he was asked to accept less than the normal real reward.

In other words, there was a virtual anticipation of what subsequently came to be called the "Scissors" crisis.

It was Trotsky who devised the name. Studying the graph of agricultural and industrial prices, his eye was caught by the uneven divergence of the two lines from the norm, and he saw that they resembled a steadily widening expansion of a pair of scissors. The "Scissors" was to play a great part in revolutionary history: and it was in active operation in 1917.

If it was the "Scissors" which kept back the grain in the surplus-producing south and south-east, it was something even more intimately disturbing which raised temperatures to fever point among the deficit producers whose holding were of the non-economic type. The Food Committees, which had been established by the Government, sometimes tried to wring grain from sources which had no surplus. The threat of hunger was present for the small producer.

Let us turn back for a moment and see how the agrarian situation of 1917 differed from that of 1905, when for a time it had appeared almost equally threatening.

At the earlier date the old communal and egalitarian agriculture was already of the past. A reliable calculation of the year 1894 puts the numbers working as wage-paid cultivators at nearly 2½ millions, not including the women who went into the harvest-field. The Bolshevik

historian, Pokrovsky, tells us that there were 5 millions of agricultural workers unemployed in 1905—perhaps he means rather under-employed. The peasants having non-economic holdings, who were calculated as being 30% of the whole on the morrow of emancipation, now formed a much larger proportion. The rise of agricultural prices after 1896 hit them hard, and partial dependence upon earnings for a livelihood was widespread, especially in the northern half of the Black-Earth belt and adjoining areas. Large-scale industry was developing: but its growth had not gone far enough, and the absence of an effective peasant consumer created a vicious circle. The two types of capitalist agriculture—the enterprising squire and the thriving peasant—had, indeed, come into existence: but the demand was for cereals for export, not for that variety of products which is stimulated by a well-distributed local industry. M. Pavlovsky, whose facts command confidence, has nothing but praise for the cultivating squire: but he emphasises the mischief, material and

re by the widely extended practice of leasing land for short peasants who cultivated with their own stock and implements. It prevailed in New Russia, in the south-east, in Ukraine and Black-earth provinces on both sides of the Volga. It has been as the key to the agrarian movement of 1905, because it made the landlord as a mere burden upon the land. It was against the landlords that those earlier disturbances were directed: and the aim was to drive them from their estates. Many of the nobles' houses were ravaged and burned. We hear nothing at this time of any action against well-to-do peasants. As soon as the Government had decided against expropriation, there was no question of the permanent dispossession of the owners, except by giving them a motive for selling their estates. Punitive expeditions visited the scenes of the disturbances, and "restored order": and did it more or less effectively because the Peace of Portsmouth had been made and the army was loyal to the Tsarist State. That the restoration of discipline was partial and precarious is true: and some degree of disorder lingered obstinately on.

(1917.) At the second of the two epochs the differentiation in the peasantry (and indeed in the squires too) had gone a good deal further. The economic contrast was now more distinctly one between the enterprising landowner and the thriving peasant, on the one hand, and the old-fashioned go-as-you-please squire and the non-economic holder and the feckless person on the other. Even at this stage Pavlovsky's observation that the alienation of peasant land for poverty and similar causes had not gone far enough to be a serious danger, warns us against exaggeration. What had actually happened was stated by a writer in *Ruskaya Muisl* whom Mr. Lancelot Owen quotes: "A powerful petty bourgeoisie is being created in the village". In the language which was current ten years later, the *kulak*—not as a mere money-lender or dealer, but as a

holder of land—had come into existence, and a new agrarian problem with him.

The “separator”, or “seceder”, as his enemies called him, under the Stolypin settlement—the Otrubnik or Khutoryanin, to give him his official appellation, the individualised peasant, as we might say—was obviously the typical figure of this new portent. It is he who, along with the enterprising squire, makes a commercial business of agriculture, increases the swelling figure of cereal exports to a whole half of the produce taken to market, helps the State to a “favourable” balance of foreign trade, accounts for the increased (but still not large) total of steel ploughs, drills, and harvesters, roof iron, and other amenities. It is he who is “strong and sober”, and wise and capable enough to benefit by the increased attention given by Government and District Councils to agricultural improvement: who causes the figures of horned cattle in European Russia to rise by 8% between 1904 and 1914 (and, on the other hand, the figures of sheep to fall by 20%, because of the extension of cultivation and reduction of pasture): he who swells the record of what Pavlovsky calls “product as well as the corollary of capitalism”, rural co-operation. Who would not share the enthusiasm of those who see in the achievement of the “strong and sober” the best hope of the progress of the country? He certainly gave a most admirable jolt to production and conferred immense economic benefits—at a certain stage of growth and at a certain cost.

(1917.) In the later of the two epochs of agrarian disturbance passed, the movement ran much higher than in 1905. The landlords endeavoured to dispose of their land by actual or fictitious sale, and there was an organised determination on the part of the peasants to prevent this. The movement was directed not only against landlords, as in 1905, but also against “separators”, who were forced back into the communes and made again to pool their land. It was much more like the reassertion of the primitive authority of the *Mir*, against a State whose rights were denied, than an anarchical outbreak against all order. The people did not seize land which had not been cultivated by their communes or owned by squires whose serfs their forbears had been. As Mr. Lancelot Owen puts it: “The *Mir* was living and active though the State was in suspension”. The observation is profoundly true, and the interpretation of it is significant for the comprehension of Russian history. It was the upper, the artificial, one might almost say the *foreign*, storeys of the building of State, which were shaken down. The lower, the native, parts of the structure stood firmer than ever. It was not only that the *Mir* reappeared in all its pristine vigour: other alternative authorities having an underground existence certainly from 1905, and probably even from earlier years (for the Soviet had its origin in unrecognised organisations set up in the factories), were the Soviets; which assumed overt activity everywhere as soon as the façade of State power had collapsed.

The incidents which together constituted the revolution of March, 1917, need only be briefly summarised here. The trouble began with a shortage of food in the capital (at that time named Petrograd) and a reduction of the bread ration: but behind these overt grievances was a long story of incompetence, suffering, and mistrust. The Premier, M. Protopopov, who was conducting the administration under the general authority of the Empress, was suspected of treasonable conversations with a German agent at Stockholm. He appears to have been suffering from a disorder which led to rumours of insanity, and had recently asked to be temporarily excused from the charge of the victualling arrangements. The capital was crowded with troops, inactive and restless. The fourth Duma was sitting at the Tavrida Palace. Its President, Prince Lvov, warned the Tsar, then at the General Headquarters of the field army, that the capital was in a state of anarchy and asked him to appoint a minister "possessing the confidence of the country": according to the approved formula of parliamentary government. In reply to this invitation to dismiss Protopopov, he received an order dissolving the Duma. On the same night (March 11-12, new style) a part of the Emperor's own Guard mutinied: and next morning mutinous troops without their officers fraternised with workers in attacking police and breaking into arsenals. The arrival of mutineers, accompanied by civilian crowds, at the Tavrida Palace, caused the Duma—which had been technically dissolved—to decide to sit again in unofficial session and to appoint a Temporary Committee: which became virtually the revolutionary authority. The Ministers of the old régime were arrested or surrendered. Seventy-three policemen lost their lives in attacks by soldiers and workmen. The rest of the police surrendered or disappeared, and no Police Force—*under that hated name*—has ever come into existence since. The Army everywhere fraternised with the Revolution, and neither the Commander-in-Chief nor any portion of the armed forces opposed the abdication of the Emperor, or his subsequent arrest along with the Imperial family.

It remained for events to show what—in positive terms—the Revolution meant. The negative intention, that neither Nicholas II nor Alexander Feodorovna—the "German woman", as the people called her, as the French had called Marie Antoinette "l'Autrichienne"—should rule, was clear enough. For a generation to come, perhaps for much longer, Russia was to search for her intention. For the moment, at least, the intention was definite enough: the land for the working commune, with an end alike of landlords and "separators": and peace. But it soon became evident that these apparently simple demands involved the whole structure of the State and constructive change extending to limits as yet unforeseen.

In explanation of what happened in rural Russia, let me again emphasise the virtual disappearance—outside of the *Mir* and the Canton

Committee—of all authority. Tolstoi had counselled his countrymen that each should say: "For me there is no State." They had taken his advice, and the State had vanished into air, like a castle of dry sand. We learn from a pamphlet of 1920 that a few landlords survived even then, but these were the local accidents of a country of huge distances. The "Land Captains" at once lost all but a nominal power, though the office was not formally abolished till July, 1917. A militia with heads chosen by popular election had replaced the police, and we learn that foreign residents were employed with this force as special constables. There is abundant evidence that this militia, hastily formed and ill-trained, and uncertain of its ground with the people, was not efficient. Some squadrons of Cossacks were employed for the maintenance of order in the capital. In rural areas it was necessary, later on, to strengthen the militia by detailing selected soldiers on special pay. But the cry for troops for the maintenance of order in rural areas was constant throughout the period of the Provisional Government: and crime was rife in the cities. No detective police existed: but Alexander Kerensky was occupied with a plan for the re-establishment of a department similar to the Tsarist Okhrana, when he was driven from power by the November Revolution. The lack of an adequate Police must be placed high among the causes of the overthrow of the Provisional Government: for rural disturbances involved a virtual severance of the economic tie between town and village, and cut off supplies of food and fuel from the capital and from the army at the front.

After a short interval in which an attempt was made to make use of the Chairmen of Rural Councils as local governors, Provincial and District Commissars were appointed by the Provisional Government: and the demands of these functionaries for military help in the maintenance of order, and the exhortations of the central authorities to them to put down anarchy, fill a large place in the official correspondence. It is evident that they lacked the regular machinery for the work of administration: and that the locally elected bodies, the Soviets in the towns, the Canton Committees in the rural areas, and the village *Mirs* (which exhibited all the vitality of their indigenous origin) took their own course, without much regard to orders from above. The course of the agrarian movement gives ample evidence of this disco-ordination of central and local machinery.

Canton Committees, of the nature of Soviets, were formed with the acquiescence of the Provisional Government in March, and played a prominent part in the agrarian movement, till the new bodies provided by the legislation of May 1917 came into existence in September. We see them, in the Tver province, collecting grain and money for war-requirements, organising a Canton library, and ultimately arranging for the elections to the new legally authorised body. But a good deal of their activity was more strenuous and less innocent than this. Both the

Canton Committees and the Village *Mirs* clashed, often violently, with the Committees set up by the Central Government for dealing with food-supply and with the land. The Food Committees were organised in connection with the grain monopoly which the Provisional Government found it necessary to establish. The Bolsheviks raised the slogan of: Down with the Food Committees: and there were cases of the destruction of the local food offices, due to dissatisfaction with the fixed price or with the method of requisition. The Land Committees were established to settle disputes between peasant and landlord, or peasant and peasant, with respect to land, rent, and wages: and to help to secure seed, implements, animal and machine power, for the cultivators. Where they took their colour from local influences, the Land Committees joined vigorously in the movement for the seizure of land from the landlords. Where they stood aloof, as representatives of the central authority, they often found themselves virtually set aside by the purposeful determination of the locally elected bodies. The picture is, in general, one of centrifugal tendencies too strong for the Central Government.

The opening of the sowing season of 1917 raised in an acute form the questions of the land, and rumours of a "black redistribution", which had been of chronic recurrence since the Emancipation, with its disappointing provision for the cultivator, were at their height in the spring of that year. In April the Provisional Government decided, in principle, that the right of occupation should depend upon the cultivator's labour: but our old acquaintance Doctor Shingarev, the Kadet Minister for Agriculture, advised voluntary agreements between landlords and peasants, and contemplated compensation for the former, and postponed legislation to the Constituent Assembly. Disorders had already begun: and the plan of compensation was particularly obnoxious to the peasantry. In April trespass and unauthorised ploughing, illicit removal of timber, destruction of boundary marks, and appropriation of cattle, were becoming frequent; and cases of robbery, riot, and incendiarism were occurring, but thus far in small numbers. Trotsky cites for us a suggestive telegram received by the Government from the Tambov province, which always took the lead in agrarian enterprise. The gist of it is a demand for the prohibition of the sale of land by landlords: "or we will shed blood". The peasants wished to stop sales because alienation was an obvious device to put the land beyond their reach. The Provisional Government boggled over prohibition: while the village *Mirs* were interfering with the cultivation, in the interests of peasant claims. The memoirs of a landlord in the province of Tambov show us how his protests against trespass and seizure are met by the village boys with the assurance that "it will all be ours soon". The Army had been embarrassed by the deficiency of fodder in March. It was now necessary to decree that all surplus grain should be sold to the State at fixed prices: and, though there may have been a moment when the fixed prices were

profitable to the owner of grain, they rapidly lost their attraction as the products of industry became harder to obtain.

In May a crisis of fuel was added to the existing crises of food and fodder. In this month the cases of violence and destruction of property were nearly five times as numerous as in April, and the appointment of the Land Committees, which should have served as mediators and moderators, made little impression on the record of agrarian crime. Attacks now began to be made on spirit-depots, and 5,000 soldiers joined in a great raid on one of these in the town of Mtsensk: a fact which sheds light on the discipline at the rear of the armies. In spite of the hay-cutting, June showed a further increase of trespass, but the more serious and violent crimes were fewer than in May. July, when the haycutting was mostly over and the heavy work of harvesting spring-sown crops not yet begun, gave 1,100 infringements of property rights in European Russia, of which nearly a third were of the serious and violent type.

Mr. Chamberlin has pointed out that more than half of the agrarian disturbances registered in 1917 happened in the Central-Agricultural and Middle-Volga regions, in the provinces of Tambov, Voronezh, Orel, Kursk, Tula, Ryazan, Penza, Saratov, Simbirsk, Nizhni Novgorod and Kazan, areas in which the leasing system was particularly prevalent and the squire was regarded as a parasite. In the west, and in Ukrain, where there were home farms, simple seizure predominated over violence and destruction.

In May Doctor Shingarev had been succeeded in the Ministry of Agriculture by Victor Chernov, a Social Revolutionary, the theorist of Populist Socialism. The Social Revolutionaries were the party most influential in rural Russia, and half of the members of the all-Russian Congress of peasant deputies which sat in May and June were of this party, only fourteen seats falling to the Bolsheviks. This congress approved a statement of agrarian principles which were virtually those of Chernov. His scheme was the socialisation, as opposed to the nationalisation of the land: that is to say, its removal from the processes of private ownership and exchange: and its treatment as public property under the administration of the organs of self-government, the right of cultivation being earned by toil and regulated by a calculation of the needs of a consuming family. The landlord was to receive no compensation. A rent was to be levied from the cultivator and devoted to social needs. The local Land Committees were to settle disputes and assist in preserving order, and the Central Land Committee was to act as final Court of Appeal, and to prepare for the agrarian legislation which was still postponed for the meeting of the Constituent Assembly. In order to facilitate the work of these bodies, private alienations—unless sanctioned by Provincial Land Committees—were prohibited. (*July 25th, 1917.*) But nothing was done to expedite the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, or to reassure the peasantry by formally declaring the land to be public property and taking

possession of it. Thus, while offence was given to the champions of private property, enough was not done to stop the progress of agrarian crime by tangible guarantees of the enforcement of legal expropriation.

The demands of the peasantry included safeguards for agricultural labour, the fixing of wages, in some cases also of hours, and cessation of the employment of prisoners of war, whose competition kept wages down. Those who had left the *Mir* under the operation of the earlier legislation for the creation of separate peasant property in land, were in the Central-Agricultural and Middle-Volga zones, which were strongholds of the *Mir*, as well as storm-centres of agrarian disturbances, often forced to return to it. In the earlier stages the Social Revolutionaries exercised a moderating influence in the villages; but, as the excitement grew, and violence was stimulated by the return of deserters from the armies, this influence was lost. Agrarian crime became immensely worse as soon as the harvest was in, and the Government deferred till too late the preparation of the decree for immediate expropriation. In the meanwhile, as we learn from Mr. Monkhouse, who was at this time employed in Russia, the position of employers in industry was increasingly difficult. The men made a practice of placing unpopular managers and foremen in wheel-barrows and wheeling them off the premises. There were more serious cases, of beating, and even of murder: but savage violence was noticeably less than in the rural areas. The unregulated prices of manufactured commodities contrasted with the fixed prices of agricultural produce, and became an additional cause of agitation among the peasantry, who demanded that the balance of exchange between the two should be restored by putting industry upon the same terms as agriculture.

V. A. Rudnev, economist and philosopher, who worked later in the State Planning Commission, was publishing at the end of May a vigorous and instructed attack on war-profiteering, showing that capital was held back in the hope of still higher prices, that fixed prices were being evaded, that wild speculation by middlemen was going on in coal and metal, that useless factories were being erected at Government expense, and that industrialists were deliberately creating anarchy in production. W. G. Groman, a Menshevik statistician and economist, was pointing out that everywhere, except in Russia, the pressure of war-needs was bringing about the State organisation of economic life and labour. The Social Revolutionary and Menshevik organ was demanding the State monopoly of some, and the State control of other, industries, and the State control of credit institutions to prevent speculation, and was hinting at the need of compulsory labour for all. The Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet was urging the acceptance of a scheme of State control of national economy. But the Government shrank from offending property interests. It appointed an Economic Council; but otherwise did nothing except to raise wages: which led to a further rise of prices.

An abortive demonstration (*July 16-19, 1917*) in which the Bolsheviks took part, under the slogan "All Power to the Soviets", gave to the Provisional Government one of several opportunities which presented themselves for getting rid of opponents whom we now know to have been dangerous to it. None of these opportunities was grasped. The explanation seems to be that only three or four months ago all the victims of the old régime had been released, and all, including Lenin, warmly welcomed back to their native land, in the glow of exaltation and unity of sentiment which the first days of the Revolution created. In the light of our later knowledge we know that Lenin was dangerous to the Liberal revolution. We must not suppose that he then seemed as dangerous as we now know him to have been. The Peasant Congress laughed uproariously when he offered, on behalf of the Bolsheviks, to accept power. He commanded only a tiny minority among the peasants, Bolshevism was not a soldiers' movement, its strength lay in the factories: but the idea that the factories might lead the peasantry was still limited to a few Bolsheviks. No doubt a ruthless Government, or even a Government of the old-fashioned police type, would have made sure of Lenin's good behaviour in the old-fashioned way. But any statesman or administrator might, *at this stage*, have underrated the Bolshevik leader's importance. And the men of the Provisional Government were legally minded, and Kerensky himself was a trained lawyer, disposed to wait for a "case", before taking action, and to believe in the effectiveness of conciliation and oratory.

It is at a later stage, when Trotsky and other Bolshevik prisoners are released on small bail in September, and when the Military Revolutionary Committee disobeys with impunity a formal order of the Government, that we begin to ask ourselves whether the long-suffering patience of the Provisional Government does not amount to a tempting of providence. It may be that Kerensky regarded the Bolshevik leaders, according to the forms of Western Constitutionalism, as "the alternative Government": but, if so, he would seem to have been misled by a false analogy. There are peoples among whom public order is secured by the acquiescence of the vast majority in certain fundamental principles of government, and in certain conventions which may be described as rules of the game. It is a rule in this game that a majority vote is accepted as the substitute for the ordeal by battle. Where the necessary conventions are faithfully observed, and the umpires are not too closely related to one of the two teams, this mode of settlement is an economiser of time and strength. The preliminary process makes it impossible to elicit and consider many opinions and many interests, and the need for paying attention to the wishes of all classes prevents the grosser types of oppression. But where the conventions are not accepted, or are not observed, where the interested spectators are momentarily threatening to break into the ring, and determine the issue of the match by a wild justice of their own, in which force, or some other method of applying actual compulsion, is the

arbiter, government by discussion and apparatus of parliamentarianism, became an unreality.

Prince Lvov, who had held the office of Prime Minister since the establishment of the Provisional Government, resigned it on July 20, 1917. He was dissatisfied with the prospects of agrarian legislation submitted by Chernov, which appeared to promise the peasants the seizure of property by the peasants. It is evident that his support to the measures of "strong government, which were being forced upon the ministry by the July disturbances and the collapse at the front. Kerensky became President of the Council of Ministers, retaining the portfolios of War and Navy. The death penalty, which had been abrogated in March, was restored "in war-time for major crimes committed by men on military duty". The military censorship of newspapers and letters was re-established: newspaper power was taken to suppress newspapers, to prohibit meetings, and arrest by administrative order.

So far as legal authority was concerned, Alexander Kerensky was now at the summit of power, with a Cabinet consisting predominantly of moderate socialists, among whom Chernov, the Minister of Agriculture, was the most radical. Socialism which has often been practised by absolute Governments, as the first Socialist Government in the world; and it might well have med that Kerensky had the ball at his feet. In Galicia had met with disaster. It July the renewed military offensive was routed army, and how to restore necessary to decide how to make a permanent demand for land: how to build up the shattered economic life of the country. The setback which the Petrograd workers had received was not long duration. Early in August the Petrograd workers were mingling with soldiers of the active army, and learning from them that conditions at the front were returning to those of the Tsarist régime. A week or the influence of the Bolsheviks in the Petrograd factories was already restored, the party had grown from 80,000 in April to 200,000, and we learn that the Social Revolutionaries of the Left began to catch up Bolshevik slogans and ideas.

Kerensky's own words show how he proposed to utilise his virtual dictatorship. The convocation of the Constituent Assembly set for October was postponed to December; and, having thus delayed the opportunity of a definite settlement of the outstanding questions, he felt the "need of making an inventory of the nation's political forces, and to give the parties, the Soviets and other organisations, an opportunity of appraising themselves". This was a decision of the kind demanded by a pressing emergency. For action was to choose between a military saviour in whom courage and energy were not united with comprehension of the political situation, and a socialist leader at whom she had laughed a few weeks before.

The story of the successive experiments by which the "persuader-in-

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chief" attempted to establish a government of mutual goodwill and conciliation without grappling with the inescapable problems: of the ignominious collapse of the plan to restore discipline by a military dictatorship: of the suspicion of betrayal of the interests of the Right which the negotiations brought upon Kerensky: of Lenin's deadly sarcasm that Kerensky was "a Kornilovist who had accidentally quarrelled with Kornilov": of the revival of the Red Guard under the name of the Armed Workers' Militia: has already been told too often and too well to justify recapitulation here. The Head of the Government, who now combined military with civil authority in his own person, could look for support neither on the Right nor on the Left: and was henceforth hurried, helpless on the stream, towards the approaching roar of the falls.

In the meanwhile the disturbances in the rural areas, particularly in Central Russia, were threatening the cessation of supplies both to the army and the cities. In September, General Kornilov, as Commander-in-Chief, had issued decrees aiming at the restoration of order in the war-zone—that is to say, in the region between the Baltic and the Gulf of Finland up to a point within six kilometres of Petrograd, to which the Government had given, on the advance of the Germans to Riga, a status outside of the law. A Marshall of Gentry in the Tambov province at this time complains of the incompetence of the militia, unable to put a stop to violent crime and the use of grain for illicit distillation, points out that the fixed prices of the State monopoly keep grain in the village, and demands military repression: but, by the time the autumn has arrived, the same authority has made up his mind to take refuge in the city. The Social Revolutionary Minister of Agriculture, Victor Chernov, had a long struggle over his bill to prohibit the sale of land pending settlement of the land question. He succeeded in passing it when the Kadet Ministers resigned in July. Landlords were at this time destroying their own crops to keep them from the peasants. The resistance on the part of landowners continued, and the Provisional Government had still not put the law into force in September: and Chernov then resigned from the Ministry. September showed a great increase in rural crimes of violence, but October beat all records, with a further rise of 42% in such offences. The disturbances were most intense in the regions of the minority nationalities: where, in some cases, the peasant movement began to merge with the strike movement of the urban workers. We now hear that Churches require special protection by the *Mirs*: that the lines of communication between the surplus-producing provinces and the towns are virtually cut: that stock is disappearing, and famine threatens. But the famine which threatened was not a famine in the villages. The bins were being partly filled by a moderate harvest, about four-fifths of that of 1916: but the grain was not reaching the markets or the towns. Destruction was widespread. Libraries, works of art, bloodstock, conservatories,

and experimental stations, were in many cases destroyed, animals hamstrung, houses burned, and masters or agents sometimes murdered. It was now far more than a mere seizure of estates and property.

General Verkhovsky issued an order from the War Office on October 24th which declares that "ruin in the rear, destructive riots, burning of grain in transit, violence and atrocities, threaten the Front Line with hunger and cold, supplies of food and accoutrements being held up". The whole territory of the Republic was now divided into military areas, whose commanding officers were to co-operate with the civil Commissars. In his last days of power, Kerensky was ordering the suppression of disobedient Land Committees, which encouraged, instead of stopping, the seizure of land, exhorting Commissars to use military force, and, at last, and now too late, preparing a decree for the legal expropriation of the landowners whom he could not protect.

The bread ration, which had been a pound a head per day in March, was reduced to three-quarters in October. The price of bread had been doubled in September, and the Minister of Supplies in the Coalition Government had resigned in consequence. Three-quarters of a pound is a starvation diet for men to whom bread is the staff of life, as it was, and still is, in Russia. It has been calculated by Mr. Chamberlin that real wages in the second half of 1917 were less than two-thirds of what they were in the first half of 1916. The cities were full of queues and shortages and discontent. In a pamphlet of September, Lenin was demanding effective measures to ascertain who was plundering the Public Treasury, a progressive tax properly enforced, and—significantly—the firing squad for profiteers. "It is doubtful whether any revolutionary government can get on without capital punishment applied to exploiters," he wrote.

It was being demonstrated, not for the first, and not for the last time, that, in Victor Chernov's words, "the peasantry is the real autocrat of Russia". For it was the peasantry—working unconsciously through its control of the fuel and food supply, and confronting its rulers with an ill-fed and disordered army and with a hungry mob of city workers—which brought down the Provisional Government.

Certain constitutional changes, including the proclamation of a Republic (which had been delayed till September 16th) and the dissolution of the Fourth Imperial Duma (which had been sitting at the March Revolution and had served as the basis of the Provisional Government), ended with the appointment of a Council of the Republic or pre-Parliament, and the formation of the last of the coalitions of the Provisional Government. Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador to the Petrograd Government, told his Government that the Bolsheviks "alone have a definite political programme and are a compact minority. . . . If the Government are not strong enough to put down the Bolsheviks by force, at the risk of breaking altogether with the Soviet, the only alternative will be a Bolshevik Government." In a few weeks there was

a demand for the dissolution of the pre-parliament and for the convening of a second all-Russian congress of Soviets, whose meeting was fixed for the day on which the Bolshevik revolution took place. The pre-parliament survived till its dispersal by soldiers on the fateful day of November 7th.

(October, 1917.) Early in October Kerensky made another attempt to secure the support of all the Socialist parties, including the Bolsheviks. He held a conference with them at which he said that he was willing to work for a transition to a new system of government, if they would take upon themselves the responsibility of dissolving the coalition with the propertied classes, represented by the Kadet ministers, and point out a person willing to form a new Provisional Government, "as I personally could not carry out the task conscientiously". But these overtures for a Socialist coalition without Kerensky were not successful.

In the meanwhile the Germans were making their naval advance towards the Gulf of Finland and had occupied the island of Oesel. Since September, the foreign Embassies had been informed of the Government's intention to move its headquarters from Petrograd to Moscow, which gave rise to rumours of an intended surrender of the capital to the Germans. Disorders among the troops in Finland had caused the people to throw themselves into the arms of Germany. An insurrection had broken out in Turkestan. The Allied Conference to decide war-aims, for which the Provisional Government had been hoping, had been abandoned. Kerensky's attempt to secure his position in the capital by moving troops from the disaffected Petrograd garrison to the front was abortive. As soon as they had formed for the march, the soldiers dispersed, so thoroughly that some units on arrival at the railway had already lost three-quarters of their effectives. Demoralisation could hardly go farther than this. On October 9th, Buchanan, as *doyen* of the diplomatic corps, read to Kerensky and the other ministers a note from the British, French, and Italian ambassadors, warning the Government of the need of measures to restore order both in front and rear. The Soldiers' Committee elections in October showed a sharp swing of opinion towards the Bolsheviks. Even among the Cossacks the rank and file were moving in that direction. The municipal elections showed similar results, partly because all the garrison, including soldiers who were merely passing through Petrograd, recorded their votes. Soldiers from the front were declaring that, if peace were not made by a stated date in November, they would leave the trenches and make peace themselves. Officers were being deprived by their men of horses and arms, displaced from their functions, and even murdered. On November 3rd guards were posted by the Government to protect the Embassies in Petrograd. We are not surprised when we are told that Kerensky was living upon drugs in the last terrible weeks.

The November Revolution, enormous in its ultimate significance, was, from the military standpoint, so easily achieved, and was so undramatic

in itself, that it is natural to ask why insurrection was necessary. In October Bolshevik majorities were secured both in Moscow and Petrograd, and, on a superficial examination, it might seem that the cause was won, and that it was only necessary for the Soviets of the two capitals, now controlled by the party of Lenin, to carry out the peaceful assumption of power.

For the Western constitutionalist, bred in the tradition of the constitutional game, and assuming that majorities will have their way, the answer may seem difficult. But Lenin was not a Western constitutionalist, and he did not expect power to be automatically transferred by a change in the balance of votes in a popular assembly: though he might, and did, value such a change, as one of the indications that the balance of opinion—and therefore of opportunity for power—was changing. He had reasons *now* for believing that the transfer of power would be forestalled or resisted, unless it were clinched by accomplished facts: and that the moment was favourable for the accomplishing of those facts. But he was, in fact, always bent upon insurrection at the right moment, and the variation of tactics at different times merely meant that the right moment appeared to him nearer or more distant.

The reasons were first put before the Bolshevik Central Committee on September 28th, before majorities had been secured in the Soviets of Petrograd and Moscow. On this occasion, Kamenev moved the rejection of Lenin's proposal for the seizure of power, and succeeded in carrying the negative motion. (*October, 1917.*) In October, both the external and the internal situation had changed. The German naval advance had taken place: but mutinies had occurred in the German fleet nearer home, indicating to the sanguine temper of the revolutionaries the early advent of the world-revolution. At the same time there were rumours of a peace between the Imperialist Powers at the expense of Russia. It was believed, or at all events asserted, that the Provisional Government, which had announced the intention of moving the capital to Moscow, designed the surrender of Petrograd to the Germans: and it was certain that it had proposed to withdraw part of the garrison to make room for other troops less friendly to revolution. This plan, though it had gone so far as to take the form of an order to the troops, had been thwarted by a counter-order of the Petrograd Soviet, which had thus demonstrated the weakness of the Government. Beside the electoral successes in the two capitals, the intensification of disturbances in the rural areas seemed to offer an opportunity. The Bolsheviks were politically in a strong position, having a legal organisation and a score of newspapers, the metropolitan Soviets and a majority of the masses in the capital on their side. It is an odd jumble of reasons, some of which may appear to be self-contradictory. But the great strategist of revolution saw his chance, and backed it, and the reasons were subsidiary to the determination.

On this occasion Lenin's resolution for armed insurrection within an

early period was carried. But some prominent party-men, including—the names are interesting in view of the later history—Rykov and Tomsky, were cool towards it, and Zinoviev and Kamenev voted against it. The two latter prepared a written protest, arguing that there was no justification for the Party to stake its existence on a rising. They would get one third or more of the seats on the Constituent Assembly, and the Constituent Assembly, when it met, would be obliged to seek support in the Soviets. Neither the majority of the people of Russia, nor the majority of the international proletariat, was with the Bolsheviki, and the forces of the opposing parties were stronger than they appeared to be. The immediate task, they urged, was to use the Congress of Soviets, summoned for an early date in November, to consolidate the proletarian party and its organisation, and to establish close relations with the railway, post-office, and telegraph workers and with bank employees. In other words, they desired a peaceful and democratic development of the Revolution, and took their stand upon the strictly Marxian ground that *insurrection, when the time is not ripe for it, is mere adventurism*. This protest of the two dissentients was communicated to the non-party newspapers, which aroused great indignation as a betrayal of plans: and they demanded the convocation of a *plenum* of the Central Committee to review the decision for early insurrection. Lenin described the action of the pair in publishing their protest as “strike-breaking”—an evident appeal to the feeling of working-men against the blackleg—and threatened to move their expulsion from the party—a proposal which was not carried out. It is evident that the Government was now aware of the intention to make an early insurrection, though the date for it was not yet fixed. It could no longer be supposed that the preparations were being made against the possibility of German attack.

It seems that the dissentient pair might have done as they pleased if they had not published their protest. The case is interesting as an illustration of the degree of liberty enjoyed by members of the party, within the party: a matter which subsequently played a part in the controversies between Trotsky and Stalin. Another illustration of this liberty was given by the division in the party over the question of boycotting the Pre-parliament which was set up by the Democratic Conference of September to give a parliamentary basis of government, pending the convocation of the always deferred Constituent Assembly. Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin stood for boycott, and the rank and file of the party appear to have been with them. But the advocates of co-operation, including Kamenev, carried their point in the Central Committee. (*October 31, 1917.*) The Bolshevik members therefore appeared in the Pre-parliament: but they withdrew on the fourth day of its sitting.

The Congress of Soviets had been summoned to meet on November 2nd, but it was postponed to November 7th. The plan of the leaders was to confront this assembly with the accomplished fact of the seizure

of power : in evident pursuance of the policy of clinching the decision by successful insurrection.

(October 29th, 1917.) Another meeting of the Central Committee of the Party appointed a military political centre consisting of Sverdlov, Stalin, Bubnov, Uritsky and Dzerzhinsky. The Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, which had been created to co-operate in the protection of the capital against the German advance, already included Sverdlov, Uritsky and others of the most active Bolsheviki. It had appointed its own Commissars to each unit of the Petrograd garrison, and to each arsenal and magazine where arms were stored. By November 2nd these Commissars were in control of all arms and ammunition in the Petrograd Military District. This was achieved by the good will of the arsenal and other employees. On November 5th the garrison of the Peter and Paul Fortress undertook to accept orders only from the Military Revolutionary Committee : so the strategic position of that Committee, acting in complete accord with the Bolsheviki, was similar to that in which the Bolshevik Party stood before its losses in July. The Peter and Paul fortress, along with the Kronverksky Arsenal, which was also in Bolshevik hands, occupies a commanding position on the river above the point at which the Great Neva separates from the Lesser. The eastern end of it is opposite to what was then the British Embassy : the western end is opposite to the Winter Palace, which was the headquarters of the Government and of Kerensky himself. The cruiser *Aurora*, which was secured to the Bolshevik interest, was moored opposite to the Winter Palace. A second Bolshevik stronghold was the workers' district known as Viborg, which occupies the north-eastern part of the city, above the island on which the fortress of Peter and Paul stands. The Military Revolutionary Committee had its headquarters further up the river, in Smolny, Peter the Great's old tarring-yard, and thereafter a school for noble young ladies, founded by his daughter Elizabeth. This was protected by machine-guns mounted in the windows, and artillery at the main entrance. A substantial provision of food had been made in the building.

All the preparations were conducted in the full light of publicity. A sort of review was held on November 4th : shooting drill was going on : on November 5th the Viborg District Soviet requisitioned cars and first-aid supplies, and the working-women formed Red Cross divisions. It was not till the night of November 5th-6th that the Government decided to take legal proceedings against the Military Revolutionary Committee, to suppress Bolshevik newspapers, and to summon reliable troops : and the news of the decision was at once carried, through the sentries on duty at the official headquarters beside the Winter Palace, to the Bolshevik headquarters. The Government ordered the cruiser *Aurora* to leave the Neva : and the Military Revolutionary Committee countermanded the order : the Government broke up the Bolshevik printing

plant and sealed the office, and the Bolsheviks sent troops and restarted the newspaper. The passing along of the news by the sentries on duty, the slipping away of comrades through the November darkness to carry it to Smolny, and the child-like outbursts of Lenin's laughter, when he heard of the restarting of the newspaper, stand out vividly to our imaginations.

On the early morning of November 7th took place, without resistance, the seizure of railway stations, telephone exchanges, telegraph and post-offices, lighting-plant, water-works and other important buildings in Petrograd. The reasons for the Government's long inactivity are made plain by a fact recorded by Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador. During the seizure of the buildings, the Cossacks received an order to come out, and disobeyed it. If any other evidence of Kerensky's isolation were needed, it is furnished by the fact that his garrison for the Winter Palace, the seat of his government, consisted of military cadets and a shock-company of a Women's Battalion. There were guns, but, when the attack came, the gunners could not or would not fire them. Provisions were forgotten. There were plenty of troops cantoned in and about Petrograd—if they had been willing to act: but those of them who were not sympathetic with the Bolsheviks were hostile or indifferent to the Government.

(*November 7th, 1917.*) At 10 A.M. the message was broadcast "The Provisional Government is overthrown. The State power has passed into the hands of the Military Revolutionary Committee." Nothing was said about the Soviets in this message: perhaps because the Congress did not meet till that evening. But the insurrection had been called in the name of the Soviets, and the Military Revolutionary Committee was itself a Committee of the Petrograd Soviet.

(*November 7th.*) The members of the Congress of the Soviets were gathering throughout the day: but the session was not begun until nine in the evening, under the name of the Congress of the Soviet Dictatorship. Of the 615 delegates having votes who were present at the opening, 390 were Bolsheviks or Bolshevik sympathisers, presumably Social Revolutionaries of the Left. This Left wing of the Social Revolutionary Party formed a substantial minority of the whole, which had split off from the majority in August over the question of support to the Provisional Government. An eye-witness describes the Congress as consisting largely of young men from the Baltic Fleet and from the front. Most of the peasant delegates were soldiers. Conspicuous by their absence were the middle-aged intellectuals, the old type of peasant with the long beard, and the old Socialist Party leaders. Such was the assembly which assumed the power which the Tsar of all the Russias had dropped in March 1917.

The Right wing of the Congress protested against the insurrection, and one speaker, Dan, prophesied its collapse and called for a coalition

of Socialist parties. Seventy of its members then withdrew, and, in conjunction with other moderate Socialists, formed a "Committee for the salvation of the country and the revolution", which became the main organised centre of opposition to the Bolsheviki, with affiliated Committees in the provinces.

(*November 8th, 1917.*) Before dawn, news arrived of the capture of the Winter Palace and of the Ministers, except Kerensky, who had left on the preceding day. The final capture was an entry, rather than a storm.

How unimpressively, and almost like the finish of a children's game, the great consummation arrived, appears from some of Trotsky's anecdotes of it. The telephone girls, scampering out of the captured telephone exchange, not so much, it appears, from panic as from unwillingness to cooperate with the captors, recall the chorus of Opera Bouffé. On the late afternoon of the 7th, which has passed for ever into the world's calendars as the day of Revolution, the smart people were on the Nevsky Prospect as usual, laughing together and saying that the Bolshevik power would not last more than three days. Rich people in their carriages were scolding the soldiers there, and the soldiers "argued feebly, with embarrassed grins".

When the news of the capture of the Winter Palace and of the Ministers reached the Congress, resolutions were passed: "that the Provisional Government is deposed: that the Congress assumes power: that the Soviet Government proposes immediate peace: it will transfer land to the peasantry, establish control over production, promptly summon a Constituent Assembly; and it guarantees the rights of the nations of Russia to self-determination".

(*November 8, 1917.*) On the evening of the same day it met again passed, with emotion, the resolution for peace: and then proceeded immediately to agrarian legislation. It voted down a proposal for a coalition, and nominated a purely Bolshevik Council of People's Commissars. The list included Lenin, without portfolio, Rykov for the Interior, Trotsky for foreign affairs, Stalin for nationalities, Lunacharsky for education. It did not include Kamenev or Zinoviev, the two Bolshevik dissentients on the issue of insurrection, nor any of the Social Revolutionaries who had formed part of the Presidium in the Congress of the Soviet Dictatorship: but we shall see that the last continued for several months to support the Revolutionary Government and virtually dictated the earliest legislation on agrarian reform.

The Cadets of the Military Schools occupied the Central Telephone of Petrograd on November 11th: but within a few hours the Bolsheviks were again in possession of the whole city. Kerensky brought a force under General Krasnov to attack the capital. The soldiers melted away as those of General Ivanov and Krymov had melted away in similar circumstances, and by November 14th Kerensky was in flight, having narrowly escaped from being delivered up by his Cossacks. In the mean-

while Kornilov had escaped from the lenient custody in which he was held by the Provisional Government, and joined Kaledin in the south, where the two laid the foundation of the future civil war. In Moscow there was a fierce struggle for the possession of the Kremlin, ending in the establishment of Bolshevik military control. At General Headquarters at the front, the Commander-in-Chief, General Dukhonin, refused to open negotiations for an armistice, and was murdered by soldiers.

A Revolutionary Government was established: but none knew better than Lenin that it was easier to establish than to maintain.

CHAPTER VII

HUNGER IN THE TOWNS (1917-1920)

"Kalinin, with his dirty feet, has climbed upon the throne of the elect. The nobles will not pardon us for this. . . . Of course, we made many mistakes, because we did not learn to rule before."—"PAPA" KALININ, in October 1919 when White armies were threatening Moscow and Petrograd.

IF SOME new Bach, or Beethoven, or Wagner, should seek to convey in music a conception of the Russian Revolution, the leading motive should certainly be the hope inspired by the conviction that man is the maker of his own history. But among the many subordinate motives of that imagined sonata hunger should be one: hunger passing through the whole gamut of human emotions: the struggle against plundering enemies, the agony of drought and dried-up field and emptied barn, the horror and despair of famine, the killing cold without food or fuel, the weakening and death of loved ones: and then the slow upbuilding of new strength and resources, under the gracious rustle of returning rain, the rattle of the machine in the harvest-field, the clang of the flail on the threshing-floor, and the anticipation of peace to enjoy the garnered store.

At this early stage there was some reduction of the resources of rural Russia in consequence of the diversion of labour to the purposes of war, but no serious hunger in the villages. The increasing severance of the towns from their client agriculture, partly by civil war and foreign occupation, partly by the lack of industrial products at reasonable prices to remunerate the peasant for his surplus grain, partly by the novelty of the socialist nexus, which had as yet found no substitute for the machinery of the private grain trade, made famine in the urban centres and drove their population back into the country for the means of life. The way to bring more food to the towns was to coax it out of the barns by an adequate supply of commodities: and this was hindered by the low productivity of industrial labour, which, in turn, was aggravated by the

short supply of food. This situation repeats itself, with variations of degree and detail, through a great part of the revolutionary period, and it was intensified into rural famine in 1921-2. Behind it lie difficulties of agrarian and industrial organisation, only to be solved by long and doubtful struggle. The collectivisation of the farms was itself a phase of this struggle, directed towards the mechanisation of agriculture, the more effective application to it of scientific knowledge, and the organisation of an effective substitute for the machinery of the private grain trade, which socialism repudiated.

This chapter aims at conveying a picture of the hunger in the towns, but I make no apology for including in it much that travels beyond that limited aim. The primary need, the original postulate, without which neither revolution nor life itself could exist, was food: and on food were built all the heroisms of high politics and the terrors and splendours of history. But there is no disentangling of this theme from the story which goes along with it.

Some of the economic conditions at the November Revolution were these. The cultivated area had been reduced by the war by a sixth, the number of horses available for agriculture by nearly a third, the cereal harvest was down by 14%. A very imperfectly industrialised country had been deprived of its access to foreign manufactures except through the north and the far east. The product of industry was a little more than three-fourths of what it had been in 1913. The railway system had suffered severely from the strain of war, and from the lack of replacements and repairs. Most of it led towards the most highly industrialised regions: and these had passed out of Russia's hands. Some of the surviving factories catered for luxuries, for which the Revolution stopped the demand. The money in circulation was twelve times as much as in July, 1914. In the country, the paper rouble was worth from a tenth to an eighth of the pre-war rouble, though the foreign exchange was rather better than this, doubtless because a virtual blockade had for three years stopped imports, except of war material, as well as exports. A fall in real wages, calculated at 12-15%, had occurred: and the cost of living in October, 1917, was five times that of a year earlier.

It was not yet economic exhaustion. The country was to endure another three years of war and blockade, with the temporary loss of large portions of its territories, including those which provided its surplus food, its cotton, and its principal fuels and metals, before that stage was reached. We have, indeed, cause to feel surprise at its economic vitality. Probably the very incompleteness of the economic co-ordination, and the inadequacy of the transport system, did something to save it. Mr. Duranty has pointed out the intensely local character of production and trade in Tsarist Russia. There were uncounted reserves, all small in amount, but important in the aggregate, which prevented political from producing economic collapse, until the agony had been prolonged for a

longer period of waste and destruction, the marching and counter-marching of armies, and foreign boycott.

We get a glimpse from an informant (who shows some taste for the backstairs) of the men who had to deal with this situation, complicated as it was by a foreign war with a superior enemy, a disintegrated army, the accomplished facts of the seizure of most of the land by the peasants and of some of the factories by the workers, by the non-co-operation of expert staffs, by an urgent shortage of food and fuel, and by inconvenient promises which presented themselves for fulfilment. In the early months, before the Revolutionary Government was transferred to Moscow, these men lived together with their families in cramped quarters in the Smolny building, once Peter the Great's tarring yard and thereafter a fashionable school for young ladies. They were all old acquaintances, if not actually friends, who had been in exile together and knew one another's weak points. If we mistrust our informant's statement that the renewal of the old squabbles sometimes led to hand-to-hand fights, there is something convincing (and very human) in the story that the ladies quarrelled over the removal of a saucepan of milk from the common kitchen. We must remember that these men were entirely lacking in experience of statecraft and administration. Will-power had to make up for all deficiencies. They suffered from all the difficulties of a permanent opposition, which suddenly finds itself in power, has acquired the perfect technique and habit of rebellion, and none of the arts of government: and they found themselves boycotted by the staffs of the administrative offices, including those of the hospitals and the telephone service. The very keys were in unfriendly hands, and the Banks withheld money from the new Government, while they supplied it to the striking staffs. Marx could not help them here. He had given them a method of historical induction, the clues of economic determinism, and of class-struggle, and the principles of successful revolution. But here were problems of every day, hand-to-mouth, humble and ordinary "carrying on": and his philosophy hardly touched them. Lenin said to Trotsky, "*Es schwindelt*", "My head swims", and no one who has any inkling, however tiny, of what the torrent of work is like, when political troubles are something more than mere parliamentary crises, will feel any surprise at this pregnant aside. Beside the force of will which the hardships of prison and exile had developed in the revolutionaries, there was intellectual ability of a high order.

Lenin is too great and complex a figure for any description that is not designed on the grand scale. Anything less would add nothing to common knowledge. But I shall sketch very briefly a few of the figures who stood round the leader. Lyov Davidovich Bronstein, known to the world as Trotsky, the name on one of his false passports, with which he escaped from Siberia, was a Jew of versatile genius, equally at home in literary criticism, in philosophy, in political pamphleteering, and in administra-

tion. Compact of fire, conscious of superiority, free from all self-seeking, contemptuous of opposition, waiting confidently to receive his due, dangerously sharp of tongue and offensive to rivals, he yet showed a noble recognition of the greatness of Lenin, under whom his genius stood rebuked, as, it is said, Mark Antony's was by Cæsar's. At the zenith of his energy, he was a sort of Judas Maccabæus. His creation of the Red Army, and his military administration, made him the idol of the working people. An ambitious man might have tried to play the part of Napoleon after Lenin's death. There was a touch of generosity about him. He had no reason to love Stalin: but, in his exile, pursued by calumny and charged with the betrayal of his country, he could yet say of his successful rival, "Stalin was not born a master of frame-up". A kind of proud negligence made him the victim of a cooler and more calculating rival, and his name is remembered as that of an enemy of the State for which he did great things. Karl Radek called him the Reason of the Revolution, and Lenin its Will. Lenin left a political testament in which, after saying that Stalin and Trotsky were fundamental factors of stability, he proceeded to criticise both. He called Trotsky the most able man in the present Central Committee, and added that he was distinguished also by a too far-reaching self-confidence, and a disposition to be too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs. His enemies have charged him with playing in exile the part of Coriolanus. The conviction which my own study of the man has impressed upon me is that, without a Lenin behind him he would not have made a good leader for a revolutionary Russia.

Joseph Dzhughashvili, the "legendary Georgian", whom Lenin christened *Stalin*, "the man of steel", is action and pugnacity incarnate. He always seemed inept in matters of theory, and unskilful in the use of language, and has yet shown capacity for creative development of Marxian doctrine when once he has mastered it. His early days were spent in exploits of an extravagant daring. It seems that he had no cruelty or bloodthirstiness in him, but he kills without hesitation "on necessity". Half Georgian, half Ossetian mountaineer by descent, he has inherited from some source the spirit of the vendetta. He forgets neither friends nor enemies, and does not forgive the latter. He has much humour of a rough type, is entirely without fear, and quite at home with a city mob. Lenin had something to say about him in his testament. He expressed a doubt whether Stalin knew how to use his power as General Secretary of the party with sufficient caution: and added a postscript in which he said that Stalin was too rude, and "this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us Communists, becomes insupportable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore I propose . . . to remove Stalin from that position, and appoint to it another man . . . more patient, more loyal, more polite, and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc. . . . From the point of view of preventing a split and from the point of

view of the relation between Stalin and Trotsky. . . ." Trotsky's description of him in the *Stalinite School of Falsification*, 1932, is interesting because it is not wholly unfavourable. "Energy, will and decision, are combined with empiricism and short-sightedness, an organic tendency to opportunist decisions on great questions, personal rudeness, disloyalty, and readiness to abuse power in order to keep the party in subjection."

As the virtual ruler of Russia, Stalin had the supreme duty of maintaining external peace while the strength of his country was being built up. He departed from the policy of peace to make a minor war, which came near to becoming a major one. That his extension of the frontiers of the U.S.S.R. to the west and north-west was politic, as a means of postponing and holding off the full terrors of the German pounce, has been demonstrated by the history of 1941. A major war was ultimately forced upon him, but when it came, it was made manifest, by the resistance with which the onslaught of the German military machine was met, that his policies had efficiently secured to his country both unity and strength. Whatever the ultimate outcome, he has earned a place among great rulers:

Grigory Evseyevich Apfelbaum, known by the name of Zinoviev, seemed out of place among the Bolshevik leaders because he lacked physical courage. He was a great demagogue, and doubtless useful for his oratorical gifts, and he was a sort of political boss in the city of Petrograd. He worked with Lenin in exile, helped to organise the Third International, and became its leader. Together with Stalin and Kamenev he controlled the policies of Russia in Lenin's last illness: he had his finger deep in British politics in 1924, when he wrote, or did not write, the *Red Letter* which assisted the Conservative Party into power. His divagations and tergiversations and submissions in Russian revolutionary politics were numerous. It is difficult to believe that he planned terroristic outrage. But (if the sentence was actually carried out) he suffered the death penalty for doing so. (1936.)

Lyov Borisovich Kamenev, alias Rosenfeld, was also a Jew by race but not by faith, and, like Zinoviev, not so brave or so determined as the typical revolutionary. He belonged to a well-to-do *bourgeois* family of Tiflis, was closely associated with Lenin in Geneva, married Trotsky's sister, and taught for a time in Lenin's propagandist school near Paris. He had considerable influence in Moscow, where he became the president of the City Soviet. But he, along with Zinoviev, had opposed Lenin's proposal of insurrection, and incurred the reproach of sending his protest to the non-party newspapers and thus betraying the plan. He had a gift for negotiation and compromise, and had a pleasant way with him which earned him the reputation of being genial. It is doubtful whether either he or Zinoviev really warmed to the peasantry. Both were pre-eminently men of the cities. After the revolution he shared the political vacillation of Zinoviev, and finally his fate.

Nikolai Bukharin, a brilliant intellectual, attractive in personality and appearance: on the extreme left in 1918, when he took part in a plot for the kidnapping of Lenin: was afterwards the leading ideologist of Stalin's ruling group and set on foot the attack against the Trotsky Opposition. On Stalin's turn to the left in 1928, he gravitated to the right, and was sentenced to death in March, 1938, along with the Trotskyist and Rightist conspirators. His last plea is an enlightening document, which shows the springs of Party loyalty.

Felix Dzerzhinsky, member of a noble Polish-Lithuanian family, had in him something of the persecuting saint. He was head of the political police, where his work in the reclamation of waif children was particularly good: but his reputation was that of a man who needed a leader.

Georgy Vasilyevich Chicherin succeeded Trotsky in 1918 as People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs: he belonged in spirit to the "conscience-stricken gentlemen" who were characteristic of nineteenth-century Russia. His great diplomatic success was the agreement with Germany at Rapallo in 1922.

Michael Kalinin, known affectionately as "Papa", has the gift of talking to humble folk, and is one of the few who have steadily maintained a leading position since the early days of the revolution. He succeeded Sverdlov in 1919 as President of the Central Executive Committee, and is the ceremonial head of the U.S.S.R. He began life as a metal-worker.

Madame Alexandra Kollontai was appointed People's Commissar of Public Welfare on November 13th, 1917: a champion of sexual freedom, and author of novels on social subjects: she was afterwards Soviet representative successively in Mexico, Norway, and Sweden.

Leonid Krasin had been director, before the revolution, of the Russian branch-company of the electrical firm of Siemens, Schuckert, of Berlin, and was unique among the Bolsheviks in having a business training. He was extensively employed after the revolution in economic work, notably as head of the Co-operative organisation and as People's Commissar of Foreign Trade, and was also Soviet ambassador in London.

Nadyezhda Krupskaya, wife and faithful friend and co-worker of Lenin, became, early in the revolutionary period, a member of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R., and devoted herself to education and the causes of Women and Youth. She always worked for moderation and sobriety in social reform. On her death in February, 1939, her ashes were immured beside Lenin's tomb in the Red Square.

Vyacheslav Molotov was employed on journalistic work on *Pravda* from the establishment of that paper in 1912, and has always retained his hold upon positions of importance, though widely different opinions of his capacity have been expressed. He replaced Litvinov as People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs in May, 1939. One description calls him a "narrow-minded but loyal henchman".

M. P. Tomsky was for twelve years (1917-29) President of the all-

Union Central Committee of Trade Unions, and a determined champion of Trade Union independence. He was expelled from the Party in 1928, but readmitted in 1929. He was charged along with the Trotskyite-Zinovievite centre, and committed suicide to avoid arrest in July, 1936.

V. Volodarsky, a Volhynian Jew, "a tall, pale youth with glasses and a bad complexion", says John Reed, whose talent for political oratory caused him to be put in charge of the department of the Press and of Agitation, at an early date after the November revolution. He gave great offence to the Social Revolutionaries by his conduct of the election campaign for the Petrograd Soviet in June, 1918: and was murdered.

I. M. Sverdlov was one of the five who organised the military *coup* of November, 1917, and was President of the Central Executive Committee when the Constituent Assembly was dissolved and when the Emperor and his family were murdered. He has given his name to the Grand Opera Square at Moscow and to the place formerly known as Ekaterinburg, where the murders took place. A leading figure in the most dramatic incidents of the early Revolution period and a capable administrator. Died of typhus in 1919.

A. I. Rykov opposed the November insurrection and resigned from the Revolutionary Government on the issue of the freedom of the Press. Said to be inclined to drink. Always a man of the Right, he was sentenced to death in March, 1938, as one of the Trotskyist and Rightist bloc.

Such were a few of the men and women who shared the adventure of revolutionary government with Lenin. What they did was largely what they must. Self-preservation made the first claim, as it must upon every Government which will neither abdicate nor be swept away, and food and fuel came at the top of the list of the means for continuing their own existence and that of the State. The peasants must have their land, and as much of their demand for manufactured goods as the urban workers, those rival claimants, can be induced to concede. The soldiers, peasants in uniform for the most part, are already making peace in their own fashion by pouring homewards, so that Trotsky, when he travelled to the German headquarters at Brest Litovsk, found the Russian trenches deserted. The official seal must be set upon that peace which the return of the troops had spontaneously decreed. Of these tasks, the hardest, perhaps, were the supply of food and the supply of commodities: for these demanded positive action, indeed actual compulsion, and not a mere bowing to the multitudinous will at last set free from the bonds of fear and discipline.

For sheer anarchy, what the Russians call *Bunt*, was a large element in the November revolution, the merely negative outburst of elemental forces, exulting in the downfall of intolerable restraints, and expressing itself in the popular verses: "There is no God, and no need of the Tsar. We'll smash the Commissars and keep the grain for ourselves." I have already suggested that the Russian character suffered from a maladjust-

ment of institutions to national habit. The nomad was tied down and made into a serf. The misfit was intolerable, and the revulsion expressed itself in a periodical breaking out. The same spirit showed itself in a sort of carnival of sexual morals, of which Lenin certainly, and the Communist Party probably, never approved, though they gave way to it, as they gave way to much else in the great breakdown.

But along with this exultant lawlessness, there was also a theorised anarchy, the anarchy of Kropotkin and Tolstoi, which regarded the State as an evil thing and sought to make an end of the political bond. When Mr. Monkhouse was travelling across Siberia, he found one of the railway stations, under a black flag, in the hands of professed anarchists. Makhno, the enemy of all governments in the Ukrain, seems to have been a theoretical anarchist, who had his manifesto written for him by anarchist Jews. We shall see at a later page of this chapter what some of the theoretical anarchists thought of the violence of the revolution as it actually turned out to be.

(1917.) Trotsky, from the thick of the struggle, gives us a glimpse of the tasks of the new Government, after Kerensky's attempt to restore his position had been beaten off. These were primarily to extend the revolution to the whole country and fight the counter revolution. In December a new political police (not under the name of police) was formed and placed under the control of the Polish idealist Dzherzhinsky. Under different names this institution repeats itself in Russian history. The Third Section of Nicolas I gives place to the Tsarist Okrana. During the period of the Provisional Government there was a gap in its continuity, but Kerensky was planning its restoration, and might have ruled longer if he had achieved it. Under the men of the November revolution it appears first as the Extraordinary Commission (Cheka, according to the initials of the Russian words), then as the Special State Political Institution (O.G.P.U. or Gay-pay-oo), and more recently as the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (Narkomvnyudiel). Under these different names it is, with slight modifications, always the same thing, and the Revolutionary Government had re-established it within six weeks of their seizure of power. With a very few exceptions, and those partial and doubtful, all States have it, and perhaps could not live without it. The reason is simple. All, except the most primitive political organisations, are hard upon somebody, and most are hard upon many. They have their enemies, whom they must watch and control, if they would not run the risk of sudden attack from within. The use made of the weapon varies with the State's sense of its own security, and with the traditional temper and habits of its people. A Government newly established by revolution, and threatened by counter-attack, will strike hardest and most ruthlessly. If it is born in a storm of anarchy, as was the Government of November, 1917, it will not risk waiting till opposition has gathered force and courage. In fact, the new Cheka, under its Polish

chief, was not, in the early months, active against political enemies. The murders of this period were outbursts of popular passion and mob law. The Terror, as the organised policy of the revolutionary State, came later, when dangers thickened and nerves were frayed.

When I say that the Revolutionary actors did what they must, I do not forget that they were filled with the expectation of an impending World-Revolution. The Paris Commune of 1871, with its supposedly fatal errors of neglecting to seize the Banks and to fall immediately upon its enemies gathering against it at Versailles, was both an example and a warning to them. Its history was a powerful influence: and they sought, in turn, to furnish examples to the world proletariat in the great adventure on which they believed it was about to enter. During the period up to August, 1918, says Trotsky, "our decrees were more propaganda than actual administrative measures". There is the unmistakable ring of propaganda about them: the rulers often prescribe that which is ideally desirable rather than that which is feasible in the circumstances, or that which they themselves know to be likely to be done. The decree of November 12th regarding workers' insurance gave the full wage to all wage-earners, at the cost of the employer, in every form of incapacitation and unemployment, without limit of time: but the means for its execution in full did not exist. A formal excuse for such legislation is that all laws at this time were theoretically provisional pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. But the weakness is one which, for long, did not disappear from Communist legislation.

The same idea—that of providing models for a world on tiptoe for revolution—shows itself in the early foreign policy of the new State. The Roumanian gold reserve is held back till it can be handed over to a proletarian State, because the existing Roumanian régime is an oligarchy. It did not matter that a rupture with Roumania followed. Funds are provided by decree for the left internationalist wing of workers *in all countries*, whether at war with Russia, or at peace with her, or neutral: and a message of December 30th to the allied countries calls on the workers to rise, if the Governments do not take the opportunity of peace. All Muslims, including those of India, are invited to rise and free themselves, and are assured that Constantinople will be left in Muslim hands. The whole of the bad old world *in statu quo ante* is challenged, with magnificent disregard of means.

(1918.) It was in this spirit that the foreign debts of the Tsar were repudiated on February 10th, and that Sverdlov answered a conciliatory letter from President Wilson with an appeal over his head to the people of the United States. The upstart and outlaw State was confident of the coming of something which would turn the forms and courtesies of diplomacy into a mockery. Anyhow it was out for a brave flourish, and rejoiced in the chance of snapping its fingers at the potent, grave and reverend signors of an outworn world. It might go down in blood and fire

within a few weeks, but it would leave a challenging memory behind.

Those who are familiar with the Moscow galleries will remember a picture of the Zaporozhian Cossacks gathered together to indite an insolent letter to the Sultan of Turkey: blustering, red-faced ruffians, glorying in their reckless challenge to a mighty power. It was in some such spirit as this that the early revolutionaries addressed themselves to the uniformed diplomats of polite Europe. But the leaders did not forget the possibility of early failure, and of a revolution like that of the Paris Commune, smothered in blood after a few weeks of survival and traduced to posterity by the victor for lack of memorials of its achievement. Lenin insisted, therefore, upon the publication of the classics of socialism and materialism in the Russian language. He would multiply copies of the Communist scriptures while he could. And he aimed at the creation of revolutionary monuments to impress popular memory and make revolutionary experience clear to all. On the same principle we should expect to find the wholesale destruction of the great cathedrals, the statues of the Tsars, and the monuments of the past. Much damage was done by mobs of peasants in the seizure of estates. Particular buildings, including sacred buildings, have been destroyed for practical objects. Many have been taken for secular purposes, but there has been no general or systematic destruction of monuments of any kind. If we were to say that the November revolution destroyed institutions, but not concrete memorials of the past, we should be very near the truth. Past cultures are valued, partly no doubt as warnings, but generally as stepping-stones, necessary to the attainment of to-day's ideal. It may be that the Marxian doctrine of history as a gradual evolution, occasionally interrupted by leaps, showed its influence here: or the Russian temper, easy and tolerant when it is not in a dionysiac frenzy.

Mr. Monkhouse reproduces for us an early revolutionary poster which he found at Moscow. Much of it seems strangely innocent, and like what Gladstone was saying in the seventies or Vernon Harcourt and Mr. Lloyd George doing a little later, but some of it goes beyond what the revolutionists themselves were actually able to achieve. It includes proportional representation, the ballot system, compulsory and universal education, disestablishment of the Church, the self-determination of small nations, abolition of indirect taxation, high income-tax and heavy death-duties, an eight-hour working day, workmen's insurance, State Labour exchanges, improved sanitary conditions for workers, an elected organisation of factory inspectors, and Industrial Arbitration Courts. Side by side with these "Liberal" demands, the Constituent Assembly and all *bourgeois* Parliaments are to be abolished, the Police and the regular army are to be replaced by militia and armed workers "to establish socialism in all countries", banks are to be nationalised, there is to be public control of industry and general compulsory labour service, the lands of

the landlords, Churches, monasteries, and Imperial family are to be confiscated and distributed by local Soviets, there is to be collective tilling of land (an evident forecast of collectivisation). Liberal, as well as revolutionary, records have been ransacked to make up the list, and we scent propaganda rather than programme.

The seizure of banks was actual enough, as Mr. Monkhouse tells us: and only the gradual withdrawal of deposits (what the more mealy-mouthed West would call a moratorium) was allowed. Paper-money was printed rapidly: and in the meanwhile stamps and dividend coupons were used for payments. Presently all employers were called upon to raise wages by 26%, with retrospective effect from the great day of November 7th. The decree abolishing the inheritance of property (with an exception for peasants' rights in land) did not issue till May 1st, 1918. But large houses were at once transferred to the charge of town Soviets, to be administered by house-committees elected by the residents: and the housing shortage was relieved by the introduction of the poorer into the houses of the richer. A decree was passed for the recognition of none but civil marriages, for equal rights for all children within and without wedlock, and for freedom of divorce on the application of one party: and another separated Church from State, nationalised Church property, prohibited all but secular instruction in schools, and gave equal freedom of practice and propaganda to all confessions. (*February 5th, 1918.*) The Judges were henceforth to be elected, and the validity of former laws was to be determined by the help of the revolutionary conscience. (*February, 1918.*) Revolutionary tribunals were to deal with sabotage and counter revolution. Lesser reforms which had been talked of for many years were not forgotten. The Russian alphabet was deprived of its superfluous letters: and the old Calendar, which kept the Russian always well behind the Western date, by an interval increasing in each successive century, was discarded. This last item was significant of a change in popular temper. In the seventeenth century such, and smaller, alterations split Russia into two camps. Now it passed unnoticed, although the Feasts and Fasts of the Church were displaced by it.

The Revolutionary Government was far from being a one-man dictatorship. There were important and quite open differences of opinion between the Commissars. (*1917.*) On November 17th the Central Executive Committee decided by thirty-four votes to twenty-four to restrict the freedom of the Press. Zinoviev, and Kamenev (who had resisted Lenin's policy of insurrection in October), and Rykov, together with other members, resigned from the Central Executive Committee, and eight out of the fourteen Commissars also resigned. It was a revolt of the Right, demanding a general socialist coalition, and protesting against the muzzling of the Press. At a somewhat later date we shall see the Bolsheviks of the extreme Left insisting on a more rigorous expropriation of capitalists, and ultimately carrying their point against Lenin in a

nationalisation decree, which may be regarded as inaugurating the epoch of War Communism. No one influence had the whole of its own way in this stage of the revolution (if, indeed, any one influence ever had it), and the evident signs of wavering between State-control and workers' control of industry, and a modified form of both, are to be thus explained.

All this time the preparations for the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, which had been so fatally delayed by the Provisional Government, were proceeding. The Constituent had been the dream and the hope of all the Liberal, and most of the Revolutionary, thinkers and workers, from as far back as 1881. It was to be the means by which the people of Russia were to declare how they desired to be governed: and all democratic aspirations centred in it. The Bolsheviks and their supporters seemed little more than a stop-gap till the great Assembly should formulate the people's will. There were warnings that the *de facto* government might not accept the democratic decision. Lenin wrote in *Pravda* that the Constituent Assembly must recognise the Soviet régime and its policy for peace, land, and workers' control of industry. But the Central Committee of the Social Revolutionaries, dominated by influences of the Right, was confident that no attack would be made upon the Assembly, and ignored or rejected proposals for precautionary measures, while the Bolsheviks made careful preparations for action.

The first election results, which arrived in mid-December, showed an anti-Bolshevik majority. The Assembly was to determine the constitution, including the position of the non-Great-Russian nationalities, and all vital questions, including that of the land, were theoretically left to its decision. When it met, it claimed supreme authority in the State, and, seeing that it was elected on the basis of universal suffrage, all the constitutional proprieties were on its side when it made the claim. It might even favour continuance of the war, or demand such conditions of peace as would make the conclusion of an agreement unlikely. There was strong feeling in the majority against the adventurism of the Bolsheviks, who had installed themselves in power by insurrection.

A warning of what might be expected was given by the arrest of some of the Kadet members of the Assembly (one of them, our old acquaintance Shingarev, the first Minister of Agriculture in the Provisional Government) before the Assembly met, for their connection with the underground Provisional Government, which, in defiance of the Revolutionary Government, had arranged a meeting of its own for December 11th. (*January 18th, 1918.*) When the Constituent met in the Tavrida Palace in Petrograd, it was mainly anti-Bolshevik in its composition. The figures are variously given, but the number of anti-Bolshevik and Mensheviks elected, not counting the Social Democrats and Social Revolutionaries from Ukrain, appears to have been nearly double the total of the Bolsheviks and Social Revolutionaries of the Left, who might at this time be expected to act together. On the day of opening, a

demonstration in favour of the Assembly was dispersed by armed force, with nine deaths, and Shingarev, the ex-Minister of Agriculture, and Kokovtsev, an ex-Tsarist Minister, were murdered in their beds at the Mariinsky Hospital by soldiers and sailors. It was thus that the author of *The Dying Village* expiated efforts of reform, which went either too far or not far enough.

When the session opened, armed soldiers and Red Guards were seated among the representatives and the proceedings were much disturbed by the "invited" persons in the gallery. Sverdlov, President of the Central Executive Committee, read a declaration in favour of vesting all power in the Soviets, of nationalisation of the land, a democratic peace, the repudiation of the debts of the Tsarist State, nationalisation of banks, and workers' control of industry. Victor Chernov, a Social Revolutionary and one of the Ministers of Agriculture in the Provisional Government, was elected President by a majority of votes over Madame Spiridonova, a Left Social Revolutionary, who was the Government's candidate. He spoke in favour of an immediate peace, and of land for the peasants. According to Baron Meyendorff's account, a part of the Government's declaration regarding war and land problems was supported by a majority, but the principle of "all power to the Soviets" was rejected by 237 votes to 136, and the Constituent Assembly expressed regret that negotiations with Germany had been initiated without the previous consent of the allied democracies. Russia was declared to be a democratic federal Republic. (*January 19th, 1918.*) At 1 a.m. the Bolshevik representatives withdrew, leaving only one of their party behind. At 5 a.m. the sailor in charge of the guard advanced towards the President and, in the name of the Government, called upon him to close the proceedings; for, he said, the guard is tired. This was not forcible dispersal, for Chernov had time to put a motion to nominate a peace delegation, to engage in negotiations in agreement with the Allies, and to appoint a commission to prepare a land bill. The meeting was then adjourned to the evening of January 19th. On that day the Central Executive Committee of the Revolutionary Government decreed the dissolution of the Assembly, and its members were not again allowed to meet. Much had been hoped from the Semenovsky and Pavlovsky regiments in Petrograd, but their interest in the life of the Assembly was not sufficient to bring them out of their barracks to defend it.

Some attempt was made to show a technical irregularity in the constitution of the Assembly. The nomination of the candidates took place while the Social Revolutionary Party was one and united, and the election when that party had been divided into "lefts" and "rights". But it is evident that the double authority of the Constituent Assembly and the Revolutionary Government based upon the Soviets would have repeated the evils of the dyarchy in the Provisional Government, and that the dissolution was an act of self-preservation on the part of Bolsheviks and Left

Social Revolutionaries. The struggle over the Constituent Assembly was in effect a renewal of the struggle over Kerensky's régime.

There was no molestation of the members, many of whom made their way to the People's Army on the Volga, where the military opposition was gathering head. A statement made by the French ambassador M. Noulens that thousands of persons were killed in the excitement following the dissolution of the Assembly is not supported from other sources. The military cadets in Leningrad, who sympathised with the majority in the Assembly, were disarmed and imprisoned, and army and workers alike accepted the accomplished fact with apparently general equanimity. The dissolution by the Revolutionary Government of the Constituent Assembly was remarkable as the definitive assertion of class-rule, against the partially democratic and parliamentary institutions which had made their appearance in Russia in 1906. It marked the end of that domination of the Social Revolutionaries of the Right, which had been characteristic of the Kerensky régime. For the first time the coalition of Bolsheviks and Social Revolutionaries of the Left, which made up the Revolutionary Government, felt itself firm in the saddle, having put an end to the menace of a democratic restoration. Incidentally we note a second demonstration of the political conditions which had been illustrated in 1906 by the fiasco of the Viborg manifesto. The champions of responsible government had then made a solemn protest against the dissolution of the Duma, and called upon the country which had elected them to withhold taxes and recruits and disclaim responsibility for foreign loans. No one lifted a finger in response. Neither in 1906 nor in 1918 had the elective assembly any roots in the people, nor any organisation in the constituencies to support the elected representatives. Parliamentary institutions initiated in their external aspect the parliaments of the Western world, but missed the living sap. They were plants without a root: which look like living plants only till they begin to wither.

These grim days of mid-winter in the capital were full of hunger, cold, and fear. Ambassadors were mobbed in the streets: the military guard broke into the cellars of the Winter Palace and plundered the liquors. Other private cellars were similarly raided. Red Guards kept a wild kind of order, with rifles unslung, and shooting at sight. Amid the terror and confusion, there was the sense of something great in the doing. Such was the moment which inspired the poet Alexander Blok to his poem of *The Twelve*. It has been often quoted, but it so mirrors a moment of crisis, so echoes the essential note of the Russian spirit, finding redemption in the very arms of sin, that I should have been glad to quote it again in my own attempt at translation.

Within a few days of the Revolution, General Alexeiev, Chief of the Staff to Kerensky as Commander-in-Chief, was on the Don, gathering the nucleus of a Volunteer or People's Army for military resistance to the Revolutionary Government. On December 12th the Menshevik

Workers' Council at Tiflis captured the local arsenal, and began to take arms and equipment from the soldiers of the Russian army withdrawing before the Turks. A south-eastern Union of Cossacks, Caucasians, and People of the Steppes was formed in preparation for secession or for civil war. Generals Kornilov and Denikin, escaping by connivance of their guards, joined Alexeiev. In Ukrain a national Assembly (Rada) was already in existence, and was disarming Red Guards. It refused the Revolutionary Government's demand for co-operation against the Don Cossacks: and the Ukrainian Bolsheviks, always a strong element, though not at Kiev, fled to Kharkov, where they set up an Ukrainian Soviet Government. The Kharkov Government had control, during the short period of its existence, of the mineral resources of the Donets basin, naturally coveted by each of the parties to the quarrel.

The rival Government at Kiev played an important part in the negotiations with the Germans which led to the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and the occupation by German and Austrian armies of the best and richest part of the old Russian empire. The three Social Revolutionary Commissars who had been appointed in December resigned their offices on the conclusion of this peace, bringing the Revolutionary Government nearer to the "one-party" system, which has characterised it through most of its existence.

Two significant changes were made in the spring of 1918. One was the moving of the capital: and the other was the changing of the name of the dominant party. For the Old Believer, and again for the Slavophil, Peter the Great, who moved his capital to St. Petersburg, was like Jero-boam, "the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin", because he set up a new place of pilgrimage to divert the tribes from the Temple at Jerusalem. A visible centre of unity and attraction, such as is Mecca for the Muslim and Benares for the Hindu, was thereby slighted and robbed of a part of its imperious claim. The importance of such symbols to the history of peoples is incalculably great. They are essential to the beginnings of patriotic sentiment. In Peter's case, the change was a declaration of a new orientation in his people's life. The semi-Asiatic Third Rome was abandoned—the Third Rome with its tradition of succession from Byzantium—and a capital set up in a non-Russian land with no history and no traditions, an uncertain future and no past. The autocrat would fain drag old Russia, gasping and rubbing her eyes, out of Asia into Europe. She obeyed in the body: but the soul remained behind in the Red Square, beside the unique and impossible Cathedral of St. Basil. It was not only the Slavophiles who were unable to forgive the sacrilege. Moscow remained, for the masses of the Great-Russian people the centre of the traditional life and the symbol of such unity as they possessed. If there was a patriotism among them, it was a patriotism of Moscow. When the Revolutionary Government decided, in the very heyday of its hopes for a World-Revolution and the formation of an

international brotherhood of peoples, to return to Moscow, it was fulfilling—we must suppose unconsciously—a prophecy made by Herzen in 1853, when he wrote: “If Tsarism falls, the centre of liberty will be in the heart of the nation, at Moscow.” The Provisional Government had contemplated removal, and had warned the Embassies of its intention. When the November Government carried out the change, it gained an emotional foundation for its power, by placing its centre where the affections and imaginations of the people have theirs, and made a restoration of the Romanov tradition for ever impossible. (*March, 1918.*) At the same time the Seventh Congress of the Bolshevik Party changed the party’s name to Communist, thus emphasising the completeness of the breach with the Social Democrats, whose name was associated with the aspiration to a parliamentary régime, and asserting the victory of the non-parliamentary Soviets, based upon a class. It appointed a Commission to frame a new constitution for the party, and pronounced for iron discipline and for universal military training.

There is a close relation between the problem of food supply and the protests of the peasants against exactions of food, on the one hand, and the agitation for the renewal of the war against the Germans, on the other. For the pressure upon resources was in great measure a consequence of the German occupation of the producing areas. The Social Revolutionaries—always the friends of the peasantry—figured, for this reason, prominently in the war-party. An anti-German demonstration in July, 1918, was followed by the murder of the German ambassador, Count Mirbach, and by a Social Revolutionary rising. The suppression of the latter by the Revolutionary Government—which desired peace with Germany in pursuance of the policy of Brest-Litovsk—may be taken as the beginning of the Terror: for Terror was not, for the eight months which followed after the Revolution, characteristic of the new régime.

The Revolutionary Government had inherited the State monopoly of grain from its predecessor. The prices fixed were originally adequate, but became rapidly less attractive: and in January and February only 16,000 tons of grain were delivered to the Government. Food was scarce in Petrograd: but energetic housekeepers could still get good meals. Madame Mary Britnieva, who kept an interesting diary, happened to be married at that time. She says, “Mother arranged a good wedding breakfast”, probably by sending special emissaries to the family estate in the Kama valley. “Mother” arranged well on other occasions, and the diarist makes it plain that food existed, if it could only be got. In the simple way of the revolutionaries, Trotsky and Lenin shared a dining-room in the Kremlin, after the move to Moscow. They had “plenty of caviare, because export was stopped: but otherwise bad food”: a very typical Russian situation of luxury without comfort. Caviare could not fill the stomachs of the multitude. As under the Provisional Govern-

ment, the scarcity in 1918 was in the transportation and the exchange, and not yet in the barns. The severity of the pressure begins to be apparent in May, when a State monopoly of sugar was established, and drastic measures for the extraction of surplus food culminated in the establishment of a Food Commissariat having a monopoly of distribution, and the deputation of Food Detachments to organise the working peasants against the more well-to-do in the work of collection.

(1918.) In June, the "breathing space" from war, which Lenin had endeavoured to utilise for the strengthening of the administration, was rudely ended by the emergence of an unexpected enemy. A corps of Czecho-Slovaks, consisting at the outset of residents in Russia, and afterwards enlarged by the admission of Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war, seized Chelyabinsk and established themselves along the Trans-Siberian Railway in the interests of interventionist Europe. It was the beginning of the long struggle of anti-revolutionary intervention. It was at this moment that Social Revolutionaries of the Right murdered V. Volodarsky, the People's Commissar of the Press. The Social Revolutionaries of the Right and Centre, and the Mensheviks now resigned from the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Government. Henceforth we see the Social Revolutionaries under one of those names compounded of initial letters which are so characteristic of Soviet Russia, as the "Eseri" (S.Rs), playing a varying, perhaps a vacillating, part in the struggles of the Civil War. These are the elements which may be regarded as representative of the well-to-do peasantry: and their exclusion was a minor revolution, involving a change in the basis of the Government.

As an essential part of the change, Committees of the Poor (which were actually Committees of all except the prosperous) were set up to replace township and village Soviets of more general composition. Their business, in rural areas, was to take possession of machines, to organise common tillage and harvesting, to collect food (of which they themselves were entitled to a share) and to distribute food and implements. There was, in fact, a substantial urban element in them, and this may be the reason why no breach was really made in the village front, and why the Committees of the Poor were not for long in active operation. The struggle for food was waged fiercely on both sides, and in the province of Tambov—always well to the fore in these rural troubles—there was a peasant rising which lasted several days. (*June 17th to 19th, 1918.*) Scarcity naturally produced strikes and troubles in the towns, and disaffection extended to the torpedo-boat squadron of the Baltic Fleet, and to the railway workers, whose control of communications gives them always and everywhere a position of great power.

The murder, in July, of the Tsar and the Imperial family was determined by the dangerous political and military situation, and the threatening advance of a Czech force on Ekaterinburg (now renamed Sverdlovsk after Sverdlov, the President of the Central Executive Committee,

who approved the deed): and the present writer feels no doubt that the Revolutionary Government authorised or endorsed it as a necessary act of state; but twenty-eight persons (*all* associated with the Social Revolutionaries) were arrested in September, 1919, for complicity in it, and five of them were sentenced to death.

Amid all the troubles of July time was found for the promulgation of a Soviet Constitution based upon the declaration of rights of November 7th. Russia was declared to be a Republic of Workers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Soviets (a strictly class constitution), and the aims laid down were the abolition of the exploitation of man by man, and of the division of society into classes, the suppression of the exploiter, and the establishment of a society organised on Socialist lines. Certain groups are excluded from citizenship. How real was the disability of the disfranchised we are able to judge from another decree of July, by which the *bourgeois* are mobilised for a year's rough manual labour. When the Moscow Soviet made out its scheme of rationing, it divided the available amount into four categories: of which those engaged in dangerous trades received four shares, and professional men and persons living on income received one. The food-card was a weapon which the Government did not hesitate to use against its opponents.

The difference between the basis of representation of urban workers and of peasants is generally mis-stated. For the former the constitution provided for one representative for 25,000 *voters*, for the latter one for 125,000 of the *population*. This is not a difference of five to one, but possibly a difference of as much as three to one, if we may assume the number of persons under eighteen in the villages to be less than the number at that age and upwards. This electoral favouring of the urban population continued till the promulgation of the constitution of 1936, when both were placed on an equal footing.

In the meanwhile Ukrain, in the hands of its German and German-protected exploiters, and nominally ruled by the Hetman Skoropadsky, was not less disturbed than the areas required to find food for the Revolutionary Government. In one respect, and that a deadly one for the counter-revolutionaries, it had a profounder cause of discontent. Of all the Governments which were set up in Russia to combat revolutionary rule, only one, that of the Social Revolutionaries at Samara, had the wisdom to assure the peasants that the counter-revolution did not mean the restoration of the land to the landlord. All the rest, in greater or less degree, made plain their policy of re-establishing or compensating the landlord. It was this, and no transcendent virtue in the Bolsheviks, which decided the issue of the three years' struggle, in despite of British tanks and French munitions and Japanese rifles and bayonets. In Ukrain, Hetman Skoropadsky so earned the hatred of the peasantry by a pro-landlord policy, that when he fled, along with his German protectors, not one stone of his palatial mansion was left upon another. In the meanwhile a

semi-political banditry prevailed, German hopes of grain were defeated by drilling holes in the floors of the railway vans, manor houses were attacked, a magazine of munitions at Odessa was burned: and on July 30th the German Commander in Ukrain was murdered by a Social Revolutionary of the Left. General Ludendorff has something to tell us, in his war memoirs, which pours a flood of light upon the true character of the separatist movement in Ukrain. The German Commander-in-Chief formed two divisions from Russian prisoners of war of Ukrainian origin, and sent them to Ukrain to support German policy. As soon as they arrived in Ukrain they "fell victims to radical influences and had to be disbanded." The events of 1941 confirm the inference. Whatever jealousies and causes of friction may exist between Great-Russia and Ukrain, there is not, in the present writer's judgment, any general desire in the latter for political separation: and certainly no disposition to favour German territorial aspirations.

(1918.) If July marked a low point in the fortunes of the Revolutionary Government, the absolute nadir was reached in August. Hunger in Petrograd became starvation, for the new grain was not yet in. We have the authority of our diarist, Madame Britnieva, for saying that the shortage was less severe in Moscow. Extreme penalties were prescribed for withholding grain, and for consuming it—a widespread practice—in illicit distillation of liquor. Death was threatened for armed resistance to collectors. The members of Workers' Food-Detachments numbered tens of thousands. Forty-seven peasant risings took place. On August 21st the Whites captured Kazan, a vital point both in the river and the railway system. The territory of the Republic of Soviets was reduced, in the vivid language of Trotsky, to the size of the ancient Moscow Principality. A new counter-revolutionary Government, supported by a British occupation and financed by rouble notes printed in England, had come into existence at Archangel: so that all the seas were now closed to the revolution. At the end of the month the discontent of an important section showed itself in the murder of Uritsky, the head of the Petrograd Cheka, by a Jewish student.

(September, 1918.) The Bolsheviks had their backs to the wall, and the Terror was loosed. During the first days of September more than five hundred *bourgeois* and officers were summarily shot. The British Embassy at Petrograd, empty save for Commander Cromie, who perished in an attempt to defend the records, was sacked, in order to find evidence of British complicity in the murder of Uritsky. Prominent allied subjects were arrested. Former officers were seized and parked at Kronstadt. Hostages were taken for good behaviour "*Une période où la crainte paralysait tant de volontés*", says M. Noulens, the Ambassador of the French Republic.

Worse was to come: for on September 13th, Fanya Kaplan, a member of the Right wing of the Social Revolutionary party, who admitted that

she was a supporter of the Constituent Assembly and an advocate of foreign aid against the Soviet régime, shot and wounded Lenin. If M. Noulens quotes it correctly, the Bolshevik organ *Truth* delivered itself of a hysterical outburst, which shows how nerves were strained. "Without mercy, without pity, we will slaughter our enemies by tens, by hundreds. There must even be thousands." In such circumstances it is significant of the comparative moderation of the Revolutionary Government that the sentences on the murderers of Volodarsky and Uritsky were suspended on condition of the cessation of terroristic activities.

The fact that discontent at this time centred in the Social Revolutionaries of the Right will not escape the reader's attention. It is not the cidevants, the champions of the Tsarist régime, but the well-to-do peasantry, the source of such strength as Kerensky commanded, the party which constituted the majority of the Constituent Assembly and desired renewal of the war with Germany, from which comes the opposition of 1918 to the Revolutionary Government.

The fuel and food difficulties, as we see them in December 1918, were in essence similar to those of an earlier date: that is to say, they were due rather to maldistribution than to actual scarcity. Madame Britnieva tells us (writing of Lipetsk in the province of Tambov in the Black-Earth zone) that "the peasants brought quantities of food in exchange for salt, cloth, and manufactured goods", that is for barter with private persons. But Countess Alexandra Tolstoi, at that time employed in a Museum at Moscow, says that the building was unheated, there was no kerosene and fuel, that the food consisted of bread, potatoes and carrots, and the "tea" was made of apples, carrots, and herbs. She adds, what we know from many other sources, that "bagmen" went out to the villages with various articles which they there exchanged for food, thus helping to keep life in the towns. We are indebted to an agricultural expert compiling a village monograph for the knowledge that villages, within a sixty-mile radius from Moscow, were full of fine city furniture, bartered away in exchange for food. How wretched was the state of the industrial workers, in the prevailing conditions of cold and hunger, we gather from the fall in the population of Petrograd, predominantly industrial in character. It fell from 2,300,000 in 1917 to 700,000 in 1919: a reduction only in part to be accounted for by the removal of the capital to Moscow. Moscow itself retained over a million inhabitants, but this was nearly 800,000 less than before the war. With the single exception of Samara (the Kuibyshev which became the temporary capital in 1941), which may have been affected by being the headquarters of the Social Revolutionary Government in 1918, all the other considerable towns lost a substantial proportion of their population. It was a flight from the foodless and fuelless towns to the villages, where comparative comfort was still to be had.

But if life was comfortless for the worker, in spite of a privileged status and social maintenance under the Insurance law, it was barely

sustained by the *bourgeois*: now the declared class enemy, subject to the performance of unsavoury tasks hitherto reserved for the poor, and with difficulty finding any share in the scanty supplies available. We see him sitting in his unheated apartment, muffled in his fur-cloak, and living on one eighth of a pound of bread a day, unless some Red Army son or nephew, or some visitor from the country, has brought a temporary supply of victuals. Konstantin Fedin, in *Cities and Years*, has given us the picture: the pencil-written placard announcing that "French and German are taught here: stockings are darned: and rabbits also kept": the anxious eye upon the cupboard lock when a guest arrives: the hammering at the door, at three in the morning, which calls the professor out for the job of digging or scavenging: the march through the cold, dark streets to the place of work: the unaccustomed strain of the pick and shovel to the sedentary muscles. It is civilised poverty at its wretchedest and dimmallest. Literary life and activity still survived, thanks in large measure to Maxim Gorky, whose reconciliation with the authorities placed him in a position to find the means of subsistence for many young writers. Paper is short, and of very bad quality, as the pamphlets of the day demonstrate, but authors somehow get hold of it and print their works. Even political journalism, which is not of purely Communist complexion, continues possible up to 1922, and there is a stir of literary talk in the Moscow cafés, where the poet Sergei Yesenin, ill-fated husband of Isadora Duncan, later to kill himself because, as he says, he is like a frisky colt overtaken by a railway train, lives a roistering life. Most writers find their way, for a short time at least, to prison: and the poet Gumilov is shot by the Cheka for suspected counter-revolutionary activities. There is great activity in the theatres, now set free from the thralldom of the box-office, and crowded nightly, perhaps as much for warmth and light as for the entertainment which they provide. It is the proletariat now, in half-sheepskin and home-spun and birch-bark, that fills the boxes and stalls.

There will be, somewhat surprisingly, a move for reconciliation between Bolshevik and *bourgeois* later on: showing itself after the ruin of General Denikin and the execution of Admiral Kolchak, when, as Madame Rachmanova, one of our diarists, says, the Government seemed disposed to play the generous and forgiving enemy. The impulse is mirrored in Gladkov's novel *Cement*: where the workman, who has restored the destroyed cement-mills, forgives the engineer who was responsible, under White domination, for getting him a thrashing: and the victorious Communists at Novorossisk welcome back to port a ship laden with their fleeing enemies. It is a typically Russian, and a typically Christian, scene. We learn from the Countess Alexandra Tolstoi that there existed at this time a political Red Cross, for the relief of political prisoners, organised by the "intelligent" class under the auspices of the Soviet Government. It distributed butter, sugar, oil, and other food to

these unfortunates. I do not think that anything similar would have been allowed to exist in 1938. It was a blessed moment: but the causes of struggle were too deep-seated for it to last.

The food decree of December 15th, 1918, made no provision for the maintenance of any (outside of the Army and Navy) except State employees and workers in industries, in mines, and in transport. But the Labour Decree of 1919 required all to work, and provided a minimum subsistence allowance—when the food was forthcoming. There is a picture by Sergei Semyonov, who knew the life of the rank and file among the workers and Government servants in Petrograd, of the hunger in the city when General Yudenich was threatening it. The girl who tells the tale is in the post-office, drawing 400 depreciated roubles every month. Her father in a factory gets 800 roubles, and he also gets an iron ration of half a pound of bread daily—for long periods the bread-ration is not received, or not received in full. The shifts and pilferings of hunger bring moral deterioration: and the father's extra half-pound turns his children against him. Ultimately he dies from insufficient nourishment. We have glimpses of the agony of the suffering intellectuals and of the obvious willingness of many to let the Whites in, if they can only get food that way. It is a revelation of the beast that lurks in hungry man, a humiliation to our common humanity.

There was as much anger and disappointment on the Left as on the Right. Emma Goldman's *Disillusionment in Russia* tells us what was felt by the ardent revolutionary deported from the capitalist United States of America, and arriving in the Promised Land of Socialism to find the body of liberty trodden underfoot in the desperate struggle. Unconsciously she herself pronounces the defence of the Revolutionary Government. All about her she sees unspeakable outrage. But "how could I speak out when the country was still besieged on several fronts? It would mean playing into the hands of Poland and Wrangel. For the first time in my life I refrained from opposing grave social evils." Of course, all that the Bolsheviks were doing, or allowing to be done, was done, or allowed to be done, in the necessity of preserving their existence as a Government and of defeating their enemies: and she was forced, by the logic of the situation, into connivance. The ultimate question was "Which rule is to be preferred?" *Inter arma silent leges*. What no one can do with immunity, or without self-waste, is to fight on both sides. That is what war means: the class-war, no less than the national war: and lies and cruelty are part of the armaments on both sides.

Meanwhile the Revolutionary Government, like Laocoon in the coils of the serpent, was wrestling with half the world. In February, 1919, it attempted to secure an end of Intervention by offering to pay the debts due to allied subjects and to renounce propaganda: but received no reply. It is probable that France was not alone in her ambitions of economic and political aggrandisement in Russia. But the agreement which

her representatives made with Petliura, the President of the People's Republic of Ukrain (and similar agreements were also made in respect to the Caucasus and with Wrangel), gave France the control of all railways for fifty years; and the control of policy, financial, commercial, industrial and military for five, as security for French debts. 0

The Bread War was raging more fiercely than ever, but the Government made attempts to restrict the arbitrary action of food-searching parties and to reassure middling peasants, who feared for their stocks. The urgency of the need for more food for the towns and the army was emphasised by a change, which carried peasant-taxation back to an abandoned principle of Tsarist times. One of the leading complaints of those who interested themselves in peasant welfare was the enforcement of a system of collective responsibility for taxation. It had been abolished in 1903, and was now reinstated by the Revolutionary Government, which at the same time introduced a more systematic calculation of requirements and net surplus. It is not possible to compare the deliveries of grain in the different years of this troubled period, because the area open to the Revolutionary Government's operations varied with the fortunes of the Civil War, but the smallness of the proportion borne by collections to production testifies to the inexperience and inefficiency of the methods of collection, which fell very unevenly upon the people. The true remedy for low collections of grain would have been an adequate supply of industrial commodities, coaxing supplies out of the barns of the peasants. But the adequate supply of commodities was prevented by the low productivity of labour, partly due to the inadequate supply of food.

In the third all-Russian Congress of Soviets a voice from the villages found significant expression: "The land belongs to us: the bread to you: the water to us: the fish to you: the forest to us: the timber to you." The peasants, more than willing to part with their surplus products if the necessary commodities were to be had in exchange, were only deterred by fear of the loss of their land in a counter-revolution from showing their resentment towards the Communist rulers. I again emphasise that the ultimate victory of the Communists was due to the fact that their cause represented the land for the peasant, while the Whites declared that they would give it back to the landlord. A Social Revolutionary Party Conference of the Peasants' Party decided not to employ armed force against the Government, but to use all available forces for the overthrow of the Whites—so the question of anti-Government action was at least debated. (*April, 1919.*) The Government was conscious of the danger, for the Food Commissariat animadverted on irregular and oppressive action by Food Detachments, and a decree forbade the use of compulsion for the creation of agricultural communes. (*May, 1919.*) It was also thought necessary to abandon the attempt to raise funds for the revolutionary State by a further increase in the price of manufactured commodities. All this time, food in Petrograd was so short that a worker in the highest cate-

gory of rations was getting only 15½ lb. of bread in the month, with ½ lb. of vegetable butter, 1 lb. of sugar, 4 lb. of herrings, 2 lb. of fish, 1 lb. of salt and ¼ lb. of mustard. It seems a monstrous quantity of mustard to so little bread. But mustard is used as a flavouring, and perhaps as a digestive. The bread allowance of about ½ lb. a day for a working man, in a country where bread is really the staff of life, is, of course, on a starvation scale. The salt must have helped the food situation, by providing for the preservation of mushrooms and vegetables.

In the meanwhile (March, 1919) the foundation of the Third or Communist International had been announced. It was a symbol of that confidence in the imminence of World Revolution which explains the untroubled courage of the revolutionary leaders in facing the storms of the early years. The conviction that man had a share in the making of his own history came from the Russian interpretation of the teaching of Karl Marx. Together with the apocalyptic vision of a Messianic mission for the Russian people, it created that sustaining faith which filled the place of a religion. There were high hopes at this time, when Hungarian, Bavarian and Slovak Soviet-Republics, all short-lived, were proclaimed. The expected triumph caused more stringent measures to be adopted towards those Socialists who were not Bolsheviks. Up to now Socialist Revolutionary and Menshevik newspapers had been tolerated. They were now suppressed. At the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party, Lenin announced that the first stage of the Revolution, which was the seizure of power, had passed: and that the second, which was about to begin, would be the separation of the proletarian and half-proletarian elements of the village (that is of the middling and poor peasants and the agricultural workers) from the more prosperous, and their union with the urban proletariat in a struggle against exploiters.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ORGANISATION OF MAN-POWER AND OF PRODUCTION

“Only listen and understand the talk of the machines,
You, the future Master, you, the Messiah!
With steam, steel and fire, you are allied!
You will capture the globe.”

SADOVIEV, *At the Lathe.*

THE PRECEDING chapter had for its central subject the question how those who do not produce food for themselves are to be supplied with their share of the food which others produce, when the motives of exchange established by the compulsions of rent and tax and by the offer of an attractive return for additional labour and the lubricant supplied by the profit in a customary system of trade have ceased to operate. Put in this form, the problem was evidently insoluble. The missing motive or

the absent lubricant, or both, must be supplied. In fact the early Revolutionary Government approached the problem by awkward substitutes for abandoned machinery. People from the towns, supported by have-nots in the rural areas, were sent out *to fetch the grain*: as and how they could. The crudity of the method is obvious. While devising more effective substitutes for abandoned methods, it was necessary to revert temporarily to the old: and this is what was done in March, 1921, when the peasants were permitted to trade in their surplus.

But, behind this question of distribution of the product, lay the more radical difficulty of stimulating production. The present chapter deals with this more fundamental problem of increasing the productivity of labour and with the attempts of the revolutionaries to find and to obtain the acceptance of that principle of organisation which should best favour the aim. Temporarily, the answer was found in that same policy of March, 1921, which sufficed for the question of distribution: but it involved the abandonment of the socialist ideal and was evidently not final.

What was to be the driving force which should compel or coax the surplus product into existence: and in the first place, who was to own, or control, the instruments of production? Sometimes they are owned or partly owned by a landlord or an entrepreneur: and then we call the system capitalistic. They may be owned or controlled by workers: and then we speak of workers' control of industry and of peasant proprietors in agriculture, or of self-employing co-operative associations. They may be controlled, or partly controlled, by a public authority, though owned by an entrepreneur: which is a modified form of capitalism. And they may be owned and controlled by a public authority under a socialist system. And there may be variations and combinations of any or all of these systems, such as we shall ultimately see in the collective farms.

War on the large scale, such as Russia suffered from 1914 to 1921, compels recourse to public control even in states which have no inclination to socialism in times of peace. It did for Russia very much what it did for the Western countries. Not only did it shake the economic machine out of gear, by the diversion of man-power and the diversion of demand, but it showed up fundamental weaknesses which escape attention during peace. In the normal course there is much economic waste; producers curtail production to make sure of profit, workers reduce effort to forestall unemployment: labour and materials are consumed on the less necessary articles for a few, while many go short of the more necessary: speculators corner goods and levy tribute: transport is employed in the long-haul carriage of goods that are available close at hand: ships and vans travel three-quarters empty. There is a chaos of production and distribution and transport. But only the economists and statisticians see it and shake their heads. The principal sufferers may be conscious of a void, but they do not know why, and they cannot mend it.

These are the conditions of peace. A serious war puts nations into the position of beleaguered cities, where every scrap of waste must be eliminated. Not only must soldiers and munition-workers be fed and equipped, but the mass of the people must be kept in good heart. Food, fuel, everything, must be rationed, and all used in the most effective way for the achievement of victory. For the moment, the full-fed man sees that the ill-fed man is a danger to himself. Hence the public control of economic operations which characterised in a greater or less degree all the nations in the Great Wars.

Tsarist Russia was kind to its capitalists—or afraid of them—and did not carry the process of control very far. Nationalisation naturally started with trade: for the first step, when the difficulties of what we may call a state of siege arise, is to find a way to distribute existing stocks. The Tsarist Government started with trade, and stopped with trade. It fixed a price for grain. The Provisional Government went a little farther, and established the grain monopoly, but shrank from the further step of controlling private industry: thus giving to the peasants the grievance that their sales were controlled, while their purchases were to be made in a free market. The November Government maintained the grain monopoly, for the system of requisitioning the surplus at a fixed price is the same thing in different language. But it was, for a long time, in two minds over the form which the control of production ought to take in the new State.

The northern half of the agricultural zone of Russia was not self-supporting as regards food. The food surplus was in the south, and the north depended upon supplies from that source and upon the communications which brought them. Nearly nine-tenths of the coal, and all the oil, were located in the south: both electricity and peat-production were poorly developed. Broadly speaking, the severance of the south meant a famine of food and fuel, and it must always mean that when similar conditions are repeated. Short of actual severance by war, such as threatened to repeat itself in the closing months of 1941, the weakness of communications produced, with a difference of degree, results of a similar kind: and any cause which deprived the peasant of his expected advantage from bringing produce to market, operated, in respect to food, in precisely the same way as the weakness, or even severance, of communications. *Deficit* Russia, by which I mean the north and centre, which could not supply itself with food, and with fuel on the commercial scale, was, when at war with its Western neighbours, in the position of a sea-girt country blockaded by a superior enemy, and threatened with starvation in consequence.

Before the fall of the Tsarist Government, some of these adverse factors were already in operation, but the surplus- and fuel-producing south was in Russian hands, and the sea was open to the north and to the far east. These conditions continued under the Provisional Government, aggra-

vated by the loss of the most highly industrialised portions of the Empire ; Poland, the Baltic provinces and autonomous Finland : and in an ever-increasing degree by rural anarchy, which operated as a severance of communications between the sources of food and the army and industrial centres. It was the lack of food, due to this rural anarchy, and not due literally to famine in the country as a whole, which brought the Provisional Government to ruin. There was food in the barns and there was money—depreciated “Kerensky” money, it is true—in the banks. But the economic circulation, necessary to the life of the body politic, was congested.

Kerensky’s successors—we must not yet speak of them as constituting a purely Bolshevik Government, for something resembling a coalition with the Social Revolutionaries continued till July, 1918—borne to power by elemental forces over which they had incomplete control, inherited the anarchy and the economic congestion. Their first decree, significantly, was the abandonment of a cherished Bolshevik plan. This was the Land Decree of November 8th, which gave up the general nationalisation of the land, and accepted in lieu of it management by local peasant bodies, who should freely decide the local forms of land-tenure. It was the Social Revolutionary plan, which had been endorsed by the numerous peasant assemblages of recent months : and it sacrificed, except in a very limited degree, the prospect of cultivation on the large scale to the demands of the people for an addition to their holdings on the old terms.

The peasants had long been demanding fixed prices for manufactured commodities, to balance those already enforced for agricultural products. General State-control of the factories would have been the means of meeting this demand. But here the claims of the workers ran counter to those of the peasants, and the early industrial policy was determined by more influences than one, and partook of more characters than one. A vigorous attempt, made in the first days of the Revolution, to get a supply of wares to the peasants was frustrated by the prevailing anarchy. Part of the objects collected were withheld by factory committees, part appropriated *en route* by railway Committees, and part fell into the hands of speculators. Only a fraction reached those whom it had been intended to supply. The Revolutionary Government desired, at the outset, to cooperate with those who owned and managed the factories, and to utilise their services. The owners withdrew funds, the managers and technicians held aloof, and the Bolshevik encouragement of workers’ control during the period of preparation for revolution confronted the new Government with a record of promises to be fulfilled. (*November 27th.*) A decree for Workers’ Control was therefore passed, but it was not everywhere enforced, and a little later we see Lenin examining workers’ deputations as to their knowledge of the commercial side of industrial operations, and advising them to be cautious about embarking on the management of

their own factories. His wish at this time was for State-control over privately owned capital—that is to say, neither nationalisation nor workers' control, but rather something resembling war-time regulation in western Europe.

About 20% of the factories, more particularly those concerned with war industries, continued in the early months to work as before under their old ownership and management. The remainder were divided about evenly between the centralised system of nationalisation, and workers' control operated by local factory committees; two systems, theoretically separated by wide distinctions, but, in the absence of trained managers and a business staff, less different in practice than in theory.

In one form or another, low productivity both in agriculture and in industry was the root of the troubles of the Revolutionary Government: and in both it was vital to find forms of organisation which should replace those which had been set aside, or condemned by the success of the Revolution. The leaders never concealed from themselves that in the long run the new order must be judged, without possibility of appeal, by its power of meeting the material needs of man: and that, if capitalism could successfully undersell it, it would fail to establish itself. The incentive to effective labour must be found without the landlord and the entrepreneur: or, in one form or another, they would find their ways back.

In so far as Workers' Control held its own against the contrary principle of centralisation, it was inimical to the establishment of a satisfactory work discipline. Or we may put it another way, and say that the State, as the employer of labour, was too dependent politically upon its own labourers to be able to control them. The revolutionary leaders had taught the workers to rebel against both State and employers: and their pupils proved apt to better the instruction. The creation of a new work-discipline was, in fact, one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest, of the tasks of the new régime: because the motive force had to be found within the worker himself, and that for a long time needed to be supplemented by an external stimulus drawn from the old armoury.

A nucleus of trouble lay in the decree of November 12th, 1917, for workers' insurance. The provision covered, in theory, all wage-earners and poor persons, and every form of incapacitation and unemployment. The full wage was to be paid, the full cost was to be met by the employer, and the fund was to be managed by the workers. As interpreted in practice, this meant full maintenance for all workers without reference to the wages earned by them, and without reference to the social value of their work. It followed that wages bore a diminishing proportion to the workers' income. After constituting the whole of it in 1917, they sank to less than half of it in 1918, to one-fifth of it in 1919, and to less than 6% of it in 1920. In other words, the pay was the same whether the work was or was not done. It was a low wage but a sure wage, and it attracted the easy-going: but the more energetic workers returned to the land, where

there was at this time much profit to be made. At the same time the Revolutionary Government found it necessary, for political reasons, to employ as many workers as possible. It is significant that the Railways, which employed just over 900,000 men in 1915, employed over 1,200,000 in 1921, though no additional construction had taken place, and hundreds of miles of track had passed out of the territory controlled by Russia.

If the industrial leaders and managers of the old régime had been enlisted for co-operation in production on the scale on which Trotsky brought the ex-Tsarist officers into the Red Army, some of the faults of labour might have been balanced by skilful direction. But this help, or enough of this help, was not obtained, because of the quarrel with the technical intelligentsia, of which something has been said in an earlier chapter.

There were other causes also for the low productivity. Capitalist business is provided—in private profit—with a self-registering index for the regulation of supply. With a money economy and normal book-keeping, figures show at regular intervals whether incomings yield a favourable balance over outgoings, and cry a halt, or a change of direction, to the unsuccessful business. The Revolutionary Government had not at this stage learned by a painful experience that it is possible, and indeed necessary, to retain the capitalist system of cost accounting, after abandonment of the capitalist device of private profit; and that figures must be used as pointers to the success or failure of communist undertakings just as meticulously as in private business. In a later chapter I have spoken of the awakening to the need of adapting capitalist devices to socialist economy. It was not, indeed, necessary that each particular industry taken by itself should pay its own way, any more than it is necessary for Army, or Navy, or Air Force, to do so: but it was necessary that the degree of the commercial success or failure of each should be registered by figures, so that the controlling authority might know when, and to what extent, it was paying a subsidy: and it was necessary that success or failure over the whole field of industry should be similarly ascertainable, lest a general excess of outgoings over incomings should involve indebtedness or financial collapse. For all these purposes a stable currency, as well as a system of commercial accounts, was essential. In the period of War-Communism the Revolutionary Government had neither. It was therefore without a guide to the direction of industrial effort: and made no attempt to ascertain that industry was paying its way, or following the channels of maximum advantage to the people whom it was to serve: which is the same thing in other words.

A similar inexperience in industrial management led to confusion in administration. When the Supreme Economic Council undertook the nationalisation of a number of manufactures in November, 1918, it set up forty departments to deal with them without any attempt to co-ordinate their work with that of the local Economic Councils: and

friction was the natural result. In short, Socialism had not yet discovered its own appropriate technique, much of which must necessarily be adapted from the experience of Capitalism.

In those days there was no regular budget of State—receipts and expenditure: but States have lived without budgets for much longer than they have lived with them. It has been alleged that there were no taxes: but the practice of requisitioning the surplus of agricultural production approximated to a tax in kind. No charge was made for the services, such as railways, posts, telegraphs, schools, theatres, worked by the State and local bodies. But some of such services, and notably theatres, schools and parks, have been and are, in whole or in part, gratuitous, in States which are not open to the charge of practising War-Communism. The stocks of raw material and the fixed capital inherited from the pre-revolutionary epoch were drawn upon. But this improvidence could easily be justified in a country suffering from civil war within, and foreign blockade without. The State paid wages or workers' insurance, largely in kind: a practice common in States having a primitive organisation, and, at least so far as agricultural labour is concerned, widely followed to-day. The theory of State finance, if this expression can be employed, was that provision for the service of the great family of the State could be made, so long as both outgoings and incomings were within that family. The only index to the process was the ever-mounting total of paper money, and the still more rapid rise of the prices of all things that were for sale. But, here again, the western countries furnished an example in their own economy, and the evil was rather of degree than of kind. The most orthodox have since discovered that a gold standard or a gold backing is not essential to economic life.

The radical defect of War-Communism lay, not in its incidental and removable faults, or in an unorthodoxy which may be merely freedom from unnecessary obsessions, but in the low productivity which ultimately ruined it. Because industrial productivity was catastrophically low, at a time when war-needs absorbed a large part of the product, there was little or nothing except depreciating paper to give to the peasants, and therefore no incentive to surplus production. Because grain deliveries were short, a fierce campaign was necessary to make up the deficiency, workers were allowed to go out and obtain food for themselves, and time was lost from the factories. But, worse than this, real wages were inevitably low, because the total divisible product was small, because industrial goods were short, and because grain was withheld by its producers. The lowness of real wages, in spite of the recklessness of a system which paid a nominal full wage for a slack day's work or for none, is illustrated by Farbman's calculation that the worker's food gave him 2,400 calories, against a normal average of 3,600. And, being underfed, his natural tendency to slackness was increased, and so another spin was given to the vicious round of low productivity and hunger.

Some theorists justified inflation as a means of destroying the value of savings and of ruining the class-enemy. But this was a clever afterthought. In its essence, inflation, in the sense of an increase of currency out of proportion to the growth in the volume of real transactions, is an attempt to arrive at a goal that perpetually recedes, to catch up with the uncatchable. By progressively diminishing the value of money, the process necessitates its own progressive acceleration. The Revolutionary Government was aware that it expended more than it received, and it made attempts to remove the necessity of printing notes to pay the balance. The capital levy of 1919, if it had been a success, should have checked inflation: but it brought only 10% of the estimated proceeds. The next expedient was to put a high price on manufactured commodities: which still more tightly closed the grain-store of the peasant, and raised wages and the prices of everything that was for sale. The use of money as between the different departments of government was eradicated: but the item was not large enough to be effective. Nothing less than increased productivity, by giving a function to money other than the raising of prices, could have checked the vicious progress. In the autumn of 1919, we are told, 18,000 workers were busy, night and day, printing money. The note-issue, which in January, 1918, was twelve times that of 1914, had reached astronomical figures in 1921.

Civil War and Allied Intervention form the background to the scene—a background which advances, at moments of intense crisis, till it all but crowds the actors from the stage. Germany and Austria, which once loomed so large, are out of the picture from November, 1918: but Britain, France, the United States of America, and Japan, are gathered about what seems to be the perishing body of the Russian State, and the Czecho-Slovaks, though no longer actively campaigning, are still echeloned across Siberia, and playing a part in the confusion of its politics. Skoropadsky has fled from Ukrain, amid the tempest of popular anger produced by his support of the landlords, but Petliura is in Kiev in his place, and has proclaimed an Ukrainian People's Republic, based upon the peasantry. (*December 14, 1918.*) General Krasnov, the Ataman of the Don Cossacks, has lost the flank support of the Germans, and has ceased to be threatening. But General Denikin, with the Volunteer Army, is on the point of destroying the Revolutionary armies in the country between the Black Sea and the Caspian, and of beginning the great advance which will threaten Moscow in the following autumn. (*January, 1919.*) Anarchy, championed by the redoubtable Makhno, enemy of all governments alike, will range over Ukrain in the rear of both armies, recruiting its green armies from the deserters of both sides. Voroshilov and his partisans still hold Tšaritsyn, "the red Verdun", for the Soviets, and the Volga and Kama valleys are in the hands of the Red Army. But the line of the Ural mountains, Orenburg, Ufa, Ekaterinburg, and the railways running eastwards, with the whole trans-Siberian line as far as Vladi-

vostok, are occupied by Whites, with their allies, Czechs, British, French and Japanese: while guerilla forces range the country behind. Some of the enemies of the Soviets, and particularly the French, in their later operations in southern Russia, will have grounds for doubting the loyalty of their soldiers in the face of Revolutionary Russia. (*November 18th, 1918.*) Admiral Kolchak has just been proclaimed dictator at Omsk, overthrowing a government which stood farther to the left than he, and will soon be moving eastwards, where he will nearly capture Trotsky himself. (*March 14th, 1919.*) In the north British and French are occupying Archangel. The Allied blockade of Russia has begun: and there is a half-hearted effort to strangle the unorthodox young Hercules in his cradle.

(*January, 1920—April, 1920.*) When Denikin and Kolchak have had their day, and Denikin has fled and Kolchak has been surrendered by the Czechs and executed, a new centre of danger will develop in the Crimea, while the Poles, in alliance with Petliura, will establish themselves far within the racial frontier of Russia, and demand the boundary line of 1772, before the first of the notorious Partitions. (*June to August, 1920.*) Only after the Revolutionaries have first driven the Poles in rout, and then been driven by them in rout in their turn, will there be an end of war for revolutionary Russia: and the end of war will mean the raising of fundamental questions of policy, and a long retreat over the whole economic front.

The fluctuation of the policies of the Revolutionary Government in the organisation of industry shows itself in the long dispute over the functions of the Trade Unions. (*January 20th, 1919.*) The second All-Russian Trade Union Congress was the theatre of a lively argument against the merging of the Trade Unions in the machinery of the State. Lenin pointed out that industry would break down if each Trade Union and Factory Committee concentrated upon itself, and that the way to give to Trade Unions wider functions in the building of large-scale industry was to assimilate them to the organs of State power. This seemed conclusive so long as the war lasted. But the controversy was only sleeping. Released from the preoccupations of war, Trotsky turned to the organisation of transport and the increasing of the productivity of labour. But the end of war renewed the opposition to centralised control and the militarisation of labour, and raised the demand for proletarian democracy in industry. The Party Conference of 1920 and the Trade Union Congress of that year were the centres of a controversy which agitated both Press and platform. It is interesting to notice that the discussion was to all appearance a completely free one. This phase of freedom has not lasted.

In October, 1920, orders were issued for a mobilisation of labour on military lines, with instructions that it should be effected "with revolutionary animation". At the opposite extreme, Shlyapnikov, of the Labour Opposition, demanded self-government in the factories and control of

the economy of the State by a congress of producers representing the Trade Unions: a logically complete extension of Workers' Control into something closely resembling the Syndicalist organisation of public affairs. Another group complained of the excessive concentration of power in the inner circle of the Communist Party, and demanded greater influence for the rank-and-file members of the Party, and for the constituent organs of the State—claims which anticipated those to be put forward by Trotsky on a more famous occasion of later date.

The Communist Party pronounced for a compromise solution. Each Union must contain a Communist element, and the Unions must accept a position subordinate to Party control, and be converted by degrees into auxiliary organs of the proletarian State. They were to have representation in the economic organs of the State, and to have a voice in the appointment of managers. But managers were to be selected, not elected, on the basis of competence, and one-man management was to be the rule for all factories. These decisions made an end of proposals for a Syndicalist State, and for workers' control of industry: but the relations of the Trade Unions to the State continued to be a subject of controversy.

THE RED ARMY

The organisation of the Army is not the organisation of production: but it has a very close connection with the management of labour, and I make no apology for saying something about it here.

After a short-lived attempt at a voluntary army, which was little different from a body of those armed workers to whom Lenin had often spoken of committing the business of the community, the Revolutionary Government, under the inspiration of its newly appointed Commissar of War, Lyov Bronstein Trotsky, established the principle of conscription for all its male citizens between the ages of eighteen and forty, with the exception of the disfranchised classes. (*April 22, 1918.*) Training was optional in the case of women. Provision was made later for work at the rear to be done by the disfranchised classes, who were exempted from military service.

This was the origin of the Workman-Peasant Red Army, for which drafts were gradually called up, till on August 1st, 1918, it numbered 331,000, and on October 1st, 1920, 5½ millions. Despite grave defects, it bore testimony to the organising gifts of the Commissar. Show me another man, said Lenin, who will create an army in six months, and win the respect of foreign experts! The result was achieved, in the first place, by a complete negation of all the principles of army organisation, for which the Bolsheviks had stood in the period of their agitation against the Tsarist and Provisional Governments: in particular, by a severer, but more impartial, discipline than that to which the Tsarist armies had ever been subjected: tactful and judicious rather than harsh. No more was heard of the election of officers. An end was made of the Army Com-

mittees. But Trotsky was well aware that to abolish an Army Committee may merely mean to drive it underground, and conceal the initial causes of discontent. The Red Army was, and is, permeated by Communists—that is to say, members of the organised and disciplined party which Lenin created, who know what the men are doing and thinking, handle complaints while they are still in the germ, and help to canalise feeling.

Another of the institutions of 1917 was the Political Commissar with the troops. In the Red Army this institution was maintained and extended, forming a complete political department. There were Commissars, or subordinate Political Instructors, to each unit, down to the battalion. In the *Journal d'un Soldat Rouge* (which contains internal evidence of having been written as a piece of propaganda for the French Army) we see the Commissar taking up a complaint about the food and punishing the offenders, including the cook; and also explaining to the men what they are fighting about. General Knox has shown us in his book on the Russian army between 1914 and 1917 that the men often had no idea why the war was being fought, and describes them replying to questions on the subject with the prescribed soldiers' formula: "I do not know at all". Whatever the value of blind discipline may be—and in more modern armies it does not seem to be worth much—instructed and intelligent discipline is better. The Commissar has a staff of selected soldiers to serve as political guides. He has other functions also: and, on a famous occasion, when a unit failed, we find Trotsky uttering a threat to shoot, first the Commissar, and then the Commander. There is evidence that these summary methods have not ceased to operate today. When there was suspicion of the loyalty of an officer to the Soviet Government, it was the Commissar's duty to watch him and report upon him. Under the conditions of revolution and civil war such things are obviously inevitable.

Trotsky's greatest contributions to the Red Army were: his insistence upon regular organisation and regular tactics, against attempts to put the army upon the footing of partisan detachments using only guerrilla tactics; and his use of military experts, including old Tsarist officers and old Tsarist N.C.O.'s promoted to officer rank. Over these questions he came into collision with Klim Voroshilov, afterwards the People's Commissar of Defence, and with Stalin, at that time a prominent member of the Revolutionary Council of War, who supported Voroshilov; and the military quarrel was, together with some jealousy due to Trotsky's late entrance to the Party, the origin of the breach between him and Stalin.

In two years 48,000 ex-Tsarist officers were taken into the Red Army, often by methods of compulsion, including the use of the families as hostages for good behaviour and of the State's monopoly of food. Among the earliest of this class who accepted service with the Bolsheviks were

M. N. Tukhachevsky, Putna, Kork, Uborevitch, and Primakov: all of whom were executed in June, 1938. Opportunities, which had been withheld under the Tsarist régime, of rising by skill and merit, were freely offered. Trotsky said that a revolution "not only permits but creates discipline in an army: but not under the class which the Revolution has overthrown". He chose and promoted officers without regard to their origin, and was successful in arousing their professional enthusiasm. There were some cases of treachery among ex-Tsarist officers, but most of them served with credit, and some, particularly Tukhachevsky, who became the Commander of the first Red Army in June, 1918, with very great distinction. As to the general superiority of the Revolutionary discipline—in spite of certain outbreaks—there is a good deal of evidence. "The orders of the Bolsheviks go right down to the bottom," said an ex-Tsarist General to Mr. Roden Buxton. A lady diarist, who is no admirer of the revolutionaries, is obliged to pay tribute to this quality, by contrast with the observed habits of the opposite side in the Civil War. She finds that "the Whites, too, commit atrocities", and that the Reds maintain discipline but the Whites do not.

Though the Red Army in the Civil War ultimately totalled over five million men, it never had more than half a million rifles, and the maximum number of combatants in it never exceeded 600,000, with 700 guns and 2,800 machine guns. There was no effective central military administration: most of the recruitment was done at the fronts: and the forces lived almost entirely upon the country. It was a great achievement, after the collapse of the Tsarist armies. But we must not fall into the error of over-estimating Trotsky's success. In the first place, the fighting in the Civil War was not, generally speaking, in any way comparable with the fighting against German armies. The actual fighting was done by armies of 100,000 to 150,000 men on both sides. Occasionally White troops achieved marvels, as in those regiments of the Volunteer army which were composed entirely of ex-officers, who made it a point of honour to advance till they dropped. But most of the operations were in the nature of raiding and counter-raiding, and the enemy was not of the highest military order. The Red Army won, because the country was with them, or rather because the country was against its opponents, and because it held interior lines, and was inspired by a single determined will. In the second place, the number of desertions from the Red Army was so high—and highest when the cause of the Revolution appeared to be losing—that praise of its military virtues must be qualified. The same defect which had shown itself in the Tsarist armies was manifest here also. The men were not prepared for a long struggle and for permanent privations. In this respect the Civil War presents a marked contrast to the campaign of 1941 against the invading Germans. It is a necessary inference that the Bolsheviks have now won that general confidence and attachment which they lacked in 1918–1920.

There were three great waves of desertion. The first, beginning in June, 1918, and reaching its highest point in the beginning of 1919, continued till the middle of 1919. A second wave, not so great, coincided with Denikin's critical advance upon Moscow in the autumn of 1919. The development of Wrangel's operations, and the war with Poland, produced a third wave in 1920. Precise figures of desertion are only available to the present writer between June, 1919, and February, 1920: but 895,000 deserted during these nine months. This does not include the large number of those who were called up for military service and did not present themselves. Of these there were over 900,000 in 1918 and the beginning of 1919. Erich Wollenberg, a recent writer on the Red Army, puts the total of desertions up to the winter of 1920 at 2,846,000: of whom 1,543,000 returned to the ranks. The cant term for desertion, "voting with the legs", shows how the soldiers regarded it.

The official report on desertion indicates the pursuit of a discriminating policy. A special Commission, with subordinate local Commissions, was set up to deal with the problem, which it approached from three directions. The first was the treatment of the particular deserter. Return to the fighting line was always insisted upon, but only a very small proportion of the offenders was sent for trial. In deciding whether a man should be tried, it was first ascertained by a preliminary enquiry whether the case was a bad one—*e.g.*, whether it involved hostility to the régime: or one of "weak will". At the end of the first wave of desertions, the Local Petrograd Commission had dealt with something over 6,000 men and sent 620 for trial, of whom six were sentenced to "conditional shooting", that is to say to a deferred penalty, which might or might not be enforced, according to subsequent conduct; 627 were sent to penal detachments. One local Commission, which was thought to have been rather too free with its penal sentences, dealt with over 18,000 offenders, of whom 468 were sent for trial, and 1,844 to penal detachments; 329 were sentenced to conditional shooting, seven to deprivation of freedom, and eighty-five to conditional deprivation of freedom.

The second expedient was the punishment of the families and the har-bourers: justified, in the conditions of an agricultural country, by the benefit derived, particularly at harvest time, from the offender's labour. This was accompanied by the conferment of special privileges on the family of the Red Army man, among them relief from direct taxation, and a pension on the death of the serving member. The third expedient was the removal of causes of complaint, by the organisation of relief in the rear. This was suggested by the discovery that desertion often resulted from the arrival of letters complaining of conditions at home. Complaint-boxes were distributed in the villages, and were systematically taken up, and grievances relieved.

Desertion was often associated with banditry, and one of the writers of monographs of particular villages tells us of a band of deserters, 500

strong, which formed a deserters' "republic" in the summer of 1919, and had to be broken up by military action. The scale of operations and the nature of the expedients employed to deal with some of them throw a vivid light on the conditions of the country during civil war. In one case a body of 2,500 deserters was rounded up, pleaded with its captors for two days' leave to go home for domestic affairs, and returned punctually at the end of the period of grace, accompanied by another couple of thousand, who had been moved by the friendly treatment of the others to surrender themselves. There were other cases of captured bandits—bandit and deserter meant much the same—being allowed to go home, and returning with their arms and equipment to their military duties. It was necessary, says the writer of the official report, to use a lever never before used, but the clemency was accompanied by action to make plain the dangerous results of recidivism.

I have dwelt upon this subject because the facts are significant of that closer touch between people and Government which is one of the features of Communist rule. It was one of the principles (writes the military officer who compiled the official report) observed in talking to the people, not to hide or minimise the mistakes of authority. This is typically Bolshevik. Everyone confesses. The Government also confesses—with certain reservations. And there was no approach *de haut en bas*. A good line to take in dealing with the representatives of the deserters (often with arms in their hands) was this: "We do not want strange people in the army. We want to know on which side you are and where your place is. If you are for the Soviet Power, what is there to talk about? Come to the front. If you are for the Whites, there is no place for you among us: and we can't leave you here. Go to the Whites. Then we shall know with whom we are dealing: and we shall have no enemies in our rear." And so, with much talking round and about the subject, the deserters (who really only want to be at their fields or, till winter comes, to be living at loose on the countryside) scratch their heads and go back to the Red Army. In the early period of the Revolution, before, and even for a year or two after, the death of Lenin, there was social equality between officers and men. The officers had no separate mess of their own: and Erich Wollenberg, who himself served in the Red Army from 1921 to 1936, tells us that in 1925 an officer had to justify himself to the Party for allowing a private to black his boots. The pay of a Corps Commander was only 150 roubles per mensem.

As soon as victory was within sight, it was decided to use a part of the Red Army as an Army of Labour, and from February, 1921, four Labour Armies began operations. In the Donets basin, normally the centre of the supply of the minerals and ferrous metals, a whole third of the enterprises were idle. The Ukrainian army was used: not to work the mines or the foundries, but to make it possible for others to work them. In four months it had repaired 120 major bridges. The Petrograd Army so im-

proved the food and fuel supply that the Putilov Metal works in Petrograd substantially increased its output.

Trotsky has given us some details of the work done by the Third Army which had been operating in the Urals. The artillery and technical troops were detached for service with other armies required for military duty. There remained about 120,000 men of the infantry and cavalry, including 16,000 Communists and Communist sympathisers. It was not possible to employ these men on tasks requiring technical skill. But they freed roads from snow, stored fuel, and organised cartage. The weak point was the smallness of the number actually available for work. Twenty thousand were wanted for guard duty in connection with military buildings and stores: more than 25,000 were employed on administrative duties: and about as many more were either on leave or absent without leave. After deducting the medical and sanitary personnel, and the sick, under 17,000 remained at the disposal of the Labour battalions, so long as there was still a possibility of requiring the Third Army for service against Denikin. When it became clear that there remained no military danger in that quarter, it was possible to use 45,000 for general labour. The inference is that good economic results are not to be obtained from labour armies.

The principal changes made at later dates in the organisation of the Red Army have been in the direction of regularisation. Territorials have been replaced by regulars: and military titles have been restored to the officers. There has been some vacillation over the characteristic institutions of Political Commissars and subordinate Political Instructors: but at the time of the German invasion this branch of the Army had been completely restored. It is their business to make sure that the rank and file know what they are fighting for, and to maintain the soldiers' moral. A recent writer has very pertinently compared the task of the Political Commissar with that of the Army Chaplain in the British Army. It was widely believed that the tremendous purges of 1936-8 had seriously weakened the Army. But its achievements in the campaign of 1941-2 show that its quality is well maintained. The youthfulness of the Generals, and the facilities for rapid promotion, have been noticed by many observers.

ORGANISATION OF AGRICULTURE

I turn now to the particular case of agricultural production. The reader will have a clue to what, at many points, looks like a puzzling contradiction between intention and performance, if he realises from the outset the existence of a dualism in agrarian policy. The Communist leaders were not masters of the situation. Their ultimate aim was one thing, their policy of the moment was another: generally a compromise between the will of the peasantry and their own convictions. There is

always a danger of undue simplification in a summary statement. But if I limit my sentence to the personal convictions of Lenin himself, it is safe to say that, throughout the greater part of his career, his aim was something very closely resembling that which ultimately issued in the collectivisation of the peasants' holdings, together with the institution of State farms worked by paid labour: but that from a very early stage he intended to secure the alliance of the peasantry, and recognised the necessity of conceding their demands.

The idea of collectivisation—that is to say, of joint cultivation—as distinct from joint ownership or joint management, on a very large scale, first emerges in Friedrich Engels' *Peasant Problems in France and Germany*. He there says that there is no idea of forcibly expropriating the small peasant, as the Social Democrats would be compelled to do in the case of the large landowner: and that the task will first of all consist in transforming individual production and individual ownership into co-operative production and co-operative ownership: not forcibly, but by example and by social aid. Co-operation is not the precise term which I should apply to collectivisation: because the latter involves the acceptance of associates whom one has not chosen for oneself: but that is a distinction which developed later.

We see the notion of State farms, along with the notions of the economic failure of small farming and the need of employing machinery in agriculture, emerging in Lenin's mind in his writings between 1901 and 1906. All these ideas co-exist with the purely Marxian conception of letting capitalism take its course in the villages, with the result of accumulating land in the hands of a few: in the same way that it was to take its course in industry, with the result of accumulating capital also in the hands of a few. Capitalism was to take its course, because it was (from the Marxian standpoint) an essential preliminary to the creation of proletarian conditions and the rise of social democracy. The peasants, as we have no difficulty in imagining, were not troubled by the agrarian theories of Marx and Engels: equally they had no desire for State farms or for collective farms, neither of which came on any considerable scale within the range of their experience. Some wanted the perpetuation of a redistributing *Mir*: some (these were the "strong and sober", together with others who wished to dispose of their land to the best advantage) wanted the consolidation of separate properties in the land. For the time being the new Revolutionary Government "gave the peasant nag its head", leaving all details to be determined by the local will.

The local seizures of 1917 and 1918 gave to the peasant an average addition of 20% to his holding. But the variations from one part of the country to another were enormous. In Ukrain holdings were almost, but not quite, doubled, and the ultimate attachment of the peasant to the Soviet Government, however great the grumbling by a section, was thereby guaranteed. Comrade Yakovlev, afterwards Commissar of

Agriculture, visited in 1923 a village of the Kursk province, and found that it had, between 1917 and 1922, increased its holding of land by 65%, but was only gradually bringing the new land under cultivation. Mr. Charles Roden Burton has left us an admirable picture of a village east of the Volga, in the province of Samara; where each "soul" got an additional area of thirteen and a half acres, and his host, having a family of seven sons, got ninety-four and a half acres. This was wealth to the peasant, if adequate means of cultivating it existed. On the other hand, one of our village monographists shows us a tract in the Moscow province adjoining Smolensk, where there was no landlord's land to divide and the people had no particular interest in the survival of the Soviet Government. Very much the same seems to have been true of part of the Tver province.

Each village took, or tried to take, the land which had been cultivated by the ancestors or predecessors of its present members in the days of serfdom: so that there was no sort of equality between village and village in the seizures. There were "no good landlords", said the people of one village; so all the land was seized: but their particular landlord had been a friend to the peasants, so they gave him his share along with the rest, and left him in undisturbed possession of his house. "You cannot eat land", and many of those who extended their holdings could not cultivate the additional area, because they had not the stock, either live or dead, for the purpose. This, and the loss of the landlord's agricultural example, often not without value, minimised the advantage which the peasants obtained from the seizures. They were also insecure in their new estates. Some of them were desperately afraid of the return of the old landlords, either in the flesh or in the spirit. A certain Count Stroganov had had a terrible reputation in his lifetime for his treatment of offenders against his rights. The local peasants left all the land on one side of the river untouched, lest the Count should return from the grave and flay the trespassers. Flaying, it appears, was a promise that he had been wont to hold out to those who misbehaved. At last, some returned Red Army men mustered up courage, crossed the stream and ploughed up the deserted lands. In the Valdai hills we hear of peasants who were afraid to build on the home-estate round the old landlord's mansion, because that involved a documentary transaction which would stand as evidence against them. They preferred to trespass quietly on the area and plant potatoes there. *No one was certain of the permanence of the Soviet power.* A formal distribution in legal form, not only of the new land acquired by seizure from the landlords and the Church, but of the land already held in uneven proportions by the widely varying classes in the Tsarist village, was likely to give confidence, and was awaited with eager interest.

The seizures which had taken place during the eight months of the Provisional Government included 108 million acres taken from 110,000 large owners, and 140 millions taken from 2 millions of individual peas-

ants, mainly, no doubt, those who had secured separate proprietary holdings under the Land Settlement of Peter Stolypin. Some of the landlords were still holding on to their lands in 1920, as we learn from a pamphlet of that year, and our village records furnish us with numerous instances of peasants of the more prosperous type who continued to occupy separate farms and to claim independence of the *Mir*. There was a widespread desire for the official confirmation of rights acquired by seizure, along with a demand for measures of equalisation, from those sections of the peasantry which found themselves in possession of the smaller holdings: all the makings, in fact, of a bitter class-struggle within the village: and the demand for equalisation extended beyond the limits of particular villages in those numerous cases in which the lands of adjoining villages were intermixed. It was evident that general measures of survey and settlement would be necessary to adjust all claims and set doubts at rest.

To the general claim for the confirmation of the seizures there was no saying nay. "Let them do it," said Lenin; "if the lands are seized the banks will be ruined (by the loss of the mortgage money). If stock is taken over, the power of capital will be broken. With the control of the proletariat at the centre, the rest will follow of itself. The point is the transfer of the political power to the proletariat:" and he went on to that famous disclaimer of knowledge of the turns in the road to Socialism, which I have set on the front page of this book, as the true motto of the Communist Government, most accomplished of experimentalists and opportunists.

(*November 8, 1917.*) The first Land Law of the Revolutionary Government made a provisional settlement of the question, *pending the decision of the Constituent Assembly*. It did lip service to the principle of nationalisation, and declared that the land and its appurtenances belonged to the entire people and that damage to them was a grave crime. Minerals and forests and waters having a national importance were to be in the hands of the State. Orchards, plantations, nurseries, seed-plots and hothouses were to be preserved as model farms. Cattle-breeding studs and poultry farms were to be the property of the entire people. Dwelling-houses and the gardens belonging to them were to be *left to the owners*, a notable concession rarely observed by the people. The rest of the land was to be distributed by Canton Land Committees and District Peasant Soviets. Each village was to decide the mode of land-tenure, whether by households, by individuals, by village communes, or by co-operative organisations. The right of user was declared to belong to all who wished to work the land by their own or by family labour, or on co-operative principles: but the use of hired labour was prohibited. The distribution was to be made, on principles of equality, on the basis of the norms of need advocated by Victor Chernov and the Social Revolutionaries. There was to be periodical redistribution in accordance with changes of population

and growth of productivity: and the right of heredity was recognised, subject to this.

So far as the great bulk of the land was concerned, this was, in effect, a law of local option: for the application of the principle of equality, and the reservations to the State, were in practice dependent upon the establishment of a system of survey and settlement not yet provided for.

Up to February 1919 only thirty-five State-farms had been created, and those of small dimensions. There was evidently no popular desire to make use of local option for the formation of large government estates.

The second Land Law, passed after the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, might naturally have been expected to mark the triumph of the poorer over the more prosperous peasants: and it did, in fact, declare that the individualistic use of land must be regarded as transitory. It emphasised the aim of increased production and gave preference, in the allocation, to agricultural co-operatives (which would later be named agricultural collectives) over individual applicants, with a view to a transition to socialist agriculture. The dividing of holdings into numerous separate strips was discouraged. Surplus revenue, resulting from superior quality or situation, was to be paid to the Soviets for public needs: a very obvious recognition of the principles of rent and of public ownership: the trades in grain and agricultural machinery were declared to be State monopolies: and paper provision, afterwards to be to some extent realised in fact, was made for State Insurance for sickness, old age, accident, and the various contingencies of agriculture.

We must not fall into the error of assuming that anything like full effect was given to the principles embodied in the decrees at this time. The actual agrarian policy presents a conflict of aims: on the one hand the equalisation of holdings, which means the perpetuation of *petite culture* of the peasant type, and the diminution of the surplus by a backward agriculture; on the other hand, the stimulation of production by the encouragement of *grande culture*, with improved agricultural machinery and the application of agricultural science. The second of these two aims is capable of being realised in different ways: either by Peter Stolypin's plan of encouraging the "strong and sober", of helping the prosperous to grow more prosperous, even though it be at the expense of the poorer; or by building the individual farms into collective entities, and creating State-farms worked by paid labour alongside of them. In pursuance of the last-mentioned plan there were, at the end of 1920, about 4,400 State-farms with an average area of 1,150 acres, and 3% of the peasants' land was being jointly cultivated by collective labour. There is yet another and an intermediate method of attaining the second aim, and that is the encouragement of voluntary producers' co-operation, which was carried so far and so successfully before the November Revolution. A trial was given also to this method, but it was not swift enough, and

not sufficiently all-embracing, to commend itself to rulers in quest of early and large results and fearful of foreign attack.

The desire to increase production is emphasised during the autumn of 1918 by propaganda against "such a waste of human power and labour as is involved in small peasant economy" and in "favour of collective tillage". A milliard of roubles was provided for agricultural improvement, on condition of the adoption of joint cultivation. Hitherto no provision had been made for a survey and settlement staff to carry out the desired changes. The Land Law of February, 1919, was this provision. It also repeated the principles that all forms of individualistic use of land must be looked upon as out-worn and transitory, and that priority in the distribution of land must be given to State-farms and to "associations", condemned the division of holdings into isolated strips, which wasted land as well as labour, and gave to the Land Departments power to assume control of land in order to prevent exhaustion and increase productivity. The Revolutionary State was not yet in a position to supplement these instructions by the provision of agricultural machinery on a large scale, and of a network of qualified scientific advisers: and the new survey and settlement staff was slow, expensive, and not always above the suspicion of corruption, and directed its labours sometimes to the aim of equalisation, sometimes to the retention of existing conditions. The law of seizure prevailed until the Surveyors appointed under the decree of February, 1919, got to work, and, owing to the smallness of the staffs and the complexity of the task, this interval was in many regions a prolonged one. On the whole, anarchy was favourable to the well-to-do, who were often able by their influence with the village poor and by the fact that they alone had the cattle and implements for extended cultivation, to secure themselves in the possession of more than their share of the better and more conveniently situated land.

Even when the surveyors got to work, money sometimes had its say. Thus, in a village of the Upper Novgorod province, which consisted of two quarters, in origin two separate villages, the surveyor found the *Mir* rent by a struggle between the more prosperous, who desired separate consolidated estates of their own, and the poorer, who objected to consolidation. He allotted the land which had been made newly available, to the whole village in one block, leaving the people to make their own division of it. Much intrigue followed, and the more astute and influential went over the heads of the Village Meeting to the Cantonal Land Committee to secure an advantage over less nimble neighbours. Ultimately, after two years of struggle, one side of the village accepted communal occupation, and the other adopted separate consolidated holdings of the Peter Stolypin type. There was no redistribution, and the supposedly equalising effects of the Survey were nullified. People said the surveyor had been bribed. The quarrel was typical of the situation in a great part of rural Russia.

One writer has left us a picture of the proceedings in a survey which involves redistribution of land. Men and women are gathered round a table under the birch trees, at which sit the Chairman of the Canton Soviet and the Canton surveyor, with a map in front of them. While the map is being examined there is quiet. As soon as questions begin there is uproar, one shouting for separate consolidation of holdings, another for broad strips, a third grumbling about his land because it is dirty, a fourth because there is too little of it, a fifth because it is too far from the village site, a sixth because a neighbouring holder crosses his boundary to turn his plough. Then the whole village, including children and dogs, moves out with the officials to the fields, keeping up the uproar, and hurling abuse at rival claimants, to the accompaniment of the barking of the dogs. Those who know rural India will recognise a likeness. Peasant life does not change at national frontiers.

We see one case, of the Tver province, between the prosperous and the poor groups in a village, carried to the Courts. The District Land Commission gave a decree for division "according to consumers"—that is, on the basis of strict equality per head. It involved a reduction in the area held by the prosperous group. The surveyor did not carry it out. Perhaps he was busy elsewhere, but there is a hint that he was squared. When the surveyor at last arrived, he started work on the division of the spring field. The prosperous group held aloof, and got an order from the Land Commission that the surveyor should start with the fallow field, because cultivation of the spring field had already begun. The fallow field was re-divided "according to consumers", and the poor group carried out their manure to plough it in as usual, each on his own allotted portion. In the meanwhile the prosperous group had gone up to the Court of highest instance at Moscow and obtained a decree that the land should all be divided into two integral blocks, one for the prosperous, and one for the poor group, and that the arable should not be broken up till the division had been effected. Armed with this, and noting that the reservation did not apply to the hay-field, the prosperous ploughed up the common meadow, with the common grass still standing uncut upon it: and a local riot was very narrowly averted. A surveyor, friendly to the prosperous group, divided the arable into two blocks in a manner disadvantageous to the poor, after the latter had refused to participate in the proceedings. And so on and so on, and the case was still dragging its weary length when the reporter finished writing his monograph. It is the familiar history of the long purse and the short. "Do not fight with the strong, nor go to law with the rich," says the Russian proverb, which retained some of its truth in spite of Lenin and the November Revolution. How familiar: and how like to India!

On the whole, however, the period of War Communism had an equalising tendency upon land-tenure within the village: and some redistribution took place even between adjoining *Mirs*. The teaching of

Marx is not egalitarian: but it is opposed to the private ownership or control of the instruments of production, including the land. The Revolutionary Government had surrendered to the peasantry as regards the control of the land: but surrender as regards the *unequal* control of it by individuals was another matter, and resistance to this further surrender continued with varying fortunes against an opposing section, which emphasised the economic advantage of encouraging and supporting the more prosperous and thriving peasants; until the policy of collectivisation propounded a new solution, from which inequality of individual rights in land, but not inequality of corporate rights in it, was eliminated.

The period of War-Communism was one in which vast tracts of the old Russian Empire were from time to time completely inaccessible to the Revolutionary administration and subject to White military control. Other large tracts were the scene of actual military operations, as the tide of battle ebbed and flowed across them, and were for long periods subject to the devastations and requisitions of both sides. Partisan bands, brigands and deserters ravaged the country behind the hostile lines. Ukrain was not free from these for four years after the end of the Civil War: Tambov, and adjoining portions of the Black-Earth zone, were the scene of a fresh outbreak in 1920-1. It was the fertile, the surplus-producing, part of Russia, the south, the east, and the south-east, which suffered most from these conditions: the existence of which is the perpetual background to all that we have to say in this chapter on the subject of rural life. The ravages of civil war and brigandage in the Black Earth, the granary of Russia, were preparing, throughout this period, the ruin which culminated in the Famine of 1921-2.

The State's monopoly of trade, and in particular of the trade in grain, though constantly evaded, embarrassed the economy of the peasant by the difficulties which it placed in the way of obtaining seed, cattle and agricultural implements. The system implied a precise calculation which should leave to each a sufficient supply of seed-grain as well as food for man and beast, and adequate arrangements for manufactured commodities to be delivered without charge. Such perfection of adjustment was, of course, impossible, and, though the peasant generally succeeded in keeping back a far larger part of his product than was contemplated, it was only by some illicit arrangement that he could utilise the surplus to obtain any of his requirements. Such illicit arrangements, if freely practised, were both expensive and precarious. The grain which was withheld from the towns, except in so far as the requisitions were effective and the campaign of the food detachments successful, was used for illicit distillation on a very large scale, as well as to feed the increased village population produced by the exodus from the half-starved towns, and to compensate for the diminution in the yield of agriculture. There was at the same time an almost complete elimination of those earnings

supplementary to agriculture, upon which a considerable portion of the peasantry had been partially dependent.

You cannot tax a peasant in cash unless you give him a market for his produce. The abolition of the market necessarily involves taxation in kind. This simple and obvious fact explains some of the changes made by the Revolutionary Government in rural taxation. It started with a theoretically complete monopoly of trade, and therefore abandoned cash-taxation. When the New Economic Policy re-established the market, it was not long before rural taxation was again levied in cash. When the peasant's freedom to dispose of his surplus was again limited, a system of "compulsory sale in the nature of a tax" was adopted which has virtually restored the system of taxation in kind, though the remains of taxation in cash continue alongside of it, because the collective farm is able to sell its surplus after the Government claims are met, and the peasant is at liberty to sell the produce of his own yard, or kitchen garden.

At the start there was theoretically no taxation at all, but the peasant was required to give up his surplus: not his surplus of every species of product, for the Government had no machinery at that time for the preservation and utilisation of products of every description, but his surplus of certain products, on a list varying from region to region, and generally including cereals and potatoes. The surplus was determined by establishing a norm of consumption, for humans, animals, and seed. In the case of holdings calculated to yield a surplus in excess of these norms, the Government took (theoretically) the whole surplus, leaving nothing for other requirements, which were (theoretically) to be provided by doles of manufactured commodities. But there were many holdings which produced too little to provide for the holders on the scale of the norms of consumption. The Cantonal Grain fund was therefore to disburse enough grain to give these poor holders their prescribed norms. The system was thus one of combined dole and taxation.

It yielded in 1918 less than half of what was expected of it. The number of those who claimed the rights of deficit holders was surprisingly large, or not surprisingly large, according to the way in which we regard it. Though barns were examined by Committees of the Poor, and Red Army men were employed in the collection, concealment and understatement were common. And since some products were leviable and some were not, an immense impetus was given to the cultivation of those which were not on the list.

The system of levying surplus and of making up deficits by doles continued in 1919. But the lists were now extended to include, among other products, meat, hay and straw. An obligation of labour and transport, of a kind which is familiar in backward countries where no general force of detached labour is available, was additional to the requisition. The State obtained more in 1919 than in 1918, but concealment and false

claims continued to be numerous, and the collections were still far below the estimate.

In 1920 there was a change of system. A calculation was made at headquarters of the amounts which ought to be yielded by the whole country (or by so much of it as was not in enemy occupation), and this was distributed over the provinces. The provinces distributed their quota over the districts: the districts over the cantons: and the cantons over the villages. Within the village the distribution was made by the general meeting of householders, the lineal descendant of the old *Mir*. The village responsibility was joint: the meetings assessed their members amid an interchange of home truths and occasionally of blows. No ground of assessment was ignored, even dogs and cats were taken into account, and there were cases in which villages were completely cleared of dogs and cats in consequence. The dole to the deficit-holder came to an end, but the poor (or those who succeeded in establishing the claim to exemption) were exempted from the levy. In one canton of which we have a precise record just over half of the households contributed to the levy in 1920. The author of the monograph observes that not always the richest, but rather the quietest, had to pay. The local jaw-me-deads sometimes put the contribution on the less solvent. But, in the mass, the more prosperous were the payers. The element of primitive communism, which first combines dole with tax, and afterwards exempts from levy a very large section of the less well-to-do, shows a progressive diminution. On the adoption of the New Economic Policy in 1921, the poorer households were required to contribute to the revised levy, if they had any cultivation at all, though on a reduced scale, and 87% of the total became contributors in place of the 53% who contributed in 1920.

At a later date, the internal controversies of the Communist Party, a section of which contended that the peasants were undertaxed and demanded that they should be subjected to heavier burdens for the building of Socialist industry, led to the preparation by qualified statisticians of a comparative calculation of extraordinary interest. This showed, for the whole of Russia, that the proportion of the peasant's gross income which was absorbed in 1912 by all taxation, direct and indirect, averaged 11.2%: and that the additions of other charges, which were brought to an end by the Revolution, for rent and land-purchase, raised the total to 18%. If we take tax payments and requisitions in the nature of tax only, the charges upon the peasant during War Communism and the early years of the New Economic Policy formed, because of the fall in income, a substantially larger proportion of the peasant's income than the 11.2% taken by Tsarist taxation. If we include, along with taxes and requisitions, those pre-revolution payments for rent and land purchase to which the Revolution put an end, we find that the change of rulers gave relief in 1918-19: increased the burden in the two years 1920-22: and maintained it, in 1922-3, at approximately the same level as in 1912.

The profits derived by the Government from the issue of notes, which took place on a very large scale between 1918 and 1921, are treated as taxation for the purposes of this calculation, and one third of them is debited to the peasantry, as an addition to their tax payments. Roughly speaking, an equal proportion—but not an equal amount per head—was taken, on a reduced income: and the conclusion must be, therefore, that there was some increase of the burden. Since the calculation was published at Moscow in 1924, we may safely conclude that the Revolutionary Government regarded it as unobjectionable. It will be noticed that its conclusions harmonised with those of the Right Wing Communists who opposed any substantial addition to the burdens of the well-to-do peasantry. Its author had no difficulty in showing that the advocates of higher taxation of the peasant went very far astray when they put the demands upon the peasant in the later Tsarist period at 40% of income. Local burdens may continue to be excessive, owing to bad distribution, after the general rate of taxation has been brought to a reasonable level: but the general rate in Tsarist Russia ceased to be excessive, after the abolition of the payments for redemption from serfdom. This result, however surprising, may be accepted as substantially true.

The writer of a monograph on a Novgorod village, who is evidently well acquainted with other provinces also, tells us that the taxation of the peasants in 1922-3 was 19% in Novgorod, 21% in the Kuban Black Sea province, 23½% in Penza, 20-27% in Moscow and Simbirsk. On the other hand, his individual peasant budgets show a prosperous peasant paying 6%, a middling peasant paying 5%, and one living on his own farm on a consolidated holding, excused from all taxation for five years, for reasons unstated. Outside earnings, where they continued to exist, as they did in the particular village of Novgorod, which he describes, were untaxed. But the grain requisition was sometimes collected twice over. Arithmetical mistakes in the calculation of the tax, whether in kind or cash, were very common, and it was extremely hard to get them put right by stupid or self-important officials: who existed still, probably will exist always, and not only in Russia. The collecting staff was extremely inexperienced, and Indian parallels suggest that even experienced staffs may work out very uneven assessments, where any calculation of agricultural produce is involved. We may safely say that the burden was very unequally distributed and demands not infrequently made at the wrong time.

The Journal, *Economic Life*, calculated, on the other hand, that in July, 1922, 2,700,000 acres of cultivation were successfully concealed from the authorities: the proportion amounting in some districts to 15 or 20% of the land cultivated, and in a few to as much as 60%. Some particularly sturdy villages resisted the levies. Mr. Rhys Williams tells us of a settlement of Old Believers, on the bluff above the Volga, which ultimately got off with only half its assessment. A village in the Valdai hills was

asked to pay a butter tax, which involved the purchase of the butter at a high price elsewhere, refused to pay, and successfully induced the authorities to commute the butter for rye, which was now the normal substitute for money. o

There was very little control from headquarters over the local administration, and the Cantonal and Village Soviets raised money by an extraordinary variety of imports. We hear of a tax of 4 to 25 roubles on a priest, 2 roubles on a psalm-singer, 2 roubles on an accordion, 3 roubles on a gramophone, 5 roubles on an evening party, 25 roubles on drunkards and preparers of fermented mares' milk: all of these in one district. Often a *pu*d of flour (36 lb.) was charged by the local authorities for a divorce, and $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. for a marriage. The peasants of Archangel complained bitterly in the all-Russian Congress of Soviets of the endless variety of the local imposts: showing, incidentally, the value of the assembly as a platform for the airing of grievances, as well as the disorder of the State.

The tax policy of the early Revolutionary period, by its favour to the poorer and smaller holdings, caused the breaking up of families and the multiplication of households. By division, it was possible to avoid assessment, perhaps even to obtain a dole for a deficit holding, and large numbers had recourse to this simple device, which must everywhere tend to defeat efforts for the relief of the uneconomic holder by the manipulation of taxation.

I wish there were more records of the popular songs. They sometimes tell more than a sheaf of statistics. There are a few of the Ryazan province in the period of War-Communism. Here is a criticism of church-goers:

Here's a secret
I disclose:
They go to Church
To show their clothes.

And here is a popular judgment on the qualities of Lenin and Trotsky:

Lenin sits upon the fence,
And waits for fire to warm his toes:
Comrade Trotsky strikes a flint,
And there is fire beneath his nose.

I have already emphasised the fact that the surplus-producing section of Russia, to which the country owes its reputation as a granary, has the best soil and the longest open season, but also the most capricious climate. It is periodically visited by droughts, when hot winds from the east burn up the growing crops. The middle and lower Volga valley suffers very acutely from these visitations, of which the history of Russia is full, but the whole of the Black-Earth zone is also subject to them: and we have the paradoxical result that the richest agricultural area is also

the most prone to recurrent famines. The year 1920 was visited by one of these droughts, said to have been as severe as that of 1911. In spite of the activities of the Food-War, the food-levy brought less than two-thirds of the estimated amount. The food dictator, Ossinsky, proposed the compulsory organisation of agricultural production as a cure for short deliveries of grain, an apparent anticipation of general collectivisation. (*September 20th, 1920.*) But the Eighth all-Russian Congress of Soviets amended his proposal to one for reduction of the ratio of requisitioning: a sign that the policy of compulsion was not supported by the peasants. The shortage of food caused a general reduction of rations, together with measures for speeding up food-trains, which led to a dearth of fuel. Food-picketing and food-cordons intensified peasant discontent. It found its first open expression in the province of Tambov, where the peasants declined to comply with the requisitions. (*1920.*) Many food-collectors were killed, the number of insurgents between January and April, 1921 amounted to 20,000, and troops sent by the Government to repress the movement fraternised with them. Other risings occurred with similar aims in South-eastern Russia and in the provinces of the middle and lower-Volga, while so-called bandits, from whom the insurgents were hardly to be distinguished, continued to operate in Ukrain. In other words, the areas of surplus-production were in revolt against the requisitioning of food for the army, the towns, and the deficit areas farther north. The peasants of the deficit areas took no part in these disturbances, for it was not on them that the burden of the requisitions fell.

Trotsky had already put forward proposals, which were not at that time accepted, for a limited tax-in-kind, and for free trade in the surplus grain.

Peasant discontent now began to force reconsideration of these. (*1921.*) In February the party organ *Truth* published letters which recommended the same plan: and Lenin supported it in a speech made before the Moscow Soviet. Resolutions in favour of a free-trading policy were carried at annual conferences of leather, metal, and railway workers, and there were ominous signs among industrial workers generally of dissatisfaction with Communist leadership. The Tenth Party Conference accepted the principle, and the Central Executive Committee passed the famous decree inaugurating the New Economic Policy: generally described by its initial letters (identical in Russian and English) as *Nep*.

(*March 21st, 1921.*) This decree replaced the quotas of provisions, raw materials, and forage delivered to the State, by taxation-in-kind on a reduced scale. The tax was to take the form of a percentage of agricultural products, varying according to the economic position of the cultivators. Collective responsibility, reinstated in 1918-19, was again abolished, but organisations of peasants were to be formed to supervise the handling of the produce collected. Then followed the clause which led to the remodelling of the Communist economy. The surplus left after

the payment of the tax was declared to be entirely at the disposal of its producers, to be used for any purpose, including barter against the produce of factories, workshops and small industries, whether through co-operative organisations or in the market. Those who wished to hand over their surplus to the State were to receive manufactured commodities, and a permanent supply of the latter, produced at home or imported from abroad, was to be provided for this purpose. Thus began the great seven years' halt in the progress of the revolution. It seemed like Russia's Thermidor, and for some time the course of its development appeared to confirm that diagnosis.

CHAPTER IX

THE PEASANT IN FAMINE

They came to the pits, and found no water:
They returned with their vessels empty:
They were ashamed and confounded and covered their heads:
Because the ground is chapt:
For there was no rain in the earth.

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH.

IN ARRIVING at the epoch of the New Economic Policy I have reached the point at which a tremendous calamity, the climax of seven years of war of which the last half was fought in the very heart of Russia herself, was impending over her people. And before I attempt to depict it I must turn back to some of the earlier links in the chain of causation.

In June, 1919, General Denikin was winning victories for the Whites in the south, with the help of British tanks and his own superior cavalry: and the Order of the Bath was conferred upon him by His Britannic Majesty. In the East, Admiral Kolchak was being pushed back by the Red forces towards the Urals. The question arose whether the Revolutionary Government's forces should follow Kolchak over the Urals, or concentrate against the danger of Denikin. It was keenly debated, and Trotsky was strongly for the latter course, but was over-ruled. The peril in which Moscow stood from Denikin later in the year might seem to have justified Trotsky: but it is probable that Denikin grew weaker the farther he advanced from the sea, where his foreign supports lay. The result of the decision was that Kolchak was being driven back to Tobolsk, while Denikin was taking Sevastopol, Kharkov and Odessa, and establishing himself north of Tsaritsyn (now Stalingrad) after the capture of that long and well-defended point of vantage on the Volga.

The declared policies of the Whites helped to strengthen the political position of the Soviet Union at this time. Two proclamations, one by Admiral Kolchak, Dictator in Omak, and one by General Denikin in Southern Russia, showed what the peasantry and workmen were

to expect from a counter-revolutionary success. The one left the agrarian question open for a National Assembly, to meet at a future date, but restored the home-farms of the landlords, and disclosed a preference for individualistic farming of the type favoured by the Stolypin legislation of 1906-11. The other contemplated a division of land between former owners and peasants, with compensation to the former, and a general return to the individualistic type of land-holding. General Denikin also proclaimed the restoration of the owners' rights in the factories, while making certain promises of a less definite kind for the satisfaction of labour.

Even the restoration of landlords, however ill-judged as a policy, might have been explained as a measure of equity. But the Denikin administration also attacked the Ukrainian language, newspapers and schools: which was a reversion to the worst blunders of the Tsarist period: and the General himself spoke of Ukrain as "Little Russia", a dangerous self-betrayal, because so easily carried from mouth to mouth, and so convincingly significant to the Ukrainian nationalist. It hardly needed the drunkenness, corruption, and profiteering of the rear to persuade the people that the Whites were not a good exchange for the Reds. In Siberia we have the testimony of the diary of Madame Alia Rachmanova, not ordinarily a friend of the Bolsheviks, that "except the soldiers at the front, no one wants the Whites to win". They were, in fact, daily destroying their own chances of success, by demonstrating how little they cared for the people of Russia, and how little experience had taught them.

(August, 1919.) The Red Army, which was now attacking to the southward, had a serious setback owing to the White superiority in cavalry. Trotsky had hitherto abstained from raising an adequate cavalry arm because of the political unreliability of the Cossacks. The Don Cossack General Mamontov carried out a successful raid in the Red rear which recalled the finest traditions of the old open warfare, and taught the Revolutionary Government a lesson. The slogan was now: Proletarians, to horse! By the middle of October, it seemed that both the old and the new capitals were in danger. In the north, General Yudenich, based upon British naval support in the Gulf of Finland, had advanced from Esthonia within striking distance of Petrograd. General Denikin, who had announced in July that his aim was Moscow, occupied a triangular area based on the three seas, with a co-operating fleet in the Black Sea and a British flotilla on the Caspian. The line of occupation ran from Nikolaev, some 60 miles north-east of Odessa, nearly as far north as Voronezh, and thence to Tsaritsyn and a point on the Caspian south-west of Astrakhan. It was a 700-mile front from Kiev to Tsaritsyn. The White army was from 300,000 to 400,000 strong, but it held a large part of Russia in Europe, and the rear was not safe. Red Partisans, and Green Bands, the latter equally enemies of both sides and of all Governments, were operating there. There was a sort of armed neutrality between Denikin's forces

and those of Petliura, the President of the Ukrainian Republic. The Poles, though established at Minsk and Polotsk, two railway junctions far within the Russian boundary, lay there inactive, because the recollection of Tsarist policy made them doubtful of the political advantage of replacing a Red by a White Government. In the east, Admiral Kolchak was back at Tobolsk in Siberia.

(*October, 1919.*) Denikin had taken Kursk and Orel, and by the middle of October he was only two hundred miles south of Moscow. Yudenich had taken Gatchina, some thirty miles south of Petrograd.

Even Lenin thought of abandoning Petrograd, but Trotsky held out against surrender. A special "Communist Party" week brought many new party members in this moment of acute military crisis. Multitudes in the cities registered for defence. A pamphlet of November, which seems to be a reproduction of a speech by Kalinin, tells us that not only the Patriarch Tikhon, but the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, who had incited the Czechs against the Bolsheviks, supported the Soviet power at this dangerous moment. Denikin's victory would have meant the triumph of the counter-revolution, and the establishment of foreign imperialist Powers as exploiters of Russia. Russian patriotism was enlisted on the side of the Reds.

Mr. Chamberlin calculates that 112,000 Whites, with 542 guns and 2,326 machine-guns, now faced a Red Army of 186,000 men, with 1,000 guns and 4,500 machine-guns. Each mile of advance left Denikin weaker. No decisive engagement occurred, but the White line was overstrained, and the collapse came suddenly.

In the light of what happened, it is easy to believe that the danger had been less than it looked. But, if the two simultaneous advances of October, 1919, were merely bluff, they were bluff of an imposing kind which might have shaken less steady nerves. By the beginning of November both Yudenich and Denikin were in full retreat. We need not follow the further operations in detail. On December 31st the Donets coal-basin was occupied by the Red Army, and the White forces cut in two. The final collapse was due to guerillas in the White rear, and to indiscipline among White troops. In the meanwhile Kolchak had been ruined by partisan warfare in Siberia, and by risings at Vladivostok and Irkutsk, as well as by the military operations of the Red Army. On January 12th, 1920, Lenin delivered a speech in which he announced the defeat of Denikin and Kolchak.

(*1919-20.*) It seemed a complete triumph: but the removal of the immediate anxieties of civil war only gave the opportunity of realising the price of victory and the extent of the troubles which remained. France and Britain continued to maintain a rigorous blockade. Vladimir Mayakovsky, the Futurist poet, the same who, in pre-Revolution Russia, made an appearance to recite his poems in a woman's yellow blouse with green pencil stripes on his face, wrote a burlesque invective on this blockade.

In it he depicts the giant Ivan, representative of 150 millions, wading out into the Atlantic Ocean to fight with President Wilson, who is here represented, somewhat undeservedly, as the leading figure of Capitalism, the "Burzhui" *par excellence*. Ivan wins his fight, but the ideal "Burzhui", always depicted as the top-hatted, be-spatted, well-fatted, city man, with prominent English teeth and a fat cigar, was yet for some time to keep his naval strangle-hold on the infant State. The Revolutionary Government reached the oil-centres of Grozny and Baku only in March and April, and, during this winter, oil still remained inaccessible. The Donets basin was reoccupied, but Denikin's forces had ruined the mines, and coal continued scarce. Kolchak's collapse had given access to the iron of the Urals, but the engineers and some of the skilled workers had left the mines with the retreat. The cotton of Turkestan was no longer cut off by an enemy army: but the peasants had ceased to cultivate a cash crop when the market for it was closed, and had grown food instead. Railways were paralysed and factories working only half time. The old trouble of low productivity, which is the essence of all the difficulties of the Revolutionary Government, continued and was intensified. (*February, 1920.*) The consciousness of the need of a more effective work-discipline was attested by a decree making more specific the labour obligations of all citizens, and two months later (*April, 1920*) by one which changed the system of rationing according to category to one of rationing according to work—an obvious further move in the direction of payment by results. Under the new plan only active workers were provided for, and only for those days on which they worked. There was an appalling epidemic of typhus in Southern Russia, carried by lice as the armies moved over the stricken land. Sanitation, never of a high order, had been entirely neglected for three years. It is said that, when cleaning operations began again, seventeen cartloads of filth, on an average, were removed from every house in Moscow.

In the meanwhile there was a renewal of war from a new quarter. (*March 6th, 1920.*) In March the Poles were at Mosyr, east of the marshes of the Pripet, and well within the Russian racial frontier. East of Brest-Litovsk the population is of mixed national origin, and White Russians and Ukrainians outnumber the Poles in an increasing degree as one travels farther east. It has been said of this tract of country that the national distinction depends upon religion, and that the Catholic is a Pole, while the Orthodox is a Russian. But the Poles ignored such considerations, and claimed the historical frontier of the Kingdom of Poland in 1772, with a promise of self-determination for its peoples. They induced Petliura to include two Poles in the Ukrainian Government, obtained his support, and used it to appeal to Ukrainian sympathy, but they made the usual, and fatal, mistake of favouring the claims of the landlords in *Ukrain*: which was the way to set the population against them. (*April 25th, 1920.*) Towards the end of April they attacked the Red Army

at Jhitomir, a railway junction well within the limits of Russian Ukrain.

A Janus-like attitude in foreign policy is perhaps an inheritance from the disco-ordination which was so noticeable in Tsarist statecraft and administration. The Revolutionary Government has not infrequently sought the friendly co-operation of other States, while organisations, tolerated by itself, and even departments of its own, have acted in such a way as to defeat that aim. In the spring of 1920 attempts were made to resume commercial relations, and Litvinov and Krasin were sent to western Europe for this purpose, which was favourably regarded by the Conference of the Allied Supreme Council. In the meanwhile, the League for the Liberation of Islam was arousing discontent in the Mahommedan possessions of Britain and France. There were doubtless other reasons besides this which determined the Entente Powers to support Poland against the Soviet Government: but it was the help which they gave, and in particular the despatch of the military mission to Warsaw in July, 1920, which decided the issue of the war in favour of the Poles. (*July 25th, 1920.*) They would perhaps have done more for the protégé, if the London dockers had not refused in May to load munitions intended for Poland.

Allied help was also given to Wrangel, who now renewed the Civil War from the Crimea. His Foreign Minister was Peter Struve, sometime Marxist and thereafter religious Liberal. Hitherto no responsible leader of the counter-revolution had ventured to hint at restoration of the monarchy, though plenty of White officers had talked king-making in their cups. But Wrangel's manifesto declared the right of the Russian people to choose its own *master*: and, whatever may have been meant, the language seemed to imply that someone should again be Tsar. He said, or Peter Struve said it for him, that he aimed at making a Left policy with Right hands: and this might have been a very astute method of handling the nettle. But his actual land-policy, as announced, was that each peasant should keep the land which he had seized, as separate hereditary property, on payment of one-fifth of the harvest for twenty-five years as compensation to the owners. This was enough to set the peasants against him: for all that they gathered from such an announcement was that they were to pay a rent, and a fairly stiff one. In short, like all the White leaders except the Social Revolutionary Government at Samara, he put victory into the hands of his opponents, and nullified his own military efforts.

I deliberately emphasise the part which was played in the determination of the civil struggle in Russia by the White antagonisation of the peasantry. It has an evident bearing on the conditions existent in the winter of 1941-2. If we are correctly informed that the German invaders of Ukrain are making grants of conquered territory to capitalists, they are repeating the blunder of 1918.

If anything further was needed to decide the issue of the struggle, it was

supplied by the publication, in 1920, of a pamphlet recording the terms of the agreement between Wrangel and the French. It stipulated a complete economic tutelage of Russia, with an offensive and defensive alliance between the two countries for twenty years. The counter-revolutionaries were patriots, and this agreement must have cost them qualms, and made them doubtful.

We need not follow further the military struggle with Wrangel. On November 11th the Red Army entered the Crimea after an eleven days' struggle in the Isthmus of Perekop: the Revolutionary Government offered an amnesty, and all that remained was for the allied fleets to carry those who did not accept it into exile and poverty.

In the meanwhile the Red Army operating against the Poles had won a series of brilliant victories and suffered a devastating defeat. At the gates of Warsaw on August 14th with 60,000 men, they were—not with any extraordinary vigour—attacked in flank and rear, and went back like a spent wave. The retreat carried them 260 miles back. Part of the force only saved itself by accepting internment in German territory. The advance was one of Lenin's rare mistakes, and it must be put to Trotsky's credit that he advised strongly against it. Apart from the political unwisdom of attempting to force the revolution upon the Poles, we cannot but see in the advance the reappearance of a strategical principle against which Trotsky had always set his face. It was more like a cavalry raid than the march of an army, and, in essence, repeated the methods which took General Samsonov to ruin in East Prussia in 1914. The diversion of a force, which was needed at Warsaw, into Galicia, seems to have been due to sheer indiscipline on the part of Voroshilov, supported by the member of the Revolutionary Council of War, Stalin. For twelve days the Russians advanced at the rate of 20 miles a day, leaving behind supplies and equipment. There were numerous deserters and stragglers, who joined the bandits still operating in Ukrain. The main body believed that it was the vanguard of the world-revolution. Polish revolutionaries gave the warning. The Socialist Poles would fight for Poland rather than for a revolution carried on Russian bayonets. Their warnings were not regarded. The Communist International was sitting at Moscow while the Red Army was making its victorious advance: and an atmosphere of revolutionary enthusiasm created an illusion of invincibility, and turned the heads of statesmen and military leaders alike. Six months later the treaty of Riga gave to Poland a frontier substantially farther east than her western supporters had planned for her.

It was during this session of the Third International that Vladimir Mayakovsky presented in the Great Theatre of Moscow the second variant of his *Mystery Bouffé*. It will help us to catch the spirit of that moment of unbounded hope and all but complete exhaustion. The preface talks of "rushing to the attack against distant planets": and Mayakovsky was not the only poet who talked of war with the stars. The play is the inspired

clowning of genius, released from the bonds of common-sense by what seemed already achievement of the impossible. We might feel ourselves back in the Athens of the fifth century B.C., seated in the Theatre of Dionysus, for a play written by Aristophanes: but the Russian has a wilder flight, upwards into heaven and downwards into hell, which is not accessible to the Greek. The English translation from which I have quoted is the work of Mr. Noyce. The characters are seven pairs of the "Clean", including Lloyd George and Clemenceau, as representatives of the capitalist Powers, a Russian speculator and a Russian priest: seven pairs of the "Unclean", of course the representatives of the Proletariat: a Compromiser (who is a Menshevik): a member of the "Intelligentsia" (who protests against manual work): a lady with handboxes, the *barinya* of smart society: Devils: Saints (among whom are Leo Tolstoi and Jean Jacques Rousseau): the Lord of Hosts: the Actors of the Promised Land (among them Hammer and Sickle, Locomotive and Steamboat, Bread, Salt and Sugar): and the Man of the Future, who gives the good news of the kingdom of heaven upon earth. There is another character: but though she appears and speaks, she is not on the author's list of Dramatis Personae. This is *Confusion*: whom the Blacksmith, one of the Unclean, slays, in the style of mediaeval allegory, after she had declared her empire:

"I eat the locomotives:
Machines do I devour;
When I blow,
I blow away a factory like smoke."

The first scene is the Universe. Between two walruses which support the world, an Eskimo hunter sticks his finger into the earth. This is the hole by which arrives the Flood, an image of revolution.

After some attempt by the Clean to cheat the Unclean of their rights, the Unclean build an ark, in which both they and the Clean embark. Some clowning follows: food fails: and the Man of the Future arrives, walking, like Christ, upon the waters.

"Not of Christ's Paradise I cry to you,
Where foolish fasters drink unsweetened tea.
But I cry of the true
And earthly Heavens.

My Heaven is for all,
Except the poor in spirit."

The Unclean climb upward to the shrouds, as the ark splits: and yet farther skywards into Purgatory, where they shame the professional pride of the tormenting Devils with true stories of worse suffering on earth: and yet farther into Paradise, where they scoff at its incorporeal joys:

"Can your Archangels not serve up
For us some cabbage soup?"

The Lord of Hosts threatens them with his lightnings. They snatch them from him, and tramp on, smashing the celestial Paradise as they pass, to the Land of Fragments. This is strewn with all the destruction of War and Revolution, but a Locomotive and a Steamboat emerge from the clouds, and cry for coal and oil, which the Engineer and Miner bring in for them.

The final act is the Promised Land. It is an idealised Chicago. The machines greet them and declare themselves their servants. The tools cry:

“We too, we too, the tools of your trades,
Hammers and Needles, Saws, Tongs, and Spades!
Heeding no longer the bosses’ commands,
All things we fashion and forge for your hands.”

The edibles cry, Come and eat us: and the Farmhand, bending down and touching the earth, says: It is our native motherland. The play ends with a hymn of the Unclean. In part it is the *Internationale*. In part it might be an echo of the closing chorus of Shelley’s *Hellas*:

“The Earth’s great age begins anew:”

with the new refrain:

“We, who were naught, to-day are all.”

This is how a poet saw, and mirrored, a tremendous moment in the life of a people. Such were the dreams of victory, and such was the earthly paradise, with which Moscow’s workers feasted their imaginations till they passed out from the brightness and glamour of the theatre into the white night and the dust and the hunger outside. Russia was the Land of Fragments. There were millions of men to be demobilised. Some cities—Rostov-on-Don, Tsaritsyn, Samara, Alexandropol in Armenia—were so ruined by war that they must be rebuilt. The oil-wells and the coal-mines were badly damaged. Where Denikin had operated, scarcely a bridge or a tank or a station remained intact on the railways. Of working locomotives there remained in 1920 only 4,000 out of a total of 20,000 at the outbreak of war, and 1,750 of these were idle for lack of fuel. The output of coal, in million tons, was 33 in 1916: it was 7 in 1920. That of pig iron was 3½ millions in 1916, it was under 120,000 in each of the three years 1919, 1920 and 1921. One-sixth of the number of draft animals had perished since 1916. In the areas of Ukrain, and the Black Earth of the middle and lower Volga, of the North Caucasus and Western Siberia—that is to say, the areas which produced a surplus of food—armies had marched and countermarched and eaten up reserves. There was a complete absence of medicines and hospital supplies; and a shortage of all commodities, of clothes, of the iron parts of tools, of nails, hinges, pipes, pots, pans, window glass, kerosene, stoves: and a boundless need of structural steel. The stores of raw materials for industry were used up, with

no prospect of early replenishment. Brigandage was still so rife in Ukraïn that the peasants had ceased to put any faith in any government, and looked upon each newcomer only as a new plunderer of the scanty remaining store. Cultivation was hampered by the lack of the means to cultivate, as well as by the absence of goods to be purchased with the surplus. War-Communism—the centralised control of production and distribution—was still the approved policy, as, with varying degrees of consideration for private rights, and of precaution against congestion of business in central offices, it must inevitably have been in any country subjected to so long and so tremendous a strain. When war and blockade were over, the results of them remained in the dearth of all things necessary to life above the level of barbarism. In such conditions, the demand being unlimited, free production and free exchange must have meant boundless profiteering, and supply only to the few from whom extortionate payment could be wrung. Trotsky tells us that he put forward in 1920 proposals for the replacement of grain requisitions by a tax-in-kind, with permission to the peasants to trade in the surplus, on the lines subsequently adopted in the New Economic Policy. (1920.) But the Ninth Party Conference once more affirmed the principle of War-Communism, by approving the inclusion of all enterprises in a centralised plan, and the subjection of all Co-operative organisations to the State. In December, all enterprises employing a minimum of five workers, with machines, and of ten workers, without them, were nationalised. The last of the Banks had already been fused with the Commissariat of Finance, and the goal of a moneyless economy had been proclaimed by the Central Executive Committee.

Even before the extension of Nationalisation in December 1920, over 4,000 industrial enterprises, employing nearly 1 million workmen, had been nationalised. Nearly 3,000 of them were under the direct control of the Supreme Economic Council, and the rest were under that of local Economic Councils. The food and clothing industries between them made up more than half of the total, and metals, mines and quarries another quarter. The number of unnationalised industries was larger, but these were on a smaller scale and employed under 100,000 workers in all. Russia was employing less than half of the industrial labour employed before the war, and the product, in pre-war roubles, has been calculated at only 18% of the earlier period. In the most efficient industries the product was less than one-third of the pre-war standard. Procopovich speaks of an epidemic of unconscious sabotage, caused by the notion that industry was a Fortunatus purse in which it was only necessary to dip the fingers. Of the struggle to restore we have a vivid glimpse in Gladkov's novel *Cement*. The hero, Gleb, twice brings the factory back to working life, but at every turn he finds in his way the Industrial Bureau, an impassable outwork of the Supreme Economic Council, and all his questions rebound from this obstacle unanswered. In the factory administration

he finds waste, inactivity and sabotage; in the Economic Council a mysterious activity of routine which he is unable to fathom. "The people there were all importantly business-like, carrying fat files about, clean-shaven like Communists, the sort of people whom one used to find hanging about the cafés and the Stock Exchange." In the factory itself the right people are not rewarded: and he quotes, from the factory gate, the Bolshevik slogan, "He who does not work shall not eat:" in which some wag has ironically obliterated the first of the two nots.

What we see here is the good workman hampered by office routine and office ignorance, burning to be set free from the trammels of both. But he recognises that all will be well if he can only get past the muddlers and meddlers to the man at the top, and he gives us an insight into the ways of the workmen in his story of the "pipe-lighters", the cant term for the odds and ends of belting, screws and nails, and the like, which were removed from the factories for personal needs. The need of the Soviet State was for the capable manager and the improved labour-discipline, and the effort to secure the latter was a part of that struggle over the organisation of production of which I have already noticed some phases.

In such a desperately shattered economy as that of Russia at the close of the period of civil war, all who were familiar with her past history must have known what they had to expect, even as they must know now what is to come after the occupation of the German armies and the scorching of the earth by her defenders. The most strenuous efforts of friends and allies can hardly suffice to avert the ancient scourges of famine and its companion disease. Food and the organisation of transport and distribution must be ready for the emergency, or more millions will perish for the lack of it than have already died in war.

Famines have been a recurring phenomenon throughout the ages: but they have been susceptible of alleviation by the development of the means of transport: and it has been possible by the organisation of information to obtain early warning of their imminence. The machinery of the market has assisted by the appeal which rising prices make to the speculator in grain: but where there are very great variations in purchasing power, this influence may rob the poorer country to feed the richer one. In India, which has been a severe sufferer, the famine in which no food is to be had, even at a high price, is virtually of the past: and famine has become a phenomenon of agricultural unemployment accompanied by high prices for food. That is because the means of importing and transporting food is now fairly adequate. An administrative technique has been elaborated for ascertaining the approach of famine by village-to-village records of cropping and other agricultural information: for testing the existence of famine conditions by the opening of experimental relief works: and for the administration of relief by means of local works, of which a permanent programme is maintained in anticipation of the calamity. An exchange of experiences would have been of value to Russian adminis-

traitors: who, in spite of many recurrences of scarcity, have developed no corresponding administrative technique. The history of the Russian famine of 1891, for instance, shows us two sets of authorities at odds with one another as to the actual existence of famine in a particular tract: and an absence of plans of relief based upon previous experience. Russian society in the nineties had not gone beyond a liberal provision of subscription balls to raise funds for the relief of sufferers.

War has always been a potent cause of famine. Some of the worst famines in the India of the early nineteenth century were due to this cause. Agriculture depends upon the closest obedience to the calls of the season, and a few weeks of interruption to the processes of husbandry may destroy the food-supply of a year. The requisitions and devastations of war sweep away the results of the peasant's labour, and often drive him from the land, or deprive him of his cattle and seed. In Russia civil war was accompanied and followed, particularly in the south and south-east, by prolonged insecurity and brigandage, which completed the destruction of local resources. Railway communications, always imperfect, and concentrated too much upon the west, had suffered grievously. In a large part of the area which was to suffer from one of the worst of famines, bridges, tanks and stations were gone. Evidence of the deliberate abandonment of cultivation, in consequence of the system of requisition and the prohibition of trading in surplus grain, is absent. What these things had produced was wholesale concealment of cultivation and of stocks, and extensive smuggling and illicit practices, including the distillation of liquor from grain. A far more important result of War-Communism and of the monopoly of grain, inherited in part from the Tsarist, and in its completed form from the Provisional Governments, was the destruction of the normal machinery of the grain trade. There were no merchants on the large scale, ready to pour imports of grain by boat and rail into the affected tracts. We cannot doubt that the scent of profit would have warned them of scarcity, and have supplied the lack of timely Government organisation. The Soviet Government had not yet built up a system capable of replacing that which had been destroyed, and the tremendous pressure of daily needs had made the accumulation of reserves of food an impossibility. There had, indeed, been little or no reserve production even before the War: for the old Russian habit of maintaining local reserves in private or communal magazines had not on any considerable scale survived the creation of a world-market for cereals.

Long severance by war and blockade from the industrial West, and the decay of internal industry, had prevented the renewal, and even in large measure the repair, of agricultural implements and machinery. There was a wholesale reversion to the primitive wooden plough, which had in some measure been replaced at an earlier date by iron, and a general reduction in the number of draught animals, which had either perished

or been requisitioned for military needs in a great part of the war area. The sown area in the Volga provinces was reduced in 1920 by these conditions and by drought to one half of the pre-war figure, and the yield was a low one: and the whole of the surplus-producing section of Russia suffered in some degree.

The drought of 1921, still more severe than that of 1920, visited a country already swept bare of its resources. It was worst in the Volga provinces from Vyatka to Astrakan, and in the Urals and adjoining parts of Asia, but affected in a greater or less degree the whole of the Black-Earth zone and extended far into the south-east. Regarding Ukrain, there was one of those controversies on a question of fact, which had already occurred in connection with the famine of 1891. The Central authorities of the U.S.S.R. claimed that the drought was not severe in Ukrain, and insisted on large deliveries of grain for the relief areas held to be worse sufferers. Half a million tons were therefore sent out of the Republic against the protests of local statisticians and officials. In fact, there was extraordinary variation in different provinces of Ukrain. One did better than usual: two had more than half a normal crop: four had from a third to nearly a half: five had less than a fifth, and three of these five had 5% and less. Of the existence of famine in a large portion of Ukrain there was no real doubt. Dr. Nansen's representative estimated in March, 1922, that 4 millions of people there were in danger of starvation. In one area it was reported that dogs, cats, crows, the straw of roofs, dead cattle, and the leather of harness, were used as food. The medical report for the first half of 1922 puts the number of deaths from starvation in Ukrain at 67,126, and those from diseases which follow malnutrition at 741,352.

There has been an unfortunate recurrence in later years of these differences of opinion regarding scarcity in Ukrain: and nothing less than a system of crop records based on local inspection by a trained staff will reconcile the widely varying estimates which are put forward, or make an end of the suspicions of repeated famine which are widely disseminated by agencies unfriendly to the Soviet Government, and aggravated from time to time by that Government's reticence about facts. For the whole of Russia, Dr. Nansen, who is the best authority on the facts, put the famine-stricken population at 33 millions, of whom he estimated that 19 millions stood in danger of death from starvation. The famine among humans was, of course, accompanied by a huge mortality among horses and cattle, many of which were slaughtered for food, and many perished from starvation and disease due to under-feeding.

Cereal yields are always very low in Russia: almost the lowest in the world: something like two-fifths of what they are in Britain. Fifteen bushels to the acre at most would represent an average crop in such a wheat-growing area as the Volga province of Samara. In 1921 the yield there was under two bushels, and that on a much-reduced area of culti-

vation. The scarcity was, to a great extent, of that peculiarly horrible type in which food is locally non-existent. There was, indeed, some bread to be had, at a high price, and adulterated with a corn-flour, grass and pig-weed. Only fruit and melons were locally plentiful. Many ate the bark of trees. Draught-animals were killed and eaten, and we hear of individuals who did well out of the meat trade, and of blacksmiths and persons with mechanical training who made money out of the forced sales of agricultural implements. Few could attempt to keep seed for the next season. The struggle to keep body and soul together precluded in the mass all thought for the future. Stories of cannibalism, even of kidnapping and murder of human beings for food, are always rife on these occasions. It seems likely that some of them were true. Nansen speaks of men and women wandering, ghoul-like, round cemeteries, to dig up and eat the dead. An appalling description is given, by the "Save the Children Fund", of Saratov and the country above it in September, 1921: but the "hungry dogs feeding furtively on the carcasses of horses fallen by the wayside" may be seen anywhere in rural India in a perfectly normal season, and are signs rather of neglected sanitation than of scarcity.

In serious famine, as the sources of local charity become exhausted, there is always much wandering of the stricken population, who flock towards every point where there is a hope or a rumour of food. It was estimated that there were 3 million wanderers, many of whom collected at the river-ports and railway-stations, as the centres offering the best chance of relief. Of the flight in a refugee train, with masses of human beings lying one above the other, hissing with vermin, amid filth and degradation unspeakable, a post-Revolution writer has left us a poignant record. Famine orphans, and children deserted by their parents, formed the nucleus of those gangs of waifs, half-starved, thievish, and often syphilis-stricken, which were for years one of the major problems of the Soviet Government.

In the bitter climate of Russia, the worst horrors of such a famine come with the winter which follows the failure of the crop, when even straw is lacking to serve as fuel. There is no wood on the steppes, and millions suffered the extreme agony of cold: crawling into the empty stoves for the sake of yesterday's still-surviving warmth. One of the relief staff has left us a grim picture of a church half-filled with frozen corpses, waiting till spring should soften the ground and allow of the digging of their graves.

In most of the famines of recent years, starvation has not been the direct cause of most of the deaths. Weakness gives admission to disease, and it is the disease which kills. In Russia in 1921 and 1922 there were certainly millions of deaths from actual starvation—Dr. Nansen estimated 3 millions. All precedents elsewhere suggest that the deaths from disease were at least twice as numerous, and (though this estimate is immensely above the official figures quoted in the League of Nations

report) it may well be that 10 millions perished. The lice-borne diseases, typhus and relapsing fever, with scurvy, and with cholera in summer, were the chief agents of destruction.

The Revolutionary Government had not foreseen the calamity, and could not have done so, without an elaborate system of crop-records and local inspections which has never existed in Russia. A Central Famine Relief Committee was set up which included "Papa" Kalinin, as President, along with Kamenev, Rykov, Krasin and others. It decided, in the words of Kamenev, to tax the hungry in order to feed the starving: an epigrammatic way of saying that it continued to collect its revenues where collection was possible. This was right. Famine, even at its worst, is local, not universal: those districts which have crops are actually beneficiaries by it. How wide the variations are is shown by the figures of cropping in Ukrain in 1921. Individuals even in the famine areas make money out of the trouble. It is an opportunity of buying some things cheap, and selling other things dear. But the Middle and Lower Volga provinces were exempted from the current taxation. A famine-tax of 5-15% was levied elsewhere, where crops were sufficient: purchases of grain were made abroad: and such measures as were possible were taken to feed the hungry, and to provide seed for the autumn sowings of winter crops. Some grave mistakes were made in the seed supply: for instance, maize, sunflower, and flax, were sent to places where these things cannot be grown. It was deliberately decided to requisition throughout Russia the grain stored for winter food, and to distribute it for autumn sowing, in the hope of replacing it before it was needed for food. Some 800,000 peasants who had left their homes were, as far as possible, transported to areas where food was available. Thousands of children were fed. The American Relief Commission found the Soviet officials "willing to co-operate, eager for the economic regeneration of Russia, as well equipped for their work as the average official of any country". But the jealousies which occur between official and unofficial agencies unfortunately led to the dissolution of an Auxiliary Relief Committee, on the ground that certain of its members were intriguing against the Government. This is the poison which is spread by the distrusts and suspicions of civil war. The expenditure of the Soviet Government on famine-relief is estimated in the League of Nations Report at something under 20 million pounds sterling: and that of the foreign relief agencies at between a half and a quarter of this sum.

The confiscation of Church treasures for expenditure on famine-relief, which took place in March, 1922, led to violent friction with the clergy and their supporters, and produced the relatively small gain of less than a quarter of a ton of gold and 150 tons of silver. Dr. Nansen paid tribute to the relief work, which was admirably supported by the American and other foreign Agencies. The horrors of the calamity were palliated: but it is not possible to improvise an efficient administration for the treatment

of famine. The number of persons on relief in July, 1921, was 12 millions, in the summer of 1922 it was still 7 millions, most of them in the Volga and Ural provinces. The crop of the latter year was disappointing. Some of the seed had been consumed for food, much of it had been obtained from areas in which the seed appropriate to the south and east was foreign, a transport crisis in February had held up supplies, the roads were in an incredible state of disrepair, many of the cattle had been sold or eaten, many agricultural implements had also been sold, "and the people are selling them again after harvesting the crop for 1922", says an American informant. Women were harnessed to plough and harrow, hand-carts came back to use, and the shortage of horses was particularly marked in the Volga provinces and the Urals. In the late summer, after the end of the cholera epidemic, Soviet medical work declined, and in South Russia many hospitals were closed through inability to find food for patients and staff.

The consequences of this destructive famine are writ large upon the agricultural statistics. For all Russia the cultivated area descends in 1922 to 62% of what it was in 1916. In the Kirgiz country the percentage is 47%, and the cattle diminish from 3,789,000 to only 495,000 head: evidence of a nearly complete holocaust, or of the removal of cattle to distant pastures. In the Kuban-Black-Sea province the losses amounted to 60% of the horses, 46% of the large horned cattle, 70% of the sheep, and 87% of the pigs: though the people did their utmost to preserve horses and horned cattle, sacrificing sheep and swine for the purpose. In the Kuban valley, the seat of the finest wheat cultivation, the diminution of cultivated areas is a whole third, and the number of iron ploughs goes down by half. The Ural has similar losses, and even wooden ploughs and harrows largely disappear. Between 1920 and 1923 the losses of cattle amount to one-third on the Lower Volga. In Ukrain just upon two-thirds of the total number of peasant households, in the three steppe provinces which had been worst affected, were in debt for purchases of food.

The year 1923 shows some recovery: but it is natural that such a calamity should leave behind it a good deal of quasi-permanent impoverishment. A record of particular villages in what is now the province of North Caucasus shows us how widespread was this impoverishment. A settlement in the Kuban valley, with a population two-thirds Cossack, lay in a typical cereal-growing area, and cultivated 78,000 acres in 1917. Repeated cereal-growing had reduced the yields to ten or eleven bushels to the acre before the war, and the Civil War greatly diminished the area of cultivation. The famine completed the ruin: the population was reduced by a quarter: no good cattle or implements remained. The settlement was left with only a fifth of its households above the poverty line, without live and dead stock, and with an excess of working hands; plenty of land, but not the means to till. Our informant adds that a num-

ber of other Cossack settlements, both to north and south, are in the same position, by reason of the famine.

In another village of the Stavropol province, with a salty soil, which lost two-thirds of its cattle between 1917 and 1923, the people "sell dead beasts to the Kalmucks (whose territory is adjoining) *if they are able to satisfy the militia that it is for soap-making*". The school-staff here has received no wages throughout the winter. The school-house is full of smoke, but cold as the street. On a bed sits a child of ten or twelve, the daughter of the school-mistress, in a torn, dirty shirt covered with an old sack, crying for food. The mother comes in, holding by the wall so as not to fall. She is cooking flat cakes of flour brought by a charitable pupil. Her face is swelled, of an earthen hue, with blue pits under the eyes. This is in 1924, but it is a survival of the famine, and of the starvation of local institutions. Half the village was down with malaria when our informant visited it. The Canton headquarters has a hospital with thirty beds, but "without heating, bed-linen, vessels, and drugs; *not functioning*".

Famine itself is a local extension and a temporary intensification of a poverty always existing. Whether in industrial town or in agricultural village, some are always on the border line, ready to be pushed across it by the first untoward accident. We call it famine, or we call it industrial depression, when distress extends beyond a certain conventional limit. There is no fundamental remedy till we learn to distribute all risks over the whole body politic and to make the economics of abundance the aim of our society. With halting steps, with innumerable blunders, it is towards this goal that the U.S.S.R. directs itself, blazing out the pioneer trail along which many corpses lie.

In 1932-33 there was severe scarcity in a part of Russia, particularly in Ukraine and the North Caucasus. A legend has established itself among writers on Soviet history and economics that this scarcity was comparable with the famine of 1921-22 and that it caused millions of deaths. The present writer, who has had some experience of the phenomena of actual famine, travelled through Ukraine and the North Caucasus just before the excellent harvest of 1933 was ready for the reapers, when the scarcity must have been at its worst because the stocks must have been at their lowest. He thinks it right to place upon record the fact that he did not witness those phenomena, including crowds of beggars and emaciated children at the river ports and railway stations, which are normally associated with serious famine. He believes that the scarcity of that time was in no way comparable to the great famines: and desires to expunge an error from current history.

CHAPTER X

THE SCISSORS AND THE KULAK

“Cunctando restituit rem.” “By delay, he restored the state.”—Q. ENNIUS.
Lines in honour of Q. Fabius Maximus, Cunctator.

“The frogs asked for a new king. Jupiter was vexed with their solicitations and sent them a stork.”—AESOP'S *Fables*.

THE NEW Economic Policy was a victory for compromise and opportunism, as much in the international as in the internal sphere. The Foreign Offices abroad regarded it as the Russian Thermidor, the end of the Revolution. It was accompanied by an Anglo-Russian agreement and by the resumption of trade relations with a number of European countries, followed by the appearance of Soviet Russia at the International Economic Conference at Genoa, and the Rapallo treaty between Russia and Germany. Lenin declared that Russia must no longer sacrifice herself on behalf of the international proletariat, but save her own economic position. But the activities of the Communist International, with its centre and source of financial support at Moscow, continued to be the cause of embarrassing, and sometimes of alarming, complications, culminating in the severance of relations by Great Britain in May, 1927.

If we are to understand the nature of the changes made in 1921, we must see with the eyes of the men who, at least up to the time of the fateful advance upon Warsaw in the preceding year, had believed in the imminence of World-Revolution. While the apocalyptic dream lasted in all its vividness, its prophets were like the early disciples of Christianity, having their eyes on the clouds for the Second Coming of Christ to establish the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. At any moment the skies might open to disclose the glory of their hopes. What need to measure the strength of Kingdoms, Principalities and Powers, or to determine the lines and the proportions of the work of reconstruction, when such a triumph was at hand, when all the skill and experience of the peoples of the West were on the point of becoming available for the assistance of the daring pioneer? It was sufficient to hold the fort, in the full faith of a better life to come, against the imperialist enemies who were about to melt away like phantoms of the night: and to deal with the necessities of each day as it passed, without facing the question: What, and how, will you build, in this Land of Fragments, which revolution and war have left to you?

The vision did not disappear, but its brightness faded, it grew more remote and less certain, faith was more strained, weariness followed upon effort. Not only was World-Revolution postponed, but the peasantry, the allies upon whom the Revolution in Russia itself depended for daily bread, withheld their sympathy, and made it plain that they would not stay the course. The great disillusionment had come. In place of the

apocalyptic vision, there appeared the almost-certainty of the long and painful recovery unhelped by the expected sharers in the labour. The question, whose urgency had been obscured by other and more immediate questions, of insurrection, peace, war, and self-preservation, now demanded an answer. What, and how, will you build in the Land of Fragments, where the work of destruction is but too well done already?

This was the question which presented itself: and to it, as yet, there was none but the vaguest of answers. In the Party and its sympathisers there was a hard core of men and women determined to create a Socialist State. But what was the Socialist State and how was it to be built? Marx could not help. He furnished the philosophy, and in some degree the technique, of revolution: and he furnished certain principles which might guide the builders of a part at least of the new temple. Almost everything still remained to be discovered, in a world where no pioneer had yet established a foothold. The best answer to the insistent question was that of Lenin: which I have placed on the front page of this book: "We do not know. Life will show us." It was another way of saying: We learn in doing.

So much at least seemed plain. The material which lay closest to hand must be used. The natural desire of the individual man for his own subsistence and his own gain must be set free to achieve the work of restoration. That, in part, is what the New Economic Policy did. But neither Marx, nor the determination of the idealists that the end should be the construction of the Socialist State, permitted that freedom to be complete. It was inevitable that the system should be a mixed one, in which individualism and collectivism would work side by side, in an uncertain sharing of their separate spheres, amid a struggle which changed from time to time the boundaries of each.

The epoch of the New Economic Policy was therefore an epoch of doubt, vacillation, experiment, contradiction: of groping towards an uncertain goal: and also an epoch of material restoration, purchased by a partial surrender to the old Mammon. Seven years of deterioration were to be followed by seven years of recovery, before a leader could find courage to declare that the path of socialism was found, and to follow it, undeterred by the groans of those over whose bodies it passed. There was to come a further Revolution, greater and more difficult than that of November. On the economic side, the New Economic Policy (N.E.P., as I shall hereafter call it, according to the Russian practice) was, in a certain sense, a reversion to the methods of capitalism. But it was not a reversion to the methods which Lenin had wished to follow in 1918. He desired, at that time, before the introduction of War-Communism, to make use of private capital, controlled by the State. N.E.P., as it presently developed, was to concede a large freedom to the petty capitalism of peasant-agriculture, to retain for the State the monopoly of foreign trade, and the "commanding heights" of transport and industry, and to leave

openings—of a width which varied from time to time—to private capitalism in the less important industries and in trade. The essential step was the initial one which limited the State's demand upon the peasant and permitted him to trade in the surplus. On that step there followed, by an inevitable sequence, a series of others which caused Lenin to speak at the Eleventh Party Conference, in no uncertain terms, of the *return to Capitalism*. The unwillingness of the peasant to part with his grain for paper money led to a decision to allow to the town-worker part of the product of his work. (*April, 1921.*) This, in turn, led to payment by results, and to the grant of permission to factory-managers to barter part of their output for raw materials and fuel, with the necessary consequence of commercial accounting. The use of money had never been abolished, and the need for calculation put an end to the possibility of abolishing it, and emphasised the evils of inflation and the inevitability of price and of payment for services rendered. A reduction in the number of workers to be fed, and of the factories to be supplied with raw materials, limited the distributing function of the State. The limitation of the State's commitments caused the selection of the factories best fitted for survival, and the grouping of them into combinations managing their business on commercial lines, selling part of their products to obtain working capital, and jointly responsible for commercial success. Interest, banking, money-taxes, budget, and the need of economy in State expenditure, all find their way back, till the economic system becomes one of State Capitalism, in so far as it is not worked by private and co-operative capital. The familiar phenomena of Capitalism reappear. Since the requisition of raw materials is stopped, and circulating capital is short, unemployment increases: and real wages in the summer of 1921 are only half of what they had been in December, 1920.

But the new system was Capitalism *with a difference*, because a Government was in power which was conscious of intimate dependence upon the support of the workers of the towns, and intensely suspicious of private capital. Powerful elements in the Communist Party were shocked and alarmed by the retrogression from Communist principle. At the third Congress of the Communist International, a speaker charged the Central Committee of the Party with selling the proletariat to the peasantry for a mess of pottage. Among the younger and more idealistic there were cases of suicide. The existence of this adverse current of sentiment disturbed the smooth course of private profit-making, and, from an early period, obstructed and, in part, set it back. From 1924, when the Twelfth Party Congress decided on the repression of the Nepmen, because private was evidently stifling socialised business, the adverse current gained in volume, until, from being two-fifths of the total trade, wholesale and retail, in 1923-4, private trade sank to one-sixth of it in 1927-8. Taxation, if often evaded, was crushing when enforceable: a scale of maximum profit, varying in different localities, and enforced with vary-

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ing degrees of rigidity, was fixed by law, and the operator was liable to prosecution for speculation, if the super-profits exceeded a certain figure. Such a system inevitably worked with extraordinary inequality, and, by multiplying doubtful risks, gave a stimulus to the wildest speculation. Mr. Duranty tells us, in September, 1923, of stores well stocked, and constantly shut owing to heavy taxation, but soon reopened. It was a game of catch-as-catch-can, between speculator and Communist. Great fortunes were made and flaunted, in spite of the social stigma attached to the Nepman's operations. It was the official cue to worry him. The militia "always inspected for clean floors on a rainy day", when the shopkeeper was likely to be caught out. Obstacles were put in his way by denying to him credits at the State Bank, and refusing transport facilities: he was "milked" by the House Committees, who made him pay three-fold for the better apartments which he occupied, he had to pay high tuition fees for the admission of his children to school, and a military tax for grown sons barred from the Red Army by their father's occupation: and, when he died, the inheritance-tax on his property, if the tax-collectors succeeded in laying hands upon it, was 90% on all sums in excess of 100,000 roubles.

The Nepman found his compensations in a predatory economy and in unbridled indulgence: and avenged himself by infecting with the acquisitive spirit the ranks of the Communist Party itself. We hear of a Saturday of corruption, gambling and prostitution, and of police connivance with crime. The sale of wine and beer was legalised in 1922, and the hotels and cafés of the cities were scenes of drinking and dissipation. The weaker brethren, outside of this orgy of profit-making and luxury, began to ask themselves why only the Nepman and his family should be prosperous. "Some of the wives," writes Mrs. A. L. Strong, "even of Communists, begin to complain: We endured hunger when everybody was hungry, but now some people make money and live comfortably: and why can't we?" In the spring of 1924, the Soviet authorities were horrified at the corruption which they found among the heads of state-trusts and party members. The general release from the restraints of religion and of popular opinion, which had been brought about by the collapse of 1917, produced a kind of anarchy in sexual morals, of which Romanov's *Two Pairs of Silk Stockings* may be taken as the literary expression. The old principles were outmoded and ridiculed, and rational substitutes, based upon the permanent needs of society, had not yet begun to take their place. Thirsty for the joys of life, men and women plunged downwards to the gutter, where the new stream seemed to flow. Lenin might disapprove the licence which placed the indulgence of the appetites alongside of the drinking of a glass of water, as equally natural and insignificant: and ask whether the dirtiness of the water made no difference. But the time had not yet come for the re-establishment of a rational self-discipline, and nature, for the present, took her own wild way, like a destroying flood before it has found its normal and beneficent channel.

Some have thought that N.E.P. was intended by Lenin to be the permanent course of the Revolution, but the evidence that it was a temporary device seems to me to be overwhelming. In defending his proposals he said that War-Communism had been inevitable in the conditions of war, as indeed it had been, and that, at present, the one consideration was to increase productivity, even though the effort should enable small industry to make disproportionate gains. At a later date he was more definite. (*October, 1921.*) "We have met a great defeat, and are now making a strategic retreat. . . . All of our military successes were preceded by similar retreats. . . . Afterwards we began . . . a cautious advance, finally crowned with victory." On his temporary return to official work after his first illness, he told the Moscow Soviet that "if we work hard enough, we can have Socialism instead of N.E.P." (*October, 1922.*) Trotsky put the point with picturesque brevity when he said that the stop was only that of a train taking on water. That some of the Party were tired out by the terrific strain of revolution and civil war, and ready to take refuge in a prolonged compromise, is in accordance with our expectations of human nature and, in particular, of Russian human nature, which had hitherto shown itself capable of immense temporary effort rather than of continued steady energy. But it is plain that the leader planned in 1921 only a breathing-space for economic recovery, and many stirring spirits were, from the outset, eager to bring the breathing-space to a close.

On the other hand, it was being argued, in the summer of 1921, that N.E.P. was consistent with Communism, so long as the workers were protected against exploitation: a theory which would have limited the scope of Communism to benevolent protective legislation with a full staff of factory inspectors, such as we might imagine to proceed from a Prince Bismarck. Such theorising was quite of a piece with the general spirit of an experimental epoch. In 1924 even Trotsky's speculations took a pessimistic turn, and he was confiding to his particular friends that American capital had re-established a firm capitalist order in Europe and that the prospects of the revolution promised ill. In the same year Stalin declared that the efforts of one country, especially of a peasant country like Russia, were not enough for the organisation of Socialist production and for the final victory of Socialism: and that the efforts of proletarians of several advanced countries were necessary for the achievement of these results. He spent much pains, later, on explaining away this statement, but such was the direction which his thought was taking when he made it. Proposals were on several occasions made, and canvassed, for a modification of the State's monopoly of external trade, which it was natural to regard as the corner-stone of a Socialist system. It was possible for Bukharin to publish an article calling upon the peasants to grow rich quickly, when Bukharin was himself a member of the inner circle of leadership: though Stalin found it necessary to explain away the heterodox slogan,

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which harmonised only too closely with his own measures authorising the leasing of land and the hiring of labour. Very great freedom was allowed to the opposition to state and discuss its alternative policy in all its details: and the Government took pains to formulate its replies. As late as 1927 Stalin was comparing the project of hydro-electric power from the Dnieper to a peasant buying a gramophone when he needed a cow: not foreseeing, at that time, the grandiose developments of his own Five-Years' Plan. He, like everyone else, was still groping.

Groping, experimentation, and a measure of freedom which contrasted strongly with the centralisation of War Communism: these were some of the characteristic features of the eight years' interval between the introduction of N.E.P. and the start of the first Five-Years' Plan. For a whole year a new marriage law was under public discussion: the death penalty was abolished and re-instituted after an interval: a movement of repatriation seemed to promise a measure of tolerance for political differences: the free Philosophical Academy discussed without let or hindrance a purified and ennobled form of Christianity: the partisans of a proletarian literature wrangled without interference by Government or Party with another group for which Trotsky found the expressive name of Fellow Travellers, because they went part of the way along the road to Socialism. The satirists of Soviet administration and society dipped their pens in disrespect, and Trotsky declared that this was precisely what the new world of the revolution needed. "How good it would be," he wrote, "if a stage Inspector-General (such as Gogol's famous *Revizor*) would walk across our Soviet life! The Censorship will set upon it if it hints at a return to the old life of the nobility. But, if it says: We are building a new life, and yet how much piggishness, vulgarity and knavery of the old and new are about us! Let us make a clean sweep of them . . . then, of course, the censorship will not interfere: and, if it will interfere it will do so foolishly and all of us will fight such a censorship." If it could but have been so! But the quarrel within the party was already preparing the way for a harsher and less tolerant system.

The best of the plays of this epoch, *The Days of the Turbins*, was one which described the *gi-devants* with sympathy. It was written in 1925 and produced in 1926. True, it was banned for incorrect ideology, but was then again admitted to the stage, on the personal initiative, it is said, of Stalin. But the Dramatic Repertory Committee, which exercised functions similar to those of Britain's Lord Chamberlain, was ominously busy. Wagner's *Lohengrin* was condemned as "mystical". Schiller's *Maria Stuart* as "religious and monarchical": Massenet's *Werther* on the ground of Werther's moodiness. Dostoievsky's *Brothers Karamazov* was excluded from the stage: and a whole scene of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* was excised, because it showed landlords and peasants on pleasant terms with one another.

Trotsky's pictorial eye had seen in N.E.P. a stoppage of the engine to

take in water. But during the eight years which followed it was not stationary. Rather, it was shunted hither and thither, picking up this truck and dropping the other, while engine and train crew argued with the general public and the station staff about the direction of the next trip and the load to be carried: helpers collected coal and executed miscellaneous repairs: and the passengers, in the intervals of talk, chewed sunflower seeds on the platform, and filled their kettles and samovars from the station hot water tap. In 1928 it got on to the socialist rails, with a tremendous jerk, which pitched some of the passengers from one end of their carriages to the other: and started off at a rate which left a good many behind. In the meanwhile, Soviet industry had passed through a crisis of high prices: prices so high in relation to agricultural prices that the peasant population ceased to deal. This was the famous crisis of the "Scissors".

It is no part of the aim of these studies to depict the turns and twists of N.E.P., though one would not go far wrong in suggesting that they tell more about the broad Slavonic nature than many pages of graver history. So we pass by in silence many tempting episodes: how Lunacharsky, once dressing like a builder's foreman, took to wearing a "burzhui" top-hat, how Meyerhold, abandoning black bread and eggs, ordered four-course dinners among the champagne-drinking Nepmen, how Bim and Bom, the Circus Clowns, made game of Soviet Red Tape, how the Marxists, forgetting that classes, not individuals, make history, set to work to establish a Lenin cult, and, with a subconscious memory of the incorruptibility of the bodies of the Christian saints, achieved the preservation of his remains to be exhibited to pious worshippers: and proceed with no further delay to the part which the peasant played in the new economic liberty which N.E.P. had conferred upon him.

Lenin, whose eye was upon everything, was severely critical of the first efforts of the revolutionaries to investigate rural conditions. They theorised and generalised without a basis of fact. His criticism inspired a remarkable body of enquiry which, following the monographical method instituted by Le Play, supplied to the Soviet Government, before and after Lenin's death, detailed accounts of village life and work in areas scattered over a large portion of Russia. They do not all follow a single plan, and some deal rather with Party work and administration than with the methods of husbandry practised and the standards of material and moral life. But in the result we have something which it is possible to regard as a picture of the Russian village in the first half-dozen years of the Revolution, supplemented in a few cases by material for its pre-revolution history. The enquiries extended to Asia, to the Altai province, the Bashkir Republic, and to Turkestan. The present writer has not been able to obtain the records of these areas: but the descriptions which have been accessible to him include a good deal about the Moscow province and some about Novgorod the Great, Tver, Smolensk, Kursk, Tambov, the

Upper Volga valley, Samara, and the south-eastern areas as far as the Mountain Republic adjoining the Georgian Military Road. Information about Ukrain is deficient perhaps because of the brigandage which prevailed there right up to 1924.

The freedom with which some of these monographists reveal and criticise the errors of the revolutionary administration, exhibiting it in certain respects as a retrogression from standards attained in the pre-revolution period, has been to me a constant source of surprised interest. It must be understood that we are dealing, not with works printed and published abroad, but with the output of publishing institutions at Moscow, Samara and Rostov-on-Don, which may be said to have appeared under the auspices of the Soviet Government itself. Here is some of the criticism, proceeding from a writer who subsequently rose to a high position under the Soviets. He is describing, in particular, the administration of the Tambov province.

“Before the revolution, the peasant endured the drunkenness of the Elder, the corruption of the Writer, the rudeness of the Police officer, the high-handedness of the landlord. But the old customs, rudeness, drunkenness, corruption, have not disappeared. Some old hands remain, and the new men have sometimes fallen under the old traditions, encouraged by the ignorance of the peasants. Within three weeks, we of the Enquiry Commission had heard of every such case, for the peasant has a keen flair for official abuses.”

Presents of milk, fowls, eggs, to the chairman of one Executive Committee, brought lenient treatment over the taxes. An Inspector of Finances gave his own father an abatement. A chairman of a village Soviet cultivated Government land and did not pay. The Militia had confiscated a horse, and their chief let it out for hire to a merchant, and kept the proceeds. A demobilised Red-Army-man met a Militia man drunk, and reproached him. He hiccupped: ‘We are the Government. We are allowed to get drunk.’ And so on, and so on. *Plus ça change. . . .*

A writer on a village of the Valdai Hills in north-western Russia contrasts the independent attitude of the peasant there, who has the tradition of the old civilisation of Novgorod the Great, and is in the habit of leaving the village for outside earnings, with that of the typical corn-raiser of Central Russia. He says there is no solidarity among the peasants of such provinces as Orel and Bryansk, and when they grow rich they cease to live like peasants. Among people such as these, he adds significantly, the lower authorities of the revolutionary régime quickly adopted the insolent bureaucratic tone with a too submissive peasantry. Another writer, describing the conditions of the Tambov province, says that the law does not reach the poor man, and Co-operation only works fairly when there is equality of means. The State-farms of the early period are described in

terms of severe condemnation. Not one of our writers has a good word to say for them. They do no good to the adjoining villages, and they are not always able to pay their own workmen. The rural Co-operative shops are burdened with excessive credit charges by the Central organisation, and often force the people to have recourse to private traders, because the elected management treats the work as a routine duty. Schools and local institutions are starved for lack of adequate salaries, regularly paid, and of the allotment of funds for equipment. In some places in the south-east the school teachers are "just like peasants, but with less good boots". One teacher "spends his night sewing boots, uses to clothe his body the straw bought for the stove, and looks ill". Everywhere the children of the poorer peasants are kept from school by lack of clothes and boots. In one village there existed before the Revolution a credit society which provided the neighbourhood with loans at 12% interest for agricultural equipment, and now the Integral Co-operative wants 20%, and has very inadequate funds. It is the well-to-do, and not the poor, who obtain advances, and "our Credit practice does not correspond with our Credit policy". The peasants of the Valdai Hills who work in the forests for the Nepmen are grossly exploited. The Labour Code should protect them: but it exists only on paper. A village Communist cell in the mountain republic adjoining Vladikavkaz writes a report that is quoted in full as an example of illiteracy. The present writer, deciphering with difficulty, understands the cell to acknowledge the receipt of frames for windows, but to complain of lack of a door: an awkward deficiency in a bitter climate. But poverty, grinding poverty, is everywhere apparent, and takes us back, at every point, to the low productivity of labour both in town and country, as the radical defect.

A comparison between the conditions of 1908 and 1920 for 223 villages of the province of Tver shows that, in the latter year, the peasants' purchases amounted to less than half of the salt, one-ninth of the tobacco, one-fifth of the kerosene, one-half of the soap, one-thirty-second part of the clothing, one-tenth of the boots, one-twentieth part of the building materials and nails, one-half of the agricultural implements, two-thirds of the carts and wheels, one-quarter of the household implements: which were bought in the former year: and this was at a time when the correlation of agricultural and industrial prices was generally favourable to agriculture. Purchases of sugar, tea, vodka, of food, flour and seed (except flax and vegetable seed) had entirely come to an end. Our informant apologises for including a girl's coat among the absolutely necessary purchases which a peasant still makes. The time had come, says he, for her to "walk out", and she could not "walk out" in a mere sheep-skin jacket. The inefficiency of the administration told in more ways than one. There was an immense amount of concealment of cultivation and of grain stores, which defeated the requisitioning policy of the Government. A canton of the province of Tver paid, under pressure, an amount of rye

which was just under one-thirteenth part of what it used for illicit distillation in 1913. The gains on illicit distillation and on illicit sales of timber in this area covered all losses, and allowed of much new building in the villages, while the towns were going to ruin. Tanning of sheepskins was prohibited, "I don't know why," writes the author of the monograph which mentions the fact: "but *tanning went on all the same*." Orders are not always carried out—particularly in rural tracts. In the period of the strictest nationalisation and of the monopoly of trade there was much underground trading in grain and in boiled butter (similar to Indian *ghi*). Occasionally the watchers confiscated a load: but did not always take it to the authorities. The smart smuggler did very well out of his enterprise.

Nor is the criticism limited to the irregularities of subordinates, which the higher authorities may naturally be expected to desire to investigate. In the landlord's time, we are told, all the peasants watched what he did, and did their winter ploughing because they saw him doing it. Now not a quarter of the fallow gets a winter ploughing. Sometimes a man, generally one of the more prosperous, tries an experiment in improvement: the cleaning of seeds or resistance to pests. War-Communism temporarily killed the local fairs where peasants picked up notions about improved implements: and, what was worse, temporarily killed rural Co-operation. This was almost pure loss, even if private enterprise was sometimes camouflaged as co-operation. Cattle-dealing came to an end too, and some lands remained unsown because seed-grain could not be bought. The revolutionaries have unjustly suspected the school-teachers of counter-revolutionary sympathies, and so have alienated a valuable agency. The local authorities are eaten up by the tasks of tax-collection and pure administration, and therefore unable to attend to the needs of the people. A picture of the dairying tracts in the Moscow province shows us that agricultural reform began in pre-revolutionary times under the inspiration of the Tsarist provincial and district councils, when clover cultivation was adopted and many-field rotations locally replaced the ancient three-field system. It was the agricultural expert of the Tsarist Provincial Council who solved the problem of over-production of fodder by the establishment of productive cattle-raising and the co-operative sale of milk. The Tsarist Provincial Council gave much attention to cattle-breeding, which was brought to an end by the war-mobilisation of experts: and a revolutionary attempt in 1920-1 to renew the work was frustrated by the peasants' fear that taxes would be increased by any increase of production. The early Revolutionary period was characterised by shortage of clover-seed and a set-back in the milk business, and, in some places, by retrogression in the type of agriculture—for instance, by the reversion to cereal-growing from technical crops. There is a significant repetition of the warning that there is too much ink and paper. "Paper eats up the Communist cell." Everything which has no bearing upon taxation is marked, according to the immemorial practice of the

Tsarist offices, either "for information" or "for guidance" and—filed among the records.

Facts such as these are frankly recorded alongside of others which tell in favour of the revolutionary régime, with an admirable objectivity. An ardent spirit of creative reform runs through the work. It is a new "going to the people", repeating the missionary spirit of the seventies, but with far more definite and practical aims, and a better equipment. But the task is Herculean, and the technique of socialist administration has not yet been discovered.

Another feature of these village records is that they set the world-shaking events of November, 1917, in an altogether new light. In the village, at least, we feel that these were not so tremendous as they looked outside of it. There is continuity in some of the rural histories, and the revolutions which actually changed the local life were the adoption of some new technical crop, the beginning of clover cultivation, the change from three-field to many-field rotation, with the replacement of ribbon strips by block strips, and the redistributions of the land which these changes involved. It was not everywhere that the seizure of landlords' land and stock made important additions to local wealth: and, anyhow, the seizures were largely made before November, and the establishment of the November Government in many cases merely confirmed the accomplished fact. The Civil War affected the South and East, the requisitioning policy and the excesses of the Food Detachments were directed to the provinces of food surplus, not to those of food deficit. Over the vast expanses of Russia there remained many "deaf" districts, many "bears' corners", where the peasant was hardly conscious of the Revolution except as a name. The local flour-mill and oil-press were nationalised, but the only people who could work them were the former owners, and they were still in control, as lessees of their old businesses or in the quality of salaried specialists. The man who formerly ran the Co-operative still ran it: for the excellent reason that no one else knew how. The man who lacked land, or, still more common, lacked stock with which to cultivate it, continued to have to hire himself out. The law against employment of hired labour was easily evaded. The labourer was even more anxious than the hirer to conceal that he was a hired man and not a sharer or a relative of the hirer. He held aloof from the Union because he wanted work, and feared that the employer would be shy of a Union man. As ever, "money talked". It was another story when collectivisation was pressed, and the *kulaks* were liquidated. That was the true revolution for the peasant, but the lesson that emerges is that—while the seizure of power by a new class may be sudden and violent—the actual process of beneficent change is inevitably gradual and slow. In the meanwhile it is much if there is a new hope.

(1929.) The peasant was familiar with the working of the village Soviet, and of the corresponding body for the Canton, which might contain a

score or so of "Church" villages, each having its own group of hamlets and an area of 200 or 300 square miles. He knew Lenin and Trotsky and perhaps "Papa" Kalinin and the famous Cavalry General Budyonny. But all between was a blank to him. With the new régime there was a subconscious sympathy. You could smoke and exchange abuse with the new type of official. There were no more Excellencies and Serenities, no need to kiss hands or bow down to the waist, and say, your will be done. A Communist was a "consecrated" busybody, too clever by half, who read books and newspapers and used strange new words, quarrelled with the women about religion, and made a nuisance of himself over the collection of the taxes. There was one that caught Iván Ivanovich making a little trifle of home-brew, and got him three months for it. A good Communist might be useful: but as for a sham one, *tfui*, and therewith a convincing stream of saliva. As for the school and the reading-room, m'yes—but what about the price of kerosene and nails? They cost thrice as much in rye as they did "*in the time of peace*" (before the Revolution). The Whites might give us more kerosene and nails; and a pair of boots might not, as now, cost half a ton of good grain. But they'd bring back the landlords and we should be flayed for taking the land. The children, asked if they are for the Soviets, reply: "We are not Soviet people. We are peasants," and this, not as an expression of hostility, but as a plain statement of fact.

The peasant had some specific grievances against the consequences of the Revolution. The dearth of manufactured commodities which resulted from the decay of industry and the Allied blockade was a grievance of the first magnitude. The impossibility of replacing agricultural implements, and the extreme difficulty of getting them repaired, lowered the standard of husbandry. The lack of window-glass, china and metal ware, pots and pans, nails, screws, and hinges, boots and textiles, kerosene and sugar, carried material comfort back to the standard of two generations ago: without the habits which had made the primitive life tolerable. Later, when manufactured articles began to be available, their excessive price in terms of agricultural products was a constant reminder of an injustice, which, it seems, was laid at the door of the town-workman, rather than of the Revolutionary Government. A speech by "Papa" Kalinin, on the alteration of tax policy at the introduction of the New Economic Policy, shows us what some of the grievances were. "There have been occasions when they (the food requisition officers) have taken from the peasant everything to the last straw. If they (the townspeople) have so far enjoyed almost without recompense the bread of the peasant, it has been because during these years they have had for the most part to work at war-industry." He does not deny the hard measure which the peasant has received, and is frankly apologetic. The taxation was no lighter than that of the Tsarist régime, and for a long period much more irregular and capricious in its incidence, with occasional double recoveries, and was

accompanied by a large number of additional imposts for local purposes. At the same time the peasant found himself deprived of those sources of additional earnings which had previously been open to him. The landlord was gone, town industry was in a state of progressive decay, the towns were emptying themselves into the villages, and aggravating the problems of under-employment and unemployment there. The peasant felt himself to be still—for this was nothing new—treated as an inferior to the townsman, and he was pestered with a succession of new regulations infinitely disturbing to the mind which obeys the quiet order of the seasons. An open letter of Trotsky written in 1920 shows that the complaints included the obligations of clearing the railways of snow, and of transporting corn and wood by road, with payment in paper, and nothing to be bought with it. All true, he says: but the country is ruined, ruined by war: worse ruined than is a landlord's estate by hail, fire, disease, and drunkenness. Who is to blame? The "darkness" of the peasants. They should have driven out the Tsar before, and stood aside from the "Robber War". Kolchak, Denikin and Yudenich only finished what the cursed War began. The task remains of restoring industry and transport from their state of ruin. All products are now for the toiler, and for the toiler only. It is a straight talk, from man to man.

In a group of particularly prosperous villages, in the dairying districts of the Moscow Province, it is possible for us to compare agricultural earnings in 1898 and in 1922. The figures show, after allowing a reasonable amount for capital depreciation on houses, cattle and implements, and calculating in pre-war roubles, daily earnings of 45 kopeks in the earlier year and 55 kopeks in 1922. It is a rise, we may say, from 8s. to 10s. per week, or about 22% in twenty-four years. The British agricultural labourer was doing better than this, even before the war: but, of course, the British agricultural labourer, till the establishment of old-age pensions, was likely to end his days in the Workhouse, when his strength gave out, whereas the Russian peasant had his rights in the land to the last, unless he lost them in a general redistribution.

Agricultural prosperity in the cereal-growing tracts of the south and east was based upon the cereal market, both within and without Russia. Overcropping had already endangered the productivity of the soil in the longer-cultivated tracts. The War and the blockade cut off a part of the market, and the famine struck a deadly blow at agricultural resources. (1921-22.) Apart from these special causes of depression, an economy of cereal export suffers from certain economic disadvantages proper to itself. Transport and trade are seasonal. The railways must pay in a few months the costs of a year's working. Their freight charges must be high, they cannot finance extensions or improvements, and they are likely to lack those adaptations which encourage the carriage of perishable articles. Interest rates must be high, for the capital which finances the movement of the crops is wanted for a short season only, and is likely to

be idle for the rest of the year. These conditions have their repercussion upon agriculture, as the history of south-eastern Russia plainly showed.

A more solid basis of agricultural prosperity is that which rests upon native industry, creating the local demand for a variety of products, the raw materials of industry, and the food of the industrial centres. This was where the flax-growers and the dairymen of the Moscow neighbourhood had their advantage, and close examination of the agricultural statistics in the later Revolutionary years shows the slow extension of a similar process, as the industrial centres increase and multiply over a wider area.

The period of Civil War, with the decay of industry and the temporary exodus from the towns, injured agriculture by diminishing this native demand for a variety of products, and produced a retrograde movement away from the cash crops which had been gaining ground before the War. Rural Russia also suffered in a very marked degree by the curtailment of outside earnings. The surplus-producing area was hit particularly hard by the destructive Famine. Man-power in rural areas was in excess of needs; land was in excess of requirements, or at least in excess of the means of cultivation; implements and cattle were very short.

During the period of War-Communism, the State, backward and ill-equipped, hampered by internal opposition, by civil war and blockade, attempted to organise universal provision, and inevitably failed to supply to the peasantry either the means of cultivation or the commodities which were the necessary price of food for town and army. It was not yet possible to organise the Russian countryside into manageable units which could be instructed, and controlled, and coaxed, into becoming obedient sources of supply: because the power-driven machines which alone could reconcile the cultivator to such a system were not yet available. It was necessary, therefore, to revert to a measure of *laissez faire, laissez aller*, in which the natural aptitude of Stolypin's "strong and sober" for winning prosperity for themselves would be utilised to advance peasant economy in general. The decree which replaced the system of requisitions by a tax-in-kind, and allowed the peasantry to trade in the surplus, was accompanied by other concessions to the instinct of vested interests in the land and its produce. Sowing Committees had been established in 1919 with a commission to assist the poorer peasants with seed and stock at the critical moment of sowing. These Committees were now instructed to supervise the execution of ameliorative measures, including the acceleration of survey proceedings, in order to get rid of the vicious system of dividing holdings into separate narrow strips, and to improve the conditions of agriculture. Security of tenure was guaranteed by putting a limit to the successive redistributions of the land, and prohibiting the use of peasants' land for the formation of State and Collective farms. The Central Co-operative organisation was authorised to make purchases abroad, in order that the peasants might be supplied with commodities—a significant breach in the State's monopoly of foreign trade: in so far as

Co-operation enjoyed any real independence of the State. These measures involved the surrender of Lenin's design of replacing small peasant tenure by large estates under national or collective management, and the reversal of such tentative measures in that direction as had already been taken. But there is ample evidence that the surrender was never intended to be more than temporary. "Papa" Kalinin, who has a knack of saying simply and directly what some of the revolutionary leaders immerse in a cloud of verbiage, is quite frank on this subject.

"The desire is to meet the wishes of the peasant mass . . . for this purpose, great flexibility and understanding are needed from all our workers. For the success of the planned line of policy depends—it is necessary to say so definitely—on *knowing how to avoid the alienation from us of the individualist, the small farmer*. . . . Marxist principles do not call for the artificial destruction of small farming. It will inevitably perish gradually of itself . . . as the cabmen failed in the competition with the automobiles. . . . We can only persuade the mass of small farmers into collectivisation by showing that it is better and more profitable."

The case of the small holding, he says, is similar to that of the small shop, which cannot compete with the factory. "But"—and here he seems to forecast with accuracy the policy of today—"I think there will be a certain freedom of trade in small matters."

Lenin himself is hardly less explicit, though more elliptical. He says in effect that there was never any danger, in introducing the New Economic Policy, of giving too much power to Capitalism. The danger was in the other direction: that the peasants would be alienated from the Revolution by the too long duration of a scarcity of manufactured commodities, if War-Communism should continue. General collectivisation of the peasants is indeed a means of organising them into a solid alliance with the urban wage-workers, and obtaining a secure supply of food. But general collectivisation will only be possible when machinery and electrification are generally provided.

Here again we see the later course of Revolutionary policy foreshadowed, and the temporary nature of N.E.P. made plain. All that remained undisclosed was the stage at which collectivisation would be introduced: and life, in Lenin's favourite phrase, would disclose that.

I have put this case as though the issues were ruled by a single will, and as though the outcome were clearly foreseen and provided for. In fact, the nature and the outcome of the New Economic Policy were differently understood by different minds. Some were wearied by the tremendous struggle of the past three years and glad to take refuge in a compromise which promised an abatement of abuses without the renewal of the agony of change. There were Marxians who believed that Capitalism would dig its own grave, if left free to handle its own instruments. It was

from sources such as these that proposals for sanction to the leasing of land and the hiring of labour proceeded. These were the men who approved the advice to the prosperous peasant to grow rich. There were others who chafed over the abandonment of the principles of War-Communism, and desired the abbreviation of the new departure. A struggle was, in fact, in operation from the outset, and there is a fluctuation of policy according as one or the other influence becomes temporarily predominant.

The leasing of land and the hiring of agricultural labour continued to be prohibited in the first years of the N.E.P., but both were permitted in 1924-5, with a limitation on the term of lease. Neither prohibition had been effective, because of the ease with which both could be evaded. In both cases the local interest was with, or at least not against, the breaker of the law. It was only when a dispute occurred between the man who let the land and the man who took it, or between the man who hired the labourer and the man who took the wage, that the authorities had any opportunity of intervening. By 1927 there were nearly as many agricultural proletarians as there had been before the war, and the difficulty of organising or protecting them had proved practically insuperable.

One side of the New Economic Policy in the village was, in idea at all events, to encourage maximum production by a neutral attitude towards the rival forms of landholding. State-farms, and cultivating associations in the nature of collective farms, no longer received, in practice or in theory, special encouragement. Some state-farms were leased out, some were closed, and the remainder were reorganised with an average area of 1,800 acres, and for the most part deprived of subsidies. The number of cultivating associations, of the nature of collective farms, fell by a third between 1921 and 1923. Freedom of choice in the village between the *Mir* and individual holdings caused a partial reversion to the principle of Peter Stolypin's settlement. In 1922 the Surveyors consolidated more than 3 million acres of individual holdings in independence from the *Mir*, and in each of the years 1923 and 1924 areas not much less. This was not quite on the scale of 1913, when $4\frac{1}{2}$ million acres were so consolidated, but it was sufficient to show the vitality of the desire, of some, for separation from the commune. We shall, however, go astray if we infer from these figures that a majority of the peasantry wished for the separation of their holdings. Survey and settlement, with redistribution of land, were taking place on a great scale. By 1927 two-thirds of the cultivated land of European Russia, not less than 150 million acres, had been redistributed. In almost every village there was a struggle between those who desired to maintain the *Mir*, and those who wished to leave it or break it up: and the number of cases in which it was maintained was far greater than the number in which it was wholly or partly broken up during these three years of activity by the individualisers. There were, however, in addition to the cases of consolidation of holdings, a large number of cases

in which individuals registered their titles to the land without claiming consolidation, and a further large number in which voluntary groups of associated cultivators obtained allotments which, under revolutionary law, were independent of the *Mir*. Most of the surveyors' time in 1922 and 1923 was, in fact, taken up with operations which, in one form or another, involved a diminution of the influence of the *Mir*, so long the characteristic institution of the Russian countryside. But when all was done, and when further detachment of individual farms from the *Mir* had been stopped by the legislation of 1926, the Report of the Central Statistical Bureau dated January 1st, 1927, showed that 95% of the land was still within the sphere of these obstinately surviving organisations. In particular instances we have clear evidence of the survival of the old "*Mir*" and the village-meeting, under the forms of the new village-Soviet: showing itself in the reference of important questions, such as the internal distribution of the village assessment, by the latter to the former body.

Within the *Mir*, however, there was a great deal of internal subdivision between households, partly, no doubt, in consequence of the relief from taxation conceded to the poorer household, but due partly also to a revolt of the young against the old which the Revolution had encouraged. There had been 15 million peasant *dvors* or households before the War. Before the period of intensified collectivisation the number had risen to 26 million: a social and economic change of profound significance.

The record of the Survey operations discloses another change in rural conditions, significant rather for its direction than for its extent. This was the substitution of wider strips for the numerous ribbon-strips which wasted so much land and so much labour; and, associated with this substitution, the introduction of many-field rotation in place of the primitive three-field. We do not know how far this was carried in the smaller Republics of the Union: but in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (always described by the shorter title of R.S.F.S.R.), which is immensely the largest, the ameliorative process was carried out over nearly 4 million acres in four years: perhaps in 2% of the total cultivation.

Though so great an amount of survey work was ultimately completed, there are many complaints of its slowness and of its high cost. Fifty kopeks per *dessiatin*—less than 20 kopeks per acre, at a time when the rouble was much depreciated—does not appear an excessive charge, but the poorer peasant with no grain surplus was always hard put to it to find cash. Yakovlev, afterwards Commissar for Agriculture, was complaining in 1924, in a monograph of a village of the Tambov province, of the great confusion over rights in land. Not a single village, he said, was yet firmly settled on the land, and questions of land-settlement greatly agitated the peasantry because of the uncertainty involved in delay. One of the popular features of collectivisation today is the provision to each farm of a certificate of right, together with a map which shows boundaries. Beside

the delay, and the payments, peasants complained, in 1924, that the payments had always to be met in spring, when resources were strained by the needs of the sowing season. There was grumbling about corruption—real or suspected—for the surveyor was too like the old-fashioned Tsarist official. If the survey was delayed, the sowing was delayed too, and that might easily mean the loss of a season's cultivation. There was much eagerness, too, in some quarters to get rid of narrow striping, and to consolidate or partly consolidate holdings (though not necessarily to leave the *Mir*), and the Surveyor held the interests of the village in the hollow of his hand.

(1919 to 1928.) During the decade of Survey work, the principle of equalisation of holdings was always in conflict with the rival principle of permitting, even encouraging, the prosperous to become more prosperous, in order to increase the marketable supplies of food. On the one hand, there were repeated redistributions made at the instance of returning soldiers, or of persons claiming a closer approach to equality; on the other hand, there was legislation to give security of tenure, by insisting on a minimum interval between two redistributions—legislation which was often made ineffectual by the intervention of the local Land-Committees.

There was much controversy over the effects of the New Economic Policy on the stratification of classes in the village: and the disputants on one side deduced from the available statistics that the middling peasant was steadily passing, on the one hand, into the ranks of the poor, and on the other hand, in smaller numbers into the ranks of the prosperous: in other words, that extremes of fortune were establishing themselves, in accordance with the process which is assumed to be normal under capitalistic conditions. This conclusion was for a long time resisted by the dominant section in the Communist Party. Statistics seem to show, generally, that the equalising tendency noticeable under War-Communism did not persist in the village under the New Economic Policy, and that in certain areas the middling peasant was becoming either poorer or richer. In the Tambov province, for instance, the monographist Yakovlev shows us a marked advance between 1920 and 1923 in the differentiation of economic prosperity. Households with no cultivation have increased, households with cultivation of 27 to 40 acres have increased also, and those which cultivate from 40 to 60 acres have for the first time made their appearance. The same process is to be observed in the records of cattle-owning. Some middling peasants are going down, and others are going up: but the descent of middling into poor is more rapid than the ascent of middling into prosperous.

Poverty, which shows itself in the lack of working cattle and implements, was, at this time, widespread. Some of the poor were still able to make a struggle: others, in particular widows and orphans, and families ruined in the Civil War, were being forced down into the ranks of the landless proletariat. Of the households in the canton of Tambov, which

was the subject of Yakovlev's investigation, cultivating no more than 5 acres, nine-tenths had no horses, more than half had no horned cattle, and four-fifths had no implements.

There is nothing new in the condition of "horselessness" among the peasantry. It was a subject of Gleb Uspensky's rural sketches in the seventies. In the rural areas of Kursk in 1923 the price of a horse was one and one-fifth ton of corn. Elsewhere we hear that two cows were given in exchange for one horse. At the Kursk rate, a horse was worth the gross product of more than 3 acres of cultivation for a season. The poor man, whose whole cultivation under the three-field system might be as little as 4 acres or less for the year, could not buy at this rate. The lack of a horse meant intolerable work for both man and woman during the short open season of Russian agriculture. One of our investigators of village life has recorded a peasant's description of that work even when horses were available.

"My wife and me worked—as hard as fools, worked ourselves nearly to our deaths. We did our harvesting along with neighbours, a man and his wife and five children. We reap, reap, reap, from dawn to night, and spend the night in the field. His wife goes home in the evening, milks the cows, lights the stove, feeds the children and comes in the morning with my wife to work. They bind the sheaves. While we reap, they gather. At dinner time we feed the horses, and join the women in gathering the sheaves. In the evening again the women go back home, and we men go on working in the open. Two did the work of eight."

This was in Samara, where holdings were comparatively large, a country of pioneer immigrants, where all who were not hearty eaters and hearty workers must expect to go under.

Another village chronicler, this time of the upper Volga near Yaroslavl, describes the women and children in a queue of out-patients come to consult the woman doctor. One of the children is evidently dying. The mother could not bring it sooner. They were cutting the rye. Next! A woman is suffering from exhaustion, breasts hanging flaccid, eyes fevered, legs swollen, and blood flowing away. How long? Since the hay-cutting. Must rest. Can't rest. The harvest time has come. Walked 6 miles to come in: very tired. You want rest. Next!

This is not roughness or heartlessness. But there were two doctors for a canton with 25,000 inhabitants. The Soviet Government had not yet the resources to increase the supply of medical officers.

Large numbers of infants die, generally of diarrhoea. It is the work in the fields, which calls out all hands. The babies are looked after by five-year-olds, for the only crèche is at canton headquarters. The children let the babies put anything in their mouths, to keep them quiet. Two young Communist girls started a crèche. They were Jewish and spoke a southern dialect. The "dark" women would not trust them. But the girls took

them "on the joke", and went ahead. Now they have their local crèche, and the village Co-operative contributes 10 roubles a month to it. But a score of such crèches are needed for the Canton.

Our chronicler describes the women at the reaping, under the hot summer sun: bent into triangular shape, can't straighten their bodies, faces like red-hot copper, eyes half-closed from heat and exhaustion, hearts beating hard, backbones cracking. The threshing is yet to come—all with flails and by human muscles. As for the threshing-floor—music at a distance, a torment of cruel labour hard at hand. And this work lasts eighteen hours in the day. "You beat and you beat, and out of it all comes a scrap, with a pinch of butter." If there was illness in a family at the moment of sowing or the moment of harvesting, good-bye to the crop, without the good offices of neighbours or of someone who would do the work—for a consideration. An attempt was made by the Revolutionary Government to ensure the peasant against such contingencies by the establishment of Sowing Committees, whose duty it was to organise help for those in need of it at critical seasons. This, along with the insurance of horses, was a palliative, but not a cure on a great scale.

In conditions such as these, with large numbers owning rights in land of which the alienation was not allowed by law, but lacking cattle, implements, and often even seed, to cultivate it, the practice became widely established, on the part of the more prosperous cultivators, of letting out live and dead stock on hire, or of undertaking cultivation on behalf of those who could not do it for themselves. A new profession came into existence: the profession of providing the means of cultivation, which often carried with it the great advantage of immunity from taxation. You had no crop of your own: you helped another man to raise a crop: and, as he was the registered right-holder in the land, it was he who met the requisition or paid the tax. Your half, if the payment took that form, was not the proceeds of agriculture but payment for service rendered, and not taxable, or anyhow not easily brought to book by the taxing authority. It is in the Black-Earth zone in Tambov and the south-east that we hear most of this practice. Yakovlev says two-thirds of the horseless and a substantial proportion of those having one horse, hired animals. A somewhat smaller proportion hired implements too. Most of the prosperous and middling peasants did business of this kind. In the south-east we hear that nearly all with 27 acres or more let out animals or implements. When the lenders had crops of their own, the borrower naturally had to wait till they had finished, and the short season might be dangerously near to its close before his turn came.

Payment for the loan was sometimes, but rarely, made in cash. Generally it took the form of kind, or of labour. The payments in kind might be a share of the crop, or a fixed quantity of grain. A favourite method was halving the crop, but sometimes the lender took as much as two-thirds. We hear of a charge of two bushels an acre for one ploughing

and 4 bushels for two: 1 bushel for reaping, and so on. These were the charges for an iron plough: ploughing with a wooden plough was a good deal cheaper. We must bear in mind that 14 or 15 bushels to the acre was a good average cereal crop. We are not contemplating, as in Britain, methods that yield an average of 33 bushels, taking failures along with successes.

Sometimes the use of the plough and harrow was given "without payment", but this meant that the borrower must be prepared to do odd jobs at any time for the lender. Payment in labour seemed easier to the borrower, but it was heavier than it appeared to be, because the work generally had to be done when occupations in the field were heaviest, and the borrower might have to sacrifice part of his own crop to discharge his obligation.

In the south-east it was common for men to work at the harvesting and threshing of an acre, in return for the cattle and implements for ploughing and harvesting an acre: the alternative being the halving of the crop on the borrower's land. Other cases of payment in labour which are cited are: a lad's work for the whole summer in return for the ploughing of $1\frac{3}{4}$ acres: four man-months of work for the ploughing of 4 acres: half the crop and eighteen man-days of work for the ploughing of 8 acres. In one village the people told the investigator that they had to give up the crop on half or a third of their land to get the rest ploughed.

It is easy to see that it was this practice, so common in the cereal-raising areas, and so often involving the sacrifice of a large portion of the proceeds of husbandry to persons possessing cattle and implements, which suggested to the Government of the U.S.S.R., at a later date, the characteristic expedient of the Machine Tractor Stations, which undertake all the heavy processes by power-driven machines in return for a share of the crop—a good deal less than that demanded by private enterprise for less efficient methods. We shall see that, in return for less than one-fifth of the crop, the heavy work which ought to be done by animals or mechanical means is now increasingly done on the collective farms by machines, with a diminished risk of the arrival of the snow before the crop is carried home. This knowledge of what has gone before will help us to understand why the people's resistance to the process of collectivisation had so little vigour in it. Only the well-to-do were losers, and the natural inertia of conservatism was overborne by a substantial gain for the greater number.

I have more than once emphasised that grievance of the peasantry which consisted in the lack of manufactured commodities and their high price. Next after the subsistence of his family and himself, it was for town goods that the peasant worked. Money, when it took the form of something not exchangeable for town goods, meant nothing to him. In the period of inflation which lasted till 1924, he made all his calculations in grain, in *puds* and *phunts* of rye or wheat or, as in the Mountain republic, of maize, against *arshins* of printed cotton, and *puds* of salt and

kerosene and herrings and iron and nails. The Soviet Government issued graphs, which showed the relative prices of industrial commodities and of agricultural produce on the basis of comparison with pre-war rates. I have elsewhere explained how the "Scissors" has come to mean the divergence of agricultural from industrial prices—a disordered correlation between the products of town and country: a phenomenon which has sometimes extended far beyond the limits of Russia.

There was a time, a short time, in the Revolutionary epoch when the Scissors was favourable to agriculture, because, though manufactured goods were short, food was shorter still. The position began to reverse itself after the harvest of 1922: and at the same period in 1923 the Scissors was wide open, with the lower of the two blades representing agriculture and the upper industry.

A pair of man's boots had been worth 150 lb. of rye before the war: they were worth 108 lb. between 1918 and 1920: 450 lb. in the latter months of 1923. The peasant used to get his printed cotton shirt for 36 lb. of rye: in 1923 he had to pay 252 lb. for the same. A yard of printed cotton cost six or seven times, a sack of salt six times, a load of pig-iron six times, a cask of kerosene three and a half times, a cask of herrings three times, a hundredweight of nails more than double, scrap iron nearly double, what it cost in rye or wheat before the War. Demyan Byedny, the revolutionary rhymist, had his little joke about the "ton and a half pair of boots", which the peasant bought with the harvest of his four acres. Mr. Hindus, revisiting his old home, apparently in the neighbourhood of Minsk, about this time, found that the lamp was rarely lighted, because kerosene was too expensive. The high price of salt was particularly hard: for salting was the peasant's way of keeping his vegetables, mushrooms, cucumbers and the like. The girls did not like the deprivation of all means of beautification: but, when paint was beyond reach, they used beetroot, we are told. The village was thus economically sundered from the town, because it could not buy; and was therefore unwilling to sell.

It was an impossible position: and it would have been an urgent danger to the Revolutionary Government, if the peasant had not taken into his head to blame the urban worker rather than the Government.

The basic cause, no doubt, was the larger product of agriculture, unaccompanied by a corresponding increase in the output of industry. Enlarged purchasing power for the peasant was unaccompanied by an increased supply of the things he wanted to buy. As everywhere and always, economic pressure compelled him to sell his products in the autumn when prices were worst for him: and the corrective to this tendency, in the form of credit, was not effectively applied. The State bank did indeed give credits, but only one-twelfth part of the amount given fell to the share of agriculture: and, as we shall see presently, Co-operative Credit in the villages was not on an efficient basis. There was another

aggravating circumstance in the economic correlation between town and country. Overhead charges on industrial goods were enormous. As is everywhere the case, except in so far as Co-operation redresses the balance, the peasant must sell at wholesale prices and buy at retail. The retail prices at which he bought were swelled by the profits added by each successive government organisation which handled the goods. The Co-operatives, as the agency of retail distribution, took up the grievance with energy, and their first all-Russian Congress (*January, 1923*) demanded that the costs of industrial production be reduced by rationalisation, and that prices be strictly regulated by the State.

Our village monographists are generally severe in their comments upon the inefficiency of Co-operation. There are whole cantons in which it exists only as a signboard. The "Centre" charges 25% for credit on goods supplied. The people often deal with the private trader "because we are such poor traders, and often we have to sell goods below the purchase price". The elected management treats the work as a routine duty. The Co-operative has a difficulty in obtaining credit, but the private trader has old business relations which make it easy for him to get it. The private trader has more flexibility and initiative. One very unkind remark is made in the rural record of the Yaroslavl neighbourhood on the upper Volga. The Co-operative shops are in the hands of "former merchants, former *kulaks*, rogues, cheats, and even clergy". The Co-operatives have a less large selection of goods: and they charge too high a rate of profit on articles in which there is no competition. The best that is said about them is that "they don't cheat, but they like to put something in their pockets".

But over vast areas of rural Russia the shop in any form was a novelty. The peasant had to rely upon fairs, upon pedlars, upon occasional visits to a town many miles away by the vilest of roads. It was not much that he wanted, at all events not much that he could hope to buy. A Russian economist, writing in 1925, calculated that a middling peasant could spend not more than 35 roubles in the year on town goods, and a poor one not more than 25. The rest must be home-made or make-shift, as it is in every natural and primitive economy. Bad though it might be in the eyes of town critics, the arrival of the Co-operative had been the arrival of a new convenience in village life, and of a competition with the profiteering private dealer: and when the "Scissors" reduced the peasant's purchases to little more than matches and kerosene, it was an advantage to have these near at hand. The attempts at cultured amenities, such as they were, were appreciated. A Co-operative tea-room was much liked because a cloak-room was attached to it, in which the peasant could deposit miscellaneous articles while he did his business. It was a safeguard against petty theft, always a weakness among the Russian peasantry.

But how easily these joint undertakings went up in smoke! From a Co-

operative inn, leased from a small dealer, every article, plates, dishes, cups, even chairs, disappeared in turn: till the society gave up the struggle. Now the *kulak* is installed in it once more, and making good money out of rubbish. Everybody's business has proved itself to be nobody's business. Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, let us point out that the Socialists were still in quest of the right technique.

While the Tsarist régime had looked jealously upon Consumers' Co-operation, it had encouraged Credit Societies and Co-operative production, as the means of dealing with rural indebtedness and of allaying agrarian discontent. These Associations had 10 million members in 1916, and the loans from the State Bank to them were between 300 and 400 million roubles. Credit Societies held most of the capital of the central Co-operative Bank at its inception in 1912, but the centre of financial weight shifted to the Consumers' Co-operatives after the Revolution, indicating a relative decline in the importance of the Credit movement. The value of rural Credit Societies, as distributors of credit among a village clientèle with whom the State agencies cannot possibly have a close individual acquaintance, must obviously be diminished by the increase of collectivisation, which substitutes a collective for an individual borrower. The need for rural Credit Societies was, however, as great as ever, during the continuance of the New Economic Policy, and the village monographists have much to say regarding them. We learn that in the south-east of Russia there is a crying need of credit, but a failure of the machinery for providing it to the poor, who need it most. After the ravages of famine in 1921 and 1922, working cattle are everywhere lacking, but those most in need find it most difficult to obtain loans. Incidentally we notice a departure from the normal system of rural Credit Societies, which should rely upon personal knowledge of the borrowers' character, and not demand the security of property. These south-eastern Credit Societies, it seems, and perhaps the Russian rural Credit Societies in general, demand security, which the poor man cannot give, and so defeat the principal object of their own existence. Yakovlev, writing of the province of Tambov, quotes the bitter comments of the poor on co-operation: "I know them—these co-operators who have cattle, stock, and machines. They don't take *us* in the Co-operative. Pay your subscription, and enter: but *you* get nothing, if you are poor." He tells us how the Government's loans of seeds went to the Co-operatives—because it was desired to encourage Co-operation—and seed was delivered at the nearest railway station: but the horseless poor could not even fetch it home, without paying tribute to their more well-to-do neighbours who had horses and carts; and for the most part they went without. He puts his finger on a weak spot in Co-operation (other than Consumers' Co-operation) when he says that, without approximate equality of means, there is no true Co-operation. In the prosperous dairying tracts of the Moscow province, the Credit Societies worked very well: lent money first at 12%

and afterwards at 11%—quite fair rates for rural borrowers, as experience in India shows, because of the risks—and generally lent it for periods which indicate arrangements to carry the borrower over the difficult time between seed-time and harvest. But these were not typical of the Credit Co-operatives in general.

The best-known types of the Agricultural Co-operative Societies are the Creameries of Siberia and the Milk Associations of the Moscow Province, of which our monographists give us a very favourable picture, showing them to be real harbingers of civilisation. There were also agricultural partnerships, which cultivated land in common and became the prototypes of the collective farms. But the Agricultural Co-operatives were associations for selling produce, after processing it, and for buying and passing on to their members seed, implements, and their other various requirements. Often they combined Credit functions with these, and commonly they set up Co-operative shops for the simultaneous needs of the peasant household. After their eclipse during the period of War-Communism they recovered their independence of the State under the New Economic Policy, and inspectors continued to test and guarantee their milk products. The agricultural authorities of the Soviet Government regarded them as a second best, pending the formation of agricultural *collectives*, with joint cultivation, which alone they believed could give the maximum product. Widely established though they were—there were 80,000 of them in 1927—they were neither numerous enough, nor strong enough, to solve the problems of peasant agriculture, and they did not help to convert small-scale into large-scale cultivation. But they helped in the restoration of agriculture to its pre-war standard of productivity, and put the thriftier section of the peasants on their legs.

Co-operation, in so far as it tended to keep down the retail prices of commodities in rural tracts, was a palliative for the hardships of the "Scissors". The more liberal supply of agricultural credits worked in the same direction. The drastic measures which the Soviet Government took in 1923-4, to bring down the prices of industrial goods, effected an adjustment which was of very great advantage to the peasant. But the low price of agricultural, in terms of industrial, products, was, after the brief interval in which agriculture was even less productive than industry, a permanent disease of the economy of the U.S.S.R. till the effective restoration of industry. A contention of a recent writer (Herr Strauss in *Soviet Russia*, 1941) that the Soviet Government has favoured agriculture to the detriment of industry in its more recent policies, is discussed elsewhere in this series of studies.

When I say that agricultural products failed to purchase the same quantity of manufactured goods for which they had sufficed before the War, I am only putting into a different form the statement that the supply of manufactured goods had fallen off, while that of agricultural products was recovering: and am repeating an oft-repeated thesis that

the peasant does not produce, or at all events does not bring to market, a surplus, except under the compulsion of taxation, or with the object of obtaining the products of the town. In so far as the Government's remedy, of restricting the credits given to industry, worked, it worked by compelling the directorates in the various branches to put their commodities on the market, instead of holding them back for higher prices. In fact, those who were prosperous enough to have a surplus of grain, held it back. The economist Yugov (who is not always the best of guides) tells us, without a guarantee of the correctness of the calculation, that the amount of grain stored by the peasants at the beginning of 1928 was from 9 to 14 million tons. In the nature of things, such an estimate of hidden stores must be guesswork, but the existence of a general impression of concealment on so large a scale is a relevant fact. The Government's collections of grain in 1928 were catastrophically low, and the holding back of supplies was evidently a chronic phenomenon, to which nothing less than a liberal supply of goods either from home or from abroad would put an end.

The Scissors is not a uniquely Russian phenomenon. A maladjustment of the correlation between the prices of industrial and agricultural products accompanied, if it did not originate, the world-wide depression of the thirties. A completely unorganised agriculture continued to produce, when a partially organised industry was putting a check upon its production: and, because agriculture ceased to be able to buy, the wheels of industry were stopped. Russian agriculture tried to meet its difficulty by keeping its products off the market. A part, at least, of world agriculture applied the remedy of destruction. The adjustment which shall make plenty no longer a cause of economic depression is, for the world in general, yet to seek. While the interests of individuals continue to be contrary to the interests of the community as a whole: while each producer benefits by scarcity in his own particular line, and the whole body, producer and consumer alike, benefits by the enlargement of the total output: such an adjustment is not in sight.

Our authorities give us, on the whole, a depressing picture of rural education during this period. The miserable pay of the teachers, the irregularity with which it was received, the lack of school-books and equipment, the lack of fuel to keep the school-house habitable during the winter season (in which alone school attendance is possible in a country that lives by agriculture) are the constant refrain. The children of the poorer peasantry lack clothes and boots, and cannot leave the shelter of their homes in winter. The well-to-do are aware of the advantages of education. They employ the school teachers to give private lessons to their own children. That is better, from their point of view, than seeing that the schoolmaster gets adequate and regular pay for his public duties, and that the school is equipped and kept warm. The half-starved teachers must make friends with the well-to-do, and take what

they give. So the schooling becomes class, not mass, teaching : and money has its way, here as in other things, despite Lenin and the Revolution.

A particularly convincing picture of local institutions in a portion of the Moscow province bordering upon Smolensk has been given to us. It is convincing because it so mingles praise with blame as to eliminate every suspicion of a propagandist intention in either direction. There is an excellent hospital, having forty beds and a large attendance of out-patients, and serving portions of the Tver and Smolensk as well as of the Moscow provinces. In the epidemic of typhoid, the number of beds rose to 100. The hospital has worked through all the difficulties caused by scarcity of food, drugs, instruments, and money : thanks to the confidence which the staff has established in the local population. The people have helped the staff and have collected voluntary levies, which have been expended on additional staff, on the pay of hospital servants, medicines and instruments.

The same canton has a satisfactory Veterinary Centre, with accommodation for the reception of animal patients, waiting-sheds, dispensary, and quarters of staff, and three times as many patients as in 1912. A large number of visits have been paid by the veterinary surgeon to outside patients. The people are making a levy in grain for new buildings.

When we turn to the educational arrangements of this canton, it is quite a different story. There has been a falling off in the number of schools and the number of learners and a great reduction in educational equipment. The canton was the centre of much adult education, conducted in the "People's Palace", built from Co-operative funds. The "Palace" was burned down, it was not insured, and all the cultural activities centred in it have come to an end. An illustration shows us the new temporary library : a wretched hut, evidently on the point of collapse into a marsh. And yet we are told that in 1923 there was great local interest among the older people in agricultural education, and among the younger in political education. The loss of the "People's Palace" has taken the heart out of them.

Occasionally it was genuine local hostility which stopped the progress of education. In the Valdai Hills there was a general downfall of attempts at "culture" in 1921-2. Hooligans of the village sacked the library and drove out the would-be students. A boy having hurt himself upon the new-fangled gymnastic apparatus, the fathers of the village came and broke it up with axes, to prevent the recurrence of similar accidents. One woman school-teacher undertook to teach some peasant women to read and write. After the third lesson, they asked for a printed cotton shirt apiece, as compensation for loss of time.

Yakovlev, on the whole our best and most convincing informant of the facts of village life, tells us that there is a wide variation in the quality of the schools and their popularity. Some attract 90% of the children, some only 20%. It depends upon the teacher's knack of getting on with the

people. Those who can't forget the old stiff ways find difficulty in getting what they want. In spite of all their grievances, of poor pay irregularly received, freezing schoolrooms, lack of books and stationery, hundreds of teachers travelled on foot to attend the teachers' course 50 or 60 miles away, and improve their qualifications. The authorities, says Yakovlev, have not treated the teachers well. At the beginning of the Revolution their old personal relations drew many teachers towards the Social Revolutionaries, and their poverty has made them dependent on the more prosperous peasants. The authorities ought to treat them as the Party's allies in the fight with illiteracy: but they neglect them, or bombard them with unexplained orders. The young people have an extraordinary thirst for knowledge, but don't know where to turn to satisfy it.

Poverty, again, accounts for much. The New Economic Policy made necessary but dangerous savings, shifted burdens from the central to the local budget, and called upon the districts and cantons to pay for services which had formerly been gratuitous. The general result—we cannot shut our eyes to it either in the field of education or of medicine—is the starvation of local needs. The village records are full of it. "Half the village is down with malaria. There is a Sanitary Committee, but no one can give any information about it." "A woman doctor attends: but she had to go out under police orders to make post-mortem examinations. The sanitary supervision is weak. The cemetery has been made over to the *Church Soviet*"—a surprising revelation of the spread of new institutions in an unexpected direction. In the Mountain Republic "whole families are infected with syphilis, and malaria and phthisis are common. The disinfection of the skin, before anti-malaria inoculation, is performed with spirit brought by the patients themselves, for the doctors have no supply". Staff, drugs, instruments, food, fuel, all are lacking. Veterinary requirements are rather better met. It was always a trait of the Russian peasant, part of that narrow practicality which the terrific pressure of his minute economy enforces, that he understood better the need of attending to the health of his horse or his cow than to that of himself or his family.

Stalin told a story in illustration of this characteristic. A man was drowned in a Siberian river. After a time, the searchers gave up the attempt at rescue because they must "go and water the mare." Stalin—not yet the man in high authority—protested against the abandonment of the victim. One of the searchers justified himself thus: "A man—any of us can make a man. But a mare—just try to make a mare!"

It is not surprising to find that the Revolution made no immediate or radical change in the realities of the local rural administration. The Provisional Government had maintained the Provincial and District Council (*Zemstvo*), and had added to it a Canton Council, which existed only for three months. The November Revolution replaced these Councils with Soviets, and thereby introduced an element of less experience,

but representative of a much more numerous class. The institutions which touched rural life most closely, beside the Land Committees, were the Canton Soviets, or the Executive Committees, which exercised their authority when the full representative body was not sitting, and the village Soviets. It was hard to find suitable men for the Canton Soviet, without going to the larger unit of the district or even of the provinces, to obtain them. It was hard also to find men willing to take up the heavier local duties. In critical times, for instance in the southern districts during Denikin's campaign against Moscow, there was often group-tenure of office and rapid rotation, as one man after another shuffled off the burden. Sometimes a man was elected President of the village Soviet to spite him. The peasant quite understood the election of the village Soviet and the working of the Canton Executive Committee. Beyond these his political ideas did not extend, and he had only the vaguest notion of his right to influence by his (indirect) vote the composition of the District Soviet. In villages where many were poor and a few well-to-do, the latter usually had a dominant position in the local institutions, and exploited it for their private interests. When the village Soviet offended powerful interests, the well-to-do sometimes set up the authority of the old *Mir* against it. There was general inability or unwillingness in the local institutions to support the poor against the prosperous. We hear of a village Soviet in the Stavropol area of the south-east which is a sort of *Mr. Facing-both-ways*. Nearly half the members are Communists, the poor are well represented, the work on paper is excellent. But the well-to-do do not like expenditure on public objects—how strangely familiar it sounds! There is no selection of pure seed, and no milling centre, no joint water-supply, no fire-fighting appliances, no drugs or instruments at the Medical Centre, no step is taken for re-survey of the land in the interests of the poor, the budget is for 10,000 roubles expenditure and 1,478 roubles income. This last phenomenon, of a fictitious expenditure against a tiny income, repeats itself elsewhere.

Why do not the poorer use their numerical strength in the Soviet to obtain what they need? In the village, we are told, people are *afraid of consequences*. It is awkward to quarrel with the man from whom you want to borrow implements or cattle, to whom you may perhaps have urgent need to hire yourself out as a labourer.

It is the old story. Liberty is not liberty for the economically unfree. From the Valdai hills comes the story of a middling peasant—not merely a poor one—who tries to stand out against a dominant clique of the well-to-do. He gets a thrashing, and no redress for it: and this in revolutionary Russia, where the true agrarian revolution is not as yet—in 1923—accomplished. Money is still king.

The local institutions, as we see them in these convincing records, are eaten up with routine duties, and especially with the collection of taxes: mere appurtenances of the Inspector of Finances, says Yakovlev. The

subordinate staffs of the south-east "would do well if assured of a tolerable existence", that is of sufficient and regular pay. In the meanwhile they are prone to all the vices of officialdom, from red tape and drunkenness to corruption. Even the President of the Cantonal Executive Committee—an important personage for some 25,000 inhabitants—gets 44 roubles a month: that is 22s. a week, if we were at liberty to assume an uninflated rouble in 1923, but in reality far less than that figure. The same record discloses to us a salary of 14 roubles a month for the militia chief—the local head of police—and 8 roubles 40 kopeks for the rank and file of the militia.

Illicit distillation is everywhere rife, and it is only here and there that the militia makes an honest fight against it. Leonid Grigorov, in an entertaining description of the local authorities of a rural area, tells us how he found an illicit still and a number of boon companions *in the militia office*. This was too much: and the militia chief was replaced by a Red Army man who was a good deal of a martinet. The new man attacked illicit distillation with vigour, and sentences up to three years imprisonment, with confiscation of apparatus and materials, were pronounced. He established night-watches in the villages, and compelled everyone, including the priest, to take his turn at them. Naturally he became extremely unpopular. When he made a civil marriage, instead of being "crowned" in church in the orthodox fashion, the old people shook their heads in disapproval. Unfortunately for him—a Communist bound to strictness of life—he betrayed a weakness. He walked out with the village beauty, and his explanation that they met accidentally was not accepted by local opinion. His wife was jealous and—another gross breach of the Communist code—he beat her for it.

What can you expect of a man who makes a civil marriage? said the village: and added that no decent man would interfere with other people's home-brew.

The offender's brother Communists took up the matter, in a sort of Court of Communist honour: but the wife was loyal and denied the beating: and it seems that the affair blew over: while the village continued to shake its head over such doings. The village does not like new-fangled ways: and in this matter of marriage, inclines, in its own extremely practical language, "to pay both the priest and the canton". Mr. Rhys Williams tells us that a Popular Judge took a census of village opinion on the middle Volga on the question of making all marriages valid, whether registered or no, and 95% voted against such license.

As to the beating of the wife, the Communists might condemn: but the village cherished quite a different tradition. A writer on the Moscow Province tells us of a man who shot his wife for refusing to give up her position in an institution and return to her household duties. The peasants, both men and women, justified the husband. He had the right to

dispose of his wife. From information as recent as 1934 we know that wife-beating was still not uncommon.

We see in these pages of Grigorov very varying types of the Popular Judge. One is a sensible, honest, considerate man, with no pretensions to legal training and very little need of any. He sits, with two elected Assessors and the permanent secretary, who records the proceedings, in a rather dirty room decorated with pictures of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky. The women who are present in Court have on their most presentable clothes: the men are in ancient discoloured pea-jackets, and printed cotton shirts that have long seen no soap. The peasants are very respectful of the Court. The Judge is an old son of the village—"born in a furrow and brought up under a stack"—a product of the one-class parish school of Tsarist days. He knows the value of summer-time to the peasant, and rûns rapidly through the less important cases on his list. When the proceedings begin, an old woman excuses herself for having an illicit still by saying that she meant to use the liquor for the Communist holiday on May 1st. That doesn't get her off a good round fine, for illicit liquor is worth money. When the Judge's day in Court is over, he sits down with the Court Watchman to tea and strawberry jam: the jam, of course, kept in the mouth while the hot tea passes through it, in the good old Russian way.

Another Popular Judge in a different canton is also a Communist, but he is for ever doing scandalous things. He has a Court Messenger, a member of the Communist League of Youth, and he sends this young man to bring him home-brewed liquor from the villagers. One day the Court is full and waiting for its Judge: who is found in a tavern with a friend, one of the Court Assessors. The men don't like to disturb him: but a woman teacher, the second Assessor—it is always the women who have the courage to bell the cat—goes into the tavern and fetches him out. The Judge and his boon companion stagger into Court and begin the hearing of an arson case: but it is too much for their fuddled brains, and they adjourn it amid the protests and exclamations of the public. On another occasion this festive Judge has a batch of fourteen illicit distillers to try. He himself has been spending the morning over his cups with Deacon Paul. One of the accused persons, a woman, fails to attend the Court, but sends a letter in which she says it is no good summoning her to Court, for she means to go on with her illicit distilling. "What a beauty!" says the Judge, loudly and good-humouredly. "She won't stop it!" and he roars with laughter, in which the crowd in Court obsequiously joins. Then, after passing his hands over his rubicund countenance, he sentences the contumacious lady to 50 kopeks fine, let us say, a much-depreciated shilling, for failure to attend Court: leaving her free to continue her illicit operations.

These are not funny stories: but a record of village life by a conscientious correspondent of the Soviet Press, who explains that he never gives

wholly or partially exempted, and in some areas this was interpreted as exempting all who cultivated less than 3 acres. It also put an end to the system of joint communal responsibility, which must have worked very differently in different places, according as the prosperous few or the numerous poor were dominant in the local Soviets. The new system retained some of the rubbish of the old: and we know that a canton of the Tver province continued to pay fifteen different items of taxation, and that discretionary local imposts continued to be numerous and vexatious.

The process of clearing up went on, and in 1923 a single agricultural tax, calculated in rye units, but payable, at discretion, in money, was substituted for the produce-tax of the New Economic Policy. The law now prohibited irregular local levies, but such prohibitions were more easily formulated than enforced. On the rehabilitation of the currency in 1924, a tax in cash was substituted for the tax in kind. We are fortunate in having a glimpse, in south-eastern Russia, of the manner in which this change actually operated. Beside very frequent arithmetical mistakes, due to the incompetence of local staffs, we learn that the prescribed abatements for the poor are not fully observed, and that claims for remission on account of death or theft of cattle (the latter an extremely common incident of village life owing to the obstinate survival of brigandage) were frequently rejected, because they came in late, or were unaccompanied by formal evidence. These are conditions in which the poor and less intelligent inevitably suffer more than their prosperous brethren, who know the official ropes. Another difficulty was created by the novelty of the new currency. It had hardly reached the village when payment in cash began to be demanded. Experience of the older inflated currency had caused the people to be very shy of notes: and a steady currency, in which there is general confidence, is an essential preliminary to the successful working of a money-tax in a backward rural area.

These difficulties adjusted themselves in the course of time: but a cash-tax, levied after harvest, inevitably means a forced sale for the peasant too poor to hold his grain till the spring. Indirect taxation, always disproportionately heavy for the poor if it falls upon articles in common use, was considerable. The excise-taxes included tobacco, sugar, kerosene, tea and matches, in 1927, and the sale of spirits as a State monopoly had been resumed in 1925, and produced an amount not far short of half of the proceeds of direct taxation. That Trotsky was right in saying that taxation policy was more favourable to the prosperous peasant than to the poor, is probable, and measures taken in 1925, to throw more of the burden on the former, did not substantially alter this position.

The opening of the "scissors" to the advantage of industry, and the disadvantage of agriculture, was less exaggerated in 1927 than in 1923, but still remained serious. A hundredweight of rye was exchangeable in 1927-28 for about half of the cotton, sugar, salt, oil, soap and nails which it sufficed to buy in the pre-war period: rather less than half in the case

of private dealers, rather more than half in the case of the Co-operatives.

We have a statistical picture of the stratification of rural classes in 1927. Roughly speaking, 3% of all the agricultural households were employed on State- and collective farms. Eight per cent. were purely proletarian, dependent upon employment on the lands of others, badly, or not at all, organised in rural unions, and as much subject to exploitation as a similar and perhaps smaller class had been before the Revolution. Over 20% were semi-proletarians, partially dependent on the land of others, but having very small holdings in addition to their cottage gardens or yards. More than half of these had holdings of less than three acres. Nearly 65% were middling peasants who were producing small surpluses without employing hired labour. A large proportion of these were letting out cattle and implements to others. These 15 million middling households, comprising 81 million persons, were the backbone of the peasantry. The petty capitalist farmers, employing hired labour, and corresponding to the class vaguely described as *kulaks*, represented nearly 4% of the total: along with their families, perhaps 5 million persons, as estimated later on at the time of their expulsion from the villages.

Rural Russia had preserved her ancient constitution in spite of all that had been done to alter it. Over vastly the greater portion of her agricultural area, the village *Mir*, and the village meeting which represented it, continued to make partial redistributions of the land, to hold by the ancient three-field rotation of crops, to fix the dates for carrying out the manure, sowing, hay-cutting, harvesting, throwing open the stubbles for the common grazing. The strips were preserved, and a man had to walk on an average 1,260 miles in the agricultural season to get round his own holding. The old large families were broken up, and the number of household units increased, largely as a consequence of the fiscal methods of the first ten years of Revolutionary Government. In the whole of the U.S.S.R., of 26 million households, 8 millions were horseless. In Ukraine not much less than half the households lacked a horse. The supply of agricultural implements was not much over two-thirds of what it had been before the war, and the efficiency of the existing supply was less. Such machinery as existed was in the hands of the more prosperous few. In the spring of 1928, nearly three-quarters of the area sown was sown by hand. Not much less than half of the harvested area was reaped with the sickle. More than two-fifths of the grain was threshed by the hand-flail. There was acute need of fertilisers and of seed of good quality.

And yet the area under cultivation and its productivity had nearly returned to the pre-war standards; and the area producing raw materials for industry was substantially above that of 1913. Taking 100% as the pre-war standard, agricultural production, which had stood at 69% in 1924, approached 85% in 1927. Horned cattle, of immense importance

for manure as well as for draught, were more than pre-war: sheep and swine were about equal to the old figure.

The countryside was back in pre-war days, *minus the landlords*. The peasant had lost one master: his other master, the *kulak*, was stronger than ever. But the *kulak* had fulfilled his function: as bees fulfil theirs in storing the hive.

In February, 1928, an article appeared in *Truth (Pravda)* which foreshadowed a change in the policy of the Party and explained its cause. It announced that the village had expanded and enriched itself, but that the principal beneficiary of the enrichment of the village was the *kulak*. Hence the difficulties which had been experienced during the current winter of 1927-8 in the collection of grain for the use of the army and the cities. A second cause, explanatory of the difficulties, was backwardness in the supply of industrial products, resulting in the hoarding of grain by the peasants in general, and the *kulak* in particular. The power of the prosperous element had increased, was increasing and ought to be diminished: at the same time that a more rapid development of industrial production must be undertaken. The stage was now evidently set for a great change: a change which, so far as the vast rural expanses were concerned, was a second and completer Revolution.

CHAPTER XI

THE TWO DISCIPLINES

"From an American viewpoint all Soviet citizens are treated very much like prisoners on parole, especially since the Tsarist passport system was revived in 1932."—LITTLEPAGE and BESS, *In Search of Soviet Gold*, 1932.

Account of the trial of the chairman of a Co-operative shop, charged with embezzlement. He confessed "so objectively that it might be the misdeeds and debauches of someone else, so completely identifying himself with the community that he actually began to grieve with it over the misfortune of having such a president. By a reverse process, his weakness was their weakness. All of them—somehow the Court too—were in the muck together, and somehow all together must get out of it."—ALBERT RHYS WILLIAMS, *The Russian Land*.

"He who, at every age, as boy and youth and in mature life, has come out of the trial victorious and pure, shall be appointed a ruler and guardian of the state. . . . They will have to be watched at every turn of their lives, in order that we may see whether they preserve this resolution."—PLATO, *The Republic*.

"The Party is a thong . . . it often cuts into my flesh, but I can't live without it. . . . I need someone to give me orders. I must feel another shoulder next to mine."—PAVEL RAYEVSKY in KIRSHON's play *Bread*.

IN AN earlier study of Russia before the Revolution, I spoke of the growing sense of indiscipline which was characteristic of the Russia of the later Tsars. It often expressed itself in a Cassandra-like denunciation of political and social evils, and in a call for the restriction of liberties which

were being abused. But alongside of it there were the obvious facts of a political system which denied a legal status to the larger half of the population and conceded it very precariously to the remainder. There was, in fact, as much indiscipline in the Government and its apparatus as in the governed : so that, in the words of a Japanese observer, quoted by Mr. Maurice Baring, "an incompetent Government was being opposed by an ineffectual Revolution". A sort of drawn battle was in progress, in which each side inflicted and suffered casualties but could not establish a definitive superiority. The setting up of the Duma was an attempt to adjust the Russian state to the conditions of a new discipline based upon a quasi-parliamentary constitution, and Peter Stolypin was apparently convinced of the need of transforming the Orthodox Autocracy to something like a *bourgeois* monarchy of the Louis Philippe type, resting upon a strong and sober peasantry. But the rulers and the clique which surrounded them would not have it so, and the opportunity was allowed to pass.

Count Leo Tolstoi was already preaching the end of the State and the replacement of its political authority by the religious standards of the individual. "The Kingdom of God is within you." When the Revolution of March, 1917, arrived, it was precisely of the type which Tolstoi had advocated. No one made it. But each said to himself, "For me, I have no need of the State." The magic words shook down the tottering fabric. The army was a crowd on the way home. The peasants were cultivators taking back the land.

But the internal discipline of the individual which Tolstoi's plan had postulated had not matured to take the place of the artificial discipline which had collapsed into dust. *The power slipped into the street.* Lenin and his Bolsheviks picked it up. It was now their task to create a discipline, and to give coherence and form to a land of fragments.

But that was not the work of a moment. It was possible, by obeying those wild forces, at once to ride the whirlwind : but not to direct the storm : except by long and patient work, such as demanded administrative genius of a high order, and the practice of creative compromise. In fact, they proceeded by the construction of a two-fold discipline : one an imitation of a semi-barbarous past ; one an inspiration from a more enlightened future. One was Terror and one was Leadership : one came from without and from above, from the Third Section of Nicolas I, from the Okhrana, and bore various names thereafter, of which Gay-Pay-oo is the best known to the West ; the other from within, and by selection and promotion out of the best brains and the best hearts of the Russian people, and calling itself (by a historical accident of revolutionary history) by the entirely inappropriate name of the "Party". That Stalin has had many a tussle both with the "Party" and with the Gay-Pay-oo to keep these institutions in their proper places, is evident to every one who can read between the lines of history.

The Gay-Pay-oo—I shall call it compendiously by that name, though the revolutionaries first called it Cheka, and at a later stage the Ministry of Internal Affairs—was something which Alexander Kerensky ought to have established, and, in his later months, thought of establishing, and which the Bolsheviks set up immediately on their arrival in power. In times of profound peace, a long-established Government with no possible rivals may with impunity abstain from the creation of such an agency, or may achieve the feat of making a moderate use of its terrible powers. Normally—because every Government is hard upon someone at some time, and because every Government has a duty to preserve itself or resign its functions to another—the existence of a political police is inevitable, because it is the eyes and the ears of the public authority, and often the hands too.

One distinction, indeed, must be clearly drawn, if we are not to fall into a moral confusion. Every Government makes use of fear as an everyday agency. That is what we mean when we speak of *detering*. From the magistrate who fines a motorist ignoring a signal, to the judge who assumes the black cap in passing sentence upon a murderer, punishment is used for this purpose, and the talk of curative or reformatory measures has not made an end of the practice. But we reserve the word *Terror* for something less discriminating than this ordinary penal jurisdiction. We talk of *Terror* when the blow is struck at whole groups or classes without regard to the culpability of the individual; and apply the word to the *organisation of fear*, by Governments, or by parties contending together for supremacy, as a means of eliminating opposition or compelling co-operation. Contrary to a general impression, the Bolsheviks did not employ this method till eight months after the November Revolution, when the Left Social Revolutionaries, who had up to this time maintained an unstable alliance with them, rose in revolt. Over 400 persons were put to death in consequence of the outbreak which occurred at Yaroslavl, and the early period of leniency then came to an end. (*July, 1918.*) The massacre of the Imperial Family in July, however shocking to the world, was perpetrated to prevent an imminent rescue, and falls into another category. The terror was intensified when the murders of prominent Bolsheviks and the attempt on the life of Lenin, following upon the spread of the civil war, had demonstrated the peril in which the revolutionary régime stood. (*September, 1918.*) “With what foot-rule”, asked Lenin, “do you measure the number of necessary and superfluous blows in a battle?” The Terror, in the sense of mass-execution, or mass-punishment in some form, of unarmed persons, by organised authority, continued, with certain intervals, throughout the civil war. It seems to have been equal on both sides, and orders by White Generals for the execution of hostages are extant.

The theorists of revolution *philosophised* terrorism. The Austrian Marxist, Kautsky, wrote a book condemning it, and contrasting early revolu-

ionary practice with the later practice of the Bolsheviks. Trotsky replied with a theoretical justification, in which he pointed out that the sternest course was also the most merciful, because it shortened the struggle and the suffering. Precisely that argument has been used in respect to frightfulness in international warfare. There is a conventional difference between the two. "I swear to you, lawful and lawless war are scarcely ever akin," sings the poet of the Victorian country-house.

The dramatist, Alexander Afinogeniev, who lost his life in the bombing of Moscow in November, 1941, wrote in 1931, when the battle over collectivisation was almost at its hottest, a play called *Fear*, describing a struggle in the Institute of Physiological Stimuli between the old professoriate and the new. The old-fashioned Professor finds that fear is the common stimulus, and that the abolition of fear would bring a rich creative life: with the obvious implication that the Soviet Government must change its ways. His woman opponent, a sixty-year-old member of the Commission of Party Control, declares that fear, hitherto the instrument of the class oppressor, is now felt by those who desire a return of the old order. "When we break the resistance of the last oppressor on earth, then our children will look for the explanation of the word *fear* in a dictionary." The lady wins, of course; for the authorities remove the old-fashioned professor: and she hits upon a significant truth when she describes the Terror as something affecting a particular class, and making no difference at all to the psychology of the rank and file of the population. The Terror has been tolerated: because it has not touched the masses. When, and if, it touches them the régime will be in danger.

The Terror took more forms than one. Like war, blockading and starving out the hostile nation, it deprived the "enemy" of food-cards, at a time when the supply depended upon rationing, or left him without the relief made necessary by famine. But its principal form was the killing or physical ill-treatment of persons assumed to be associates of the opposing section.

In 1922 the Soviet Union had emerged from a desperate struggle for existence, and, after the merciless annihilation of the rebel sailors at Kronstadt, had made a vital concession to the peasantry. It seemed that extraordinary measures for internal security were no longer urgent, and—again contrary to general impression—there was, in fact, a period of six years in which the Terror was suspended. The Gay-Pay-oo was deprived, for a time, of the authority to execute persons without trial, and there was a brief interval in which capital punishment was off the statute-book. How real was the relaxation of tension during the epoch of N.E.P., becomes evident if we contrast the treatment of the various Oppositions within the party at this time with the events of 1936–38. Exile was the worst penalty during the former period, death sentences came thick and fast during the later one.

It was a turn in foreign politics which brought back the Terror in

1927. Disappointment after disappointment had fallen upon the Soviet Government, in China and in Britain, and the rupture of diplomatic relations by the latter Power was followed within a few days by the murder of the Soviet envoy in Warsaw by a Russian refugee. A bomb was thrown in Leningrad, and an attempt was made at Minsk on the life of an officer of the Gay-Pay-oo. It seemed as though the long-threatened danger of attack by the capitalist States was about to be realised, and that traitors at home would prepare the way for them. The powers of the Gay-Pay-oo were strengthened, and on two successive days twenty White Russian prisoners were executed. Among them was Prince Dolgorukov, a man of seventy-eight, once Chairman of the Kadet Party, and a well-known champion of freedom and democracy. There was no pretence that these persons were personally concerned in any plot. The act was typically terroristic: a demonstration intended to strike fear into opponents.

The Gay-Pay-oo had political prisons of its own, including the famous Lubyanka at Moscow. A combination of the function of policeman and of jailor is a standing temptation to the abuse of the function of the former: and the separation of the two would be the first requirement of a civilised administration. It was more than a political police in the ordinary sense. It included a frontier army: it provided guards at markets, railway stations and river ports: it assumed responsibility for the reclamation of the waif children of whom war and famine had left a terrible legacy: it possessed reformatory prisons for the treatment of ordinary non-political crime, of which the inmates are patients rather than prisoners: we even hear of it establishing dancing clubs for the wholesome amusement of youth in the towns. From 1929 it had the new function of organising penal labour on the building of canals and railways and other work carried out by the agency of deported persons. In this capacity it established human, even friendly, relations with its prisoners, and one of the paradoxes of recent Russian history has been the release of many persons, and the decoration of some of them who had done good work under its auspices in the building of the Baltic-White Sea Canal, and of the Far Eastern Railway.

Part of the reputation of successive Russian Governments for cruelty is derived from the rigours of the journey to Siberia, and from the careless, corrupt, or capricious, administration of the prisons. But before, as well as after the Revolution of November, there has been a marked contrast between the good-humoured leniency with which ordinary offences are treated and the harshness towards crime which attacks the State itself, as an entity distinguishable from the community. Under the Tsars political offenders were frequently tried by special Courts created *ad hoc*, and the Emperor often took a personal part in the administration of justice in such cases. Ordinary theft was very lightly regarded: and Mr. Maurice Baring tells a typical story of a policeman who was taking a drunken man "to a friend's house, *where he can rest*". Under the Revolu-

tionary Government the discipline for ordinary criminals aims at curative results. Yet the theft of the property of the State, including the grain in the fields of the collective farm, is punishable with shooting. I think that the notion of crime, as distinct from sin on the one hand, and from wrong to a particular individual on the other, was, and perhaps still is, imperfectly developed. I shall endeavour elsewhere to make it plain that religious ideas survive the formal abandonment of religion. The thief is a sinner who ought to repent: the person injured by the theft may be expected to retaliate upon him: but other members of the community will naturally pity the sinner and help him to win absolution. How cruel could be the retaliation of the persons directly injured by a theft, we learn from Gleb Uspensky, the depicter of peasant life and character. "If he kills the man who took his horse, he feels innocent, because the horse was his helper on the land." Rick-burners and fire-raisers were often beaten to death by the peasants: and we hear of a horse-thief roasted over a slow fire by men who lived by the carrying trade.

Similarly, the State retaliates on the person who attacks it: but the ordinary offences which are treated with such sympathetic consideration and such lenient discipline at Bolshevo, and other similar centres, do not seem to be attacks upon the State, however much they may affect the *community of which the State is the embodiment*. I have heard an instructive story of the Revolutionary period regarding a man who stole the watch of a foreigner. The law provides a penalty of three years' imprisonment for such a theft. But in this case the offender was shot. He was shot for *discrediting the U.S.S.R.* in the eyes of foreigners.

We get some light upon Russian conceptions of crime and punishment from the popular attitude towards the capital sentence. Capital punishment for ordinary crimes was abolished by the Empress Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great (1753), but flogging, sufficient to cause death, continued for some time longer. The latter was stopped by Nicolas I: and from that time up to the Revolution of 1905 a very high regard was shown for human life. This did not stand in the way of the semi-official encouragement of pogroms: but I speak, for the moment, of the official attitude. Judged by the British standard, the official Russian practice in regard to the capital sentence was, in this interval, remarkably lenient. The Revolution of 1905-6 was drastically repressed, and the Field Courts-Martial executed numbers which are variously stated at from 600 to 2,000. The Provisional Government of March, 1917, abolished capital punishment even for soldiers on active service: but soon had to reinstitute it. It was again abolished in 1922, but again restored. During the period of increasing severity since 1927, the Press and public associations of all kinds have had every external appearance of welcoming the most rigorous treatment of offences against the State. But demonstrations can be organised: and the popular outlook on judicial execution is more complex than these expressions of feeling appear to suggest.

There seems to be, in the Russian temperament, a special susceptibility to the legal enforcement, with all its paraphernalia and solemnity, of the capital sentence. This susceptibility coexists with a high degree of indifference to human life, and occasional extensive destruction of it, as in the pogroms. Kerensky shows that he was aware of the existence of this contradiction, when he says that "killing by terror or mass execution is another matter: but it is practically impossible to carry out a judicial death-sentence in Russia". Trotsky, he observes, did not dare to introduce the guillotine: but Trotsky decimated whole platoons in his military administration. Trotsky did, in fact, intend to shoot both the political Commissar and the Commanding Officer of a regiment which misbehaved and—with Lenin's full support—faced up to the outcry which charged him with killing Communists.

It may be that pity finds time to come into operation, and reflection fixes the blame upon a third party, the State, when formal justice does its dreadful work. It may be that a deep-rooted and traditional distrust of the State makes Justice seem to be Injustice when it puts on its robes. I recall a sentence which Bernard Shaw has put into the mouth of his Julius Caesar: "This was natural slaying. I feel no horror at it." Evidently there are those to whom the wilder justice, by its very spontaneity, seems the less horrible.

Dostoevsky makes Prince Myshkin say that murder by legal sentence is more terrible than murder by brigands, because in the case of the latter, hope remains till the final blow is struck. This seems another way of saying that the prolonged torment of despair for the sentenced victim is too great to be justified. A great Russian thinker, Vl. Soloviev, who has analysed from the religious standpoint the case for capital punishment, asks himself which, of two things, is the greater sin. "The fanatical crowd which, under the influence of a mad anger, kills a criminal on the spot, is to be blamed: but deserves indulgence. As for the Society, which kills slowly, coldly, consciously, it has no excuse." As between the murderer and the Society which executes him, he finds for the former: for the latter "lacks all those physiological and psychological conditions and motives which have obscured and concealed from the criminal the essence of his act". With or without reason, the Russian people appears to agree with this judgment: is capable of mass murder: and pities the condemned criminal. It may be that it pities him less when the execution is summary.

There were indications, during the Terror of 1937, that popular sympathy was awakened on behalf of the victims. This, at least, is how I interpret certain official pronouncements and actions. It was thought necessary to emphasise the solidarity of the executioners with the Red Army, and the frontier guards who protect the Socialist Fatherland from external enemies. The beneficent functions of the political police, as builders of canals and railways, were put prominently forward. The twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Cheka was accompanied by

organised ovations, at which the public demanded the continuance of the good work. A poem in the principal Communist Daily romanticised the function by calling it Razvyedka, which means the military reconnaissance of the enemy's forces, and so has associations with the defence of the Fatherland against armed attack:

“Day and night, we are on guard,
Day and night, we keep the fight,
The foe is wise, we are wiser,
The foe is strong, we are stronger.
All the peoples of the Soviets will help us
To burn to cinders the enemy's nest.”

With the adoption of the first Five-Year-Plan, and its accompaniment of a revolution in agriculture, involving changes greater and more radical than those of November, 1917, the U.S.S.R. entered upon a period of renewed struggle, in which the weapon of Terror has seldom returned to its sheath. Periodically we see Stalin himself impressed by the necessity of moderation. In March, 1930, he tells his followers that they are dizzy with success, and orders them to cease compulsory collectivisation and the removal of church bells and closure of churches. In June, 1931, he cries a halt to the persecution of the intellectuals. Later, a new danger appears on the international horizon. To the danger of Japan in the Far East is added that of Nazi Germany in the West, renewing the fear of capitalist, now renamed fascist, attack. Internally the battle of collectivisation seemed to be won, and the food supply seemed at last to be secured. Suddenly an underworld of insecurity opened at the feet of the victorious Party. S. M. Kirov, the Secretary of the Party in Leningrad, was murdered as he sat in his office in the Smolny, to announce the Government's decision to abolish rationing and equalise food prices.

S. M. Kirov, a native of north-central Russia, was deep in revolutionary activities from his boyhood upwards, and was one of the earliest members of what afterwards became the Communist League of Youth. An accident brought him into the inner circle of Stalin's Trans-Caucasus friends. Escaping from the police at Tomsk, in 1909, he helped to edit a revolutionary journal at Vladikavkaz, where he made friends with Stalin's crony, Ordzhonikidze. During all the chances and changes of 1918-22 he played a leading part in south-eastern Russia on behalf of the Revolutionary Government, recovered machine-guns and treasure from under the ice of the Volga, and helped to defend Astrakhan from the Whites. When Trotsky desired to concentrate the Red forces against Denikin's threat to Moscow, Kirov at Astrakhan, like Stalin and Voroshilov at Tsaritsyn, resisted the demand. It was probably bad strategy and worse discipline, but it created a special bond of sympathy between Kirov and Stalin. Stationed in Baku, he distinguished himself by his activity in the restoration of the oil wells, which were only less important than the food supply. In December, 1925, when Zinoviev, the political

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leader of the Leningrad proletariat, was joining his forces with those of the Trotsky opposition, Kirov was sent to the post of difficulty at Peter the Great's capital, and won the workers to the cause of the Government. In the critical year of 1929, when Stalin had launched the first Five-Year-Plan, he had charge of the north-west. He was a man of exceptional courage, energy, and versatility, and discharged each successive task with distinction. Already a member of the Central Committee of the Party, he became in 1930 one of its inner ring, the Politburo.

I have dwelt thus at length upon Kirov's career, because his assassination is a turning-point in Soviet affairs, and because his past goes far to explain the fierceness of the reprisals which followed. In losing him, Stalin lost not only a valuable instrument but a particular friend, one of those political workers of the Caucasus, for whom the General Secretary of the Party has a very warm corner in his heart. It was the first murderous attack for sixteen years on a prominent Bolshevik within the limits of the U.S.S.R., and it profoundly shook the confidence of the Government in the efficiency of its police and in the security of the leaders. The discoveries which led to the trials of 1936-38 are its direct consequence: and an atmosphere of increasing suspicion, aggravated by the danger of foreign attack on two sides, has ever since pervaded the U.S.S.R.

The Central Executive Committee at once decreed a special law for the summary punishment of outrages. This forbade appeals against convictions and required the immediate execution of death-sentences. Sixty-six persons, including one woman, were executed at Leningrad and Moscow after summary trial. Thirty-seven others were executed at Kiev and Minsk. All this happened before the actual assassin of Kirov, a Communist named Nikolaev, was brought to trial, and there appears to have been no allegation that the 103 persons executed were guilty of complicity in the murder. The proceedings fall into the category of demonstrative terrorism, differing only from earlier cases of the same character in that the forms of law were observed. The head of the Leningrad section of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs (which had now taken the place of the Gay-Pay-oo) was put on his trial for negligence, and along with other officials of the Commissariat sentenced to imprisonment.

S. M. Kirov had succeeded Zinoviev in the leadership of the Communist Party at Leningrad on Zinoviev's latest fall from favour. It was now stated, with the support of the Moscow and Leningrad centres of the Party, that Zinoviev and his group were morally responsible for the murder. Zinoviev, Kamenev, and a number of other persons who had been associated with the Opposition of 1926, were arrested, and thirteen of them brought to trial. The indictment stated that an underground counter-revolutionary terrorist group of former members of the Zinoviev group had been formed to disorganise the leadership of the Soviet Government, in order to change the present policy to that of the Zinoviev-Trotsky platform; and that it looked for armed assistance from

certain foreign States. A consul of a foreign Power was alleged to have paid money to Kirov's murderer, and to have helped to establish communications between the group and Trotsky, at that time in France. Nikolaev had been separately tried and shot, but no further sentences of death were passed at this trial. (*January 17, 1935.*) Zinoviev, Kamenev and ten others were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment. The reflections upon the negligence of what I shall continue to call the Gay-Pay-oo caused great activity among the political police, and a large number of persons were dismissed from their posts and exiled or prosecuted on charges of Zinovievism and Trotskyism. This general heresy hunt was directed largely against teaching staffs and students: and many members of the Communist League of Youth were found to be infected with the views which were obnoxious to the Government.

Many hundreds of arrests, mostly of persons of the dispossessed classes, were made in March, 1935, and an epidemic of crime, much of it of a political character, was in existence in the summer. The local head of the Gay-Pay-oo in a district of Ukrain was killed: and attacks were made on tax-collectors, newspaper reporters, chairmen of collective farms, factory foremen and shock-workers. Death sentences for thefts of public property were numerous. In the course of their activities the political police arrived at fresh evidence implicating more deeply Zinoviev and Kamenev. At the end of June it was already public property that these two were actual organisers of the Kirov murder, and in full sympathy with Trotsky, who was alleged to have advocated terrorist methods against the Communist leaders.

(*June, 1935, to August, 1936.*) The interval of a year between this date and the institution of the murder charge against the old Bolshevik group, including Zinoviev and Kamenev, will not escape the reader's attention. Two events happened in this interval. The revolt of the parties of the Right in Spain occurred in July, 1936, with Italy assisting the insurgents from the very start, and Germany doing the same at an early date in the operations. This certainly increased the anxiety of the Soviet Government regarding the European situation. It seemed that the Central European dictators were staging a rehearsal of further plans to be carried out in Czecho-Slovakia or even in Russia itself. The second event was an attempt, in which Bukharin was employed as an intermediary, to secure the withdrawal of Trotsky's opposition. If there had been no revolt in Spain, encouraged by the European Dictators, or if the attempt to conciliate Trotsky had been successful, there would have been no Zinovievite-Trotskyist trials, and no outbreak of the Terror, at this time. But enquiries by the political police, accompanied by the usual pressure upon suspected persons, were proceeding throughout the interval, and eliciting fresh discoveries.

In August, 1936, Zinoviev, Kamenev and fourteen others, some of them prominent figures in the Trotskyist group of 1924-27, were brought to

trial for forming, at the end of 1932, under the inspiration of Trotsky, a united centre for terrorist action against the leaders of the Party and the Government: and organising measures (which were successful in the case of Kirov) for the murder of Stalin and others. In the open trial, which took place before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R., under the special decree for the summary disposal of political outrages which was passed after the murder of Kirov, all the forms of law were observed: all the accused persons confessed: all were sentenced to be shot, and their property to be confiscated. Of this open trial we know everything. Of the previous proceedings before the investigating officers of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs we know only a single fact, because it happens to be mentioned in the formal indictment: but it is an enlightening fact. Zinoviev, *in spite of obdurate equivocation, was compelled by the weight of evidence to confess*. The language is quoted from the official document. Regarding the confessions generally, in this and the other cases which followed, I have made a suggestion, when discussing the survivals of Orthodox Christian tendencies in the Bolshevik psychology.

A character in *The Three Cities* by a Yiddish writer, Sholom Asche, says that it is a positive pleasure to a Russian to confess his sins and beg someone's forgiveness, and that he will, if necessary, gratify this desire by inventing a sin for the occasion: because he is afraid of being alone with himself and has a passion for collectivism. Mr. Louis Fischer gives another explanation which will be more intelligible to the British mind. He says that the course of the trials had been arranged beforehand between the authorities and the accused, and it was agreed that confession should be rewarded by the remission of the death penalty. It is possible, of course, that different persons had different motives, or different combinations of motives, for those confessions which presented an apparently insoluble enigma to so many of us.

This was the first occasion upon which any of the old Guard of the Bolsheviks, the revolutionary founders of the Soviet State, had been sentenced to death. In the past, the political police have sometimes spared the lives of person reported to be executed. If the sentences were actually carried out, the case is a novel and striking departure from previous Soviet practice, which reveals itself in its true light if we contrast the comparatively lenient treatment of Trotsky and his associates in 1928-1929. I feel no doubt that the Soviet Government was seriously alarmed by the policy of the Central European Dictators, and therefore decided on the ruthless destruction of an opposition at home, which might furnish a foothold for foreign attack. The subsequent course of events, first in Spain, where a Government of the Left was overthrown after a struggle of more than two years by a Spanish leader of the Right, supported by German and Italian troops, and in Russia itself, where a sudden military attack in violation of a recent agreement of non-aggression was made by the Ger-

man armies and explained as an anti-Communist crusade, has justified, as a measure of general policy, the determination to stamp out resistance to the Communist Government. Whether each of the accused persons in each of the proceedings which followed one another thick and fast between the years 1936 and 1938 deserved his fate, is a question which I do not propose to investigate in these studies. That some false charges were made, and that some innocent persons were convicted and punished, was officially admitted at a later date. It was indeed impossible that, in so great a mass of criminal information and prosecution, there should have been no failures of justice. The trials were open, the accused persons generally confessed: because those who were not ready to confess were often disposed of without trial. But there was a mystery regarding these confessions, and there was often a long interval between the arrest of the accused and the commencement of the open trial. Of what happened in those long intervals of silence, during which the accused were in the hands of the political police who prepared the prosecution, we know nothing: but must inevitably imagine much. No police can safely be trusted with the custody of men whose doings it is their duty to investigate. Under the similar conditions of India, a confession made to a police officer, unless recorded with certain special precautions by a magistrate, is not admissible in evidence.

The more serious charges included conspiracy against the lives of the Soviet leaders and against the Communist régime, treasonable correspondence with foreign Powers, and industrial sabotage. As to the general likelihood of such offences in a period of revolutionary changes and strong partisan feeling, I think there can be no doubt. But it is equally likely that there was some fabrication. The plain truth is that when passions of this kind are aroused there are some who will stick at nothing and others whose judgments will be dictated by their prejudices. Seventeenth-century England is full of examples: and the Dreyfus case reminds us how near we are, even to-day, to a similar danger in Western Europe. That industrial sabotage by highly placed authorities was not improbable, I am sufficiently convinced by the evidence of Mr. Littlepage, an American mining engineer, who gave an objective account of his experiences in *Soviet Gold*.

Among the old Bolsheviks and men of long revolutionary service who suffered in consequence of these proceedings were: M. P. Tomsky, the consistent champion of the freedom of Trade Unions (shot himself to avoid arrest): Karl Radek, a brilliant Polish Jew, at one time the close political friend of Trotsky, and thereafter principal editor of *Izvestia* (sentenced to ten years' imprisonment): Gregory Sokolnikov, who built up the Soviet currency, was Vice-President of the State Planning Committee, Ambassador of the U.S.S.R. in Great Britain and Assistant Commissar of Foreign Affairs (ten years' imprisonment): Y. L. Piatakov, who had been Chairman of the State Bank and Assistant Commissar for Heavy Industry

(shot): L. P. Serebriakov, who had been chief of the Chinese Eastern Railway and representative of the Soviet Railways in the United States of America (shot): N. I. Muralov, the Bolshevik giant, a famous fighter and the henchman of Trotsky in the Civil War (shot): Marshal Tukhachevsky, a military officer of the highest distinction, who had commanded the Red Army in the war of 1920-21 against Poland (shot): N. N. Krestinsky, formerly Assistant Commissar of Foreign Affairs (shot): K. G. Rakovsky, once Chairman of the People's Commissars in Ukrain and thereafter Soviet Ambassador successively in London and Paris (imprisoned for 20 years): A. I. Rykov, prominent throughout the revolutionary period, always showed Rightist tendencies and definitely joined the Right opposition when Stalin decided on the liquidation of the *kulaks* (shot): Nikolai Bukharin, a brilliant intellectual, once the leading theoretician of Stalin's ruling group and one of the Septemvirate of 1924; gravitated to the right when Stalin made his leftward turn in 1928 (shot).

Many of the principal accused had been close associates of Trotsky, and no concealment was made of the fact that it was upon Trotsky himself that the gravamen of the most serious charges rested. But many of the punishments of this period of terror were inflicted in consequence of accidents and failures in industry, agriculture, transport and trade. A tendency to treat these accidents and failures as deliberate can be traced back to that strike of the intelligentsia against the revolution of which I have written elsewhere: and Stalin's attempt to restore public confidence in the directing class will be described in a later chapter. (*The old stones in the new building.*)

Besides these accidents and failures, deliberate or not, there were actual or alleged abuses of power, for which members of the directing group were dismissed or drastically punished. It was upon this directing class, consisting largely of members of the Communist Party, and making up, as a whole, that bureaucracy against which Trotsky has directed so much of his invective, that this part of the Terror fell. Some of the victims were no doubt suffering from lassitude, after the exceptional effort of the Plans: for over-work is notoriously common among Russians in positions of responsibility: and some were indifferent and negligent (for these things are even commoner than over-work). Peter the Great took the same way with his instruments. Whenever he returned from absence in the field he found the administration in such a state that it was necessary to begin at once a series of trials and executions. If, in these general cleansings of the administration, some sacrifices are made to appease the popular sense of justice, by *levelling* the group which has enjoyed more than its share of material advantage and consideration, we need feel no surprise. I have little doubt that Trotsky's denunciations of the new directing class have received so much attention as to suggest the need of reminding them that they too are mortal. It would not be the first time that Stalin had taken a hint from the invective of his adversary. The function of leveller

is a very popular one in the U.S.S.R. But in all autocracies it has been a part of the ruler's duty to know "whom to advance, and whom to trash for over-topping". Some light is thrown upon this part of our subject by the proceedings of October 29th, 1937: when the workers in coal-mining and metallurgy were received at the Kremlin. Stalin toasted the *lesser leaders*, the men whom he described as the household managers of the nation's business, addressing himself particularly to the furnace men, and to Father Korolov, the supervisor of the blast-furnace gang, who was present. The newspaper gave a portrait of Father Korolov, in West European clothes, complete with white collar and tie, which helps us to realise the status of the group to whom these "lesser leaders" belong. Such people, he said, had been regarded in the days of the Tsars as the dogs of capitalism. Now they were recognised as workers for the interest of the people. He continued with the significant remark that "leaders come and go, but the people remain. Only the people is immortal. All the rest is transient. We must therefore know how to earn and value the confidence of the people. To the health of our household managers," he cried, "who will not allow anyone to lower the high calling of a Soviet economic leader."

The Communist Daily, in crossing the "t's" and dotting the "i's" of this speech, said that it was an open secret that the Plan of 1937 for Heavy Industry was not being fulfilled and that there had been a slowing down during recent months. It called upon what we should describe as the non-commissioned element in the industrial army, which is in close association with the masses, to listen to their voices and carry the work to higher standards with their co-operation. It went on to blame the "Trotskyist-Bukharinist fascists"—such was then the approved combination of depreciatory epithets—for the mischief they had done to industry, and bade the household managers point the lesson. All this, as I interpret it, was in part a justification of the blows which had been struck at industrial leaders, in part a reassurance of those who had escaped from the purge, and a warning to them not to hold their heads too high, but to keep in close touch with the mass of workers. *Closer to the masses*—this was the lesson which was now being impressed alike upon the Party and upon the leaders of the Trade Unions and of industry.

At the beginning of 1938 the Central Committee of the Communist Party discovered that innocent members of the rank and file had suffered unjustly, and ordered the rapid disposal of their appeals and their early reinstatement. The natural result of wholesale prosecutions and punishments is a crop of false charges, and the Press has contained evidence of the activities of the informer. But the rank and file has been little touched, and their sympathy with the sufferers has on the whole been small. The Soviet Government did not lose the support of the masses by the drastic proceedings of 1936-38, for the masses believe that the punishments have been deserved: as—in general—they probably were.

It is a relief to be able to turn from the discipline of terror to the discipline of leadership: a sphere in which the achievement of the Soviet Government has been new and great. The leadership comes from what historical accident has named the "Party": but the Webbs have taught us to describe it as a *vocation of leadership*. It serves to induct a politically uneducated people into an understanding of public duties: and now that the function has been pointed out by an appropriate definition, it is natural to ask oneself whether any democracy can be brought rapidly into existence without it. It was planned as a narrow circle of disciplined and chosen spirits working in secret for the overthrow of the Tsarist State. But it has become something entirely different. It exists today as a public association of two millions of men and women exercising the vocation of leadership in a population which, at the outbreak of war in June, 1941, fell not far short of 200 millions. It may be that it is in process of undergoing a further metamorphosis at which we can only guess.

Let me begin by a statement of the obvious. There have been and are some very bad Communists. The records of the village monographists abound with such. It is also true that there have been some very bad Popes and some very bad Cardinals. No useful purpose would be served by multiplying particulars about individuals. But that I may not pass over in complete silence this aspect of the case, let me cite one instance which the judicial records place beyond all possibility of question. G. G. Yagoda, a Communist who rose to the enormously powerful position of head of the Political Police, lived a double life, according to his own statement, and organised a peculiarly horrible series of murders, effected by the terrorisation of unwilling agents who did the actual killing. He had reasons which he stated to the Court, *in camera*, for desiring the deaths of Maxim Peshkov, the much-loved son of the poet and dramatist Maxim Gorky, and of Maxim Gorky himself. He drew two doctors, one of them the President of the Moscow Medical Association, who had an international reputation as a specialist in angina pectoris, into a conspiracy, and caused by their means the death of Maxim Gorky, and perhaps of both father and son. These were not his only murders: and they were preceded by the systematic corruption of his instruments. Many must have been aware of the character of this man, but it was only when it became known that he was concerned in a conspiracy for the subversion of the régime that he met his deserts. There is a mystery about the motive which prompted the murder of Maxim Gorky: but a personal rivalry between Stalin and Yagoda is disclosed to us by Mr. Louis Fischer. It is one of the dark places in Soviet history.

Be it noted that this was not an instance of offences against the Party, confessed by conscience-stricken members, willing to acknowledge and exaggerate their faults in order to perform a last service to the brotherhood by covering up its weaknesses and helping to destroy its enemies. Either Yagoda did what he confessed to doing: that is to say,

he organised murders at the same time that he plotted against the Party; or he was the victim of a plot organised against him by his own political police, and somehow induced to confess. Either alternative reveals depths of depravity somewhere in the régime. Evidently the Party is not a communion of saints, nor for the purposes for which it was founded did it need to be such. P. N. Tkachev, who succeeded Bakunin as the head of the Revolutionary organisation, agreed with his predecessor in his schemes of insurrection, but differed from him in his desire to preserve instead of abolishing the State. He wrote a letter to Friedrich Engels in which he advocated the creation of a strong revolutionary organisation with a rigid discipline. It was an idea which he inherited from Bakunin, and it was the germ of Lenin's conception of the Party. In his European exile Lenin digested his experiences with the workers of St. Petersburg, and published the famous pamphlet *What is to be Done?* In this he formulated the conclusion that only a strong and disciplined organisation can prevent the danger of premature outbreaks, before the ferment in the working class is ripe for them. It is because of the need for restraint and for secrecy that democratic methods are inapplicable to such an organisation. This was not a denial of democracy: but the exclusion of democracy from a particular sphere, as a fighting sea-captain would exclude it from the control of a battleship. The paradox of the Party's evolution is that the organisation planned to carry through a revolution has survived into the post-revolutionary period, and has taken a form in which it must guide and instruct the mass and furnish a reservoir of energy and goodwill from which the leaders of all grades are to be drawn.

Those who made the Party seem to have had before their minds certain faults of human nature, or of Russian human nature, and to have determined to change them. One of Lenin's favourite authors, Chernishevsky, imagined a regicide-in-training, who set himself to harden his body and his spirit by abstaining from indulgence and by sleeping upon iron nails. The Russian is a loose talker. The Communist must keep the Party secrets. The Russian is a natural anarchist who respects no rules. The Communist must observe a rigorous discipline, must be ready to go anywhere, and to do anything. The Russian is hesitant and tolerant and wavering and introspective: looks before and after and pines for what is not: doubts all things, easily tires, easily despairs: has a poorly developed instinct of self-preservation and readily resorts to suicide. The Communist must be and do none of these things. He must have faith, active faith, and the buoyant optimism which faith gives: must have his eyes firmly fixed upon the external realities about him, must have no sympathy with, or mercy for, those who hold heretical views, must spare neither himself nor others: must set an example of untiring work: must protect health and life, as instruments of achievement on behalf of the Party.

There must be no sentiment: no introspection: no melancholy: no sub-

jectivism: above all, none of those qualities of the Russian lie-abed, which have passed into proverb in the name of Oblomov, the sluggard hero of a famous tale. It is a setting back of the current, a determination to turn the impossible into the possible. Pope Hildebrand attempted something like it, when he demanded celibacy in all priests, and required those of them who had wives to abandon them.

Formerly the qualifications required for entry to the Party varied according as the candidate belonged to the urban workers, the peasantry, or the *intelligentsia*. From 1939, when the Party made changes aiming generally at increased democracy, security against arbitrary procedure, and elimination of Party interference in industry, the qualifications were made uniform: a gain to the technicians. The candidate must still accept the Party's programme (but need not, it seems, be a profound student of principle): must be a producer, free from the mentality of property: must not exploit the labour of another for profit: must be engaged in some civic activity, and must be politically active too: must be a militant atheist, for religion is one of the unpardonable sins for the Party man.

Above all things, the Communist must have that stirring activity of temperament, which brings a man or woman to the fore among their fellows: something which we vulgarly denominate "push". Self-confidence, self-assertion, ambition, are all facets of this quality, without which the latent gifts remain undiscovered and unutilised. The first postulate of recognition by others is recognition by oneself. There must be a conviction of capacity to shoulder a task, and a readiness to face the trouble and risk of undertaking it: and this conviction, and this readiness are the conditions of acceptance by the mass of mankind. The party man and the party woman are, in a sense, self-recommended to their fellows. They are ready for a duty, for which most people are not ready: and in this sense they constitute a sort of natural élite. They may disappoint expectation hereafter: and in that event they may be purged at a later stage: but anyhow they have won their start in the life of ambition.

This explanation is not the mere platitude which it may at first appear to be. I have sought to emphasise the distinction between two disciplines, the discipline of terror and the discipline of leadership, and to suggest that the one comes from without while the other comes from within. The men and women who find themselves enlisted in the vocation of leadership, as it expresses itself in the so-called Party, are recruited from the mass of the people in virtue of a specific quality, which does not separate them from their fellows, and distinguishes them solely by their willingness to accept an additional and heavier task. No doubt, they may tend to become separated hereafter in proportion as the achievement of official ambition removes them into an official class: but that is merely to say that no method is available for the sublimation of human material into something which is superior to human motives. Mrs. Seema Rynan

Allan, in *Comrades and Citizens*, has given us a good reason why people may safely trust a Communist more than they trust an ordinary man. It is an answer given by a non-Communist worker, when asked why he voted for Communists to represent him on the Trade Union Committee. "When a Communist does not do what he undertakes to do, he has to answer for it." This is so, and the Courts and all the authorities demand a higher standard from the man or woman who has joined the Party.

Stalin himself has been a severe critic of the Party. During that period of suspicion and distrust which followed upon the murder of S. M. Kirov in December, 1934, admission to its ranks was temporarily closed. At the elections which followed upon the introduction of the new Constitution in 1936 emphasis was laid upon the alliance between Party and non-Party, with the evident intention of dimming the line of distinction between the two. During the prosecutions, which were numerous at that time, the members of the Party received a reminder that they had been holding their heads too high, and themselves too much aloof from the mass of the workers; and at the end of October, 1938, Stalin was again lashing the leaders of the Party, as well as the heads of the official departments, with accusations of negligence, corruption, and incompetence, and holding them responsible for insufficient food and defective industry.

That there exists a popular notion of Party privilege is plain enough from current stories of disgusted comments proceeding from *voces populi*, on fur coats and other similar luxuries. There certainly is a possibility of access to certain exceptional comforts and amenities—better apartments, even motor-cars—obtained not by means of money but rather in the form of what the French call *frais de représentation* in consideration of the special needs of the recipient's work: and, of course, there are openings for the gratification of the ambition of the Communist man or woman: but there is access to these openings for the non-Communist also, if he or she has the energy and capacity to use them, and no obstacles are interposed by the lack of means or social influence to advancement of these kinds. There is a career opened to the talents in the Western countries too: but money paves the way to it: in the U.S.S.R. membership of the so-called Party—attainable by certain special sacrifices and efforts by those in whom nature has implanted a turn for public work—gives the opportunity. In so far as success is dependent upon the conditions of early life and the position of parents, its conditions are more rigidly determined in the West than in the U.S.S.R.

Privilege is dependent not so much upon membership of the Party as upon the degree of success which a man or woman is able to attain in consequence of that membership. Stalin expressed this graphically in a description which he gave of the stratification of the Party. He put it in military language. There are—out of the 2 million or more members—from 3,000 to 4,000 who constitute the General Staff: from 30,000 to 200

40,000 whose functions are parallel to those of an Officer Corps, and from 100,000 to 150,000 comparable to non-commissioned officers. The rest form the rank and file of the *corps d'élite*. The non-Party mass pass into the ranks of this Army, without let or hindrance, subject to their willingness and capacity for public work: and they earn promotion—or suffer demotion—by the sort of show which they are able to make thereafter.

What are the virtues which are rewarded by success? I have already given some hint of their nature. Along with activity, discipline is the essential need. For it was discipline—a quite un-Russian virtue—by which the Bolsheviks broke and scattered the other parties in the State, as a Roman Legion broke and scattered Gauls or Egyptians. The Social Revolutionaries, a party with an inheritance of ideas systematised by the Populists of the past, and adjusted to later needs by Victor Chernov, a thinker of constructive ability, were the controlling force in the State after the Revolution of March. They commanded large majorities among the soldiers and among the peasants, they dictated the first agrarian legislation of the November Government, they had a majority in the Constituent Assembly of January, 1918, they formed the anti-Bolshevik Government of Samara, which was unique among counter-revolutionary organisations in propounding an agrarian policy acceptable to the peasants, they contributed a large element to the Omsk Government, before Admiral Kolchak established his own dictatorship there in November, 1918. By all the rules—excepting one—it was they who should have been the successors of the Tsars. But they lacked the unity and the discipline which made the Bolsheviks a stone in the sling of Lenin: and they degenerated, as a political force, into vacillation and ineptitude.

Another group which illustrates, by contrast, the reason of the success of the Communist Party, is that of the Anarchists. To the American and the Briton the name evokes the image of the fanatic with the dagger and the torch. Actually, the Anarchists are advocates of an extreme decentralisation, of a peaceful federation of self-governing villages, and economic associations, such as Mahatma Gandhi appears to contemplate for India. They started in Russia, with a great natural advantage, the widespread dislike of the organised coercive State, which was a marked characteristic of the Russian people, and their outlook upon the State differed from that of Marx only in contemplating an earlier and more summary destruction of it. The great successes of Co-operation among the peasantry showed the general readiness to accept economic, rather than political, bonds of association. Prince Kropotkin, one of the leading thinkers of Anarchism, spoke feelingly of the openings which the Revolution had seemed to offer to the Anarchists. The Co-operatives, he said, would have bridged the gap between the peasants and the workers, and, together with the Syndicates, would have filled the place of the coercive institutions of the Police-State. The energies of the people, released by

revolution, instead of being imprisoned by a centralised system of government, would have worked wonders. Anarchism found a militant champion in Nestor Makhno, who for a short interval dictated terms to the Communist Government in Southern Russia. The *Nabat*, a general Anarchist organisation of the South, seemed in the summer of 1920 to have a chance of carrying out the unification of separate Anarchist factions at which it aimed. Far-Eastern Siberia was for a time controlled by Anarchists, and a well-known Anarchist was its Railway chief. All was in vain: and the theorists of libertarianism, lacking unity among themselves, and deficient in the very principle of discipline, were dispersed and swept away by the solid phalanx which Lenin had created. After the overthrow of the Kronstadt rebellion of 1921, in which Anarchist influences had participated, Anarchist book-stores and printing-offices were closed and leading Anarchists imprisoned, and all vestiges of organised combination of the Anarchist groups were destroyed. Discipline had triumphed, and had brought back the organised State, in despite of the Marxian principle that the organised State must wither away. True, it was not—in theory—the organised State, but a transitional Dictatorship of the Proletariat, destined to disappear in the Classless Society. But time has not brought any nearer the disappearance, and has immensely consolidated the structure. In this organised State, the Communist Party is the nucleus of Power, and more and more those who control the Communist Party rule the State.

The Communist League of Youth has in the past discharged the functions of a second and auxiliary Party. It naturally contained a larger proportion of idealists, and it showed this characteristic very plainly on such occasions as the adoption of the New Economic Policy, which dashed many utopian hopes, and it aspired to larger spheres than the mere training of the young (or of the younger than itself), and the provision of a nucleus for the defence forces. Its rules emphasised its international function and called upon it to cement the union between workers and peasants. It held opinions upon policy, and aspired to the right to pronounce them. I do not know with certainty the causes of the changes which were inaugurated in June, 1935, but I suspect that the enquiries which followed on the murder of Kirov, and ultimately led to the prosecutions of 1936-38, revealed the existence, in the ranks of youth, of widespread sympathy with the movement which is vaguely designated as Trotskyist. The Central Executive of the Komsomol—the Russian name for the League of Youth—doubtless under pressure from above, decided that the association ought to concentrate upon the political education of themselves and of the young in general, and proposals, which occasioned profound searchings of heart, were prepared to give effect to this decision. The feeling of the opposition was expressed in a letter to the editor of the Ukrainian Komsomol's newspaper. It is wrong, says the writer, to put the Komsomol, which has earned the esteem of the Communist Party in

the course of years of heroic work and struggle, on the fronts of the Civil War and in all branches of industry, on an equal plane with the *Friends of Museums* and other such organisations. Such was Youth's protest against the sentence.

(*April 11th-21st, 1936.*) Discipline prevailed: and the Tenth Congress of the Komsomol, which met in March, 1936, after a five years interval, and after being twice postponed in consequence of the strength of the feeling which had been aroused, accepted the alteration in its status. At this meeting the League's Secretary-General said that "we must cease chattering about the industrial and financial plans, the lowering of prices, the equilibrium of accounts, the sowings, and other tasks of the Government, as though we were the deciding authorities:" and the reporters of the Congress told the audience that they had no need of a second Party. The new programme declared the aim of the League to be the education, political, general and physical, of *young people*. The fact that it is the education of *the young* which concerns the League is repeatedly stressed. The League is also to assist the Bolshevik Party in the organisation of socialist competition, and the Soviet Government in strengthening the family, and in the care of children and mothers: to prepare young people to defend the U.S.S.R., "our Fatherland", in the spirit of Soviet patriotism: to unmask and prosecute all who betray the interests of the Fatherland: to continue to be the patron of the Soviet Navy and Air Force, to supply devoted fighters to the Red Army, and to encourage the study of the military art among young people. They are really wanted for more than this: and in January, 1938, we find them being reminded that their help is needed to supply driving power for the repair of the tractors and for other preparations for the sowing season.

In this programme there is no longer any word of the part to be played by Communist Youth in cementing the alliance between workers and peasants. The only reference to internationalism is contained in a quotation from Lenin: "Since November 7th, we are patriots. We are for the defence of the fatherland, but the patriotic war towards which we strive is the war for the socialist fatherland, for Socialism which is our fatherland, for the Soviet Republic *which is a detachment of the international army of Socialism.*" The emphasis now is on the Fatherland. It is one of the milestones on the road on which the Soviets are travelling from internationalism to nationalism, and the journey is now practically completed.

Over two-fifths of the present population of the U.S.S.R. were born after the November Revolution. Of the rank and file of the active Army the greater number is of Komsomol age (sixteen to twenty-three), if not actually in the League. Youth has the zeal and the idealism and the physical *elan* which fit it for action. It is a truism that scope for its ambitions and aspirations is a necessity of the State. We can only guess at the feelings which are concealed under the discipline which has accepted a reduced status. But the degradation of Alexander Kosarev, the Secretary

of the Communist League of Youth, and the punishment of other leaders of the young generation in November, 1938, throw light upon the question. Trotsky, not a favourable witness for the Soviet Government, tells us, in 1936, that there has been too much stress on the virtues of fidelity to the chief, and obedience without discussion, that there is much hypocrisy and boredom in the schools, that youth burns its fingers when it touches politics, and that the underlying heroism seeks for an outlet, which the most impatient, even among the sons of leading personages, find in terrorism. I think there must have been a residuum of truth in these strictures: because it is the heroic and the uncompromising which make the greatest appeal to youth. Not everyone can be a hero of the Arctic or a trans-continental aviator: but the war of 1941 has given scope for all the heroisms.

I have referred to the international affiliations of the Communist League of Youth. It is perhaps not clearly understood by all that the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. (Bolshevik) itself is only one among many theoretically similar parties affiliated to the Third (Communist) International and bound to strict obedience to that body, and to its Executive Committee in the intervals, which are now very prolonged, between Sessions. There have been occasions on which the Party of the U.S.S.R. has appeared to resent this subordination, and it is, of course, so important a sector of the Third International as virtually to control the latter. But the international outlook which the affiliation has involved has had, and still has, a profound influence upon the history of the Party. The opposition within the Party which is principally associated with the name of Trotsky, operated, and continues to operate, on an international scale and in international circles. The movement for the repression of the opposition extended to all the parties affiliated to the Third International, and involved the displacement in all of them of the leadership favourable to Trotsky. The issue has been, or was being, fought out on the ground of events and prospects in Bulgaria, Germany, Spain, England, China, the United States and France, not to say in the whole world. If one side seemed more conscious of the cosmopolitan dimensions of the stage on which the struggle is presented, it was only because the tremendous tasks of internal construction had absorbed the best of the other's energies and powers, and distracted its attention, from the hope of world-revolution, to the needs of peaceful relations with potential collaborators and, by consequence, to the maintenance of vested rights, abroad, if not at home.

But that same tendency, which has shown itself in the case of the Communist Party of the Union, to lengthen the intervals between general conferences and leave control in the hands of a permanent body, was apparent in the Communist International itself. After the Congress of 1924 more than four years elapsed before another was held. After the Congress of 1928, seven years elapsed without one. The Plenum of the Executive, familiarly known as I.K.K.I., and the permanent official staff, was the

source from which, for long years on end, the orders binding on the national Parties emanated. This is a notable contrast to the early years of the Third International, when full Congresses were held every year (1919, 1920, 1921, 1922): and we cannot be blind to the fact that a larger authority was passing into the hands of individuals and of secretaries. More and more, party discipline meant obedience to a head, and to the staff which was the mouthpiece of the head. This tendency to a centralisation of authority has been a general one. The movement has been in the direction of the subordination of the rank and file to a permanent "apparatus": and this is equally true of the Third International and of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. At the same time, the Third International, to which all the National Parties, including that of the U.S.S.R., are nominally subordinate, has tended more and more to be the instrument and the mouthpiece of the ruling power in the Soviet State, and to advocate the policies of the Soviet State's Foreign Office.

The military metaphor employed by Stalin to describe the differentiation of the functions of the various groups in the Party inevitably suggests a question whether the discipline is literally that of an Army bound to obedience to its Commander. In 1934 the Party Congress discussed the basis of democratic centralism, which is the technical expression for the freedom (or limitation) of discussion within the Party. The conclusion was that freedom of discussion is an inalienable right: but may lead to schism unless it is limited to cases in which either several local parties think discussion necessary, or there is not in the Central Committee an evidently strong majority for the proposal, or the Central Committee thinks discussion necessary. After the tremendous winnowing to which the Party was subjected in 1937, and the wholesale removal first of the offenders, or supposed offenders, and then of those who had been too reckless in their accusations, we hear Stalin's trumpet-call for vigilance against the secular enemy, and for freedom of criticism as a means of ensuring supervision from below over erring leaders: followed by a decision of the Central Committee that judicious leadership must guide freedom of discussion.

It is a fair inference that the critic must tread warily.

Yet the intention of Stalin seemed plain enough. He wanted the rank and file to elect freely all party organs by secret ballot and to speak their minds. Up to the spring of 1937, the voting had been by show of hands, there was a convention of unanimity, and after the expulsion of Trotsky and others ten years earlier, there was no instance in the Party Congress of even a minority vote against an official proposal. In March, 1938, we find the Central Committee insisting on the principles of the election of Party functionaries, not by list, which was a way of slurring over differences of opinion, but by separate voting for individual candidates: and of the election of delegates by secret ballot. The forms of democracy "within the Party" were evidently to be observed. In the words of the

Leader, who declared that "ordinary people are found at times to be closer to the truth than some exalted institutions", Bolshevism was to draw its strength from the humble earth "like Antaeus when he wrestled with Hercules".

I suspect an unconscious reminiscence of an Orthodox religious conception. Truth resides in the congregation—not in a majority of it, but in its aggregate whole. To square this perfectly with the modern parliamentary notion which postulates a determining voice for the majority, after due consideration of the views of the minority, is a hard task.

That Orthodox conception of the brotherhood has played a great rôle in the cementing of Party bonds. It is responsible for some of the agony which the victims of the trials for treason and sabotage have shown at parting from their comrades. The last plea of Nikolai Bukharin on March 12th, 1938, is eloquent of this sentiment. "When you asked yourself: if you must die, what are you dying for? There was nothing to die for, if one was to die unrepentant. . . . And when you asked yourself: suppose you do not die. . . . Again, what for? . . . *isolated from everything that constitutes the essence of life. . . .*" A character in Kirshon's play *Bread* puts the same thought in a different form. "I cannot step out of the ranks. I dare not leave. . . . *I must have someone to give me orders. I must have another shoulder next to mine.*" Doubtless it is the coarser motive which appeals to some. The fear of being removed from the Bolshevik patriciate to fall into the Soviet plebs makes cowards of the strongest.

Now, more than ever, all things are in flux, and he would be a bold man who would prophesy with assurance the direction in which the Party may now be expected to develop. One thing seems certain: that the Russian people needs, and will long need, a discipline which only its own best human material can supply, to replace (or must I say, supplement?) the harsher discipline which seems to be the alternative. In another chapter I shall discuss the reality, or the possibility, of actual democratic self-government: that third course which Americans and Britons, with their peculiarly fortunate experience of peaceful development and insulation, are prone to envisage as the political panacea for others as well as for themselves. In the meanwhile I suggest that the "Party" is most truly conceived as a Priesthood—a Priesthood of a Religion which is of this world, not of the next.

CHAPTER XII

THE OPPOSITIONS WITHIN THE PARTY

"No wonder my military work created so many enemies for me. I elbowed a way. I trod on their toes. . . ."—TROTSKY, *My Life*.

"With the exception of one intoxicated person, this meeting declares the medical officer of the Baths, Dr. Thomas Stockmann, to be an enemy of the people." All (yelling after the Doctor and his family as they go): "Enemy of the people! Enemy of the people!"—IBSEN, *An Enemy of the People*.

IN HIS history of Literature in Revolution, Trotsky quotes with appreciation Boris Pilnyak's antithesis between the peasant and the spirit of the November Revolution.

"Peasant life is known—it is to eat in order to work, to work in order to eat, and, beside that, to be born, to bear and to die. Our Revolution is a rebellion in the name of the conscious rational purposeful and dynamic principle of life, against the elemental, senseless, biologic automatism of life: that is, against the peasant roots of our old Russian history, against its aimlessness, its non-teleological character, against the holy and idiotic philosophy of Tolstoi's Karataev, in *War and Peace*. It will take decades to burn out Karataev's philosophy, but the process has begun."

Trotsky, who emphasised the necessity of a Plan for the economic life of Russia, was the champion of conscious design for life in general; and the simple, elemental, unconscious, unplanned existence of the peasants, living like a flock of sheep, following they know not what and know not whither, was an offence against the clarity, the lucidity, the consistency, which, for him, were the redeemers of human action. The peasant, and, along with the peasant, old Russia in general, obeyed the need of the moment, gave no thought to the morrow, trod the path in unconsciousness of any aim, followed his nose, we might say. Conscious purpose was something new, and, as Trotsky saw it, it came from the cities and the factories.

The place which was filled in the social system of the West by the middle class, was filled, in Trotsky's view, by a petty *bourgeoisie*, the peasantry, which in its property-mentality resembled the middle-class, but lacked the political qualities of that class. The peasantry was capable of making a revolution in order to satisfy its desire for the land: but capable of it only with the help and leadership of the proletariat of the towns: and, having made it, was incapable, owing to its attachment to its landed rights, of going on to the building of Socialism. The proletariat, the wage-earning workers of the town, would not only lead the Russian peasantry in the making of the revolution, but would find themselves in a dominant position in the new social and economic order, and would necessarily proceed to socialistic measures. But since the peasantry will

be an uncertain and unwilling ally in the building of Socialism, the propertyless workers of the towns can only hope, as it were, to hold the fort, till the proletariats of the West join them in the completion of their task. The building of Socialism means a high degree of division of labour between the peoples of many countries: and the Permanent (or, as we should probably prefer to say, the Continuous) Revolution has, for its postulate, the achievement, at not too remote a date, of the World-Revolution, bringing all the proletariats into alliance and common action.

The November Revolution, as actually achieved, gave effect, up to a certain point, to Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution. That is to say, it was carried out by the peasantry, who gave to the proletariat an opportunity to become installed in power. But the concessions made to the peasantry in the early land legislation, and afterwards in the New Economic policy, show that this power was conditional only, and far from being absolute. So far, it was plain that the peasantry was not a reliable ally for the building of a Socialistic system. It was left for the future to disclose whether it could be converted into such an ally: or whether, for lack of such an ally, King Proletariat would have to await the establishment of a similar revolutionary régime in the countries of the West.

When, in 1927, Trotsky wrote *The True Position in Russia*, he logically conceded that the mechanisation of agriculture and the collectivisation of the peasantry would convert the latter into an instrument, by the aid of which the tasks of Socialist building could be performed. But he did not draw the conclusion, apparently implicit in this argument, that a World-Revolution was not essential to the establishment of Socialism in Russia. He did, in fact, retain the conviction that the attitude of the peasantry would not be such as to dispense with revolution elsewhere: and he continued to urge the necessity, as a *sine qua non*, of encouraging and supporting the World-Revolution. He retained this conviction because he believed that the Capitalist West was too strong for a Socialistic Russia, and would crush it by economic, if not by military, power. The argument, as Trotsky saw it, was something like this. Now and here, the peasant is unplannable, and therefore unassimilable to the needs of Socialism. But, if the World-Revolution is achieved, he can be brought to Socialism through a series of transitional stages. For instance, the Western proletariats when they have been won by revolution to the Russian alliance, will fertilise the peasant's economy, and win his support, by a generous supply of the manufactured articles which Russian industry is too weak to provide. In other words, the World-Revolution must precede the conquest of the peasant's good will to the building of Socialism. In the meanwhile the modernisation of agriculture and the collectivisation of the farms will give a start to the process.

At all events, the attitude to the peasantry was fundamental to the policies which Trotsky urged, in the long controversy which led immediately to his disgrace and exile. For one who saw the peasantry as he

saw it, the international alliance, the international division of labour, and the revolutions which alone could make them possible, were indispensable conditions of the achievement of Socialism.

Trotsky's opposition is very far from being the only one within the Party. Russia, where the gift of formulating general principle is a common one, exhibits when left to itself a particularly marked tendency to divisions of opinion. Both before, and after, the arrival of Marxian doctrines, the history of the revolutionaries shows this tendency. It was one of the things which Lenin fought when he established a Party on the basis of strict discipline. The tree continued to put forth rebellious branches. On the eve of the November Revolution, and almost in the moment of battle, Zinoviev and Kamenev opposed the policy of insurrection, first won and then lost the majority vote, and, having lost, carried their protest into the non-Party newspapers. This was a divagation to the Right: again expressed, after November, by the opposition to the muzzling of the newspapers and the demand for a coalition of all Socialist parties. The discussion on the German Peace produced even more acute differences in the opposite direction, since the Left favoured a revolutionary war, in the confidence that military discipline and spirit could be restored and dissensions created in the ranks of the enemy by an appeal to proletarian enthusiasm. Bukharin, at that time a partisan of the ultra-leftist tendencies, joined with Radek, V. M. Smirnov and others, to set up an opposition journal, *The Communist*, which for months resisted the predominant influence of Lenin. Trotsky, who at first occupied an intermediate position, yielded to Lenin's arguments, and acquiesced in the temporarily disastrous peace: which, to Lenin, was no disaster, because he was still confident of the imminence of World-Revolution.

The New Economic Policy seemed a catastrophic surrender to the principles of Capitalism, and divided the Party fundamentally. Only the great authority of Lenin prevented this division from finding expression in open and public opposition: and the Left's acceptance of the N.E.P. compromise was always a grudging one, which sought every opportunity for struggling back in the direction of War Communism, and renewing the attack upon private trade and private profit. Whatever Lenin's view of the New Economic Policy may have been—and to me it seems clear that he regarded it as a temporary retreat, necessitated by the unexpected postponement of the World-Revolution—it was impossible that Trotsky should for long reconcile himself to such a compromise. It was a mixture of the individualistic with the socialistic economy, a combination of a free agriculture with an industry of which the citadels were held by the State. It was therefore incompatible with comprehensive planning, and Trotsky was from the outset an advocate of planning. He was not the originator of the idea, but it was his insistence that gave life to it. In 1923 he introduced a plan for the metallurgical industry, and in 1925 outlined a Five-

Year-Plan upon a national scale, upon which an abortive draft for the period 1926-31 was actually prepared.

With Lenin, the Revolution lost the dominating personality whom all tended instinctively to obey. When his influence was withdrawn the fissiparous tendency began to assert itself with more insistence. The New Economic Policy had involved a compromise in international politics as well as in internal affairs, and carried with it a species of truce between the rival worlds of Capitalism and the Revolution: a truce which was marked by the Soviet Government's participation in the Geneva Conference of 1922, and the agreement at Rapallo for co-operation with the Weimar Republic. The reduction of the Soviet Government's armed forces after the Civil War involved agreements with neighbouring States for mutual abstention from armed aggression. In the Europe of 1923, when the Curzon ultimatum threatened danger from the direction of Britain, there were reasons for desiring the firm establishment of that régime in Germany which had entered into friendly relations with the Soviet Government. The Germany of the Weimar Republic, humiliated by the Treaty of Versailles and by the policies which succeeded to it, seemed to the statesmen of the Soviet Union a fellow-sufferer in a world of menacing imperialism, and a natural friend, towards whom they were drawn by the necessities of their own position. These considerations clashed with others which sought the extension of the Revolution into a new sphere. When the French occupied the Ruhr in January, 1923, and the German mark fell to a figure which swept away all savings and disturbed all economic relations, Left Social Democrats and Communists formed a Cabinet in Saxony, and events appeared to point to an impending Communist revolution in Germany. There was much popular excitement in the U.S.S.R.; and sympathy with the Communists in Germany ran high. It seemed as though a new Soviet Socialist Republic was about to be added to the Union. The ruling triumvirate—Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev—had to decide between Soviet support of the revolution and Soviet support of the existing Government. Karl Radek was sent to Germany: he, or the Government which he represented, decided that the revolutionary movement in Germany must be discouraged; and the German Communists received no countenance from the U.S.S.R.

This momentous decision has been the ground of one of Trotsky's bitterest and most persistent attacks upon the policy of the Third International after the withdrawal of the influence of Lenin. It was typical of the policies to which every normal Government is led by the actual pressure of international relations, and the criticism was typical of the uncompromising idealist. We do not find that Trotsky, in office, was in any way uncompromising. He told John Reed in 1920 that the Soviet Union could live in peace with *bourgeois* governments, and could even work with them, within broad limits. On September 30th, 1923, he said that war would harm the German revolution, and that only that revolution which

succeeds by its own strength is capable of life. Out of once, he became more and more convinced that the desertion of the German revolution in 1923 was a fatal error. But the dialectic of the situation, as a Marxian might have put it, had moved from the point at which it was a duty to seize every revolutionary opportunity, to another point at which it was desirable to support every political friend in a friendless world. Trotsky saw the situation as it had been: and perhaps Stalin saw the situation as it was. Lenin was too ill to have a voice in the decision.

The action, or inaction, in Germany which is the subject of Trotsky's attacks, is technically that of the Third International rather than that of the Government of the U.S.S.R. In form, the Third International is the body to which the Communist Parties of all the world are affiliated, and from which the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. takes its instructions. In fact, the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. is the strongest element in the Third International, and determines its policies. In form, the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. is only a guiding and inspiring element. In fact, the Party, or the heads of the Party hierarchy, are masters both of the Third International and of the Government of the U.S.S.R., and the Third International has tended, more and more markedly of late, to become an instrument of a Russian Foreign Office dominated by the Communist Party. When Trotsky attacked the Third International, he made no concealment of the fact that he was attacking the leadership of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. in international relations, and in particular that of its Secretary General, Stalin, who is inevitably recognised as its guiding brain and will.

Ostracised by Europe—excepting Germany—and America, the Soviet Union naturally looked to Asia to redress the balance: to Asia, where she saw, in the dependent relation of the peoples to the Great Powers, a reflection of her own recent relation to the class dispossessed by the Revolution. A Congress of Peoples of the East had been organised at Baku in September, 1920, for a holy war against British Imperialism. The Asiatic States were assured of the abandonment by Russia of all unequal privileges secured against them by the Government of the Tsars. Some of them seemed naturally linked to the Soviet Union by a common impulse of social revolution. She seemed to be at once a fellow-sufferer and a champion. This early feeling of sympathy gave place to disappointment, in proportion as the need of normal relations with the Great Powers ousted the revolutionary impulse to destroy their hold upon colonial and quasi-colonial territories. There was, in fact, a conflict between two tendencies in leading circles in the Soviet Union: the idealistic and the diplomatic. The second became increasingly dominant, until the first became little more than a concession to the sentiment of the extreme Left.

The failure of the Powers to return Shantung to China at the end of the war disillusioned the Chinese with Western political ethics, and made the way smooth for Soviet diplomatic successes in China. "Borodin's

name is Lafayette," said Dr. Sun Yat-sen, describing the Soviet emissary to the Canton Government. The two were agreed on a policy of nationalism and anti-imperialism for China, which put revolution of the Russian type in the background as essentially premature. The Kuomintang, which was the party on which the Canton Government was based, was not a class-party, as was the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, but made up of elements having contrary economic interests. From the revolutionary standpoint, therefore, it contained a fatal defect. Its principle of unity lay in its anti-foreign aims and its desire for national rehabilitation. When, in January, 1926, the Canton Chamber of Commerce sent to the second Party Congress of the Kuomintang a declaration closing with the words: "Long live the World-Revolution": it is certain that the formula was meaningless for them. Whatever it was that they desired, neither they nor the Kuomintang desired the end of capitalism. The Kuomintang had, indeed, accepted a programme which included, along with national aims, the equalisation of land and the regulation of capital: but these aims fell short by a great deal of the proletarian revolution. The strikes and disturbances of 1925 at Shanghai, Canton and Hongkong were anti-British and anti-foreign, and the contributions of well-to-do Chinese to the campaign funds were the result of nationalist feeling. General Chiang Kai-shek wavered between the left and right sections of the Kuomintang, but there is little doubt that he had no sympathy with the former.

In the meanwhile, the Executive Committee of the Third International at Moscow, issuing its instructions, as usual, to all national parties affiliated to it, had resolved that the Chinese Communist Party should cooperate with the Kuomintang in a programme partly nationalistic, partly revolutionary, including the nationalisation of land, and of foreign firms, industries and banks, railways and waterways. The Trotskyist opposition criticised the co-operation of the Communist Party with a body which had no Communist aims, and demanded more thorough-going revolutionary measures in China, including the establishment of Soviets of workers and peasants.

(*October, 1926, to March, 1927.*) The Southern Chinese army, supplied with Russian officers and material, and obviously actuated by anti-foreign feeling, was now advancing northwards to the Yangtsekiang, which was reached without serious opposition. The Great Powers had naturally taken alarm at the threat to the international settlement at Shanghai, and recognised the anti-imperialist character of the movement. (*April, 1927.*) General Chiang Kai-shek propitiated the Powers by wholesale executions of Communists and their sympathisers in Shanghai. It was plain now, if indeed it had ever been doubtful, that he was no friend to revolution, but a champion of Chinese nationalism. Stalin, who had desired a combination between workers and peasants and *bourgeoisie* to conduct a nationalist movement in China to success, found that the combination was shattered. The familiar course of Chinese poli-

tics began to repeat itself, with the marchings and counter-marchings of War-lords, and confused uprisings of peasants and workers, without recognised head or definite purpose.

The question at issue, between Stalin and the leadership of the Third International on the one hand, and the Trotskyist opposition on the other, was whether the Communist movement in China was ripe for the proclamation of a revolutionary programme and its successful prosecution, without reliance upon the very questionable sympathies of such allies as Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang. If I may be allowed to anticipate the language of a later moment, Stalin wanted a *United Front* of all the Left sympathisers in China, while Trotsky believed that such a United Front would smother the Communist Party. Stalin thought the Communist Party, without the United Front, too weak to achieve results: and in this view he had the support of Borodin, who was in close touch with the conditions of China. Trotsky wanted nothing smaller than a Socialist revolution. His argument, in his own words, is: "If we had helped the (Chinese) Communist Party to arm itself with its own Press, and had given it the slogans of the maximum of armament for the workers, and of the development of the peasant war in the villages, the party would have grown daily. The slogan of the formation of Soviets should have been pronounced from the beginning of the mass movement. The agrarian revolution would then have scattered the pseudo-revolutionary armies and have spread the infection even into the counter-revolutionary armies of the enemy." In other words, the cry of *the land for the peasants* would have sent the armies of both sides to their homes, to secure their share. I cannot guess whether the forecast is correct, but it would have been a desperate throw, and I think the hope of plunder in the armies of the War-Lords was an equally strong attraction. Stalin and Borodin wanted a nationalist and anti-imperialist revolution, which may have been feasible, but was prevented by the strength of the Powers and the self-seeking of the War-Lords. The Chinese Communist Party and Kuomintang always differed in ultimate aims: but it was permissible to believe that they were fellow-travellers along a common road up to a certain point, and might have co-operated together without losing their respective identities.

Borodin left China in July, 1927. The Communist remains of the Southern army were cut to pieces in an abortive attempt on Canton in December. The collapse of the policy of the Third International was followed by a marked anti-Russian reaction, in which the War-Lords at Peking and Shanghai vied with one another in hostile demonstrations against the U.S.S.R. (*December 14th, 1927.*) A new Chinese Government at Nankin severed diplomatic relations.

(*February, 1924.*) The reaction in China was encouraged by events in Great Britain. The first Labour Government in Great Britain recognised the Soviet Union, on condition of mutual abstention from interference in

internal affairs. Negotiations for the settlement of debts followed, and it was agreed that the settlement should pave the way for a loan: an arrangement greatly disliked by the Conservative Opposition. The defeat of the Government, on the issue of the withdrawal of proceedings against a Communist charged with incitement to mutiny, was followed by a general election. During the campaign, the Press published a letter purporting to convey the instructions of the Third International, through its Chairman Zinoviev, to the Communist Party of Great Britain, regarding its tactics in the election. The document added that *work should be done in the British Army*, with a view to paralysing military preparations. There is internal evidence that this document was not an accurate copy of instructions given by the Third International, but it produced a very great effect in Britain: where the Conservative Party was returned to power with a considerable majority: and the policy of the new Government, culminating in the diplomatic rupture of May, 1927, was not friendly to the U.S.S.R.

In the meanwhile an understanding had been established between organised Labour in Soviet Russia and Great Britain. It had been found that the disunion between Communist and Social Democratic elements in the European Trade Unions made more difficult the maintenance of Trade Union standards in Great Britain: and it was decided to create a joint organisation. In April, 1925, the General Council of the British Trade Unions Congress ratified an agreement with the all-Russian Council of Trade Unions (not with the Communist International of Trade Unions, which is known as the Profintern) for the establishment of an Anglo-Russian Trade Unions Committee. The programme was for joint action against the encroachments of capital, against the outbreak of war, and for unification of the international labour movement: and there was a condition of mutual non-interference, which the Trade Unions Congress General Council afterwards held to have been violated by the Russians. British Trade Unions representatives in the Amsterdam International made a practice of espousing the Soviet cause. Soviet Labour showed sympathy with British Labour in its troubles, and offered pecuniary support in the General Strike of May, 1926, which the British General Council declined to accept. The miners, who continued their strike after the collapse of the General Strike, received the contribution of the all-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions to their strike fund. The British Government protested against the transmission of the money, but the Soviet Government declined to interfere. It has been suggested that the British protest would at that time have taken a more vigorous form but for the wish to exercise a restraining influence upon Soviet policy in China: where the revolutionary movement had not yet completely collapsed, and British interests continued to be threatened.

The Anglo-Russian Trade Unions Committee broke up because the Russians interfered in the strikes of 1926, abused the General Council for

deserting the miners, and appealed to the British Trade Unions over its head: thus violating the condition of non-interference. The British Government, having awaited the moment when the British position in China appeared no longer to be in peril, raided the Soviet Trade Delegation in London, and severed diplomatic, without severing commercial, relations with the U.S.S.R.

We know from a speech of Stalin made in July, 1926, what he had expected from the understanding between the British and the Russian Trade Unions. He wished for such an international organisation of the working class as would prevent, or embarrass, foreign intervention in the U.S.S.R. It is the same policy which, later on, took the form of the advocacy of the United Front between all sections of the Left, whether Communist or non-Communist. Both sides of the policy, the political and the industrial, broke down: and Russian aims received as serious a rebuff in Great Britain as in China. The Trotskyist opposition was not less critical of the alliance with the British Trade Unions than of that with Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang. Both were attempts at a United Front with the class-enemy: both involved the sacrifice of the working class, and the abandonment of the aims of the World-Revolution. The error, according to Trotsky, lay in attempting to work through the existing Trade Unions instead of aiming to permeate them: in other words, in overleaping the Party. For although the ruling class of Great Britain may, at that time, have regarded the British Trade Unions as a subversive influence, Trotsky recognised them for a merely reformist element, making both for political and for industrial peace, and a powerful barrier against revolution.

These were not the only points at which Trotsky attacked the policy of the Third International. In May, 1926, Marshal Pilsudski, the leader of the Polish armies and the inspirer of Polish policies in 1920, who was, or perhaps I should rather say, had been, a Socialist, had become the virtual dictator of Poland. He drew his strength from elements of the population very different from those dominant in the U.S.S.R.: but the leader of the Communist Party in Poland declared him to be a champion of the town-workers and the peasantry, and called on the Communist Party to support him. This was done under the guidance of the Third International at Moscow, whose policy here furnished a close parallel to the case of the Kuomintang in China. The hollowness of the understanding between Soviet Russia and Pilsudskian Poland revealed itself in June, 1927, when the Soviet envoy to Warsaw was assassinated by a member of an anti-Bolshevik Society operating in Poland. The Soviet Government had already protested against the toleration of anti-Soviet conspiracy. The Soviet Press now charged the Polish Government with responsibility for the murder: and the pending negotiations for a non-aggression pact between the two countries broke down.

(1927.) This murder happened within a fortnight of the rupture with

Great Britain. It produced, in the U.S.S.R., an impression of encirclement, and intensified the fear of impending attack: for which the memories of intervention between 1918 and 1920 gave a plausible basis. This was the time when the proceedings of the Trotskyist opposition were beginning to culminate in an open appeal to public feeling. The danger of war was used, as it had been used for some time past, to arouse odium against supposed enemies of the Soviet Fatherland, and doubtless played a part in their expulsion from the Party, and their commitment into the hands of the Gay-Pay-oo.

I repeat that Trotsky had been substantially right in his forecast of the course of the Revolution in Russia. It had gone straight to a dictatorship of the proletariat, supported by the peasants, but insecurely supported by them. The remainder of his conception of the Permanent, or Continuous, Revolution was yet to be fulfilled. He burned for its fulfilment and chafed over every lost opportunity. It is this which explains the bitterness of his criticism about Germany, about China, about the British Trade Unions, and about Poland. The other threads which ran through the web of his thought were: first, that the U.S.S.R. must be industrialised, and industrialised with speed, in order to win the support of the wavering peasantry with a supply of the goods which were the price of its allegiance, and to strengthen the revolution against attack: and secondly, that the economic activities of the revolutionary State must be co-ordinated by an authoritative Plan. There was, I think, yet a third leading thought: that he, Trotsky, was the hero of the masses, both party and non-party, and that to increase the power of the masses was to secure to himself the means of carrying the measures he saw to be necessary. I do not think that he was actuated by any Napoleonic ambitions, except in the sense that every man who knows his own mind, and desires to have his own way, is so actuated: but personal pride, leading to impatience of opposition, and an unwillingness—in spite of all his brilliant pamphleteering—to explain himself in plain language to the plain man, were always among the clues to his actions. Mr. Louis Fischer says that he “diagnosed but could not prescribe”. In fertility of invention he was unsurpassed. It is doubtful that his political judgment was of equal quality. He was conscious of having no gift for political intrigue, or he despised the arts which some employ with success for the attainment of their aims. Confident of great achievements and great powers, and of the popular appreciation of both, he stood haughtily upon his record. His rival pursued a different course; built up an organisation of dependents and supporters, used the mistakes of his adversary, and bided his time. He was helped by the spirit of caution or timidity, or perhaps of weariness of adventure, characteristic of N.E.P., which made many unwilling to follow the brilliant, but possibly erratic, guidance of a genius too clever to be quite understood. I cannot, myself, after close study of Trotsky’s recorded opinions, detect with certainty any ideological difference be-

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tween the two men : but Stalin was an opportunist, where Trotsky was a theoretician : and Trotsky was earlier convinced of the paramount necessity of Planning and of rapid industrialisation : while Stalin stood—ultimately—for the conversion of the outside world to Socialism by the example of a successful Socialist State.

In the “Scissors” crisis of 1923, when the prices of industrial goods far outsoared those of agricultural products, and the peasant ceased to buy because the desired articles had grown monstrously expensive in terms of grain, Trotsky, and a minority which stood with him, attributed the crisis to the backwardness of industry, demanded that it should be strengthened by industrial planning and by the extension of credits and subsidies, and gave to the more liberal financing of industry precedence over the aim of the reduction of industrial prices. He argued that this and other crises of economy are due to mistaken forecasts, or to the absence of forecasts, such as are inevitable in the absence of comprehensive planning, and turned the case into a sermon on the need for such planning, and of executive authority for the State Planning Commission, and declared that the last word should belong, not to finance, but to industry : to which other interests should be strictly subordinated.

The course actually followed by the Triumvirate of Stalin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev was very different from this. They decided to force, by financial measures, the reduction of industrial prices, and to proceed with the stabilisation of the currency. The spread of the “Scissors” contracted, and it again became possible for the peasant to buy.

It has been argued that the triumph of this decision averted the creation of a system of exploitation of the countryside for the benefit of a town proletariat, similar to that of the exploitation of colonies for the benefit of a motherland. The peasantry would have been made to pay excessive prices for their town purchases, and the temptations of a system so advantageous to the towns would have led to its perpetuation. But the history of the relations of town and country in Russia show the existence, in the latter, of an enormous capacity for passive resistance. So crude a method of exploitation as systematic overcharging would have reduced peasant purchases (as indeed it did during the “Scissors” crisis) and possibly peasant cultivation, and would have cut off the towns from the peaceable supply of food. A local Soviet functionary in White Russia told Mr. Hindus that he would not like to have to enforce the Trotsky policy in the village : “I had better be in jail. I should be safer there.” It seems to me that the “Trotsky policy” was misunderstood, or mistakenly attributed to Trotsky. It was a lesser man, Preobrazhensky, who dreamed of “Socialist accumulation” for the State, from the surplus payment of the peasantry for industrial goods.

Trotsky did not contemplate overcharging for industrial goods, at all events as a permanent policy. It was, for him, at most a temporary method of raising the capital required to establish industry on a firm

basis. In a later work (*The Real Situation in Russia*, 1927) he entirely repudiated the charge of desiring to raise prices at all, and asserted that the true object was to reduce the cost of manufacture, and the spread between wholesale and retail prices, so as to secure a profit for the State without overburdening the peasant: and to give to Socialist industry the essential quality of cheapness in the international market. The course of the controversy (as is perhaps inevitable when strong passions are aroused on both sides) was deflected to personalities, and to the disinterment of old controversies regarding Permanent Revolution: and Trotsky's fundamental criticism that the economy of the U.S.S.R. was going wrong for lack of a comprehensive plan to co-ordinate activities, was evaded. But it is now evident that the "Scissors" crisis was due to the disproportionately rapid growth of agricultural, by contrast with industrial, production: and that Trotsky was pointing in the right direction when he advocated conscious co-ordination by means of a plan which should systematically expand industry. It is this which I take to be the central point in his economic proposals.

Along with the economic question, the issue of democracy within the Party, upon which many old Bolsheviks were in agreement with Trotsky, was also under debate. He addressed, to the Central Committee of the Party (*October 8th, 1923*), a complaint that party functionaries were being appointed from above,—that a party bureaucracy was being created—instead of being elected from below, to an extent far greater than in the "fiercest moment" of War-Communism, when the dictatorship required special safeguards. He protested against the "18,000 revolutionary officials, in many of whom the habits of a superior caste are beginning to ossify". The controversy, deserting the ground of principles, at once reached personalities, and Trotsky was charged with personal ambition and pride. A compromise on a "new course" did not satisfy the Opposition; Trotsky appealed, or seemed to appeal, to youth against age for support to his contentions, and a conference of Party officials declared that the Opposition had given the word for the destruction of the Party staff. The question was never discussed on its merits, and the "Lenin push", which admitted to the Party nearly 200,000 workers, so altered the balance that the majority was no longer favourable to Trotsky.

A humorous, but characteristic, incident enlivened the debate when Trotsky, declaring his loyalty to discipline, said: "The Party is always right . . . one can only be right with the Party." The language awakened subconscious memories of the ingrained Orthodox conviction that truth is to be found in the congregation of the brethren where mutual love resides. For days, Communist circles in Moscow discussed, with an obstinately mystical and theological bent, *whether the Party is infallible*: till Stalin hinted that Trotsky had been making fun of them: and said that the Party often made mistakes.

This, I may take the opportunity of noting, has always been the line

taken by Stalin, whatever lesser men may think and say. He makes mistakes, the Party makes mistakes, everyone makes mistakes. They must not cover up mistakes, but drag them to light, analyse them and provide against their recurrence. His advance is avowedly by trial and error. But I am sometimes tempted to think it hard that those who shared his errors of an earlier period should be so drastically censured for not amending them at the precise moment when he amends them himself. He is the very prince of trimmers—I use the word in the respectful sense in which I should use it of a skilful yachtsman—and he cannot abide when others are not prompt to trim the boat along with him. What I deprecate is the flinging of such passengers incontinently overboard.

In November, 1924, Trotsky republished some of his works, with an introduction entitled *Lessons of October*. This is a pamphlet of remarkable cogency and power, in form an analysis of Revolutionary history, in essence an attack upon the ruling triumvirate, with the lesson that success or failure depends upon the choice of the leader. The qualities which make bad leadership are traced in Stalin to his early resistance, as joint editor of *Pravda*, to Lenin's slogan of power for the Soviets: in Zinoviev and Kamenev to their minority campaign against the November insurrection. The case of Germany in 1923 is shown to be parallel to that of Russia in the autumn of 1917. The leadership which the Third International should have given in the former case was lacking. The last words of the book summarise its intention:—

“Bolshevism is not a theory (that is, not merely a theory): it is a revolutionary system for teaching revolution to the proletariat. And what does Bolshevising the Communist Parties mean? It means an education, and a choice of leaders, which will prevent them from missing the moment of their October.”

A deadly insinuation, not to be forgiven by a triumvirate of leaders. The Government, which controlled the presses, kept back the book, and filled the newspapers with attacks upon Trotsky, on his theory of Permanent Revolution, on his under-estimation of the part to be played by the peasants, even on his work with the Red Army. (*November 19th, 1924*.) A more effective blow was the reading of the letter which Trotsky had written in 1913 in criticism of Lenin. This letter had been seized by the Tsarist police, and Stalin, who had taken charge of the police archives when the Party came into power, had evidently noted its potential usefulness, and had it ready to hand. It was a broadside of poison gas against Trotsky's rapier: and the latter's reasoned demonstration to the Party that he had not ignored the peasants, nor despaired of Socialist construction, and not evaded Party discipline, was silenced by the general disapproval of his criticism of the newly lost leader. (*January, 1925*.) He was deprived of the post of People's Commissar of War, and an important

economic office which included the chairmanship of the electro-technical board, was conferred upon him. (*May, 1925.*)

A factor of importance in the history of the Opposition was the illness of Trotsky and his prolonged absences from Moscow. He was ill and absent when Lenin died, did not attend Lenin's funeral, protested by letter, and not in person, against the building of his Mausoleum in the Red Square, and was still absent in the autumn of 1924 when the Press campaign was active against him. He again absented himself in the Caucasus in 1925, and visited Berlin for medical advice in 1926. Throughout he ignored completely the arts of popularity. Events move swiftly in the U.S.S.R., the very generations are shorter, the personnel of public life changes, memories are brief, or the persons who should remember give place to new. It is by reference to facts such as these that we must explain the evanescence of the popularity of a hero of the Revolution and Civil War, who had stood scarcely second to Lenin in the estimation of the people. It is not so much that the masses are fickle, as that everybody's business is nobody's business, and that organised publicity plays a necessary part in keeping popular memories alive.

The concentration of industry, the contraction of State-credits, and the measures of rationalisation, which had brought down industrial prices, and ended the dream of creating resources out of the peasants' purchases from the town, had still left for solution the question, which the exhaustion of reserves made urgent, of the means of finding capital for the revolutionary State. It inevitably raised the issue whether Socialism could be built in Russia alone, without the collaboration of the other peoples: and all questions thereafter, external as well as internal, tended to hinge upon the answer to this one. After a moment of hesitation, during which he expressed convictions which he was afterwards at pains to explain away, Stalin declared that Socialism could be built in a single country. He started with the assumption that the World-Revolution was postponed and Capitalism stabilised. He sought for protection against attack from a stabilised World-Capitalism in the support of the moderate groups abroad, of which the Kuomintang in China, the Trades Union Council in Britain, and, supposedly, also Marshal Pilsudski in Poland, were examples. He looked for resources within the U.S.S.R., and found them—very much as Peter Stolypin had found them two decades earlier—in the “strong and sober” among the peasantry, and he stood for an alliance with them. This was entirely in harmony with the spirit of N.E.P., which aimed at utilising the private desire for gain, as a means of restoration of the public economy. But reliance upon the prosperous peasants was combined with measures for controlling private enterprise in industry and trade. Observers in Russia in 1924 and 1925 were impressed with the vigour of the campaign against the *nepmen*, and with the deliberate stretching of the laws against them. Herr Scheffer, a German journalist of distinction, went so far as to call 1924 the year of the

second revolution. An immense number of small private enterprises were closed: such freedom as N.E.P. allowed was largely withdrawn: and these measures were accompanied by attacks upon surviving *bourgeois* culture, the closing of churches, the purging of libraries, and the exclusion of *bourgeois* children from the schools.

The policy of reliance upon the more prosperous peasantry was exemplified by the measures of 1925, which permitted the leasing of land and the hiring of agricultural labour. The workers of Leningrad took umbrage at the favour shown to the peasantry. Bukharin, in an article the outspokenness of which may have embarrassed the leader whose policy he intended to support, issued the blatant invitation to the peasantry to enrich themselves. The resultant controversy was hushed up by the Central Committee of the Party: but Zinoviev and Kamenev had taken alarm at Stalin's leadership in economic policy, and the Triumvirate (Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev) which had controlled the Soviet Union since the second illness of Lenin, was broken up.

Circumstances now brought Trotsky into alliance with Zinoviev and Kamenev. They feared the growth of power in the prosperous peasantry. He desired co-ordination, by plan, of all parts of the Soviet Economy, both industrial and agricultural, and actually sketched a Five-Years-Plan in 1925. At this time, planning was not in favour in official circles. Rykov made a speech about it at the end of 1923, in which he drew a picture of ringing up a "literary person: and, literally in three hours, a plan was ready with all its lines and circles and so forth. But this plan could in no way take into account the conditions of our market." The idea that something must take the place of *laissez faire, laissez aller*, in economics, and that some authority must decide, if individuals were no longer to do so, had not yet won its way to general acceptance. The greatest contribution made by the Opposition, in this period of discussion and experiment, to the growth of a coherent system of Socialist economics, was the insistence upon the necessity of a Plan. It won: but not before its most persistent advocate had trodden the path to exile.

In June, 1926, Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev agreed upon a common platform. It is interesting, with reference to the Trotskyist trials of ten years later, to note that Karl Radek, Evdokimov, Rakovsky, Piatakov, Smilga and Smirnov were also among the leaders of this wing of the Opposition. It is hardly less interesting, with reference to the same group of trials and the accompanying degradations and dismissals, to note the prominent position occupied, *on the other side of the controversy*, by Bukharin and Rykov, at that time champions of the Right wing.

The Opposition's policy in 1926 was a composite one, showing plainly the need of concessions to unite different sections of thought. In the province of foreign relations, it insisted upon energetic efforts for World-Revolution, and it negated the possibility of Socialism in a single country. At the same time it advocated close links with foreign capitalism,

the use of foreign credits and of foreign technical aid, the accumulation of a reserve of foreign raw materials, and the stimulation of Russian industry by contact with the example of the outside world. We can treat these aims as mutually compatible only if we suppose the aim of World-Revolution to be postponed, at least for a season. The strengthening of industry is demanded, but the emphasis is on increased production, and on reduction of prices, by the reduction of costs, and by the diminution of the spread between wholesale and retail prices.

In this programme the peasantry, as an integral whole, is not looked upon as a source of accumulation, a means of building up capital for the Socialist State. A distinction is drawn between the prosperous peasant, who is declared to be increasing in strength and to be using his economic strength to oppress the poorer: and the rank and file of the peasantry. All the means of the State are to be used to favour the poorer peasant, who is to be relieved of taxation: while the *kulak* is to be forced by higher taxation to surrender his accumulations of grain. An interesting feature of the programme is that small-scale peasant agriculture is to be ended as soon as the change is feasible, and replaced by the organisation of collective farms. This is a reversion to earlier projects dropped on the introduction of N.E.P. Until collectivisation becomes feasible, the way for it is to be prepared by increased co-operative production in agriculture and increased electrification and mechanisation.

The programme makes much of the grievances of the urban workers. The rationalisation associated with the policy of closing the "Scissors" has unfairly reduced wages and increased unemployment. The housing-space for workers is inadequate. The workers are deprived of all share and of all representation in the making of wage-bargains, and the so-called collective agreements are not agreements at all, but unilateral instructions forced upon the Trade Unions. The differences between wages are too great. Accidents in the factories are far too common. Generally speaking, the programme of the Opposition turns its back upon N.E.P., with its reliance upon the acquisitive instincts of individuals as a means of economic restoration, and faces once more the original revolutionary principle of a system based upon the worker and the poorer peasant, with active help for the realisation of the same principle in the world outside of Russia. Within the Party there is to be democracy: in the Soviets there is to be more rigorous control over elections, to exclude all *bourgeois* elements, including the prosperous peasants.

There is evidence that the programme had much support among the factory workers. The attack was a powerful one, launched along a wide front. But the Revolution had now created its own vested interests, and the fort was strongly held. The Opposition was accused of that worst of Bolshevik sins, of disbelief in the Revolution: as a Roman might have said, of despairing of the Republic: of lacking confidence that the Revolution can exist in isolation. Those in power declared that the Revolu-

tion was already victorious but not yet finally victorious, because of the possibilities of intervention from abroad: and they made vigorous use of the danger of war to create odium against their opponents. Many of the leaders of the Opposition (Trotsky himself, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, Sokolnikov) were Jews. The Communist Party has always set its face against anti-Semitism. In April, 1928, the Central Committee issued instructions to the Party to proceed against anti-Semitic agitators: but discreetly and in such a manner as not to give the impression that Communists are the particular champions of the Jews, or that the Government is a Government of Jews. This was an evident recognition of the survival of anti-Semitism among the people.

The Government took the sting out of some of the Opposition charges by measures of its own. A campaign of reform from within was launched in 1926 by Felix Dzerzhinsky, formerly head of the Cheka, who had succeeded to one of the vacant places in the supreme Triumvirate. In a series of speeches he condemned the consumption of reserves of capital, the famine of manufactured goods, and the lack of training for workers, and declared that the State was "smothered in bureaucracy". Rudzutak, the People's Commissar of Communications, attacked the administration of the Railways. "Papa" Kalinin declared that the rural Soviets were ossified, because so few took the trouble to vote: and that the Soviets both in town and country were increasingly dominated by persons of *bourgeois* sympathies. It was decided to cancel elections in cases of official interference, and where the proportion of voters fell below a certain minimum: and permission was given for the nomination of candidates outside the Party list. These measures are apparent concessions to the Opposition's demand for workers' democracy. It seems certain that attempts were made to effect conciliation, and that Stalin was prepared to go to considerable lengths to avoid a breach. There was a strong sentiment of *camaraderie* at this time, uniting all who had taken part in the early revolutionary movements, in spite of the bitterness of their disputes and the severity with which sentences of exile and transference to inferior offices were pronounced and executed. It was natural, *then*, to contrast the peaceable termination of apparently tragic quarrels with the murderous use of the guillotine against revolutionary rivals in the France of the eighteenth century. But the developments of a later epoch were such as to make any congratulation of the Russian revolutionaries upon this score obviously inappropriate.

In October, 1926, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Piatakov, Evdokimov and Sokolnikov put their hands to a document which looked like a treaty of peace: but it did not prevent them from continuing the struggle with Stalin, Bukharin and Rykov, now the ruling Triumvirate. It was not long before both Trotsky and Kamenev were expelled from the Politburo of the Party, and Zinoviev removed from the Chairmanship of the Third (Communist) International. Karl Radek was dismissed from the head-

ship of the Sun Yat-sen University at Moscow, because he shared Trotsky's views on revolution in China. The tension produced by the rupture of diplomatic relations with Great Britain, followed by the murder of the Soviet envoy at Warsaw, gave occasion for an outbreak of terrorism. At home there were fresh economic difficulties, with a widening of the "Scissors" in consequence of the scarcity of goods. The background of discontent revealed itself in the throwing of a bomb in Lenin-grad, and an attack on an officer of the Gay-Pay-oo at Minsk. The blows which the foreign policy of the U.S.S.R. received in 1927 in China, Great Britain and Poland, gave prestige to the Opposition by confirming its forecasts, and intensified the political strain. Zinoviev, who was not ordinarily remarkable for courage, addressed a non-party meeting at which he criticised the Central Party Committee, thus repeating his offence of October, 1917, when he carried Party affairs to the general public. Trotsky openly accused Stalin of betrayal of the cause of World-Revolution. A warning was given to Trotsky and Zinoviev by the Central Control Commission, and they ostensibly submitted to discipline. But when Smilga, a member of the Opposition, was transferred to a post in Siberia, as a disciplinary measure, Trotsky saw him off from the railway station, and made a demonstrative speech.

Owing to the charges made against them of endangering the safety of the Socialist Fatherland when threatened by foreign attack, Trotsky and others signed, in August, 1927, a declaration that they would stand by the Government and the Party in the event of conflict, and would call upon the soldiers of the Capitalist Powers to desert and join the Red Army. Some of the Opposition leaders were occupying posts abroad (a favourite method of securing their isolation from the centre of opposition): and this declaration was signed by Rakovsky, as Soviet ambassador at Paris, and by L. B. Kamenev, as Soviet ambassador at Rome. In September, the Opposition sent to the Central Committee of the Party a statement of its case, to be published for the information of the members and discussed at special meetings in preparation for the Fifteenth Party Conference. The majority decided against its publication: whereupon it was mimeographed by I. P. Bakayev, G. E. Evdokimov, L. P. Serebriakov, and other members of the Opposition, who were brought to trial in 1936. The Gay-Pay-oo seized the Press and arrested many persons. The substance of the document was elaborated into Trotsky's *Real Situation in Russia*, which purports to reproduce his speech on the motion to expel him from the Central Committee. This speech was not delivered, or was whistled and shouted down, but it stands as a record of the policy of the Opposition.

In the international and the internal economic spheres the policy of this abortive speech does not differ from that already described. World-Revolution is to be forwarded, there is to be an end of the policy of making allies in such quarters as the Chinese Kuomintang, the British Trade

Unions Congress General Council and Pilsudskian Poland: but use is to be made of the capitalist governments to stimulate the growth of Russian industry. Internal policy is to be based upon the workers and the poorer peasants, not upon the *nepmen* and the *kulaks*. Since the ultimate victory of Socialism depends upon its victory in the markets, industry is to be developed first and foremost, and prices are to be brought down by reduction of the cost of production and of the spread between wholesale and retail. Certain kinds of waste are to be eliminated. One of them is the devouring of surplus value by an overgrown bureaucracy. Another is the consumption of alcohol, which had been increased by the restoration of the State monopoly of vodka in 1925. Agriculture is to be collectivised, not by compulsion, but by subsidising the process, and by the introduction of large-scale mechanised cultivation: and the poorer peasant strengthened by the steeper taxation of the more prosperous, the prohibition of the hiring of labour, and the reduction of the renting of land to minimum limits.

The draft of the Five-Year-Plan for 1926-31 is criticised by Trotsky as inadequate, because it ignores all the potentialities presented by the position of the State as owner of nationalised land, banks, and industry, and does not deal drastically enough with the spread between wholesale and retail prices.

In Chapter V of *The Real Situation* the Soviet bureaucracy is attacked, not only for its size and cost, but for its tendency to develop social snobbery and to arrogate to itself the position of master of those whose servant it should be. In his later works, written in exile, Trotsky reverts again and again to the mischievous results of the growth of the great bureaucratic machine, with its conservative personal interests. He emphasises the subordination of the truly democratic organs, the Soviets, to this new official tyranny: and says that the objection to bureaucratic domination, the rule of the "apparatus", was the root of the opposition of 1924-27.

Next comes a chapter condemning the treatment of the minority nationalities, which are being deprived of the independent authority contemplated by the Federal Constitution. The evils of revived Capitalism and of bureaucratic domination, of which Trotsky has complained in Great Russia, tend to be at their worst (he says) in these outlying regions. The imported Communist and office-holder domineer and dictate over the native-born. The Council of Nationalities, intended to be a co-equal chamber in the Central Executive committee, is reduced to an inferior status.

One chapter is devoted to the Party, and one to the Communist League of Youth. The Party contains too few workers, too many officials, too many Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Congresses and Conferences are summoned, without any preliminary free discussion, such as was always held under Lenin, of all questions by the whole Party. Old

Party men are being replaced by Yes-men, who have not undergone the same hard experiences. One man at the top—the Secretary-General, for instance—counts for more than a hundred at the bottom. The subjection of the Politburo to the Secretariat, and of the Secretariat to the General Secretary, is an accomplished fact, and the dying out of democracy within the Party is accompanied by the dying out of democracy in general, in the Trade Unions, in the Soviets, and in all other non-party mass organisations. Lenin's precept that the General Staff must be supported by the honest and conscious will of the rank and file of the Army is forgotten. The controlling body must be reconstructed and organised, to make it a truly democratic force such as Lenin contemplated when he planned the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection.

The proportion of proletarians in the Communist League of Youth has fallen to just over a third of the whole: and there has been a recent lowering of the status of the young worker. The Opposition programme has evidently been devised to make an appeal to youth: and changes in these respects are demanded by Trotsky.

At this time scores of malcontents were visiting Trotsky in his office, where he still continued to be the head of the Economic Concessions Board, and a good deal of platonic sympathy was evidently felt in many quarters with his aims. He says that he had to pour cold water on the ardour of these emissaries, but he adds that the Opposition was preparing for the Party Congress by holding both secret and open meetings. One evening the Opposition seized the Technical College at Moscow (much as the Bolsheviks had seized the Kshesinskaya Palace at Petrograd in April, 1917) and held a mass meeting, which a crowd outside the building protected, while Trotsky and Kamenev spoke for two hours.

It is of some interest, with reference to the charges made at the Trotskyist trials of 1936-38, that the Opposition was charged with a royalist conspiracy at this time, as well as with assisting the military designs of foreign Powers. These charges played, or were intended to play, the same part in the strife of the parties, as the incitement-to-murder accusations against Charles Stewart Parnell in the Irish Home Rule controversy, or the "German spy" stories against Lenin in July, 1917, or the burning of the Reichstag in the early stages of the Nazi campaign against the parties of the Left in Germany. The tendency to create odium against political opponents by exaggerating, if not actually fabricating, offences resembles the practice of propaganda against national enemies in time of war.

(*November 7th, 1927.*) At the Anniversary demonstrations in Moscow hundreds of the Opposition came out with banners and joined the procession in honour of the Revolution. Trotsky says these banners bore slogans, *not directed against the Party*, but worded as follows: "Let us turn our fire to the Right: against the *kulak*, the *nepman* and the bureaucrat." "Let us carry out Lenin's will." "Against opportunism, against a split,

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and for the unity of Lenin's Party." The Militia tore away the placards, Trotsky's car was fired upon by a policeman: and similar action was taken at Leningrad, where Zinoviev had been busy.

It is not surprising that Trotsky and Zinoviev were at once expelled from the Party. They had broken every rule of party discipline in their open appeal to public support. On November 16th, Joffé, who was ill, and to whom sufficient means for undertaking a cure abroad had been refused by the Party, committed suicide: and his funeral was made the occasion of a further Opposition demonstration.

(December, 1927.) The Fifteenth Congress of the Party expelled Trotsky, Kamenev, Radek, Rakovsky, Piatakov, and many hundreds of Communists of lesser note. We have been reminded by a recent speech of Stalin how the voting went. Of the 854,000 members of the Party 730,600 voted. Of these 724,000 supported Stalin and the Central Committee: 2,600 abstained from voting: and 4,000 voted for the Opposition. There is no reason to suspect these figures. Trotsky himself has stated in *The Revolution Betrayed* that the number of those who joined him was small. Zinoviev and Kamenev abased themselves, and along with thirty-six others, were readmitted to the Party in June, 1928. Trotsky himself was exiled to Central Asia in January, 1928, and excluded from the U.S.S.R. in January, 1929.

It seems a far cry from Trotsky, who had urged the organisation of labour on military lines, to M. P. Tomsky, the president of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, who had stoutly championed their claim to a freedom as complete as that of the Trade Unions in the United Kingdom. And yet there was a point of approach between the two. Trotsky made himself the advocate of democracy in the Party. Democracy in the Party involves very naturally the assertion of an important rôle for the Soviets: and, equally easily, it passes on to a claim for independence in the Trade Unions. The programme of the Trotsky Opposition in 1926 included a protest against the so-called collective agreements, which are not agreements at all, but unilateral instructions forced upon the Trade Unions. In exile in 1931-2, we find Trotsky complaining (*The German Revolution and Stalin's Bureaucracy*) that the Trade Unions are deprived of all power to influence the relative proportions of consumption and saving: that is to say, to claim a larger part of the product for wages. He goes on to say that the participation of the workers in leadership will have a favourable influence upon production, and that Soviet Democracy is a living need. I do not stress unduly this ultimate similarity between the doctrines of a leader of the Left and a leader of the Right: but it obviously has some relevance to the events of 1936 and later, when Left and Right alike were swept into the net by the Department of Internal Affairs, which has succeeded to the functions of the Gay-Pay-oo.

I have found little space, so far, for any reference to the Opposition of

the Right. It bulked less large in the period which we have been considering, because the leadership of the Party itself, at this time, stood so far on the right flank of politics. But there were already signs in the attitude of the Party in 1928 of a tack towards the Left. In proportion as this tendency developed, the Right Opposition became more restive. In June, 1929, Tomsky, who had demanded for the Trade Unions the right to defend the interests of their own members, was removed from the Presidency of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. Bukharin had always held that it was possible to absorb, instead of destroying, the anti-Bolshevik forces in the village: and the measures connected with the adoption of the first Five-Year-Plan, the collectivisation of the farms, and the "liquidation" of the *kulaks*, completed the breach between Stalin and his supporters on the Right. In 1930, Rykov, Bukharin and Tomsky, addressed to the Politburo a memorandum showing that grain supplies would fail unless the policy was changed. The economist Kondratiev, who had collaborated with the three dissentients in the preparation of this document, disappeared into the hands of the Gay-Pay-oo. At the Sixteenth Conference of the Party in 1930, Stalin attacked the Right deviators, as representatives of the defeated classes. Bukharin, once a partner with Stalin in the Triumvirate and "the Party's supreme theoretician after Lenin", was dismissed from the Executive Committee of the Third International and from the editorship of *Pravda*. Tomsky was exiled from the capital. Syrtsov, who had organised a new opposition group, was charged with conspiracy and imprisoned. Rykov, "the old reliable Bolshevik", also a sharer at one time in the powers of the Triumvirate, was ousted from his post of Chairman of the Council of Commissars and replaced by Molotov. The Right Opposition then followed the Trotskyist Opposition underground.

Another form of Opposition within the Party came from Communists belonging to the non-Great Russian nationalities. Overtly, at least, their protests were made against over-centralisation and what has been termed Great Russian chauvinism: but I have more to say on this subject in the chapter dealing with the Nationalities of the U.S.S.R. (Chapter XIX).

After his removal from the U.S.S.R. in 1929, Trotsky had no opportunity of returning to the Party. At all events he never bowed the knee, and did not respond to overtures, such as those which appear to have been made to him in July, 1936. His associates were more pliable, and most of them found their way back to the Party and to positions of trust, till the storm broke upon them again. His later writings throw valuable light on his political aims. In *The Soviet Union and the Fourth International* he says that the last real Congress of the Bolshevik Party was the Twelfth, which took place at the beginning of 1923. All subsequent congresses were bureaucratic parades. No constitutional way remains for the removal of the ruling clique. *Only by force* can the bureaucracy be compelled to yield power into the hands of the proletarian vanguard. But

the question of seizing power will arise for the new Party *only when it shall have consolidated itself round the majority of the working class*. A major historical test—which may be a war—will determine the relation of forces. The first Workers' State may fall. "But we wage our struggle from the standpoint of defending it. . . . The new International will offer the Stalinist bureaucracy a united front against the common foe."

In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) Trotsky's patriotic pride breaks through his partisan criticism, and he exultingly quotes the French technicians' report on the Red Air Fleet, which expressed "surprise and admiration". Envisaging the likelihood of war, he declares that, if the proletariat wins elsewhere, even the defeat of the U.S.S.R. will be only an episode. But no military victory will save the heritage of the Revolution if Imperialism keeps its place in the rest of the world. Nevertheless the Red Army is of extraordinary value, because it will give time for the development of the class-war in the imperialist countries. He condemns the recent policy of the Third International for its purely conservative policy of maintaining the world *in statu quo*. The aim should be the creation of a United States of Europe: *but not by adventurism or by attempts to force the course of world events*.

In a closing chapter he declares that *a new revolution is now ineluctable*. Delation and inquisition are devouring the society of the U.S.S.R. The workers detest the Bureaucracy. They abstain from action only because they fear to prepare the way for a capitalist restoration.

Trotsky then makes a reference to the assassination of Kirov in December, 1934, an outrage which had an important influence upon the course of events. He says that attacks on the representatives of power are important as symptoms, and that the assassination of Kirov was the most significant of these. He adds that individual terrorism is incapable of overthrowing the oligarchy. It is the aim of impatient or desperate men, generally belonging to the young generation of the bureaucracy. But, as under the autocracy, political crimes show that a crisis is at hand.

He continues that the task of the Fourth International—the new organisation created by Trotsky—is to prepare *a new revolution*, and to place itself at the head of the masses, *in a favourable historic situation*.

It is an outspoken notification that Trotsky and the Fourth International will oust Stalin and make a new revolution *when the time is ripe* for it. A war may provide the occasion for this new revolution. In such a war the Fourth International will defend the Soviet Union: but the intention of defending the Soviet Union is compatible with the making of a fresh revolution there.

Such a notification would set any ruler, any State, to work on measures of self-preservation. We cannot affect surprise that all who were within reach, and were supposed, by reason of their antecedents, to be sympathetic with Trotsky, were seized: after an attempt to arrive at an accommodation (by means of a meeting in Holland which was reported by the

Dutch Press in July, 1936) had been made and failed. It is only a hypothesis: but I think it is a likely one: that the Government of the U.S.S.R. became aware that Trotsky was publishing, or about to publish, his *Revolution Betrayed*: with its ominous reference to the assassination of Kirov, and its threat of a new revolution: that it thereupon opened negotiations with Trotsky: and that when these failed it determined upon the general attack upon all surviving vestiges of Trotskyism within its reach. The attack included more than the old associates of Trotsky: for Tomsky committed suicide: and Bukharin and Rykov, both of the Right Opposition, were arrested. The prosecutions, which continued from 1936 to 1938, alleged an alliance between Trotskyists, malcontents of the Right Opposition and the Red Army, and so-called *bourgeois* nationalists of Ukrain, White Russia and Mahommedan Central Asia: treasonable negotiations with Germany and Japan, and conspiracy for murders, cession of territory to foreign powers, sabotage and the restoration of capitalism.

When the oppositions went underground, they became, by an internal logic of their own, more desperate and more dangerous. I disbelieve much of what was "confessed", or stated in evidence, in the trials of 1936-8: but close study makes evident an important nucleus of truth. Trotsky meant to make a new revolution when conditions should be ripe for it; and old revolutionaries who mean to make fresh revolutions do not sit with folded hands. They keep alive their old connections, are busy in making new ones, seek for agents and supporters, collect funds, exchange information, make alliances with others having similar objects, watch the course of international politics in order that the favourable moment may not be missed when it arrives. In work such as this it may be necessary to use instruments which are not over-clean, and it is often difficult to repudiate an over-zealous accomplice.

Under the conditions of a constitutional country (not to be reproduced by the mere transportation of constitutional forms), the men of the Right might have become a constitutional conservative opposition, aiming at the absorption of *nepmen* and *kulaks* into a Socialist system, and at softening the transition for them. What actually happened to them is convincingly described in their own statements in March, 1938. Within the Party it was evident, in spite of their conviction that a wrong policy was being followed, that they could achieve nothing. The leaders were not to be disposed of by a vote. They must be ousted by more drastic means. First, it was to be done by an insurrection, of the kind which the agrarian disturbances of 1929-31 seemed to make easily feasible. The success achieved by collectivisation and by the operations of the first Five-Year-Plan, destroyed the hope of popular support for an insurrectionary movement. They turned therefore to the notion of a "palace *coup*", of the seizure of the Kremlin, to be carried out preferably in conjunction with foreign attack; and they began to pick up allies of every kind: the rest-

less and ambitious soldier, the discontented nationalist, the Napoleonic police-officer with purely selfish aims and a head turned by arbitrary power. The logic of events carried them even into alliance with their opposites, who desired the same immediate end for altogether different reasons; and some of the new friends did things which others of them would, at the outset, have seriously disapproved. The dismemberment of the U.S.S.R. presented itself in the form of allowing particular constituent republics to secede by their own will from the Union; and the opening of the front to the foreigner, in the form of allowing German or Polish troops to facilitate the secession.

Of the more serious offences, charged and admitted, it is remarkable how much was merely contemplated, discussed and intended, and how little was actually done. There was much of "*imagining* the death of His Majesty", of designing treasonable intelligence and negotiation, and little specific evidence of performance or attempted performance. For the most part, we look in vain for dates and concrete instances. It is only when the terrible Yagoda, of whom something has been said in the preceding chapter, comes upon the stage that murder passes from discussion into reality. Up to then, the conspirators seem to be wrestling with shadows. This is all the easier where action and thought are united so closely as they are united in the Russian psychology. Close analysis of some of the statements, in particular of that of Nicolas Bukharin, shows that an action, once shown to be a natural consequence of a particular thought, is conceived as already performed. The plotters readily admit responsibility for the action which should have followed upon the thought. It is part of the same mental habit which identifies planning with performance in the spheres of industry and agriculture. It is not that the union of action and thought causes the former invariably to follow the latter, but that there is an illusion of identity between them. The idea is familiar in the sphere of religion, where thought itself may be sin; but here we find it extended into jurisprudence, and a man pleads guilty to something of which the idea was present in his mind, though no overt act was committed.

Concerning Trotsky himself, there are some inferences to be drawn from the undiminished enthusiasm for the U.S.S.R. which his later speeches and writings make evident. It is very marked in a speech which he made at Copenhagen in November, 1932. He then declared that the results attained in industrial production were great, though there had been unfavourable developments in agriculture: and he extolled the rapid rise of merit to high place, and the careful preservation of everything which had been of value in old Russian civilisation. A couple of years later, in *The Soviet Union and the Fourth International*, he was declaring that even "the Stalinite apparatus" had its significance as the gate-keeper of the social achievements of the proletarian revolution: that there still existed the dictatorship of the proletariat, although a sick one.

Even in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) he continued to say that Russia's industry had made enormous advances, while the capitalist States had advanced little or not at all. He fortified this statement with the particular observation, that a comparison with Poland and the Baltic States, formerly the most advanced part of the Russian Empire, showed how great was the growth of the U.S.S.R.

So far as the internal situation goes, his most radical criticism is that, in spite of the advance made, productivity is still insufficient. From the insufficiency of productivity it follows that the U.S.S.R. has the form, not the substance, of Socialism. The evil lies in Trotsky's pet aversion, the bureaucracy, which paralyses the organisation. Because the product is too little, there is a scramble for that little, along with all the evils typical of a *bourgeois* State, and the bureaucracy appropriates power and comfort for itself. Thus, resources have not sufficed for the intended emancipation of woman, who has gone back, since rationing was abolished, to the wash-tub and the kitchen. Because production does not provide satisfactorily for all, the coercive State remains, to check the inevitable scramble, and liberty is subjected to regimentation.

As to the new Constitution of 1936, it involves (he says) the liquidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, before the proletariat has merged into a socialistic society: for which the material basis of productivity has not yet been created.

In international affairs, his criticism is that the Third International now aims at neutralising the *bourgeoisie* by assuming the appearance of the guardian of order and, in taking that aspect, it becomes the thing itself. In one deadly sentence—the Soviets are becoming *bourgeois*.

The inferences to be drawn from all these considerations, some of them self-contradictory, must be read along with the events in Europe in 1936 and succeeding years. The Central European Dictators had ambitious plans which first revealed themselves in Spain. The widespread fear of Communism provided them with a system of concealed approaches to their objective, which ultimately proved to include an attack on the U.S.S.R. Trotsky had made no secret of his intention of bringing about a fresh revolution in that country. He, or his friends, were ready to hand as instruments of political intrigue. The Opposition of the Right, driven underground by the denial of freedom of expression, combined with the Opposition of the Left, by a manoeuvre which, however surprising, is not without parallel in history. However much falsity of detail there may be, the trials of the leading personages in 1936–38 were substantially justified by facts: and were probably the means of saving the U.S.S.R. from an attempted revolution which would have given to the Nazi Government an earlier opportunity.

CHAPTER XIII

PLANNING

"The Russians have—at least since the beginning of the eighteenth century—been constantly mapping out . . . the country that lay before them, and advancing with gigantic strides according to the newest political theories."—MACKENZIE WALLACE.

"Nothing in Russia is ever done by cold design, unless it be by Jews and Germans. The whole of Russian history is a story of accidents."—STEPHEN GRAHAM.

"The slow and inconspicuous way in which great decisions in Russian history have often come of themselves."—SIR BERNARD PARES.

HISTORY WILL perhaps discover that the two outcomes of the Russian revolutionary movement destined most powerfully to influence the history of the world were unintended, and even unforeseen, by their authors. One of them was the growth, out of a disciplined band of revolutionary conspirators, of what the Webbs have named a vocation of leadership for a new type of democracy. The other is the institution of State-planning, with all its by-products, of which the solution of the problem of unemployment is likely to be one. The Planning, which is the subject of the present chapter, has naturally had to encounter the powerful criticism of orthodox economists, and has still to make good its claim, alongside of the financial budget, to the respect and imitation of mankind as a device of better government. If it still appears a novelty, we may remind ourselves that the annual planning even of the revenue and expenditure of a State exercising very restricted functions is not of a hoary antiquity.

Professor von Hayek tells us, and we need not question the accuracy of the pronouncement, that "the question whether we are to have more or less to consume, whether we are to maintain or raise our standard of life, or whether we are to sink back to the state of savages, always on the edge of starvation, depends mainly on how we use our resources". It follows that the method by which we determine the choice between alternative uses of such labour, material and land as are available, is vital to economic well-being. Man lives or dies, prospers or the reverse, by putting things into their right, or into their wrong, places. The controversy, or one of the controversies, between Individualism and Socialism centres upon the question: how is man to know which are the right places, and which are the wrong: how is he to distinguish the better from the worse use of his available resources? This question is abbreviated when we ask whether Plan or Price is to be the guide to economic action.

In the course of this controversy it is sometimes assumed that Plan is exclusively the method of Socialism, and Price exclusively the method of Individualism. The practical issue is less clear-cut. There is much planning in what we call the individualistic society, and much use of the

mechanism of price in what we call the socialistic. But the planning in the individualistic society is not, except in a limited degree, done by a central authority having the function of protecting the interests of the public in general: and the pricing in the socialistic society is not the outcome of the play of contending economic interests.

In the most individualistic societies which we know, the whole fields of public finance and taxation, of defence, of civil administration, of road- and bridge-making, of drainage, of primary and secondary education, except for *Church Schools* and for a limited number of well-to-do persons, of house-building for those who cannot pay competitive rents or cannot find accommodation with the help of private enterprise, are the subjects of planning by the State or by local authorities. The monetary system is planned by public or quasi-public bodies, which may nominally, but only nominally, be not responsible to the State. A part of the planning is done for annual periods, part of it extends over much longer periods. In war-time it is carried much further, and enters into most departments of life, controlling the means of production, distributing cargo-space by land and by water, raw materials, and labour power, fixing prices, and making an equal division of food and other necessities in the public interest. This planning in the individualistic society is not limited to those departments in which there is difficulty in collecting remuneration for service rendered. The public planning extends to postal communications, sometimes to telegraphic and telephonic communications, to radio-telegraphy and broadcasting, and to public transport by railway, tram and omnibus.

Outside the province of peace-time planning in the individualistic society lie industry and trade in general. Here the State intervenes—by tariffs, subsidies, quotas and marketing boards, and by a monetary policy calculated, according to circumstances, to effect a general expansion or restriction of business: but, with rare exceptions, only to change the framework within which private interests operate. The planning of the actual operations is done by the private or quasi-private interests which produce or distribute the goods or supply the services. For simplicity's sake I shall speak only of the producer, not of the distributor. The consumer—if he is a member of a Consumers' Co-operative Society—may do some counter-planning of his own: but normally plans nothing but the disposal of his own income. He has, however, in theory or in reality, a vast economic power, which he exercises, unconsciously and without planning, as a member of an unorganised entity, the general body of consumers. If he and his fellows bring a sufficient effective demand to bear upon the market, they may enable the producer to raise his price above the figure which covers the cost of production plus a reasonable profit: in which case it is assumed that competitive producers will bring the price back to that figure by increasing the supply. If he and his fellows withhold their effective demand, they may compel the producer

to lower his price below the cost of production : in which case it is assumed that production will fall off until the price required by the producer to meet his costs and profit is again attained. The power thus exercised, or assumed to be exercised, by the generally unorganised consumer public, is dignified with the appellation of Consumers' Choice. Under this system, the producer plans to adjust his production, both in quantity and direction, so that the effective demand for it may touch the figure which meets costs and profit. His planning often goes further than this: for he enters into agreements with potential competitors, and he employs devices of advertisement and salesmanship which are effective against the unorganised consumer. The latter is potentially able to check the quality of the goods offered to him and to limit the price to cost plus a reasonable profit: but—for lack of counter-planning or organised counter-planning—is not conscious of the power, and perhaps does not really exercise it.

If we examine another branch of economic activity—that of the hiring of labour—in an individualistic society, we find that planning plays a considerable part, but substantially less in the United States than in Britain. Employers' federations, on the one hand, and Trade Unions and Trade Boards, on the other, exercise influence on the rates of wages, and limit the sphere of free, individual competition. A similar conclusion must be reached in respect to the rate of interest upon capital, where the planned monetary policy of the Central Bank is, within certain upward and downward limits, the effective factor. Land is locally often a monopoly: and, in large towns, outside of distressed areas, rent is determined by the planned policy of the large estates, with the competition, all on one side, operating to increase the claims of the landowner.

If planning plays a large part in the individualistic society, prices play a large part in its socialistic counterpart. Since the second abolition of rationing in 1935 there has been a steady attempt in the U.S.S.R. at uniformity of retail prices in particular geographical zones, but with differences of prices between those zones. No wholesale market exists: but the prices at which materials and goods are exchanged between State organs and enterprises may reasonably be treated as wholesale prices. They are based upon the planned cost of production, with the addition of a commission or profit for every organisation through whose hands the goods pass, and of a turnover-tax which forms the largest portion of the State's revenue. Charges for rent are never included in cost of production, and charges for interest, in the strict sense, do not arise. But an allowance is made for the replacement of fixed assets, and the enterprises must surrender a share of their profits to the Bank from which they derive their investment capital. In practice the wholesale price-fixing authority fixes only the price of certain standard qualities, and the prices of other qualities are negotiated between the enterprises concerned, on the basis of the standard thus set. In the case of agricultural produce, which is acquired by the Government (or by the Co-

operative institutions) partly in the form of a tax-in-kind, partly in discharge of obligations contracted with the Machine Tractor Stations, and partly by voluntary sale in return for engagements to supply manufactured goods, the wholesale price—that is to say, the price at which the Government passes on the produce to the processing and exporting departments—appears to the present writer to be arbitrarily determined, subject to the ultimate necessity of adjusting retail prices to total incomes. At all events it has no discoverable relation to the retail prices obtained by the peasants in their private sales, or to the payments made by the Government to the peasants for their deliveries of produce.

These wholesale prices determined, in the case of industrial goods, by costs of production, commissions or profits, and the turnover tax, are planned on the basis of average costs in the whole of a given industry, not on the costs of the particular enterprise. It is thus quite possible for a particular enterprise not to recover its costs of production, and provision is made for the selling up of unsuccessful concerns at the instance of the Industrial Bank, whose business it is to finance them. This is not a meaningless provision: for standing orders require such virtual bankruptcies to be published, whether the sale of effects is, or is not, in practice enforced, and the student of the Soviet Press from time to time sees notices of them. The amount of the turnover-tax varies according as the Government desires to encourage or restrict a particular industry, and it forms a part of the wholesale price. Retail prices are zonally uniform: that is to say, zonally uniform in theory. But there are substantial fluctuations and local departures from the norm. Prices are sometimes put artificially low in order to encourage the use of particular products, or to get rid of goods for which there proves to be little demand. But the principle ordinarily observed in fixing them is that demand must be kept within the limits of supply. It may startle us to find ourselves back with the familiar language of the economic text-books. But there are only two ways of avoiding the necessity of adjusting the general level of prices according to the pressure of demand upon supply. One way is by rationing, which the U.S.S.R. abandoned in 1935. The other is by the principle of first come first served, which is a kind of rationing according to priority in the queue. While rationing existed, it was necessary to supplement it by putting high prices on the goods sold to the unrationed population, in order to equate the demand with the supply. In the alternative, the goods went cheap, and some of those who were prepared to pay the price went without, because the supply was exhausted before their turn came. But the aim is the provision of goods in order to satisfy needs: and the failure to provide them only showed that the Plan was inadequate, or not backed by sufficient industrial power. When rationing was abolished in 1935, and a simultaneous increase was made in the scale of wages, the Soviet Government showed that it believed the supply of goods to be enough to go round, at prices assumed to be reasonable with regard to the new level

of incomes. When both supply (within the limits of industrial power) and income—which is potential demand—are controlled by the same monopolist authority, prices (though admittedly determined by the pressure of demand upon supply) become mere indices, and means of measurement. The Socialist State can change either or both the factors whose interaction determines price: and it is in this sense that Plan makes Price. On the other hand, Price makes Plan in an individualistic economy: in the sense that it is prospective price which leads the *entrepreneur* to his decisions.

The Socialist Government can control supply (to such extent as its industrial power extends) and can control the potential demand, which is represented by the general level of incomes. It cannot control the actual retail demand for any particular commodity, except by an artificial manipulation of price (like the draper selling off old stock at a sacrifice): and it is in respect to the retail demand for particular commodities that the consumer's choice is operative.

The greater part of the resources of the Government for the common purposes of the State is derived from the additions to the wholesale prices of which I have spoken above. If supply should ever catch up with demand, the natural law, which we have said is equally operative in a socialistic as in an individualistic society, that price is determined by the pressure of demand upon supply, would eliminate this source of income. The limit of demand for any particular commodity may, of course, easily be reached. But the notion that the limit of the demand for commodities in general can ever be reached seems to be due to a confusion between demand and effective demand. Man's appetite for the good things of life, including leisure, is reasonably assumed to be inexhaustible. It is only his poverty which causes him to go short. If it be true that a method of converting demand into effective demand has been found, there is no chance that supply will reach the limit of demand, or that the State will find itself deprived of its revenues from the Turnover Tax, and from the difference between the price paid to the peasantry for food and the price charged to the processing and exporting departments.

Are we to suppose that the monopolist State will raise the price of necessities unduly against its people, or a section of them? The peasantry has on more than one occasion shown itself capable of very effective passive resistance: and the attempt to overcharge would be met by refusal to purchase, and by the withholding of food from the towns. The crisis which gave rise to Preobrazhensky's proposal to build up capital by this device was ended by measures of a character diametrically opposite to the raising of industrial prices. It is always true, in a sense, that a monopolist may use his power to raise his price excessively: but the Soviet Government would have changed its aims, if it were guilty of this blunder, and would find itself back in the Food-War of earlier days.

In saying that it is the Plan which makes the Price in the U.S.S.R., I

do not wish to convey that Price always conforms to Plan, but that it tends to do so, so far as control is complete. In one respect Plan governs Price in a manner quite unattainable in an individualistic society. Not only is the individualistic producer sometimes ignorant of what his competitors are doing, almost entirely unable to influence the incomes of his customers, and only able to direct their taste through advertisement and salesmanship, but he is bound to make his profit, if he makes it at all, in the one particular part of the field where his operations are located. The Socialist State not only controls incomes, through its control of wages, but it also deals with the whole, or virtually the whole, field of production. It can, if policy requires, lose in one part of the field, provided that incomings balance outgoings over the whole of it: and it actually follows this principle, not by allowing its individual departments to work ostensibly at a loss, but by subsidising their operations as policy requires. While the general level of prices must obey the general economic law, particular prices therefore become in great measure conventional prices, framed in the interests of general policy. Coal, for instance, is priced far below its cost of production, in the interests of industry as a whole: a policy which would only be possible to a private coalowner, if largely subsidised on condition of fixing a low price for industrial purchasers.

It has been powerfully argued that, in an individualistic economy, Price is decisive, that is to say that it determines both the amount and the direction of production, and, in the form of interest, which is the Price of capital, it determines the volume of saving: that it is determined by competition, which cuts all costs to the bone: that it is, therefore, a perfect index to the choice between alternative uses of labour, land, and material: and that an economy which does not suffer its choice to be determined by Price must inevitably make the wrong choice, and pay the penalty in economic loss. There is no means of ascertaining the scale of this loss, but the implication is that it is fatal to the claim that a socialistic economy will excel an individualistic one in productivity: a claim upon which the success or failure of the former ultimately depends.

The case would be stronger if any completely competitive society were actually in existence, but the ideal competitive society does not exist. Professor von Hayek says that the world today is "just interventionist chaos". In the retail market competition is notoriously imperfect, owing to the ignorance and carelessness of many of the housewives with whom the business of retail purchase mostly rests. It follows that a portion of the loss which is anticipated in a socialistic system is already occurring in the individualistic one, and the difference between the two systems, as they actually exist, is, in respect to the economic advantages of free competition, rather one of degree than of kind. Indeed, we may with good reason suspect that the individualistic society has lost many of the merits of free competition, without acquiring those of collective planning.

Let us, however, endeavour to construct in our imagination a purely competitive society. "The pricing process", says Mr. George Halm, "is an endless network of exchange relationships, from which individual prices cannot be arbitrarily torn without injuring the rest. If the threads of these relationships are cut, those parts of the pricing process which remain will lack that tautness and interdependence which is the *sine qua non* of an effective exchange economy." At every stage, therefore, in the process, in renting the land, borrowing the capital, erecting the factory and the machinery, hiring the labour, buying the raw material, right through to the disposal of the finished consumers' goods across the counter and the sending of them home to the customer, all costs are cut to the bone by competition, and all prices are at the minimum. Everyone knows what is the cheapest rate for the indulgence of every wish. In so far as he is able to equate his desires with the cost in money of satisfying them, he has complete material for a choice. But the society in which such conditions exist will not be egalitarian: we may reasonably expect it to be not less unequal than our own. Consumer's choice institutes a sort of referendum, determining the application of the means of production to this or the other purpose. But the body to which the referendum is addressed consists of a multitude of sections, for each of which the equation of desire with the cost of satisfying it is reached at a differing point. The question which is put in the imaginary referendum has a different significance for each of the sections. For articles of prime necessity all will continue to bid as long as any means remain: but for everything beyond these articles, the tendency must be for only the longer purses to dictate the price, till we reach the point at which the shorter purses retire altogether from the competition.

Perhaps we may take the point of Professors von Hayek and von Halm to be this: that, in an economically satisfactory society, the decisions of separate individuals, each acting in his own field of vision, must carry more weight than decisions made by or for such individuals, combined in associations whether voluntary or compulsory. This process of decision by private individuals may legitimately be corrected or supplemented by decisions taken by certain types of combinations, the Federation of Employers, the Banking Corporations, the Joint Stock Companies and so on. But as soon as there is intervention—by another group of combinations, in particular of the compulsory associations, the State and the Municipalities, mischief is done. It is the decisions of individuals and of voluntary associations of business men, taken in free competition with each other, which constitute consumer's choice, and ultimately determine relative economic values. The virtue lies in the conflict of individual wills, and, in proportion as deliberate organisation takes its place, the system falls short of economic effectiveness. It has the advantage of being self-regulating—an advantage which does not save it from miscarriages in the form of gluts and resultant slumps. The potentially

effective demand and the potential supply go together into the calculating machine. A handle is turned, and out comes Price, the basis of a perfect compromise between rival desires—*so far as the desires have money behind them*. It is a beautiful device—or a beautiful accident—and we must sympathise with those who have learned to love it, and are asked to contemplate its abandonment. But a Socialist Government which determines all urban incomes, as well as prices, and comes near to controlling supply, at all events in respect to the upper limit, is not primarily concerned with the effectiveness of the demand—which it can itself, within limits, make effective—but rather with the maximum satisfaction of needs and desires, on the principles of payment for work done and of regard for the interests of the coming generation. It is precisely because the one system must wait upon the realised effectiveness of demand, while the other aims at making the demand effective, that the determination of values by a process dependent upon the existence of effective demand, is irrelevant to the Socialist economy. The one registers facts, based upon the existing distribution of means. The facts are useful to the producer. He knows that his fur coat at a thousand guineas, and his lace nightgown at fifty, will find purchasers at those prices, and is encouraged to devote to similar confections more of “the scant means available for alternative purposes”, of which the economists tell us. The other attempts to realise aims—that is to say, conscious and planned aims: and these will probably not include the disposal of the fur coat and of the lace nightgown.

One of the aims in the U.S.S.R. is to give freedom of choice to the consumer. The range can never be so wide as in a society where wide variations of wealth enable the rich customer to indulge an almost unlimited caprice. For the present, the Industry of the U.S.S.R. is too busy in overtaking the demand of the State for the means of defence, and of the masses for primary necessities, plain food in abundance, substantial boots and clothing, and adequate housing, to give a great amount of attention to variations of individual taste. But the shops of the cities, which in 1937 exhibited a wide range of choice at a very varying scale of prices, demonstrate that the latter object is not ignored. The question which interests us in respect to consumer's choice is whether a planned system is necessarily incapable of respecting it. It has been powerfully argued that it is incapable: but the argument appears to start from the premise that plans cannot be, and are not, modified. In point of fact, they are very frequently modified. The asbestos engineer, Mr. Rukeyser, mentions five changes in the asbestos plan in the course of six months. Students of planning are aware that this was by no means an exceptional case. In both types of society the producer and the retailer make their guess, or their plan, of the consumer's desires: and, if they err, have to sell their unpopular stock at a loss. Such sales are quite common in the U.S.S.R. In regard to that comparatively small number of commodities which are “made to order”, it is possible, in the U.S.S.R. as in our in-

dividualistic society, to have recourse to the self-employers, whose economic function, as the Webbs have made clear to us, still survives. Generally speaking, it is no more difficult for a State or a Municipal Institution, than for an impersonal Joint Stock Company or the management of Chain Stores, to meet the customer's wishes. Each must find, and train, the suitable personnel. Both may devise methods of remuneration which encourage skilful salesmanship.

It must be admitted that a special obstacle presents itself in the U.S.S.R. in the form of a characteristic Russian contempt for retail trading; partly due to the essentially caste constitution of the old *Kupjets* or merchant class, and partly to the original revolutionary enthusiasm for manual productive work. It has also been made clear by recent investigation that the proportion of the population engaged on the work of retailing is far smaller in the U.S.S.R. than in Britain: from which we may infer a less degree of attention to the convenience of the retail customers in the former than in the latter country. To provide a supply of goods and leave the retail distribution of them to inferior or indifferent agencies, is like building a canal to irrigate a waterless country, and omitting the minor channels through which the water should reach the fields. The encouragement given to village Co-operative shops by Government and by the Central Union of Co-operatives, and the improved condition, of those shops which has resulted, show that the importance of proper retail distribution is now better realised. But retail distribution still remains a subject of complaint and satire.

In so far as the system is successful in establishing freedom of choice for the consumer—and the practical difficulties will, of course, increase as the standard rises higher above the subsistence minimum—it will be possible to carry the process of economic valuation back from consumers' to producers' goods, and to obtain an economic criterion of the alternative uses of scant means at an earlier stage of the economic process.

Free choice of occupation is facilitated in the U.S.S.R., at present, by the great unsatisfied demand for skilled labour, and for technical qualifications, and encouraged by opportunities of training and of the chance of trial in a higher grade. There have been occasions when men of special qualifications or experience in one line, such for instance as railway work in 1931, have been required to return to it during a period of emergency. The introduction of the passport system for residents in the cities in 1932 has sometimes been represented as interference with the free choice of employment. Its aims appear to have been the prevention of overcrowding, with which the supply of new housing accommodation was unable to keep pace, and the relief of the pressure on the town supply of food. In April, 1933, owing to the heavy labour turnover in the mines of the Donets basin, arrangements were made which must have involved pressure to enter and remain in the mines. Demands for labour are often met by agreements between the administrations of

Collective Farms and the managements of factories, and there is no reasonable doubt that the former exercise some pressure on their superfluous hands, if volunteers are not forthcoming.

In October, 1940, a system of industrial conscription was introduced under the pressure of political conditions, and, in order to diminish the attractiveness of the literary courses, fees were imposed for secondary education. Collective Farms and Town Soviets were instructed to select young men and women for the technical courses, and those upon whom the choice fell were required to take up the trade for which they were trained for a stated minimum period. These orders seem to show that the preference for industrial work which was at one time marked, has given place to a liking for sedentary tasks.

At present, at all events, the U.S.S.R. is free from unemployment, and the choice of occupations is freer than in a country where young people must take the first job that offers, or risk finding none. I reserve for discussion elsewhere the question whether Planning or Price is the more favourable to human liberty. Here I will only pause to note that liberty is essentially a matter of balance. Each man, left to himself, takes so much of it, that he tends to impinge upon the liberty of others. The maintenance of the balance calls for organisation, and any tendencies towards anarchy, in the economic or any other sphere, inevitably upset this balance.

Whatever be our attitude to planning by public authorities, it becomes inevitable, in a greater or a less degree, in proportion as planning by private persons or by voluntary combinations ceases to give satisfactory results. Private armies, private navies, private road-making, private drains, private paving, private letter-carrying, in large measure also private schools and private hospitals, have ceased to be adequate. Private industry is debatable ground. In the pioneering period, when the object was to get increased production by any and every method, private industry was irreplaceable. But it has learned to live by providing employment for some and goods for some, without providing employment for all and goods for all. Many are cut off from the natural sources of subsistence, without obtaining access to the artificial sources. Many remain poor in the midst of plenty. It is too casual and fortuitous a method of meeting the needs of the enlarged community which it has helped to create.

The need of planning was illustrated with particular force in Soviet Russia by the obvious mutuality of two economic functions. The supply of food inter-acts with the supply of industrial commodities. That alliance between peasant and town workers upon which Lenin insisted with so much emphasis is as inevitable in the economic as in the political sphere. Short food, short commodities: short commodities, short food. The peasant will not grow, or will not bring to market, a full supply, unless the handicraftsman has clothing and implements to give in return.

The handicraftsman must go back to the land and dig if the peasant does not give him grain. This is a platitude, no doubt, and yet a platitude upon the complete assimilation of which depends the understanding of Soviet Russia (and of much more beside). The two must work in mutual interchange, and maladjustment will bring about economic disease. The "Scissors" crisis—in one country or in many, or perhaps as a world-wide phenomenon, and sometimes on the one side, sometimes on the other—is Trotsky's name for the disease. Over-production on one side will set the world to burning or drowning its food, and so affect the remuneration of the food producer as to stop the sale of industrial commodities—since it is he who is the principal customer for them. Under-production on that same side, when it occurs, means famine in the towns, if not in the country also. The right adjustment means economic health: and the success or failure of economic policies is to be judged by the effectiveness of the adjustment. If we are to form an opinion of the deserts of the Soviet Government, which operates on a continent-wide scale upon the economic life of nearly 200 million human beings, it is essential to determine how it has set the balance between town and country.

And here we are confronted by diametrically opposite opinions both purporting to establish their correctness by statistical demonstration. One, represented by the authoress of *Economics of Peasant Farming* (Oxford University Press, 1939), is that the State artificially widened the gap between the earnings of town workers and peasants in order to force the pace of investment in industry. The other, argued by E. Strauss in *Soviet Russia*, 1941, is that the peasant demand for modern means of production is almost completely satisfied, that supplies of manufactured consumption goods for the village were on the up-grade at least up to the end of the second Five-Year-Plan, and that "agriculture seems to be in a better position than industry, which has been fostered with so many exertions and which has now, to a certain extent, even become the basis of agriculture".

In Chapter XVI and in one of my appendices I have tried to furnish material for a decision between these two opposite contentions. For the moment I only emphasise the importance, even the inevitability, of planning, if serious economic maladjustment is to be avoided.

A definition of the national aim is an essential preliminary to planning. It may be planning for scarcity: as some capitalist planning must, inevitably, be if it is to maintain the prospect of profit. There is planning in Nazi Germany: planning for a maximum of armament and for the reduction of other peoples to a helot status. Russian planning, as its first prophets saw it, was to be planning to make an end of the backwardness of Russia. They had emerged from a war, in which the inability to create the apparatus of modern civilisation had been emphasised by a virtual blockade, and had produced a humiliating military collapse. Whatever

private industry might have done elsewhere (and in time of war it had been largely superseded), it had certainly not saved Russia. The Civil War had rammed home the lesson. They were conscious of a weakness, not only military, but economic, which the indefinite postponement of the hope of revolution abroad made imminently dangerous. Internally they had an uncertain ally in the peasantry, prepared to feed them *for a price*: and that price was the supply of manufactured goods, for which native industry was still inadequate. They realised that the final issue of the struggle between Capitalism and Socialism depended on the capacity for victory in the world's markets: and that the low productivity of Russian labour threatened to be the fatal flaw in the armour of the Socialist Fatherland.

Trotsky, speaking in 1920 before the Third all-Russian Congress of Trade Unions, in defence of his plan of the militarisation of labour, said that it could succeed only on the basis of a single economic plan, covering the whole country and all branches of economic activity. The plan must be drawn up for a number of years, and must deal first with transport and necessary supplies of food, raw material, and fuel: secondly, with machine-building, having the locomotive as its core: thirdly, with machine-building in the interests of primary necessities: and fourthly, with the production of articles of personal or secondary significance. The living interest of all that is honest, class-conscious, and inspired in the working-class must be excited in support of this Plan. All energies must be concentrated upon it: there must be no distraction of attention, no dissipation of forces, and no waste of effort. This outline, made eight years in advance of the actual first Five-Year-Plan, is a very remarkable forecast.

The New Economic Policy—an interlude in which economic development, in agriculture almost entirely, and in industry to a very large extent, was left to the individual appetite for gain—was the antipodes of Planning: and the struggle of Trotsky and the Opposition on behalf of planning was in essence an attempt for the premature abrogation of N.E.P. The outline of a general economic plan, published in the summer of 1925, had a very modest scope. It aimed at forecasting the development of private trade, particularly of agriculture, and at giving guidance to industrial enterprises in maintaining the equilibrium which the "Scissors" crisis had shown to be precarious. Annual control-figures continued to be published, and their binding force upon State departments was increasingly emphasised. But this fell far short of the enforcement of a plan by the authority of a State having control of the processes of production and distribution. The Plan, when it came, might have been, as the State Planning Department wished it to be, a mere forecast of probable attainment, based upon past experience and serving to co-ordinate the various branches of production and to prevent such disproportionate and one-sided growth as had been the cause of the "Scissors" crises. Actually it was more and yet less than this: it was of the nature of

a "production drive", a means of inspiring a whole people with the will to equip itself with all the instruments of civilisation. It aimed at rebuilding resources from the bottom upwards, the instruments of production, the agriculture that feeds the worker, the education that makes the most of the worker's brains, and develops to the utmost his technical skill, the inspiration that gives the desire, as well as the power, to make the best of all opportunities in the pursuit of a great common aim. Man was to be remoulded for new tasks, stimulated to high hopes, encouraged to sacrifices. The first outline of a Plan of this ambitious character was completed in March, 1927, but the examination of it lasted for more than two years. The Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party adopted it in 1928, and the all-Union Congress of Soviets gave it formal approval in May, 1929. It was to run from October 1st, 1928, at that time the beginning of the Soviet year, and the epoch of intensive production was thus inaugurated. It was adopted in its maximum variant, and it aimed at extending *the power to produce*, the means of production, not merely at increasing the supply of goods: with the object of bringing the Soviet Union nearer to the productive standards of capitalist enemies. That it co-ordinated the various branches of production and prevented the disproportionate growth of some of them, is more difficult to establish.

Why was the leadership, which had resisted the pressure of the Opposition for the policies so clearly formulated in *The True Position in Russia*, for the development of industry, the collectivisation of agriculture, and the co-ordination of the whole by Plan, now convinced that the moment had arrived for carrying these out? I think that the situation at home and abroad had become ripe for the change: which was, in effect, only a reversion, with increased energy and a new technique, to a suspended design. N.E.P. had replaced War-Communism, when the hope of alliance with the world-proletariat had been indefinitely postponed, and when the peasantry had plainly shown its unwillingness to tide the Revolutionary Government over a difficult interval. Up to a certain point, the position of 1927-28 was parallel to that of 1921. The design of winning support for the U.S.S.R. in a United Front of the proletariats, in China, in Britain, in Poland, had broken down, and encirclement by hostile Capitalist Powers seemed to be threatened. The peasantry was withholding its grain, and it seemed as though its more prosperous elements might soon be in a position to dictate their own terms. The difference between the two epochs lay in the increased strength and resources of the Soviet Government at the later of the two dates. Both agriculture and industry had recovered something like their pre-war standard. The currency had been stabilised, and a common denominator thus provided for economic calculation. A serious rift had indeed developed in the Party: but the leadership had shown itself powerful enough to remove the dissentient element without the use of violence on either side. It was no longer necessary to buy off opposition by vital concessions as in 1921. It was

possible so far to ignore the traditional individualism of the peasantry as to plan an agrarian revolution, far more radical than anything contemplated in 1917-18. In other words, the home front was secured: and cool heads and stout hearts could afford to turn their attention to the grand aim of putting the material and moral equipment of the Soviet Union on a par with that of its rivals and potential enemies. These, as it seems to me, were the conditions in which the first Five-Year-Plan was set up, as the goal of the ambitions of the people of the U.S.S.R. It was no desperate throw, made by a gambler in a moment of difficulty and despair: but the seizing of a favourable moment for the fulfilment of a cherished hope. For the technique the leadership was indebted to the fertile inventiveness of the Opposition, but it exercised its own political judgment in choosing the time for putting it into use. If Trotsky had gone bathing, and Stalin had stolen his clothes, the clothes at least fitted their new wearer.

The aim was primarily one of defence, against capitalist boycott, if not against capitalist war, against the pressure for the importation of manufactured goods which must be the ultimate consequence of the failure to produce them at home, with the resultant risks of debt and enslavement. Since the power to produce must be extended to bring the Union nearer to the standard of its capitalist rivals, heavy industry and the instruments of production were above all else to be developed. Light industry was not omitted from consideration: for it was desired to raise the general standard of living by an increased supply of consumers' goods. But it was imperfectly realised that the demands of the urban worker are greater than those of the peasant, and the Plan did not give all that the prospective growth of the factory population required.

The actual working of the Plan was that of an enormous measure of compulsory saving, and of sacrifices far greater than had been contemplated, which substantially reduced the general standard of living for a time: and, to hearts less stout and to wills less ruthless, might have seemed to presage ruin. For the capital required for the reconstruction of the U.S.S.R. was to be raised within the country, not borrowed from abroad. The penalty of foreign indebtedness would have been the sacrifice of that independence which it was the leading object of the Plan to achieve. With or without modern industrial equipment, the U.S.S.R. would have been enslaved to her creditors, if she had not paid her way by tightening the belts of her people.

Not in its first form, but in a later amendment, it incorporated the great and fruitful idea of new bases for the Coal and Metallurgical industries in Eastern Russia, and also the extension of the textile industry, hitherto limited to Great Russia, to Central Asia and Siberia, thus diminishing vulnerability to external attack, and giving to the non-Great-Russian nationalities a share in industrial development. How far-reaching were the consequences of this decision, it is only now in the

summer of 1942, with the old industrial areas occupied by German armies, that our eyes are open to see.

If we pick up, at random, any Russian newspaper of the period of the first Five-Year-Plan when the strain was at its greatest, we receive an impression of ardent hopes, and of immense and general excitement in which the sacrifices of individuals are forgotten by themselves as well as by others. The workers speak with their own voices and write with their own pens; on four pages of very poor paper, with very poor print, the vocal soldiers of industry shout themselves hoarse, with boasting, with exhortation, with criticism of failures, with challenges to Socialist competition, with offers of "tow-ropes" to less forward enterprises, with promises, with indignation. It happens to be an anniversary of the newspaper. Here is the Lenin factory of electrical apparatus, proclaiming itself the first-born of October, the giant of electro-technical industry, the strength of Bolshevik tempos, twice honoured with the order of Lenin, the active fighter for the Socialist reconstruction of rural economy, the sharpshooter of the undertakings for Government grain-farms, the initiator of the great idea of Lenin of mass workers' control from below over Soviet bureaucracy. We seem to see the giant slapping his bulging muscles, and challenging his rivals to competition. He proclaims a two years' struggle for cleansing the personnel from bureaucrats, intriguers, rogues and opportunists: and, in honour of the journal's anniversary, promises to equip with electrical transformers a workers' settlement and cultural buildings for the Capital: also to provide a magneto (evidently the magnetos had hitherto been imported) for the Red Flag Tractor factory, "so that a Soviet tractor may plough Soviet fields with a Soviet magneto". Then he recites some of his own triumphs: the initiation of the Third Soviet loan, the equipment of the Moscow Airport, the equipment of the Butter-centre with electric power; and calls upon the Editor to fight implacably against divagations, whether to the Right or to the Left, against recidivist counter-revolutionary Trotskyism, and compromise with it. The manifesto ends on this quasi-theological note. The conciliar age of the Church is lined up with Messrs. Krupp and Armstrong.

Next we come upon a grave article upon the problems of technical construction in the Coal Industry, calling upon the whole mining proletariat to devise machinery for those processes, such as freighting, which are still conducted by primitive methods: and to bring Russian coal-production to the second place in the world, alongside of England: and the hope is held out of the improvement of the material conditions of the miners, with socialistic settlements, schools, clubs, libraries, radio, baths, tramways, roads, telephones, and water supplies, so that they may be placed on a level with the workers of the industrial centres.

More coal, more pig-iron, more steel, more machines, more oil, more paper! Such are the headlines which take the place of the murders,

divorces, betting odds, and greyhound races, of our own newspapers. The Boiler gang is short by fourteen boilers, and the quality of boilers has deteriorated. There is plenty of seed but it hasn't yet reached the farms, though the sowing season is upon us. The new beet-root regions are very ill supplied with beet-seed. There are plenty of tractors, but no spare parts. The workers have proclaimed an all-Union muster roll of their own for the supply of spare parts. Cabbages and potatoes for the factory! We have planted our own vegetable garden, and challenge all others to Socialist competition to do the same. We, the workers, guarantee Soviet fire-bricks for metallurgical work.

First raid of the Young Communist brigade. Post Office complaint books examined. Officials show a stiff attitude to complainants. Complaint book not given to complainants on demand. Five-day-period for anti-bureaucrats' light cavalry organised!

Milk, curds, and sour cream so adulterated as to lose both nutritive quality and natural flavour. Attention to sale of milk products on private market necessary. All inspectors will receive complaints of false weights and other breaches of orders regarding retail prices of necessities.

Short paragraphs announce, (1) a discovery of unpublished manuscripts of Goethe, (2) an advertisement for teachers of political economy, and a demand upon all undertakings and institutions to give up any of these whom they find in their employ, (3) the despatch of a medical mission to women and children in the Kirgiz country: *salaries by agreement*, (4) a Poster Exhibition in the Tretyakov gallery at Moscow, (5) a report of the current quotations of eight loans, State and Municipal, two of them lottery loans, (6) an advertisement of bile-powder—the only advertisement of any commodity which appears in the journal. This has the quality of *making the use of soap unnecessary* (soap is a deficit commodity at present), (7) a liquidators' announcement of the payment of claims *against state concerns which have failed*, (8) advertisements for two book-keepers; *salary by agreement*.

Then we are off again on self-criticism. Our correspondent complains of short production of coal in the Donets basin, there is absenteeism of labour on a large scale. Men are sometimes standing in queues for bread when they ought to be at work. For months the Co-operatives were feeding "dead souls" (non-existent customers), who swallowed thousands of tons of food. The portrait of a shock-worker in a coal-shaft is given, and details of the output at different shafts, some worse, some better, than the plan, follow. Our correspondent at Cheliabinsk complains of too much dust in the coal produced there, and the consequent failure in the electric supply. The repair of locomotives on the Murmansk line is unsatisfactory, so the workers have instituted a system of marks for the work of different shops, and place them monthly in order of merit. A locomotive came back from the Vologda repair shop, after overhaul, with seventy defects.

Technical victory, in a cable factory! Calico (which is made from cotton, and is therefore a deficit material) has hitherto been used for insulation purposes. A comrade in the factory has devised the use of cambric (which is made from flax, and therefore more easily to be had in European Russia) instead. This means a saving of half a million roubles yearly in all the cable factories (so says the newspaper: but the use of cambric with oil-impregnated cables appears to be quite familiar to British electricians). Sulphuric-acid factory ready for production! First coke-battery of Coke Chemical Combine continues to increase output! Third furnace started in cement factory; producing seventy barrels of cement in an hour!

And now we turn back to some malpractices. Coal again is the sinner. A shaft in the North Caucasus coal administration attracted attention in two successive years by its exceptional output. It is all a fake. Coal-dust was reckoned in, and old stocks were treated as new gettings. Sometimes the gettings were counted twice, once on coming from the mine and once after sorting. *The class origin of the conspiracy is clear.* The woman conspirator is the daughter of a man deprived of civil rights, and *her husband is a gentleman!* The Party and Trade Union leadership of the shaft slipped into the way of compromise with the class-enemy.

Follows a slashing attack upon the newspaper run by the Party Collective and Factory Committee of a Flax and Hemp mill. The Editor of this minor organ does not know what was meant by Comrade Stalin's six points (see the chapter on "Old Stones in the New Building"), and his *paper has no worker correspondents.* (*Worker correspondents are a very important part of the Soviet newspaper system. Along with village correspondents, they keep the public in close touch with the newspapers: and the newspapers in touch with their public.*) Why has no one yet thought of liquidating the fellow's illiteracy?

Next we have a page devoted to agriculture, with a great headline across it: "Quick collection of seed shows Bolshevik leadership": and a picture below showing the peasants of a collective farm examining and approving the seed for their spring-sowings. A priggish little townec describes his cross-examination of some up-country peasants, to discover how much they know of the organisation of their collective farm. "Don't know as how we can tell just how it is." "How many active workers are there?" Silence. "How many shock-workers?" Still complete silence. Our agricultural critic observes that this ignorance of farm problems is a serious sign: and we are left to imagine what the peasants said when they had got rid of him. Tfu — — — and a stream of saliva.

Someone has been in a hurry in Buriat-Mongolia, and has pushed a whole region into collectivisation. But the provincial Party Committee has censured the district Party Committee and put the matter right. Our Tashkent correspondent says a region of Uzbekistan is suffering from the absence on leave of certain Party leaders: so that the agricultural

work does not begin till noon, and is pretty slack even then. There's too much talking in the Fergana valley: and in the region of Samarkand there is not a single collective in which the gangs of workers have been properly organised. Under the heading "The Red Tablet," certain collective farms on the lower Volga, in the North Caucasus, in the Tartar republic, in Ukrain, and in the Chuvash region, are commended for having completed the collection of seed. Socialist competition is established between the different gangs of a collective farm near Simferopol. The cattle-breeding Trust is blamed for requiring a State cattle-farm to take more cattle than its completed preparations permitted: and is warned that the guilty must be held to their responsibility.

Stop speculation! Our Smolensk correspondent reports that our paper, price five kopeks, is being sold for fifteen, with a parcel of old useless magazines, and withheld from purchasers who will not take the lot. The railway station kiosks must be kept under proper control. Organisation of a department of the Academy of Sciences in the Far East! Delay in the repair of vessels on the Amur river! In the best-equipped basin at Blagoveschensk there are twenty vessels less than the plan provides: but the less well-equipped Nikolaev has thirty vessels in excess of plan!

The administrator of a chemical depot at Nizhni-Novgorod, the full-powered attorney of the pedigree pig-breeding trust—there's a title for an ambitious man—and others, all members of the Communist Party, have been expelled from the Party for disposing of deficit articles in the private market, and for *relations with strange elements*. The Control Commission is passing the case on to the Public Prosecutor.

No attacks upon Government: no sex: no city article, except the quotation of the loans and of rates of exchange: no reference to religion, churches, or clergy. Japan is very much in the news. Otherwise there is nothing "patriotic" or "Russian" or "national" in the paper: and no scandals, or crossword-puzzles. The sport is all in the Socialist competition, for more output, and the heroes are all shock-workers. The beautiful ladies have shed their beautiful smiles, and are busy planting beet-root, or helping in the supply of deficit commodities.

Such was the pabulum of the newspaper reader in the final year of the first Five-Year-Plan: and so eagerly was it sought after that queues were formed at the newspaper kiosks by would-be purchasers. The Soviet Government carried the masses on a wave of enthusiasm and made them forget that their belts sometimes needed tightening. But the strain had been enormous. When it was over, not much less than a third of the national income for four years had been put into compulsory savings—in other words, had been expended upon providing the instruments of future production, to the detriment of the present standard of living. Stalin made one of his rare, but impressive, speeches declaring that the object of the Party had been to change the beggarly peasant-nag into a large-scale machine-industry: and that whereas there had been no

ferrous metallurgy, no tractor or automobile industry, no construction of machine-tools, no serious up-to-date chemical industry, no production of agricultural machinery, and no aviation industry, all these things were now in existence, so that, from a weak country unprepared for defence, the U.S.S.R. had become a country prepared to defend itself against foreign attack. He declared that in the next five-year period there would no longer be any necessity of accelerating effort, and that they would be content with a yearly increase of 13-14% instead of demanding one of 22%. He claimed that unemployment had been eliminated, and the number of workers in large industry had been doubled, with increased money wages: and, not unnaturally, exulted in the contrast with the capitalist world, then in the trough of the worst depression which had ever affected it.

The Plan has well been described as the first denial, *in action*, of the possibility that a multitude of unco-ordinated efforts of separate profit-making can supply a nation-wide need, without ruinous gluts and slumps and gaps of unfulfilled demand: a first assertion, *in action*, of the possibility of ending starvation and semi-starvation in the midst of potential plenty, of ending the coexistence of unemployed labour and unsatisfied consumers. But we must distinguish between the two aspects, which are, in fact, confused together in the system of planning in operation in the U.S.S.R. Since it is to be Plan which determines Price, not, as in the theoretical conditions of a capitalist country, Price which determines Plan, the Russian Plan should discharge the function of determining the application of economic means to economic ends: in plainer language, should tell us how much capital, material and labour should be devoted to each branch of production, and should maintain the appropriate equilibrium between different objects. This is quite a different thing from a production drive, which seeks to get on with the job as quickly as possible in each of its sectors, without any particular concern with precise co-ordination or even with exact calculation. It was natural to make the Plan a production drive as well as an estimate and a means of co-ordination, because demand, in the sense of need, is so greatly in excess of potential supply, in almost every line, that there seems no fear, for the present, of the actual over-production of anything. But this method of approach obscured the other object, of precise calculation and co-ordination. One of the results was the too rapid progress of the collectivisation of agriculture, before the supply of agricultural machinery, which was essential to the success of the collectivisation policy, was available. This involved discontent and resistance, which might have been averted, and important changes of plan, including the establishment of new centres for the manufacture of tractors.

In 1938 we find the Council of People's Commissars recognising the neglect of the aims of precise calculation and co-ordination and insisting upon these aims as the most important problem of the State Planning

Commission. But the nice adjustment of means to ends involved the existence of reliable statistics: and statistics, everywhere less reliable than could be desired, have always been a weak point in Russia. The first systematic attempts at statistical tabulation were made by some, but not all, of the Tsarist Provincial and District Councils in the nineteenth century, and some of the early writers on peasant life made use of these. The growing interest in social and economic questions led to a considerable output of statistical matter and interpretation, and this output continued in the early phases of the Revolution, accompanied by a freedom of discussion and criticism which occasions some surprise to the investigator. During the period of the New Economic Policy there was a great deal of economic literature: but, even in 1927, the statistician who compared Tsarist with Revolutionary taxation spoke of the despair with which he contemplated the chaos prevailing in the statistics of Peasant Agriculture. In the disputes between the Government and the Left Opposition, which led to the exiling of Trotsky and his principal supporters, each side complained that the figures showing the growth of the more prosperous section of the peasantry had been cooked by the other.

In the critical days of the first Five-Year-Plan and of agricultural collectivisation, there was an ominous restriction of the output of information on certain important points, and these restrictive tendencies have grown more jealous as the threat of foreign attack grew more urgent. From the middle of 1930 the cost-of-living index ceased to be published. The agricultural failure of 1931 was kept out of the news in the beginning of 1932, as that of 1936 was kept out of the news of 1937, and the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome has, or had till quite recently, no figures of cereal production in the U.S.S.R. after 1930. The Moscow correspondent of the *Kölnische Zeitung* wrote in 1931: "A man must read between the lines to get his knowledge of Soviet economics, but it can be done." The great increase in the prices of rationed commodities (varying from 25% to 200%) which took place in February, 1932, in consequence of the scarcity of food, was kept from the Press. Some of the ablest Russian statisticians were arrested and prosecuted for their disclosures.

In May, 1934, the Communist Party promised a re-organisation of the Statistics department, but it does not appear that cost-of-living indices have again been published. There was for a time a very great output of statistics, entering into very great elaboration of detail, but it did not continue. For instance, the compilation named *Socialistic Construction* is not at present (in 1942) available for any year later than 1935. Though the U.S.S.R. keeps back some facts, of which it is aware, it is frank enough in admitting to its published tables some very disconcerting information. There is no concealment, for instance, in these tables, so far as they extend, of the destruction of cattle, of the slowness of recovery in this respect, of the consequent diminution in meat products, of the

continued low yield of the principal crops, for which we have to turn to India to find a parallel. The results of a tendentious presentation of figures would be so serious to the calculations of the Soviet Government in the gigantic operation of planning, that we are justified in acquitting it of using formal statistics as a method of propaganda. The propaganda is to be found outside of the formal statistics: but the formal statistics are kept back. This does not mean that statistics do not exist, or that they are not used, in the meticulous calculations which accompany the preparation of the Plan; but that figures give to potential enemies material from which deductions may be drawn regarding economic strength and economic weakness, and that secrecy is a valuable weapon (as indeed it has proved to be in the period preceding the German assault). There are tens of thousands of employees engaged in the tabulation of statistics in the offices of the Planning Commission, and tens of thousands more engaged in the separate Commissariats whose business it is, each for its own department, to discuss the draft plan when the Planning Commission has prepared it.

Three foreign observers have had fairly recent opportunities of forming opinions of their own from actual experience of the working of the Plan in particular parts of the economic field. One, the American engineer, Mr. Littlepage, who developed the goldfields of Siberia, saw the working of the Gold Trust, and was apparently not subject to many of the restrictions of the Plan. He took a pessimistic view, and thought that the Plan demanded an impossible degree of foresight. The Yugoslav Socialist Ciliga, who was sent to Siberia as a political *détenu*, and there employed as the economist of the Prombank at Yeniseisk, where he had large opportunities of watching material development in the north-east, says that much was being done there in spite of the shortage of raw materials and capital, though *often in a way which in no way corresponded with the Plan*. He speaks of a dynamism unknown in Europe, and confirms the impression left on the mind of the present writer that the Plan, in some quarters at all events, is in essence a production drive, rather than an instrument of co-ordination. The third, Mr. Jacob Miller, has a much more intimate acquaintance with the machinery of planning, for he actually worked for a year in the office of Gosplan. He is on the point of publishing an account of his experiences: and in the meanwhile he has been good enough to inform me that his impression of the Plan is that, far from being a mere production drive, it provides a high degree of co-ordination between the different branches of a rapidly expanding economy. A detailed account of the early history of the Stakhanovite movement, which involved at the outset an uneven rate of productivity in various industries, would enable us to clear up the question of the value of the Plan as a co-ordinating instrument.

Statistics, where they exist, cannot afford a basis for a final judgment as to the quality of work. So far as quantities are concerned, a recent

calculation by Mr. Maurice Dobb (*Soviet Economy and the War, 1941*) shows that the increase in production of certain important products between 1928 and 1937 (coal, oil, pig iron, steel, and cement) was 200-300%, while electrical power increased by 600%. These things have been achieved without foreign indebtedness, and along with a great reduction in the export of grain, formerly a prominent feature in Russian economy. The railway-goods traffic in 1937 was five times heavier than it had been in 1913, and the number of passenger miles travelled increased three and a half times. For the evidence of quality we must turn to the military records of the campaigns of 1941-2, which must go far to convince the most sceptical.

That the three Five-Year-Plans, the latest of which has been interrupted by the Nazi attack, were perfect either in design or in execution, it is unlikely that anyone will contend. A different governmental machine might have done the job better. But the tremendous dynamic of that group of men which, having conceived and developed the idea, proceeded actually to put it on the map of realities, was unique. It will never again be possible, with an easy conscience, to relegate to cloud-cuckoo-land the notion that production and distribution for a great community may be based on something other than competitive price.

In introducing this administrative invention to the world, the Soviet Government has incidentally performed a remarkable feat. Here we have the testimony of an investigator who approached his subject without a favouring prejudice, and mixed his praise with blame. E. Strauss, the author of *Soviet Russia, 1941*, along with much condemnatory criticism, holds that, at the end of the second Plan, a powerful heavy industry had been created, and that in spite of unfavourable circumstances, the system works, and even—a more doubtful conclusion—that agriculture seems to be in a better position than industry. So far as industry is concerned, these conclusions are confirmed by the result of the strains to which it has been exposed by the campaigns of 1941-2. In other words, the audacious experiment has been a remarkable success as a production drive.

CHAPTER XIV

THE OLD STONES IN THE NEW BUILDING

“We have to build with the bricks which Capitalism has left to us. . . . The toilers have crushed Capitalism, but you cannot feed upon crushed Capitalism. You must take all the culture inherited from Capitalism and with it build Socialism: all the science, all the technique, all the knowledge, all the skill. And these things are in the hands and in the brains of the specialists.”—LENIN, *Success and Difficulties of the Soviet Power*.

IN DESPITE of Marx, there was much of Utopian Socialism, of more Utopian Socialisms than one, in the conceptions of the early revolu-

tionaries: and much of the apocalyptic fancy which ran riot in the popular imagination, and made its way from thence into the dreams of poets and the speculations of theologians. Was the Revolution to be the complete remaking of all things, after destruction of the traditional from the foundations upward, and the sowing of them with salt? Were the familiar devices of the former economic life—buying and selling and lending, and money itself, the common denominator of the incommensurables—to be thrown into the furnace in a Last Judgment upon the condemned old world? There were some who thought so: and still more who hesitated whether there was still any need of the familiar instruments, in a universe about to be regenerated in World-Revolution.

The thought emerged that the Revolution had an inheritance in the world which it had set about re-creating, that there were ancient materials to be used, that Capitalism had invented devices which were indispensable, that new principles could and must live alongside of old methods and by their help: that there must be continuity as well as change. In the last preceding chapter I wrote of the new artifice of Planning, which grew out of the revolutionary conception of the public ownership of the means of production. I now have something to say of the re-discovery and re-employment of some of the traditional expedients—those who had owned the means of production privately: the precise valuation in money of costs and profits: the pecuniary incitement to individual for better work: and so forth.

The Revolution was far less destructive of the material monuments of the past than has been commonly supposed. The survival of the statues of the Tsars—even of that of Alexander III, to which a slighting inscription has been attached—and of historic buildings and collections, and the preservation of ancient icons (and, in many cases, their restoration to primitive beauty by the removal of barbarous additions) bear testimony to the truth of this statement. An instance of preservation, demanding considerable sacrifice in a period of acute fuel-famine, has been that of the Imperial hot-houses at Leningrad, where many exotic plants still existed in 1935, and doubtless exist still. There has been, in fact, a tendency, and one which has grown rapidly stronger, to treat the achievements of bourgeois and earlier civilisations as a valued inheritance. Amid his bitter criticisms of the Stalinite period of the Revolution, Trotsky does not fail to award praise to the preservation, and wider dissemination, of the good things which the past has left behind. It is not only that the older literatures, native and foreign, have been popularised in enormous editions, and the old arts made available to a far wider public: certain simple amenities and principles of hygiene—for instance the use of soap and the tooth-brush—formerly known to the few, have been extended, through the schools, the clubs, the holiday-homes, the collective farms, to millions of backwoodsmen. We are now to trace the

workings of a like maxim in the spheres of industrial and financial administration.

Two-thirds of the way through the period of the first Plan, when some of the difficulties of that great reconstruction had become apparent, Stalin made one of his dramatic emergences from silence, and delivered to a conference of industrial managers and economic workers a sermon on the way to conduct their business. It was one of those frank enunciations of policy, delivered with complete disregard of all theory and all face-saving reticence, which give occasion to Western critics to acclaim the abandonment by the Revolutionary Government of its fundamental principles. He began by declaring that the Plan was developing in a lop-sided fashion, and that some branches of industry were forging ahead, while others were hanging behind. The backwardness was particularly marked in coal-mining and in metallurgy (as indeed it continues to be to-day). He called for a reorganisation of all ranks of the industrial army, and of commercial methods, in order to achieve that increased productivity which is a condition of the success of Socialism.

Low productivity—which is another way of expressing the backwardness of Russia—has been the root problem of the Revolution since the successful seizure of power. It is in the main an inheritance from the Tsarist period—it is rather Russian than revolutionary—but it was aggravated at the Revolution, partly by strained relations with the managing class, the technical intelligentsia, partly by the rebel mentality of manual labour, and the resultant necessity of creating a new labour discipline.

The Revolutionary Government was acutely aware of the necessity of placing the U.S.S.R. on a footing of economic equality with Western Europe. The Labour force was at best half-hearted. The technical intelligentsia, through which the Labour force was to be brought to increased productivity, had been hostile, and was still suspect. The questionable loyalty of manager and technician, the easy-going laxity of the worker, and his readiness to “flit”, were weaknesses in the human instruments upon which the task depended. Sometimes the one, sometimes the other, bulked the larger. Now it was the manager and the technician, who were to be terrorised by a demonstration trial. Now the emphasis was to be laid on the necessity of disciplining and encouraging the worker, and the danger of disloyalty to the régime, on the part of those set over him, was to be minimised.

When Stalin made his “Six Points” speech on June 23rd, 1931, the increased demand for labour, caused by the first Five-Year-Plan, had put an end to unemployment and brought about a shortage of labour. The workers had taken advantage of the situation. “I have seen them laugh at a foreman who reprimanded them,” writes Miss Ella Winter. Increased absenteeism and malingering, and even attacks upon the factory staffs, compelled the appointment in 1929 of a Commission to

enquire into indiscipline. The Commission reported that it was due to the influx of fresh workers from the country, to the negligence and indifference of the technical and managing staffs, to the interference of representatives of the People's Commissariat of Labour, of Trade Unions, and of the Communist Party, in technical operations, and to the passive attitude of the Commissariats of Labour and of Justice to breaches of discipline. The powers of managers were thereupon strengthened, and steps taken to restore discipline. Tomsky, the steady advocate of Trade Union independence, was removed from the office of President of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions: and a purge took place of the personnel of the Central Council. (1929.) The Sixteenth All-Union Congress of the Party (1930) made a final end of Tomsky's claim that each Trade Union is entitled to press for increased wages and improved conditions for its own membership, and declared that each must take part in increasing general productivity, as the one and only means of raising the standard of living for all.

Hostility and distrust towards managers and technical staff remained, though the workers had passed the humorous stage in which they expressed criticism by wheeling their administrators out in wheel-barrows to the rubbish-dump of the mill. Management by one man was still not universally realised in fact. A controversy of long standing regarding the method and principles of determining wages was still not finally settled. The conditions of labour were not attractive, and there was perpetual "flitting" in the hope of finding better. There were grave complaints of irresponsibility and negligence in the treatment of machinery and tools. The costs of production remained unduly high, and the commercial management of economic enterprises was defective. Such were the conditions in which Stalin made his pronouncement.

THE BRAINS OF INDUSTRY

The old intelligentsia, the kin of Vissarion Belinsky and the "circles" of St. Petersburg and Moscow, was revolutionary in every fibre. It was academic, philosophical, literary, but it produced the fiery spirits of the seventies and eighties. The economic developments of Sergius Witte created, out of it, or side by side with it, another, a new, intelligentsia, of managers, engineers and technicians. These were the men to whom the Revisionist Marxism of Eduard Bernstein, with its quietistic and anti-revolutionary philosophy, made its principal appeal. They had no sympathy with the Bolsheviks, dreaded the proletarian insurrection against authority, and withdrew co-operation from the new power in the State. The lawyers refused to attend the new revolutionary Courts. It was almost impossible to fill with efficient holders the official posts outside the great cities. The flight of the telephone girls from the central office, on the day of its seizure, was typical of the general attitude of what we call the black-coated (or the white-collar) worker. The *bourgeois*, at

the cross-roads, with his neck sunk in his collar, is the poet Blok's appropriate image. He was waiting for the upstart régime to come to an end. Madame Britnieva has put the same thing in other words :

"Contrary to the first expectations of all reasonable people, these new-fangled persons who called themselves Bolsheviks had come to stay for some time, in spite of the complete chaos in every single branch of life which was the only visible consequence of their advent to power."

The black-coated workers—someone said—were like those angels who fought neither for Michael nor for Satan. The services of the old intelligentsia to the revolutionary cause were forgotten in the dislike and suspicion to which the aloofness of the new intelligentsia gave occasion. Madame Chernavin lifts the curtain from the tragedy, when she repeats the words of the old Nihilist in prison :

"The Revolution has flung open the door which I have been struggling to unfasten, but how can one enter the land of the future, when prison, the dictatorship, and the rest of it, bar the way?"

Lenin was conscious of the mischief, and pointed out that the proletariat had neither knowledge nor training for the building of industry and culture, and that the intelligentsia must be won to co-operation. A. Yurovich, an old member of the Kadet Party, has left us a description (in *Archives of the Russian Revolution*) of the efforts made to induce him to accept a controlling post, in which his qualifications could be utilised. The attempt, particularly effective in the case of the officering of the Red Army, was made to win them by offering openings to their ambitions, and by differential treatment. This aggravated the jealousy with which the proletariat regarded them. The masses, taught that physical labour was alone productive, and suspicious of the counter-revolutionary reputation of the managers and technicians, cherished their hatred, and welcomed every opportunity of revealing and punishing the offences of the suspected class. The dislike and the suspicion were mutual, as the diarists and novelists abundantly demonstrate.

It is likely that some of the "intellectual" servants of Bolshevism neglected their work. Some may have done deliberate damage. Still more were suspected of doing it: and the failures, which must occur everywhere and in all enterprises, were represented to be deliberate. It is here that we must look for the explanation of that persecution of the black-coated which has brought so much discredit upon the revolutionary régime, and done so much injury to its economic interests. I shall here cite only three out of the numerous cases which occurred.

In February, 1928, some fifty Russian engineers were charged with counter-revolutionary activities in the Donets basin, where failures and disappointments have been a constant source of irritation and suspicion.

This is known as the Shakhty trial. Along with them were arrested some German mechanics in the employ of the Allgemeine Electricitäts Gesellschaft. The president of the Gesellschaft was Felix Deutsch, who had been one of the prime movers of the Treaty of Rapallo, which established intimate relations between Germany and the U.S.S.R. The case was not the only one in which charges of sabotage against foreign subjects have adversely affected the diplomatic interests of the U.S.S.R. At that time Germany was the one friend—perhaps, in existing conditions, I should write rather *ostensible* friend—of the U.S.S.R. in Europe, and the incident cooled the friendship.

In December, 1930, Professor Ramzin, the leading expert in thermodynamics, and other Russians, were charged with economic sabotage, with the organisation of a secret political party, and conspiracy with a White *émigré* organisation in France, to induce the French Government to invade Russia. This was the so-called Promparti (Industrial Party) trial: of which, and of its aims, the asbestos engineer, Mr. Rukeyser, has left us an account. He thinks the aims of the Government were to explain the breakdown of certain industries and the shortage of certain commodities, and to focus attention upon the foreign enemy, in order to divert it from mistakes at home. This explanation, by one who was in very close touch with industrial business, has a significant relevance to some later events. Professor Ramzin and others confessed to the charges. Six sentences of death were passed, but not carried out: and the sentences of imprisonment were reduced. In March, 1931, fourteen professors and State officials, including the well-known statistician Groman, who had pressed for lower estimates of production in the first Five-Year-Plan, were brought to trial, on a charge of conspiracy with Mensheviks, in the U.S.S.R. and abroad, for counter-revolutionary measures.

In his Six Points speech of June 23rd, 1931, Stalin referred to the Promparti trial, and said that wrecking had at that time been a sort of fashion. He recalled the panic in the right wing of the Communist Party in the early days of the first Five-Year-Plan, when Rykov, Bukharin and Tomsky were shocked by the drastic action against the village capitalist; and explained that, at that time, determined suppression of all active wreckers was necessary. Now, however, the position had changed. The enemy was on the run: and a section of the intelligentsia, conscious of defeat, was ready to join the victor of the struggle. He therefore called for greater consideration for the engineers and technicians of the old school, and announced a truce with the intelligentsia, in order to win the co-operation of brains.

At the same time he insisted on the enormously increased demand for new brains to direct the new centres of industry and railway construction, which the Five-Year-Plan had called into being: and demanded an industrial and technical intelligentsia drawn from the working class. It was a call for more industrial and technical training: and, more than

that, for the abandonment of the distinction between Party and non-Party brains. The brains must be sought out and encouraged, wherever they could be found. There was nothing really new in this repudiation of the Party's claim to a monopoly of all the functions of leadership. But it was necessary to draw a clear distinction between general political leadership and industrial and technical specialism. It was, incidentally, an instruction to the Party not to interfere in spheres in which political expertise was not a qualification: and it is not the only hint to that effect which Stalin has given.

For the first Five-Year-Plan there was a shortage of 5,000 superior engineers in industry and of 6,400 in transport: of 22,000 foremen and overseers and of 12,000 subordinate railway technicians; of 13,000 agronomists, 200,000 tractor operators and 50,000 tractor mechanics. No wonder that there has never been any unemployment of skilled labour, or that there is a general pressure among workers to improve their qualifications, since prizes such as these lie ahead of them. The problem of securing a supply of qualified men was, still is, acute. It was faced, in characteristic fashion, by a sort of dilution. Efficiency of training was sacrificed to speed, and the length of the curriculum in technical institutions was cut down: and picked factory-workers were sent for short training courses. The technical institutions were taken out of the hands of the Ministries of Education in the constituent Republics, and brought under the control of the Supreme Economic Council. The system of polytechnics—of general technical training—was replaced by one of monotechnics, strictly specialised and closely connected with the particular industry for which the student was being trained: a far narrower but a more rapid training. In 1926 Mr. Monkhouse, the electrical engineer, found that many students with inadequate preparation had been admitted from Workers' Faculties into the University and Technical Institutes. "It appeared to me", wrote Mr. Rukeyser, the asbestos engineer, "that they were trying to turn out technicians with too little grounding in the fundamentals, just as the production of cement, alloys, and bricks was irregular." Stalin had evidently put his finger on one of the weak points, when he directed attention to technical training.

THE DESK AND THE BENCH

Stalin called at the same time for the breaking up of unwieldy amalgamations and for the decentralisation of management, while retaining centralisation of control. Here again we have confirmation from our asbestos engineer, who knew at least one thing, through and through. When his factory became subject to the super-trust, *Mineralrud*, "the red tape, bad enough before, heaven knows, had become well-nigh impossible". It was on a par with the state-farms as big as Yorkshire, which could be inspected only from an aeroplane, and other examples of the

worship of bigness, which characterised one phase of Bolshevnik development.

Boards of ten to fifteen persons (some of whom, said Stalin, might be much better employed at work at the benches) were to be replaced by one-man management. Chairmen and their deputies must get into touch with their workers, and do more work in the field and less in the boardroom. There is ample material to show how much this rebuke was needed. Before me lies a complaint of 1931 that the river-navigation authorities are afraid of the water: and another that the conditions for "eye-wash" on the railways are too favourable. Mr. Monkhouse tells us that the engineers spent too much time in their offices, instead of going down to the workers' benches. It is the effect of a virtual caste-system, which makes manual labour, or manual labour of certain kinds, a degradation, in the literal sense of the word: and it is one of the weaknesses of Russia, both before and after the Revolution.

COMMERCIAL MANAGEMENT

The existing sources, says Stalin, are no longer sufficient to provide the capital required by the developments of the Plan, which demand a new industry in the Urals, in Siberia, in Kazakstan, and a new railway system uniting the West with the Far East. (This early insistence upon the development of the East and the Far East shows the prescience of the leader.) Heavy industry must become a new source of accumulation of capital. At present it fails, for lack of good commercial management. There is no check upon the cost of production, no check upon the credits granted by the Banks, no effective cost-accounting, to furnish a commercial basis of operations. In effect he calls for the adoption of the devices of capitalist business, in the interests of an economy which has banished private profit.

But not quite of *all* the devices: for there is one, without which the best cost-accounting is likely to be inefficacious: and this is a stable currency, the true measure of expenditure and receipts. In June, 1930, there was no small change to be had in Moscow; silver and copper were being hoarded in spite of penalties, because of paper inflation. A rouble-note was being treated as equivalent to a ten-kopek piece. In 1931, on the black exchange at Berlin, twenty roubles were being offered for the dollar, which means about 100 for the £: and the rouble rate was to go considerably lower in succeeding years, though it never reverted to the astronomical figures of 1923, before the stabilisation. Without committing the reader to the opinion that the black exchange is the true mirror of the rouble's value, it is plain that the value of the rouble was falling rapidly: and a changing medium is not an accurate measure for the purposes of cost-accounting.

Stalin was not among the theorists who said that money was tolerated

only as a temporary concession of a transitional epoch. He laughed heartily at them in a speech which he made in January, 1934. It seems that there was, in the U.S.S.R., the same struggle between inflationists and deflationists as elsewhere, in spite of the absence of any (large-scale) private interest in the question; and Piatakov, the Chairman of the State Bank (later on, one of the sacrifices in the Trotskyist trials), was removed because he resisted the demand of the industrialists for the expansion of the currency. Under a régime of fixed official foreign exchange, and officially determined prices, such as that of the U.S.S.R., inflation does not take full effect, except in the open market, where its results, concentrated in a narrow channel, are correspondingly devastating: and it is easy to understand that Stalin was on the side of the industrialists, when he was preaching his sermon to the managers of industry. At a later date he told the world that the stability of the Soviet currency was secured primarily by the quantity of commodities which the Government puts into circulation at fixed prices: by which he meant that inflation is not inflation if it only supplies sufficient currency to deal with the actual volume of business.

He did not dwell upon bank credits, but he touched the subject: as was inevitable: for their influence upon commercial discipline, and on the reduction of the costs of production, is critical. All economic operations involve what we may call *hungry intervals*: the interval while the seed is in the ground, and before the crop is ready for eating or for marketing: the interval after the raw material has been supplied to the factory, and before it has been made into the finished goods: the interval after the goods have been sent to the trader, and before he has collected the price of them from the purchaser, and so on. Short-term credit is that which fills these hungry intervals. In the type of society with which we are most familiar, the Bank accepts the custody of A's money, and lends it to B, to fill a hungry interval in B's operations. If B gets more than he needs to fill his hungry interval, or is allowed to keep it longer than his hungry interval ought to last, certain undesirable consequences ensue. Light come, light go: and B is careless about his costs: the pressure upon him for repayment being relaxed, he holds his goods for a higher price. The same operation being multiplied over a large number of Bs, there is too much short-term credit in operation, and the same thing happens which happens when there is too much currency—that is to say, there is inflation. The pressure of the Bank upon B is needed to maintain financial discipline. In the long run, if B is recalcitrant or unsuccessful, the Bank must be prepared to sell B up.

The Bolsheviks found that B, as a Trust or a Government enterprise, presented precisely the same problems as did B as a private *entrepreneur*. The hungry intervals were present and needed filling, just the same: and Trust B, or Enterprise B, was just as prone to be careless about his costs, and to hold up his goods—more careless, in fact, because his own money

was not directly at stake—as was Individual B, or Joint Stock Company B. We therefore see the Socialist State feeling its way towards a workable technique for short-term credit under State capitalism, and creating a system of control by the rouble.

In the United Kingdom there is a Credit Plan, operated by a Central Bank, which at some important crises dictates the financial policy of the State, and on other occasions masks the responsibility of the rulers against attack. The Credit Plan is worked by raising or lowering the Bank rate on advances, and by purchase or sale of securities on the part of the Bank. It does not determine the share of individuals in the total amount of Credit, but it determines, within limits, what that total is to be. Individuals obtain, or fail to obtain, a share, according as they have, or have not, the required security to offer. The social value of the business for which the loan is granted is not a relevant question.

From January, 1930, the system of the U.S.S.R. has been to give a monopoly of short-term credit for industry to the State-Bank and its forty-two regional head-offices. Commercial credit between different undertakings is forbidden. Bank credit is substituted for Goods credit. At first the practice was to credit the seller of goods automatically, on proof that he had forwarded goods, and to debit the buyer with their value at the same time. This provided no check upon the costs of production, and no guarantee that the buyer was satisfied with the goods or their price. In 1931, before the date of Stalin's speech, the procedure was changed. On proof of an agreement between the parties, the Bank debits the buyer with the agreed value of the goods delivered to him. The adjustment between buyer and seller is made in the books of the bank: the seller having his outstanding loan reduced, while that of the buyer is increased, till the goods pass on to a third party. Industry is thus financed by advances limited to goods in process of production or distribution: advances which are treated as repaid as soon as a debit has been raised against the next stage in the series of exchanges. As soon as any doubt arises whether credit is being accompanied by production, the Bank is bound to make an investigation into the debtor's business. A law of March, 1931, gives the State-Bank drastic authority for dealing with a defaulting State-concern, which extends, in the final resort, to the sale of the effects of the defaulter: that is to say, to virtual bankruptcy.

There are complaints of a lack of elasticity in the system, and it is easy to imagine irritating delays. For instance—with an exception in favour of perishable goods—the railway authorities are forbidden to surrender goods till the State-Bank has certified that the consignee has funds to pay for them. The Bank is expected to limit supplies of cash to wage-payments and to retail transactions. But there is a provision for an appeal against an order of the State-Bank refusing credit to an organisation.

In practice some concerns do outrun the constable, but not, it would seem, by obtaining improper credits from the Bank, upon which the hold

is now a tight one. Complaints of arrears of wages, owing to the exhaustion of planned credits, from time to time make themselves heard. In other words, certain concerns incur debt to their workers, when the Bank withholds credit.

The hungry intervals of State enterprises in the U.S.S.R. are filled by planned overdrafts in the books of the State-Bank, which acts as a universal clearing house: and the inflation of credits beyond the planned limit, except by a deliberate decision of the Government, is to all appearance impossible. Each buying enterprise has a motive for pressing for a reduction of the costs of each selling enterprise. Each producing enterprise has a similar motive—that of avoiding the discredit and possible loss of status and position, to which failure to keep within planned limits must lead. No long-term credits are given by the State-Bank. There are four long-term banks which supply these—that is to say, which discharge the function of the money market in the United Kingdom. It is from this source that funds for investment are derived. Subject to the operation of the Plan, the long-term Bank doles out funds as the expenditure on construction, purchase of machinery and the like, occur: and, on completion of the plant, credits the concern with the equivalent of the expenditure as assets. Technically speaking, the loan is unrepayable, and no interest is charged upon it. But the concern pays to the Bank a depreciation charge, which may be regarded as in essence the repayment of the loan: and it also contributes to the Bank 10% of the profits on its operations. These funds enable the long-term Bank to be a distributing agency for the financial requirements of industry.

There is an important difference between paying interest upon a loan, and paying a portion of the profits of the business created with its assistance. In the former case, the interest is a test of commercial success: if the concern's profits do not meet the interest, it must go under. In the latter case the concern is not automatically brought to reckoning by the inadequacy of its profit. In this respect also, therefore, the devices of the capitalist world are not fully applied to the cost-accounting of the U.S.S.R.

From a decree which issued a month after the date of Stalin's speech, it appears that the practice of applying short-term funds to capital investment, which has led to the creation of frozen credits, still existed in the U.S.S.R. It was then prohibited. Whether the prohibition was effective I shall presently consider.

LABOUR

In the latter days of the Tsarist régime there were factory regulations without adequate staffs to enforce them: a law authorising the formation of Trade Unions, but an administration hostile to their formation: a government which, in the words of a former professor of the St. Petersburg University, had become the policeman of capitalism.

Urban labour was the mainstay of the Bolshevik Party. Thanks to the co-operation or acquiescence of the army, and the determination of the peasants to get rid of the landlords, urban labour was the instrument of a successful insurrection in November, 1917. It was natural that it should be in some measure demoralised by its victory and should expect to enjoy the Fortunatus' purse which it seemed to have won. The unwillingness of the technical intelligentsia to co-operate with the Revolution compelled the use of the operatives to keep watch upon the management. Workers' control of factories and the replacement of wages by subsistence allowances, calculated without regard to work done, were among the concessions made by the Revolutionary Government. But, at an early stage, the search for the elements of a new revolutionary labour-discipline began. Piece-work was introduced into the metal industry, at the request of the Petrograd workers, in January, 1918, and soon extended to other workers in the capitals. Trotsky's proposals for a disciplined labour force went far in the direction of a militarised industrial system.

On the other hand, throughout the duration of the New Economic Policy the Trade Unions continued to struggle for the right to exercise functions similar to those of their Western prototypes: and in October, 1927, the Central Council of Trade Unions adopted a resolution declaring that the standard collective "agreement" issued by the Supreme Economic Council was an order addressed to State industrial undertakings, and not an agreement at all. The argument was that a sort of artificial wages-fund was fixed, over the heads of the Trade Unions, and that it left no room for bargaining. The demand for real consultation with the workers was again emphasised by the Central Council of Trade Unions in November, 1928.

A struggle was also in progress on the subject of piece-work. In 1928 the Eighth All-Union Congress of Trade Unions opposed a fresh extension of piece-work, and expressed a preference for collective bonuses. The managers thought there was danger of incorporating the extra pay in the standard rates, and of the consequent destruction of the incentive which the extra pay was intended to supply. Revision of the norms of output was ordered in 1929, but the difference between piece-rate pay and standard wage remained too high, because defects in technical standardisation made it too easy to exceed the norms.

The payment of Unemployment benefit was stopped from the last quarter of 1930, on the ground of the shortage of labour in State industry, and it was announced that the number of State workers and employees, which had been 14 millions in 1930, must be raised to 16 millions in 1931. Drastic steps were now being taken for the establishment of discipline. A crisis in railway transport in 1930 and 1931 was dealt with by compulsory recall to transport service of persons having technical experience, and by penal enforcement of railway discipline. Similar

measures were taken to secure skilled hands for the timber-floating campaign in the spring thaw. In March, 1931, the principle of the adjustment of earnings to work done was carried further by the abolition of limits upon additional earnings: in April, on the principle that he who works best shall be fed best, differential rations were prescribed for shock-workers—the *udarniki* who undertake more than the ordinary norms of work: in June it was ordered that all payments should be by results, with a progressive wage for those who exceed a certain minimum of production, and that, in the case of work done by gangs, there should be differential payment within the gangs. The maintenance of conduct-sheets for workers, and the elimination from the working hours of the day of all occupations except work, had already been prescribed. In June orders issued that a worker must go where he is sent: that he will be held responsible for his tools, and that wages are not to be paid in working hours. The operation of the seven-hour working day had been extended to all railway employees, and to the majority of the remainder: and the five-day continuous week, with every fifth day a holiday, was made widely applicable to most State undertakings. The prevailing signs, however, are those of a severe shortage of labour, and of measures for speeding up work. We are not surprised to learn that Government trusts were bidding against each other for labour, with offers of better wages and better living conditions, and that the “fitting” of labour from the less desirable forms of employment was a problem of grave urgency. There was precisely the same sort of competition for labour among Socialist managers, that there had been in earlier centuries for cultivating peasants among the landed gentry.

Stalin declared in his “Six Points” speech that the old source of supply of labour, from the spontaneous overflow of the village, had been dried up by the improvement of rural conditions, and called upon economic organisations to re-establish the flow by entering into agreements with the managing bodies of the collective farms. The latter were to be induced to help by offers of assistance in various forms from the factories and mines. At the same time the need of additional hands was to be reduced by increased mechanisation. No direct call was made for what we have learned to describe as rationalisation, but it was a very obvious inference that rationalisation was desirable, and we shall see that the inference was actually drawn in practice. The evil of labour-flux was to be checked by the encouragement of the good workers, and in particular of the skilled workers, to stay where they were, instead of wandering in search of improved conditions elsewhere. There was no explicit reference to a severer discipline. The result was to be achieved partly by the improvement of supplies and of living conditions; and partly by an attack upon the principle of what Stalin called *equality-mongering*.

It is this denial of equality of remuneration which has occasioned and continues to occasion the greatest surprise among those who suppose

that Socialism is necessarily egalitarian. Actually, there was nothing novel about the denial. In his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* Marx made it plain that equal distribution was not his primary demand. His aim was the establishment of a society which, by the very nature of its constitution, would do justice between all claims. The removal of the grosser inequalities, as of the exploitation of man by man, is implied in the aim of the classless society. But pending the attainment of complete Communism, when distribution is to be according to *needs*, because production will have reached a stage at which there is enough for all, the claim is for distribution according to *work*. There was a tendency, in the earlier period of the Revolution, to suppose that the final stage was already reached, or on the point of being reached, and to fix the remuneration of the workers accordingly. It was at the laxity of labour discipline, caused by this anticipation of a future achievement, that Stalin struck when he devised his condemnatory epithet, *equality-mongering*. Apt phrases stick, and this was one of them.

But the attempt to increase incentives by the adjustment of pay to the quantity and quality of work was largely frustrated by the system of rationing and the accompanying variety of prices, which had been introduced in 1929. Rationing was a means of securing to the most important categories of the population—to factory-workers, school-teachers, office-workers and children—a minimum supply of necessities at a moderate price, at a time when supplies generally were short. It applied to bread, and (less regularly supplied) to meat, butter, groats, and finally to a number of other articles, including certain textiles, tobacco and cigarettes. Side by side with rationing, so-called Commercial shops of various types, some of them “closed”, that is to say, limited to particular categories of customers, supplied similar articles at higher prices, but also in limited quantity. Shortly before the abolition of bread rationing in 1934, its ration-price was sixty kopeks per kilogram, while the commercial shops charged more than four times as much. Outside of the rationing and of the operations of the commercial shops, was the open market, with unrestricted prices, which often ranged very high, and varied very greatly.

Under this system differences of money wages tended to lack practical significance. Income in excess of a certain amount could only be spent, if it could be spent at all, at such a sacrifice as deprived it of much of its value. It became a commonplace that privilege was worth more than wage: and since—for workers in the same ration-category—privilege was almost (but not absolutely) equal, the inequality aimed at by the differentiation of money-wage was non-existent. To achieve all that Stalin sought when he condemned *equality-mongering*, it was necessary to establish a rouble with equal purchasing power for all purposes, so that pecuniary incentives might have their full effect, and for that we are to wait till 1934–35, when rationing was abolished.

It was necessary also to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the problems of the wage-scale, which, for years past, had been exercising the best brains of the Soviet administration. Not all work is of a kind which can be remunerated by the piece, and time-work also requires encouragement. Wage categories, on a time basis, but varying according to skill, were devised, but they tended to become stereotyped, and therefore ceased to operate as incentives. The condemnation of *equality-mongering* is a sign that this controversy has taken a turn favourable to the claims of the piece-workers. The fact that a speech, dealing with so vital a question of industrial organisation as the principles of wage-payment was addressed, not to Trade Unions, but to managers and economic workers, leaves us in little doubt as to the relative influence of the two in the decision of a question, which in effect was that of the distribution of an artificially fixed wages-fund between different categories of workers.

IRRESPONSIBILITY

Stalin passed, from measures for ending the fluidity of labour, to a criticism of irresponsibility. Here again he invented his own phrase, which it has become customary to translate by *depersonalisation*. No doubt he reckoned that it would stick better than a familiar word, and the event has shown that he was right. Depersonalisation means the negation of personal responsibility for work and the instruments of work. As the grand example of an institution which created *depersonalisation*, he pitched upon the five-day week, which had hitherto been regarded as the *ne plus ultra* of industrial organisation. With the five-day week the factories were permanently at work. The workers were on a rota, and got their holidays on different days. Each man worked four days, and had his holiday on the fifth. When his fourth day was over, he left his bench, his unfinished work, his tools for a successor. No one was continuously responsible either for work or for tools. Both were *depersonalised*. Stalin advocated a six-day week, with the sixth day a holiday for all: and a factory stoppage on that day. Workers, as well as managers, were to be made responsible each in his own sphere.

RESULTS OF THE SPEECH

There were six principal heads, with which the speaker wished to deal: the supply of labour: its fluidity: the evil of irresponsibility; the creation of a working-class intelligentsia: the attitude towards the old intelligentsia: and the management of industry on business principles. On these points he preached his sermon, from a skilfully chosen pulpit: and the obedient Press and wireless took it up, expounded and popularised it. The challenge from above was characteristic of Soviet methods. The oracle spoke, and every department set to work to give effect to its pronouncements. In lesser matters, the initiative may, and does, come

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from below. In greater, it comes from above: after a period of listening to the talk of those who are in touch with the details of business.

We are now to see what the State machine made of the instructions. But first we must note that the Soviet Government was yet to suffer a grave setback, which in great measure falsified the estimate of the success already attained. The bitterest part of the struggle over the collectivisation of agriculture, and the scarcity of 1932-33, was yet to come. The victories, which were believed to have rallied the intellectuals to the side of the Revolution, were not yet realised.

The speech was at once followed by a message signed by Stalin, Molotov, and Ordzhonikidze to all Party, Communist League of Youth, Economic and Trade Union organisations, regarding the position in the Donets coal-mines, which were the most important source of coal and iron, but also a classic example of ill-success in the organisation and productivity of labour. The output there was less than two-thirds of that planned for the first half of 1931. The message required more mechanisation: the extension of geological research: better facilities for cleaning and sorting: personal responsibility of the manager for his pit, of the worker for his tools: more piece-work: better differentiation between skilled and unskilled work: attention to the quality of the work, both of individuals and gangs: more attractive conditions of labour in respect to food, housing, schools and workers' clubs: better training for technical jobs. Since the influx of labour from the villages had been checked by the improvement in rural conditions, the managing bodies of collective farms must be induced by the offer of coal on favourable terms to enter into agreements for the supply of labour.

The workers of the Stalingrad Tractor Factory wrote a letter to Stalin in which they made the typical Russian confession, with the true religious ring in it, of the manifold sins and wickednesses which had made the factory at first a failure.

“ We talked big about everything but no one knew his own special responsibility. . . . Our lathes had no regular masters. Dozens of them got out of order and it was nobody's business. The forge-hammers passed from hand to hand. . . . We had on paper an unbroken week, which became sheer irresponsibility. . . . The levelling tendency in wages brought about actually lower wages in the forge and foundry where the heaviest work was done. . . . We altogether underestimated the need to look after the living conditions. . . . We thought that, once we had the new equipment, things would move of themselves. . . . We had to reconstruct fundamentally our methods and organisation of work, and we started to do this on the basis of your six points of efficiency.”

The congregation is down on its knees. It has done the things it ought not to have done: and left undone those things which it ought to have

done: and there is no health in it. But the six points have come to regenerate it.

“We changed our so-called unbroken week to a six-day broken week, and assigned every machine and group of machines to specified workers and foremen who were held responsible. . . . We had to create for our working class our own technical specialists. . . . In the Workers’ Evening University we are training unskilled to become skilled workers. . . . We had to change our relations with the old-school engineers and attract them to participate in our tasks. . . . *We have helped them to atone for their past guilt* against the working class. . . . We give special attention to their living-conditions and food-supplies, and *don’t suspect them for every mistake they make*, but allow for a certain amount of professional risk-taking. We had to strengthen internal accounting, and build up accumulation within the industry. The first to fulfil your instructions were the smelters. They put all the furnaces on the cost-accounting basis. . . . The chief result of this is lower costs. . . . Before the Party and before the Country we pledge ourselves to reach by May 1st an output of one hundred and forty-four tractors daily. . . . This year must see the model tractor of quality. . . .”

Repentance and amendment are complete and absolution is to follow. The Russian people certainly have a genius for confession: and their confession differs from ours. They not only admit that they are miserable sinners: they confess specific sins, which is a good deal more embarrassing to the sinner.

That the department of Railway Transport took a less emotional and more practical line with Comrade Stalin’s Six Points, we gather from an article in the Party newspaper, *Pravda*, which betrays the hand of the technical expert. Locomotives are to be assigned to gangs, and the gang held responsible for the working. The members of the gang are to be paid according to the number of kilometres run by their particular locomotive. The antiquated systems of jobbing out of work to sub-contractors, and of time-work, are condemned. Cost-accounting must be applied to each locomotive. The Communist Party cells among the railway workers—there were 200,000 Communists in railway work on January 1st, 1932—do not escape criticism. One organiser in particular is pilloried for running about and jabbering: “The masses are mobilised”: when the work of his own cell is badly disorganised. Red tape—deplorably prevalent—had recently been satirised by an author’s picture of an office which kept handy, for processional purposes, a coffin marked *Death to Red Tape*; but did not extend its reforming energy beyond this demonstration. The Railway reformer says that both red tape and corruption must be eliminated from the Party, and the members must attend meetings more regularly, and pay their subscriptions. The best

use must be made of the periods of repair and cleaning of the locomotives to do educational work among their crews. The Party is strong enough in the locomotive gangs, but much weaker in the departments of repair, the assemblage and starting of the trains, and of the conductors. The staffs of these departments are made up largely of villagers who have not broken with the old way of life, and pay too much regard to family ties. (Presumably they seize too many opportunities for running home to their wives and families.) Mass educational work has to be done among these, and among the men on construction work. In a construction division named, employing 15,000 workmen, there are only three Communist workers and twenty Communist officials. One-man management is far from being established in the railway work, and labour-discipline is not strong in consequence. The local Party organisations must expect to be held responsible for these things.

An All-Union Labour Conference which sat in November, 1931, began with complaints of the decline of the real wages of labour, and the suggestion of an all-round increase. This was not included in the Six Points, and was discouraged by the official representatives of the Commissariat of Labour. The Conference went on to the approval of piece-work and of the six-day week, instead of the unbroken five-day week, condemned by Stalin: and agreed to measures of rationalisation: the reduction of hands and the exercise of a stricter discipline: apparently on the understanding that piece-work rates, and harder work would increase the wages of those who remained in the factories, without involving any general increase. The impending rationalisation was evidently the keynote of the conference: and it was the assent to this that the authorities wished to obtain.

The persecution of the intelligentsia was not ended by Stalin's speech. The shooting of officers of the Agricultural Department in 1933, for supposed sabotage, took place immediately before the arrest of the engineers, British and other, in the Vickers-Maxim trial. There was a further trial, with eleven death sentences, of directors and officials of the Horse-breeding trust, in 1934. But rival influences were at work after the speech. In August, 1931, engineers and specialists were placed on the same plane, in respect to living conditions, vacations, and the education of children, with the highest category of proletarian workers. In the spring of 1933 a Procurator, or Attorney General, of the Union was invested with powers to supervise the legality of the proceedings of the Gay-Pay-oo, and released many prisoners. After the reorganisation of the Gay-Pay-oo in 1934, the Commissariat of Internal Affairs, which took its place, was deprived of the right to arrest *engineers, and officers of the Red Army*, without the Procurator's sanction. The new Constitution of November, 1936, makes the supervising authority of the Procurator a general one. *Pravda* of May 15th, 1937, reports the revision of a sentence of five years' imprisonment passed upon an official of the Donets coal

basin who was found responsible for the output of inferior coal. The procurator demanded a thorough review of all cases of industrial crime in the past three years, and warned the Courts against the violation of revolutionary law. The year 1937 was one of alarms for managers and technical heads, as well as for Party men and administrators: but Professor Ramzin and other victims of the industrial party trial of 1930 received free pardons in 1938, and the importance of the intelligentsia in Soviet life was emphasised in the pronouncements on the equalisation of the franchise. We must expect to find fluctuations of practice in this, as in other matters, as political conditions grow less, or more, critical for the Soviet régime.

We shall seek in vain for any considerable change produced by the speech in the openings offered to non-party brains. At an earlier date there was, as Mr. Monkhouse reminds us, a non-party Deputy Commissar for electrical development. Exceptions were always made for distinguished scientists such as the physiologist Pavlov. But the tendency has been for the most energetic intelligences to find their way into the Party: and when work of exceptional value has been done, as by the Stakhanovite workers, one form of recognition of it has been the offer of facilities for entering it. Up to March, 1937, the factory was nominally controlled by a "three-in-hand", a *troika*, consisting of the manager, the secretary of the Party cell, and a representative of the Trade Union workers. The *troika* was then replaced by the Manager.

Of the decentralisation of management we have examples in the breaking up of the greater State-Farms into more conveniently managed units; and in the sub-division of many of the Trusts. There are now (1942) over thirty separate Commissariats, and the latest creation is of one devoted to the special purpose of making military mortars. In the encouragement of local industries for the utilisation of local sources of fuel and building material, for the manufacture of spare parts and small fittings, and for repairs of all kinds, we see a further development of the same principle. These local industries are controlled by the industrial authorities of the Constituent and Autonomous Republics, but managed by local Soviets.

One-man management of industrial establishments was resisted by Menshevik opinion but justified at an early date after the November Revolution by a decision of the Party. Trotsky discussed the principle at length in his work on *Terrorism and Communism*, and defended it against the suggestion that it was borrowed from the Army administration. "A board of persons who do not know a business", he wrote, "cannot replace one who does know it. It is absence of personality which is frequently hidden behind the collegiate principle." It is evident, however, that the "collegiate" principle of management by boards had not been killed by the earlier discussions. Mr. Littlepage, the American gold-mining engineer, is, within the sphere of his own observations, a valuable and

trustworthy source of information on industrial conditions over the period between 1928 and 1937. He is emphatic in his statement that the average ability of managing staffs greatly improved during this interval. His account of the organisation of industry, however, draws attention to a feature which is incompatible with the unity of management. The central goldmining trust, and all the district trusts, and every group of mines, were in the joint charge of a non-technical manager and a chief engineer, the former a politician and a member of the Party and having a final voice in all decisions. This double control, without clear definition of functions, reappears elsewhere in the Soviet system, and contains obvious elements of weakness. Much closer observation than the present writer has been able to give to it is needed to form a satisfactory judgment of its potentialities. One-man management is firmly established in industry now: but those below are expected and encouraged to keep a close watch upon the manager, and report all his shortcomings.

There was a time when the Revolutionary Government inclined to regard political orthodoxy and correct class origin as satisfactory substitutes for technical skill. These things have had their day. One of the things for which the speech called was the mastery of technique by the workers, so that the immensely increased demand due to the progress of the Plans should be met. In the following year the number of pupils in technical institutions leapt up by more than 25%. Messrs. Lorwin and Abrahamson, two industrial experts who visited the Soviet Union in 1935, paid particular attention to the methods of *technical training*. They found a general urge for the improvement of qualifications, so that it seemed as though the whole country were at school. Sometimes the specialisation appeared to them excessive. The training was carried on in factory apprentice schools, secondary technical schools, and industrial institutes, under the control of the Commissariats of Heavy and Light Industry, Food Supplies, Lumber and Transport. The investigators noticed an intense and dynamic quality in Soviet industrial life: but a comparatively slow pace of work, and an only moderate rhythm of the belt and conveyor systems. In a speech of March, 1937, Stalin declares that his call "has given the Soviet Union tens and hundreds of thousands of splendid Bolshevik economic cadres". Mr. Littlepage, whose favourable opinion of the managers I have just cited, says that the industrial worker has been constantly increasing his skill and his output since 1928: and this estimate is borne out by all the information received from the front in 1941-42. The organisation of higher technical instruction was again overhauled in November, 1937, when professors, hitherto employed and paid by the hour, were attached to particular institutions and provided with progressive monthly salaries: and the stipends of students were increased. It is now possible for a student to live on his stipend.

The prohibition of the use of short-term credit for long-term invest-

ment, which took place within a month of Stalin's speech, completed the rigid division of credit into two kinds—the long-term and the short-term—which now characterises the credit system of the U.S.S.R. In a capitalistic society the obliteration of the line between the two (such as appears to have happened in Britain in 1931, when short-term funds were employed for virtual long-term investments abroad) escapes notice, so long as the borrower continues to meet his engagements. I have noted that, in the U.S.S.R., the State-Bank has the duty of advancing short-term funds only on the delivery of goods, and of investigating without delay every case in which this condition appears not to be fulfilled: and the possibility of the accumulation of frozen credits is, on paper at least, adequately forestalled. The State bank thus not only keeps the banking account of each trust, but is the agency through which the Government inspects and supervises its operations. As soon as the flow of production ceases, the defaulter must, if rules are observed, be brought up short by the collapse of his banking account. To this, I have only to add one qualification. The rigidity of rules in the U.S.S.R. is only equalled by the facility with which rules are violated. The result is a somewhat capricious and uneven operation of the most important regulations, laxity alternating with meticulous insistence. Stalin himself has recently complained of the "soullessness" of the bureaucracy: but the bureaucracy has a way of suddenly and unexpectedly relenting. The "broad Slavonic nature", of which the poet Lermontov wrote, is still with us, and it still pardons evil where it sees its inevitability: but it grants, or withholds, pardon upon conditions which there is no foreseeing. I shall have occasion in the closing words of this book to point out that this instinctive elasticity has its good, as well as its bad, points. But in matters of finance there is something to be said for rigidity.

It seems that the system of separating short-term from long-term credit, and of making the former entirely dependent upon the production or delivery of goods, should not only effectually prevent the excessive issue of short-term credit, but should give elasticity to the supply. When there is a seasonal increase in the needs for money, or when some change, such as the Stakhanovite movement, increases production in an unexpected degree, the fact that the grant of credit depends upon the production of goods, gives, at all events potentially, that automatic expansibility of short-term credit to deal with increased business, which is everywhere a desideratum. But, in 1933, the names of trusts and factories having wage-arrears of an aggregate total of twenty millions of roubles were published. They had expended their wage-grants prematurely by over-payments, and were therefore unable to meet their legitimate obligations. It was considered that the irregularity was made possible by the practice of making a long-period wage-grant. The practice was modified by reducing the wage-grant to the needs of a single month. Theoretically this should have made over-expenditure

in wages impossible. But a charge made against the Agricultural Department in the summer of 1937, of withholding or delaying large amounts of wages, shows that Government concerns still run into debt with their employees. Complaints of financial indiscipline continued in 1938.

Orders which issued in that year showed that certain Machine Tractor Stations had not only been deriving their short-term credits from at least two different banks, but had also been financing themselves out of the deliveries of the collective farms in cash and kind : payments which ought, by all accepted standards of public accounting, to be credited without deduction to the State. Debts between departments which ran into many hundreds of thousands were reported, and some undertakings were said to be paying nothing at all for their raw materials, while their creditors were neglecting their obvious duty of *putting the debtors into Court!* I am convincingly assured that managers sometimes overpay their labour in order to overcome difficulties of recruitment. It may be that the financial jacket is too strait, and that managers wriggle out of it, by cooking accounts.

Directors can distinguish themselves and can earn honour and promotion by putting their enterprises upon a paying basis. By an order of April, 1936, each State enterprise receives 4% of the planned, and 50% of the unplanned, profit, for expenditure on the improvement of the social services for the workers engaged in that enterprise. It is true, no doubt, that the State, by manipulating price, can raise or lower profit on particular branches of industry. The fact remains that the incentive of profit exists in the Socialistic as in the Individualistic society, though the money which represents it does not pass into private pockets. The trained administrator is aware that a department of State will fight with determination for the ascription to it of what it regards as its proper share of public revenue, even when it has no prospect of being allowed to spend the money on its own requirements.

The most important of all the measures required, for the purpose of the good commercial management which the Six Points speech demanded, is the establishment of the currency on a firm basis. This seemed to have been achieved in 1924-25, but the strain of the Plans ended the stability of the rouble, and the re-establishment of rationing in 1929, and the manipulation of prices which accompanied it, destroyed all certainty as to the value of the coin. Restoration is a slow process : but, if I read the situation aright, an attempt was being made gradually to bring the rouble up to its official exchange value. The substantial lowering of retail prices in June and July, 1937, appeared to be steps in this process, but the war will no doubt upset all calculations.

LABOUR AFTER JUNE, 1931

The number employed in large industry, building, and transport, when Stalin made his speech was just upon ten millions. In 1932 they

were nearly twelve. In 1933 they went down to eleven—mainly as the result of a decrease in the building trade. In 1934 they were back at nearly eleven and three-quarters. In 1935 they were just above twelve millions.

During the period of the diminution of the numbers employed under the three heads mentioned, there was not, except to a slight extent in 1933, any fall in the total numbers employed by the State. But building, which employed over three millions in 1932, had not returned again to that figure by the end of 1935. The increase in 1934 and 1935 was in large industry and transport. There was no falling off in the flow of labour to non-agricultural employments, but some of it was diverted from housing to tasks regarded as more urgent, among which the defence industries may with confidence be included.

The general extension of mechanisation is notorious. We have precise figures of it for coal-getting in the years 1932–34 and for iron-smelting in 1933–35. In agriculture, particularly, the advance of mechanisation is very great indeed. A good deal of labour has been set free for the increased Army, and for armament making, by these changes, as the census figures of rural and urban population clearly show (see Appendix).

There are many signs of rationalisation and of the tightening up of the conditions of labour. At an earlier stage a general shortage had been combined with the employment of excessive numbers. In other words, labour had been badly organised. It had also been undisciplined. The measures taken for restoring discipline were drastic. In November, 1932, it was decided that a man might be dismissed for a single day's absence without leave. In December orders issued for the cancelment of the worker's ration-book on dismissal, and the co-operative shops in all the most important industries were transferred to the control of the managers of the works, with the evident intention of giving reality to the penalty of dismissal. The passport system, familiar to Tsarist Russia, was reintroduced for Leningrad in 1931, and in the next year extended to other large cities, with the ostensible purpose of removing undesirable persons and those unconnected with industry or socially useful work (excepting invalids and pensioners). Substantial reductions of office staffs at the same time took place. It is evidently convenient to possess the means of limiting overcrowding and excessive calls upon the food supplies of the cities, and planning is facilitated by the authoritative determination of numbers. But the immediate aim of the passport system was to deal with the effects of rationalisation and the influx of unemployed persons from rural areas, at that time suffering from scarcity. We are not to understand that labour of good quality in the industrial centres was so plentiful that the authorities could afford to reduce it; but rather that rationalisation made it possible to pick and choose, and that the persons removed were not of the kind wanted in the factories and offices. Though the passport system did not have all the effects expected of it in securing the

exclusion of undesirables, it appears that it checked the influx from outside. In April, 1933, it was extended to other areas, including, evidently for political objects, a strip along the western frontier. A functionary called the *rationalisator* has made his appearance in the lists of Soviet employees.

The six-day week has recently given place to a seven-day week, with a weekly holiday: the latter to a large extent suspended for the urgent needs of defence.

An increasing use of piece-work, of premium systems, and of set norms of production, was noticed by Messrs. Lorwin and Abrahamson in 1935. In large-scale industry, the proportion of work paid by the piece had been rather more than half in 1930: it was more than two-thirds in 1934. Generally speaking this method of payment was steadily extended, and the exceptional favour shown to shock-workers has been carried further in the so-called Stakhanovite system. Here again the best information comes from Mr. Littlepage. Under the old shock-worker methods stress had been laid upon greater physical output by the individual worker. Stakhanov, a worker in the Donets Coal Basin, where low output had always been a subject of complaint, told the engineers and foremen in his mine that, if they would provide him with small tools and equipment and give him all the helpers he needed, he could get out many times more coal than he and the helpers could produce separately. Much time had hitherto been wasted by the disappearance of small tools and equipment, which—under the comprehensive description of “pipe-lighters”—had been very generally stolen. Part of the scheme was that engineers and foremen should be held responsible for keeping the gangs supplied with these articles. The rest was specialisation and organised co-operation of a brigade of workers combined with the piece-work wage.

The system by which a piece-worker is assisted by men on time-work rates is understood to be permissible under British Trade Union rules: though it may come near, in practice, to a sub-contract system, in which the day-rate men are employed by the piece-worker, and not directly by the employer. The system has been criticised particularly by E. Strauss (*Soviet Russia*, 1941) as incompatible with Socialist principles: because the principal worker absorbs the whole of the premium earned by his brigade for the additional work performed by the organisation: and is thus in a position somewhat like that of a sub-contractor. The present writer has not the detailed information which would enable him to say whether the brigade-leader receives an extra premium in excess of what the members of his brigade receive. But he thinks it unlikely that the total gross remuneration is divided equally among the members including the leader. The case illustrates the difficulty of drawing the line at any particular point in adopting the incentives familiar to the capitalist system.

The fairest and most effective method of dividing the available wage-

fund between the different categories of workers continues to be a subject of discussion: but it does not appear that proposals for increasing the aggregate amount are tolerated. Otherwise there is much initiative on the part of labour from below and it is generously encouraged. A practice which contributes to the efficiency of labour is that of consultation between the heads of industry and representative workers, with a free interchange of opinions regarding the causes of failure and the means of improvement. Prominence was given in 1937 to meetings of this kind with coal and iron and copper workers: and the workers went away with presentation watches in their pockets.

A recent attempt to encourage what appears to be a multiple bench system—that is to say, a sort of de-specialisation of workers, aiming at fitting them for a variety of tasks—has been criticised by industrialists in the U.S.S.R. on the ground that every worker ought to have his own load: in other words, that he has enough to do already if his work is properly organised. Output is still on a low scale, and some of the remedies proposed and applied take this for granted.

The results of a severer discipline, or of more effective inducements to steadiness, show themselves, after 1932, in a remarkable drop in the figures of absence of workers for trivial causes, in some of the more important trades. The average number of days per year per worker had been from four to six. In the coal industry they had been much higher, and still stood above ten in 1932. In 1933 they dropped to less than one in industry in general, and to less than two in coal, and the lower figures were well maintained up to the time when statistics ceased to be published. Labour flux—that curse of Soviet industry, for which the emblem of the grasshopper, and the opprobrious epithet of the “fitter”, have been devised—continues extremely high. For years, including the year of Stalin’s speech, it was, in a group of the principal trades, well over 100% of the total strength, and it was not till 1934 that it fell below that figure by a few points. In June, 1940, under the evident pressure of the needs of national defence, “fitting” was made punishable at the instance of the Central Council of Trade Unions. Both the decree itself, and the source of the proposal, are notable.

Of the general conditions and status of urban labour I have something to say in another chapter. One of Stalin’s demands in his sermon to the managers was for an amelioration in the workers’ conditions. Benefits, partly corporate, in particular for the Donets miners, who have received better housing and rest-homes, and partly individual, taking the shape of model dwellings for good workers, are from time to time announced. In the absence of statistical evidence of an increase in real wages, it seems that the material improvement has been rather for the capable and energetic minority of the workers, than for the rank and file. But all of them alike have benefited by increased security due to the ending of unemployment.

To sum up this chapter, the Soviet Government, on its industrial side, has learned to apply, in substance, most of the devices of its capitalist forerunners, without allowing the accumulation of private fortunes or giving a controlling authority to private wealth. This statement applies not only to the incentives of the extra salary and the extra wage, and the rationalisation of labour. Paradoxically, it applies also to the employment of the profit motive. For, though no profit is allowed to pass into the hands of individuals, the calculation of profit, as an element in cost accounting, is an instrument by which responsibility is brought home to management, and this responsibility carries with it the liability of Government trusts to virtual bankruptcy, with all the consequences which such a catastrophe involves to the heads of an unsuccessful enterprise. These adaptations from past experience have not made an end of the cruder methods of the police and the prisons: but there is solid ground for holding that the efficiency both of management and of labour has improved in the past decade.

CHAPTER XV

THE END OF SMALL-SCALE AGRICULTURE

"A phase in a world-wide struggle, which is still going on, with many fluctuations and set-backs, between the individualist family farmer, on the one hand, and organisation and (later) machinery, on the other. . . . A successful resistance by the peasant spells regression."—H. G. WELLS, *Work, Wealth, and Happiness*.

"We expect each farmer to be able, single-handed, not only to plough and hoe, to reap and sow, but to be an agricultural chemist, a veterinary biologist, an accountant dealing with complicated costings, a statistician, a man of business skilled in buying materials and in selling products, an up-to-date reader of Lord Bledisloe and the scientific investigators, and an expert in half a dozen other capacities utterly foreign to his antecedents. And his mere reaping and sowing keeps him working in his shirt sleeves for sixteen hours a day to pay his rent and mortgage interest, besides keeping himself and his family fed, clothed, and lodged. In short, his case is only to be stated to reduce itself to absurdity. He cannot even make out his income-tax return. What he needs is several partners who are experts in the scientific and commercial departments for which he has no time. No small farm could support such a managerial board."—BERNARD SHAW, Letter to *The Times*, Sept. 27th, 1940.

THE IDEA that agricultural labour in the Russian village community should be collective can be traced to the Slavophiles. Baron Haxthausen, who first revealed to the Western world the existence of the Russian village community, hints at it. M. Leroy Beaulieu points out that, in a country of vast plains and in a machine age, the village community would adapt itself well to a system of large-scale cultivation by joint labour. Friedrich Engels, foreseeing the inability of peasant cultivation in France and Germany to compete with large-scale cultivation, formu-

lates the task of the Communist as consisting in the transformation of individual production and individual ownership into co-operative production and co-operative ownership, not forcibly, but by means of example.

The general Marxian outlook upon the peasantry was that capitalism, an inevitable stage of growth in the country as in the town, must live its life, and dig its own grave. The development of this stage was not to be hindered, but rather to be welcomed, as the necessary preliminary to the appearance of socialism. The first necessity was the destruction of the remains of feudalism, incarnate in the landowner. This would clear the way for the village capitalist, whose operations would create a rural proletariat, excite the class-war, and provide the weapon for slaying the slayer. No essential difference was conceived between the cases of town and country so far as the conditions for the appearance of socialism were concerned. But Lenin had a double intellectual inheritance. On one side, and that perhaps the stronger, his brain descended from the Russian Populists. On that side, there survived in him memories of a Russian socialism, which gave the first place to the Peasant Commune and the Workers' Fellowship. With these memories went an impulse to active revolution and to militant measures, which the German Marxians and the Menshevik wing of the Russian Marxians missed. On the other side, he was a Marxian, with the Marxian conception that economic forces make for revolution, that the movement of their maturity cannot be forestalled, and that precocious attempts are to be condemned as mere adventurism. On the Populist side, he recognised the weight of the immense peasant mass. On the Marxian side, he looked for leadership in revolution to the urban wage-earner, free from the bias which property gives. Out of this combination comes the conception of the alliance between peasantry and proletariat, the "dove-tailing" of the one with the other, which the Russian word for this alliance conveys. As Zinoviev put it in 1924: "The first new idea that Lenin introduced into Marxism was his outlook upon the peasantry . . . the union of a working-class revolution with a peasant-war."

I have already pointed out that Lenin had a double policy for the peasant: one which determined the ultimate aim: and one which fixed the tactics of the day. Even in 1901 we see that he aims at the replacement of small farming by large, and the full application of mechanised methods to agriculture. That was possible in two ways: either by the ousting of the small farmer and his reduction to the status of a wage-earner: or by agricultural co-operation on a large scale. He was prepared for both or either: but the immediate task was something different. In deciding upon it, he followed the Marxian analysis. It is formulated in a very early number of *The Spark (Iskra)*, the first journal of the Russian Social Democrats. Social Democrats must use every opportunity of sending urban workers to country-markets and villages, to develop the

antagonism, primarily between landlord and peasant, and secondarily between rural employers and rural workers. Appeal must be made to the grievances of the peasant: to his deprivation of a portion of his pre-emancipation allotment (this is a reference to the so-called "cuttings" made in the operations under the Emancipation Law): to the redemption-payments (abolished in 1905): and to his legal disabilities: and it must be brought home to him that a representative assembly is the remedy (for, at this time, the demand was merely for democratic institutions). There is no demand as yet for the nationalisation of land: for there is a possibility (a very near one at the crisis of the revolution of 1905) that the reactionaries will adopt this policy, in order to end peasant discontent at the cost of the landlords.

The peasant disturbances of 1905 showed the strength of the discontent in rural Russia, and Lenin changed his agrarian programme to one for the confiscation of all the land of the landlords. He recognised that the peasants might demand the distribution of the land among themselves, after the expropriation of the landlords: thus defeating, or postponing, more far-reaching plans for the creation of large-scale cultivation. But, he wrote, "Every vegetable has its season": such a distribution may be temporarily inevitable, however little it may harmonise with a wise agrarian policy.

I need not follow him through each turn in his revolutionary tactics. I express the spirit of them compendiously when I say that he put the alliance of the peasants first among his aims: and that he was willing to wait upon their will in order to secure it. In 1917 he encouraged their seizure of the land, while urging that it should be an organised transfer of possession, not a mere scramble by individuals. By this time the peasants themselves desired nationalisation, not as a means of forming large units of cultivation, but in order to end the exodus from the *Mir*, which took place under the settlement of 1906-16: and Lenin abandoned his cautious attitude towards it, in consequence. It was made plain by the Conference of Peasant Deputies in June, 1917, that the peasants wanted to use the new accessions of land as additions to their own holdings, and to redistribute the latter periodically in accordance with the ancient practice of the *Mir*.

After the November Revolution, the agrarian legislation of the new Government was a concession to this demand. The little group of Bolshevik and Left Social Revolutionary rulers *gave the peasant nag his head*. (*November 8th, 1917*.) It was a return to the dream of a "black redistribution", which had danced in the village brain, at intervals, ever since the disappointment of the Emancipation decree. Live and dead stock was to be confiscated and distributed along with the land. Studs, cattle-breeding, and poultry farms were to become the property of the State. In this last sentence is the one vestige which the first decree contains of the policy of large-scale agriculture. After the dispersal of the

Constituent Assembly a further decree was promulgated. It explicitly abolished private property in land, mineral wealth, waters and forests. (*February 19th, 1918.*) It left the local Soviets to make the redistribution, and defined the aims as including the "encouragement of collective-farming, as the more advantageous system in point of labour-saving and productivity, at the expense of individual farming, with a view to transition to Socialist agriculture". Another article laid upon the State the specific duty of encouraging the collective system of tillage and of giving preference to the communal and co-operative, as against the individual, farm. Beside these forecasts of future collectivisation, there is a cautious hint of future state-farms, contained in a provision that: "Soviets may work lands by State-paid labour: though, generally and fundamentally, personal labour is the basis of the right to use land".

The speech with which Lenin accompanied this piece of legislation is significant. It was comparatively easy to overthrow the Tsardom and the power of the landowner. But now comes "the battle to secure the conquests of Socialist Russia and the communal tilling of the soil. Under no circumstances, of course, can such a change from small individual farming to common tillage be completed all at once. . . . Such a waste of human power and labour as is involved in small peasant economy cannot go on any longer. The productivity of labour and the economy of effort would be doubled and trebled in agriculture, if, from the present disjointed individual system, we could pass to one of collective tillage." The speech is so intimately relevant to the policy, definitively adopted ten years later, that I make no apology for quoting from it further. "The struggle in the villages (says Lenin) was much more complex than in the towns. *We do not say of the kulak, as we do of the landlord or capitalist, that he must be deprived of all his property. We say that we must break down his resistance to such necessary measures, as for instance the corn monopoly, which he refuses to observe, in order to enrich himself by the sale of surplus grain. In the case of the middling peasantry our policy has always been one of alliance.*"

The speaker goes on to say that a milliard of roubles has been allotted for agricultural improvements, on the condition that communal tillage be taken up: and that communal farms and state-farms are being created. But so long as Soviet industry continued to be unable to supply the village with manufactured goods, and above all with agricultural machinery, there was no means of establishing the material basis of the alliance of town and country, and no means of illustrating, in practice, the benefits of communal tillage. Lenin told Mr. H. G. Wells in 1920 that his plan was to introduce state-farms in one district after another, the example of success in one district helping the introduction of the same system in another. But machinery was essential to the demonstration, and machinery was lacking. In 1921 there were 3,000 farms under communal tillage, as well as 10,000 cultivating fellowships on a smaller scale: but

the New Economic Policy was a reversion to individualism: the General Land Code of October, 1922, specifically conceded the right to the alternatives of individual or collective cultivation, according to the decision in each case of the *Mir*; and such state-farms as existed were left without adequate financial support. On the other hand, agricultural co-operation—which differs from collectivisation in that co-operators receive only those associates whom they themselves approve—assisted the thriftier among the peasantry to increase production. This period was one in which the leasing of estates from poorer peasants and their cultivation by hired labour increased: and both these practices received official sanction in 1924 provided that the period of the lease should not exceed twelve years. In 1927 the whole of the so-called socialised sector of agriculture, including both state-farms and lands tilled communally, amounted to no more than 3% of the whole.

From 1925 a hot discussion was in progress on the issue of collective or individual cultivation. The Commissariat of Agriculture pressed for the vigorous extension of co-operation, pending collectivisation, but held that the latter alone could yield the maximum product. Trotsky was even more decisively on the side of collectivisation.

The controversy was rather one of time and degree than of absolute desirability. The extreme Right was impressed with the danger of the failure of food supplies, if the interests of the more prosperous peasants were too lightly regarded, and believed in the possibility of absorbing the opposition in the villages by a policy of gradualism. It advocated the raising of grain prices as a means of inducement: one obviously unfavourable to the deficit producer, a category into which a very large section of the peasantry fell. On the Left, it was urged that the differentiation of classes in the villages had already been carried very far by the individualising policy of N.E.P., and that the domination of the prosperous peasant must be drastically checked. This contention received some confirmation in 1928, when a satisfactory harvest was followed by catastrophically low collections of grain on behalf of the towns and the army.

The question of obtaining assent to collectivisation was in reality the old one, constantly reappearing in revolutionary Russia, of the material basis of the economic link between town and country. When the "Scissors" was wide open, as it still was in 1926-7 and 1927-8, though not so wide open as in 1923-4, grain was withheld because there was no adequate reward for supplying it. Without a supply of commodities at reasonable prices, money was meaningless. Another phase of the same difficulty was the absence of machinery for economical large-scale cultivation. Till the State was equipped with a more efficient industry, with lower costs of production and less gap between wholesale and retail price, it was arguable that the attempt, so long postponed, to introduce large-scale cultivation continued to be premature, because it would be resisted.

On the side of the Government there was a consciousness of urgency. It was not only that the Powers of Western Europe constituted a military threat. There was also a profound realisation of an internal danger, so long as industry failed to furnish the countryside: a danger of irresistible pressure to abandon the monopoly of foreign trade, to admit the cheap goods of the West, and to accept the subordinate economic rôle of the inferior competitor. Not only Trotsky, but others also among Soviet thinkers, were conscious that in the long run the victory of Communism or Capitalism depends upon the capacity for cheaper production. There could be no development of industry without an increased supply of food: and no increase in the supply of food without a development in industry. The circle was a vicious one, from which there was no escape without heroic measures. Stalin took those measures when he abandoned the New Economic Policy, so far as to recommence the requisition of grain at fixed prices in 1927-28, launched the first Five-Year-Plan, and adopted as a part of it the active conversion of small-scale into large-scale agriculture. We have seen that this transformation of agriculture had been in the minds of the revolutionary leaders since the beginning of the century. The problem was to decide the moment for bringing it into effect. Lenin's statement, that this was a greater and more arduous achievement than the overthrow of the Tsar and the November insurrection, remained as true as when he made it.

In one respect the difficulty was less than it had been. The process of differentiation in the villages had gone far enough to create an acute conflict of interest between prosperous and poor. The poor peasant had to borrow animals and implements from the prosperous in order to cultivate his land and to pay unconscionable terms for the loan, in labour, or sometimes in a share of the crop which he raised. Non-economic holdings were numerous. The number of landless wage-earners in the village was as great as it had been before the Revolution. A government engaged in pooling land and resources might reasonably look for allies in those who benefited materially by the process. So, indeed, it proved: but less universally than might have been expected. The village is "dark": local influences are strong: people in these "bears' corners", away from the great concourse of life, are afraid of consequences: the man on the spot who has cattle and implements to lend, and money with which to pay wages, looms larger than the greater personage at a distance. The ordinary peasant admired, even if he hated, the successful neighbour and was inclined to follow his lead. There was some degree of solidarity in the village, and a power of common resistance to urban interference. The collective farm was a new thing, and humanity, most of all rural humanity, prefers the old until it becomes intolerable. "First we'll summer it, and then we'll winter it, and then we'll see," is the natural sentiment of the man who has followed the slow processes of nature and witnessed her catastrophes.

But we shall fall into error if we suppose that the peasant, invited to pool holding and equipment, was a free yeoman accustomed to deal as he pleased with his own. Under the legislation of Peter Stolypin, one-tenth of the peasant allotments in European Russia had been consolidated into separate farms (1906 to 1916). The seizures of 1917 compelled many of the owners to return to the *Mir* which they had left. Between 1921 and 1926 there was a renewal of the movement towards separate consolidated holdings and the abolition of fragmentation into strips. But at the end of it, nine-tenths of European Russia preserved its separate strips, its open-field system, with the cattle of all driven over the stubbles of all, and, by consequence, its virtually compulsory three-field rotation. I cannot too strongly emphasise the facts that *old rural Russia survived till 1929*, and that it had a plan of cultivation, not a scientific plan, but a traditional one, which had played its part with the peasantry of Europe since the days of Charlemagne, and had become, as such things do, a fetter upon improvement. The plan was the three-field rotation, with the *Mir* determining the dates of the agricultural processes: and the cattle trampling down the crop of the man who departed from the dates. The holdings were too small and too ill-shaped to permit the use of machinery. The peasant depended on his own hands and the hands of his family, fortunate if he had a little nag to assist in the heaviest of the work. Co-operative production was indeed a palliative: but it needed a nucleus of means which the poorer lacked. It was this, and not the prosperous farm of a free yeoman, which the peasant was invited to pool. As ever, the young were quite ready for the adventure, though their elders might boggle over it. Among the material advantages offered to collectivisation were the remission of arrears, temporary exemption from levies, the supply of manufactured goods, and advances on a generous scale. Not every one, not even every peasant, is capable of being a good independent farmer: and collectivisation offered a differentiation of agricultural tasks, a measure of guidance, and a certain insurance against the accidents of illness and the incapacitation of the bread-winner; it saved the peasant from his normal obligation of attempting to be a business man as well as a tiller of the soil; and—best of all—it held out a hope of ending the miserable plight of the cultivator without animals and implements of his own. On the other hand, it was not yet possible to offer the inducement of a liberal supply of machinery. In 1926-27 10,000 tractors were imported, but the total number in all Russia cannot much have exceeded 20,000. Before 1928 all the machine-works in the U.S.S.R. were equipped for the construction of horse-drawn implements only. Among other needs of the time, an urgent one was the re-equipment of all such works.

Trotsky, who had urged more decisive discrimination against the more prosperous stratum of the peasantry, and a vigorous policy of collectivisation, was condemned by the Congress of the Party which met in

December, 1927. The same Congress imposed restrictions upon the rights of hiring labour and leasing land, and thereby struck a blow at the rural group which it had been Trotsky's aim to discourage. It also advocated collectivisation "gradually but steadily, not by means of pressure, but by example and conviction". The adoption of this policy, along with the need of more vigorous measures for the collection of grain, soon brought the Government into collision with the more prosperous peasants—the class commonly described by the word *kulak*—and in January, 1928, a decree was passed to enforce the exclusion of *kulaks* from the village Soviet: a virtual revival of the Committees of the Poor, which had governed the village in an epoch prior to the New Economic Policy. On the adoption of N.E.P., agricultural taxation had taken the form of cash imposts, presently amalgamated into the so-called single agricultural tax. The State depended for its supplies of foodstuffs and raw materials on a system of contract with the peasantry, undertaking in return to provide with manufactured goods those who fulfilled their quota. In 1927–28 supplies were withheld by the peasants, either because the fixed price was too low, or because manufactured goods were not forthcoming. In March, 1928, a dictator of crops was appointed and compulsion was applied: with domiciliary searches, the closure of village markets and the erection of barriers to check the trade in grain. This was the abrogation of the right, conceded to peasants on the adoption of N.E.P., to dispose of their own produce. But the difficulty continued, and there was renewed friction between grain collectors and peasantry after the harvest of 1928. To meet the continued food crisis in 1929, energetic measures were taken, which included the recruiting of a volunteer corps of some 25,000 men, from the factories and the Red Army, to assist and accelerate the process of collectivisation. Mrs. Anna Louise Strong has given us a lively description of the invasion by the zealots, accompanied by a miscellaneous crowd of helpers, of a village within convenient reach of the capital. Many, probably most, were entirely ignorant of the processes of agriculture: and we can imagine what the village thought of its visitors. The old people doubtless recalled stories of Antichrist and the Apocalypse.

It will not have escaped the reader's notice that the organisation of the peasantry into collective units and the direct control of cultivation in state-farms, were calculated greatly to facilitate the collection of the State's dues, whether in kind or in cash. These changes also made it far easier to apply mechanisation, and the results of scientific research, to agriculture: and there was a natural expectation of increased production, as well as of improved collection, when the small unit had been eliminated. There was thus a direct connection between the introduction of large-scale cultivation and the removal of the difficulties of food supply for the towns; and the prosperous peasant, who objected to the pooling of his land and stock, and hoped to extract higher prices for his surplus

products, was the principal obstacle to the attainment of both these aims. The atmosphere of the time is reproduced for us in Kirshon's play *Bread*: where we see the sanctimonious *kulak* making the peasants drunk, and persuading them to attack the party which has come to collect food. A fanatical nun is represented as inciting the attackers.

No doubt there were reasons of social policy for undertaking the great transformation, with all the risks and difficulties which were involved. The Party and the Soviet Government did not desire the survival of what was regarded as the *petit bourgeois* element of an individualistic peasantry. But far more convincing and urgent were the administrative and economic arguments. Above all, it was necessary to make provision for the renewal of the capital equipment of the Soviet State. Count Witte—if it had fallen to him to undertake such an operation—would have tided over this difficulty by means of a foreign loan: but the Soviet Government shunned commitments which were likely to compromise its independence, and preferred to pay for imported machinery by increased agricultural exports. This involved arrangements for larger and more systematic deliveries from the peasantry. But, apart from any cornering of the produce to secure more favourable terms for its owners, it was calculated that the middling and smaller peasants were consuming half as much again of the grain as in 1913. This was in part a result of the breaking up of joint households and the increase in consuming units. In place of 16 million peasant households there were now 25. The increase was stimulated by fiscal arrangements which exempted the poorer households from taxation. The State generally lost something of its dues whenever a household was sub-divided: and the attempt to collect dues from many millions of separate units must, in any event, have been administratively difficult. This is what Stalin meant when he told the Party in April, 1928, that the number of farms must be reduced. The substitution of a limited number of collective farms for a much larger number of households was at once a convenient administrative device, and a means of taxing a large number of persons who were exempted under the poverty law.

There was prolonged hesitation before the final blow was struck. When it came, it was stunning in its impact. In January, 1930, the aims of complete collectivisation within three years, and the "liquidation" of the *kulaks*, were announced. The latter meant that persons numbering, with their families, some five millions, were to be dispossessed of their properties, and in many cases driven from their homes. Apart from this tremendous decision, which can only be compared for ruthlessness with the wholesale removals of population by the ancient monarchies, or the expulsion of the Moors from Spain or of the Jews from Germany, it seems to have been intended that the process of collectivisation should be one of persuasion. But it was to be persuasion assisted by certain levers. The vote which determined the total collectivisation of a village, and was

intended by the law to furnish the only valid justification for the expulsion of *kulaks*, might be a minority vote. The State had control of such tractors as were available, and the use of these was dependent upon the pooling of land and seed. The State had control of the supply of manufactured goods, and could use it to show favour or disfavour. The man who made himself prominent in resistance to the official policy ran the risk of finding himself classed as a *kulak*. This last was a consideration which weighed very heavily with the middling peasants, many of whom might easily be brought under the ban by jealous neighbours. The formal legislation followed, a month after the announcement, but the people had set to work in anticipation of the laws. The examples of 1905 and 1917, when the peasantry had sacked manor houses and seized property and (in the latter year) taken possession of the land, were followed in 1930. Hatred (perhaps jealousy, as much as hatred) of the prosperous *kulaks* created a zeal for collectivisation. Those who might have hesitated, over so profound a change in the habits of a lifetime, were encouraged to the plunge by animosity against the success of unpopular fellow-villagers. Members of the Party, both local and urban, hung upon the flanks of the movement, and sometimes tried to direct it. But, for a time, it was entirely anarchical. Mrs. Strong says the great mass of the peasantry "moved like an avalanche into the collective farms". The avalanche crushed, in passing, the mainstay of the village opposition, whom Stalin's pronouncement seemed to have delivered into the hands of their enemies.

As for the *kulaks*, fortune had dealt ironically with them. It had been an insult to call a man poor. It was now a welcome compliment. Five years ago, Bukharin, then high in authority, had been calling upon the peasants to enrich themselves. As a student friend told Mr. Hindus, every peasant in his heart wanted to be a *kulak*; it was deep rooted in their very bones. When man is to be changed, in habit if not in character, there are some strange wrenches and dislocations necessary to the operation, so that what was a virtue may come to seem a vice to him. I myself have known respected practitioners of the ancient and honourable art of cattle-thieving, who endured the shock of discovering that, however ancient, it was no longer honourable: and, somewhat dazed by the novelty, adjusted themselves, in habit at least, to the change. What the order of liquidation meant, in the execution, may be gathered from Sholohov's novel *Virgin Soil Upturned*: where we see some of the villagers touched to the heart by the cries of the *kulak's* children, until they are reminded of the treatment which the *kulaks* have meted out to their debtors. Red Army men wept, along with the family, when a friend of Mr. Hindus was *dekulakized* in White Russia. Mr. Monkhouse saw some of the ousted families. He heard tales of broken homes and vain search for employment. The older people were too terrified to talk. The children came to him to beg.

It is a horrifying picture. The shock which the Western student of the facts experiences is intensified by the suddenness of the blow. Yesterday encouraged to increase and multiply the subsistence of the family: today ousted from home and property, and exiled to a precarious livelihood. Similar, but less sudden, changes have resulted from less violent agrarian revolutions elsewhere. The story of the enclosures of common land in Great Britain, which substituted, over a long period of years, large individual for common property, would shock us too, if it had been concentrated into half a dozen seasons: and the outlook upon the sanctity of landed property would be different if we were more vividly conscious of its actual history.

When the formal law began to be enforced, the local authorities appointed "testing commissions", whose duty it was to see that the persons put forward as *kulaks* were really such, and that the demand for their expulsion was a mass demand, and not dictated by personal spite. But it was a wild winter, and it evidently shocked Mrs. Strong, for all her strong sympathy with the Soviet Government. "There really is too much anarchy," said the Communist with whom she discussed the subject: and, characteristically, he laid the blame on the right wing of the Party, which objected to drastic collectivisation. "*We expect Government's decree soon.*" Then there will be more order." In the meanwhile, he said, the Right had been delaying the precise formulation of the orders. Subordinates, full of zeal, or eager to distinguish themselves, compelled unwilling acceptance of the complete pooling of all property, including domestic fowls, threw the immemorial yards, or gardens, of the peasants into the collectives, extended collectivisation to backward areas in the associated republics such as Buriat-Mongolia, and removed church-bells and closed churches: these last being apparently regarded as sanctuaries of the possessing class. It is not surprising that there was retaliation in some places. But everywhere a sinister consequence of collectivisation presented itself. *The people killed their animals*; in particular, it seems, their young stock. This was so general, and it so repeated itself in successive waves of destruction as the process of collectivisation spread, that the simple explanation of deliberate sabotage does not suffice. I see in it rather the naïve assumption of each peasant, that animals for collective agriculture would be supplied, and that he might as well make what he could out of his own. Some killed animals because they feared that they would be classified as *kulaks* if they had too many. Sholohov gives us a convincing picture of the Cossacks making themselves miserably ill on the short-lived abundance of meat. Not only were milk and meat products reduced for years, but the manure supply, vital to the agriculture of the north central region, was dangerously diminished. The losses came in successive waves, as the infection spread to different parts of the country. Compulsory collectivisation was extended to the *denomadisation* of the wandering pastoral peoples in Kazakstan. Mr. Littlepage, as late

as 1934, saw the smoke of the burning *auls* of the Kirgiz, and the empty pastures. Cattle and pigs had recovered their numbers by 1938, but sheep and goats still continued short. The horse population, in part reinforced by mechanisation, was calculated in 1941 to have suffered a net loss of 8 million H.P. Another grave consequence was the removal from the soil of many of the most enterprising and industrious cultivators: for the so-called *kulaks* were by no means mere traders and money-lenders. The too rapid progress of collectivisation threw the Plan out of gear, compelled the curtailment of the importation of some things, and forced an increase in others and the opening of new sources of tractor supply.

The opposition of the Right had gone underground, and we learn from the revelations of the trial of March, 1938, that some of its members were talking of the "madness" of the Government, and building hopes of peasant revolt. But lest we should suppose that all rural Russia was in disorder, we have pictures, drawn in colours neither sombre nor garish, of some of the collective farms of this period, from the hands of Mr. Hindus and Herr Scheffer, a distinguished German journalist. Mr. Hindus describes the farm in his own village, which had evidently secured the best land in the redistribution between collectivists and individualists. The land included the finest pasture and the best water, and had been divided into eight fields for scientific rotations. Jealousy and carelessness were common in the management, and the best brains had gone to larger farms. But there was a real improvement in cultivation: and the Machine Tractor Station (M.T.S.) and the state-farm, both close at hand, helped with agricultural machinery. The collectivised peasants worked on the basis of wages, and were gradually introducing piecework. Medical service was free: and there was maternity benefit for a month before and a month after birth. Here, as everywhere, there was a bitter cry for manufactured goods.

Herr Scheffer, writing rather earlier, in September, 1929, describes a collective, south of Saratov, on the Volga. It had a membership of over 1,000 souls, and an area of about 9,000 acres, of which half was under cultivation. It was hoped to deliver 1,600 tons of grain to the State. There was an elevator, which in the preceding year had handled about a tenth of the whole crop. Land and live and dead stock had been made common property, but the families lived and fed, each in his own separate house. The surplus produce was divided according to the number of days of work done by each member of the collective: and approximate equality was attained by assigning the various tasks in turn to each. In anticipation of the annual accounting, cash-wages of 70 to 75 kopeks a day were paid in advance. A farming plan was laid out by an agronomist, who served more than one collective. The village was divided into brigades, for the distribution of the work. The managing board contained, not only peasants, but also "rural intellectuals", for

instance, teachers and factory workers, eager for distinction, who were sent to the farm by the Party in Moscow. Two former *kulaks* were members of the collective, having surrendered their possessions and paid entrance fees. Threshing was being done by Russian machines, with power furnished by the motors on American tractors. All this is a fairly close forecast of the forms which the collective farm took at a later date.

In another village he found a collective including eight of the poorest farmers, but only 35% of the holdings were covered by it. He saw the election of the administrative body. A member of the League of Communist Youth gave the names of the persons proposed by the Party, and there was no opposing vote. An auditing Commission was also appointed, but its members were all Communists. It appears that many of the new farms were quite small, and some were altogether bogus, serving to camouflage private interests.

Mr. Littlepage, the mining engineer, who had his eyes open for the practical aims of industrialisation, saw that the expulsion of the well-to-do peasants would help to supply the labour market; and this, though only an incidental advantage, must have been one of the consequences which the authorities had in view. There was a reasonable expectation that the dispossessed would be absorbed by the development of industry under the first Five-Year-Plan; and there has been in fact a net reduction of the agricultural population for which this absorption would account.

(*March 30th, 1930.*) That serious excesses were committed in the first burst of collectivising zeal is made plain by Stalin's speech, known, like a Papal Bull, by its title: "Dizzy from success". It called a halt, and much of what had been done was now undone. Many full communes, which had pooled income and living as well as land and implements, took the opportunity of reverting to the intermediate status in which both living and income remain separate. Many peasants left the collectives in consequence of the liberty conceded to them. The speech was followed by the grant of half a milliard for credits to collectives, and by concessions to the propertied interest. In the division of the surplus product of the farms 5% was to be distributed to the members in proportion to the value of the property pooled by each. A definition was given of the status of *kulak*, to prevent wholesale extension of the application of the orders, and a limit of 3% was set to the proportion of the peasantry to be so described. The word was afterwards defined by a writer in the *Economic Review* as "a peasant who systematically employs hired labour, who possesses power-driven machinery such as a flour-mill or a wool-combing machine, who hires out such machinery or contracts to work on other farms, who rents out living quarters, who leases land for commercial purposes, or who receives unearned income of any kind". But it had been made clear that the Canton Executive Committee was at liberty to change the interpretation according to conditions, and, in

practice, we may take it that the description was made to cover all unpopular persons who had grown rich by village standards.

The sown area in 1930 increased by 7% over 1929, and the cereal harvest was 83 instead of 71 million tons: a remarkable result considering the disorder of the spring. Michael Farbman travelled during the threshing season, and received the impression that the need for large cultivation and joint effort had taken root. He said that young people were attracted by the machines, and by the freedom from parental control, which membership of the collective secured to them, and he noted that the Machine Tractor Station was a centre of activities for the young.

The Machine Tractor Station, always known by its initials M.T.S., was an adaptation to socialist ends of the practice, which had arisen among the middle and more prosperous peasants during the period of N.E.P., of lending animals and implements in return for the labour of the borrower or for a share in the crop raised by him. The Station provided machines, many of them horse-drawn at this stage, on condition of joint cultivation, and charged a share of the crop, or a money payment, for the loan. Agronomists and veterinary officers were attached to the Station, and courses of instruction, which the young people of the neighbourhood attended, were given there. In 1929 there was only one such station. The gradual extension of these over increasingly wide areas, and their equipment with power-driven machinery of an increasingly effective type, have been the chief means of introducing the collective system to the people. By 1935 nearly half of the traction power required by agriculture was supplied by them, the tractors which were being newly put into use had been all, since 1932, of Russian make, and caterpillar traction was beginning to supplant wheeled traction on a large scale. The M.T.S., with its elevators and its stock of machines (by no means always protected by sheds or other coverings from the weather), and its skilled staff of experts, had become a centre of rural life and agricultural activity. Approximately there was one such to 60,000 acres of cultivation: and the total number was between 4,000 and 5,000 scattered over the length and breadth of the agricultural U.S.S.R.

Y. A. Yakovlev, the People's Commissar of Agriculture, of whose studies in rural economy I have already had a good deal to say, told the Sixteenth Congress of the Party (*June-July, 1930*) that peasants of the surplus-food-producing zone were already collectivised, to the extent of nearly half in the most important area, and to the extent of nearly a quarter in the rest of it. The size of the farms averaged over 3,000 acres in the former and under 1,000 acres in the latter. Two hundred M.T.S. were at that time established. The collectives owed two-fifths of their capital to the State, about a seventh of it was derived from the liquidated *bulaks*, and the rest had been the separate property of the members. He admitted the loss in the past year, owing to the slaughter of the animals, of a fifth of the beef-cattle, an eighth of the dairy cows, a third of the

sheep, and two-fifths of the hogs, but did not dwell upon the calamitous consequences, or specify the loss of horses. He emphasised the remaining inequality in the collective in consequence of the varying size of the yards, or garden holdings, known as *usd̄dba*, which are not pooled along with the peasant's allotments, but continue to be the separate possessions of particular families. On this last point, the Central Committee made the significant comment that the collectivised peasant should not be called upon to surrender all individualist habits and interests, or to give up his separate farming. The insistence on the pooling of the *usd̄dba* land was an error of over-zealous subordinates, never intended by the Government: and the determination of the Central Committee to retain a mixed system, partly individualistic, is an evidence of moderation. The private trade in food products which was of the essence of N.E.P. was suppressed in 1929: but the markets were reopened in 1930 and have formed an important part of the Soviet system ever since.

There are interesting remarks upon the relations of the collectivised and the non-collectivised peasants. It seems that the latter had been penalised for holding out against collectivisation, and deprived of land which they had subjected to winter ploughing, in anticipation of spring sowing, and that manufactured goods had been refused to them. The Central Committee condemns these proceedings, and says that all should be regarded as potential members of collectives, even though they have not yet joined. Those who deserted the collective, after the pronouncement of March 30th, ought to be readmitted, if they so desire, without penal measures.

Yakovlev's report shows the growth of the conception of the "compulsory sale in the nature of a tax", which was soon to become a virtual revenue-in-kind, and to supersede in great measure rural taxation in cash. He says that the collective farms in surplus-producing regions should deliver to the Government, or to Co-operative organisations, from one-third to one-quarter of their grain in an average harvest, and more in a good harvest. This provision was embodied in contracts between the collectives and the District Union of Collective Farms, by which the latter bound itself to supply manufactured goods, to arrange credits, and to organise agronomic aid: engagements some of which were later assumed by the M.T.S. The theory at this time was that the collectives should yield up their surplus, after providing a necessary minimum contribution to common funds, assigning 5% to the remuneration of property contributed by the members, and setting aside enough for seed and the food of men and animals. The sale of produce to any except the Government and co-operative organisations was prohibited until 1932, when there was again a reversion, in part, to the fundamental principle of the New Economic Policy, allowing the peasantry to sell surplus direct to consumers. The labour of the members was remunerated by a dividend, according to the number of days' work done by each. It is added

that there is no objection to the remuneration of members with large families, according to the number of "mouths", if so desired. The provisions for what was virtually an interest on the value of property contributed, and for allowances for large families, afterwards disappeared from the system: and surplus was divided, after the share of the Government had been more precisely fixed in 1932, strictly according to the number of days' work, with some differentiation according to the social value of the work.

The wide prevalence of agricultural co-operation, in the strict sense of the words, had greatly facilitated the introduction of collectivisation. It had done its work, and its abolition is distinctly foreshadowed in Yakovlev's report cited above. The difference between the two is that co-operators choose their own associates, and presumably reject those whose qualities (or whose property contributions) they do not approve. But every local peasant man or woman has a legal right to join the collective: unless he belongs to one of the groups who were (prior to 1936) excluded from civil rights (*lishentsi*). The one provides for a select number. The other aims at providing for all, both good workers and bad, but with a difference of remuneration according to work.

In 1931 the total cultivated area of the U.S.S.R. was 340 million acres, as contrasted with 288 in 1913. But drought ruined the grain in the lower and middle Volga provinces, in the southern Urals, in Western Siberia and Kazakstan. The crop in Ukrain was a good deal worse than was reported at the time. The cereal harvest was 69, instead of the 83 million tons of 1930: and meat and milk were scarce because of the slaughtering of animals. The proceedings of Japan in Manchuria had created the fear of imminent war. The world was in the grip of the great depression, and suffering from a sort of universal "Scissors" crisis, in which the value of food and raw materials, the principal exports of the U.S.S.R. at that time, fell in relation to that of machinery and manufactured commodities. It was necessary to maintain, and even to increase, the volume of exports, so as to prevent the growth of an unfavourable trade balance and the accumulation of short-term debt. Requisitions were vigorously pressed in spite of the bad harvest: and, when the crop was in, collective farms were forbidden to retain stocks for seed and for consumption. The intention was to send supplies at a later date: and there were some imports of Canadian grain for this purpose.

In the winter of 1931-32, food was short, especially in Ukrain, where it appears that the requisition quotas had been wrongly distributed. It was commonly believed that part of the grain required for sowing in the spring of 1932 was consumed for food. The winter opened with frost instead of snow, which deprived the winter-sown grain of its usual protection. In February, 1932, it was necessary to supplement supplies in the wheat-growing areas with an additional million tons of grain. The legislation of the period is indicative of growing tension due to economic

strain and of attempts to conciliate a discontented peasantry. In particular we note certain decrees for restraining official excesses, which were causes of friction. Insistence upon the communisation of all property in the collectives is prohibited: orders are given for the encouragement of the possession of cows and poultry in the yards, or gardens (*usádba*), of the collectivised peasants: persons guilty of compulsion are to be expelled from the Party. In May an important change is made in the regulations for the delivery of produce to the State, and fixed quantities per unit sown are substituted for the general obligation to surrender the surplus. In June, both collectivist and individualist peasants are guaranteed by decree against the illegal acts of officials, arrests, raids, confiscation of property, and interference with the right to elect the managing bodies of farms.

The cereal crop of 1932 was no better than that of 1931. The summer's growth was slow, and thin crops mean heavy weeds—a fact which explains the frequent comment of observers in 1932 on the dirty condition of the land over a large part of Russia. The stalks proved too short in many areas for the reaping machines to do their work properly, and, half-way through the gathering of the crop in the important cereal areas of the south, the weather broke. In August came the draconic decrees against the stealing of the collective grain, eloquent evidence of the severity of the pressure upon the people: and in September, the declaration, evidently intended to check the growth of discontent, that the process of collectivisation would go no further. But an attempt by local Communists and regional administrations of the Black-Soil belt to represent the case of the peasants at Voronezh was rebuffed.

The permission which was given in May, 1932, for the sale of surplus products, both grain and meat, by the peasants on the open market caused a reduction in the State's share of the grain. It was therefore decreed that sales should not be allowed until the obligations to the Government had been discharged in full. The practical result of this restriction was to limit free trade in grain to a period of about six months in each year from the middle of December or the beginning of January. The concession of the right to sell surplus, which was soon extended to vegetables, fruit, butter, milk, cheese and eggs, remained one of great importance, and it will be noticed that, in combination with the assertion of individual rights in the yards (*usádba*), it converted the system of collectivisation into a mixed one, partly socialistic and partly individualistic; which it remains to this day. In order to give reality to the right of sale, markets were established in towns, at railway stations and at river ports, and the turnover at these was exempted from taxation.

The winter and spring of 1932-33 was a time of food shortage and of struggle against opposition and discontent. In October Zinoviev and Kamenev, with eighteen others, were charged with organising a counter-revolutionary plot, and with using illicit presses to distribute their

propaganda. Their actual offence appears to have been a demand for changes of policy to overcome the difficulties of food-supply by obtaining assistance from abroad. They were expelled from the Party and, this time, finally. There was a general purge of the Party in 1933. The period has been described as one of severe famine, affecting a population of 50 millions, and causing 3 or 4 million deaths, and this description has passed into legend. Any suggestion of a calamity comparable with the famine of 1921-22 is, in the opinion of the present writer, who travelled through Ukrain and North Caucasus in June and July, 1933, unfounded. The truth was probably stated by Kalinin when he said in June, 1933: "There are collective farms in Ukrain and North Caucasus, where the supply of bread does not suffice, or suffices with difficulty". Officials were placed on their trial for the failure of the plans of grain collection, there were numerous conflicts between grain collectors and peasants, many stores of grain were destroyed by the latter, especially in the large area, having a population of 9 millions, known as the North Caucasus and later as Ordzhonikidze, in parts of the Volga basin, and in some districts of Ukrain. Bands of vagrant peasants were plundering stores and trains. Resistance, generally passive, was active in the North Caucasus, which had been a centre of military opposition during the Civil War. This territory was placed in January, 1933, under a special commission empowered to exact compulsory labour, and to evict, deport and punish, even with death, the resisters. Special "policy sections" were posted to state-farms and M.T.S. The Russian name for these (*Politotdyel*) has given rise to the misconception that they were bodies of police. Rather, they were selected Communists, from headquarters, and from the Red Army, superseding or supplementing in their guiding functions the less satisfactory local Communists. Their presence created friction, and they were withdrawn from the M.T.S., and to some extent from the state-farms, in 1934 and 1935.

The removal of resisters, especially from the Kuban valley, a once prosperous tract, largely inhabited by Cossacks recalcitrant to Soviet methods, included Communists and higher local officials and members of village Soviets, who had made common cause with collectivist peasants. The mortality in particular villages, subjected to these penal measures, was very high, and is responsible for the high estimate which some have made of the general mortality over a larger area. Ukrain villages which failed to deliver their quotas to the collectors were punished by the confiscation of all grain, and the stoppage of relief supplies: a measure of ruthless reprisal which was doubtless the cause of some of the local mortality. Postyshev, an able Communist official, was sent to Ukrain to reorganise in that Republic the local Party, which was held to have failed in its tasks, and there was a virtual suspension of the local Republican authority. The serious nature of the local tension is evidenced by the suicide in July, 1933, of the Ukrainian Bolshevik, Skrypnik, who

had rendered great services to the Revolution, and was a member of the Central Committee of the Party and of the Politburo. The harsh lesson inflicted at this time—completely in harmony with Bolshevik methods, which are sharp, but mercifully short—seems to have put an end to all overt opposition both in Ukrain and the North Caucasus. But a notable sign of the existence of dangerous discontent was given towards the end of 1932, when Town and Village Soviets were ordered to investigate the conditions of the families of men employed in the Red Army.

All through this period the Soviet Government was wrestling mightily with every species of administrative difficulty. Trouble in the administration of the farms was caused by the short supply of qualified book-keepers, and consequent confusion over the distribution of the surplus. There were too few trained agronomists and technicians: and too few of the experimental stations whose function it was to provide the material for the scientific guidance of agriculture. In mere bulk—I say nothing of quality, which is always difficult to gauge—agricultural education of University standard had been multiplied twenty-five times since the Great War, and the number of experimental stations had been raised from 200 to nearly 1,600. Difficulties in the food supply of the towns had already led to a very great increase in prices in February, 1932. There was a general increase in industrial wages in October to meet the increased cost of living. A partial decentralisation of the arrangements for the supply of food to the towns followed. In December of that year measures were taken for the removal of unneeded persons from the cities, and in January, 1933, a new rationing system was brought into force, reducing the number of card-holders, and weeding out some of their dependants. Steps to supplement the food supply by pig-keeping, rabbit-keeping, and the utilisation of fish products on the part of Trade Unions and Factory Committees, had already been taken. There was a reappearance of waif-children at Moscow. Transport was presenting grave difficulties, and grain lay rotting at railway-stations and river-ports. "Policy sections" of selected Communists were appointed to deal with disorganisation on the railways in July, 1933.

Every period of stress in the U.S.S.R. claims its sacrifices or scape-goats. In March, 1933, thirty-five persons were executed for so-called sabotage in connection with the agrarian difficulties. All were officials of the Agricultural Commissariat and of the farms: and one of them, Konar, was recently the Assistant Commissar for the U.S.S.R., but was now said to have been for thirteen years the secret agent of a foreign Power. Zalogin, the Director of the Odessa Grain Trust, and five others, were tried for reserving too much grain for the use of the twelve state-farms under the Trust: and sentenced to ten years forced labour and five years deprivation of civil rights. I cannot pretend to be a judge of the facts of these painfully numerous cases. But I think that failure is often treated as a deliberate offence, and leading organisers sacrificed to

general indignation, guided by that very dangerous thing, the revolutionary conscience.

At the beginning of 1933 14½ millions of peasant households had been included in collective farms, and the proportion collectivised ranged from 43% in White Russia to 80% on the Lower Volga and in the Crimea. Three-fourths of the 8 million horseless households which existed in 1928 had been absorbed. The extensive provision of machine-traction to peasants who formerly hired horses, or depended upon the muscle-power of themselves and their families, was a conspicuous gain of collectivisation: for, by this time, more than 80,000 tractors were available from nearly 2,500 M.T.S. Yakovlev's report to the Central Committee of the Party (1933) steers clear of the painful subject of horses, but emphasises the value of the sub-farms in the collectives, which now had 5½ million large horned cattle and over 8 million pigs, sheep and goats. He severely criticises the defective labour discipline, and the blunders made in the record of the work upon which the remuneration of the members depends. In some cases the interruption of the old crop-rotation followed by the *Mir*, and the substitution of a general scientific rotation, had thrown out of gear the cultivation of individuals. He emphasises the leading function of the M.T.S., which must submit to the guidance of its "Policy section", and insist upon correct rotations and proper methods of cultivation in the farms of its charge. In a speech which Stalin made to a congress of collective farm workers two months later, stress was laid on the aim of making the peasantry well-to-do, without exploitation, and upon the opportunity given to the women to work on terms of equality with the men.

The harvest of 1933 yielded the best crop since the Revolution, and, in spite of difficulties in getting it in, it put an end to scarcity throughout the U.S.S.R. Favourable climatic conditions were the main cause, but the adoption of a fixed demand, in lieu of the vague stipulation for the surplus, contributed to the result, by encouraging sowings. Tension was relieved: and, with more than two-thirds of the peasant households collectivised, collectivisation was virtually achieved. A less good crop in 1934 was more successfully carried home, thanks to mechanisation. This, and another good harvest in 1935, confirmed the victory. It was so complete that it became possible to "amnesty" a large number of the liquidated *kulaks*, who had done good work on the navigation canal between Leningrad and the White Sea.

By July 1st, 1935, nearly 83% of the total number of peasant holders in the U.S.S.R. had joined the collectives, and, by the same date in 1936, just under 90%, and in Ukrain the proportion was 91%.

The other section of the Socialist policy for agriculture: cultivation by paid labour in state-farms: can be dismissed with fewer words. The estates which were taken over for this purpose at the beginning of the revolutionary period were placed in 1922 under an Agricultural Trust,

to the number of a thousand or so. They were not provided with adequate capital and equipment, and some of them became heavily indebted to the Banks. During the epoch of N.E.P. their reputation had sunk to a very low ebb. But some, especially in Ukrain and the German Volga Republic, had done well. As part of the first Five-Year-Plan it was decided to set up a Grain Trust to develop state-farms, and provision was made for 150 new ones, with some 12 million acres of land and a liberal financial grant, in Kazakstan, the middle and Lower Volga, Siberia, the Urals, the North Caucasus, Ukrain and the Bashkir Republic. The aim of these measures was to raise an amount of grain equal to that provided by the prosperous peasants in 1927, which was a little over 1½ million tons. Some of the largest state-farms were set up in arid or semi-arid tracts, having a scanty population, and on lands which the agricultural officials of the pre-machine epoch thought incapable of profitable cultivation. The measure was virtually one of colonisation on lands hitherto left to pasture. In order to develop these new lands (from which often the horse or the sheep had been ousted) reliance was placed upon the speed with which the processes of agriculture could be conducted by means of machines, thus escaping the dry hot wind which is the bane of the cultivator in eastern and south-eastern Russia. Moisture was the desideratum, and the development of irrigation on a large scale would be slow and expensive, and perhaps not possible on the uneven lands of the steppe. It was hoped to secure the full benefit of the winter snow by winter ploughing, after removal of the summer crop: and it was supposed that successive spring sowings of wheat, with no intervening fallows, except those of the winter months, would produce satisfactory returns. The areas of some of these farms were deliberately made enormous, so as to economise overhead charges. The *Gigant (Giant)* at one time contained 600,000 acres: and several of them varied from 80,000 to 160,000: and the capital investment in buildings, machines, and road-making, was about 26 roubles per acre. At first the virgin soil produced returns substantially exceeding the average for the U.S.S.R. Nine and a half million acres, sown in 1929, yielded a net marketable surplus somewhat larger than the 1½ million tons which had been expected. To fill the gap in the ranks of trained agricultural workers and mechanical engineers and tractorists, training colleges and farming schools were built or extended on every farm.

The enterprise was carried far beyond the original intention. In the season of 1934, the state-farms were employing over 3 million persons, and were cultivating over 40 million acres, of which over three-quarters were under grain. They had nearly 1 million horses, 4½ million large horned cattle, 8½ million sheep and goats: their tractor park had a horse power of nearly 1¾ millions: and they supplied one-eighth of all the grain delivered to the State, and nearly an eighth of all the sugar-beet. But these figures convey only a part of the whole picture. There were about

10,000 farms, dealing with 228 million acres, of which the vast bulk was uncultivated land given over to ranching operations. They were administered by more than a dozen different departments of state, all but one of which (the Commissariat of state-farms) were mainly occupied with very different matters: and it was inevitable that they should be worked on very various principles and with very various degrees of success. The one department which gave undivided attention to its state-farms was the special Commissariat of state-farms, dealing with 173 million acres, of which one-ninth part was cultivated, laid out in 2,179 farms, for grain, milk and meat, pigs and sheep.

The Commissariat of Agriculture for the U.S.S.R. had 531 farms extending over 17 million acres: nearly two-thirds of which was utilised for horse-breeding. There were also seed-farms, farms for cotton, flax, hemp, nitrogenous plants, rice, sub-tropical plants and silk, and farms for blood-stock (cattle, sheep and pigs). The blood-stock farms co-operated closely with the collective farms in the matter of animal-breeding, and the seed-farms supplied them with selected seed.

The Commissariats of Agriculture in the Constituent Republics had about 600 farms for vegetables, poultry, fruits, and vineyards. The Commissariat of Food industries had about as many farms for sugar-beet, vegetables, potatoes, tobacco, poultry, pigs, and essential oils, with a considerable area under glass. The attention paid to the essential oils, many of them employed in the manufacture of perfumes, is an unexpected feature. In the middle of the scarcity of 1932-33, the city shops were well supplied with perfumes, and it was stated to the present writer that perfumes were regarded as a necessity of hygiene. In 1934 6,000 acres were devoted to the essential oils. It was a special concession to the female population.

The Commissariat of External Trade had twenty-eight farms, occupying 17 million acres, for silver foxes, Persian lambs, rabbits and other fur-yielding animals. That of Heavy Industry grew rubber substitutes over 130,000 acres, scattered over wide areas, but for the most part in Kazakstan and the Azov-Black Sea area. Thirteen million acres, under six different Commissariats, were devoted to victualling various institutions, both co-operative and non-co-operative, including factory dining-rooms, and shops for the supply of particular departments. The farms which held this area had hot-houses and land under glass: they grew more grain than anything else, but also vegetables, potatoes, roots and grasses: and they kept large horned cattle, pigs, sheep, poultry and rabbits. They were by far the most numerous of all classes of state-farms, and their average area was small, not exceeding 2,000 acres. The unevenness of the arrangements for supply, favouring some and disfavouring others, must have been greatly accentuated by the existence of these auxiliary sources of food. A lucky factory or office would feed well, when others were going short.

Defects in the organisation and management of the farms began to make themselves apparent as early as 1931. The harvest of 1931 on the grain-farms was a disappointment, and it was realised that the system of "monoculture", with strict specialisation on a single crop, must be modified by the adoption of regular rotations. The grain-farms were evidently too large for efficient management. They were divided up, and a decree of 1932 limited their size to a maximum of 108,000 acres, with sub-divisions under assistant managers. Administrative opinion suggested 32,000 to 40,000 acres as the optimum size. The Six Points speech of Stalin, with its emphasis on cost-accounting (see Chapter XIV of these studies), drew attention to the lack of arrangements for ascertaining how much of the resources of the State was absorbed in maintaining them, and what was the cost of their contribution to its grain and raw materials.

(1931.) A Commission appointed to investigate the management of the grain-farms found that they had allowed the rations for their workers to exceed the prescribed limits: and had improperly absorbed the lands of adjoining collective farms, particularly in Siberia. The excessive size of the great animal-breeding farms next attracted animadversion. (1932.) The herding together of large numbers of stock increased the danger of epidemics. "*Cattle breeder*" occupied over 63,000 square miles: and "*Sheep breeder*" over 46,000: more than the area of many a considerable province. These were broken up into more easily manageable units. Among the blunders of the management, animals had been requisitioned before stockmen and stables were available for them. The names of delinquent officials were published, and thirty of them were prosecuted.

"Policy sections", consisting largely of trained Party men from the Communist University at Moscow, were posted to the farms in 1933, and occasionally eclipsed the authority of local directors, or aroused the jealousy of local Communists. The directors were always Party men, relying upon their agronomists for expert knowledge, and transferred at short intervals from one post to another, sometimes in an office, sometimes in a factory, sometimes on a farm. All that they could contribute was general driving-power. For technical management, particularly for the technical management of the larger farms, there was a dearth of trained personnel: and training had to be given rapidly.

It has been suggested that there is no reason why these farms should be expected to "pay": and that the habits, which still continue, of estimating results by current revenue and expenditure, with an allowance of 10% for depreciation of animals and machines and of 4% for buildings, with no addition on account of the value of the land acquired, is all that is necessary in a Socialist State, which meets all charges out of current income. I note in passing that 10% is an extremely low rate of depreciation to allow for animals, if not also for machines. On the general question, it is to be observed that a Socialist State, like every other, must

know to what extent it is subsidising particular branches of its administration: and that no one more heartily endorses this principle than Stalin himself. In 1933 he declared that the state-farms—with the exception of a few dozens of them—did not “pay”. He might have added that no one knows what their products cost the State. In 1929 the cost of their wheat per ton was calculated at 50 roubles: but no similar calculations seem to have been made after this date.

In 1934 the President of the State Planning Committee told the Seventeenth Party Congress that many state-farms, having better material and technical conditions than the collective farms, obtain considerably worse results than the latter: and he called for better organisation and better management. This criticism set in motion a policy which has resulted in changes on a very large scale. At the end of 1935 the dissolution of a large number of the farms was announced. Those which remained were required to justify their operations on commercial principles, and were placed under the three Commissariats of State-Farms, of Food-Industry and of Agriculture. The land taken from them was transferred to collective farms. The process of transferring land in this way is evidently a continuous one, for the Soviet Press of February, 1937, announced the surrender of an additional area of half a million acres. Information obtained at Moscow in June, 1937, shows that the number of state-farms had then been reduced to little more than 1,000, and that 60 million acres had been taken from them out of the 228 millions which they had in 1935.

In the absence of statistical details, which the Soviet Government has ceased to publish since 1935, I infer a very great reduction in the number and area of the grain-farms, whose land seems to have been transferred on a very large scale to collectives. It is probable that the animal-breeding farms remain substantially intact. Their value as a source of good stock was always very great, and their milking records were substantially better than those of the collective farms. Seed-farms and experimental farms doubtless continue as before. If these suppositions are correct, the changes indicate the partial abandonment of the design of large grain-factories, run by the State with paid labour, in favour of smaller units run by bodies of collectivised peasants who divide the surplus produce among themselves. In other words, the new attitude to state-farms furnishes additional evidence of the triumph of collectivisation. Of the form which the latter has taken I shall speak in my next chapter.

CHAPTER XVI

THE COLLECTIVE FARM

"To do anything jointly, all in lugger-mugger, as they say, in such a way that you cannot bring the work done by each to a separate reckoning, is repulsive to the peasants. . . . They take very kindly to partnership work, when it is so divided that each receives the remuneration for his own share."—ENGLHARDT, *From the Village*, 1872-87.

"To withdraw the use of steam-power suddenly will not have the effect of reducing us to the state in which we were before its introduction. There will be a general break-up and time of anarchy such as has never been known. It will be as though our population were suddenly doubled, with no additional means of feeding the increased number."—BUTLER, *Erewhon*.

PAVLOVSKY, THE historian of Russian agriculture, said that peasant agriculture is not merely a means of livelihood: it is a way of life. For centuries it was both the means of livelihood and the way of life, for the overwhelming mass of mankind. Industrial life is a mere *parvenu* beside it, with many of the qualities, good and bad, of the *nouveau riche*. Until a comparatively recent date peasant agriculture made up nine-tenths of Russian life. Even now, when industry has made great strides, over two-thirds of the population of the U.S.S.R. live in villages (1941), and a good deal more than half of the whole live by tilling the soil. Since the beginning of the present century, the peasantry has more than once said *No* to the course of history. Its negative is greater than its positive strength. It might—tremendous thought—say *No* to Russian Socialism. Pavlovsky's sentence, which I have quoted above, adds that peasant agriculture does not lend itself to dramatic transformation.

Those who undertook to change the way of life of this half-awakened Titan were indeed armed in marble and triple bronze. He stirred, and muttered threateningly, in the crisis of the first Five-Year-Plan. The resistance which he is now opposing to the Germans gives cause for believing that the new institutions have won his support. But none of us can be certain even now that he may not strike out with those irresistible arms, and sweep them into a heap of fragments. Allowance being made for his lack of the qualities of leadership and organisation—for he is often the giant, led by the dwarf—he is incomparably the greatest potential force on one-sixth of the world's land surface. I make no apology, therefore, for dealing at length with the things which concern him, and for making more of him and his way of life than of all the triumphs of industrialisation. The fate of Russia, and of all that part of the world which depends upon the fate of Russia, lies in the hollow of that callus-covered hand. If the rulers have discovered in collectivisation a way of life which can be made to harmonise with his instincts and to provide the satisfaction of his needs, their system will survive, and external enemies will fail to overthrow it, because of its internal strength. If he is

submitting uneasily to a compulsion which irks him, the skipper must veer off upon another course, or Russia will again become the Land of Fragments depicted in Mayakovsky's play. In this chapter, and the relevant appendices, I have set myself no less a task than to help my readers to a judgment on the chances of this supreme issue.

The observer of Russian historical life soon becomes conscious of a subtle distinction of values between townsman and countryman. The institution of serfdom will not account for the whole of this distinction. There were household serfs quite familiar with the life of the towns: the earliest factories were worked by serfs. But the serf who paid his commutation fee and went off to work on his own account, generally in a town, reached an atmosphere of liberty unattainable to the man who stayed behind to work his master's land. The inferiority, or assumed inferiority, of the plough and the sickle and the flail and the manure-cart seems to constitute the difference. The legal inferiority of the peasant, which survived into the twentieth century, leaves its traces even to-day, when the peasant has been placed by the Constitution of 1936 on a complete political equality with the townsman. The slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat has not yet ceased to ring in our ears: and the status of the peasant as the ally, not the co-ruler, is not wholly forgotten. In the difference between the price paid to the peasant for his delivery of grain, and the price at which the Government passes it on to the State departments, to be processed and exported, or consumed by towns and army, there is a large virtual land-revenue, or land-rent, through which the peasant pays at least one quarter—Mr. Hubbard says three-sevenths—of the whole State expenditure, in addition to his share of indirect taxation. In return he is secured in his collective rights in the land. Other boons he receives in less measure than the townsman—partly because nature and geography have scattered him over vast areas, whereas the townsman's life is by definition concentrated in a few accessible settlements. You will not find the peasant in the holiday homes and sanatoria with which the townsman is generously provided. His so-called cultural opportunities depend, even now, on what his local organisation, the collective farm, is able to do for him: and that varies immensely from one centre to another. The standard of maternity benefit for his wife is half-pay for a month before and a month after child-birth: the corresponding standard for the town-worker's wife is full pay for four weeks before and four after: in the case of the Red Army, the dependants' allowance in the village is half that in the town; these differences are typical of the surviving distinction. Hitherto his work has been very different from that of the townsman—tremendous, back-breaking toil, at certain seasons, when nature demands the completion of certain tasks at shattering speed, with long spells of demoralising idleness and sleep on the stove: by contrast with hours, regular if long, under the watchful eye of manager or foreman. The machine

nas brought a relief from the excessive strain of ploughing and harvesting and carrying and threshing: but with it has come a new discipline, the need to spend the old leisure in agricultural or instructional processes unrecognised, or even unnecessary, before; the fixed hours, and the vigilance of the gang-master. He is a factory-hand working in the open air, and his work is piece-work, with payment varying according to output. But his furnace is the sun, his water comes from the clouds, nature is still his supreme arbiter, and the final payer of his wage.

The change to collectivisation has affected the social status of the peasant and affected it in a direction different from that which we should have expected. In becoming, so to speak, a factory-hand, he might have lost some of the dignity of the permanent right-holder in his own allotment of land. But as earlier chapters in these studies have attempted to make plain, of dignity there was none. His work was "black" work, and, when he came to town, the factory-hand was his superior. Some of the memories of the time when he alone was subject to judicial and administrative flogging yet survived. The words for peasant, *muzhik*, and for peasant woman, *baba*, had nothing honourable about them. The new name for the collective farmer, *kolkhoznik*, barbarous though it may sound to the Russian scholar, has in fact more dignity. At the Peasant-house in Moscow they now serve the arrival from the country not with *peasant soup*, but with *kolkhoznik soup*. It is the same old soup, but the name gives it a social flavouring. In the collective farm, one peasant out of four holds an office or incumbency of some sort. He is a pig-breeding expert, or what not, and his wife is a dairy-woman, and *in the women's group*. That is very different from being a *peasant*, with the associations which attach to the old status and the old name. Collectivisation is a step up on the social ladder, and I err greatly if this has not been an element of importance in the acceptance of the change. It was otherwise, of course, with the prosperous peasant, who desired no such change; but the prosperous peasant, in his character of *kulak*, was condemned beyond reprieve.

But here I must interpolate an explanation. It is not prosperity that is condemned: one of the objects of the collective farms, as stated in their model statute, is to make the peasant well-to-do (*zazhitochny*). When Stalin addressed the Agricultural Combine Workers about their wages in December, 1935, he told them that the money was their own and they could spend it any way they liked. The prosperity which is derived from the exploitation of the labour of other persons, from usury, from buying cheap and selling dear, became a crime when the U.S.S.R. abandoned the principle of N.E.P. and entered upon the period of Planning. If we say that a man is at liberty to make all that he can by his own work, but nothing by the work of others, we lay ourselves open to the enquiry whether organisation, such as the captain of industry conducts in a capitalist society, is not itself work, and work of a very

valuable order. The answer is that it is of high value : but, in the socialist society, a man must not use his organising gift for his own personal profit, any more than he may use his exceptional nerve or muscle power to rob on the highway. If our supposed interlocutor objects that it was hard for the man who had been allowed, even encouraged, to use his organising gift for his own purposes one day, to be drastically punished the next day for doing the same thing, I shall have no reply to offer, except that revolutions are ruthless things, and that the effect on character of such sudden changes of fundamental principle is likely to be, for a generation or more, distintegrating. The organiser has to learn to use his organising power for the community, as the great military or naval commander does, and to be content with little more than the laurel wreath for his achievement.

In order that I may keep nothing back from the reader, I must add here that the Stakhanovite worker, whose function is more particularly described elsewhere, does perhaps derive a portion of his remuneration from the use of his organising power in the direction of the work of the gang which co-operates with him. *Prima facie*, it would appear that the case is one in which the adoption of some of the devices of capitalism has involved a breach of normal principle.

The general conception of collectivisation is the conversion of peasant agriculture into a congeries of open-air factories of food and raw materials. But the new agricultural factory differs from the industrial factory, which was, in a certain sense, its model and prototype, because the workers in the former have permanent rights in some of the instruments of production, are entitled to a dividend instead of a wage, and use part of their labour in tiny sub-factories of their own, over the proceeds of which they have complete control. The system is, in fact, an ingenious combination of the individualistic with the socialistic farm, worked out by the favourite Bolshevik method of trial and error, which—we must remember—is still available to make alterations and corrections. How large and how far-reaching these alterations and corrections may be, has been shown by the concession establishing fairs for the purchase and sale of cattle.

The collectives are of three types. The simplest is a mere cultivating or herd-tending partnership, common among the nomads of Kazakstan, and found with some frequency in the North Caucasus, but otherwise occurring only on a small scale. At the other end of the scale is the full Commune, in which the members live together round a common dining-hall and kitchen, and have no separate belongings except trifling objects of personal use. Collectives of this type do not make more than 1% of the whole number. In the vast bulk of the collectives—those of which I write in this chapter—the work is common, the rights in land and in live and dead stock are joint, the surplus product is divided among the members, the incomes are separate, and the members live, and, to a

large extent feed, in their separate families and in their own houses. An important individualistic element in them is the small separate yard, or garden allotment, representing the old *usdaba*, ordinarily adjoining the living-house, and worked by the family. I shall use the expression collective farm of this common type of organisation only. It is the Russian *Kolkhoz*: a word which is begotten of the Western word *collective*, and the Russian word for a farm or economic establishment (*khozyaistvo*).

In the collective, thus defined, the land is the property of the State, but the members have rights of permanent enjoyment, subject to their legal obligation to admit other members who have the required qualifications. A cause of great satisfaction has been the distribution to the collectivised farms of certificates of permanent rights in the land accompanied by plans which show its area and boundaries. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the confidence which the receipt of these certificates has created. In the yard, or garden land—which for convenience I shall call simply the yard—attached to each household, the right of permanent enjoyment is vested in the family. This yard was properly only from one acre to five, but larger yards are recognised in some areas, notably in the tracts where cattle-raising is the principal occupation. Abuses have been recently discovered which have led to a reduction of the area. It was found that some collective farmers (those of the Don valley were noted as particular offenders) were neglecting the collective work for the work of the yard, and the process of re-survey revealed the misappropriation from common land of no less than 100,000 acres. A minimum number of work-days on the collective lands has now been prescribed. A growing conviction that the collectivised peasants are giving too much time and industry to their yards and to cottage industry, and even to longer undertakings, including coal-mining, is noticeable.

The implements of cultivation belong generally to the State, so far as all power-driven and large-sized machinery is concerned, but the collective owns some large implements in areas to which the operations of the M.T.S. have not yet been extended, and all smaller and more primitive implements, and may be seen parading them at the rehearsal for the harvesting which takes place in June of each year. The horses belong to the collective. Of the other animals, some belong to the collectives, but most are kept in the sub-farms for animals, which form sections of the majority of collective farms—presumably to fix responsibility for the stock upon particular persons or groups. A very large proportion of the large horned cattle, and of smaller animals, are the property of individual collectivist peasants, who keep them in their yards and feed them on their own produce, and on the fodder which they receive as part of their dividends. It is a little-known fact, but one relevant to the prospects of cattle-rearing in the U.S.S.R., that 65%

of the cows and calves and more than half of the pigs and sheep in the country are owned and tended by individuals. Of the remainder a large proportion are tended in the sub-farms by persons who are individually responsible for their charges, and remunerated in proportion to their success. The large element of individualism in the system, particularly in respect to cattle, has played a leading part in the reconciliation of the people to its collectivist features.

There are a quarter of a million of these collectives, occupying in 1935 94% of the whole cultivated area. The proportion which is collectivised is comparatively low in Georgia, Armenia, and in certain other areas. Elsewhere the percentage ran from 78 to 99 and, prior to the removal of the Germans to Asia, actually reached 100 in the German Volga Republic. In the surplus-food-producing centres, it was everywhere over 90: and in Ukrain, as a whole, it reached 98.

The farm is not identical with the old village. It is often larger. Its average size varies widely in different regions. It is below 600 acres of cultivation in much of the Northern Agricultural belt, in White Russia, in the Trans-Caucasus and in Mahommedan Central Asia. It runs up above 1,800 in Ukrain, and twice or three times as high on the Middle and Lower Volga. For the whole country it averages 1,600 acres. The number of households in a farm averages ninety-five for the whole country: but here also the regional variation is great, from less than fifty in the Far East and the Northern Agricultural region, to 133 in Ukrain, and 152 in the North Caucasus. The units of horse power (apart from the hiring of machines from the M.T.S.) available on the farm average fifty-two, but they go down in particular regions below half this figure. Nevertheless more than half the horse power used in agriculture was still provided by animals before the German attack, and is certainly larger now. In 1935 less than three-quarters of all the cultivated area of the farms were served by the M.T.S. (Machine Tractor Station), with a substantially greater proportion in the more important agricultural areas, and a lower proportion in the north and centre. Nowhere is any but the heaviest of the agricultural work done by the M.T.S.: There was everywhere a varying balance of heavy work which must be done by the people themselves, though they were for the most part relieved of the ploughing. The pressure on the oil supply caused by war will greatly increase the proportion of the work to be done by human and animal labour. The collectives had over 8½ million working horses and an average of 29 acres of cultivation to every horse.

There are not less on an average than twelve working members of each collective to every 100 acres of cultivation. After making allowance, on the one hand, for the great amount of mechanisation which has been introduced into agriculture by the M.T.S., and, on the other, for the continuance of the elderly and invalid members and the employment of members on non-agricultural duties—we hear, for instance, of doctors,

as well as veterinary surgeons and book-keepers, on the membership list, and a substantial amount of administrative work is also necessary on farms of this magnitude—the figures are indicative of rural under-employment. Three to five agricultural workers for every 100 arable acres, including permanent grass, are, I understand, found sufficient in Great Britain, except on glass and market gardens. The impression of under-employment is confirmed from other sources. There has been of late years a substantial reduction in the number of peasant households, and the existence of many abandoned houses has been noticed. The Census of 1939 showed a reduction of 5% in the rural population. Evidently a movement to the towns is in progress, in order to meet the demands of increasing industrialisation. Its extension will be economically advantageous at both ends. In the meanwhile it is clear that a remedy for rural over-population is being applied. Mr. Hubbard has criticised as uneconomical the widespread mechanisation which has been carried out: but one of its aims was to establish a pool from which labour for the towns could be drawn.

How much equality, and how much freedom, do the collectives give: what are their fiscal burdens: what has been their effect upon the livestock and upon the fertilisation of the soil with manure: what upon the land, and upon agricultural production: what upon the condition of the peasant both material and moral: how does the still surviving individualist farmer—now a rarity—carry on his economy: has the new system come to stay or is it likely soon to be displaced by another?—these are some of the questions upon which the reader will desire to have light.

Some degree of egalitarianism was forced upon the Bolsheviks by proletarian demands in the early period of the Revolution. But Marx was not egalitarian, and the Bolsheviks are not: and their non-egalitarianism is not something which has been unwillingly adopted by way of compromise, or surrender. True, it is contemplated that, on the attainment of the final stage of the classless society, when the growth of wealth, unhampered by the restrictions of a system based upon private profit, is expected to make feasible a virtually unlimited distribution of desirable things, the rule will be, from each according to his capacity, to each according to his needs. In the meanwhile, the rule is, to each according to his work, and he who does not work neither shall he eat: to which we must make the important addition that work is *provided*: and under the new constitution formally *guaranteed*.

As between the different farms, it cannot be said that the rule of equality according to work is actually operative. There are wide variations between the areas of cultivation per worker, and still wider variations in the advantages of climate, water, soil, and situation. This is only another way of stating the problem of the differential value of land and of the differential rent to which it theoretically gives rise. If we assume the existence of approximately equal industry and

equal skill, and of approximately equal or insufficiently differentiated taxation, one corporation of collective farmers will grow rich, while another will remain poor. This is actually happening under our eyes. There are so-called "millionaire" collectives, whose income, translated into roubles, reaches hundreds of thousands, because they grow cotton or sugar-beet, or some other valuable crop, or because their cereal cultivation is exceptionally favoured by nature, or because their vegetables and dairy produce are within easy reach of a great consuming centre. But an examination of average yields, as officially published prior to 1936, convinces us, without more ado, that the general lot is very different from this. Nothing less than a drastic differentiation of burdens would prevent the wide variation of prosperity from farm to farm—a variation which does not depend on the qualities and defects of the farmers. To what extent the Soviet Government has attempted to correct this anomaly, we shall see when we come to the subject of taxation.

Within the farms, the principle of remuneration according to work is effectively observed. The collective farmers are divided into gangs or brigades, to each of which are allotted particular land, particular buildings, particular animals, particular implements: and further subdivision into *links* determines with further precision the responsibilities of smaller groups. In some cases the land for which an individual worker is responsible may be seen marked out with wooden tablets. Within the group, the gang-leader appraises the work of links and of individuals, and there is a system of rewards and penalties according to the quality of the results. The general scheme is one of payment by work-days, but the value of the work-day is determined by the social value of the type of work. A doctor, or veterinary surgeon, or book-keeper, who is a member of a collective, may be credited with two days or a day and a half for every day that he has worked. The valuation is determined by the general meeting of the collective. A standard work day is not very exacting, and a good worker may put in more than one between sunrise and sundown. A recent order of general application gives to the Chairman a lump allowance of 600 work-days, with an additional bonus of 250 roubles, if the requirements of the Plan are met in full. In the sub-farms which look after the animals there is a system of premia, the milkmaid getting such and such a proportion of the milk, and so on.

The fund from which the payments are made might accurately be described as a dividend. It consists of the residual produce and cash which remain after the demands of the Government and of the M.T.S. have been met, and after setting aside certain funds such as the provision for next year's seeds, which forms a very large percentage of the total crop in Russia, owing to the extraordinary smallness of the yield. Subject to an exceptional provision for the rush of harvest work, there is, or there should be, no hired labour to be paid. A collective may employ an expert—for instance, a dairy expert—at an agreed salary: and it may

employ paid builders for building. Otherwise the principle that no man must make a profit out of the labour of another is strictly enforced, or violated only at the peril of the transgressors: and all the work must be done by the members and remunerated out of dividend. A recent pronouncement of the Council of People's Commissars, animadverting on irregularities, shows that this rule has been often violated, that individualist peasants have been employed on work which should have been done by collective farmers, at rates of pay higher than the dividends earned by the latter, and that, in some cases, the collective farmers have had to seek work outside their farms, in consequence.

The poet Nekrasov shows us seven peasants wandering far and wide, to discover: who can be happy and free in Russia? And the answers which they receive to their question make the poet's picture of rural life in the nineteenth century. How much freedom is there now? The principal limitation is the Plan. I have already pointed out that there was a traditional plan—the three-field rotation—before the Bolsheviks invented Planning: and that it was virtually impossible for the individual to break away from it. The agricultural Plan of the present day, so far as the particular farm is concerned, amounts, in effect, to the device of a particular rotation, since the area of cultivation is limited by the land and resources available. The plan travels upward from the farm: and then back from the central planning authority to the farm again. The regional and local authorities, who deal with it on its way, have to translate it into terms of approved rotations, which, applied to the whole area with which they are severally concerned, will give the result demanded. If it is not agriculturally feasible, it will not be carried out: and, despite a tendency to over-elaboration of detail, which has been recently diminished by dropping the attempt to prescribe the cultivation of particular cereals, pains are naturally taken to see that it shall be feasible, as well as to meet the requirements of the planning authority. On a big question, such as the rotation to be observed, the collective must, ultimately, submit to orders: after it has wrangled about its own share in the distribution of the areas to be devoted to particular crops. The frequent insistence by the higher authorities upon reasonable consideration for the opinions and requirements of the collective farmers, suggests that they are often overridden by local agricultural authorities.

Blunders are, of course, made in agricultural planning. Perhaps the worst was the obliteration of the rice-fields, and their irrigation channels, in Uzbekistan, with the object of universalising the growing of cotton in the area best suited to it. This was done before the local food supply was secured. The order was countermanded, on the discovery that the food was not arriving by the new Turkestan-Siberia railroad as fast as it should: and the people were told to replant a third of the old area with rice: but the season for this had gone by. Another mistaken order was for sowing "in the mud", while the thaw was still in progress,

in order to secure the earlier maturing of the crop. These are errors which experience corrects. In the meanwhile a characteristic fact is that the wrong orders are put down to the machinations of Trotskyist-Bukharinist-Rykorist enemies of the people.*

Normally, the plan is a reasonable thing, in which the cultivators have had their say. The worst which will happen to the collective farmers, if they fall short of requirements, is that they will go without some of the favours which the Government has to distribute, for instance, without a liberal share of advances, or the privilege of the cheap purchase of stock from the state-farm; and will have to pay their tax-in-kind on the total culturable area, though it be larger than the area sown and harvested.

On details of agricultural management, the General Meeting of the collective farmers has a large discretionary authority. This body has caught much of the primitive democratic spirit of the old *Mir*, while learning to submit to the rulings of a modern Communist Chairman. In form, the latter is elected by the General Meeting; but the form is not a reality, and Chairmen are transferred from post to post at the discretion of the Government. I myself have met one, who had been in charge of a glass factory, before he joined the collective, and had just received orders transferring him to a brick factory. His successor, a woman, had been in charge of a Co-operative shop before she joined her new post as Chairman. Neither knew anything of agriculture. Their duty was to supply organising and driving capacity, and both appeared quite fitted to do so. The case may safely be taken to be typical of Bolshevik methods. There was no apprehension that the General Meeting of the collective might elect someone else to the chair.

The General Meeting elects out of its own members a managing Committee for day-by-day business, and a Revision or Audit Committee, which has the function of watching the accounts and scrutinising decisions. The records and accounts are kept by book-keepers, who are often very capable persons, men or women.

The order of the People's Commissars, of which I spoke above, reveals to us that the authority of the General Meeting has, in many cases, been overridden by the Managing Committee, and sometimes even by the Chairman, acting without the Managing Committee. Thus, members of collective farms have been arbitrarily expelled, for insufficient reason, there has been excessive outlay, without the sanction of the General Meeting, on buildings and other capital expenditure, and on the hiring of outside labour, and the dividends have thus been improperly reduced, and their distribution delayed. It was the function of the Revision Committee to bring these irregularities to light, but they have often confined their functions to cursory examination at the end of each

* Bukharin and Rykov, like Trotsky, are now classed among the enemies of the régime.

year. The result, as the Commissars point out, has been disappointment and discontent. If, as I think probable, these revelations were made by peasant members of the Supreme Soviet, meeting at Moscow in January, 1938, they are an interesting justification of the new Constitution: which assists the ventilation of grievances, and exercises a truly democratic function in this respect.

The collective must hire machinery from the M.T.S. of the region in which it is located, or deliver an increased amount of produce to the Government. It is conceivable that a collective might prefer to utilise surplus man-power for the heavy operations, if it were perfectly free to do so. We must recall, however, the extent to which animals and implements were hired from private persons before the establishment of the M.T.S., and the fact that the members of the collective, and not persons hired by them, would have to do the work, if the machines of the monopolist M.T.S. were not available. Mechanisation has very great advantages: among which the saving of agricultural time, in a country having a short open season, is the most important. It seems unlikely that the obligation to employ the M.T.S. is felt as a grievance, so long as the charges are substantially less than those formerly levied by the private lender, as I think they are. An effect of mechanisation, in the form which it has taken in the U.S.S.R., is to make the people closely dependent upon an official agency, as the inhabitants of an irrigated tract in Northern India are dependent upon the irrigation authorities, who decide "turns", and the dates of supply. Recent criticisms of Machine Tractor Stations by the People's Commissar of Agriculture are to the effect that they do not cover the outlay upon them, and that the machines are carelessly housed, or not housed at all.

For six or seven months of each year the collective farmers are prohibited from selling grain except to Government or to co-operative agencies. The object of this restriction is to prevent them from disposing of produce before the claims of the Government and the M.T.S. on the harvest have been met, and the necessary "funds" for seed and so on, set aside. Otherwise they have full liberty of sale. There exist no authorised wholesale dealers, and sales in large quantities, except to co-operatives or to government departments, would come under suspicion of illicit trading. Liberty of sale, in practice, means liberty of retail sale, and it may be exercised in collective markets or otherwise as each producer may find convenient.

The member of the collective farm works under a discipline more closely resembling that of the factory than any to which the peasant, in his agricultural work, has hitherto had to submit. He must keep time, and satisfy the gang-leader, or he will lose his "work-day", if he incurs no worse penalty. The People's Commissars' order of April, 1938, gives us a glimpse of the penalties which may be enforced. A man, or woman, who offends against internal order, may be punished by

public admonition, by posting on the "black" board, by fine, by transfer to lower work, by being required to work for a period without remuneration. In the past, it appears that orders of expulsion have been passed by the Managing Committee, and even by the Chairman. Henceforth—if orders are observed—there is to be no expulsion from the collective except by the General Meeting, and by the vote of at least two-thirds of the members.

I turn to another form of restriction upon liberty: that of family life. Collectives receive women as full members on equal terms with men, and their statutes require them to give to women opportunities of advancement to work for which they are fitted, and to resist attempts to keep them in domestic subordination. The reality of such provisions depend upon economic conditions. The separate wage is of immense importance. I have been told, and I can readily believe, that the first actual reception of a solid dividend for the work done by the women, in solid rye and potatoes, was like the entry upon a new world, where each gazed on each with a wild surmise. A man said he had one complaint to make of the collective: *he no longer received his daughter's wages*. Female labour is very extensively employed on the farms, and the woman's dividend is one of the reasons why there has been acquiescence in collectivisation: *because it has put the women on the side of the Soviets*.

Emancipation from household drudgery involves common catering, the crèche, the public laundry. The provision here is of course far from complete and very uneven. Community kitchens and common catering are in operation for field-work at busy seasons. There are day-nurseries for the children while the mothers are at work, and schools for the older ones. But these, like all other social arrangements in the village, are limited by the amount of the social insurance fund, and the extent of the building accommodation available in each case. In industry, Government is the employer, and sets aside as social insurance a stated percentage on the wages. In agriculture the collective farmers are self-employers. It is they who find the money out of the produce available after harvest, and there are wide variations in the prosperity, and therefore in the provision of social privileges and amenities, in different farms. On the other hand, we must not be misled by a crude comparison of percentages in the two cases. The percentage of 14% or more, in the case of industry, is a percentage on wages. The percentage of 2% or 3% in the farm is a percentage of the whole gross product of the concern. I feel no doubt, however, that the industrial worker does better out of his social insurance than the collective farmer does. Buildings in the collectives for schools, crèches and the like, vary very greatly. Sometimes they are very fine, the homes of former landlords and *kulaks*: sometimes very poor.

The woman has gained in liberty by her membership. The young people have gained also. It may be that the man, the head of the family, as we traditionally call him, has lost what they have gained. At all

events he has less power over his family than he had. Custom and opinion still preserve to him a good deal of power: and the joint-family-working of the "yard" gives him a sphere in which to exercise it. His position in society has gained in dignity for reasons already indicated.

We come next to the somewhat vexed question of the tax-burden, which is often stated by observers at a very low figure. The "single agricultural tax" in cash, which prevailed throughout the greater part of the period of N.E.P., was superseded in 1936 by an income-tax on collectives. But by far the most important part of the tax-burden is the "compulsory sale in the nature of a tax", which goes by the Russian name of *Khlebopostavka*. The contradictions which appear in the accounts given by different observers are due sometimes to the treatment of this compulsory sale as something other than a tax, sometimes to varying local experiences. Since a payment is made by the Government in respect to the compulsory deliveries, it has been, not unnaturally, supposed that they constitute, not a tax, but a sale. But the official description of them shows that they are in the nature of a tax.

There is a difference of opinion, among the investigators of Soviet conditions, between those who think that the régime has unduly favoured the peasant and those who think that it has disfavoured him. The present studies have been recorded in vain if they have failed to show that the general course of Russian history—with certain exceptions—has been to lay the greater burdens upon the peasant. It was he who was the predial serf, who did the "black" work, who, after emancipation, retained the inferior legal status, or had no legal status at all and submitted to beating by everyone dressed in a little brief authority. The "intelligents" who "went to the people" in the seventies of the last century were going against the stream. A quasi-religious sentiment took them to the peasant as to an oracle possessed of a mystical inspiration: but the peasant continued to be slighted and beaten and, for a long time, to be overtaxed and officially neglected. In 1902 and again in 1905 he awakened and gave signs of the same latent power which he had shown at rare intervals in earlier centuries, but with a new addition to it brought by strange allies. Henceforth he had leaders, who sought his alliance, and confirmed his strength with their own. But he was still not an equal, though he had come nearer to being one. Formal equality the Constitution of 1936 gave him. How near is the approach to real equality remains a question in dispute.

Light will be shed on this question if we can reach a secure conclusion regarding the distribution of the burden of taxation. This I have endeavoured to do in an appendix. For reasons there given, I think that the peasant pays between 15% and 18% of his gross produce in direct taxation in addition to the indirect taxation which falls upon him in proportion to his consumption. The direct tax is taken almost entirely in kind for a very good reason. You cannot tax a peasant in cash unless

you provide him with a market: and the Russian *kolkhoznik* has a market only for a very small part of his produce. As to the direct impost of 15% to 18% of the gross produce, it shows the impossibility of escaping from the operation of certain economic laws. If land taxation is light, the person who enjoys the right of cultivation is placed at an enormous advantage over the rest of the community: and unless land taxation is differential—the man who is luckier in the soil, climate, and situation of his lot is better off than the man who is less lucky in these respects. In a state aiming at remuneration according to work, we naturally expect a system of land taxation which leaves as little as possible of the unearned income to any individual.

The impost is to be judged, as you would judge a rent-charge, by its amount, its distribution, and the elasticity of its assessment and collection. We are fortunate in having two standards by which to judge the severity of the 15–18% impost as a general average. The land revenue in British India, along with cesses for local purposes, comes, on an average, to something like the value of 12% of the product. But the Indian peasant, if a tenant, pays a rent which is probably double this percentage, and he is often deep in the books of the moneylender. We have another standard of comparison in a valuation of pre-war and post-revolution burdens on the Russian peasant, made by Mr. Albert Vainstein and published at Moscow, under the auspices of the Council of Labour and Defence, in 1924. We there see the peasant of 1912 paying in indirect as well as in direct taxation, 11.2% of all his income: a somewhat surprising figure, in view of the frequently repeated story of excessive taxation under the Tsarist régime. It must be remembered that, before 1912, not only the poll-tax, but also the redemption payments on account of emancipation from serfdom, had long been abolished, and that in this, as in some other respects, the Tsarist régime was not at its worst when the Revolution occurred.

According to Mr. Vainstein's calculations, the burden on the peasant was somewhat lightened in 1918–19, and made somewhat heavier in 1920–22, but the taxation of 1922–23 was about equal to that of 1912. We see, then, that the present rural taxation is more than the Tsarist taxation of 1912, and more than the taxation of the first five or six years of the Revolutionary period. But the peasant in 1912 was meeting charges on account of debt and of rent for additional land leased by him, which were out of all proportion to the loan-charges upon the collective farmer to-day.

Viewed as a tax or a rent charged for agricultural land by the proprietor State, 15–18% of the value of the gross produce is a moderate, but by no means a very low, charge. It does not justify the suggestion of E. Strauss in *Soviet Russia* that the peasant is favoured as against the urban worker. Criticism must be directed, not against the pitch of the charge, regarded as an average, but against its insufficient varia-

tion according to local conditions, and against a possibility of inelasticity in administration. In these respects the system is open to criticism, for which I must again refer the reader to the appendix. The somewhat indulgent treatment given to the grower of the technical crops is justified, not only by the importance of industrial interests, but also by the desirability, from the agricultural point of view, of diminishing the still great preponderance of cereal crops and of diversifying the range of cropping. The idea that the peasant receives exceptional favour is probably due to the comparatively high prices paid for the technical crops, the growing of which is not within the reach of the majority.

Taxation-in-kind, on a large scale, involves the existence of elevator, or other storage, accommodation, very widely distributed, and of arrangements, which only an organised Socialist Government can possess, for the preservation of perishables, and for putting them through the processes which fit them for the consumer. For instance, wherever there is a milk revenue, there must be creameries, or butter or cheese factories: where there is sugar-beet there must be sugar-boiling plant: and the kind-collecting Government must create all this machinery for processing or distribution, or organise its creation by Co-operative Societies. If we realise all the complexities of such a system, we shall not be surprised that collectivised agriculture, with taxation-in-kind, did not work smoothly from the outset. In a year of plentiful crops, such as 1937, complaints of inadequate storage and of the resultant destruction of food by weather, are still insistent. The People's Commissariat for Food Industry has done excellent work in creating the network of institutions and plant, which was essential to the prevention of muddle and waste: and this organisation of supplies has contributed much to the improved food situation which is so noticeable in the towns since 1933.

The catastrophic destruction of livestock on the introduction of collectivisation is a subject which naturally makes the agricultural authorities wince. It gave, and continues to give, to the enemies of the Soviet Union legitimate occasion for jubilation. Subordinates sometimes try to gloss it over, but there is no concealment in higher quarters of the urgency of the need for recovery. If we seek a correct perspective, we must turn back to the historian of pre-revolution agriculture, G. Pavlovsky, who notes the beginning of a diminution in livestock, in consequence of the increased use of mechanical transport, and the extension of arable land in European Russia—processes which have now been carried farther. As in India, a good many of the horned cattle were of poor quality, and the loss is not all that the figures suggest. But there is growing doubt of the adequacy of the reserves of oil, the Army makes increasing demands for horses, the need of milk products becomes more insistent, the land cries out for manure which is not available in sufficient quantities. This is a subject upon which figures are more eloquent than words, but I have given my statistics in an appendix.

They do not show complete recovery at the time that the animal census of 1938 was taken: but they show progress. Great droughts have before now destroyed hundreds of thousands of animals. But such a holocaust as was this, spread over the whole length and breadth of so vast a country, surely never was since agriculture began. The animals killed were mostly young, and the date when they would have reached breeding and working power is the date when the losses begin to be most felt. Recovery is inevitably slow. A cow cannot produce a calf till two and a half years after she herself was conceived.

More than two-thirds of the horses are in the hands of the collectives. Individual peasants, workers, and employees of local bodies, own 15% of them. The provision of well-bred sires is cared for by a hundred horse-breeding farms, which had 52,000 breeding mares in 1934 and produced the large number of 24,000 young stock. The normal tendency of collectives, whose heavy agricultural work is done for them by the M.T.S., would be to care very little about the production of young stock: and special measures to correct this tendency appear to be necessary. The Government has exempted from the obligation of compulsory deliveries certain areas to be devoted to fodder. In 1935, 11,000 acres of cereals, and 800 of potatoes, were exempted: but more than this is called for. *Pravda* has recently published circumstantial complaints of the lack of provision for adequate veterinary service in Ukrain. Some encouragement has been given to horse-racing.

The large number of animals in the personal ownership of individuals, and tended in their yards, should be a guarantee of the personal attention which they require. In the case of the others, the system of payment by results seems likely to stimulate stockmen and dairy-maids. But the most significant and far-reaching measure for the encouragement of breeding is the recent establishment of fairs for the purchase and sale of cattle. The mode of taxation, which demands a stated quantity of milk in respect to each milch cow, tends to the elimination of the inferior animals. If they can be replaced by something better, this should be advantageous. There are complaints of the quantity and quality of the hay, and in 1935 the hay crop failed over large areas, so that cattle-feed in winter presented great difficulty.

The most important item in the needs of Russian agriculture is increased manuring, and this is closely bound up with an increase in the stock. The Black-Earth zone lacks moisture more urgently than it lacks soil nutrients, but, in the long run, the elements taken from the soil by cropping require to be replaced. In the non-Black-Earth areas, where moisture is generally sufficient, manure has always been a prime necessity. Not only the reduction of stock, but also the disorganisation of the old methods of stock-keeping, caused by collectivisation, have affected the supply of farmyard manure of recent years: and have doubtless made important contributions to the general failure to increase

the yields. The old methods of storage, collection, and carrying out of the manure, developed by long traditional practice, have had to be replaced by new, which are not immediately effective. The potential supply is reckoned at 300 million tons, which, if it could be made actually available, would permit of the application of nearly a ton to every cultivated acre. Actually, 135 million tons of farmyard manure were applied in 1935. The British standard—applicable, of course, to a more intensive agriculture—is understood to be two tons of farmyard manure per acre, with artificials in addition, and with a leguminous crop ploughed in once in four years to restore vegetable humus. Very little use of cleaning crops is made in Russia. Without expecting conformity with the methods of an intensive cultivation such as the British, I think it clear that Russian agriculture has much leeway to make up: and that a very great increase in livestock is essential to success.

A good deal of manure on the treeless steppe is burnt for fuel, and it is difficult to devise any means of checking this practice without extensive forestation. Factories have been set up for artificial fertilisers, and the supply is increasing fairly fast. There is an increasing production of phosphates: but the production of potash salts has only begun. Artificials are used almost exclusively for the industrial or technical crops, primarily for cotton and sugar beet.

I have said enough to prepare the reader for the conclusion in the appendix, that agricultural yields in the U.S.S.R., always very low, do not show any unmistakable signs of rising higher. Doubtless, remarkable results are attained by Stakhanovite workers in particular farms, and there has been an increase in cultivated area resulting in an increase of gross produce. Dr. Otto Schiller, whose outlook upon collectivisation is not a favourable one, has recorded the opinion that in 1935, for the first time after a number of years, the bread supply was secured. There has also been a great extension of the area under the so-called technical crops, and the U.S.S.R. has become virtually self-sufficient in sugar,* flax, and cotton, and to the extent of one-third, also in tea. This, and the extension of fodder grasses, are great achievements. The harvest of 1937, after the serious disappointment of 1936, appears to have been a bumper, and that of 1940 is put by official speakers at a high figure. But the volume and quality of the crops depend almost entirely upon meteorological conditions: and the average yield per unit of area, as shown by the official figures published by the Soviet Government before 1936, continues generally stationary. With a diminution of the manure supply, I do not see how anything better could have been expected.

The agricultural authorities have looked to mechanisation for great

* Sir J. Russell in the *Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture* for February, 1938, cites evidence of a yield of sugar beet per acre higher in 1937 than 1913.

results. Its actual benefits are the following. First, it takes the place of deficient animal-power, and sets both animal and man-power free for other tasks. The value of this benefit depends on circumstances. I have repeatedly pointed out the large proportion of horseless households which has characterised rural Russia since the epoch of the Emancipation, and probably even earlier. As to man-power, there is already under-employment in the village, and mechanisation tends to add to it. But it helps to meet the growing demand of industry for new hands, and—whether in consequence of it, or for other reasons—work, such as hoeing, which was formerly neglected, is now being done. The relief to the rural situation in respect to draught animals is very great. Secondly, mechanisation saves time : a factor of immense importance in so short an open season as that of the greater part of Russia, with advantages both at the beginning and the end of the season. The timely performance of all operations adds much to the product. The caterpillar tractors, which are now to a large extent replacing wheeled tractors, can work in unfavourable weather, which is of great value for the timely beginning of agricultural operations. Of the advantages of the combine-harvesters, also rapidly increasing in numbers, I have something to say below. Small special tractors for hoed crops are being produced in the Putilov works at Leningrad, and the lighter operations of husbandry are being increasingly performed by mechanical means.

On the question whether mechanisation adds to fertility otherwise than by contributing to speed, I have to note that the mere fact of deep ploughing does not necessarily increase production. The soil which is turned up may be less fertile than that which is nearer the surface. Autumn ploughing of land which is left unsown till the spring is a very valuable operation, because it enables the snow to get in. There is nothing new about this practice, which was always observed by the better farmers : but in so far as mechanisation enables more autumn ploughing to be done—and it seems clear that it does so—it contributes directly to fertility.

Collectivisation has contributed to the success of agricultural operations by the improvement, of which it has been the cause, in work-discipline. This naturally varies widely in the quarter of a million of collective farms. But it is plain that some things are now being done, which were left undone or incompletely done before, and that the incentive of payment according to work is a very effective one. An equally important fact is that collectivisation enables the cultivator to concentrate on his job, instead of having to dissipate his attention over a number of different functions, including the financing of his farm and the buying and selling of implements and produce. Collectivisation has also made possible the application to agriculture of the results of scientific research, to an extent hardly to be achieved in dealing with millions of separate peasant holdings. Russian research work has won

the admiration of scientists, and it is not being wasted by the pigeon-holing of its conclusions as it often is in Great Britain. It has carried the wheat-belt further north, and defeated the shortness of the agricultural season by giving an earlier start to growth. Orders go through to the very bottom. When they are wrong orders, they cause extensive mischief. The quality of the research work makes the prospect of judicious orders a promising one.

One of the most valuable influences upon agriculture has been the result, not of collectivisation, but of the increasing industrialisation of the country, which has created new, and enlarged old, centres of demand for dairy products, vegetables, and technical crops, and is slowly but surely diminishing the immense preponderance of cereals. Changes in this direction are particularly noticeable in the Leningrad, Moscow, Ivanovsk, and Gorky (old Nizhni-Novgorod) provinces. If the process of industrialisation continues, as appears likely, it is in this direction that we may look for the surest, if least spectacular, advances of Russian agriculture.

If we now address ourselves to the question of the material prosperity of the peasant under collectivisation, we must begin by saying that it shows enormous variations, from what is wealth by peasant standards, to what is poverty by any standard. Of the former type it is easy to find examples, because the rich collective is naturally the most willingly shown. Suffice it to say that the rich collective, with each member earning on the average 2,400 roubles a year, with half a ton of wheat, 600 lb. of vegetables, 300 lb. of potatoes, and 30 litres of wine, besides the earnings of his "yard", and taking in holiday lodgers into the bargain, actually does exist. That the average is something immensely less than this is an inevitable inference from known facts. Since cereal and other yields have not on the average increased, general material prosperity could be derived only from one or more of the following causes: a reduction of waste: an increase of cultivation in a ratio greater than the increase of population: a change of cultivation to more profitable crops: an increase of animal products: an improved market: non-agricultural earnings: a reduction in the prices of industrial goods, in terms of agricultural products: or a diminution of tax, rent and usury burdens. Under the head of reduction of waste, I have to note one wholly admirable result of mechanisation: in particular of the introduction of combine-harvesters. Hitherto there has always been a substantial loss of crop, caused by the breaking up of the weather before it could be carried home. The combine-harvester has faults of its own, and will not wholly eliminate these losses. But, by the speed which it introduces into harvesting operations, it has reduced them, and is likely to reduce them further, as the supply of this type of machine is extended. The importance of this consideration is shown by the recorded losses in cereals in 1933 and 1934. In the former year they amounted

to 21% of the winter rye, 24% of the winter wheat, 33% of the spring wheat. In 1934 the corresponding figures were, 16%, 19% and 27%: still very large but somewhat reduced. The complete elimination of this source of loss would raise the net supply by something like a fifth, and substantially enrich a large portion of the country.

The cultivated area within the present boundary of the U.S.S.R. increased by 25%—that is to say by 66 million acres, between 1913 and 1935. The creation of the state-farms, on lands not previously under cultivation, accounts for nearly two-thirds of this. I do not know what proportion the 52 million acres, recently taken from the state-farms, was cultivated land, and how much of it was given to existing collectives, and how much to new ones created for the former employees of the state-farms. I think it probable that the increase of the cultivated area of the peasants, partly by drainage of marsh, and partly by the adoption of more scientific rotations, involving a smaller proportion of fallow than the old three-field rotation, and partly by surrender from the state-farms, has not been in a higher ratio than the growth of the rural population since the war. No great projects of irrigation, on the scale familiar in Northern India, have been carried out, but some are in contemplation and smaller projects are actually being carried out. In 1933, 1934, and 1935, 5 million acres in the non-Black-Earth zone were reclaimed from marsh, and probably the drainage of another 4 millions was completed in 1936.

As regards the cultivation of more profitable crops, the growers of cotton and sugar-beet have increased in prosperity. These crops occupy limited belts, well-defined by climate and physical conditions, and, in the case of cotton, very largely dependent on artificial irrigation. The extension of cotton-growing, outside of irrigated areas, has not so far given good results. Some increase of prosperity is probable in these northern and central regions where dairying, and the growth of vegetables, potatoes and technical crops, have recently developed. But three-fourths of the agriculture of the U.S.S.R. is still cereal: gain has resulted from carrying the wheat-belt further north, into what has always been regarded as the deficit-food-producing area: but otherwise conditions in the cereal areas are for the present stereotyped.

Animal products have been gravely diminished by the destruction of stock; but there appears to be hope in pigs and poultry: and collectives, and collective farmers, who have access to good markets for these—that is to say, who are within reach of industrial centres and places of general resort—are likely to be doing well.

A proportion of the village population, even of those who retain rights in the land, and who assist occasionally in cultivation, does not live by agriculture. Some of the surviving individualist cultivators regard agriculture as a secondary occupation, and live by carrying, by costermongering, and, as Stalin observed in a recent speech, by speculation,

by which no doubt he meant buying and selling produce. The number of collective farmers, who live mainly by non-agricultural pursuits, can only be inferred from the number of those who have very few work-days to their credit when the annual dividend comes to be divided. Dr. Otto Schiller puts the non-agriculturist rural population at about 10% of the population of the villages. Rural under-employment is relieving itself by means of these "self-employers": and small domestic manufacture and repair, after a period of discouragement by the Revolutionary Government, has again resumed importance. It is sufficient to cause anxiety to the authorities by the diversion of the labour of collective farmers, but is not on the pre-war scale. There is, of course, a marked exodus from the villages for permanent employment in the towns, despite the theoretical obstacles created by the passport system; because industrialisation is growing rapidly.

The absence of any cost-of-living index, and of any recent statistics of consumption, makes it equally difficult to determine to what extent the "scissors" is now open against the grower of food and raw materials. The village co-operative shops, at all events in the more prosperous collectives, are now very well supplied with semi-luxuries. The demand is now not for head-shawls, sheepskins, felt boots: but for stockings, half-shoes, lipstick, even for gramophones, clocks, and bicycles. But this fact leaves us in our previous ignorance regarding the great multitude of the quarter of a million collectives, which depend upon the growth of cereals, or are for some other reason in the class of the unprosperous. Between a quarter and a fifth of the amount of grain which is compulsorily sold to Government is sold to co-operative institutions at a somewhat higher price in consideration of a supply of manufactured goods. This may mean that manufactured goods, at reasonable prices, are hard to come by: but the great increase in industrial production makes it probable that goods are reaching the rural areas in greater quantity. We must not, of course, calculate the cost of goods in agricultural produce on the basis of the low payments made by Government in respect to the compulsory deliveries: for these compulsory deliveries are a tax, or a rent, in kind. The analysis of taxation in the appendix shows no reduction of burdens upon the peasantry.

Such calculation as is possible of the average income of a collective farmer is given in another appendix. It is plain that the average collective farmer, in order to make ends meet, must use to the utmost his "yard" and its produce: and we are not surprised to learn that, in the vicinity of towns, or where there are favourable market conditions, peasants have recently been taking great pains to develop and improve their yards, which are the exclusive possession of the family. It is easy to see that an area of 1 to 5 acres ($\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hectares) might, in favouring circumstances, and with a little capital outlay, become an important competitor with the claims of the collective; and Trotsky, who had his

eyes wide open for all Soviet failures, said this was already happening. The taxation of collective farmers was revised in August, 1939, with the avowed object of discouraging it. But it can hardly be happening on a great scale: since the resources for glass, or other expensive methods of small-scale cultivation, do not exist except in the "millionaire" collectives. But, when we have emphasised the facts that prosperity is for a comparatively small number of collectives and that, for the vast majority, the *kolkhoznik soup* is still the same soup, both in quantity and quality, as the peasant soup was before, we have still to remind ourselves that—small though the increase in production continues to be—there have been important changes in distribution. What the *kulak* added to the common stock—it is hardly to be supposed that he added nothing—he has ceased to add. What he took from it, has gone back into it again. In some collectives there are people who talk gleefully of their "great inheritance". They at least are conscious that they have gained. On an average, 15% of the property of the collectives is calculated to be derived from the *kulaks*. But this is not the whole of the redistribution which collectivisation has involved. The 8 million horseless households, of which I have more than once had occasion to speak, are now provided with horse-power, partly by the machines furnished by the M.T.S. and partly as co-sharers with their fellow collective farmers. The landless agricultural labourers, scarcely less numerous in 1928 than in 1916, are now partners on equal terms with the landed peasants, if their work is of equal value. These groups at least have made an important material gain.

The agricultural authorities are aware of the weaknesses of the collectives: and at the end of 1935 a conference investigated the means of improving their work outside of the Black-Earth zone, and in White Russia. The low yields, the heavy losses, and the existence of administrative abuses, received attention.

Recent pictures of peasant housing and living arrangements given, for the year 1934, by Mrs. Seema Rynin Allan (*Comrades and Citizens*, 1938) do not, when compared with earlier descriptions, convey the clear impression of a rise in the standard of comfort. A herdsman of a collective farm in the Moscow province, who is a candidate for admission to the Party, lives with his wife, his mother and his three children, in a one-roomed, one-windowed hut of whitewashed clay, entered through the cowshed. The familiar features of the brick stove, with sleeping-quarters for cold weather on top of it, and the wide wooden platform serving for common bed for those who do not sleep on the stove: the long, narrow bench along the wall: the ikon in the corner: the cockroaches and the bed-bugs: the little pig housed under the stove: the window sealed shut with rags and pitch at the first approach of winter: are all reproduced. The family eat with wooden spoons from wooden bowls, but they do eat from a table: there are books and papers in the house:

and the owner is planning to have a hinged pane in his window so that ventilation may be possible. Another picture is of the House of a Tartar Chairman of a collective farm in the Crimea, "one of the most cultured in the village". Here there are three rooms, with floors of clay renewed every few days, perfectly clean and very spacious. But the family uses only one of the three rooms (perhaps because the others are unheated): and, after the visitor has been installed in the one and only bed, lies down on the rug-covered floor, father, mother, children and all, to sleep. There is a table and a chair (only one, it seems), and the host ate at the table, with a knife and fork, but squatted to wash his hands afterwards with water poured into a basin on the floor. There are plenty of rugs on the divan which runs round two sides of the room, as well as on the floor. In the house next door, also quite clean, though the children are dirty, there is no bed, no table, no knives, no forks, no chairs. Everyone sleeps in one long row across the floor, and squats on the floor for meals.

At the other end of this Tartar village is another family, also Mahomedan, which has learned city ways, has a bed for each member of the family, and has furnished its house, "like that of a Russian city-worker", with tables, chairs, starched lace white curtains, books and a picture of Lenin on the wall. And the wife is learning to ride her husband's bicycle! The rural Mahomedan is evidently more "cultured" than the Russian *kolkhoznik*, or perhaps richer.

I turn back at this point to the two villages in the Don Valley which were elaborately investigated by Dr. Shingarev at the beginning of the 19th century (see Chapter IV of these studies): because the Soviet Government has published an account of their present condition, with photographs of the existing buildings. The old tumbledown buildings are changed beyond recognition, and a complete end has been made of the old poverty-stricken conditions. But close study of the volume reveals the fact that the land at the disposal of these two villages is now six times what it was. The changes are therefore due to the transfer of land from the landlord to the peasants, rather than to the transformation of the system of farming. Additions to land on this scale were exceptional: for the average gain to the peasants did not exceed 20%.

That the village is "dark" and "deaf", and needs to be civilised by the influence of the town, is part of the Bolshevik thesis. The aim is "cultural"—which means urbanising in the etymological sense of the word—as well as economic. The model statute lays particular stress on raising the status of women, whose lot in rural Russia has always been a hard and degraded one. They are to be given every possible opportunity of advancement suited to their individual capacities. Attention is to be paid to hygiene. The statute requires the establishment of barbers' shops, baths, plantations of fruit-trees and other amenities. The system is criticised as loosening the family bond, by turning the wife into a "worker", and putting the cottage loom and spinning-wheel largely

out of use: as making an end of national individuality along with peasant customs and costumes: as reducing the influence of the elders upon the children, and consequently weakening the hold of religion. All these things are, in general, true, though the common interest in the yard, and the animals kept there, seems to me to counteract in part the tendency to the dissolution of the family bond. There is, in fact, a change from an old world to a new one, bringing its emancipations and its sophistications, destroying the picturesque uniqueness of village life, introducing a number of new occupations, teaching man to be machine-minded, opening up opportunities of promotion, and compelling an increase of literacy, because the business of administering a large farm cannot be carried on without it. The itinerant cinema and the autobus are active. The town is—whether for good or evil, or more probably for both—brought to the village. One of the consequences may be, perhaps already is, a diminution in the birth-rate of the villages. It has been noticed by Sir John Russell, and I endorse his observation, that this urbanisation of the village has not produced signs of a closer approach on the part of the intelligentsia to village life. A feeling that it is uncomfortable, if not barbarous, to go into “the jungle”, is sometimes to be detected. As in India, the dislike of rural solitude is particularly marked in the qualified medical practitioner. Young Soviet employees pull many levers to be posted to the towns.

What, in the meanwhile, is the individualist peasant doing? He is not free to deal with his land as he pleases. Like the collectivised, he must abide by the Plan. But, as has always been the case in the food-importing section of agricultural Russia, agriculture is generally of subordinate importance to him. He is one of the “self-employers”, doing only such farming as he must. As a farmer, his position is uncomfortable. The process of collectivisation has hitherto been a continuing one, involving changes as each additional batch of peasants decides to join. This means repeated redistribution, in which those who remain uncollectivised normally receive the worst and most distant land, allotted to them only for one agricultural year. The area and shape of their lots make it impossible for them to benefit by agricultural machinery, even if the M.T.S. were willing to supply it: their taxes and dues are, on paper, much higher than those of the collectivised, and they do not enjoy equal privileges in respect to loans from the State. Recent heavy taxation of their horses has evidently been aimed at the reduction of their openings in the carrying trade, which had been one of their remaining resources. It seems evident that the dissidents must soon be reduced to a still smaller residuum or be driven into the towns. In fact, this process is already completing itself.

Must we conclude that collectivisation has come to stay? We have heard in recent years of the prosecution and imprisonment of Communists in the Yaroslav province—not an area in which collectivisation

has been conspicuously successful—for conniving at reversion to individualist farming, on the ground that it was authorised by the constitution of 1936. I do not think that the case is typical. Time is working for the new system: *vis inertiae* is beginning to be on its side. Dr. Otto Schiller, who closely watched Russian agriculture for many years, and profoundly dislikes collectivisation, said that the peasant does not object to the régime, as such, and blames the local official for his troubles. His feeling, he says, is one of resignation. This is not a feeling out of which combined resistance is likely to arise. A more dangerous threat to the system was that presented by the systematic evasion of which I have said something on an earlier page; 100,000 acres were misappropriated out of the common land to increase the area of the private “yards” in a single region: and many persons, including the local authorities, and the local Communists, must have connived with the law-breakers.

It is probable that the German invaders of Ukrain will seek supporters by setting up landlords there. In 1918 the local peasants showed their detestation of this policy, and it proved to be a valuable asset to the Bolsheviks. A politically more astute, but financially less profitable, move, would be to distribute the land to individual peasants.

The support given to the Soviet régime in the war of 1941-42 shows that it has the support of its people. As regards collectivisation, in particular, there has, of course, been grumbling, but apparently no specific grievance. There is no period of prosperity or freedom with which to contrast the present. The peasant has often been hungry, hungry for mere bread. Now he is, with some exceptions, poor, but not actually hungry for bread. The lack of manufactured goods is a recurrent irritation: but it has been like that, sometimes worse and sometimes better, for a generation, perhaps always: and it is probably less than in recent years. There is no landlord, and no *kulak*, upon whom to centre his jealousies and his hatred. Within his own collective, he sees all equal with himself, equal at least in that all get only what they earn. Outside the collective there may be groups of whom he is envious. He dislikes the official: but he has always disliked the official, a fussy person, making unintelligible demands, even if free from corruption. Taxation comes almost entirely out of a common stock. He is not conscious of paying it in person. There is no beating for him as in the old days, if he fails. He still remembers, or is familiar by tradition with, the tremendous strain of harvest work, often without help from animal strength. Now that strain is taken off him by mechanisation.

The women have gained greatly in freedom and human dignity. The men have come nearer to the achievement of personality, than in the days when they were *muzhiks*, *homunculi*, “little men”. Dr. Schiller tells us that the young are not buoyant and hopeful. I record his opinion, but I question it. There is, of course, variation from year to year. A good harvest makes temporary content.

When the savage onslaught of 1941 has been beaten off, and peace has been restored, the Soviet Government must take up once more the titanic task of rebuilding a "Land of Fragments". It would be vain for me to forecast what the future has in store. But I do not think that a victorious Russia will abandon the system of collectivisation, which has given the advantages of *grande culture* without the incubus of landlordism and has avoided the burden of peasant indebtedness, ordinarily so grave a feature of all peasant societies.

A good sign is that some of the Communists are beginning to study the details of agriculture and learning to talk to farmers in farmers' language. Here is a scrap from a long speech made by Khrushchev, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party in Ukrain, with the *voces populi* interjected: "You must have your coarse-wool sheep as well as your fine. A jacket from a coarse-wool Rumanian sheep is good for fifteen years' wear. (Applause.) I can't imagine what life in the village would be like without a sheep-skin jacket. (Laughter.) . . . You must do better with your buckwheat. Trophim Denisovich Lysenko [a famous populariser of new farming methods] says, grow millet instead. Millet? But what about your bowl of porridge? (Laughter.) And don't you want buckwheat for the sake of your bees? No honey this morning! What? (More laughter.)"

If the matter is good, this is the way to put it across a farming audience. Kalinin also has the same turn for making plain people understand him. He explained the Census (always a subject of some suspicion, since King David brought a pestilence by numbering the people) by saying that no one builds a house without settling the size and calculating the material, or sows a field without knowing how big it is and what kind of soil it has. It is the language of the Gospel Parables.

After this glimpse of a peasant crowd and its reception of a Communist's little jokes the official journal gives us a picture of the children of the *kolkhoz* practising their violins in a typical suburban drawing-room. Wonderful, past all whooping! This is the kind of collective farm which lets seaside lodgings to summer visitors. Need we tell the reader that there are not many such? Like the Press everywhere, the newspaper is irredeemably urban.

It remains for us to note the effect of the new system on the food supply of the towns and the provision of raw material for industry. Here we can register pure gain. The attempts to collect a land-tax from 25 million peasant households, many of them too poor to pay, or having incontrovertible claims to remission, and to obtain food and raw materials in return for manufactured goods of which the supply was always short and precarious, were evidently destined to failure. They have been replaced by collective claims upon the whole joint produce of a quarter of a million manageable units: claims of which the evasion is made all but impossible by the intimate participation of the Machine Tractor

Stations in the harvesting of the crop. Regarded as a fiscal measure, collectivisation and its accompaniments have given a degree of efficiency undreamed of by the Tsarist, or the early Revolutionary, Government. There is a guarantee of regular deliveries of produce which was formerly lacking. This gain is reinforced by the arrangements for the storage and processing of the produce of which I have already spoken: arrangements which reduce waste to the minimum. The towns are the direct beneficiaries, but the rural areas must ultimately benefit by the growth of industry to which these increased resources give the impulse. In the towns, the advance in material prosperity, since 1933, leaps to the eye of the unprejudiced observer. The enriching fluids certainly pass from village to city. I look with some confidence for the return of the circulation from the heart to the members. I have already noted that the process has begun, in the increasing diversification of cropping in particular areas and the slow diminution of the predominance of cereals.

But the picture of the possibilities will hardly be complete if I fail to remind the reader of what may happen if the sources of Russian oil should fall into the hands of the enemy or be destroyed in the "scorching of the earth". In suffering the decay of the horse population and substituting mechanical power, the Soviet Government has given hostages to fortune. The quotation from *Erewhon* at the head of this chapter conveys a sinister suggestion of the possible consequences.

CHAPTER XVII

URBAN LABOUR (LONDON AND MOSCOW)

"There is violence in a system which compels a man to sell his work like merchandise, however capitalism may veil it: and in one which makes his material existence depend on people who demand particular convictions and beliefs from him. Real liberty demands an economic guarantee."—BERDYAEV, *Christianity and the Class War*.

"In Moscow, as a skilled factory worker, I should be a member of the ruling class, of the new aristocracy. . . . There's a very bright side, the facilities for rest and recreation . . . education, and the care they take of the children."—ARCHIBALD LYALL, *Russian Roundabout*, 1933.

THE *New Survey of London Life and Labour*, based fundamentally on the conditions which preceded the great slump, deals with over 3 million "occupied persons" and their families, in the County of London and nine additional boroughs. It shows a remarkable general improvement in the general standard of living in the forty years which had elapsed since Charles Booth's Survey. Nothing comparable with this for scope or precision exists for Moscow, or any other city in the U.S.S.R. It follows that we can only piece together such imperfect evidences as are available, in the attempt to make a comparison of some of the conditions

of urban labour in the two cities. The period will not be the same for Moscow as for London: because, when the New Survey was being prepared, Moscow was in the throes of the early years of the first Five-Year-Plan and its workers were making sacrifices on a scale which made conditions abnormal. But a comparison of the London of 1928-29 with the Moscow of 1937, will bring together two epochs of more or less stabilised economic conditions—the one for London preceding the slump, and the other for Moscow preceding the disturbances caused by the outbreak of war in Europe.

London Labour is a series of different social strata, not a single group. In its most comfortable strata, it is hardly to be distinguished from the middle class: it has its savings, and is sometimes engaged in buying its house through a Building Society. A steady income of thirty-eight to forty-one shillings a week will buy the absolute necessities for a family of moderate size, without any surplus. It is at this point that the editors draw the poverty line. More than a tenth of the wage-earners draw over eighty shillings a week. More than half of them draw over sixty shillings.

The number of those in poverty during the week of investigation was rather over a tenth of the whole. That means a submerged tenth, who have actually less than enough, with no question of superfluities. This is far better than forty years ago, when the number of those living in poverty (with the cash line adjusted to the lower prices then prevailing) was three times as large. But the proportion of children living in poverty, on the day of investigation, was more than one-eighth of the whole child population. Destitution is something other, and worse, than poverty: and the acutest suffering, caused by destitution and the fear thereof, has been removed, or at least blunted, by the operation of the Social Services.

Very recent enquiry has revealed the existence of a number of scattered and unclassifiable occupations in which adults, working at full-time rates, earn less than a living wage. But, generally speaking, in the causes of poverty there has been a significant change in the past forty years. Formerly insufficient wage-rates, along with old age and illness and the lack of a male breadwinner, were its principal causes. Unemployment then played a small part. Now, in the week of investigation, insufficient employment accounts for nearly half of the total cases of poverty. Though unemployment in London is on a lower scale than in Great Britain as a whole, an average number, on any day of the year, of 134,000 was always unemployed in the period preceding the great slump. The incidence of unemployment on particular groups was much higher than this: and the London average rate in 1931 was 12%.

Every family of moderate size, in which the breadwinner is unemployed, and which is dependent solely on the Unemployed Insurance payment, is below the poverty line. This is because the Unemployment benefit does not profess to provide a living wage over a protracted period. The editor of *London Life and Labour* assumes that when the breadwinner

has for six months lost a quarter of his working time through unemployment, the family will be living below the poverty line: because savings become exhausted, the rent-collector becomes pressing, and the weekly benefit does not reach the thirty-eight to forty-one shillings limit at which the poverty line ends. Unemployment, as a cause of poverty, is in certain respects worse than more permanent causes. "The dynamic poverty caused by a sudden decrease in the usual means of subsistence is likely to produce more conscious distress than the static poverty caused by a low standard of living." The anxiety, and the loss of self-respect when the unemployment is prolonged, are causes of acute mental suffering to sensitive persons. In the cramped conditions of the worker's home, there is a strain upon temper, which is likely to affect domestic happiness.

Seven shillings and sixpence a week, without rent, is the minimum budget for a person living alone. The Old Age Pension of ten shillings a week will not pay for the rent of a room. Public Assistance Committees find that, in one out of six cases of old-age-pensioners, it is necessary to supplement the pension in order that the pensioner may be able to pay rent. Out of the specimen cases of old-age-pensioners visited, the investigators found "nearly one-third of the houses dark, dilapidated, damp or leaky". Generally speaking, the improvement in average conditions of employment and standard of living is "unevenly distributed and unequally consolidated and secured".

The family income is more than the average wage, because the wages of all earners in the family are pooled to calculate the income: but only exceeds it by about one-seventh. The average rent for the tenement is twelve shillings per week, and requires 15% of the family income. But there are very wide variations in rent, from three shillings to twenty shillings for a two-roomed tenement. On the British system, the percentage for the rent is naturally larger as the income becomes smaller and, for the family with the breadwinner unemployed, may easily amount to 25% or more. The three-roomed tenement is more common than any other. Rents above the average are not often the cause of poverty.

The level of real income has risen much faster than the improvement of housing accommodation. In a large number of cases, the surplus income above the poverty line would suffice to pay for decent accommodation, but there is none to which the families could move. The scarcity of houses is particularly marked in the poorer areas: in six of the poorest boroughs less than 1% of the dwellings were vacant at the census of 1931, as compared with 7½% in four of the wealthiest. Excluding middle-class households, nearly 30% of the population are crowded or overcrowded, according to the standards adopted for the London Survey. Nearly 10% are living three or more to a room; about as many, more than two but less than three to a room; rather more are living two to a room. The Manchester standard of overcrowding (which provides for

the separation of the sexes after ten years of age, and requires not more than two and a half persons per bedroom, counting the child as half a person) is equally violated. The editor calculates a deficiency of a quarter of a million houses. Many slum houses are in disrepair and verminous, and most of them are seriously overcrowded. A large number are irreparable, and ought to be pulled down. Drastic re-planning of obstructed areas, which often form pockets of slumdom and degradation, is needed. Sir E. D. Simon, who published an investigation of the same question in London in 1933, says that the houses which have been built to increase accommodation are all beyond the reach of the lower-paid worker: and the requirements are so vast, and the difficulties so special, that exceptional measures are necessary, and the solution will be a long process.

Trade Union organisation in London is very uneven. Some trades are highly organised and others little or not at all. Some unorganised trades receive protection from the Trade Boards Act, which provides for a minimum wage. London is the home of many small and moderate-sized firms as well as of large enterprises. The rapid growth of mechanisation tends to enlarge the scale of undertakings, and to eliminate casual and intermittent employment. Small firms have usually been associated with bad conditions for labour. The small workshop and the home worker still survive, but in a much less degree than forty years ago. There are no general regulations about hours of work.

Beggary survives under the disguise of petty hawking and musical performance. The volume of drinking is immensely diminished, but not the volume of the expenditure on drink. Gambling is responsible for a good deal of distress and corruption, but it is doubtful whether it is so damaging as the drink habit was a generation ago. Professional prostitution has declined and continues to decline. The editor of *London Life and Labour* puts the present number of commercial prostitutes at no more than 3,000.

When we turn from the conditions which lend themselves to statistical estimate to the less easily ponderable considerations affecting human liberty and self-respect, we must draw a distinction between the black-coated worker and the upper grade of mechanic, on the one hand, who are virtually of the middle class, and the rank and file of working men on the other. The British working man is under no legal disabilities which do not apply equally to all Britons: but, if he sleeps out he may get into trouble, and he will be well advised if he is not found "loitering". If he comes under suspicion, he will find it more difficult to satisfy police and magistrates than a man who is able to make a better show, or has a better trick of speech. The law is equal, but its administrators have a preference for the symbols of property, and are disposed to agree with the northern farmer that "the poor, in a loomp, is baad". He may exist, for a time, without working: at all events without doing more than the tramp's

task. In the long run, he must choose between finding employment with someone who is able and willing to give it, and beggary or starvation.

In his bargaining with the potential employer, and in the determination of the conditions of his work, the British worker receives some protection from the law, and some from the activities of the Trade Unions. In combination with others, he may strike for better terms : but it is a risky business, in times when unemployment is extensive. Normally, he must take what is offered, and, within limits, do what he is told. He is not a slave, but the employer and the manager are the masters. He does not own his tools : if he does, he is a self-employer, and not entitled to Insurance benefit when out of work. Beyond his wage, while he continues to receive it, he has no interest in the factory or workshop where he works. It will reject him ruthlessly, when his powers begin to fail, or when his work becomes unnecessary. This ruthlessness is an inevitable condition of survival in a competitive world.

If he is a member of a Trade Union, he has a voice in the choice of officials and in the determination of policy. The Trade Union is a powerful instrument of collective bargaining. Not more than one in three of the wage-earners, in the United Kingdom as a whole, is a member of a Trade Union. The influence of many employers is used to prevent the industrial organisation of their men.

At intervals of four or five years he is able to cast a vote for the choice of a representative in the House of Commons. With rare exceptions every successive Government is dominated by employers and owners of property, and the administration, the financial system, and the newspapers, are under the control of this class. For glaring injustices, recognised as such by the general conscience, he will find champions. But the general conscience accepts the general system, and is not tolerant of protests against it.

Roughly speaking, and subject to important palliatives, property is liberty : and the lack of it means dependence upon the will of those who have it, or of their paid assistants. This is mainly because property alone can give employment. Almost always there is a market for capital. Often there is no market for any but very special skill : and strength and skill perish while property survives.

Property alone can give employment, when the growth of population and the development of industrial civilisation have cut man off from access to the natural sources of subsistence. And property cannot always give it. It can give it, on a large scale, only if there is a market, at a satisfactory price, for the products of labour. Periodically this market fails, and the phenomena of large-scale unemployment appear.

It fails, in spite of powerful efforts, backed by diplomacy, and sometimes by war, to extend it abroad : and in spite of infinite ingenuity bestowed upon the arts of advertisement. Commercial rivalry, taking the form of cheap competition, accounts for something, but the principal

cause is the deficiency of purchasing power. We are often reminded that a few more shillings in the hands of the Indian agriculturist or the Chinese coolie would rehabilitate Lancashire. That the same thing is true of the pockets of the British workman is less commonly mooted. The idea appears at intervals like an unquiet ghost, who finds no vacant chair, at the economic banquet: where business men are too busy with the *hors d'œuvres* or the champagne to see it at all. The same man who would eagerly support a policy for the extension of foreign markets, and expend thousands on the advertisement of an alcohol, an amenity, or a convenience, takes a limited home-market for the great staples for granted. There is enough wealth in a limited circle to give profitable openings in a favourable season. The larger prospect of a nation-wide demand is overlooked: and a deliberate policy of increasing the incomes of all, if contemplated at all, seems like thimble-rigging. And yet it is plain enough that more work is capable of producing more commodities, and that more commodities are the essential pre-requisite of increased real incomes. Only the mechanism of market-exchange stands in the way.

In the meanwhile, it is necessary to restrict output, so that the smaller aggregate may find a market—it may be, and is, in the case of many luxuries and semi-luxuries, only among the wealthier section—at a price that pays the producer. Perishables—we would not exaggerate the extent to which this happens, it is sufficient that it does sometimes happen—are thrown away. Few plants, except for an emergency, work at full capacity.

The mentality of restriction spreads from the entrepreneur to the workman. The notion that there is a limited number of jobs, and that one must do nothing that might reduce the chances of one's fellows, takes root. Nevertheless we have been recently assured on good authority, in respect to the building industry, that the English worker produces about twice the volume that the Russian worker produces in the same time, and that the quality of the work of the Stakanovets builder would never be accepted in the United Kingdom. The Trade Unions fix the task, and fix it as low as their negotiating power will allow. Piece-work seems a trick to bring down time-rates. Interests seem—perhaps are—antagonistic: and profit-sharing a trick for the destruction of working-class solidarity in the struggle with the employer. All the essential conditions of a class-war come naturally into existence. To put the position at its best, the employer and the manager are the workman's opponents in the economic game. He and his fellows are on the defensive. He has no sense of "ownness" in the factory where he works. He knows how the boss lives, and he doubts the fairness of the sharing. When he himself has the advantage, he presses it ruthlessly. Why not? The boss will get rid of him whenever rationalisation makes it convenient to do so. In the meanwhile there is unemployment—a reservoir from which his place can be filled without difficulty unless he behaves himself: and unemployment,

in the anticipation as well as in the reality, is a hell for all who can think and feel.

The millions of working-class homes are so many millions of separate boxes, in which so many millions of women slave at millions of separate tasks, unaided by co-operation, and very little aided by mechanical device or electrical power: tugged at by children, and burdened with children to come: till temper and nerves are frayed into unnatural irritability: while the spectre of economic insecurity stands always at the door.

I have done what I could not to exaggerate these characteristics of British working life. They must be realised, if a just conception is to be formed of the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the life of the urban worker in the U.S.S.R. Let us begin by examining the extent to which actual compulsion to labour—not merely compulsion by the prospect of starvation or semi-starvation as in Great Britain—survives in the U.S.S.R. In doing this, I shall exclude from my purview the subject of penal labour, which belongs rather to prison management or criminal administration.

It is in respect to the timber camps of Karelia, and of northern Russia generally, that allegations of compulsion have been most freely made. A gifted journalist, who was excluded by the Gay-Pay-oo from the timber camps, has told us that forced labour has been employed in Karelia on a gigantic scale: but the enquiries of the Russian Timber Committee of the Timber Trade Federation, of the Central Executive of the Timber and Wood Workers' Union, and of the Anti-slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, all made in 1931, rebut this statement. Albert Rhys Williams in *The Russian Land* appears to be giving us a true picture, when he says that everyone curses Northern Woods, the state exploiting department. "But, at last, with many declarations of mutual esteem, the contracts are signed and the season's work begins." The truth, as I gather it from the evidence, is that the exploitation of timber is not every man's job. It requires some skill, and a good deal of strength: and a conscript force would not be likely to deal with it in a satisfactory fashion. Commercial rivalry has exaggerated, if it has not invented, the charges against the Timber administration of the U.S.S.R.

This is not to say that there is no compulsion of labour under the Socialist Government. The practice descends from two, perhaps from three, lines of ancestry. One is the immemorial usage of purely or mainly agricultural countries, in which no general body of wage-labour has yet come into existence, of calling upon the occupiers of land to deal with emergencies. For certain purposes, such as the seasonal repair of roads, there is actually no alternative, in primitive conditions, to this practice, and there is no more hesitation about turning out the countryside for such work than there is for a hue and cry after a thief. The *trinoda necessitas* of British history is a regularised and limited form of the usage.

All that can fairly be asked is that such demands upon labour shall be limited to real emergencies, evenly distributed, and properly paid for.

Another line by which the compulsion of labour has established itself in the U.S.S.R. is the revolutionary principle: He who does not work, neither shall he eat. At the beginning of the Revolution, members of the *bourgeoisie* were put on to the nastiest tasks, and the literature gives us a picture, too convincing to be anything but true, of the nocturnal summons of the bookish gentleman for the performance of them. The law requires, in public crises, all men between eighteen and forty-five and all women between eighteen and forty (except pregnant and nursing mothers and mothers with no one to look after their children) to do public work. After the Civil War, armies, for which there was no immediate military need, were engaged for a time in felling trees, building roads, and unloading and loading freight cars.

Those who have experience of the employment of unwilling labour are aware that it seldom pays for its own food and lodging, and for the overhead charges of control and management. On a large scale it can only be used effectively for the simplest and most unskilled tasks, scavenging, earth-work, stone-breaking and the like. Though excellent carpets have been made in Indian jails, the business reduced the net expenditure on the convicts without completely defraying it. In this fact lies the true safeguard against the extensive employment of compulsory labour. It was made clearly manifest in the last days of serfdom. For any but the very simplest kind of unskilled task, it *does not pay*. But the Soviet Statute Book contains examples of the use of it. In the spring of 1930, there is to be "rigorous discipline in connection with timber-floating, after the thaw", and labour is to be despatched from collective farms to "seasonal branches of the national economy—construction, floating, agriculture, loading and unloading". Demands for labour for loading and unloading of grain, and of export and import goods, are to have priority: and all unemployed persons (this refers to 1930) are to obey the call for work on these tasks, on pain of deprivation of unemployment benefit. Intellectual workers are included in this order. Labour organisations are to create voluntary brigades of shock-workers to work off accumulations of unloading and loading. As I have already noted elsewhere, the system of agreements with collective farms for the use of their surplus labour involves a measure of compulsion upon individuals.

There is yet a third form which compulsion takes: and that is the use of skilled workers as officials, liable to transfer from one place, and from one job, to another. A decree of October 20th, 1930, empowered the authorities to send skilled workmen in unimportant branches of work to coal-mining, iron, steel, and construction enterprises. A little later, persons having technical experience of railway work were recalled to railway service, and in June, 1931, an order issued that a worker must go where

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he is sent. This would not strike a Western critic as a hardship in the case of a postal or a railway official, so long as the conditions of transfer were equitable and all its expenses paid. In proportion as the worker develops into a functionary, to be permanently provided for by the State which employs him, a further development on these lines seems to be perfectly logical. It is an abatement of liberty, paid for, as in the case of the official, by a guarantee of employment and pension. As a consequence, an apparently necessary consequence, of the relations between the Socialist State and the individual, it gives occasion for thought. But, if we desire that kind of liberty which consists in economic security, we must, it would seem, be prepared to sacrifice that kind of liberty which consists in doing what we please at the cost of economic security. Perhaps there is no such thing as doing what we please, except upon a basis of pecuniary independence. It is one of the middle-class illusions, which do not deceive the man who depends upon the wage of his daily labour. He knows that he is free—to tramp or starve.

There is, in fact, a radical contradiction between the British and the Russian type of liberty. A comparison of the status and functions of Trade Unions in the two cases will furnish further illustration of this contradiction. In spite of the attempt made in 1927 to limit its influence, the British Trade Union movement is truly representative of its members, and responsive to the sentiment of the majority of them. Most of the workers are outside of its ranks: but it is likely that its existence confers advantages on more than its members. It is, so far, as free from official and social influence as the British affection for rank and distinction will allow any British movement to be. It honestly aims at the good of its members: that is to say, it seeks the improvement of conditions, the increase of pay, and the lightening of toil. It does not aim at the increase of output and, indeed, appears to be indifferent to this consideration. This is because the increase of output is conceived as advantageous to the employer, and as not advantageous, possibly disadvantageous, to the worker, as involving a reduction in the number of available jobs. The advantage to the community as a whole, including the worker, of increased output, is obscured by the system of distribution.

After a long struggle, beginning with the attempt in the early days of the Revolution to achieve the Syndicalist ideal of industrial and social control by the Trade Unions—an ideal very close to that of the Anarchists—the Trade Unions have settled down in the U.S.S.R. as organs of the State. Membership has long ceased to be compulsory, but the subscription (1% of pay) is so small, and the advantages of membership so obvious, that the movement covers 80–90% of the whole body of urban workers in all categories. In its virtual universality the Trade Union system of the U.S.S.R. is markedly contrasted with that of Britain, and still more markedly with that of the U.S.A.

It has been notorious that elections to Trade Union offices in the

U.S.S.R. were influenced, if not actually dictated, by authority: but, since the introduction of the new Constitution of 1936, Stalin has insisted upon secret voting, and it is probable that these orders have been generally carried out, with such reservations as are implied in the dominant position of the Communist Party. But it is in the functions, rather than in the organisation, that the difference between the British and the Russian Trade Union reveals itself.

The All-Union Joint Trade Union Congress, and its elected Central Committee, have inherited the functions of the former Commissariats of Labour in the Union and the Constituent Republics, and a portion of those of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. If we assume them to be actually democratic in constitution, not only all working-class institutions, including all branches of social insurance, but all factory inspection, and all labour recruiting, are controlled by representatives of the workers themselves. We have the authority of the Webbs for saying that the collective bargaining with the agencies of production, which is carried out by the All-Union Congress of the individual trades, in consultation with the Central Trade Union Committee, is a reality and no mere form. That it was not always so, we learn from S. Zagorsky's work on Wages, published by the International Labour Organisation in 1930. What we there see is an allotment of available funds by agreement between central authorities, followed by a distribution of them over particular industries and undertakings, in consultation with the Trade Unions. In September, 1929, there is a definite ruling that no one can demand an increase in funds determined by the central authority for providing increments in wages. It does not appear that there has been any essential change of procedure since. The officials of the Central Trade Union Committee sit down with the officials representing the various Commissariats, and the State Planning Committee. The clerks bring up the figures, showing how much is available for wages. When the accuracy of the calculation is verified, that amount becomes a sort of artificial wages-fund, out of which all claims are to be met. The rest is merely a question of distribution.

This is all most reasonable: but it is not bargaining, in the ordinary sense of the word, which implies the possibility, on each side, of withholding something from the other. The assumption in the U.S.S.R. is that a Trade Union is to protect, not wage-rates in its particular industry, but the earnings and conditions of all the wage-earners: and this is to be achieved by a general increase of productivity which gives a larger surplus for distribution. Therefore, as it appears to me, there is no bargaining. Beside the width of its functions as the manager of working-class institutions, and of social insurance, and the controller of factory inspection, the Russian differs from the corresponding British movement in two important particulars. It is not a potential organiser of strikes, and it seeks to stimulate productivity and to raise technical proficiency—

that is to say, it has, as one of its aims, co-operation with the Employer State in the increase of output.

There is no law which prohibits strikes. There were seven as recently as 1929-30. It is argued that they are unnecessary because, with the end of the exploiting class, there is no enemy party. The workers are one with the Workers' State, and can have no interest that conflicts with it. The enquiry which precedes the formulation of the collective "bargain" is an ascertainment of facts, not an examination of claims. The amount available for the wages of the worker is the whole balance of the State's receipts after the needs of public expenditure have been met. Simple arithmetic admits of no dispute. That the State may be making demands for military defence, for the adornment of the capital, or for other purposes which to some may seem excessive: that there may be differences between different groups of workers regarding the division of the product, after all exploitation has come to an end: that there may be tyranny of the whole as against the part, of the majority as against the minority, of a favoured minority as against the majority: these contingencies do not enter into consideration.

Can we feel satisfied that the interests of the worker are safeguarded, when the organisation which should protect him is, by a fundamental assumption of the system, precluded from protecting him by strike—in other words, from enforcing its power of bargain by withholding the labour which is the subject-matter of the bargain? The Russian answer is: Yes. Liberty is secured to the class, when its fundamental interests are secured. And the fundamental interests are something corporate, of course. In his early days of power, Trotsky himself put the case thus, as between the Party and the general body of workers. "In the substitution of the power of the Party for the power of the working class, there is in reality no substitution at all. The Communists express the fundamental interests of the working class." And of course, there was no minority, no fraction, no individual, to be taken into account. The true liberty of the individual would be realised in a complete economic security, setting him free for the development of his personality in the classless society.

S. Zagorsky makes plain to us the actual course which the Trade Unions were taking, when he wrote in 1930, to support the claims of their members. They played their part, of course, along with the manager of the factory and the local representative of the Party, as the *Troika* for the decision of industrial disputes. But, since there was no *ultima ratio*, no possibility in the final resort of withholding labour, they did not play it, as responsible negotiators. They satisfied the men by asking for too much, and referred the unsettled differences to the Court of Arbitration; passed the baby, if we may be pardoned for using the language of the market-place. In this shifting of the responsibility of decision, we note a characteristic Russian weakness: which drastic punishments only aggravate.

The notion of the Trade Union movement, as a co-operator with the State in the stimulation of productivity, is shocking to the fundamental sentiment of the British Trade Unionist, who conceives his duty to lie in the direction of protecting the worker against the normal tendency of the employer to exact a larger task. The Russian conception is framed in the interest of the community as a whole, which certainly stands to gain by increased output, and cannot be enriched without it: while the British is framed in the interest of the worker whom the employer must not be permitted to exploit. The encouragement of the pace-maker in Russian industry is carried very far indeed. The shock-worker, who increased his output by sheer power of muscle, and enjoyed the best conditions as the reward of his achievement, has been succeeded by the *Stakhanovets*, of whose function something has already been said elsewhere in these studies. The peculiar danger of piece-work is that this method of remuneration will be used to bring down wage-rates by alteration of the norms. This is actually occurring, and we are not surprised at hearing of discontent among those who cannot stand the pace, and even of murderous attacks upon Stakhanovites. The British worker, from his own peculiar point of view, as one who seeks to checkmate efforts to hasten the pace, would probably call them blacklegs.

The city shops are filled with articles of luxury and semi-luxury for which the average wage is certainly unable to pay. One of Mrs. Seema Rynin Allan's correspondents at Moscow wrote in 1937 with enthusiasm about the varieties of bread, jams, jellies, canned fruit and vegetables at attainable prices. She added that dress material of every kind, from calico to velvet, was available, but at very high prices: and that stockings could be had at prices ranging from 70 kopecks to 20 roubles a pair (from two pence to four shillings!), "not as good as foreign, but can be worn". She mentioned that Moscow had stopped making her particular shade of lipstick: so toilette decorations are evidently not altogether neglected. It is an inevitable inference that the new super-piece-workers are buying many of these things, and that society is being transformed by the growth of a new kind of sectional prosperity, having, indeed, a better claim than the old, because it is graduated according to work, but creative of new jealousies. There seems to be nothing to protect the worker against the temptation to exhaust prematurely his reserves of strength. At the same time we must recognise that the norms of production in Russia are extremely low: and that the only way of raising them to something approaching the Western standard, is to begin by utilising the willingness of the few to do more work, or to organise their work better.

It is low productivity which, next to the dread of foreign attack, continues to be the fundamental anxiety of the U.S.S.R. There is a call in official quarters for a collective Stakhanovism, and the inefficacy of the individual record-breaker, as a means of increasing general productivity, has recently been emphasised. Stalin himself insisted on it in his speech

of March 5th, 1937, to the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Among other "rotten" mistakes which he there enumerated was a boastful confidence in the achievements of the Stakhanovite workers. In April, 1937, the journal of the all-Union Communist Party wrote of the continuing backwardness of the country both in the quantity and in the quality of the product. Something is needed which will effect an escape from the contrary faults of the British and the Russian Trade Union systems: will amend the former by taking account of the community's need of increased production, and the latter by protecting the worker against overstrain. In the meanwhile we can only register the fact that the Trade Union movement in the U.S.S.R. does not defend the individual against overwork. In too many cases he protects himself, by an invincible slackness, confident of the difficulty of replacing him in a society which needs all hands.

But we shall leave a wrong impression if we stop at this point. There are plenty of Russian workers who care nothing for their work. The proportion of labour turnover, and the large number of "flitters", prove this. But a very general characteristic is a pride, of *ownness*, if not of ownership, in the factory and the job. Frau Koerber, who enrolled herself as a worker in the Putilov factory at Leningrad in July, 1931, "continually had the impression of being on a visit to the women workers, because they seem so like hostesses anxious to show their guest all the new household arrangements". Mrs. Margaret Cole made a similar reflection. "The factory is my father", sang the Communist poet. The aim of making the factory a social centre, as well as a place of work, has been deliberate. The best of the modern factories are surrounded by workers' settlements having a complete equipment for all needs, schools, hospitals, clubs, theatres, baths. They remind me of great British Public Schools in their cultivation of *esprit de corps*. The sense of *ownness* goes deep. "You would think they owned the country", wrote Mr. Knickerbocker: "maybe they do, and maybe they don't: but they think so, and I have never seen the slave who thought he was the boss." To help in the completion of the Moscow Subway workers gave up their holidays, and embarrassed the organisers with their volunteer assistance. It was their *own* subway at which they were working. The feeling sometimes extends to the State as a whole. There is a story of a seven-year-old boy visiting the Zoo. He was told that the elephant belonged to the State: and, after a few moments of thought, said: "Then a little bit of it belongs to me". They may have told him that at school, perhaps, but it does not matter how the feeling comes, if it is there. Long experience of special privilege for some members of the group might destroy it: but at present it is still a reality. While it lasts, it is a guarantee of enthusiasm, and will salve many a sore back and shoulders. It is the team-spirit, raised to a higher power, and operating in a wider field.

It is likely that Russians have a special aptitude for a communal feeling

of this kind. It is very noticeable in the theatre, where the perfection of acting is sometimes achieved by perfect drilling and combined effort, without the prominence of particular "stars". It is not new, for Turgenev in his *Sketches of a Sportsman* has given us an example of it in the old world of serfdom. Extended to a larger sphere, it becomes devotion to the State.

A fourth form of compulsion has recently established itself (October, 1940) in the restriction of the choice of employment by a proportion of the young people. Some of them are selected by the Committees of collective farms for industrial training, and required to remain for a limited period in the trade to which they are allotted. Virtually this is industrial conscription, and the compulsion is fortified by the charging of fees in secondary schools where a more general education is given. This step was taken as a part of the measures for national defence, and may or may not represent a permanent policy.

Alongside of the possibilities of compulsion to be exercised by the Employer State, that State has formulated a fundamental principle for the defence of the status and dignity of the worker. There was a moment when the well-to-do peasant was permitted to hire labour as well as lease land. This was before Stalin and the Communist Party decided on that dramatic turn to the Left which is associated with the first Five-Year-Plan and the collectivisation of the land. It is still permissible to pay a "hired girl" for domestic tasks. In fact, full liberty for women to undertake equal work along with men would hardly be attainable on any other terms. We must take note, however, that the employer of a "hired girl" for domestic work does not make a profit out of her labour: and it is the making of a profit out of the labour of others, which is the head and front of the offence of exploitation. Collective farms may pay experts to help them with their agriculture, masons to do their building work, and extra labour in the emergencies of the harvest season. With these rare exceptions, the employment of one person by another is against the law. The State and the public agencies subordinate to the State have a monopoly of employment: and "exploitation", which means the enjoyment of the profit on one man's labour by another, is forbidden. Trotsky says that inequality of remuneration, and inequality in the income of collective farms, are leading to violation of this principle. It may be so, but the offenders risk punishment and can only act by stealth.

Is the worker better off when his only exploiter is the Employer State or the Employer City or some such public body, than when he must go to the owner of the small workshop, or to the manager of the private firm, or of the Joint Stock Company, to ask for work? It depends in part upon that sense of *ownness* of which I have spoken above. Materially he is no better off. He may even find it harder to resist pressure, when the opposite party has all the weight of public authority. But if he feels himself one with his public employer, his position gains immensely in moral

dignity. And let no one suppose that a gain in moral dignity and self-respect is not desired by the working man. Even where the sense of *ownness* is less strong than it is in the U.S.S.R., the position of the public employee has its attractions. There is a justifiable assumption that caprice will be less arbitrary, and public opinion more powerful. At the worst, and the lowest, there is a satisfaction in getting rid of the fictitious superiority and the leonine partition of the private firm and the private employer. Whatever be the sentiments, good, bad, or indifferent, which prompt the preference, I believe it to be general.

The dictatorship of the Proletariat—that is, of the wage-earner uncorrupted by the mentality of property—though so obviously not to be literally realised in the sphere of high politics, has been no meaningless phrase in the U.S.S.R. “They are a cocky lot”, wrote Mr. Knickerbocker. They have had reason to be cocky, elevated as they were to the position of the dominant class, from which the Revolution had ousted the remnants of feudalism and the nascent *bourgeoisie*. “She’s no worker”, protested the disputant, justifying his rudeness to a woman in the tram. To be of worker stock was an asset in the struggle for favour and promotion. “You were born with a silver spoon in your mouth because you happen to be a proletarian”, says the disappointed son of a senator in the play, to the woman student who has been elected to an Assistant Professorship on the strength of her qualification in the Workers’ Faculty. The whole of the ration system, twice established, had for its object the securing of the town worker’s food and clothing when food and clothing were short. There are signs that this unquestioned dominance of a class is coming to an end. On the one hand, it is being divided by the special pay and privileges of the champion worker. On the other hand, the new Constitution threatens a new equality in politics of the worker and the peasant. But an honourable status, satisfactory to the sense of human dignity, has been secured by the Revolution to the Russian worker in virtue of his work. No one would deny an honourable status to the British worker—if he touches his cap.

I have digressed: I hope, not without justifying the digression. The Trade Union, along with the Factory Committee, which is a section of the Trade Union in a particular undertaking, is no longer a potential fighting machine, but an instrument for the improvement of output: which, taken over the whole field, is a necessary condition, if not necessarily the cause, of improved real wages for the workers in general. The aspect of the Trade Union, as an agent in the enforcement of labour discipline, was emphasised in the closing days of 1938 by legislation which halved the insurance benefits of workers who were not members of Trade Unions. But the Trade Union is a forum for the complaints of the worker, and a channel through which the Government addresses him on important questions of social policy. It can generally secure the dismissal of an unpopular manager: it can prevent the unjust dismissal

of an individual worker. It assists in the decision of disputes, without having more than moral force behind its contentions. It administers the laws for the inspection of factories. It administers the funds of social insurance, some milliards of roubles annually, a sum enormously in excess of the aggregate of the contributions to Trade Union funds derived from members. The worker does not contribute to the fund for social insurance and social services. Since the sum for expenditure is taken out of the total set aside for the payment of wages, by agreement between the Central Council of Trade Unions and the Commissariats concerned, it has been argued that he pays indirectly the whole of it. I will not attempt to follow this argument into all the vistas which it opens. At all events the worker is not aware that he contributes, any more than he is aware that he pays the tariff charges which form part of the British fiscal system.

The payment of Unemployment Insurance came to an end in October, 1930, when the marked scarcity of labour required for the first Five-Year-Plan put an end to mass unemployment. It was never administered by the Trade Unions, who took over their functions in connection with Social Insurance only in 1933. While it lasted, it was subject to criticism for its inadequacy, and it made no provision for the large number of unregistered unemployed.

Social Insurance, in general, does not cover the self-employers, and therefore excludes the peasantry, both individualist farmers and members of collective farms. These last have their own arrangements, in the form of a percentage of net produce put aside by each farm for social objects. Since there is wide variation in the productivity of the farms, there is also wide variation in the provision made for these objects. For urban employees there are sickness and medical benefits and old-age benefit at sixty years: and mothers received till recently full pay for two months before and two months after the birth of a child: but the discovery of abuses led, at the end of 1938, to the stricter definition of the conditions, and the reduction of the duration of maternity benefit to thirty-five days before, and twenty-eight days after, confinement. At the same time there was a similar tightening-up in the conditions of sick benefit, in general, by reason of the prevalence of malingering, and other changes were made in the regulations for social insurance with a view to the improvement of labour discipline and the discouragement of labour-flux. It was provided, for instance, that the statutory annual holiday with pay may be taken only after eleven months of continuous service in one and the same enterprise: and incapacitation pensions were varied according to the number of years last worked continuously in the same enterprise. Measures were also taken to enforce the full statutory working day, and to compel the vacation of workers' dwellings in the event of resignation or dismissal. These pills were sweetened by a provision that the economies resulting from the changes made should be expended in

workers' dwellings and other amenities: and new honorific distinctions carrying pecuniary benefits were instituted.

There are admirable rest-homes at the seaside and in the mountains, but they do not suffice for more than a small portion of the working population. Complaints have recently been made of the heaviness of the charges for cost of administration which the residents have to pay. Inevitably favouritism plays a part. There have been scandals, but it does not appear that they are more numerous than in other administrations where favours are dispensed. Children enjoy a large share in these good things, and the children's holiday camp, or a party of children marching off to train or boat for a summer outing, is generally a model of kindly and effective organisation. They are closely shepherded, and taught what to sing, and what to do: but it is difficult to imagine any other way of dealing with children in masses. No person under the age of eighteen is admitted to work: whereas, in England, boys and girls of fourteen to eighteen are working ten to twelve hours a day, and children of twelve are allowed, under certain conditions, to work before and after school hours. There are still beggars upon the Russian streets and at places where travellers resort, so the wage and the social insurance do not cover all cases. The visitor who knew pre-Revolution Russia receives the impression that drunkenness is less than it was. Prostitution has been very greatly diminished: by the extensive employment for women and of equal pay for equal work: but luxury prostitution has made its appearance, along with expensive shops and wide inequality of piece-work wages in the cities. It seems that the existence of luxuries unattainable to the ordinary wage inevitably breeds this phenomenon: which is less simple than that of the hungry woman offering herself for the means of livelihood.

The absence since 1930 of a cost-of-living index, and of family budgets, and of every statistical provision for calculation of the value of real wages, stands in the way of effective generalisation on the general standard of living, even in the towns. The Central Statistical Office maintained a cost-of-living index up to 1929. It was then dropped, not, I think, from the wish to conceal facts, but because rationing, and the introduction of several categories of shops with varying price systems, made calculation impossible. No one who has attempted to thread his way through that labyrinth will be surprised that the official statisticians abandoned the task. But uniform retail prices, or at least a uniform system of calculation, appeared in 1935, when rationing was abandoned, and the reason for the abolition of the cost-of-living index has ceased to exist. Pending its re-establishment, I am aware of no possibility of improving, in principle, upon the method adopted by Mr. Colin Clark in his *Critique of Russian Statistics*, 1939. He gives us good reasons for believing that the real value of the Russian urban worker's wage in 1934 was, on the average, equivalent to that of an English weekly wage of seventeen shillings and seven-

pence. This conclusion is arrived at by applying, to the calculated expenditure per worker, the British scale of prices for the same commodities and services. Thus the Russian expenditure on rent of five roubles a month is represented by the sum of twelve shillings: not because the rouble is supposed to be worth more than two shillings, but because similar accommodation in England would cost that amount.

Before we draw the inference that the average Russian urban worker received, in 1934, a wage rather less than half of that at which *London Life and Labour* drew the poverty line (thirty-eight to forty-one shillings per week), there are some very important differences to be observed between the two cases. One is a difference in the economic constitution of the family. In Britain the family normally consists of a bread-winner, a housekeeper, and a varying number of dependants who break off and form new families a few years after they reach the wage-earning stage. In other words, the bread-winner's wage contains a concealed, or unavowed, wage for his housekeeper. The family income in London is arrived at by adding to the principal wage 13% from other sources, mainly the earnings of former dependants. The one wage has to provide, permanently for two; and over a long period, for three, four or even five persons. In Moscow, on the other hand, the housekeeper is, in a very large number of instances, a direct earner: and the number of dependants actually averages only about $1\frac{1}{2}$ per wage-earner. To make the comparison a true one, we must therefore make it clear to ourselves that the Russian wage of seventeen shillings and sevenpence per week was for $2\frac{1}{2}$ persons, whereas the British wage with which we are mentally comparing it was for a larger number.

Another consideration not to be ignored is that there is a subjective, as well as an objective, element in poverty. What the Russian was able to buy with his wage in 1934 was purchasable in England for a wage below the poverty line in that country. It does not follow that he felt the pinch of poverty in anything like the degree represented by the difference in the figures. His living and eating habits are, traditionally, and today, far less expensive than those of his opposite number in London. He gets as many calories, and possibly as good a supply of vitamins, out of a much cheaper type of food: and he pays, for accommodation which does not shock his sense of decency or even of comfort, an immensely lower rent. Sir John Russell has calculated that the Plan for 1937, assuming its fulfilment in respect to food (and the harvest of that year was exceptionally bountiful, quite unparalleled in the agricultural history of revolutionary Russia), would have given to each inhabitant of the U.S.S.R., per head, quantities of meat, eggs, milk and milk products, margarine and fish, somewhat less than half of those consumed per head in Great Britain: about one-third of the amount of sugar, twice the amount of flour, and 160% of the weight of potatoes. These figures illustrate the radical difference in the standards of diet in the two countries—standards

the relative cost of which is only partially relevant to the respective degrees of well-being.

Meat is certainly, as it always has been, eaten to a very much smaller extent in Russia than in the United Kingdom. Bread is still largely the staff of life in the former country, and it is primarily to changes in the quality and quantity of bread that we must look to find improvement of diet. One change which has been steadily in progress for past years, and is perhaps the most convincing evidence of a general rise in the standard of comfort, is the increased consumption of wheat per head of the population. The figures of the Institute of Agriculture at Rome show that the consumption of wheat per head in pre-war Russia, excluding its use for seed, was over 81 kilograms, about half as much as in Britain, and more than half as much as in the U.S.A. This figure runs counter to the traditional belief in black rye bread as the diet of Russia, but it shows that wheat as well as rye has long been important. The economist Yugov, writing in 1927-28, notes that there has been a general inclination of late years to eat wheaten bread instead of rye, and that between 1922 and 1925-26 the rural consumption of wheat increased by nearly two-fifths and the urban by nearly three-quarters, while the consumption of rye was diminishing in somewhat smaller proportions. In the one year 1926-27 he says that there was an increase of 7-8% in the consumption of white bread. For later years there is no continuous statistical evidence, but there was a similar substitution of wheat for rye between 1933 and 1936, and the change has probably been progressive. The aggregate out-turn of wheat has increased, and the export has diminished, leaving a net balance per head of population greater than formerly, available for consumption, and—since there is no increase in the animal population—presumably consumed by human beings.

Flour and potatoes largely take the place of meat, eggs and milk products. Tea is an article of very exceptional consumption, and beer plays a much smaller part than in the life of the London worker. Fruit is a rarity: and cabbages and cucumbers make up most of the vegetable supply. Canned goods, though now making their appearance in increased quantities, are far less frequently on the table than in Britain. Life generally is simpler and nearer to nature. The differences in diet make a smaller wage go further. But it is in the item of rent that the advantage of the Russian over the British worker is most marked.

Recent investigators have made us familiar with the fact that the housing of the urban workers, by comparison with that of Britain, on the average, is bad. In Moscow, for instance, we know that there is, on the average, only 45 square feet of space (not including kitchen, passage, lavatory, bath and staircase) for each individual: and that a fraction of the people in the city have only 30 square feet per head, which means just room for a bed. We also know that there has been a falling off in building enterprise of late years in consequence of the diversion of

resources to preparation against military attack. I feel no doubt that other considerable towns present a no less unsatisfactory picture. The (illicit) renting out of a room, made available only by increased overcrowding, is still an occasional source of profit. The rate of construction is still quite inadequate, but it is important to get the right perspective. It is with India, and with Tsarist Russia, that the comparison should be made. The report of Mr. Whitley's Industrial Commission shows even more shocking conditions in Bombay and other rapidly industrialised cities. In Tsarist Russia (as in the Russia of to-day) the standard of accommodation, even for what we should call the upper middle class, was low. Dostoievsky has described in *The Idiot* the apartment of an official family: the father (a retired General), the mother, the grown son, the grown daughter, the schoolboy son: all living in four rooms, two of them small. But this family has a lodger, and it takes in Prince Myshkin as a guest. Even if there was no maid living in, they averaged, when at the full complement, 1.75 per room, which *London Life and Labour* would classify as "crowding" for a worker's family. If there was a maid, the case was on the borderline of "overcrowding" for General, Prince, and all. Where did they all live and sleep? We must get out of our heads the notion—it is not a Russian notion, and it is not an Indian notion—that living-rooms and sleeping-rooms must be separate, and that each person is entitled to a room. The nightly ritual, by which each person assumes a special costume, and deposits himself in a special apparatus known as a bed, is a novelty still incompletely assimilated.

The description in *The Idiot* represents conditions in the sixties. At the same period, in the poorer quarters, a single room was often let out to several families, *each of which occupied a corner*. It is a precise parallel to a Bombay case cited by Mr. Whitley, except that in the latter there was a *fifth corner*, made by a large table upon which a fifth family slept. A great deal later (in 1908), the textile workers of Moscow slept, three-fifths of them, on bunks in barracks. There was no question of housing them, any more than there is—or was till very recently—any question of housing the publicly plying *jhampanis* at Simla. They curl up in their rugs in a shed, or in a shop in the bazaar.

The cities of Russia emptied themselves in the early years of the Revolution when the towns were nearly starving: but filled again with great rapidity. Rapid industrialisation in the period of the first Plan brought great waves of population to the urban centres. Much was done. But the majority have hardly yet been rescued from the stage in which migrant labour lay down on the floor of a cellar, or on a piece of cloth stretched between two boards: much as it had formerly lain down in a corner of the field, when the harvest work was heavy. *Town life is still a novelty.*

Just about the time of Stalin's speech in which he called, among other things, for improved living conditions for the workers (see Chapter XIV),

86% of the houses in Moscow were of wood : sometimes covered externally with plaster or concrete : 40% of the streets had no sewage system : whole municipal districts were without any piped supply of water. Life in large aggregations is an art which is slowly learned. If fortune (or misfortune) takes the visitor to the extreme outskirts of the growing city to-day, he will find conditions very much the same : alongside of the bed of a stream, which is just learning to be a drain : and making a mess of the lesson. The ten-year plan for Moscow shows that the new art is being studied with energy and purpose, and that is about as far as the U.S.S.R. has got at present. India, with a much older town civilisation, but even younger in mass industrialisation, has not got any further.

In seeking our perspective we have to recall that excellent communal arrangements, in the form of catering establishments, day crèches for the care of children, workers' clubs, parks for rest and amusement, cheap entertainments, have been provided on a handsome scale, in the cities. The annual budget of social insurance is over 6 milliard roubles, administered by half a million members of Insurance Soviets and Insurance delegates from the Trade Unions, and dealing with pensions and invalidity payments, rest-houses and sanatoria for adults and children, maternity benefits, children's camps, touring, mountain-climbing and physical culture. Holidays with pay, in the mountains and at the sea, are available for the more fortunate. The money value of the benefits from social services has been calculated at 34.5% of the individual wage, whereas it is probably about 16% of it in England. We may reasonably ask ourselves : Is the good home precisely what the gregarious Russian most wants? Perhaps, when he has experience of it, he will want it as much as the Yorkshireman and the Lancashire man want it. For the present it is hardly an attainable goal. Industrialisation is too young to provide it. The bad home, which for the majority takes the place of the good one, is at least inexpensive, and the rent does not swallow a sixth of the whole family income, according to the British example, but rather the thirtieth part.

To return to what is, for the moment, our main theme, the respective real values of the Russian and the British urban wage ; the comparative inefficiency of retail distribution in the U.S.S.R. has become, since the abolition of rationing, more than ever closely relevant to the question. The authorities obviously encourage the comic Press to pillory the defects of the state and co-operative shops. The high-and-mighty shopman, the cross shopman, the stupid shopman, the empty shelves, are stock jokes. Efforts are made by the training of the personnel to make the profession a skilled and honourable one : but a preference for the triumphs of productive work, and a dislike for counter-jumping and, more recently, the wish for a seat at the official desk, seem to be ingrained in the more ambitious and efficient of the Soviet workers. Private individuals, working under licence, make and supply certain goods and services, including

tailoring, upholstery, cabinet-making, plumbing, and repairs. The collective farm markets help out the food supply. Model shops have been set up in the great cities, with service of a high standard and delivery to customers' houses. Advertisement, especially for prepared foods and for luxury goods, is a growing practice. *But I feel no doubt that inconvenient access to retail supplies lowers the real value of the cash-wage.*

In 1928 the International Labour Office concluded that the real value of the Moscow wage was then exactly 50% of the English. There is no evidence that it represented any greater proportion of the latter in 1934, after which date the data for the comparison come to an end. After 1935 the Russian annual compilation known as *Socialist Construction* ceased to be published, probably from the fear of giving economic secrets away to Germany. Mr. Colin Clark has cited figures (he is careful to call them provisional) which show a rise up to 1937 both in agricultural and industrial output, and an increase between 1934 and 1937 by as much as 42% in the average income of the working population taken as a whole. It is possible that an increase is taking place: and that, when satisfactory and complete statistics again become available, the Russian urban standard will be shown to be less far below the British than it has hitherto been. In the meanwhile, I have attempted, in Appendix IV to this study, to show what the Russian urban wage was capable of purchasing in 1937-38. I think it left rather more than 500 roubles a year for each individual to buy clothes and industrial commodities and pay for amenities other than communal.

Outside of wage and price statistics, and of those propagandist statements which naturally awaken the suspicion of the enquirer, there are some indications of an increased divisible product in the U.S.S.R., and of an increasingly efficient method of securing the share of the cities in that product. As explained elsewhere, there was, for the first time in 1937, when there was an extraordinarily good harvest following immediately on a very bad one, evidence of a rise in the out-turn of cereal crops to the acre; and—since the Census shows a diminution of the rural population by 5%—this is accompanied by increased agricultural production per agricultural worker. Hitherto agricultural yields had not increased, mainly because certain advantages of collectivisation had been neutralised by the loss of manure. The use of machinery has made it possible to bring more of the crop home. Additions to cultivated area, and changes in cropping, have increased the gross total and value of the product. The growers of certain crops, especially cotton and sugar-beet, have benefited materially. The export of food has substantially diminished: and the waste of food has been greatly reduced by the operations of the Commissariat of Food, and the processing and storage of meat, fish, milk, grain, vegetables and fruit, which have been consequences of the collection of revenue-in-kind. The growth of industry cannot be estimated in figures, because of the uncertainty and variation of the value of the

rouble : but it is quantitatively very great. There is rather more food, and a good deal more of the product of industry, per head of the population. But, so far as the urban population goes, the arrangements for supply have, in gross, and with some reservation due to bad retailing, been immensely improved by the efficiency of the collection of the revenue-in-kind. There are net gains : and the gains have gone partly to the growers of industrial crops, but mainly to the cities : partly in the form of public amenities, partly in that of an improved standard of living.

The Russian worker, like the British, has his share in the machinery of the workers' State brought periodically home to him by the exercise of his vote, both for the Soviets and for the Trade Union organisation. The practices of issuing instructions to representatives, of receiving reports from them, and of recalling them if their conduct of public business is not satisfactory, are calculated to give to representative institutions a reality which is lacking to them for the working-man in Great Britain, unless he is a particularly active politician. In both cases they contribute something to the worker's self-respect. Whether the contribution is greater in the one case than in the other, I am doubtful. In both there are considerable potentialities for the exceptional man, not much for the rank and file.

There was a statutory seven-hour day, which has recently been suspended to meet the needs of defence. It must be understood, in respect to this and to everything else in the U.S.S.R., that the laws show what the law-makers would desire, rather than what they are actually able to enforce. I myself have travelled on a slow local train with a conductor who was on duty, with such intervals of sleep as he could snatch, for thirty-six hours. Of a woman who supplemented her factory earnings with washing, Mrs. Beatrice King writes :

"I do not know when she rested, but then I found Russians worked the most amazing hours in some cases. . . . In the household where I stayed in Moscow the servant rose one morning at four a.m. to do the household's fortnightly wash and had not finished at 2 p.m. These long hours at strange times are partly due to the fact that life is not very organised."

It is not organised at all. The visitor at a Russian hotel is aware that the native life is a night life, that the band plays till 2 a.m. and that the servants are clearing up at 3 a.m. In the factory, with its regular shifts, there is better organisation than this. That the ordinary time worker in the factory—that is to say, the mass of the urban workers—got the benefit of the seven-hour restriction, there is no reason to doubt. It was because she worked only seven hours in the factory that Mrs. King's example was able to take up laundry work in addition. But in April, 1933, the newspaper *Labour* was complaining of the disregard of the time rule

in the mines of the Donets Basin. The working day underground was officially six hours : but some miners were working between twelve and eighteen hours a day without extra pay, in consequence of the disorder in the wage system. I take leave to doubt whether anything less than a workers' organisation independent of, or at least secure against the interference by, the Employer State will put an end to abuses of this sort.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Under-employment in the rural areas is, in a certain sense, inevitable so long as the agriculture continues to be predominantly of the type which requires very great reinforcement of labour in certain seasons, and fails to give employment to it during the remainder of the year. Cereal cultivation, still three-quarters of the whole, is of that type. The situation was relieved at one time by rural industries. Some of these were inevitably killed by the competition of the factory. Others survived it, but the Bolsheviks underrated their importance, and tended for a time to tax them out of existence. The mistake was discovered by 1932, when Molotov declared that handicraft industry can and should provide a share of additional products for the local markets, and also supply industry with subsidiary articles and with building materials. The self-employers, largely outside the towns, are now a recognised subsidiary source of supply, and local industries, under the control of local Soviets, also contribute.

In Britain there are approximately three to five agricultural workers to every 100 acres of arable, if land permanently under grass be included. In the U.S.S.R. there are approximately twelve able-bodied rural workers to every 100 arable acres. The two sets of figures are obviously not comparable: for from the second are to be deducted the handicraftsmen and a number of persons who are doing, in the collective farms and elsewhere, work of an administrative or clerical character, who would not be reckoned as agricultural workers in Britain. On the other hand, agriculture is now mechanised in the U.S.S.R. to a great, and increasing, extent. We cannot but conclude that, judged by the British standard, there is very great under-employment in the rural areas of the U.S.S.R.; all the greater, because there is so much less of the glass and truck-farming which occupies a large proportion of the labour in Britain.

It is not only inevitable, for the present, that there should be under-employment in rural Russia: it is also actually desirable, while the country is in the process of rapid industrialisation. The rural under-employment is the reservoir from which the growing needs of the towns are to be met. We should therefore welcome the indications of rural depopulation, the diminution in the number of peasant households, and the large number of deserted buildings, to which some have pointed as indications of rural decay. A process, economically advantageous, is transferring population to the towns. It is far from being completed.

Skilled labour has never suffered from unemployment in the U.S.S.R. But before, and during the first two years of the First Plan, there was much unskilled unemployment in the cities, probably attributable to the influx of peasants seeking work. The registered unemployed ranged between 1 million and 1½ million between 1925 and 1929, fell to little more than 1 million in April, 1930, and below a million in the later months of that year. A substantial addition to these figures must be made on account of the unregistered unemployed. Unemployed persons who had recently arrived from their villages, and might reasonably be required to return thither, were left unregistered.

In October, 1930, the payment of Unemployment benefit was stopped on the ground of the shortage of labour in all branches of state-industry, and the despatch of the remaining unemployed to useful occupations was ordered. The Commissariat of Labour was censured by the Central Executive Committee for "Right opportunism", on the ground that it had retained hundreds of thousands on Unemployment benefit instead of organising their absorption into industry, which had plenty of room for them. In 1931 there were still 300,000 registered unemployed, who may probably be accounted for by workers in transit from one employment to another, and by the effect of seasonal trade. After that, registration ceased.

In 1932 there was a reappearance of the symptoms of unemployment : to be explained by the combined effects of rationalisation in industry and of scarcity in certain rural areas. Actually the facts point, simultaneously, to shortage of labour, and the excessive employment of superfluous hands—in other words, to bad organisation of labour. We learn, for instance, from the reports made to the Central Executive Committee in February, 1932, that nearly 18½ million persons were employed by the State when the planned total was 14 millions : and, of these, nearly 5½ millions were employed in heavy industry against the 4 millions contemplated by the plan. The process of reduction, in so far as effect was given to it, involved, at least temporarily, some unemployment, but the absorption of the displaced workers in new factories was expected. This is one of many instances which might be cited to show that command does not always mean performance.

At the same time Magnetostroi was sending recruiting agents all over the U.S.S.R., paying the wages of recruits from the moment of employment, plus their railway fare and living expenses en route to the factory : and still had a labour force 10,000 below requirements. Many labourers were still wandering in search of better food and housing conditions, and much waste of power is thus accounted for. The pressure of the demand for hands is shown by the employment of women on underground work in mines and in all kinds of industrial occupations, including some of the heaviest. Hands were so short of the demand that theatres and cinemas complained that they could find no one to take the part of the

crowd. (1932.) By way of contrast to the "ca' canny" of capitalist countries, "Saturday men" (*subbotniki*) were doing voluntary work on holidays, to fill the gap. Today (in 1941) there are "Sunday men" at work to help the military defence. In 1933 steps were taken to obtain miners for the Donets basin on three-year indentures.

Of the fact that mass urban unemployment has come to an end in the U.S.S.R., there appears to be no doubt. But it is naturally argued that the cause of its cessation is a boom, and that the boom is a temporary one, so that we may look forward to the reappearance of a phenomenon with which the history of capitalism has familiarised us. The market fails to absorb the product at a price which covers the maker's costs, including profit: the maker closes down and the worker loses his job. But there is one obvious difference between the individualistic and the socialistic society. In the former the enterprise, however extensive, covers only a portion of the whole economic field: and the costs must be covered and the profits made in that portion or not at all. When a monopoly of enterprise is vested in a public authority, loss in one portion of the field can be accepted with equanimity so long as the net result over the whole of it is satisfactory. Every Government deliberately loses, in the economic sense, over Army, Navy, Roads, Bridges, Drains, Schools, and as a regular matter of routine, covers the losses by its receipts in other directions. A Socialist Government, such as that of the U.S.S.R., having control, direct or indirect, over the whole field of production, can deliberately lose on coal, to recuperate on cottons: is not, in short, dependent upon a profit on each and every item of its multifarious business, if there are good reasons for what is virtually a subsidy, permanent or temporary, in any particular sector.

But are we to consider that this is a difference merely of degree and not one of kind? The individualist producer goes out of business when the market in his own particular sector fails him, that is when the limit of effective demand in that sector is reached. Must the Socialist Government, in the long run, also restrict production when the limit of effective demand over the whole field is reached, and follow the individualist producer into economic retirement, with no advantage other than the comparative duration of the interval of its economic survival? If the Socialist Government possesses no means of changing demand into effective demand, then the answer to this question is Yes: and the claim to have found the secret of preventing mass unemployment drops. The secret lies in the power to make demand effective: in other words, to confer purchasing power as well as to put commodities on the market, and to make the one process a necessary correlative of the other. Those who talk of producers improving their markets by increasing the wages of their workers are feeling after the truth. If all producers did it, and did it simultaneously, they would actually improve their markets. But in proportion as they attained to identity and simultaneity of action, they

would be simulating the action of the Socialist State, which is able to regulate income as well as supply. What happens, potentially at least, in a society organised like that of the U.S.S.R., is that, in the process of putting commodities upon the market, the power to purchase such of them as are not capital goods—in other words, such of them as do not represent public saving—is automatically conferred. In so far as that potentiality is realised in fact, the aim of ending mass unemployment is necessarily achieved. The market is created by the distribution of the wage, as a part of the process which brings the goods there.

Does this mean that every need will be met? No. The art of production is not yet sufficiently advanced. Does it mean that every variety of taste will be catered for as in the luxury shops of London, Paris and New York? No. A great deal of mere caprice, always the privilege of the few, will necessarily be eliminated from the range of choice. Does it mean that there will be no failures and blunders, no forced sales of unwanted commodities, no miscalculations, no woodenness of application, and no resultant losses and suffering? There will be all these things.

The claim is that the true technique has been discovered, not that it will always be unerringly applied, and that it leads to the ending of mass unemployment. In this, a by-product of the Socialist experiment, lies what is perhaps the greatest claim of the U.S.S.R. to the gratitude of mankind. The chief misery of working-class life is economic insecurity. With adequate social insurance, and a technique which promises the end of industrial unemployment, that misery is at an end: until war destroys the foundations of society.

To sum up the pre-war comparison of the conditions of Labour in London and in Moscow: the Russian worker produces much less: has a much smaller real wage, and more uniformly poor accommodation: he pays one-fifth of the London rent: he gets holidays with pay (which the British worker is only now beginning to get): he makes no direct contribution to social insurance: and he enjoys important communal amenities without payment. His wage and his conditions of work are protected, less by Trade Unions than by the absence of unemployment, which makes him a valuable asset. There are no Trade Boards, and the minimum wage is almost a dead letter. Trade Union protection in London is far from general, but it is supplemented in certain trades (those most liable to exploitation) by Trade Boards, which enforce a minimum wage.

For the children of the London worker, the chance of being below the poverty line (that is, of having less than the indispensable necessities) is one in eight. In old age, the chance of being below the poverty line is one in six: the chance of having bad house accommodation is one in three. The Russian worker enjoys greater security in respect to his children, whose health, schooling, and holidays are extremely well looked after. There is no material for a comparison of the conditions in old age.

Widespread fear, which has no parallel in Britain, has existed, perhaps still exists, in Russia in the class which is called upon to make decisions. The managing class in Britain has its anxieties when unemployment is acute. This fear and these anxieties do not extend to the workers in the U.S.S.R. The Russian worker is freer than the British from anxiety, because of the absence of unemployment. He stands higher in the comparative scale of human values, and has no example of disproportionate luxury before him (except in so far as the Stakhanovets or the Soviet bureaucrat begins to set it) to give him a sense of inferiority. He has no cause (other than personal indolence) for restricting output, and has a feeling (which the British worker lacks) that he is working for himself. His wife works hard, but is economically freer, and is largely emancipated from household drudgery. He lives in an obviously advancing and improving world, which breeds hope.

Who shall say how the balance dips? I believe that—given the material minimum required for subsistence—the moral and mental considerations are the more important. In spite of Unemployment benefit and Unemployment assistance, security is one desideratum in Great Britain: and status is another—for status, for the undistinguished mass, too obviously depends upon property. Here is the missing half of liberty for the British worker.

CHAPTER XVIII

RELIGION IN THE REVOLUTION

“Russians are always apocalyptic or nihilist. . . . The spirit of the people could very easily pass from one integrated faith to another integrated faith, from one orthodoxy to another orthodoxy, which embraced the whole of life. . . . And there always remains, as the chief thing, the profession of some orthodox faith: this is always the criterion by which membership of the Russian people is judged.”—BERDYAEV, *Origins of Russian Communism*.

THE EARLY Orthodox Church, making no distinction of spiritual and temporal authority, identified itself with a Messianic mission of the Russian people, in which Holy Russia was the God-bearer. The Church played a heroic part in the national history. Almost she might be called the maker of the Russian nation. Her leading figures were, indeed, servants of the Tsars, but they did not hesitate to rebuke injustice, as Elijah rebuked Ahab for the rape of Naboth's vineyard, and they pointed the way to some of Russia's great national recoveries.

The Schism (Raskol) of the seventeenth century marked a turning point. It was the beginning of a breach in the tradition of unity. The quarrel, which wore the superficial appearance of a dispute about forms, revealed itself as a movement of rudimentary nationalism against the invasion of foreign influences, and threw the official Church into a new

subjection to the State. The process of change was thereafter a rapid one. Peter the Great hastened it by putting the Patriarchate into commission under a lay Procurator. Catherine the Great confiscated the land of the monasteries, and the completeness of the fall was made manifest when Gregory Rasputin—neither priest nor monk, but a mere Imperial favourite with the affectation of a Divine Mission and the reality of a debauched life—made high ecclesiastical functionaries and canonised saints by his influence upon the heads of the State.

Against this degradation of the official Church there was a volume of protest from its lay defenders. First the Slavophiles, and later the liberal Marxists, spoke with no uncertain voice. But, in the words of Merezhkovsky, "the holy words of the Scriptures, in which we (the laymen) heard the voice of the Seven Thunders, sounded to them (the ecclesiastics) like catechism texts learned by heart". The Church had become a department of the State, and participated in its incompetence and corruption. Priests were required to disclose the secrets of the confessional, in order to assist the State in its repression of revolutionary movements. High ecclesiastical office was for the careerist. The extension of Orthodoxy was a branch of the policy of Russification, and was thrust upon unwilling dissentients. The followers of the Raskol were treated as Orthodox who neglected their religious duties. Both Roman Catholics and Jews were subjected to disabilities. The Church was an oppressor as well as a worldling. Only individuals stood out from the mass as true pastors and true saints.

Karl Marx regarded the organised Churches as enemies to social revolution. By ascribing divine origin or divine sanction to human institutions, they placed them out of bounds except to the impious or the unbelieving. In Imperial Russia the state of the Orthodox Church confirmed, for the revolutionary parties, the inferences which Marx had drawn. Not only this or that Church, but religion in general, assumed the aspect of a defender of oppression: and philosophical theories which might appear to justify the intellectual demand for a transcendental cause became outworks of the hostile citadel to be conquered and demolished. That is why, when the Social Democratic Party at the Communist school at Capri was toying with Mach and Avenarius, and the "god-building" which seemed to be the inevitable accompaniment of their philosophy, Lenin intervened with his insistence upon materialism and thus gave to Bolshevism its anti-religious turn.

His book on Empirio-criticism was no mere essay in philosophy. It was a battering-ram to level fortifications behind which he saw the oppressor sheltering: and it is as an instrument for the destruction of ideas hostile to the Revolution that anti-religious propaganda and anti-idealist philosophical teaching have been employed by the Communist Party.

With the integral completeness characteristic of the Revolution, all

half-way houses and compositions are rejected. Agnosticism is merely a pseudomorphosis of idealism. All teleology, everything which postulates the existence of an aim in nature or the universe, comes dangerously close to god-building. The Menshevizing idealism of Deborin, who had once been a Menshevik and never freed himself from the tradition, became anathema at the "new turn in the philosophic front" in 1929, because it treated the categories of knowledge as eternal and unchangeable, and so threatened a compromise with deity. Mechanism, revived on the background of N.E.P., is a form of materialism which robs it of its dynamic principle. Only dialectical materialism, which repudiates idealism but retains the dynamic principle, must displace religion. Without the materialism on the one hand, and the dialectic on the other, we fall, according to the Communist outlook, into fatal error.

The teaching of the Godless is no mere negative. There is an actual substitute for religion, which does not receive the name of religion, and, if religion is necessarily the recognition of the transcendent, is not religion at all. One integral faith can only be driven out by another. Mere scepticism, mere negatives, cannot serve as battering-rams, and it is the battering-ram that is needed. In the heresies to be avoided, on either side of the truth, we are conscious of an atmosphere like that of the early Councils of the Church whose decisions took shape in the Creeds. Idealism means reaction: mechanism, without the dialectic, means fatalism and inertia.

The representatives of the Orthodox renaissance, among whom M.M. Nicolas Berdyaev and Sergius Bulgakov are the most remarkable, are well aware of the causes of Communist hostility to religion, and conscious of the lines along which a concordat might be won. Bulgakov accepts the division between Church and State, assures us that Orthodoxy is not the guardian of capitalism, and protests only against the Russian Communism *of to-day*, as denying the freedom of personality. In a very different sphere of life and thought from that occupied by the labours of Berdyaev and Bulgakov, there are some priests who are cultivating Communist favour by colouring church doors and crosses red, and by emphasising the proletarian origin of Jesus the carpenter, of Paul the tent-maker and of Simon Peter the fisherman.

When Nazi Germany made the attack in June, 1941, the acting Patriarch of the Orthodox Church blessed the Russian cause, and it is probable that Orthodox priests and Orthodox believers are as patriotic as the rest of the population. A group of priests in the House of Detention at Leningrad were found by M. Ciliga to have preached the duty of submission to the powers that be: but one monk was recalcitrant. That any of the Churches could forgive the confiscation of Church property is—whatever pious or far-sighted individuals might be able to do—not to be expected; and, for the Roman Catholic Church at least, the refusal of facilities for the religious education of children and of direct contact

between the Vatican and the priesthood, is an insuperable obstacle to a concordat. The more official representatives of the émigré Church have chosen each their own successor to the Imperial Throne: and for these there seems to be no possibility of reconciliation.

The first dealings of the Revolution with the Churches seemed to promise their liberation. The Provisional Government of March allowed the restoration of the Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church, abolished by Peter the Great. Bishop Tikhon, along with a synod to assist him in the ecclesiastical administration, was freely elected to the restored office. The first religious decree of the November Government (*February 5th, 1918*) placed all confessions upon an equal footing, disestablished and disendowed the Orthodox Church, gave freedom of *religious and anti-religious propaganda*, prohibited all but secular instruction in schools where general subjects were taught, but allowed citizens to give and receive religious teaching privately. This deprived the Orthodox Church (like all other landlords) of its landed property, and also of the favour which it had hitherto enjoyed over the other confessions: but gave to the others a liberty and an equality which had hitherto been withheld. In particular, the freedom of religious teaching and propaganda—there was a new liberty for all, formerly enjoyed only by the Orthodox, to make converts—was a valuable concession to the non-Orthodox: while the confiscation of landed property affected few, if any, outside the Orthodox Church, and, within that Church, probably none except the monastic, or black clergy, who also enjoyed exclusive access to high ecclesiastical office. Additional orders provided for handing Church buildings and ritual furniture over to associations of worshippers who would be responsible for maintenance. So far, the official policy was one which gave apparently complete satisfaction to all religious communities in Russia except the Orthodox Church: being briefly one of disestablishment and disendowment.

According to an official Soviet computation made in February, 1938, the sequestrations of ecclesiastical property amounted to 2 million acres of land, 1,038 farms including stock, 1,816 houses and hostels, 311 apiaries and eighty-four factories. To this must be added something under a quarter of a ton of gold and 150 tons of silver levied for famine relief in 1921–22. The total of land confiscated has probably been understated: for the Church owned 23 millions of acres in 1905, according to M. Daudé-Bancel, and it owns none now.

The Patriarch Tikhon anathematised the Bolsheviks, not by name but by description, excommunicated all who assisted in the enforcement of the ecclesiastical decree, and condemned the peace of Brest-Litovsk with the Central Powers. (*March, 1918.*) During the Civil War many priests supported the Whites, and it was believed that Roman Catholic ecclesiastics gave assistance to the Poles in the war of 1920. But we learn from a Soviet Government pamphlet of 1919 that, at the time when

Denikin was threatening Moscow, and Yudenich was within a few miles of Petrograd, Tikhon called upon the people to support the Soviets. On the other side, there was a vigorous campaign of propaganda against all forms of religion, accompanied by the exposure of bogus relics, and other action offensive to the Churches. Tikhon was under house arrest in 1920, and at that time alleged that over 300 bishops and priests had been executed since the beginning of the Revolution. Regarding the higher figures sometimes cited, a sceptical attitude is justified. It appears certain that these ecclesiastics were executed for opposition to the Revolutionary Government or for assistance to the Whites in the civil war.

When the demand was made for the surrender of the Church treasure in addition to the immovable property already confiscated, Tikhon gave orders that the clergy should neither assist in the collection nor resist it. Actually there was widespread concealment and resistance, and the Countess Alexandra Tolstói mentions the execution of seven ecclesiastics on this account. The Government now pursued the policy of dividing the Church by encouraging schism: and the year 1922-23 was one of intense and widespread interest in the cities in ecclesiastical organisation and practice. Among the many Churches which came into existence as soon as the removal of Orthodox privilege gave freedom to the fissiparous tendency, the so-called Living Church demanded freedom for the parish clergy to remarry, admission for them to the episcopate, the use of Russian instead of Church Slavonic in the services, and a popular basis for religion. At its Congress in 1922 it discussed social as well as ecclesiastical questions, including the reform of the marriage laws and the recognition of the Revolution. But neither this nor any of the other religious movements of the time, which were numerous, attracted notice outside of the towns, or exhibited any vitality when official countenance was withheld from them.

The Orthodox Church, as we see it portrayed in the pages of the Rev. Mr. Palmer in the first half of the nineteenth century, had been acutely nervous of attempts to define or change anything: and the suggestion at that time of the summoning of an Oecumenical Council of all the Eastern Churches for the restoration of religious unity would have appeared daring to the borders of recklessness. But the position of the Russian Orthodox Church as only one of a sisterhood of Eastern Churches, and the senior status of the Oecumenical Patriarch at Constantinople, had always been recognised in ecclesiastical theory: and, if so audacious a proposal as the fresh definition of dogma had ever been contemplated, it would have been agreed that only the Oecumenical Council was competent for the purpose. The question of the election of Bishop Tikhon to the newly restored Patriarchate had actually been referred in 1917 to the Oecumenical Patriarch. It was reserved for a Revolutionary Government to countenance the project of an Oecu-

menical Council to make proposals for the restoration of the unity of the Orthodox Church. In 1924 the new supreme ecclesiastical authority, created by the Bolsheviks, took measures to summon such a Council: which, it appears, would actually have sat, but for the objections raised by the Government of the Turkish Republic. We must seek the motives of the Soviet Government in the same direction in which we seek the motives dictating the negotiations for a concordat with the Vatican. Combined with a desire to weaken the influence of religion, and in particular of the Orthodox Church, there was a desire to utilise the surviving influence of the Churches for political purposes. The Eastern Churches, like the Vatican, so long as they continued to be forces, were forces to be used. At a later stage, it became less important to reckon with them, or more important to make an end of their influence in the internal affairs of the U.S.S.R.

National Churches in the non-Great-Russian nationalities were encouraged by the Soviet Government. In Ukrain there arose a Pan-Ukrainian Orthodoxy which gave an outlet to nationalist as well as religious aspirations, and is described as being directed at first as much against Moscow as against Roman Catholic Poland. The new Church here was declared to rest upon the principles of congregationalism (*sobornost*) and of the will of the Ukrainian people: and a lively description is given by N. Brianchaninov, a historian of the Orthodox Church, of the consecration of a Metropolitan of Kiev and his bishops by the laity, no bishop being available for the purpose. All the people present in the Cathedral of St. Sophia "laid their hands upon one another's shoulders: those who were in the front row laid their hands upon the shoulders of the priests": and the priests laid their hands upon the Metropolitan. A further process of consecration was carried out by the elective Rada (the Ukrainian equivalent of Soviet). Thus the ancient principle of congregationalism (which remembered that the Holy Ghost at Pentecost descended upon all the people and not merely on the Apostles) was here carried to the point of conveying the Apostolic Succession to the Episcopate by the hands of the laity. The Ukrainian Church was still conducting services in St. Sophia at Kiev in 1933. By what method the decision to convert the building into a Museum was reached I do not know. In 1937 the restorers were at work upon its mural paintings and mosaics, and services in the building had ceased.

A method of weakening the Orthodox Church was to allow a greater degree of freedom to sectarians such as the Baptists, who were very successful with their welfare work among their flocks. For a time it seemed that the Biblical Christians, escaping all political suspicions, were to enjoy a favoured status in revolutionary Russia. But the State is a jealous State, desiring no competitors with itself in its function of achieving the material and educational advancement of its people. The Baptist Training College in Moscow was closed in 1929.

The Russian Dissenters (Raskolnik) had enjoyed the reputation of the most sober, honest, and steady element in the Great Russian people. Their ideal was an autonomous Church managed by the faithful, and the election of the clergy. During the pre-revolution period, almost all of them were registered against their will as Orthodox, and treated as deserters from the Church, unless they bought themselves off by making payments to the Orthodox clergy. One of Lyeskov's characters, a humble and pious divine, tells with contrition how he collected silver from the dissenters "in order that I might not have to dress my wife as a chanter's wife". In Turgeniev's *Virgin Soil* we hear the die-hard gentleman describe how he once helped the police to catch an old dissenter, who all but jumped out of his cottage window. "And there he had been sitting, as quiet as could be, till that minute, the rascal." To these people the March Revolution came as a liberation. We see them, in the pages of Mr. Albert Rhys Williams, holding their periodical Councils above the Volga with representatives from Archangel, Moscow, the Caucasus and the Caspian steppes, in a new freedom and absence of concealment. The Union of the Godless has no information regarding them: but we catch glimpses of them among the prisoners whom the Yugoslav Socialist, Ciliga, met in his wanderings from jail to jail. One of them was a woman, faithful to the idea of refusal to co-operate with all authority, who declined to countersign her own act of liberation, and therefore remained in prison. Another was a member of one of the Biblical Sects, or possibly an Old Believer, who described to Ciliga a mutual aid association which his people had set up to cover the urban population outside of the factories and the trade unions. Ciliga says that these communities live a sort of innocent underground existence and, when possible, elect as their heads persons who stand high in the Soviet administration. This sidelight is valuable because it shows that religion has gone under the surface. M. Ciliga—I give his statement for what it may be worth—says that the Church has succeeded in modernising itself, and is one of the most powerful and secret forces in Russia. This is almost certainly an exaggeration, except as regards the dissenting sects: which are, I suspect, still an underground influence of importance.

For political reasons, the Roman Catholic Confession had been the worst treated of all the non-orthodox faiths in the period immediately preceding the Revolution. It was very closely associated with Polish nationalism, one of the bugbears of the Tsars. Indeed, it was the religious Confession, Roman or Orthodox, which often determined nationality in the doubtful racial borderlands of the west of the Empire. The definitive loss of all Polish territory might be supposed to have made an end of all causes of friction between the Pope and the Revolutionary Government, in spite of the deep commitment of the Vatican against socialism by the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and other pronouncements of Leo XIII and Pius X. But the Vatican welcomed the opportunity

given by the confusion of the Orthodox Church for the extension of its influence in the East: and the Italian papers emphasised this aspect by cartoons in which the Pope was shown blessing the attack upon Orthodoxy. The Revolutionary Government, which was far from being without an ecclesiastical policy, adjusted to political requirements, offered to submit to examination by the Vatican a circular of the Commissariat of Justice regarding the status of the Roman Catholic Church, and was prepared to contemplate with equanimity some strengthening of its influence as a means of diminishing that of the Orthodox Church. Past history seemed to show that there was nothing extravagant in the hopes of the Vatican: for the Roman confession had exercised a great influence upon the Orthodox during part of the nineteenth century, and the Society of Jesus had for some years held a powerful position in Russia. The prospect for Roman Catholicism seemed the more hopeful because some Orthodox churchmen, deprived of material resources at home, were beginning to turn their eyes towards Rome. But there were occasions of friction in the administration of Roman Catholic relief funds and in the Vatican's claim to Church buildings, which, by revolutionary law, could only be given for specific uses to particular congregations.

In 1923 a group of Polish Roman Catholic ecclesiastics were prosecuted for espionage during the Russo-Polish war of 1920, and one of them, who had retained his Russian citizenship, was executed. The Patriarch Tikhon and other Orthodox ecclesiastics were also on trial for political offences: but Tikhon made his peace by a declaration that he abandoned his opposition to the Soviet Government. These trials, represented abroad as part of a religious persecution, caused a remarkable outburst of indignation. There were protests from Great Britain and Poland, and the long delay in the recognition of the Soviet Government by the Government of the U.S.A. was probably due to the odium which these events excited. The Vatican—evidently desirous at this time not to offend the Bolsheviks—did not join in the chorus of condemnation.

In 1925 formal negotiations took place, through the Papal Nuncio in Berlin, with a view to a concordat, on the questions of education, finance, the appointment of Roman Catholic bishops, the publication of Papal Bulls in Russia, and free communication between the Vatican and the Roman Catholic hierarchy. A Roman Catholic bishop, Mgr. d'Herbigny, came to Moscow under the auspices of the French Ambassador, without the previous cognisance of the Soviet Government, and undertook on behalf of the Vatican the reorganisation of the Catholic clergy in the U.S.S.R. This caused some indignation, and the emissary was expelled in 1926. Negotiations for a concordat finally broke down in 1927, and relations have greatly deteriorated since. In 1931, after the fresh revolutionary legislation against religion, of which I have something further to say below, the encyclical "*Quadragesimo anno*" reaffirmed the Papal condemnation of Communism, conveyed by the Bull *Rerum*.

Novarum. The Vatican took a firm stand for the spiritualisation of the old order and condemned the subordination of life to economic ends, and the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world has since been emphasising that no Communist can remain a Catholic. A further pronouncement was made in September, 1937, condemning alike the National Socialism of Germany and the Communism of Russia, both of which offend by their claims to the monopoly of authority by the State.

Islam, like Eastern Orthodox Christianity, is a social or collectivist religion, in which truth is conceived as residing in the congregation: and *'ijma'a*, the *consensus* of the faithful, takes a place similar to that of *sobornost* in Orthodoxy. The concordant decisions of the general assemblies are regarded at least by the Sunnis, that is to say, by the bulk of the Mahommedans outside of Persia, as equal in authority with the Koran: though interpretation has in practice become ossified. There are some 18 millions of Mahommedans in the U.S.S.R., in very different stages of development, religious, social, and economic. Except among the Kirgiz, whose Mahommedanism is superficial, religion is intimately intertwined with social custom and the way of living, and it would be difficult to separate religious from social and customary life. The *Young Bokhariot* movement wanted a constitution based upon the Mahommedan *Shariat*, which might mean a theocracy or a democracy or a combination of both, but would certainly mean the observance of the juridical principles of the sacred law and the authority of the Cadi and the Mufti. The right to polygamy up to a maximum of four wives is a part of the sacred law. Other social practices, of purely customary origin, are nevertheless jealously cherished and associated with religious sanctions: for instance the veiling of women, and the payment of a price for the bride. Both of these had become essentials of social respectability: so much so that a woman for whom no price had been paid found herself regarded as no wife, and committed suicide in consequence. The veil is an effectual preventive of female education beyond the primary stage. Religious endowments, based upon land-owning, form a link between religion and the economic system. Arabic, as the language of the Koran, occupies a position similar to that of Latin in the Roman Catholic Church, and Hebrew among the Jews. There is a chief ecclesiastical directorate of the Muslim Faith in the U.S.S.R. having its headquarters at Ufa, whose pronouncements are in some degree recognised as binding upon the faithful. There are no priests in Islam, but there are men learned in the Koran and in the sacred law, who discharge some of the functions exercised in other religious systems by priests, perform marriages, interpret the law, occupy the judicial posts, and teach the Arabic Koran by rote, generally in the precincts of the mosques, to the children. The Arabic is not ordinarily understood by those to whom the Koran is thus communicated, and is very imperfectly understood by most of the

teachers. The learned live partly by the endowments, and all their influence is naturally employed to defend the existing economic order. It must nevertheless be noted that the interpreters of the sacred law at Bokhara gave a sentence declaring the duty of the rich to divide their lands with the poor when inequalities arise. This it seems was a local pronouncement, and not one of a generally authoritative character.

The Tsars maintained the local theocratic rulers in Central Asia, and the Mahommedan Courts, civil laws and customs, but refused recognition to local languages. The principles of the Soviet Government are to encourage the local languages, in which Arabic is, of course, not included, to instal native administrators when the personnel becomes available, to exercise control through the Communist Party, and to attack native customs inimical to the approved social policy, which includes the emancipation of women. This attack upon native custom, so closely intertwined with religious conceptions, together with the nationalisation of land, affecting the livelihood of the ministers of religion and the religious law, brings the Soviet Government into collision with Mahommedan sentiment. In the early years of the revolution, Soviet power was not firmly established in the Mahommedan areas, and the general relaxation of revolutionary principle in the epoch of the New Economic Policy acted as a buffer to the impact. But from the beginning of the second decade there was increasing insistence. Armed risings in Central Asia have been frequent, and the so-called brigandage of the Basmachi, who are Mahommedan irreconcilables, has been an almost chronic phenomenon. The murder of women who have made themselves prominent in the movement of emancipation is not infrequent. I know no better illustration of Russian methods of dealing with religious sentiment than Mrs. Anna Louise Strong's story of the theological students (*talib ilm*, a notoriously fanatical class) arriving at their University (which had been occupied for the purposes of a political conference) and being told by the clerk that no rooms were available for them. "They just stared and went away." It is something short of persecution, but there is a touch of slighting contempt in it.

The Mahommedan social and economic system in Central Asia was more firmly rooted than the corresponding system in Christian Russia. The landlords were smaller men who lived on the land and maintained a closer touch with their tenants and farm-hands. The tenants, with their share in the crop, and the farm-hands, paid in kind, were interested in the system. There was a free-masonry between all these and the representatives of Koranic learning, and religion was inseparably a part of social life. On rumour of active nationalisation, all combined to drive flocks and herds to safety, and the nomad part of the population was virtually secure against effective interference. Only on the irrigated lands, where cotton and rice grew, was the rural population intimately accessible to the demands of alien authority. In the towns the Bolsheviks seem to

have recognised the limits set by popular feeling to communist principle: for the bazaars are active, with little or no pretence of the public control of trade, and Asiatic merchants freely infringe the State's monopoly of import and export.

In the towns the jurisdiction of the Cadi has been ousted by salaried judges sitting alongside of non-professional assessors. It is believed that the latter are often influenced by the tradition of the Mahommedan law. Except among the Kirgiz, where polygamy has been made a punishable offence, the law against it is enforced by refusal to register a second marriage where a first is still in existence: and it is likely that the succession of the children of polygamous marriages is not in practice prevented. The veil and the bride-price are discouraged, but exist. It is likely that the mullahs continue to some extent to enjoy the proceeds of endowment lands, after the latter have been nominally merged in collective farms or in the more individualistic partnerships which are common in Kazakstan. Only a very active and ubiquitous administration could change these things or prevent the teaching of the Koran in the yard outside the mosque. It is reported that in Adjaristan, the portion of Georgia which adjoins the Black Sea at Batum, the mullahs deliberately fixed the hours of their Koran schools so as to clash with those of the Government schools: and made it necessary to instal religious sections in the curriculum of the latter, in which the mullahs were invited to give religious instruction. The Bolsheviks have retained some of the native Russian faculty for concession when resistance becomes unwise.

It is otherwise on the Volga, in Azarbaijan and in the Crimea, where Mahommedan custom had struck less tenacious roots or had already lost strength. In the Crimea the veil has disappeared, and the girls are attending the secular schools and joining the Communist League of Youth. At Bakshi Serai, formerly regarded as a hotbed of reaction, only three mosques remain, out of a former total of thirty-three. Azarbaijan was the first Mahommedan State to replace the Arabic alphabet with the Latin and to adopt legislation for the emancipation of women. Owing to the oil industry, it is permeated by cosmopolitan influences. In the Tartar Republic on the Volga, now prosperous and setting an example in agriculture, little resistance to anti-religious propaganda is encountered. Here too the Latin has replaced the Arabic alphabet. But, generally speaking, there is a kind of strength in mere backwardness, which has made Islam a more thorny plant to handle than Christianity has thus far shown itself to be. To a large extent the old social and religious leaders continue in control, under new titles, and occasionally we catch glimpses of them behaving very much in the old way.

In 1926 the Soviet Government so far recognised the religious authority of the Mahommedan ecclesiastical centre at Ufa, as to allow it to send a delegation to Mecca, for the general Islamic Conference convened by Ibn Sa'ud to make proposals for the future administration of the Holy

Places and for the conduct of the annual Pilgrimage, a matter of extraordinary interest to the whole Mahommedan world. Its attitude at the time contributed to the reinforcement of the position of the Sa'ud. It was the first Government to recognise the title of King of the Hijaz assumed by him, and the first to raise its Consular representative to the rank of Minister. The policy is in essentials the same as that which is exemplified in the proposal for an Oecumenical Council of the Orthodox Church, and in the abortive attempts at a concordat with the Vatican. But the Pilgrimage to the Holy Places of Arabia is rarely allowed to nationals of the Soviet Government: there is no ban upon it, but permission to leave the U.S.S.R. is, as in other cases, difficult to obtain.

There is no objection of principle to the election of a head to an autonomous Church. In 1933, with the acquiescence of the Soviet Government, a body of some eighty ecclesiastics and laymen, some of whom had returned from abroad for the purpose, elected a new Katholikos and a Holy Synod for the Gregorian Church of Armenia, at the ancient ecclesiastical centre of that country. But the policy is opportunist: there has been no election of a later date to the office of Katholikos now vacant; and no election to the Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church, vacated by the death of Tikhon in 1925, has taken place. Some of the functions of Patriarch are being discharged by the Metropolitan Sergius, who returned to the Orthodox, after an interval of allegiance to the Living, Church: and it is understood that he is attempting to arrange a concordat with the Soviet Government. The Russian Orthodox Churches abroad have detached themselves from the Mother Church in the U.S.S.R.

The partial return to a small-scale capitalism in the period of N.E.P. was favourable to the Orthodox Church: but the period of the first Five-Year-Plan renewed revolutionary excitement in all fields of Soviet life. Many of the priests supported the opposition to agricultural collectivisation. Kirshon's play *Bread* illustrates the close association of the clerical and monastic element with resistance to the policy adopted by Stalin. As a consequence, there was fresh, and less liberal, legislation on religious matters in 1929 in the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic—limited in geographical application, as will presently be explained. The most important change was the restriction of the right of propaganda to the anti-religious side of the controversy: and it is this change which, at the present day, arouses the most unfavourable criticism in Britain and the United States of America.

A very carefully studied statement of the facts was made by the Archbishop of Canterbury in a speech in the House of Lords on April 2nd, 1930.

In the first place, it is to be noted that the laws regarding religion are *not federal* laws, but republican laws. So far as I have been able to ascertain, nothing corresponding to the Law of 1929, which withdraws

from the Church in the R.S.F.S.R. (by far the largest republic of the Union) the right of religious propaganda, has been applied to the remaining Constituent Republics, including those in Mahommedan Asia: so the right of missionary enterprise is still in existence in Ukrain, White Russia, and the Republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

But in the R.S.F.S.R.—that is to say, in by far the greater part of the Union, including some Mahommedan areas, such as Bashkiria, Crimea and the Tartar republic—the legal status of religion is laid down in the Law of 1929, and is now as follows. Registered congregations of adult citizens may use the churches and the articles required at their religious services: which include stores of candles, wine, oil, coal and money necessary for the religious ceremonies: and may make collections and receive voluntary donations, but only from registered members, and only for purposes connected with the maintenance of their Church, property and service. They must accept liability for maintenance and insurance and for the payment of local taxes. Local taxes—rates, as we should say—are leviable on the Churches, but not federal or republican taxes. They cannot make compulsory levies, establish central funds, or own property. All such central funds and property, as existed before, have been confiscated. In the second place, they must not propagate religious doctrine outside the limits of the registered congregation, and their priests must limit their activity to the area of residence of their own congregations. We shall see below that this prohibition is not always observed. In the third place, the law prohibits religious instruction in any State, public or private educational institution: it provides that such instruction may only be communicated to adult citizens, and only at special courses of religious instruction given by Soviet citizens, and only by special permission obtained in each case from the authorities. This means that there can be nothing corresponding to Sunday Schools. Only in the family can the young receive religious instruction. Another provision directed against the organisation of the Churches is that communities and groups must obtain permission before holding general meetings—that is to say, presumably, of members of more than one registered congregation: and district and national conferences, if formed, are not juridical persons and cannot own property or enter into legal agreements. The Churches are also debarred from welfare work for their congregations.

Summarised in a sentence, the position is: freedom of conscience for the adult individual, together with the right to impart religion personally to his own offspring: but, otherwise, no pecuniary or other means of making an appeal to the public or of influencing the younger generation: and no ecclesiastical organisation, beyond the individual congregation, except for purely consultative purposes and by the sanction of the temporal authority. The organisations of the Churches have, however, not been broken up: and there have been numerous instances since the

attack by Germany in June, 1941, of the continuing activity of these organisations: and freedom of belief and worship and of family instruction survives. The Government is unfriendly, but, if persecution means the punishment of persons on charges of believing, or of holding or attending religious services, there has been no persecution.

Propaganda varying in intensity from time to time has been conducted against religion by the Union of the Godless, with the co-operation of the Party and of the Communist League of Youth. So far as is known, the funds for it have been derived from the subscriptions paid by members of the Union of the Godless and from the sale of its publications, and not from the Government. In addition to the literature, the Godless Museums, with their exhibits illustrating the part played by the clergy in the old régime, and the share of the national resources enjoyed by them, have been used to influence opinion against religion: and atheism has been taught in all the schools.

For some years past the office of President of the Union of the Godless has been filled, along with other posts, by Emilian Yaroslavsky. He is one of the old Social Democrats anterior to the division between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, who was in exile at Yakutsk at the time of the March Revolution. He has done much journalistic and administrative work, was secretary to the Central Control Commission in 1923 and a member of the Commission of Party Control in 1934. He was employed to re-write the history of the Party—an important instrument for the formation of correct ideology—after Zinoviev's draft had been rejected, in connection with the famous opposition of 1924–27. But he, too, failed to give satisfaction, and his fourth volume was condemned as an abetment of Trotskyism. He has never been in serious trouble, but is not in the first rank of revolutionary leadership. On his sixtieth birthday in February, 1938, he received the honour of the Order of Lenin for his services, and the congratulations of the Government. I have entered into these details because they seem to me to be relevant to the attitude of the Soviet Government towards anti-religious propaganda. It is not treated as a matter of the first importance: some inclination to blow alternately hot and cold upon it is noticeable: and it is significant that the Party Daily, which makes a great feature of every anniversary and emphasises the Party lessons to be drawn from it, gave a very cool summary of the work of Yaroslavsky, and said nothing at all in its birthday issue about the propaganda for which he is responsible. I have myself observed a tendency to convert the Anti-God Museum in the Cathedral of St. Isaac at Leningrad into an *anti-clerical* Museum. The Commissariat of Education has closed the anti-religious faculties at the Universities. A functionary of the Godless Union informed me in June, 1937, that there was a possibility of its being closed: not because of failure, but because its work had ceased to be necessary. The number of its subscribers has fallen off greatly. Its literature is not characterised

by any profound examination of the questions involved, and on some matters, in particular those connected with Islam and with Russian dissent, it has appeared to me to be poorly informed. Trotsky, writing in 1936, described the present attitude of the Soviet Government to religion as one of "ironical neutrality": and he suspected that this is a preliminary step towards making use of the Churches as a support for the existing régime. Among the straws which show how the wind is blowing, the vigorous propaganda of 1930 against the observance of Christmas was replaced in 1937 by the advertisement of Christmas trees and Christmas decorations: and *Pravda* published a picture showing the entertainment by young Pioneers of Spanish refugee children round a Christmas tree. On the other hand, the Godless Union, like most other institutions, underwent a drastic purge in 1937-38, and the Communist Party has itself taken up the propagandist cause by instituting short courses for anti-religious training. The Metropolitan of the Living Church, Platonov, has announced his conversion to atheism and has begun to deliver lectures in that sense.

A picture of the position of religion in Soviet Russia was given in April, 1937, by Yaroslavsky, in a report to a meeting of propagandists. He estimates that a third of the adult population in the towns and two-thirds in the villages are still believers. It is untrue that there are no believers except among the old. Among believers there are many persons who are loyal to the Soviet Government. But many decline to work on Sundays and on Holy Days: and many workers and collective farmers serve as members of the Church Soviets. In 1897 there were 295,000 persons employed in the offices of religion, of whom 7,638 were priests. In 1926 only 79,000 were employed in the offices of religion, of whom only 948 were priests. According to the latest figures there are 30,000 registered religious congregations, with 8,338 churches, synagogues and mosques. The buildings are said to have considerable incomes and good choirs, and not badly decorated. Something like half a milliard of roubles is spent annually on places of worship. But the newly created industrial towns, such as Magnitogorsk, Karaganda, and Stalinsk, have no places of worship. There are thirty-seven surviving monasteries.

Many priests, says Yaroslavsky, have learned to assume the mask of loyalty, and some have penetrated into official organisations and collected money for the repair of their churches. It is a common thing for priests to travel with the sacred vessels and vestments and with sacramental wine, and to perform arrears of baptisms, marriages, and funerals, in return for payment, in the places which they visit. It is evident that there are some registered congregations which lack buildings for worship.

There was a good deal of activity among ecclesiastics between the promulgation of the Constitution of 1936 and the general election for the Supreme Soviet, and the claim was made that a registered religious association was empowered by law to nominate candidates for election.

The Government disallowed the claim, and some of those who used their pulpits to press it were prosecuted and punished. Ecclesiastics of all ranks came in for a share of the repressive measures of 1937 on a variety of charges involving disloyalty to the régime.

On the other hand, the editor of a local newspaper was prosecuted and punished in 1937 for advocating the wholesale closure of churches. *Pravda* of May 7th, 1937, while denouncing the notion that there remains no need of anti-religious propaganda and blaming the Union of the Godless and the Communist League of Youth for negligence in this respect, condemns the closure of houses of prayer without the consent of the citizens, and the dismissal of persons from their work for being believers. A recent Census form contained a question whether the householder is a believer or not: with an assurance that his answer will be kept secret: but a revised form omitted the question. The teaching of atheism in the schools continues universal: and believers continue to be debarred from membership of the Party. But the dismissal of school teachers and of other functionaries for the exercise of religion is prohibited by law: and the constitution of 1936 has abolished the disfranchisement of the priest and of other office-holders of religion. It is believed that—outside of the Islamic constituent republics—nothing like a seminary for the training of religious teachers now exists. One of the village investigators, to whom I have made frequent reference elsewhere, tells us that the priest is no longer sent by the ecclesiastical administration, to be accepted willy nilly, but is engaged by the village meeting, which often drives a very hard bargain. Church Soviets, for the management of Church affairs, are general in rural areas. Mr. Hindus, on the other hand, writing of White Russia in 1931, says that the dignitaries of the Church were drafting into the priesthood anyone whom they could find. How the new comers receive their training I do not know: but the method is presumably private instruction.

Yaroslavsky has restated the anti-religious policy by quoting Lenin's maxims emphasising the toleration of all religions and the Party's duty to practise propaganda against them. He calls upon propagandists "to avoid any unnecessary roughness, to listen closely to the mass: not to repulse believers, but help them to free themselves from the influence of religion". I have myself attended religious services including a baptism by immersion. It is untrue that they are restricted in any way.

There is a word to be added here regarding the Jews. Freed by the revolution from all their civil disabilities, they have fallen into a new religious disability along with the followers of the other cults. Up to 1929 they retained their Rabbinical Seminary at Vitebsk for the training of Rabbis. In that year this Seminary was closed. Hebrew, which is to them what Arabic is to the Mahommedans, because it is the language of the Bible and the Talmud, but not the vernacular in use in their homes. was discouraged as being a vehicle for the teaching of religion. But the

appearance of a secular literature in Hebrew has destroyed the basis of this unfavourable discrimination, and the works of Mayakovsky and of Pushkin have been translated into Hebrew. Zionism is frowned upon for political reasons. There is a particularly prosperous Synagogue at Moscow, with paid seats, and an income of eight hundred thousand roubles. There is no anti-Semitism in the Soviet Government, but it occasionally shows itself in the people.

Regarding Buddhism, or that mixture of Buddhism with Shamanism and Animism, which is to be found among Mongolian citizens of the U.S.S.R., very little information has been obtainable by me. The policy is the same, but enforcement presents difficulties even greater than in the case of Islam. We see the *Kem* or Medicine-man, of the Oirat country, in trouble with the Soviet authorities, partly because he is a *Kem* and partly because he is a *kulak*: and we see vigorous and effective efforts being made through the Institute of the Northern Peoples at Leningrad, to equip the most promising members of the nomad tribes with the literacy, the Communism, and the irreligion, which are the Bolshevik equivalents of missionary training. A strong resemblance between the officer corps of the Salvation Army and the instructors at institutions of this type is the most vivid impression left upon my mind; so that I ask myself, when departing from them, what is the effective difference between atheism and theism: and do the gods of one revelation become the devils of the next, as they seem to have done in the passage of the Aryan invaders out of Persia into India, or is the essential feature of all Religion this, that it turns the eyes of man to something greater than his individual self?

Most of the churches in the cities are closed, or turned into museums or clubs, or devoted to other secular purposes. This has sometimes been done forcibly, by the misdirected zeal of propagandists. Stalin's speech on "Giddiness from Success" in March, 1930, called a halt to such proceedings. Some churches, like the Temple of the Saviour at Moscow, which commemorated the victory over Napoleon, have been deliberately demolished to make room for secular improvements. In 1930 the famous Chapel of the Iberian Virgin was destroyed because it obstructed the entrance to the Red Square at Moscow. But by far the greatest number of the abandoned churches have been given up because the congregations could not, or did not desire to, provide the money for their maintenance and insurance, and because there has been a tendency to concentrate resources upon the smaller number required by those who desire to attend Christian worship. Those which remain are crowded at the great festivals. It is safe to say that no one is kept away from church by the lack of liberty to attend the service: and that no Roman Catholic in any of the greater cities who desires to attend Mass has failed to find the priest and the Altar for his purpose. This statement is not applicable to new industrial towns. So far as I am aware no new churches have been built.

In the rural areas the churches generally survive. Sunday and the

religious festivals are kept, baptism, marriages, funerals are often performed by the priest: but the compulsion now is the compulsion of custom, and the worshippers are fewer than they were, and include a smaller number of the young. As a child, evidently familiar with the language of the factory, said to me in an Ukrainian village: "The Church is on half-time." Both a Buddhist temple and a Mahomedan mosque exist at Leningrad, and are well cared for. As to the monasteries, the confiscation of the property by which the monks and nuns lived has killed most of them without reprieve, and there was no occasion for a forcible dispersion. Mr. Littlepage had many priests and mullahs working under him at the gold mines and says they worked well.

I approach with diffidence the question—which naturally presents itself in different aspects to those who do and those who do not believe—whether a revival of religion in the U.S.S.R. is to be anticipated. Actual persecution would revive it, but persecution is not the Bolshevik method, however much zealots may misunderstand and misapply policy. The official Orthodox Church appears to have been definitively discredited: but this is not to say that religion in some other form will not recover influence. The movement represented by Mm. Berdyaev and Bulgakov is a powerful bid for such a recovery. But the possibilities are wider than this. What do we mean by religion? It has taken a thousand forms. There have been religions, like Buddhism in its pure form, without a God. Such may be found in India to-day. Others there have been, like Buddhism again, having the ideal of escape from existence, whereas Christianity condemns despair, and aspires to fuller life. Some, like early Judaism, and its successor in the Sadducee form, have been without a belief in the life of the individual after death, or have hoped for absorption in a greater whole. Some, like Islam, have been without priests and almost without dogma. Some, like Christianity in its Roman form, have lodged all authority in a Church and its visible earthly Head: others, like Christianity in another form, have referred all revelation to a Book: others, like Hinduism, have neither Head nor Book, but only a Tradition and books. Some, like Hinduism, are indistinguishable from a social system: to others, like Buddhism again, the social system is irrelevant. The essential feature seems to be an ideal, expressed in myth or ritual or prayer or mystical communion or ascetic exercise, of an entity or an aim *above and beyond visible humanity, but accessible to it.*

Every religion leaves the ground of ascertained knowledge to imagine this ideal. The Communist holds that there is no knowledge except that which is verifiable by experiment or by experience: but he, too, leaves the ground of ascertained knowledge, when he makes his flight to the hypotheses of the classless society and the redeeming mission of the socialist fatherland. "The Thing came first, and the Thought came after," and yet there was an ideal, burning in the hearts of those first revolutionaries, and, paradoxically, the Thought did come first, however

passionately they might repudiate the sequence. The early Christians, observes Mr. Julius Hecker—but we are not sure that he himself satisfies the canons of the stricter dialectical materialism—were driven by an inner urge which they called God within us: or the witness of the Holy Spirit: and something of the same order is to be observed in the Bolsheviks. He might have added that Orthodoxy, perhaps in consequence of the influence of the Platonic Idea upon the Eastern Fathers, sees in the visible world a reflection or a symbol of a spiritual entity elsewhere: a spiritual entity which it is the task of the Church to reflect with an ever closer approach to perfection: and that the search for a meaning in history, a straining for a vision of the picture to be realised, which is a noticeable characteristic of Russian thought, has its origin here. The pre-existent idea, to which the reality must be brought to conform, is present to the Bolsheviks in their conceptions of a classless society, and of the oecumenical mission of Russia.

Nicolas Berdyaev, in *The Russian Revolution*, analyses the psychological tendencies in Russian Communism, and traces some of them to Christian Orthodoxy. He does more than this, as everyone must do who would draw the picture faithfully. He goes back to the origins: to the conception of a Messianic mission for Orthodox Russia, growing up perhaps in the struggle of Christian against Mongol, and taking shape in the fifteenth-century notion of Moscow as the Third Rome, destined to give to the world what the first and second Rome and Byzantium had failed to give. The Schism, the *Raskol*, of the seventeenth century was the protest against a betrayal of this Messianic idea, when the Church surrendered to the Greeks over the question of ritual; to the Greeks who were envisaged as having themselves betrayed the Church when they yielded to Western error to buy succour for Byzantium against the Turk. There was a second betrayal when the Orthodox State, along with the Church which had become its servant, failed either to advance alongside of the West or to fulfil the Slavophil ideal. Then came the *second Raskol*, the nineteenth-century Schism of the intellectuals who found themselves as much divorced from contemporary life, as conscious of a gulf between themselves and both rulers and people, as had been the dissenters of the seventeenth century. The intelligentsia, whether Westernisers or Slavophiles, whether revolutionaries or no, were exiles in their own land, looking either to an ideal past or to an ideal future. The influences of both met and intertwined in the development of the Populist revolutionaries: and the sons of priestly families, with vivid memories of early religious training, played a large part in it. Berdyaev finds in them the sense of sin, the tender conscience, the profound compassion for human suffering, the passion for social justice, the capacity for self-sacrifice, the ascetic contempt of worldly goods, the religious questioning of the value and justification of culture in a world of sin and suffering, the maximalism demanding from man effort and sacrifice without compromise, and the

expectation of an apocalyptic ending in revolution or a Last Judgment; which the early days spent in intimate familiarity with the teaching of Orthodox Christianity might be expected to inspire. In their irreligion—for the revolutionary intelligentsia of the nineteenth century were irreligious, though the Slavophiles were champions of the Faith—he sees a mere inversion of religious motives and of religious psychology into a non-religious or anti-religious conviction: so that the spiritual energy of Religion flows into social channels. In the anarchist Michael Bakunin he sees the belief in a Russian and Slavonic mission for bringing about a cataclysm of destruction, in which the old sinful world shall perish and a new one—a kingdom of God upon earth—arise upon its ashes.

Marxism introduced certain other elements into Russian Socialism, the idea of class war and the psychology of a conquering class which had been oppressed and felt the resentment of oppression: but also the conception that man is capable of leaping out of the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom: and, in this last, Berdyaev finds an echo of the idea of spiritual liberty which he regards as specifically Christian. For him the anti-religious psychology of Communism is a religious psychology *turned inside out*: and he cites, for a parallel, Dostoevsky's story of the peasant who set up the Blessed Sacrament and shot at it.

The echoes of religious thought in the brain of the anti-religious Communist ring yet further, if more faintly, in that strange passion for confession and self-humiliation which the trials of the Communists fallen into disfavour have revealed to a puzzled world. At the very root of the Russian conception of religion lies the idea of a brotherhood of the faithful, in whose mutual love resides the revelation. For the Roman Catholic, nurtured in an ecclesiastical system which has borrowed the autocracy of the Roman Empire, the Holy Father is the ultimate authority, and under him the priesthood is the interpreter. For the Russian Orthodox, notwithstanding the solitary supremacy of the Emperor both in Church and State, truth was republican, and was to be sought in the communion of the Orthodox brethren—laity as well as clergy: for it was not only upon the Apostles, but upon the disciples too that the Holy Ghost descended at Pentecost. This thought disclosed itself in the movement of the *Raskol* in the seventeenth century, but was always present: though it continued shapeless and undefined, till form and definition were given to it by a great Slavophile, Alexander Khomiakov, in the nineteenth century. It is the doctrine of *sobornost*, congregationalism, as I venture to translate it. What excommunication is to the pious Catholic, that, to the Orthodox, is separation from the congregation of the brethren, in which truth and love alike reside. He must seek restoration by the abjuration of all errors and the confession of all sins. *Outside of the congregation he cannot be right.*

The religious conception of the presence of truth in the congregation

passed to the Communists. Trotsky—perhaps with his tongue in his cheek—once set them discussing whether the Party was infallible, when it made a pronouncement after full consideration: and they discussed it gravely and in good faith. I do not mean that any formal doctrine ever took shape: the idea was there, like the echo of an old tune heard in early childhood. To differ from the Party, to be outside the communion, is, by definition, to be wrong and to be excommunicate. Only self-abasement and confession of sins can save the wanderer from that outer darkness.

The revolutionaries of the nineteenth century proclaimed their deeds with pride and defiance. They were conscious that the congregation of the faithful was with them. But the majority now is on the side of the Government: and the offender, alone in an agony of isolation from the brethren, confesses all, and more than all, in the humiliation of his soul.

There are others, of course, who obstinately refuse to confess; and these are not brought to public trial, because their appearance will not make for edification. It is not every man in whose brain the old tune rings so compellingly. But it is in the echo of that old tune that we must seek the explanation of the passion for confession, as of much else that is characteristic of the Communist psychology.

If Communist psychology has in it much that is Christian and Orthodox in its origin, Orthodox Christianity, on its part, prepared the way for some of the conceptions of Communism: and nowhere more clearly than in its vision of a Kingdom of God *upon earth*, of a transfigured universe made perfect for the Second Coming. The period of wars and revolution which precedes it is the period of apocalyptic preparation.

The survival of religious habits in thoughts and action does not mean that the Bolsheviks are likely to become Christian: but merely shows what persistent “residues” these habits are. On the other hand, the notion that there is a pattern somewhere stored up, to which it is desirable to make the life of man conform (such, for instance as the pattern of the classless society), carries with it a conception of teleology, which is, in essence, religious: and is hardly reconcileable with the materialistic doctrine that the deed comes first and the thought comes after. That the Bolsheviks have an ideal is not to be denied, and latterly they have used language which at least admits the word to their vocabulary.

Communism has been the inheritor of much. It has also added much of its own. Orthodoxy trained the heart, but not the will. The sense which Communism has brought to its adepts, that man has the power to make his own history, has steeled the will. The philosophers are able to demonstrate to us that materialism is incompatible with free will. On this basis, the Communists should be lacking in will-power: but I cannot discover any such deficiency. On the contrary, an immensely optimistic energy is characteristic of them. They themselves would probably tell

us that it is the dialectical element in their materialism which makes the difference, and that the philosophers are thinking of a mechanistic materialism.

It is vain to discuss whether Communism is itself a religion. What is more important is to notice that Communism possesses certain of the qualities which have caused religions to spread. Chief among these is an aim (which in the case of Communism is the service of Man) inspiring devotion and creating unity, and linking together the generations in a communion—we must not say of Saints.

Finally, to descend to a different plane of thought, there are the possibilities of ecclesiastical politics from which the solid benefits of toleration may be extracted. Before the intensification of revolutionary action in 1929, the Soviet Government showed what these possibilities were. The recent concession to the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R., which is to have its own Roman Catholic chaplains, and the placing of the French Catholic Church at Moscow at the disposal of the R.C. community there, are happy omens. The clergy ceased, under the Constitution of 1936, to be disfranchised. A victory over Germany, achieved by the help of the Western Powers, will give to the U.S.S.R. a new sense of security, which will make precautions against internal opposition less urgent, and diminish the force of anti-clerical feeling. In the meanwhile it appears that new sects of an evangelical type have emerged during the last decade in Central Russia. Religion—the passionate yearning of Man for something greater than his present solitary self—will yet find many and various expressions; not all of them other-worldly.

CHAPTER XIX

THE NATIONALITIES

“The bureaucracy is constructing for the backward nationalities a bridge to the elementary benefits of bourgeois, and to some extent of pre-bourgeois, civilisation. For many regions and nationalities the régime is discharging the historic task which Peter the Great and his associates performed for old Muscovy, but on a vaster scale and at a quicker pace.”—TROTSKY, *The Revolution Betrayed*, 1936.

“The hunger for knowledge displayed by the most primitive peoples in the Union.”—KURT LONDON, *The Seven Soviet Arts*.

HANS KOHN, in *Nationalism in the Soviet Union*, has aptly emphasised the parallel between Religion and Nationality. Lonely man, afraid of the unknown, desiring permanence, seeking companionship, finds comfort in both. Nationality provides companionship and gives to man an extension and multiplication of his personality. The desire for continued life finds a collective substitute. The passion with which both Religion

and Nationality are defended against rivals illustrates the devotion of man to something representing a larger self. In one of his early pamphlets on Nationality, Stalin detects the essential likeness, and asserts the natural right of man to both. However much the idea of tolerance may have been violated in the pressure of the daily struggle, it represents at bottom the Bolshevik attitude to both religion and nationality. Both are substitutes for something which is regarded as better and greater. For Religion there is to be no encouragement, but a cold toleration. For Nationality there is to be something warmer than toleration, and, as I shall endeavour to show, a Soviet patriotism has been brought into vogue by the dangers of external attack, while the corporate sentiment of the minor nationalities is nursed by appeals to sectional pride.

Religion and national sentiment sometimes meet inseparably in the way of life of a people. In the mass of the Jews the two appear to be identified. The case of Islam is similar, though more obviously modified by the existence of underlying national distinctions anterior to conversion. In Eastern Europe the identity extends beyond these two examples. On the doubtful racial borderland between Poland and Russia, a Pole is a Pole because he is Catholic, a Russian is Russian because he is Orthodox. Among the Balkan peoples it was the national Church that kept the nationality alive. The spirit of nationality is in essence the love of a greater self. But there are other and rival devotions, and other and rival greater selves, contending with the national devotion and the national self. Setting on one side for the moment the religious devotion and the religious self, we find, in a very cursory examination of recent European and American history, that Socialism has created a loyalty to class which crosses the boundaries between nations, and sometimes comes into conflict with the spirit of nationality. I need not dwell upon this new rivalry. It is embodied in the successive Internationals, illustrated in the fraternal relations between International Labour, and recorded in much revolutionary history. I lay stress upon it here because the conflict between the devotion to class and the devotion to nationality explains much that is otherwise unintelligible in the course of Russian events. It takes two forms, and appears equally under the aspects of opposition between the national and the international, and of opposition between the minor nationality or minority and the federal state.

Let us begin by adverting to a concrete case. When Poland was still a part of the Russian empire, should Polish Socialists exercise a right of national self-determination to separate from Russia, or ally themselves with their Russian class-brethren? Marx and Engels favoured separation, because they wished to weaken the power of Imperial Russia, but they had a poor opinion of the right of self-determination in general, because they did not believe that the working class would have the opportunity of exercising it. They therefore opposed it as a principle while admitting it as a particular expedient. The political aim of destroying Tsarism

ceased to be operative as the Russian Empire lost its strength: and with it there disappeared the reasons which had formerly justified for Polish Socialists the cry of freedom for Poland. Rosa Luxemburg, the Polish Socialist, was therefore among the strongest opponents of national self-determination.

The general Marxian view which passed on to Russian Socialists was the internationalist standpoint, which regards national self-determination with suspicion. The reason why we hear so much in Russian controversies of "*bourgeois* nationalism", as a mark of the counter-revolutionary, is that there is a conviction that not the workers, but the middle class, aspire to national self-determination, in the sense of political separation. Cultural autonomy, on the other hand, which means the use of one's own language in schools and courts and public affairs, along with the encouragement of national literature, drama and art, is the legitimate ambition, and harmonises completely with the international ideal.

Lenin always insisted upon the right of self-determination, extending to political separation, because he saw that the concession of this right to the hitherto oppressed nationalities, such as Ukrain, would win their support for the revolution. But, along with the emphasis on this right, he called upon the workers of all nationalities to organise themselves into unitary groups crossing the boundaries of nationality, as members of the "Party" and members of the Trade Unions. It is here that we hit upon the explanation of the seeming contradiction in Soviet institutions, which with one voice assert this right of self-determination and separation, and with another condemn the attempt to realise such self-determination as *bourgeois* and counter-revolutionary. The position becomes clearer to us if we say that self-determination is a right: but it is the duty of the Party and the Trade Unions to prevent the exercise of it, except so far as cultural autonomy is concerned. The treatment of nationality is parallel to that of religion. In both cases there is the recognition of a right, together with propaganda against its assertion. This is far from being mere hypocrisy: though it is a kind of argument entirely unfamiliar to most of us.

The Russian Empire grew outwards from a Great-Russian nucleus till more than half of its subjects and nearly half of its armies were non-Great-Russian. After the loss of Russian Poland, Finland, the Baltic Provinces and Bessarabia, the U.S.S.R. contained, in 1926, 182 ethnic groups speaking 149 languages. If we ignore the smallest groups, thirty principal nationalities made up nearly 98% of the population. Half of the causes of the revolution had been found in the policy of the Tsars towards their non-Great-Russian subjects. That policy was not a mere caprice of the Autocracy. It had the warm support of the most influential groups, military, official, social and industrial, and of the Great-Russian quasi-garrisons of officials and skilled workers cantoned in the cities of the subject peoples. It was a policy of Russification, religious, cultural

and linguistic, and, in great measure, of Russia for the Great-Russian. "The name Russian means oppressor to the Bashkir," said Lenin, when addressing the Communist Party in March, 1919.

The sentiment of Great-Russian national chauvinism, which had ranged itself behind the Emperors Alexander III and Nicolas II in support of the policy of Russification, survived the Revolution. The Revolutionary leaders found the human material, which was to serve the purposes of socialist uplift in the minor nationalities, infected with an overbearing nationalism of its own, and likely therefore to provoke a responsive growth of local separatism in them. The unevenness of material and cultural development, which the Imperial régime had left behind it, made the search for civilising agencies in local sources difficult and slow. The leaders themselves, in the days before they came to power, had been concerned, not with the urgent day-by-day realities of administering a hungry and anarchical people, but with higher and remoter problems such as that of replacing nationalism by internationalism, and with securing allies for the revolutionary task by the promise of freedom extending as far as the right of secession. These things played an important part in the early period, when cessions of territory and authority had less significance than the preservation of existence and the winning of friends by the reversal of unpopular policies. But a scheme of permanent relations between majority and minorities, in a State made strong for defence against external enemies, was yet to seek: and it was mainly from a man who had personal experience of a *macédoine* of religions and nationalities that the elements of such a scheme were derived.

The man was Stalin, the son of a Georgian father by an Ossetian mother, who had spent his boyhood in the streets of Tiflis, had been educated in its theological seminary, had done his early revolutionary work there and in Batum and Baku, and had intimate knowledge of the prison in the last named place, where he once underwent the punishment of running the gauntlet among the prisoners. The *macédoine* was the Caucasus, out-balkaning the Balkans by its variety of faiths and races. In the post-revolutionary distribution of territories, for which Stalin himself was mainly responsible, the country north of the great range of mountains contains one Mahommedan autonomous republic, Daghestan, six autonomous regions and one autonomous district (Circassian). In the mountains, and to the south of them, are three main republics, which, by the constitution of 1936, are elevated to the constituent status. These are Christian Georgia, Christian Armenia and Mahommedan Azarbaijan. But in Christian Georgia, Adzharians, who speak the Georgian language, have a Turkish culture and an Islamic confession. Adzhar, and Abkazia, are autonomous Soviet Socialist republics included within the Georgian constituent republic. The Nakhichewan Autonomous Soviet Socialist republic is included in the Azarbaijan constituent republic, and so is the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous province. The Armenian constituent

republic contains Kurd national villages with their national Soviets. The oil city of Baku, also within the republic of Azerbaijan, is a kaleidoscope of mixed proletariats. But this is not the whole of the picture. There are (it is perhaps too early to say that there are no longer) deadly quarrels between Georgians and Armenians, between Ossetians, Adzharis and Abkazians, against Armenians, between Tartars on the one hand and Russians and Armenians on the other: not to mention some scores of different languages, and the jarring remnants left by the successive dominations of Persian, Turk and Russian. It is not surprising that Stalin viewed without illusions the prospect of national cultural autonomy for Chechens and Ingushes and other similar Caucasian tribes, or that he had a realistic outlook upon the problem of autonomy for Georgia. He was a member of a minority within a minority, and he knew what those who claim liberty for themselves may do to others who make a similar claim.

In 1913 he made a Marxian study of the question of nationalities. In this he traces the idea of nationality to a *bourgeois* source, but claims that it must be respected as long as it lasts. He rejects the plan of registering nominal lists of all who claim to be members of a particular nationality wherever resident, and of assigning to each of the bodies, thus voluntarily constituted, a protective institution which will look after their religious, cultural and educational needs. The Jews, the one nationality which lacked altogether at that time a territorial basis, he expects to become assimilated to the local populations. He does not propose to recognise at all—this is an important negative—a nationality which has no territory. The general question is to be dealt with by complete equality of personal rights for all, including freedom of conscience, and freedom of movement (which the later Romanov Emperors denied to the Jews): along with cultural autonomy for definite territorial units. He strongly opposes the national organisation either of the Party or of the Trade Unions, which must continue on an international basis, on pain of dissolution into separate units. He condemns even cultural autonomy for backward peoples such as some of those of the Caucasus, on the ground that its tendency will be to perpetuate worthless primitive cultures. In general, he insists upon the adjustment of a nationalities policy to the changing needs of the times: upon an opportunist rather than a dogmatic solution of particular problems.

Stalin, as I read his brochure of 1913, is for tolerance, but not for the perpetuation of backward cultures. He classes the idea of nationality along with religion as something to which all peoples have a right. But—and this is a reservation of great significance, in view of the later development of the nationalities policy—the Social Democracy, as it was termed at that time, in other words the Party, must agitate against bad institutions, and resist whatever is contrary to the interests of the proletariat. As to the right of secession, that must depend upon the needs of the time.

There is no express reference to federation, but the idea of federation was implicit in the contention that the Party and the Trade Unions must remain on an international basis instead of being split up among the nationalities.

The actual policy of the Soviet State to-day, as carried out in practice, whatever the difference of form, corresponds very closely with the outline sketched by the opportunist statesman in 1913; but it has been filled in by the provision of opportunities for the realisation of the promised equality.

The Conference of the Party which met in August, 1913, decided that the nationalities should have the right of self-determination, even extending to secession. It is obvious that the authors did not advert, when they framed this resolution, to the possibility of some minor nationality, occupying territory surrounded by Russian peoples, acting upon the theoretical right. They were not yet responsible for the fuel and food of a whole people, isolated from the productive south, and cannot yet have imagined what such a responsibility would mean. If they did advert to it, they must have contemplated that all the influence of the Party would be thrown against ruinous secessions. The resolution provided for territorial autonomy, with the right to use the local language, and the removal of the Russian yoke in all forms. In effect the decision was one for the abolition of all the much resented measures of "Russification", and, as such, contributed greatly to the victory of the Revolution.

When the Revolution of November came, Stalin was the natural choice for the tasks of the Commissariat of Nationalities. The declaration of November 15th, 1917, announced the equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia, and their right to self-determination, extending to secession and the formation of independent States: the abolition of all national and religious distinctions and restrictions, and the free development of national minorities and ethnographical groups inhabiting the territory of Russia. But the revolution had given to the victorious party, instantly expectant of the accession of new peoples to the revolutionary cause, a new outlook upon the question of nationalities. It was necessary to provide a form of union for the expected allies of the Soviets from outside of Russia. Equality and sovereignty, which meant no more than confederation, even if they meant so much, must be replaced by a more definite bond. In January, 1918, it was announced that the Soviet Russian Republic was constituted on the basis of a free union of free nations, as a federation of Soviet National Republics; and Stalin wrote a new essay, justifying the conception of Federation by the international character of the Revolution. In the light of later events, this article has the special interest of exhibiting Stalin as hopeful of the impending revolution in Germany, Austro-Hungary, Persia and India, as well as in China. The argument is that the nationalities question has now ceased to be one of particular struggles against national oppression, and has become a general one of the liberation of nations, colonies, and semi-colonies

(including such countries as China) from the greed of imperialism: and that the November Revolution has opened the way to that liberation.

The bitter struggle which preceded, and followed, the signature of the ruinous treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany revealed the depths of the national Russian sentiment which survived in Marxian minds: and the losses of territory, permanent and temporary, which took place between 1918 and 1920, by depriving Great-Russia of most of her food and fuel, read a new lesson to the revolutionary leaders. It was demonstrated that Ukrain and the territories north and south of the Caucasus, if not others of the border countries, were indispensable to the very existence of the Russian State. It was easy to argue further that Great-Russia was equally necessary to these countries, in order to protect them against exploitation by an imperialism which had shown itself greedy for their resources. Stalin wrote a third essay in 1920 in which he plainly said that so-called independence for the smaller nationalities of old Russia was an illusion. They have, he wrote, the inalienable right of separation: but—the interests of the masses declare to us that the demand is counter-revolutionary. The course marked out for the nationalities is provincial autonomy: but it is a provincial autonomy allowing of wide variations of form and scope. Even mere treaty relations, he says, such as those existing at that time with Azarbaijan, the principal source of oil, were admissible. A point upon which he insists is that respect must be shown for religion as well as for national feeling, and he vigorously condemns what he calls the shock-tactics of the Great-Russian Chauvinists in endeavouring to force conformity upon the outlying peoples. Mutual confidence must be created by destroying the remains of feudalism and privilege: by conferring those economic benefits which the policy of the Tsarist Government had limited to the Great-Russian centre; by employing local men for local duties; and by giving scope for national education and for the national theatre. Autonomy, he said, is not a mere temporary evil to be eliminated as soon as possible. On the other hand, the whole tenor of his article is to show, what the actions of the Soviet Government have always made clear, that the interests of the revolution and of Socialism, assumed to be identical with those of the masses, come first, and that no breakaway will be tolerated.

A serious difference divided Lenin and Stalin on the question of autonomy in Georgia. Georgia, in Trotsky's phrase, was the heart of the Menshevik Gironde. Fear of the near neighbours, the Turk, produced opposition to the Bolshevik policy of defeatism. In the fourth Duma, and in the period following upon the March Revolution, Georgia provided Menshevik Social Democracy with some of its best leaders. It was a Georgian who read in the Duma the Zimmerwald manifesto against war. Another Georgian, Tsereteli, was a member of the Coalition Ministry with the Kadets in 1917. He might have done much, if moderation had not been a disqualification in a revolutionary epoch. After November

the Georgian leaders resisted Bolshevik domination and formed a separate government which lasted until February, 1921. This Menshevik régime was of a much more moderate character than that established in Russia proper after the Revolution, and harmonised in this respect with the sentiments of the Georgian peasants, who were described as fanatical champions of private property in the means of production. The Georgian Government resisted the attempts to draw them into the civil war on either side, but the Soviet Government's need of petrol made the whole Trans-Caucasus territory a necessary complement to its resources: and, after two internal communist conspiracies had been discovered and thwarted, Georgia was occupied by armed force. A revolt which took place in 1924 lasted only two or three days.

In the interval between the military occupation by Soviet troops and this revolt, the form of federal organisation between the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (R.S.F.S.R.), which includes the great mass of the old Russian Empire between Smolensk and Vladivostok, and the associated territories, was under consideration. Stalin held the less "Liberal" view on nationalist aspirations. In agreement with Ordzhonikidze, another Bolshevik of Georgian birth, and with the Pole Dzerzhinsky, he wished to minimise Georgian independence, and Lenin, then gravely ill, took exception to their "chauvinistic" attitude.

If we may trust Essad Bey, a lively biographer of Stalin, there was an elaborate intrigue to thwart the intentions of the invalid Lenin. Kamenev was sent to Tiflis to deliver a conciliatory speech to the Georgian Assembly: but, learning from Stalin that Lenin had had a second stroke, altered the speech to one reaffirming the Stalin policy, which was also triumphant in the Twelfth Party Congress. Budu Mdivani (reported as having been executed in the Terror of 1937) and certain other Georgians came to Moscow to complain against the conduct of Stalin and Ordzhonikidze: and, Lenin being ill, represented their case to his wife, Madame Krupskaya. Madame Krupskaya is said to have told Stalin that these complaints put upon his conduct a complexion quite other than that represented by him to Lenin: and Stalin is said to have replied in an insulting manner. Lenin contemplated a complete breach with Stalin, but died before he could carry out his intentions. Souvarine in his book on Stalin adds that Trotsky and Madame Krupskaya kept back the facts because they did not wish the Party to know of the quarrels between the leaders.

If all concerned in these transactions were not so determined to prove that it was they, and no other, who had the full confidence and support of Lenin; a very good case could be made out for the view which Stalin took.

Lenin was in very bad health; Stalin had an intimate acquaintance with the conditions of the Trans-Caucasus territory: there were obvious dangers in giving to the Georgians a too powerful position even in their

own country. The national minorities amounted to nearly a third of the population, and to three-quarters of it in the capital city, Tiflis: the hostility between Georgians and Armenians was bitter, and had often broken out into fighting between the two. The notion that Lenin was infallible is not borne out by history, and the claim that non-conformity with his opinions must necessarily damn the dissenter is a mere piece of Communist theology. But the execution fifteen years later of Budu Mdivani, who was the direct occasion of the difference with Lenin—a difference which caused Lenin to condemn Stalin in the document known as his will—is relevant to our estimate of the character of Stalin. The ethics of the Caucasus include the vendetta: and a wise man—wise in his generation—does not leave his enemies, longer than is inevitable, in a condition to pursue their hostility. In the interest of historical truth I must add that the now current picture of the relations between Lenin and Stalin as those of affectionate intimacy is not a true one.

At the end of 1922 the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic agreed, together with Ukrain, White Russia, and the Trans-Caucasus Federation, to a federal union. The result was the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in January, 1924. At the end of that year the Soviet Socialist Republics of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, created by an ethnical rearrangement of the Mahomedan States of Khiva and Bukhara, together with the imperial Russian conquests in Central Asia, entered the Union: and in 1929 the separate Soviet Socialist Republic of Tajikistan was formed for the Shia Mahomedans of Uzbekistan. Under the constitution of 1936 the Trans-Caucasus Federation was broken up, and, in place of it, its three Soviet Socialist Republics, Azarbaijan, Georgia and Armenia, joined the U.S.S.R. as constituent Republics. Two new Soviet Socialist Republics, Kazakh and Kirgiz, also became at that time constituent Republics of the Union. The acquisitions of territory made in 1939-40 have raised the number of full constituent republics to sixteen. But this fact is very far from presenting a full picture of the framework of the Union. There are numerous autonomous Soviet socialist republics (A.S.S.R. is the common abbreviation) and autonomous provinces and national regions: exercising functions which, in the cultural and educational field, are of importance, and help to satisfy the instinct of nationality for small territorial units.

While the Union was still in process of formation in 1923, the Party adopted a Resolution which recited the difficulties and explained the ultimate aim. The first difficulty was the old one of Great-Russian chauvinism, the close associate of the policy of Russification (which had done so much to ruin the Tsars). It was aggravated, said the framers, by the fact that the greater part of the urban working classes in some national Republics (notably Ukrain, White Russia, Azarbaijan, Turkestan) were Great-Russians. A second difficulty was the economic and cultural inequality of the nationalities, "some of which have not so much

as seen, many of which have not passed through, the stage of capitalism” (which Marxians regard as a necessary step towards socialism). Yet a third difficulty was the survival of nationalistic jealousies among the minor nationalities themselves: resulting in internecine squabbles such as those of the Trans-Caucasus territory, and, in Central Asia, between Uzbeks on the one hand and Turkmans and Kirgiz on the other.

One embarrassing survival which is specified in the resolution is the conviction existing among many Soviet officials that the Union is not a federation of equal states, but a transitory stage towards unification: and the consequent attempts of the Commissariats of the predominant partner, the R.S.F.S.R., to dominate the autonomous Commissariats. So far from justifying such encroachments (of which it is not difficult to find examples today), the Resolution declares that the Union of the constituent republics is the first step towards the creation of the future World Soviet Socialist Republic of Labour. Here we see the Party, in a mood of World-Revolution, envisaging the addition to the U.S.S.R. of a German Soviet Socialist Republic and—who knows, how many more, to complete that assemblage of the continents, of which the five-pointed star is the symbol. The attitude is relevant to the question here under consideration, for the prospect of such potential additions inevitably influenced the outlook upon the minor nationalities which had formed portions of the old Russian Empire.

The Constitution of 1924 reaffirmed the right of secession: and declared that the sovereignty of each constituent republic should be restricted only to the extent specified—in other words, that all residuary authority belonged to the constituent unit (as in the United States of America), and not to the federal Union. To both of these assurances, then and always, there was an implied limitation—the all-union unity of the Communist Party, and of the Trade Union organisations.

The figures available to me for the proportion of nationals of the minor nationalities to the total membership of the local organisations of the Communist Party are incomplete, and do not extend beyond the year 1930. For what they are worth, they show a growth in the proportion of local nationals. But Great-Russians make up a very large proportion of the local parties: and in Azarbaijan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Bashkiria, the Tartar Republic and Kazakstan (all of which are predominantly Mahomedan), and in what was till 1941 the German Volga republic, the local nationalities have less than half of the local membership. In Ukrain and White Russia they have slightly more than half. Only in Armenia and Georgia do they predominate greatly over Great-Russians. This does not mean that Great-Russian Communists are deliberately brought in numbers into the minor nationalities, but that Great-Russian factory and transport workers are already established there on a large scale, and naturally gravitate towards the local organisations of the Communist party. The proportion of *locals* in the Trade Unions is on

the whole somewhat higher : but in some cases—*e.g.*, in Azarbaijan, owing to the conditions in the oil-fields, a large number of the Trade Unionists are neither Great-Russians nor locals, but of some other nationality.

Whatever the inferences which we might draw from the local predominance in influential quarters of particular nationalities, the Party, as a determining influence in policy is very strongly centralised in Moscow : and it is from this centre that the driving force takes its direction. It is certain that the right of secession is one which could not be enforced : and that the powers conferred by the successive Constitutions on the local organs of administration were and are inefficacious against the real Government of the U.S.S.R., which I take to be the Politburo of the Communist Party, except in so far as the Party's Secretariat exercises the actual control.

The sixth Congress of the third International, meeting in September, 1928, reaffirmed the right of secession, the complete equality of all nationalities, and the duty of combating all remains of chauvinism, national hatred and race prejudice : and broadened the nationalities policy by the express addition of provisions for the creation of *opportunity*. Since equality is not equality when the potential competitors start differently equipped, and since some of the minor nationalities are in fact backward in varying degrees, the resolution pronounces for assistance to those which lag behind. Another clause is an unmistakable echo of Stalin's strictures of 1913 on the folly of encouraging the survival of unworthy cultures. The guarantee given to the national cultures is to be accompanied by a proletarian policy of *developing the content of such cultures*. By this time we have reached the complete theory of *constructive levelling* which is characteristic of Soviet policy towards the nationalities.

But Great-Russian chauvinism remained, as it remains today, and in July, 1930, Stalin attacked it once more. He defined its errors as the disregard of differences of language, culture and manner of living : the adoption of the objective of unification : the destruction of national equality of rights : and encroachment upon the national administration and the national press and schools. On the other hand, he stigmatised the contrary deviation of local nationalism, as an attempt to "shut oneself up in one's own national mussel-shell . . . not to see what brings the working masses of the Soviet Union closer together and unites them, and only to see what can keep them apart". He declared for a culture national in form and Socialist in content, ultimately merging in one, Socialist both in form and content, with a common language, when the complete ultimate triumph of world-wide Socialism is achieved. The difference between this ideal of ultimate unity, and "the adoption of the objective of unification" which Stalin had condemned, is evidently one of degree, time and circumstance : and not unlikely to escape the comprehension of ardent followers.

A particularly interesting question is whether the U.S.S.R. has dis-

covered and put successfully into practice a method of dealing with less advanced nations, which enlists their co-operation by allaying their jealousies, and differs fundamentally from the imperialism of European colonising powers. There is a further question applicable particularly to nationalities, such as those of Ukrain and Georgia, which claim a civilisation equal or superior to that of the predominant partner. How far is their sense of equality satisfied, and their national pride reconciled to their constitutional and actual status? Upon the answers to these questions must depend a large part of our estimates of the value of the federal organisation and of the reputation of Stalin as a statesman of the first rank. We shall see that no absolute answers can yet be given. We must look to tendencies rather than to conclusions.

The claims of nationality are sometimes of a character to be satisfied by the equalisation of the rights of individuals. This seems to be the position of the various immigrant peoples of the United States of America, who, with some reservation in respect to the negroes, actually enjoy equal constitutional and legal rights, as individuals, and make no corporate claims for the recognition of their nationality: either because they feel themselves to be in the presence of a culture having a prestige superior to their own, to which they are content to be assimilated, or because they are not so concentrated in particular centres as to be able to make a claim to territorial status. It seemed at one time that the Jews of Russia would be content with the removal of their disabilities, and the right to live where they pleased: but their ambitions, perhaps under the stimulus of the Zionist movement, have now extended further. Generally speaking the nationalities of Russia have a territorial basis, greater or smaller, and make corporate claims: ranging from national autonomy in some form, to the right to a separate cultural existence in respect to language, literature, art and education, the right to a proportionate local provision for education and economic advancement (in particular in respect to railways and industries), and the right to the local employment, not only of local residents, but of natives. Sections of them have organisations abroad, for the most part in Paris, which claim independence, and there have been, particularly in Asiatic Russia, vigorous separatist movements, of which that under Enver Pasha in 1922, for the unification of all Turkestan, was perhaps the most determined. Occasional incidents, such as the murder of Abid Saidov at Bokhara in 1930 for giving evidence on behalf of the Soviet Government, reveal the underground workings of "*bourgeois* nationalism" and a whole section of the prosecution's case against the "Rights and Trotskyist bloc" in 1938 was devoted to plots in Ukrain, White Russia, Kirgizia and Uzbekistan, for separation from the Union. But the signs of popular support for such movements are scanty. The expression "*bourgeois* nationalism" is applied to everything which over-emphasises the fact of the separate corporate existence of any nationality: for instance, to the aspirations of the Zionists: to every

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assertion of the national status which goes beyond the equal personal rights and the rights to use the national vernacular for official, educational and cultural purposes, and to foster the national culture: and to the invasion of the rights of one minority by another. The assumption is made that claims such as these proceed from the remains of the "liquidated" classes, and not from workers and peasants. It is probable that this assumption is on the whole true: but the Basmachi of Central Asia, who appear to resemble the Hindustani fanatics on the North-west frontier of India, include irreconcilables of all classes, who refuse to live in a country not governed by a Mahommedan ruler.

We are now in a position to summarise the aims which the Communist Party, or its leadership, has set before itself. The first is to convert all the peoples, not into Russians, which was what the later Tsars desired to make them, but into builders of Socialism, and ultimately into willing members of a Communist society. In every society an attempt more or less conscious, more or less organised, more or less efficient, is made to fashion man according to a particular pattern: sometimes, when one class is intended for a position subordinate to another, according to particular patterns. This, indeed, is the aim of all education and of all forms of moral discipline. A great part of what we mean by liberty is the right of individuals and associations, parents, school teachers, Churches, newspaper proprietors, to mould humanity according to their own plan. In a society such as that of the United States of America or the United Kingdom, the State, as such, takes a very small share in the process, and did, *until very recently, take no direct part at all, except the negative part* involved in the enforcement of the criminal law. But, in the U.S.S.R., the whole of the work of "making Man" falls upon the State, and its agents including the Communist Party. This is not the whole of the difference between the position of the State as an educator in the two sections of the modern world. In the United States of America and the United Kingdom the aim is to adjust the character and habits of man to the conditions of an existent society based upon property. In the U.S.S.R. it is sought to change man and his habits, and to create, by doing so, a new type of society. The task is thus immeasurably greater, and it falls upon a single totalitarian agency, which has repudiated the traditional co-operation of the Churches, and itself controls, directly or indirectly, the whole of the Press.

There is, of course, the possibility of an entirely different outlook: of an outlook which we may call pluralistic as opposed to totalitarian: surrendering the task of the "making of Man" to agencies other than the State, and often to a ruling class, which has its own privileges to defend and its own aim to attain. But, granted the premise, which is that one bent is evil, and another one is good, it is impossible to surrender the function of guidance to persons who have a different conception of what the bent should be. The magnitude and difficulty of the operation, and the extent

to which it is conducted in the minor nationalities by nationals or the major one, account for some of the friction which is produced by the process. Owing to the close relation, at some points, between religion and nationality, on the one hand, and between communism and religion, on the other hand, the task presents some of the difficulties of a religious mass-conversion. This is particularly evident in the case of the Islamic peoples. No doubt a portion of the conversion will, in fact, be superficial : as when Charlemagne made Christians of the Saxons by driving them into the river to be baptised ; or a Chinese Christian general turned the hose upon his troops for a like purpose. Education, in the widest sense, starting from the young Octobrist in the lowest class in the seven-year school, travelling upward to the Pioneer and the higher school, still further to the Communist League of Youth, the technicum and the university, and the propaganda of radio, theatre and press, which accompanies Soviet man and Soviet woman through life, is national in form and socialist in content, and alongside of the activities of the Communist Party, one and indivisible in discipline and inspiration, is the means by which Great-Russian and Georgian, Ukrainian and Tartar, Armenian, Uzbek and Yakut, are to be moulded to the standards of the new society.

Economic considerations have to some extent run athwart of the aim of placating national sentiment. The U.S.S.R. has been divided into economic regions, in order to give local unity to economic policy, and these economic regions are not conterminous with national boundaries. In Central Asia, for instance, there is a single economic region, having its headquarters at Tashkent, which is not the capital of any of the constituent republics, but is admirably situated as a centre for the organisation of the production of cotton and for the textile industry. The Economic Council of this area deals with irrigation, river transport, cotton, silk, local coal and grain, and Asiatic health resorts : in other words, with all the most vital economic problems, and with the recreation of the workers. Ukrain, on the other hand, is divided into two regions, one agricultural and one industrial. We owe to Mr. Batsell (in *Soviet Rule in Russia*) the knowledge that a struggle was in progress for three years between the Tartar and the Chuvash autonomous republics, on the one hand, and the economic region having its headquarters at Samara on the middle Volga, on the other : and that it was necessary to effect a compromise by special administrative arrangements. Another dispute arose from making White Russia (a separate Constituent Republic, with all the susceptibilities appropriate to the status) a part of an economic region having its headquarters at Smolensk in the R.S.F.S.R. That the principle of economic regionalisation should have been extended in this way to the constituent and autonomous republics, shows that their authority in economic matters was not regarded seriously, and confirms the conclusion at which I arrive in a later paragraph that real autonomy,

except in linguistic and cultural matters, does not extend very deep or very far.

Nevertheless there is a genuine aim, which I put in the second place, after the primary aim of making a Socialist, and ultimately a Communist, commonwealth: to get rid of all causes of friction between the nationalities. One of the methods of achieving this elimination of friction in Central Asia has been the revision of boundaries on lines corresponding with ethnical and economic conditions. The purely political demarcation of Khiva, Bukhara and Korezm has been replaced by a delimitation which separates mountaineers from plainsmen, nomads from settled agriculturists, Shia from Sunni Mahommedans. But the principal expedient has been that of social and economic levelling, levelling *up*, as well as levelling *down*, levelling both for the individual and for the corporate body of each of the nationalities. The only historical parallel, and that an incomplete one, with which I am acquainted, is that of primitive Islam, which admitted all races and all colours to the full privileges of Islamic brotherhood and intermarriage, retaining the unconverted in a status similar to that of the disfranchised under the revolutionary constitution of the U.S.S.R. prior to 1936.

When the old régime did not actively disfavour non-Russians (as by depriving them of their lands for the establishment of Russian settlers), it, at all events, took no pains to secure for them equality of opportunity. A deliberate policy of excluding industries from non-Russian areas is contradicted by the great developments in Russian Poland, in which industrialisation was far more advanced than in other sections of the Empire; and an elaborate railway system was in existence. It would rather appear that the Tsarist administration followed the line of least resistance, and accepted the pressure of the most powerful interests. Thus the Central Asian Railway was the result of strategic aims, combined with the desire to bring Central Asian cotton to the mills of Central Russia, and to carry the manufactures of the latter to eastern markets. But there was no deliberate provision of economic opportunity to the outlying sections: and this is what the revolutionary government has supplied: partly in the interests of general economic development, partly in pursuance of the policy of equalising the nationalities. The establishment, over the whole Union, of Machine Tractor Stations, which have mechanised uniformly a large part of all the operations of agriculture, is an instance of the combination of both of these aims. But the most striking example of the new policy is the creation of cotton-spinning and cotton-weaving in the Central Asian Republics, which were formerly purveyors of raw material to the centre. The vested interests of the imperial régime would hardly have allowed this assertion of equality.

It is in the overriding of the vested interests, whether of workers or of *entrepreneurs*, that the merits of a levelling authority, no respecter of classes or persons, reveal themselves. The later Tsars were autocrats in name;

but they were chary of offending their capitalists. The British Government, under a system of unevenly distributed democracy, in an Empire partly parliamentary, partly bureaucratic, must inevitably do more for that section of its people which commands the vote than it does for the voteless section. When Lancashire is at odds with a non-self-governing colony, the odds are that Lancashire wins, and that Imperial Preference makes the market safe for the British producer. This may be politically convenient, but it does not strengthen the bonds of affection in the Empire. The Communist rulers are subject to no such weakness, and they do in fact aim at even-handed justice and equality in the economic sphere for all peoples alike. Industries are very generally making their appearance in areas formerly devoid of them, and there is no preference for the interests of one nationality over those of another, wherever the natural facilities for economic development exist or can be stimulated.

Formerly local labour was not employed even at the oil-wells of Baku, and the subsidiary requirements of the oil industry were provided from outside the Tartar territory. It is still true, and apparently inevitable, that machinery and manufactured goods, timber and food, are coming from outside, but attempts are made to modify these conditions. An increasing proportion of Tartars is employed at the wells, but it is not yet equal to the proportion in the local population. The number of native workers (outside of agriculture) in the whole of the Trans-Caucasus territory, Central Asia, the Tartar republic, Daghestan, Kazakstan and Bashkiria, all of them areas industrially backward, doubled itself in five years preceding the epoch of planning, and has doubtless increased very greatly since, though figures are lacking to confirm the belief.

We learn from Mr. Maurice Dobb's *Soviet Russia and the World* that the Tartarisation of officials and teachers in the Tartar Republic went so far as to involve the dismissal of a number of Russians, and some lowering of standards: and that in Uzbekistan Uzbeks were preponderant in all departments of government except Health and Planning. But at about the same time, the White Russians in White Russia held only a little more than one-third of the administrative posts, when they were more than three-quarters of the population. Jews held more posts, though they were only one-tenth of the number. In this case there was no unfair preponderance of Great-Russians. Mr. Batsell tells us an illuminating story of the struggle over Ukrainisation in the public services of Ukrain in 1926. Great-Russians held one-third of the appointments, though they constituted less than one-seventh of the population: Jews, only half of the number of the Great-Russians, held nearly another third: Ukrainians, with three-quarters of the population, had to be content with 30%, that is with two-fifths of their proportionate share. The question of increasing the Ukrainian element was raised in the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. by an Ukrainian delegate. One very pertinent argument was that the Ukrainian population was mainly rural, and not

likely to be fit for administrative, teaching and clerical work. This argument was equally applicable in White Russia. An Ukrainian delegate argued that a more liberal policy was necessary, to impress the Ukrainian population outside of Ukrain with the benefits of Bolshevik policy. A Great-Russian delegate carried the war into the enemy's country by insisting that the Russian element was oppressed in Ukrain, both linguistically and otherwise. Abel Yenukidze, long the Secretary of the Executive Committee, and one of the victims of the trials of 1937, admitted that the Russian language was essential to Socialist construction: but said that the process of Ukrainisation could not be opposed. Bukharin, at that time high in the counsels of the State, quoted the case of a party leader sent from Moscow to Ukrain, who *returned home sooner than learn the local language.*

Bukharin's anecdote looks very like a glimpse of Great-Russian linguistic chauvinism. It was as though a civil servant should decline an appointment in Wales because the members of the County Council spoke Welsh: or refuse to move from the Tamil to the Telugu section of the Madras presidency because he could not learn the latter language. But the linguistic question really has more sides than one: and there are indications, in some quarters, of the use of the linguistic privilege for obstructive ends. The educational authorities in Tajikistan and the Crimea, in particular, have been charged with ousting the Russian language from the schools, or with deliberately lowering the standard of its teaching. It cannot be ousted without bad consequences to local education as well as to all union unity: because the majority of the local languages have not the literature, or even the vocabulary, which is necessary for the higher teaching. It is only in the Russian, Ukrainian, White Russian, Georgian and Armenian languages that education of University standard can at present be given. Another group of languages is capable of providing secondary education. But a third group requires to be supplemented by the Russian language for the purposes of secondary education: and, for a fourth, the very alphabets and scripts, as well as textbooks and teachers, have had to be created, before any use could be made of them even for primary instruction. Generally speaking, all technical faculties can find no medium except Russian, and many of the national languages are inadequate to the needs of modern life and science. No longer imposed by decree, for the purposes of Russification, for exclusive use by all nationalities, Russian, as a compulsory second language in non-Russian schools, should become a *lingua franca* for the Soviet Union, as well as a channel for the higher education, wherever the local language lacks the content for that purpose.

From the beginning of the academic year in the autumn of 1938, the Governments of all the constituent and autonomous republics have decided to make Russian a compulsory second language in non-Russian schools: an obviously reasonable decision.

The Russian and Ukrainian and White Russian languages retain the script based on that introduced by Cyril and Methodius, the Christianisers of the Slavs, with some simplifications and omissions of superfluous letters. The Tartars and Buriat-Mongolians have adopted the Latin script: which has also been used for the numerous alphabets recently created for hitherto illiterate peoples. The autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Adzharia, which had adopted the Latin script, recently abandoned it for a script founded on the Georgian. The Latin script has been accepted for the Uzbek language, but the Georgians and Armenians retain each its own. In the German Volga republic there was a movement in favour of the substitution of the Latin for the Gothic script. Complete liberty in this respect has been left to all nationalities: but a strong lead was necessarily given to the most backward.

Hans Kohn observes that it was not possible for the U.S.S.R., without surrendering its primary aim of a general culture socialist in content, to recognise those elements of national culture which belong to the feudal or the theocratic epoch. This policy, he says, involves the separation from large national units, such as the Germans and Jews, of those sections which are resident in the U.S.S.R. The close connection—it is virtual identity—of the older Jewish culture with the Jewish religion has raised difficulties in respect to the Hebrew language and literature: but Hebrew is now a recognised subject in the Moscow University: and the best of the Russian literature has been translated into that language and published by authority. There is no basis for any suggestion that the Germans in Russia are cut off from the older German culture. Since Hitler's attack upon Russia, the rebuke of a Russian General to a student, who had declared that he would no longer study German, has been published. The works of Goethe, Schiller and Heine are very widely circulated. Generally speaking, the official attitude towards the older national cultures is a very appreciative one. The work of the thirteenth-century Georgian poet, Rustaveli, was the subject of general interest and ovation at his seven hundred and fiftieth anniversary, and it has been translated into many of the local languages, with the evident aim of giving to all the nationalities a sense of a common inheritance in the monuments of each. As much was made of Rustaveli, and his "Knight in the tiger skin", throughout the Union, as had been made of Pushkin some months before, and the object in both cases seems to have been the same. As pointed out in a later chapter, the aim in recent years has been to create a Soviet patriotism equally distinct from a purely national one and from internationalism: and the events of 1941-42 seem to show that the effort has met with success.

The theatre and the film are regarded as powerful means of popular education: and the national theatre and the national film receive generous encouragement. The U.S.S.R. is divided into film areas on the basis of nationality in order that the cinema may be adjusted to local needs.

We hear, for instance, of a film exhibiting at Tashkent the evils of polygamous marriage. The smallest national section now has its theatre. A play in the Karelian (closely similar to Finnish) language was first presented in December, 1937. Non-periodic literature is published in seventy-three languages. Dictionaries of a scholarly quality (sometimes the occasion of a good deal of pedantic squabbling) begin to fill the shelves.

The extension of linguistic, cultural and other autonomy into very small territorial aggregations is well illustrated by the treatment of the Jews. Biro-Bidzhan, a region in Siberia, somewhat larger than Palestine and believed to be capable of supporting 50,000 families, 40,000 of them in agriculture, has become an autonomous province with its own mainly Jewish provincial executive committee, under the Constitution of November, 1936. Since there is a large non-Jewish population, the economic and educational administrative units are not exclusively Jewish. But the Jews have thus ceased to be a non-territorial minority, like the gipsies, and have a small territorial home of their own. On an even smaller scale they have a quasi-territorial status in European Russia also. In the Crimea, White Russia and Ukrain, there are numerous Jewish Soviets, conducting all their transactions in Yiddish, which is the vernacular of the Russian Jew and of the Jew of much of central and eastern Europe. Jewish Soviets exist wherever there is a considerable Jewish group. In Ukrain a minimum population of 1,000 Ukrainians or 500 non-Ukrainians is entitled to form a Soviet: and a minimum of 25,000 Ukrainians or of 10,000 non-Ukrainians is entitled to form a regional Soviet. A conception of the nature of this regional autonomy can be formed from the fact that the Jewish regional Soviet in the Kherson district had a Jewish Police Commissioner, with a small Jewish jail. There is a considerable number of lower judicial courts in Ukrain and White Russia, where the business is conducted entirely in Yiddish: and there are Jewish police at Kiev and Odessa: and a Jewish registration office for marriages and divorces at the latter place. There are complaints that an equally liberal policy is not pursued in respect to small local units of the Finno-Ugrian race: for instance, that the group (about 145,000) of Karelians at Tver (now re-named after Kalinin) have no administrative unit. But that special arrangements should be expected for so small a territory as this, is evidence of a generally liberal policy. The wide concession of territorial autonomy to small national groups in Ukrain has been made by Ukrainian nationalists the basis of a charge of deliberate weakening of Ukrainian nationalism by the Soviet Government. This is the familiar difficulty of the minority within the minority.

The Soviet Government encourages Yiddish, as the actual vernacular of Russian Jews, and the Jewish theatre in the U.S.S.R. makes use of this language. The Hebrew theatre (Habima) has left the U.S.S.R., and has its headquarters at New York. The large number of Jews employed in the

public offices—it is particularly marked in White Russia and Ukrain—and in such institutions as those of socialist retail trade, is responsible for some growth of anti-Semitism in Soviet Russia, and also perhaps for the fancy that the Soviet Government is predominantly one of Jews. The Soviet Government has set its face firmly against anti-Semitism, and punishes anti-Jewish outrages with severity. It is itself charged with anti-Semitism, because of its repression of the Zionist movement: but is, in fact, neither pro- nor anti-Jew, but gives to the Jewish the same encouragement which it gives to other nationalities, while discouraging the separatism which appears to be involved in Zionism.

The Soviet of Nationalities, which is one of the two coequal chambers of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. under the constitution of 1936, is a device, similar in principle to the Senate of the U.S.A., for securing the equal representation of Constituent Republics as such, and of smaller autonomous units. Each Constituent Republic (with twenty-five deputies), each autonomous republic (with five deputies), and each national region (with one deputy) is represented in this chamber. Smaller numbers were proposed in the first draft, but were deliberately increased by an amendment aiming at making the numbers of the two chambers approximately equal: so as to give to each of them equal weight when joint sessions are held. Another amendment of importance was at the same time made. The first draft provided for indirect election of the members of the Soviet of Nationalities through the Supreme Soviet. It was amended by the substitution, for indirect election, of direct election by the citizens of each unit. Another amendment improved the standing of the Constituent Republics in the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. The Presidium had eleven (now sixteen) Vice-Chairmen, each of whom, by a convention, is the Chairman, either of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of a constituent republic, or of the Council of People's Commissars of the same. The original draft, which had provided for a smaller number of Vice-Chairmen, was amended to provide one for each constituent republic, and so affirm the equality of all the Vice-Chairmen in the Presidium. The care taken to ensure the equality of the smaller national units between themselves is evidence of Stalin's personal vigilance. The increase made in the proportion of the number of deputies to the population in the Supreme Soviets of the smaller constituent republics is another evidence of this care. For instance, whereas the R.S.F.S.R. has a Supreme Soviet consisting of one deputy to every 150,000, Ukrain has one to every 100,000, Georgia has one to every 15,000, Kirgizia has one to every 5,000 and so on. There is no doubt that Stalin's heart is in the success of his nationalities policy, and equality, both corporate and individual, by removing jealousy, eliminates friction. If the actual opportunity and power, which are given by the membership of the Supreme Soviet and the vice-chairmanship of its Presidium, are small: the dignity is considerable, and it is at all events equal for all: and

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the smallest constituent republic is coequal with the largest in at least one of the two chambers and in the vice-presidential chairs of the Presidium. The voice of the constitutional government of a constituent republic may be weak in the determination of policy: but the execution of policy offers some scope, and the sphere of administration is not to be despised.

In the statutory allocation of powers between the Union and the constituent republics, the former has control of foreign policy and defence; foreign trade; law of citizenship and rights of foreigners; the prevention of clashes between Union and Constituent Republics by power to admit new Republics, to determine boundaries and to ensure conformity of constitutions; of the monetary and credit system; of the criminal and civil codes: and of general acts of amnesty: all of which are inevitably necessary to the central authority. Other items of a more unusual character are: the courts and judicial processes: a general power for the protection of the security of the State, which would evidently extend to jurisdiction over *all* matters which in the opinion of the Union Government might involve a danger of subversion of existing institutions: a large economic and financial authority of which I give further particulars below: the administration of all transport and communications: the establishment of the fundamental principles in the domain of education (which, literally understood, would certainly cover the languages to be used in the schools): and the same in the domain of public health, and in labour legislation. The powers of the Union in economic and financial matters include the establishment of the national economic plans of the U.S.S.R., *the confirmation of the unified State budget of the U.S.S.R., as well as of the taxes and revenues which go to form the all-Union, the republican, and the local, budgets*: the administration of banks, of industrial and agricultural establishments and enterprises and also of trading enterprises of all Union importance: the organisation of State insurance: the contracting and granting of loans, the establishment of the fundamental principles for the use of land as well as for the exploitation of its deposits, forests and waters: and the organisation of a single system of national economic accounting.

Constituent Republics are entitled to levy only certain specified taxes, at specified maximum rates: and the proportion in which the proceeds are to be divided between them and authorities subordinate to them, is prescribed by the all Union authority.

The absence of an independent budget in each constituent Republic, and of all power to borrow, and the restricted authority of taxation, place the Constituent Republics in a position inferior to that of the States which make up the Federal Union of the U.S.A., of the Provinces of the Dominion of Canada and of the Commonwealth of Australia, and even of the Provinces of British India. Local budget deficits are often made up by central subvention as part of the policy of constructive *levelling up*. A Constituent Republic, dependent upon financial assignments from

the centre, may be treated with great generosity by the Union, but necessarily lacks initiative and authority, and the practical means of resisting encroachment upon its sphere of control.

Such is the *formal* division of power between the Constituent Republics and the Union.

Friction there has often been, particularly in Ukrain. A vigorous effort at conciliation of that Republic was made between 1922 and 1929, when the Soviet Government aimed specifically at "Ukrainisation" of the official language and the administration, against the contrary inclination of Great-Russian zealots. Ukrainian separatists abroad allege that this effort was neutralised by the wide establishment of regional autonomies for non-Ukrainian minorities and by wholesale Jewish colonisation in the Crimea and the south. The Ukrainian-speaking population is one of peasants, and measures which caused discontent among peasants in general were particularly resented by national sentiment in Ukrain. In 1930 a member of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences was imprisoned for forming a society of liberation, and the Academy was closed. The allegations against the Soviet Government include neglect of industrial interests, export of necessary food in periods of scarcity and depletion of Ukrainian finance in the interests of the Union. One of them—that the Donets mineral area has been separated from Ukrain—is evidently based on the fact, already mentioned, that Ukrain has been divided into two economic regions, one agricultural and one industrial; but it is misleadingly stated. The friction took a very serious form at the time of the struggle over collectivisation. In July, 1933, N. A. Skrypnyk, an old collaborator of Lenin, Commissar of Education in Ukrain, and a member of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R., whose sixtieth birthday had been celebrated as a State ceremony, protested against the agrarian policy, was called upon to recant, and committed suicide. There were many lesser sufferers on the same account. The purge of 1933 disclosed the presence, as chairmen of the collective farms, of a number of the old officers of the nationalist chief Petliura: and the Commission, returning a month later, after the expulsion of these undesirables, found them again at their posts. About a quarter of the Ukrainian Communists were expelled at this purge, the average for the whole Union being a fifth. In 1935 there were disturbances, with numerous attacks on tax-collectors, Communist agitators, newspaper reporters, chairmen of collective farms, factory foremen and shock workers, and one district chief of political police. This outbreak may have been purely economic, but the line is difficult to draw. In 1937, Lyubchenko, chairman of the Council of People's Commissar in Ukrain, committed suicide to avoid arrest as an enemy of the U.S.S.R. and a betrayer of Ukrainian interests: and Postyshev, who had been a sort of hero of Bolshevisation in Ukrain since the difficulties over collectivisation, was disgraced. A general clearance has been made in the upper ranks of the Communist Party in

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Ukrain: and it is understood to have included Stanislas Kosior, formerly a stalwart supporter of Stalin.

In White Russia *Pravda* gave a picture of the purge of 1933, particularly in the region of Vitebsk, where were found many adherents of the Zionist and Jewish Bund parties, along with Social Revolutionaries and National Democrats. One of those questioned by the Commissioners was found to have aired a grievance about the demands of the grain-collectors: and to have said that White Russia was a poor country which ought to be put on the subvention list and receive help instead of making contributions. Another was unmasked as a leader of a Social Revolutionary revolt in 1918. "They made boastful speeches about the White Russian people. They got drunk, and sang, with false notes, White Russian nationalist songs." Not much more serious, perhaps, than, "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," on St. Andrew's night: but we must not expect the fortunate conditions of the British Isles on the doubtful border between Poland and Russia. In 1937 there were more evidences of friction. Chervyakov, chairman of the Central Executive Committee for the past seventeen years and one of the organisers of the Red Army, committed suicide—apparently to avoid arrest—and Goloded, chairman of the Council of People's Commissars for ten years, was arrested as a Trotskyist. A few months later Chervyakov's successor in the chairmanship of the Central Executive Committee was removed from that post. Eight so-called Bukharinists in White Russia were sentenced to death for aiming at the separation of White Russia from the Soviet Union by means of the military intervention of Poland and Germany: an evident echo of the Trotskyist trials: with the addition of a nationalist element.

In the Mahommedan areas nationalist movements, such as *Milli Istiklal* (National Independence), in Uzbekistan, have often been active and have invaded the local sections of the Party. In 1934 Nusratulla, the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee in Tajikistan, was removed on charges of having pursued an unduly nationalistic policy in that republic: and replaced by Rahimbayev. Other Tajiks were also degraded. In 1937 Rahimbayev was in turn disgraced on a charge of supporting the Mahommedan mullahs and of diverting public funds to the mosques. I will not weary the reader with a full list of similar incidents in the constituent and autonomous republics in 1937; but the cases of Lokola, a former chairman of the Executive Committee in Abkhazia, and of nine high officials in Azarbaijan, convicted of a plot to murder Stalin, and executed, deserve notice. The Terror was at least as active in the constituent Republics generally as in the R.S.F.S.R., and separatist movements played a great part in the trial of March, 1938. But Hitler's attempt in 1941 to rouse the Russian Mahommedans to a Holy War on the German side have been met by an appeal from the Mufti Abdurrahman Rasulev to Muslims throughout the world to give aid to the U.S.S.R.

Of the lesser bickerings over the complexities of linguistic policy and

the sharing of public office, I have already had something to say. How strong is the language used over comparative trifles we are able to judge from an article in *Pravda* in December, 1937, which castigates the editor of a Russian Ukrainian dictionary for seeking Ukrainian neologisms to replace perfectly good Russian words in common Ukrainian use. The editor of this learned work has associated with “*bourgeois nationalists*” and was for this reason expelled from the Party. His exclusion of Russian words is characterised as sabotage, *vreditelstvo*. It is a mere straw, but it suggests that the wind of Great Russian and Ukrainian opposition is disappointingly high. I think that Stalin would have been glad to see it abated, for Ukrain is by far the most important of the non-Great-Russian nationalities; but the events of 1941 show that the separatist movement there, in spite of jealousies and sore places, is neither strong nor widespread.

Mrs. Anna Louise Strong, a good observer, writing in 1930, found no traces of race prejudice in Central Asia, where she saw Russians and Uzbeks sitting down together in the co-operative dining-room: but the same was true of the pre-Revolution period. Mr. Littlepage tells a startling, but convincing story, of the Kirgiz outside a hospital during a typhus epidemic flipping lice at the nervous Russian out-patients, and describes a sort of inverted national snobbery which favours the Asiatic against the European and puts the former into places for which they are not really fit. As regards the peoples of the *macédoine* of the Caucasus, Mr. John Lehmann, after a stay of some months in 1937, sums up his opinion by saying that “there seems little reason to question the claim of the local authorities that, in the face of the advance in education and material welfare, old tribal jealousies are rapidly dying out”. He adds that the vendetta was hard to eradicate, and that, in upper Svanetia, there were 600 deaths from this cause between 1917 and 1921, but between 1930 and 1932 two only. My own experience in another part of Asia leads me to regard this achievement as unusually rapid. Mr. Lehmann also thinks that the quarrel between Tartars, Armenians and Georgians, has been ended by the socialisation of the three constituent republics. It may be so: but I prefer to await further evidence.

I arrive at these paradoxical conclusions: that the constitution gives little or nothing in the way of actual power to the constituent bodies which are parties to the federation: that the political system is one of intense centralisation, particularly in the vital sphere of finance: that the concessions to local language and culture give a very large part of what national feeling most desires: and that there is such an absence of favour to particular nationalities, and such a constructive effort to make their equality real, that national jealousy and friction are diminished, though not yet eliminated. It is not, except in the sphere of language, liberty: but national *amour propre* is placated: and levelling *up* is in active operation. The Soviet Government has, in fact, reverted to a system more

familiar in Asia and in the Balkan Peninsula than in western Europe, which gives cultural, without political, autonomy. Under the old Turkish Empire, and perhaps in Bulgaria today, it existed, or exists, under the name of the *Millat* system. Essentially it consists in concession to local religions, local languages, local culture, together with the institutions connected with these three: but the Soviet Government has added an element of active encouragement which is all its own. To those nationalities which are only emerging from primitive nomadism and were, under the Tsarist régime, threatened with extinction, the policy brings pure gain. To those such as the Central Asians, who occupy an intermediate place in the order of civilisation, it offers a compromise which is likely to keep discontent within manageable limits.

For Ukrainians, Georgians, Germans, there is a measure of relaxation in the strait waistcoat of the centralised state and an end of certain much-felt grievances. Experience of the consequences of national self-determination in practice makes it reasonable to doubt whether anything better was possible.

There is nothing in the U.S.S.R. corresponding to the device of communal representation, which is so extensively applied in British India: because there is no recognition of non-territorial nationalities and minorities: and because territorial minorities are placated by concessions in local administration: and also because economic classes are eliminated or in process of elimination.

The criticisms of Trotsky on the policy followed towards the Nationalities are to be found in his *Real Position in Russia*, 1927, in his *Stalinite School of Falsification*, 1932, and in his *Revolution Betrayed*, 1936, from which I have quoted, at the head of this chapter, a favourable comment on the treatment of the most backward of them. Apart from his personal strictures on Stalin, in relation to the dispute over Georgia, before Lenin's last illness, he is mainly concerned to show that centralisation is carried too far and the domination of the imported communist and the bureaucrat too strongly enforced. He says that bureaucratic guardianship even deprives the republics of the right of settling land disputes between the local and the Russian population. I think that the aim here was to protect the local population. He criticises the unsatisfactory attitude of the industrial city (where the population, as in the Don Basin and at Baku, is often of a different nationality from that of the surrounding rural area) towards the village: but this was one of the recognised difficulties with which the Soviet Government has always had to grapple, as best it might. The same is true of his strictures upon the supercilious treatment of some of the active revolutionary workers of the minor nationalities, who, he says, were elbowed away as a kind of second-rate communists. He suggests the publication in the Press of Lenin's letter on the question of nationalities which contained reflections upon Stalin, and has been consequently suppressed. There is no doubt that "pious frauds" have

been perpetrated upon the documentary evidence, and that the standard of ethics, generally, is rather that of the palazzo of the Italian Renaissance than of the British Cathedral close: but I am at present concerned, not with the personal characters of the actors, but with the policy which has been pursued: and I do not think that Trotsky's criticisms call for the nullification of the general judgment I have already pronounced.

Like many other things in the U.S.S.R., the policy for the nationalities is not that miracle of completed performance which the propagandists would have us believe, but it is an immense improvement upon the Tsarist policy, and a genuine achievement on the part of its creator, Stalin. I think that other Governments have something to learn from it, particularly in respect to the device of cultural autonomy for peoples not sufficiently advanced to exercise political autonomy, and in respect to the active *levelling up* of the economically backward.

CHAPTER XX

THE NEW RESPECTABILITY

"All things are in flux."—HERACLITUS OF EPHEBUS (sixth to fifth century B.C.)

"Russia is full of respectable married people, just as anxious to do well in their jobs and help their children to get a good start in life as their counterparts in the U.S.A. A new kind of respectability is emerging which sometimes seems almost as extreme in one direction as the previous ideas in the other."—LITTLEPAGE and BESS, *In Search of Soviet Gold*.

THE TASK of the November Revolution, as seen by the men who took part in it, was the seizure of power by a hitherto oppressed class which would use it to create a classless society, in which each would work according to his capacity and receive according to his needs. Those who did not fancy that industry was a Fortunatus purse into which all could dip without exhausting it, perceived clearly that the central problem was that of production: because the satisfaction of needs is dependent upon an immense increase of productive power: and, less clearly perhaps, that a long period of time must elapse before the necessary stage of productivity could be reached. An indispensable condition of the attainment of that stage, in the eyes of all, was the world-wide division of labour which would result from the anticipated world-wide revolution. For the rest, the discoveries of physical science were to achieve the conquest of matter, and machines, owned and operated by a public authority in the interests of all, were to take the place of the slaves and serfs and wage-earning proletariats, upon which earlier civilisations had depended. The workers were to become the lords of the machines. There was cold, there was hunger, there was danger from within and from without: but there was a happy certainty of victory, made possible by the close ap-

proach of the moment when the barriers would go down, and the rush of brethren from abroad would relieve the proletarian citadel.

In this imagined world, the Third International represented the aspirations of the proletariats to emancipation from the chains of capital, and of the colonial peoples to freedom from imperialist oppression, and it met each year at Moscow, the centre of a new world of hope, to determine the policies for effecting these deliverances. Defeats, political and other, were no worse than the return of workmen after an unsuccessful strike, submission to the inevitable by men confident of an early resurrection. There were no alliances except of proletariat with proletariat. In such a world nationalism was merely a weakness to be tolerated, a stumbling-block of superstition. The coercive state was necessary so long as cupidity demanded an unfair share of the world's wealth for a class or for an individual : but that would come to an end with the removal of the fetters upon production, the problem of distribution, which had so greatly exercised earlier Socialist thinkers, would solve itself, and men—their reasonable requirements freely met—would cease to snatch advantage and to need restraint. The coercive state would wither away, and give place to a society in which purely economic organisations would settle the relations of mankind. In the meantime, the armed workers, when each day's work was done, would, like the Twelve in Blok's poem, patrol streets and mines and factories, and watch over public security and enforce the proper discharge of public business : or stand forth to protect the achievements of the revolution against attack from within or without. Great establishments of civil functionaries, like regular armies, seemed part of the paraphernalia of a bad old world, vanished for ever into the limbo of nightmares.

At the twenty-first anniversary of the November Revolution, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was an organised state, immensely more efficient and more powerful than the one which it overthrew, exercising all and more than all of the coercive functions of its predecessor, with a military machine as regular, as elaborately equipped, and more numerous than that of any power on earth ; paying no more than lip-service to the idea of world-revolution, in close association with capitalist powers, a member of the *bourgeois* League of Nations, seeking in its relations with the outside world the advantages of peace and profitable trade. In building up gigantic projects of State-controlled industry and agriculture, this State had created a host of functionaries, 70,000 of them employed in the one task of tabulating its statistics. 12,520 young people passed out of the higher educational institutions in the fourth quarter of 1937 and were at once taken into the employment of the Government : 7,190 as engineers, 1,049 as agricultural specialists, 1,115 as animal specialists, 1,270 as doctors, 340 as veterinary doctors, 298 as economists, and so on. Of these, 2,224, went into the administrative employment of the Government or the Party : for both have large staffs. The total of civilian re-

cruits for the whole year 1938 was estimated at 91,000. The "Party," once a handful of men and women, steeled to endurance in the school of hardship and exile, had grown to two millions, who occupy all the best and many of the second and third best places in the state: an influential inner ring having a vested interest in things as they are, and enjoying more privilege and more comfort (though not more wealth) than the rank and file of the population. The vision of the armed workers, taking care to see that officials are servants and not masters, had faded away though the ivory gate of dreams. The Soviets themselves, though they had bequeathed their name to the new state, had ceased to be the constituents of the supreme legislature, now remodelled on the lines of a *bourgeois* parliament: and the constitutional bodies, in which the burning questions of earlier years were discussed and settled, had given place to the organs of the Communist Party as the source of policy. The Third International had held only one full meeting since 1928, and was represented by a permanent Executive Committee issuing its instructions to rigidly disciplined national Parties, and following a policy of defence of the Socialist Fatherland: in the discharge of this function, it must help to defend the capitalist states which are the allies of the Socialist Fatherland, and to maintain order among their African and Asiatic subjects. It had gone through a phase in which it ordered the affiliated parties to support the moderate non-Communist Left of the *bourgeois* countries, once condemned as Social Fascists. Lip-service continued to be paid to the idea of world-revolution, but the former engine of change and overthrow was harnessed to the Foreign Office of a world-power, in competition with other world-powers like itself.

It had taken two decades to bring these developments thus far: and they had worked themselves out, not by any new turn, but rather by the prolongation of a curve which began to diverge from the straight line of theoretical principle, from the first moment of the seizure of power. The curve was inevitable as soon as the Soviet Government came into contact with the obstinate realities of existence in a *bourgeois* world. The divergence had taken place, not with a mathematical precision, but with a wavering oscillation, as rival forces pulled first this way and then that: but the dominant influence acted always in the direction which, at the end of the period, we see to have been taken. The result is hateful to the surviving idealists of an earlier period, who tell us that the Soviets have become *bourgeois*: and the intransigence of Trotsky and the bitter struggle associated with his name were the historical issue of the contradiction. But there could have been no reconstruction of industry and agriculture by the State without an army of civil functionaries: and there could have been no safety in a predatory world without a military machine of quantity and quality similar to that of dangerous neighbours, and without alliances and contacts incompatible with a policy of the encouragement of revolutionary movements. I think that Trotsky, if it had been he and

not Stalin who had triumphed in the struggle of 1924-27, would have done very much what Stalin has done, and that his earlier actions and writings, when he was himself in power, afford ample proof of this contention. The task of Socialism is a task of organisation and construction: and there can be no organisation and no construction without the employment of the available human material. Armed workers, giving their spare time to the job of building and defending a new world, cannot take the place of military experts, and equipment, and training, of administrators and statisticians and clerks. That the servants should tend to become masters, should develop bureaucratic tendencies as the phrase goes, is the critical difficulty of all social organisation. The simple course is the quasi-anarchical one of *laissez faire, laissez aller*, which permits the individual to use his organising gifts for his own purposes, that is to say to dominate his fellows who lack those gifts. When we have decided that this is neither justice nor wisdom, we must take our risk of being dominated by those who should be servants of society, and use our brains to find a solution of the peril. The existing régime in the U.S.S.R. is not without expedients for keeping the Party man and the official in their places, as the periodical purge, and the trials and the expulsions of 1936-38, sufficiently demonstrate.

As I read history, the idealists of the Revolution—they would repudiate the title, but it seems the appropriate one, and I note recently, for the first time, the use of the expression the *ideals of communism* in a Party publication—descend from the enthusiasts of the Messianic Mission, for whom Moscow was the Third Rome, though they have translated their hopes into the language of Karl Marx. Since November, 1917, they have been in perpetual struggle with the statesmen: who have sought, by compromise and by opportunism, ruling *as they could*, as statesmen must, to shape their country's course. There has never been unanimity in revolutionary Russia, though there has sometimes been the appearance of unanimity, because opposition has been driven underground: and both the Further Left and the Right have had their share in the oscillations.

In external affairs the first great compromise was the Peace of Brest-Litovsk; signed, against the will of an actual majority of the Central Executive Committee, who desired the continuance of war with Germany in the belief that it would spread the revolution. In the bitterness of the struggle over this national humiliation, the Left, then including Bukharin, plotted to kidnap Lenin: but it is likely that Lenin's solution saved the revolution from destruction by the German armies. The strategic retreat of the New Economic Policy—accompanied by an analogous change in international relations—was made possible by the overwhelming authority of the great leader: but the suicides of many ardent spirits marked the resentment and disappointment with which it was received. When, in the autumn of 1924 Stalin formulated his theory of Socialism in one country, the death of the aspiration to world-wide revolution, except as

something to be reached by a slow process of universal conviction, and the development of nationalism in the international revolutionary state, were already within sight. Along with internationalism, goes the class-war: because, for a struggle crossing national boundaries and linking the proletariats together in alliance, there is substituted the rivalry of nations as integral entities. As soon as it became clear that the other nations were not at once prepared to follow the example of the U.S.S.R., the goal of Socialism in one country was the only alternative to no Socialism at all, or Socialism indefinitely deferred.

The struggle between the original internationalism and the nationalism which has taken its place, has been a long one, and has been fought with varying fortunes. The history of the Third International is a compendium of this struggle. It was brought into existence because the Second International had betrayed the International cause by its support of national war in 1914. It began its career as the avowed champion of World-Revolution: and it was the enthusiasm of one of its meetings which sent the Red Armies to defeat outside of Warsaw. It made a concession to compromise when it damped down the revolutionary spirit in Germany in 1923, and further concessions in the same direction when it endorsed the policy of friendly alliance with the moderate parties abroad, with the Kuomintang in China, with the Trade Union Congress in Great Britain, with Pilsudski in Poland: still more when it adopted the policy of the United Front in 1935. Its schools for Asiatic and colonial propaganda were directed against the Powers with which the Soviet Government desired friendly relations: its extraordinary plan made in 1928 for a Negro Republic in the United States of America was a direct challenge. The long delays between its plenary meetings (after the one held in 1924, there was an interval of four years and after the one held in 1928 there was an interval of seven) seemed to proclaim lukewarmness or neutrality. The signature of the non-aggression pacts, including a clause against intervention in foreign countries on account of their internal condition: the entry into the comity of nations signalled by the endorsement of the Kellogg Pact (1928): the acceptance of membership of the League of Nations: appeared to repudiate subversive design. But, even in 1934, the permanent organisation of the Third International was engaged on plans for the encouragement of revolution in three European countries, one of them on terms of intimate political association with the U.S.S.R.

The accession of Italy in November, 1937, to the anti-Komintern pact, already signed by Germany and Japan, called forth a pronouncement, addressed to the peoples of all the world, in which World Revolution takes a place entirely subordinate to the defence of the U.S.S.R., as the Fatherland of Socialism, and of republican Spain and national China, against Fascist attack. This was followed by a declaration by the Chairman of the International that the workers of capitalistic countries should judge each State by its relations with the Soviet Union, not by its relations

with Socialism in general. In effect, this declaration waived the aim of proletarian revolution for those countries which stood with the U.S.S.R. against the dictatorships of Central Europe and the Japanese Empire. Molotov, delivering his report at the ceremonial session of Party and non-Party organs in the Great Theatre of Moscow on November 6th, 1937, formulated the now ruling theory regarding World-Revolution. He said that it had already begun with the revolution of November, 1917; not by the sudden fall of the whole chain, but by the successive fall of individual links. Since November, 1917, the proletarian revolution had become the support of all really progressive movements of the popular masses, *even though not purely communistic*. "Now," he said, "it is the support also of the struggle of the toilers *for their democratic rights against the fascists*, and of the weak countries for their national independence against imperialistic aggression."

In spite of the puzzle which was set to the rest of the world by the Russo-German Pact of August, 1939, the policy of the Third International from 1935 was to bring about a United Front throughout the world of all the left and leftward forces and to use them for the protection of the U.S.S.R., the Fatherland of Socialism, against the apprehended attack of those Powers, in particular Italy, Germany and Japan, which are, by definition, hostile to the tenets of Communism, or prepared to use Communism as a pretext for aggression. Thus the Communists of Great Britain received instructions from Party headquarters, before the General Election of 1935, to support the Labour Party, and sought, without success, to establish intimate relations with that organisation. The Popular Fronts in Spain and France were among the consequences of this policy. Nothing more is heard of the agitation, once so active, in the Asiatic colonies of Great Britain and France for the emancipation of their peoples from the Imperialist yoke; and pains is taken to reassure the representatives of actually or potentially allied states against the apprehension of Communist interference.

And yet the toasts of the Central Committee of the All Union Communist Party for the twentieth anniversary of the Revolution, as given to us in the Party newspaper on October 30th, 1937, included minute libations to the old gods: "Proletarians of all lands! Oppressed peoples of the colonies! Up with the flag of Lenin—Stalin, the flag of the victorious Socialist Revolution! Long live the proletarian revolution in the whole world! Long live the Communist International: the leader and organiser of the struggle against war, fascism and capitalism! Long live World Communism." In the speeches which glorified the new Constitution, it was remembered that there are friends abroad, the toilers of capitalistic lands, who will be encouraged by this crowning achievement of the Soviet Union under the guidance of the Party, and will remember that they too may some day enjoy a similar happiness.

It is just as reasonable to expect the formal surrender of the international

pretensions of Communism, as to ask His Holiness the Pope to give up the oecumenical claims of the Vatican. The reverend age of the latter and their religious derivation from St. Peter, and beyond him from Jesus Christ, must not blind us to the essential similarity of the spirit which is behind both. Each has a gospel of salvation for mankind. The one puts it after the death of the body, the other promises it here and now. Both seek their end by imposing a rigid discipline on conduct, mind and conscience, both have their sworn orders, their martyrs and their devotees. But both have also their worldly diplomacy and their worldly policy; both can be harmless as doves, as well as aiming to be wise as serpents; both have been, in their time, capable of pious fraud, and can make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, can justify the questionable means by the noble end, can be all things to all men.

Every Government of the Left has a further Left, which it cannot ignore; a section which is shocked by compromise, suspicious of concession, impatient of backsliding. A portion of it may be frankly hostile, and may necessitate measures of the kind applied to the followers of Trotsky. But thought is subtle, and its influence penetrates beyond the avowed opposition. It is necessary to placate and neutralise this leftward thought. That is why the Soviet Government was careful to continue to uphold the Third International, as well as to use it as the instrument of its own Foreign Office, while it supported the existing régimes of the Powers from which it hoped for support. It hopes that the world will become Communist, as the Pope trusts that it will become Catholic; but the result is now to be attained by conversion, not by subversion; and, in accordance with Molotov's metaphor, by the gradual slipping of the links off the chain. Communism is to conquer by its superior productivity; a contingency which the capitalist, presumably, does not contemplate.

But before I consider further the relations between the Soviets and the so-called capitalist States, I have something to add as to the replacement of the internationalist ideal by an entirely new Soviet Patriotism. Precisely how wide and how deep was the sentiment of Great-Russian patriotism in the pre-revolution state, it is not easy to say. Patriotism of the *State* was perhaps neither wide nor deep. Patriotism of a mystical entity, of Mother Russia, may have been both. What seems certain is that the minor nationalities of the Empire did not share it. Even here, however, the too assured negative is apt to be contradicted by the citation of an example, such as that of the Ukrainian Gogol, who must have been echoing the feelings of many of his countrymen when he wrote his famous apostrophe to Russia's Troika. But the lesser peoples had little love for the dominant race which suppressed their languages and literatures, tried to replace their religions with its own and kept them in economic subordination to itself.

In a chapter on the Nationalities I have shown that these lesser peoples, their cultures and their economic interests, have been matters of special

concern to the revolutionary régime, and I have suggested that, in spite of a strict financial and administrative centralisation (entirely contradictory to the theoretical principles of the Soviet Government itself), there has been a careful fostering of those things to which local patriotism attaches itself with a special affection—language, literature, drama, art and local tradition. The system has been one of political centralisation and so-called cultural autonomy, and it has been accompanied by measures, quite foreign to the practice of the Tsarist Government, for *levelling up* the economic level in all parts of the Soviet State. That admirable observer, the gold-mining engineer, Mr. Littlepage, goes so far as to criticise the Soviet Government for paying undue regard to the interests of the indigenous peoples and promoting them over the heads of better qualified Russians.

A step of profound significance—for the Cossacks were the instruments of the Tsarist administration, a large part of the strength of the White armies in the civil war, and the most obstinate opponents of the collectivisation of agriculture—was the re-establishment of Cossack regiments in the Red Army. It was more than an amnesty. It was a rehabilitation. A patriotic Cossack song from the opera in Sholohov's *Virgin Soil Uplifted* figured prominently in the Soviet Press of the Anniversary week. Along with the Law of 1935 which abrogated the exclusion of the children of the disfranchised from the higher educational institutions, and with the provisions of the constitution of 1936, the inclusion of the Cossacks in the Soviet Red Army was an invitation to all classes to co-operate in the service of the Soviet fatherland. The moral and political unity of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. was strongly emphasised in the speeches of the twentieth anniversary of the Revolution. Soviet patriotism is inculcated by a new turn in the teaching of history, for which Stalin himself gave the cue by a brochure addressed to the writers of text-books. Patriotism both of the whole and of the parts, of the constituent Republics as well as of the Union, is included. Mingled with announcements of record output of potatoes and pig-iron, of roads in the sub-arctic regions, of new water supplies and public baths for cities, of chess champions and polar fliers, with enormities of Trotskyist and Bukharinist enemies and Fascist machinations, we find the poems and portraits of Georgian and Armenian and Tartar minstrels and poets, and notices of a new archæological magazine which throws light upon the pre-history of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., and an account of the recovery from the bottom of the river Bug of a cargo-boat which must have carried Ukrainian corn to Greece 3,000 years ago, when Jason was setting forth to Kolchis to find the Golden Fleece. Among the recurrent adulations of Stalin—half Georgian half Ossetian—the word “native-born” (*Rodnoi*) is constantly repeated as though to reassure his faithful supporters of his unity with all his peoples. At an earlier date more stress would have been laid upon his proletarian origin. From February, 1938, the form of oath

for the Red Army has been changed, and the soldiers now pledge their faith as citizens of the Soviet Union, in lieu of the older international pledge.

In 1933 a schoolmaster was dismissed from his post for making too much of Kutusov and Bagration, the heroes of the Napoleonic war. It was counter revolutionary to cherish the portraits of Tsarist Generals. In June, 1938, the Press was insisting on his restoration to his school. He had become the remembrancer of a Russian triumph.

Patriotism has its obverse in xenophobia and stress is laid on the foreign provenance of the capital invested in Russia, in the pre-revolution epoch, and some of the odium of capitalism is thus shifted from native shoulders. Foreign consulates in Russia are cut down, and foreign associations, even those existing for purely beneficent purposes, are excluded from operation on Russian soil. Statistics are suppressed; suspicions on all hands become more painfully obtrusive; official reticence is carried to a point which seemed morbid, until we learned in June, 1941, that foreign attack was not mere fancy.

How real were the grounds of apprehension and how effectively had the patriotism of the Soviet peoples been aroused to meet the danger, we learned in the next fourteen months.

The aim of the Soviet Government in its relations with foreign Powers was dictated by its experience of the intervention of 1918 and 1919, by the announced intentions of the man who controls the vast might of the German Reich, by the evident ambitions of Japan, and by the willingness of a third Power to share in the spoils. These things thrust into the background the design of bringing about revolution throughout the world, and caused the Soviet Government to look for helpers where they were to be found. It needed time for development, and needed peace. By its non-aggression Pacts it foreswore the claim to intervention for the assistance of proletarian revolution, and by oral declaration at Geneva, it extended this self-denying ordinance to cases in which counter-revolution in the interests of capitalism or fascism was being attempted. It was eager to combat depression and restore economic order in capitalist countries, because the world is its customer and supplier. It courted foreign opinion, and sought to disarm foreign suspicion and prejudice. One of the aims of the new Constitution was to give evidence of liberal and democratic sympathies.

The desire for peace was accompanied by a rapidly growing preparation for war. The explanation of this contradiction was given by Stalin himself in February, 1938, in answer to a correspondent who said that he had been censured by local propagandists for declaring that the final victory of Socialism could be achieved only on the world scale, and told that he was no better than a Trotskyist. Wide publicity was given to the reply, which declared that there were two separate sides to the question of Socialism in one country, one that of internal, the other that of external

relations. In the first sphere the U.S.S.R. has everything that is needed to build a complete socialistic society. In the second she has to deal with capitalistic encirclement, and must strengthen the ties with the workers of *bourgeois* countries, and her own military power. The danger of external attack is constantly emphasised, and one of the first measures put before the first session of the Supreme Soviet in 1938 was the creation of a separate Commissariat for Naval Affairs, with a view to the creation of a powerful fleet.

The figures of expenditure on defence in the years immediately anterior to the German attack are eloquent of the determination to be self-sufficing as a military power. They will be found in one of my appendices. From one-fifth of a total of a hundred milliards in 1937, they grew to nearly one-third of two hundred and fifteen milliards in 1941. Let us see what was the policy which this great outlay was intended to support.

I repeat that Stalin desired peace, almost at any price, and for excellent reasons. Every Russian statesman must be conscious that, for Russia at all events, war brings profound political disturbance. On the Russian victory over Napoleon there followed—with a considerable interval of years, no doubt, but things moved slowly then—the revolt of the Decembrists. The revelation of Russian weakness in the Crimean war made a revolution which was only prevented from declaring itself as such because an Emperor headed it. He carried it some way to completion and abandoned it; and then—after another war which disappointed Panslavist ambitions—became its victim. A humiliating war with Japan caused a revolution which might have proved fatal to the dynasty if Count Witte had not saved it by a humiliating peace. Finally the first World War made an end of the Tsars.

There were other reasons besides anxiety for the régime which should have caused any Russian ruler of today to make sacrifices for the maintenance of peace. A delicate and difficult process of social and economic change was being carried through; a huge estate, so to speak, was being developed at unexampled speed, industry was being created, military and naval defence was being organised, and the great inchoate achievement would be imperilled by conflict with a first-class Power.

Stalin desired peace; but he firmly expected war. Having regard to Hitler's own announcement of his intentions in Ukraine, and to the actual course of the world's history since Japan attacked Manchuria in 1931, he had the best of reasons for expecting it.

Why then did he miss the opportunity of confronting Hitler with the prospect of war both on the east and on the west, by accepting the overtures of the British Empire and the French Republic for joint defence of Poland against attack? Knowing what we know of Hitler's unwillingness to accept war on two fronts, it is probable that a firm Russo-Franco-British alliance would have averted, or at all events postponed, a European war. Instead of that, the aggressor was encouraged by a pact which

postponed for nearly two years the attack on Russia, but removed the German fear of an immediate war with a first class military Power in the east.

And—for so it seems to many—Stalin shared the spoils of German aggression, and even involved Russia in a troublesome minor war with Finland in order to do so. Was this a mere reversion to a vulgar imperialistic ambition, with all its risks, and its apparent disregard of the policy of peace?

As I see the political position, Stalin made one great miscalculation; and another minor one. His policy was entirely realistic and self-regarding; and he did not believe—having regard to the history of appeasement in Europe—that Great Britain and France could be trusted to stand against aggression. In the light of events we may quite reasonably suspect that he had good reasons for these doubts in the case of France. He was wrong about Britain. But Britain was far away and not a land Power. He therefore thought it best, in the interests of the U.S.S.R., to gain time to strengthen his military position. And, as a part of his measures for the strengthening of his military position, and knowing something of what the *pounce* of a mechanical German Army and its supporting air fleet and navy would be like, he sought to put as great a distance as possible between his advanced posts, military and naval, and the potential enemy, that more time might be given for the assemblage of the Russian reserves. Time was of the essence of his plan of defence, and it was apparent that, while the Germans were ready, Russian mobilisation would be a comparatively prolonged process. The facts entirely justified this forecast. The minor miscalculations were the willingness and the power of the Finns to defend themselves, and perhaps also the rancour with which they would resume the fight as soon as the opportunity should present itself.

In July, 1942, we see the terrible neighbour not yet installed in the principal cities and oilfields, the Russian Armies largely intact and concentrated for resistance, and the great industrial Powers girt up to furnish the needed supplies by routes which daily, however slowly, are being made fit for their duty. In these facts we have the substantial justification of the policies which Stalin has followed.

The new consciousness of the need of consolidating strength at home changed the outlook upon the family, the basic institution of the new as of the old State. Neither Lenin nor the Communist Party in general desired or favoured that anarchy in sexual morals with which the revolutionary epoch began. Both Lenin and his wife Mme. Krupskaya spoke and wrote against it. It was part of the general collapse of the framework of society and the State which characterised the great overturn; and I repeat that the business of the Communist Party, far from being the business of destruction, was that of reconstruction upon the ruins, social, economic and political, of old Russia. But the Marxian outlook upon Woman was

upon a being whose personality had been sacrificed to the tasks of reproduction, child-rearing, and household drudgery: who must be rehabilitated by an economic emancipation. She must cease to be a mere instrument for the creation of a future generation, and become the equal companion of Man, as well as the mother of his children.

It is a delicate adjustment which determines the true balance between woman as a personality and woman as a mother. A little too much this way, and she is Aspasia, free to love and to leave. A little too much the other way, and she is the drudge:

“To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.”

There were always many millions of the second type, of whom social history is silent. But the early period of the Revolution rather favoured the first, with effects which were not inconsiderable in the towns. There was the notorious glass of water theory, and there were the equally notorious pairs of silk stockings: there was absolute freedom and ease of divorce at the will of either party, and there was the admission of the right to abortion, so long as it was performed under authorised conditions. These things, combined with the widespread employment of women as wage-earners and social and political workers, and the encouragement of the communal life in the forms of public catering and arrangements for the public care of children, were not favourable to the family. Plans even went so far as to envisage the establishment of children's towns, in which—as in the “public schools” of England—the parents would have a minimum of concern with their offspring: but at this point nature rebelled.

The danger of attack from Germany and Japan brought home the necessity of a nation made strong by its teeming millions, while some reduction in the speed of the annual increase, caused by the spread of urban notions to the rural areas, suggested the possibility of a future falling off. It is an interesting fact—the more curious because of the high place taken by the Θεοτοκος, the Mother of God, in Orthodox Religion—that Woman has no *consort* status. She is dependent for her place in society on her own achievements. The wives and families of the leaders are rarely mentioned. But the Party and official Press made much of a visit paid by Stalin to his mother in Ossetia. It was an announcement that the family was an object of Bolshevnik respect. The lesson of the debt of politeness due from young to old began to be inculcated by the Press and educational authorities. It was not unneeded; for youth was, and continues to be, not too respectful to its elders. The League of Youth received a brusque intimation that it was their juniors, and not their seniors, whom they were to instruct. In 1935, the Party and the Government initiated a campaign against the practice of abortion, and ultimately carried legislation which made operations unlawful except in cases of danger to life or health. Doctors performing them were made liable to

imprisonment and women undergoing them to minor punishments. Other clauses placed obstacles in the way of divorces: required the presence of both parties before the registration court, and imposed a rising scale of charges: increased the amount of alimony payable for a child: and offered substantial premia for large families. Additional beds were to be provided in maternity homes and additional crèches and kindergartens to be established. Under these proposals the first divorce was to cost 50 roubles, the second 150 and the third 300: and the party not applying for divorce was to be heard, before the divorce was granted on the application of the other.

While this new law was under discussion, there was a remarkable outburst of criticism, largely on the part of women, against the limitation of the right to abortion. This was grounded upon the low standard of family incomes, the lack of housing accommodation in the cities, and the inadequate supply of nursery requirements from perambulators to baby's bottles. It came from women of all groups, teachers, students, factory workers, office employees and collectivised peasants. Nothing could have been less like the platitudes of laudation—along with judicious criticism of selected details—and assent, with which the columns of the Press are normally occupied. For once, the female population of the U.S.S.R. was fully vocal, and there could be no doubt at all what it wanted.

The Soviet Government has its ear very close to the ground, and may have been aware that the men did not fully sympathise with their women on this issue. Mr. Hindus suggests something of the kind when he tells us that Russians do not want their birthrate interfered with, because they expect war. Men are also less acutely sensible of the inconvenience of large families than are women: for reasons which I need not emphasise. The bill went through, and the *head of the Planning Commission*—this is a characteristic touch—announced that the U.S.S.R. would have a population of 300 millions by 1975.

According to a statement made, and not contradicted, at the one hundred and twenty-first annual gathering of the British Medical Association at Dublin in July, 1933, abortion is widely and largely practised in the United Kingdom: and it was widely and largely practised in Russia before it was legalised in 1920. The legal prohibition will not put an end to it but will increase the number of clandestine and more dangerous operations. But a substantial proportion of the quarter of a million births which were annually prevented by operation in hospital will now take place in due course: and since the use of contraceptives—cheap and easily obtainable though they be—spreads but slowly, and space in crèches is quite inadequate, women is in some measure relegated to that prison of domestic duty from which she had recently been delivered. In the meanwhile I note that a lady correspondent of Mrs. Seama Rynin Allan, writing, apparently from Moscow, in 1937, assures her friend that a new factory is being established for the manu-

facture of contraceptives and that everything that is produced is available in any drug-store. This fact is to be balanced against the announcement made in September, 1941, that single and childless citizens (men between twenty and fifty, and women between twenty and forty-five) are to pay an additional income tax, ordinarily amounting to 5 per cent. on salary.

In so far as woman continues in the prison of domestic duty, her economic equality is incomplete, and it is economic equality upon which emancipation ultimately depends. She has gained and continues to gain, by the freedom of divorce, which has made an end of the legal right of property in her as a chattel: by the large openings for industrial employment, and by the system which makes her a co-sharer and a dividend-drawer in the farm: by the enforcement of the law of alimony for children: and by the communal provision for family-catering, for mechanised washhouses, and for the care of the young, so far as these last in practice extend. The housewife, and the woman who is a mother, now figure along with the worker and the woman worker, the collective farmer and the woman collective farmer, the Red Army man, the man of the Red Fleet, the Government employee, the member of the working intelligentsia, and the old-age pensioner, and separate from all of these, as two of the groups of which the citizens of the Soviet Union are made up. But laws do not, in the space of a generation, change popular habits: and the resistance, in the Mahomedan population, to the abolition of the veil and the payment of the bride-price, is only an extreme case, illustrating a general conservative tendency. "We have rounded Seraglio Point: we have not yet doubled Cape Turk." The two aims, of a largely increased population, and of the emancipation of woman, will continue to be mutually contradictory, until a further development of economic strength makes possible a vast extension of accommodation, in maternity homes and in institutions for the reception and charge of young children and of the supply of mechanised laundries and of the requirements of the civilised nursery. In the meanwhile, as a part of its policy for the strengthening of the family, the Soviet Government strikes at the sexual perversions, formerly treated with legal tolerance: and encourages an almost bourgeois standard of sexual ethics. We hear of persons excluded from the Communist Party on the ground of successive divorces.

The children have always been regarded as the treasures of the Socialist State, and, in periods of want, they and their education have been the first charge upon scanty resources. It is a part of the new developments that all the children, whatever their social origin, should be equally treated. Stalin himself gave the key note when he declared that sons were not responsible for the offences of their fathers. In the Budget for 1937 education was the next largest item, after Defence, and a very close second to it. After an interval of experiment, the Bolsheviks have learned not to put too great a strain upon the children, and to abandon educational eccentricities which had attracted them in the early stages. Dis-

cipline, uniforms, examinations, certificates, a place for classical studies, learned titles, have all come back into the schools. A touch of priggishness betrays itself now and again. *Pioneer Truth* has made light of the children's habit of jumping up behind motor cars and so getting free rides. Adult *Truth* rebukes it for this levity, and particularly for some verses in which fun is made of the children who climbed on to a car in the hope of a ride, and found the chauffeur was asleep inside. Are the examinations not at hand, and are there not more serious subjects to occupy the pages of the juvenile journal? Mr. Gradgrind is not solely of British nationality. But his appearance in Russian dress may be no more than a reaction against the spirit which encouraged the child to write to the public press when his mother whipped him.

I have suggested that latter-day Communism—the Communism which reconciles itself with the stage of socialism in one country—hopes to establish its ecumenical claim by its superior productivity. To what extent does it rely, as N.E.P. relied, upon the incentive of personal gain? There are those to whom it seems that the system of piece-work wages, carried to the pitch which it has reached in the case of the Stakhanovite super-piece-workers, and the other champion producers, Ephremovists, two hundred percenters, and the like, represents a new stage of retreat from principles. It is a part of the model statute for collective farms that its members are expected to become well-to-do. The definition of the legal rights of collective farmers in their own yards and the produce of their yards and in their dividends, after the dues of Government and of Machine Tractor Stations have been met, tends in the same direction. There are considerable inequalities from farm to farm, and a number of farms have actually reached the so-called "millionaire" status. One of the earliest advertisements (as distinct from political propaganda) which appeared in Moscow was that of the Savings Banks. The newspapers publish with pride the rising amounts there deposited: and every *plage* and holiday resort has its branches for the convenience of depositors. The law allows of the inheritance of wealth, subject to a very drastic scale of death duties: government loans offer an opportunity of investment free from inheritance tax: and there are even a few individuals who live upon the interest of them. The successful artist or novelist may almost be called rich on the proceeds of his royalties. The town households which keep maids, and have country cottages for summer *villegiatura*, are pretty numerous. There is a pleasant suggestion of leisure in the great prominence now given in the news to sports—not to the gambling sport of the British people, but to skating, tennis, ski-ing, hiking, hockey and parachute jumping. There was a football match at Moscow between a Basque and a Russian team in very hot weather at the end of June, 1937, and *phut-bol* has become a Russian word. The shops are fairly full of semi-luxury goods at substantial prices. Model department stores in the cities will pack your purchases in paper and deliver goods to your address.

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Advertisements of sports goods, musical instruments, photographic apparatus, paints and perfumes, superior soap, preserved foods, sweet biscuits, and articles the appearance of which suggests wedding presents, occupy space in the newspapers and the public vehicles. One advertisement showing an extremely respectable family in a well-furnished room, with book-case, sofa, sofa-cushions, dining-table, chairs, and electric light shade, and urging householders to insure their furniture, clothing, musical instruments, *auto-transport*, etc., irresistibly suggested to me Maxim Gorky's story of the man with the smug ideals, who realised his ambition of the *red armchair*, in which he might sit and read the newspaper to his wife and children. Flowers and personal adornment are within the reach of a section of Soviet citizens, and a *Society of Friends of Green Plants* holds exhibitions of flowers at Moscow. White collars and ties are worn by the men in the towns; and even the collective farmer, when he comes up for a conference, thinks it necessary to be photographed in similar vestments.

The differences in the emoluments of the better-paid workers and technicians have combined with the position of the *souburi*, as the people call them, the huge administrative and clerical staffs, to create the semblance—which bids fair to develop into the reality—of a middle class. In the upper ranks of the Red Army, and in official circles, there is a return to Tsarist manners, and you may see the gentleman, *en grande tenue*, bowing over the lady's hand or kissing it at the end of a dance. Trotsky made much of the fact that an official may be heard *theeing* and *thouing* a subordinate, though this very practice was one to which the revolutionary soldiers of 1917 objected in their officers. The *Moscow Daily News* reported a growing demand for jewellery in 1936, and the opening of an institute of beauty culture and a cocktail hall. The excursion steamers on the new Moscow Volga Canal advertised three classes of fares.

Formerly manual labour was held in higher honour than the life of the desk. It seems that a change has now come about and that literary instruction now offers a superior attraction, which it is necessary to counteract. In October, 1940, not only was the conscription of industry formally introduced—this was quite in harmony with already well-established principle—but fees began to be levied on pupils in secondary schools, with the aim of encouraging technical against literary education.

Lest I should convey a false impression by this picture, I hasten to emphasise that the new economic inequality is not the inequality of the West, for the gambling of the Stock Exchange, and of financial manipulation, is unknown, and one man cannot make money for himself by organising the labour of others, or establish a factory or a commercial business involving the employment of paid labour, or the buying and selling of commodities. Make all that you can by your own labour, but nothing by the labour of others, and nothing by trade: is, in brief, the law of the land since the

end of N.E.P. Nothing approaching to the waste and ostentation of the fashionable quarters of London, Paris and New York exists in the U.S.S.R. The best standard is more nearly that of the London Co-operative Society. If there is any "law of conspicuous waste" in operation in the U.S.S.R., it is not for the individual, but for the city and for public institutions.

Side by side with the growth of inequality between the rank-and-file workman on the one hand and the official and the better-paid technician and *stakhanovets* on the other, there has been a closer approach to equality between the larger categories of the population. The abolition of rationing, and the establishment of zonally uniform prices, (1934-35) deprived the urban workers of a privilege which they had enjoyed since the early days of the planning period: and, in spite of the additions made to cash wages, did actually reduce the real wages of that group as a whole. I shall deal in the next chapter with the constitution of November, 1936: but I must note here that it, too, was in theory at least, a political leveller, destroying the class-basis of indirect election by class-organs, and substituting a supreme legislature of the parliamentary type, equalising the franchise for town and country, and putting an end to the disfranchisement of particular classes. All this was, in effect, an invasion of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" by a principle of an entirely different kind. The Society of Old Bolsheviks, which was founded in 1922, with a membership qualified by at least eighteen years' service in the Party, and playing the part of a sort of Elder Statesmen, consulted on large issues, felt very strongly on the subject of this essay in equalisation. It was therefore dissolved in May, 1935, while the draft of the constitution was still in embryo. It is likely also that the abolition of the Communist Academy (founded in 1918) and its absorption, in February, 1936, in the all-Union Academy of Sciences, founded by Peter the Great at St. Petersburg, and transferred by the revolutionary Government to Moscow, were also aimed at the forestalling of opposition to the principles of the constitution.

There are some other indications that the drafters of the new constitution sought to introduce something more closely resembling what the Western democrat regards as a normal democratic constitution. One of these is the importance attached to the non-party element in the list of candidates for election to the Supreme and the local soviets. The "Party" remains powerful; but it has received a reminder—more reminders than one—that it is not indispensable. Stalin evidently has every intention of keeping the "Party" in order, and deals with it just as any determined autocrat might deal with the Church.

As pointed out in the succeeding chapter, the new Constitution, which goes into so many and such meticulous details regarding the system of Government, says practically nothing about the "Party" which guides and controls the working of the whole. Until a few months ago, it was

true to say that Stalin himself had no place in the Constitution. He was merely the General Secretary of the Communist Party; and not a part of the Government recognised as such by the document which purports to define its character. Since then he has become the President of the Council of People's Commissars and is virtually the Prime Minister of the U.S.S.R., and the statement that he is outside the constitution is no longer true. But while he was still outside of it, he was, as he now remains, the unquestioned head of the State, and these were some of the things which the Press and people were saying about him. He is the leader, the teacher, the friend, the father, the saviour. The others are merely his counsellors and pupils. It was the Stalinite Five-Year-Plan, Stalin's constitution, Stalin's block of party and non-party citizens, and it was a Stalinite exploit which the heroes of the drifting floe in the Arctic Ocean accomplished. He is always at his post, always on the captain's bridge, always handling the true compass: he is the giant, the genius of political reason and unbendable will: his name is the symbol of our victories, and the war-flag of our people. To all he is precious, to all he is familiar, to each one he is the close friend, for all he is hope and strength and guidance on the dangerous and difficult path from oppression to freedom and happiness. He is fearless in fight and merciless to the people's enemies, like Lenin: free from every kind of panic, like Lenin; wise and unhurrying in the decision of complex problems, like Lenin. He *loves his people* (sic) as Lenin loved it.

The delegation of literary men, assembled at Tiflis to do honour to an ancient Georgian poet, pay a pilgrimage to Gori, the birthplace of Stalin. Here is the little house with the inscription upon it: "Here was born on December 21st, 1879, the Great Stalin: and here he spent his childhood up to 1883." Amid applause, and the singing of the International, a letter is indited to the leader. Unforgettable day, unforgettable impressions!

The Yugoslavian Socialist, Ciliga, who was exiled to Yeniseisk as an irreconcilable, quotes a popular comparison of Stalin with one of the early Russian Tsars. He is our Ivan Kalita, they say, our "John Money-bag" (Ivan I, 1328-40), who accumulated money, gained a breathing space of forty years from the Tartars by turning revenue collector for them, and so acquired a powerful economic hold over the smaller principalities which set Russia on the path towards unity. The nickname shows how long, and how essentially accurate, popular memories in Russia are.

His name passes into legend, and I append to this chapter a translation of a poem, which tells a sort of good St. Wenceslas story about him. It makes a bizarre foreground to the Moscow trials of 1936-38: but this seemingly impossible combination of the people's father and friend, with the executioner of political opponents, is what actually reveals itself. The warm broad smile, which films and photographs show to us, is a

reality, confirmed by recent close observation. He loves a homely proverb or a quotation from Gogol the humorist, the Russian Dickens. He has no command of literary Russian, and talks in short sentences, shifting from one leg to another, or walking up and down, while the people roar with delight at every sentence. It is not fear that makes this enthusiasm. It is the men in responsible places who have cause for fear. The rank and file are happy with their hero, and confident that he is their friend.

I know nothing more revealing than a sentence of Trotsky making his statement before the international commission in Mexico. It shows us something of both the two enemies. "Stalin was not born a master of frame-ups." There is generosity in that: and a hint of old memories too. Trotsky goes on to say that it is all a matter of the régime: that men take the bent which the system gives to them.

Is Stalin the master of the machine which he has done so much to build up, or is he another Frankenstein faced by his own monster? I might counter with a further question. How long can any dictator continue actually to dictate: and how soon must he begin to be the servant and mouthpiece of his own creation? Trotsky says that it is this latter which has happened to Stalin: but it is possible that he may have been in conflict with a section of the bureaucracy which desired an alliance with Germany in order to ensure peace and its own position.

In March, 1937, he made a characteristic onslaught upon the bureaucracy, and described it as *soulless*. *Krokodil*, the Party's comic paper, plays a part similar to the famous "Labby" of Victorian days, in lashing official abuses and ridiculing indolence and inefficiency. The editors would not do this if they did not know that Stalin chuckled over their criticisms. Both the Bureaucracy and the Communist Party—now not easily to be distinguished from it—suffered severely in the storms of 1936–38. The Sovburi, as the people call them, the Soviet bureaucrats, now constitute a vested interest, making for conservatism, as all vested interests do, and Stalin doubtless feels the necessity of keeping both the "Party" and the official staffs in a proper subjection to control.

The great Russian rulers—Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, Catherine the Great—have not been fortunate in their successors. The burden of autocracy can hardly be lifted on lesser shoulders. If I may be pardoned for attempting to raise a corner of the veil which covers Stalin's inner thoughts, I suggest that his constitution of 1936, with the accompanying hints of a desire to construct a true democracy, show that he has no successor in whom he is able to repose full confidence, and that he seeks to protect his people against the consequences of a less able rule than his own. It may be that S. M. Kirov (murdered in 1934) was his provisional choice, and that the extraordinary consequences which followed upon Kirov's death are explained by the blow then given to Stalin's plans.

In the meanwhile there is much in Stalin—a touch of occasional caprice,

for instance—which recalls the typical despot seeking the good of his people, but indulging his own humours in doing so. His dealings with art and the artists—they form a virtual portion of the machinery of State in the U.S.S.R.—since the end of the period of comparative freedom which characterised the new economic policy—have not infrequently worn a look of caprice.

Modernism in art—if cubes and the like can still be called modernism—is out of fashion. That strange and baffling creation which gives to the Red Square of Moscow its particular *ownness*, the Cathedral of Basil the Blessed, the “Mosque” of Napoleon, is restored to the form in which its original Russian architects conceived it, and pride is expressed in the engineering and technical skill which they displayed in the erection of the “greatest monument of Russian national architecture”. A new figure is being performed by the dancers in the cotillion of state, and old favourites among the artists, who have not kept up with each turn in the dance are relegated to obscurity or to disgrace. In some cases it is possible to guess in what respect they have offended: in others I must confess that my imagination is baffled. But I remember Ovid sent to the chilly shores of the Black Sea, and Juvenal stationed at the somewhat warmer First Cataract of the Nile, and Seneca instructed to open a jugular vein in his bath, and I realise that history has a way of repeating itself.

Boris Pilnyak was excluded from the Writers' Association, and therefore from opportunities of publication. He began by welcoming the revolution as a revolt of the Russian people against the false orientation given to Russian life by Peter the Great. One of the characters in his *Snowstorm* sees the Revolution as a blizzard, and the actors in it as snowflakes. This was picturesque, but not in harmony with the conceptions of the purposeful Bolsheviks. He liked the company of Bolsheviks, he tells us, because they had buoyancy and cheerfulness. But he seems to have been always suspect, and he was forced out of the Proletarian Writers' Association, which between 1928 and 1932 made itself supreme in Russian literature, because his novel *Mahogany* was supposed to be tainted with “romantic Trotskyism”. To rehabilitate himself he wrote, first a book on Tajikistan (because it was hinted to him that Stalin was deeply concerned to establish the success of his policy with the minority Nationalities), and afterwards *The Volga Flows to the Caspian Sea*: a forecast of the canal system, parts of which have since been carried out. But this latter work, too, contains very thinly veiled criticism and mysterious hints of nonconformity. For instance, there is a parable in it, comparing the scent of violets to the smell of stinking fish, which must have given somebody occasion for searchings of heart. Pilnyak is a chronic dissident, and there is nothing surprising in his troubles. It will be noticed that it is the Writers' Guild, not the Government, which first took action against him. This is characteristic of present methods. Artists are used to

keep artists in order. But in this case the arrest of the artist followed his disgrace.

Valentin Katayev was excluded from the Party, and I cannot guess why. He was a satirist of Soviet institutions between 1924 and 1928, when self-criticism was the approved order of the day. Afterwards he wrote a hearty farce on the theme of the housing shortage, which must have made tens of thousands laugh. His *Forward O Time!* takes for its subject the beating of the world's record in concrete-mixing, and shows the proper enthusiasm for socialist construction. He never exhibits that antagonism between old and new which provides Soviet literature with its best and most poignant theme, while occasionally approaching dangerously near to the edge of the impermissible: and his offence remains a mystery for me: but I notice that he is again writing on behalf of the Soviet Government in December, 1941, and both he and Ilya Ehrenburg appear to be rehabilitated after a period of eclipse.

Boris Pasternak is a lyrical poet of originality and distinction, who has been compared with Dr. John Donne. It has been said that he makes the impression of seeing the world for the first time. He wrote a poem on the suicide of the poet Mayakovsky—a poem inspired by delicate and profound sentiment: and the Soviet Government disapproves of suicide, because people must not exhibit the desire to escape from the new dispensation: just as the Orthodox Church disapproved of it because people must not desert the congregation, upon which the spirit has been bestowed. He had recently been translating some contemporary Georgian poets. He was always aloof: and therein perhaps lay his offence. He was excluded from the Writers Association, like Pilnyak.

A very different person is Bezimensky, a gifted rhymer, frankly political in all his productions, who sang (or said):

“Let others think of Spring!
But I walk on, and think persistently
Of the cost price of Soviet goods.”

He did not err by delicacy and aloofness: but he, too, has been in trouble, after losing a portion of his literary reputation in recent years. It may be that he could not dance the new figure set by the cotillion leader. Demyan Bedny, who once came near to being the proletarian laureate, offended against the new historical sense by an unfavourable picture of the ancient Russian *bogatyri*, and fell from favour. The worst that he had suffered in happier years was a drastic reduction of the payment made to him per line of verse: because it was noticed that he repeated his refrains too frequently, which looked like stealing a claim upon the department of accounts. Selvinsky, another of the writers now out of grace, was a constructivist—that is to say, an advocate of plan in literature, to correspond with plan in production. But that, too, is out of the mode.

(1914). Tairov, the founder of the Kamerny theatre on a basis of equal

pay for all, from manager to scene-shifter, in days when such experiments called forth the frowns of authority, produced in January, 1935, a composite Cleopatra, for whom both Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw had been laid under contribution. The Egyptian queen was represented as fighting for Egyptian independence. It was a theme which would have met with more approval at an earlier date, when the Communist International was inciting oppressed "colonials" to rebellion against imperialist masters. But it was not the right thing when the Third International began to favour the United Front. Equally, a film based on R. L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* was condemned because it represented the pirates as Irish Revolutionaries, and, for this and other shortcomings, Shumiatsky ceased to be the chief of the Cinema industry.

Afinogeniev, the author of *Fear*, recently killed in an air raid upon Moscow, and Kirshon, the author of *Bread*, both plays with considerable reputations in their time, but both dealing with painful episodes in Soviet life, fell temporarily out of favour. Mr. Robert Byron acutely observed that the people of the U.S.S.R. were beginning to appreciate the joy of life, and did not like to be reminded of the period of stress, which went before. The periodical *Art* has been roughly criticised for neglecting themes of to-day.

Eisenstein has fallen from his high estate in the world of film production. The film is an instrument of propaganda, a means of maintaining the masses at a white heat of enthusiasm: and, to fulfil this object, it must be simple and intelligible, and capable of presentation to the less advanced nationalities of the Union. There were complaints that Eisenstein was too abstract, for the discharge of the function required of the film-producer. He was engaged in the production of a film of the collective farm, but took a very long time over it, spent a great deal of money, did not acquaint himself with the life of the farm, and, finally, was removed to—a *sanatorium*. Those who recall the grim jest of Nicolas I with Peter Chaadaev—he placed the critic under medical observation—will recognise the survival in the U.S.S.R. of the spirit of 100 years ago. It is a new turn, and yet some of the newness is of quite respectable antiquity.

The theatre is to the Bolsheviks what the Church was to the Orthodox. The liturgy of the Church re-enacted the holy mysteries and its decorations represented them for the better understanding of the congregation. In doing this it *caused the great events to happen anew*: did not merely give a theatrical representation of them. The Church could not have tolerated irrelevant or distracting matter in its services or its paintings and did in fact observe a very rigid convention in respect to both. Similarly the Bolsheviks required their dramatists and producers to show to the people the great events and the characteristic life and aims of the Revolution. This is the key to certain demands which, without it, seem to show an unreasonable rigidity of outlook. But the audiences wanted relaxation

and amusement. They did not want, if I may so put it, to be always in Church. Man can endure the heights for a time, but he cannot live at them. I think that the changing history of the Russian theatre is to be explained by these two things: the insistence on a revolutionary liturgy, and the self-protective reaction of the philistine public, who prefer to see *Charlie's Aunt*.

Meyerhold, once described as the creator of the real revolutionary theatre, and the first to reject the monotonous realism of Stanislavsky, honoured with the title of Artist of the People at the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of his activity, had made his stage a forum for the expression of political ideas, and a means of conveying to the masses the watchwords of the revolution. Trotsky called him the passionate experimenter: but also laughed sily, in his *Literature and Revolution*, at the "bio-mechanics" and "constructivism" which turned the actors into highly qualified acrobats, and the stage into scaffoldings symbolical of industrial development, with great wheels indicating a kind of speedometer for the passions represented. He was building a new theatre, with three stages, a sunken pool, and a speedway entrance and exit for motor-cars. It seemed ominous of the agitational mass-play, once all the rage. But the Soviet public is tired of death of the agitational mass-play, longs for something simple, human, and entertaining, let us say the *Geisha*. Stalin, himself an amateur of the theatre, and a frequent visitor to it, sympathises with the low-brows. According to the article in *Pravda* which signed his artistic death-warrant, Meyerhold has more against him than this change of the public taste. We quote it because it is characteristic of the fates of the artists. The writer says that Meyerhold's first production—in the early days of the Revolution—made a hero of a Menshevik traitor, and his second was actually dedicated to—Trotsky. That Trotsky was at that time the organiser of victory against intervention and revolt is clean forgotten. A re-writing of history has converted him into a traitor from the days of the Brest-Litovsk peace onwards. For the rest, the revolutionary producer, in spite of warnings, has never exhibited "Soviet realism", never reflected the problems which interest all Soviet citizens, and his theatre has made itself a foreign body in the wholesome organism of Soviet taste, so that all now ask whether it continues to serve a useful purpose. This was followed by an order of the Committee of Arts, closing the Meyerhold theatre, with the remark that "the re-employment of the producer in some other capacity will be taken into consideration". In the same issue of the paper which published this order there appeared—a cruel reversal of fortune—a special article in praise of Stanislavsky, the veteran of the Moscow Art Theatre; so the whirligig of time brought in its revenges.

A change in popular taste accounted for the temporary eclipse of the promising young composer Shostakovich. His music for the opera of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* was admirably expressive of the action of the drama. But there were no *tunes* in it, and people much prefer something

which they can pick up and hum over. A review, in the Communist daily, of a ten days' musical festival held to commemorate the twentieth anniversary emphasises the need of a Soviet symphonic classic, of something national, bright, gay and melodious. It contrasts C. Prokofiev's complete failure in his "formalistic" fourth symphony, with the success of later compositions in which he had corrected his former style. Now, it seems, he has attained to a profound simplicity and truth, and shown us what a *Soviet composer*, a serious musician and a great master, can achieve—when guided by instruction.

We should go wrong if we were to suppose that the guidance which brings about these changes is merely official. The public make their own demands upon the artists and press their own tastes. Readers and playgoers write to playwrights and authors and urge their own requirements with no uncertain voice. At the first Writers' Conference grotesque contraptions were paraded by bodies of "consumers", caricaturing the conventional figures supposed to be beloved by literary and other artists, with inscriptions declaring that they had no likeness to reality. In particular, a troop of young Pioneers displayed representations of large-eyed, innocent-looking children, and gave notice that "we are not in the least like this".

An intriguing incident of the stormy period of 1937 was the fall from grace of Natalia Satz, who, as a girl of fourteen and a half, had originated the Children's Theatre, now an important institution of the U.S.S.R. It is a theatre for children, not a theatre in which children act. The three principal children's theatres have large adult companies of some 200 persons each—artists, teachers, psychologists, writers, musicians and supers, as well as actors. I wish I could be certain what Natalia Satz did, or failed to do, so as to come into conflict with the Committee of Art. It is said that she made the children, by the pictures which she presented to them, too keenly aware of themselves as individuals, whereas they ought to be aware rather of their position in society. Perhaps she was merely self-willed and proud of her young achievements. But I confess that the sudden reversal of her fortunes looks like an effect of female jealousy.

It was not for nothing that the Tretiakov Gallery in Moscow selected for its special 1937 Exhibition the works of the painter Surikov, a well-known nineteenth-century realist. It is simple, crude, broad-cavassed, historical, stuff, with a tang of sensation in it, something which everybody can understand. Many visitors to Moscow have probably carried away a recollection of *The Morning of the Execution of the Streltsi*: and the picture of *Ivan the Terrible's Murder of his Son*, by another artist of the same epoch and school: and perhaps are Philistine enough to sympathise with the popular taste which likes such graphic representations.

A change, essentially similar, has made its appearance in architecture. The straight up-and-down buildings of glass, concrete and steel, which have been irreverently described as band-boxes, have given place to a

showy, luxurious, pseudo-classical style, which I may, I hope without offence, describe as nineteenth-century *bourgeois*. The new Workers' Sanatorium at the sea-side resort of Sochi, opened at the twentieth anniversary of the Revolution, and illustrated in the British Press, is a fine example of this relapse. It is Hans Andersen's Goblin, weary of adventure and hungry for comfort, settling down to "take porridge with the huckster." But architects continue to be enthusiastic over the large opportunities and generous expenditure of Russian planning. In looking at the new Moscow with its glorious spaces, it is inevitable that one should be reminded of the Athens of Pericles.

Let us not forget that the terrible Gay-Pay-oo started dance clubs for the young people—to keep them out of mischief—and sanctioned jazz. Man cannot remain for ever on the stretch; any more than Apollo can always bend the bow; and one of the things which has happened to the Russian people is that they—of course before the German attack in June, 1941—felt the need of relaxation after effort. The tendency of certain Communists to rest on their laurels was the subject of severe stricture in June, 1935, when the society of Old-Bolsheviks was liquidated. This is a part of the explanation of the Industrial purge which accompanied the Trotskyist purge of 1936–38. There was an interval between the end of the Second Plan and the start of the Third: and, not unnaturally, some of the less heroic took the opportunity to nod. Professor Gleb Struve tells us that Zoschenko, the best humorist in Soviet literature, has found his mouthpiece in the Soviet man in the street: who passively accepts the Revolution, but vaguely regrets the Philistine comfort and happiness which was the lot of the *bourgeois*, before the chips of the world's workshop began to fly so furiously. Of course we know that Art ought not to be an escape from life, but an expression of it: but the poor abuses of the time lack countenance.

We are told that, from the Marxian standpoint, theatre, sport, and physical culture (of which there is increasingly much in the U.S.S.R.) are not mere relaxation from productive labour, but the cultural counterpart to economic and institutional change. It may be so. But we remember that Mackenzie Wallace, who knew his Russia well, said that periods of intense effort were followed by periods of weariness: and that the old peasant-life, bred into the bone of every Russian, consisted of tremendous toil in the fields, followed by collapse on the stove in winter. We know that the artists themselves felt the lassitude in the air: for the all-Union Committee of Art detected them in the attitude of napping, and revised *the terms of their remuneration*, on lines demanding a more regular output.

I would not be understood to say that the new turn was all in the direction of fatigue and the abandonment of effort. How immense is the latent energy we are learning now in 1941–42 when Russia is shedding her blood and burning her great works. Youth is for ever arriving, and putting fresh life into work and play, and the leaders do not flag in their

call or renewed achievement. Plan succeeds to plan, anniversary passes on to anniversary, and socialist emulation conspires with material rewards and individual distinctions to keep energy alive. The natural disposition to lie back and contemplate with satisfaction the gains of previous effort is perpetually being counteracted by a succession of new appeals and new excitements. A whole nation is being stage-managed to admiration. This has been going on, of course, since the start of the first Five-Year-Plan. What is ever fresh is the fertility of invention devising new stimulants to make enthusiasm sparkle.

In the realm of Art, the Soviet novel has been returning, since its revival in 1924, to that close concern with the individual human being and the springs of his action which characterised Leo Tolstoi and the great masters. There was an interruption of this current in the period of the first Five-Year-Plan with its summons for the enlistment of literature under the banner of economic progress. But, since Maxim Gorky returned to the Soviet Union in 1932, the demand has been for Socialist Realism. That is very far from signifying a mere photographic Realism, reproducing a platitudinous actuality. There must be in it a buoyancy, an optimism, a mood of prophecy: it must imagine and forecast the future triumphs of Socialism: must be, in short, not Realism at all, but rather a romantic conviction in the light of which the present is to be transformed. For this new Art, misgivings and doubts are treason to the truth. The artist must be whole-hearted in an assured faith. He is no longer asked to comply with a social command, or to depict the victories of cement-making, or wheat-growing. But he must be inspired with a general vision of success, of the success of the tanks upon which the Soviet Union has entered. It is an echo of the conviction that man can make his own history.

Fortunately for the artist, there is here no minute prescription with which he is to comply under threat of ostracism. He is not free to mope, or to doubt, or to plunge into introspection. The art of escape, turning aside from actual life and its problems, seems to be forbidden to him, and he must see the future in red, if not in *couleur de rose*. As Mr. Hannibal Chollop informed Mark Tapley, "We must be cracked up, sir. We are a model to the airth, and must be jist cracked up, I tell you." He continues by saying: "Our backs is easy ris. We must be cracked up, or they rises, and we snarls." But there is a vagueness in the requirement, which leaves a wide range of choice. Sholohov has satisfied it with his *Virgin Soil Upturned*: although he was not insensible to the tragedy of the *kulak's* dis-possession and deportation. Stalin himself has sometimes proved more reasonable than the lesser members of his constellation. It was at his instance that *The days of the Turbins* was restored to the stage: although the singing of the old Russian national anthem, *God Save the Tsar*, was part of the performance: and the sympathies of the audience were enlisted for White officers.

In the drama and the film, as in the novel, the individual human being has come into his own, and the interest is in his character and its expression in action: no longer in that mystical entity, the mass, as it was when such productions as *October*, and *Turk-Sib*, were the approved form of Cinema art. *Chapayev* (issued in November, 1934), the simple story of a hot-headed, stout-hearted partisan leader, and of the political Commissar, who guides him to wisdom, is a film with a hero. *Circus*, the story of a white woman who defies American conventions against miscegenation, and wins the sympathy of the many races of the U.S.S.R., despite the machinations of a villainous German, combines the representation of the heroic individual with the theme of the fascist enemy. It had a success only second to that of *Chapayev*. *The Last Night*, a picture of Moscow on the eve of revolution in November, 1917, might have lent itself to the mass treatment of an earlier epoch of film-production, but is actually full of individual characters distinctly developed. The same thing shows itself in the theatre, where Okhlopkov, a young producer, made a great success of *Aristocrats*, a play with the theme of the building of the Baltic-White Sea Canal by criminals of all types. Pride in the work, and in his own contribution to it, works a change in each individual, differing according to each character. It is no mass conversion.

The emphasis on the personality of individuals, characteristic of latter-day Soviet literature and art, found its analogue in the character-pictures of the candidates selected for the election to the Supreme Soviet, which figured in the Press. Tractorists, collective farmers, smelters, miners, men and women, not necessarily Stakhanovites and by no means all Communists, were depicted, along with their large-scale portraits, to each being allotted half a dozen columns over a third of a newspaper page. There was an insistent suggestion that similar honour was attainable by each and all who learn to do a job well: but the individual did emerge in distinction from the mass, and was made interesting for his own sake. Orders and decorations for good service are bestowed as lavishly as under the Tsarist régime. Stalin and his inner circle of councillors appear on banners and posters with wearisome repetition. If one of them ceases to figure before the eyes of the public, it is an ominous sign, and a warning that his favour is diminished. *The anonymity is gone out of Soviet life*: and the heroes and martyrs are buried, if not in the wall of the Kremlin, at least in that of the Novodevichi monastery, with tablets commemorating their names and achievements. The change is characteristic: and the achievements of individuals in the war with Germany will stimulate it further.

Annexure to Chapter XX

THE BOY IN OUR VILLAGE

The little boy is ill.
Death sits on his pillow.
His mother's heart will break.
The earth sleeps under the rain.
The autumn leaves fall :
There is no sap in them,
It is evening, and the village
Lies far away in a sleepy hole.
The son is dying, the boy,
The hope, the joy, the delight.
The father grieves sorely,
There is lead on his heart.
He looks at the child
And sees the greyness,
The greyness that is darkening
The bright face.
It seems, it is already going out,
The young flame of the eyes,
They are already growing cold,
The little fingers.
A doctor! But a wise one!
He wrings his hands.
Help, help, is needed,
Such as is not in the village.
A rare, a cruel, chance,
And no doctor to help.
The father goes out in the street,
He goes with weary feet.
The sleepy telegraph man
Opens his hatch.
The father writes, in agitation :
"Moscow,
Kremlin,
To Stalin."
And forth flashes a telegram
Across the fierce whistle of the wind :
It flies over the hills
A short and plain one :
It lights up the trees in the woods,
With its voice like a spark.
The telegram knocks at Kremlin Gate,
Stalin receives it,
And sorrow, the sorrow of a father,
Gives a squeeze to his heart.

But Death sits beside the boy.
Measure her strength!
It is she who triumphs. All is over.
Give up, be silent, yield.
She knows not that Stalin
Means a struggle with Death.
She knows not that Stalin
Means Life for us.

Not a moment is lost:
 Stalin gives the order.
 Hurry scurry, the telegraph men
 Send off the telegram, and lo!
 The mechanics wake up the pilot:
 And, while it is night at Kazan,
 The doctor enters the cabin.
 The aeroplane flies into the sky.
 The aeroplane rushes over the clouds,
 The messenger of the Great Friend.
 Louder, nearer, the engine,
 Speaks its message of gladness.
 The mother flies to meet it.
 Death cowers in the corner.
 The doctor enters the room:
 He rolls up his sleeves.
 He says gently to Sister:
 "See that all is in order!"
 He says to the parents:
 "Father and mother, not another tear!"
 The old man, fearless and wrathful,
 Begins to wrestle with Death.
 And the boy falls into sleep:
 And Death sneaks away.
 There it is, Stalin's heart,
 His life, and his work.
 He leads to great happiness
 The peoples of my land.
 Foresees the storms and the wars,
 Gives their marching orders to the pilots,
 Saves the life of the child,
 The boy in our village.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CONSTITUTION OF 1936

"But it is an easy thing for men to be deceived by the specious name of
 Libertie: and, for want of Judgement to distinguish, mistake for their Private
 Inheritance, and Birthright, which is the right of the Publique only. . . ."—
 HOBBS, *Leviathan*.

"Communism has no idea of freedom as the possibility of choice, but only as
 the possibility of giving full play to one's energy when one has chosen which
 way to turn."—BERDYAEV, *The Russian Revolution*.

"In the Soviet factory where I worked, every single change in production or
 administration was the subject of the widest and most heated discussion among
 the workers. . . . From the floor came not only criticism but constructive
 proposals. The rank and file contributed enormously to the reorganisation of
 the factory. If this isn't democracy I don't know what the word means."—
 CLARENCE HATHAWAY, quoted by Joseph Freeman in *An American Testament*.

CERTAIN FUNDAMENTAL assumptions underlie the Constitution of
 1936. It is assumed that a basis, economic, social and political, has been
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created, a solid foothold upon which the advancing commonwealth can establish itself, till a further step forward can be taken in the passage through the slough of difficulties. We should be wrong if we were to assume the attainment of a permanent goal. There is, for instance, no pretence that the Communist ideal: *from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs*: is yet within grasp. That is attainable only when production has so increased as to make possible the satisfaction of all reasonable needs. So long as there is less than enough, whether of objects of enjoyment or of leisure, to go round, there remains the possibility of differences over the distribution, and the need of the coercive State to prevent the scramble and the furtive misappropriation which characterise Capitalistic conditions. The State still exists, as Article I makes plain to us—if we needed the assurance—it has not withered away according to the Marxian anticipation. It is a Socialist State: not yet a Communist Society knit by purely economic and social bonds.

And yet, it appears, certain things have become possible which were not possible hitherto, because the material basis for them has now come into existence. The danger from the dispossessed classes has so diminished that it is safe to admit them to a franchise, universal, equal, direct and secret, for all the elective organs of the State. The peasant, always a potential danger to the socialistic ideal and from time to time able to dictate departures from it, is so far reconciled to the process of collectivisation and its results that it has ceased to be necessary to withhold from him the right to equal suffrage alongside of the urban worker. Certain rights, very far from realisation in the capitalistic societies, notably the right to work and the right to leisure, can now be proclaimed: because confidence is felt in the existence of a material basis for their realisation.

Any forecast of the value in practice of this new Constitution, with its significant fundamental assumptions, must begin with an estimate of the reality of those assumptions. It is obvious, for instance, that the Government of the Soviet Union bound, as every Government must be, to self-preservation as its first duty, will not tolerate subversion by the newly enfranchised of the fundamental principles upon which its existence is based. It is even more obvious that the declaration of the right to work will become meaningless if economic conditions do not permit of its fulfilment. We must look therefore, in the first place, not to the intentions of those in power, but to the correctness of their estimate of the stage at which the U.S.S.R. has arrived: and that is to be judged by a review of all the conditions. That is why I have left the constitution nearly to the end of my study.

The events which followed upon the promulgation of the Constitution did not justify an optimistic forecast either of the abatement of internal political difficulties or of the attainment of economic security. Still less did they appear to promise the permanence of that international peace,

upon which depend the direction of resources to useful ends and even the stability of the régime itself. The Soviet Government declared itself beset by internal enemies, hampered by intentional as well as by merely negligent injury to production, and threatened by the treachery of highly placed military commanders. The Party itself was said to be full of spies, and ceaseless internal vigilance was a condition of survival. The excellence of the intentions with which the new constitution had been formulated would not save it, in circumstances such as these, from becoming a dead letter. The Communist Party receives a passing reference in the constitution of November, 1936, in a clause providing for liberty of association. The clause affirms the right of combining in public organisations, and, among others, "for the most active and conscientious citizens from the ranks of the working class and other strata of the toilers, of uniting in the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., which is the vanguard of the toilers, in their struggle for strengthening and developing the socialist system, and which represents the leading nucleus of all organisations of the toilers both public and state". It is again mentioned in the chapter on the Electoral System, where Communist Party organisations are specified among those having the right to nominate candidates for election. Otherwise the Communist Party is outside of the Constitution of November, 1936, as it was outside the previous Constitutions. In fact, it has a separate Constitution. And yet the Communist Party is by far the most important element in the government of the U.S.S.R.—so important, that it comes near to being an *Axiocracy*, a government of the most worthy citizens. The fact that these vast functions are outside the document compels us to regard the new constitution with a qualified conviction.

At the outset, therefore, of our examination of the constitution we find, first, that its reality is dependent upon favouring circumstances, and secondly, that power actually resides elsewhere than in the authorities for whose establishment it makes formal provision. Such contradictions are not unique. Both in the United States of America and in the United Kingdom, the uneven distribution of wealth, and the resultant social influence, contradict in practice the theory of democracy: and the ruling class or group is, in fact, something other than the elected representatives of the people, although it ordinarily makes a scrupulous use of constitutional forms. It is not therefore in a written constitution, or even in an unwritten constitution as expounded by constitutional students, but in the political practice of the adepts, that we must look for the realities of the distribution of power. This is not less, but possibly somewhat more, true, of the U.S.S.R. than of the Western democracies. At the basis of the institutions of every state there lies a fundamental principle. In the West it is private property: in the U.S.S.R. it is socialised property: and in neither will democracy be permitted to violate the fundamental principle. In the one case the Communist Party is the guardian and

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guide, in the other the same functions are exercised by a more fluid, less tangible entity, of which wealth is the most easily recognisable characteristic, but having behind it the forces of tradition and inertia. The one desires change, the other desires continuity. Both may be said to drive, the one on a new road, the other on an old one: and both unmistakably occupy the driver's seat and hold his whip.

What emerges is that, in attempting to interpret any particular clause of the constitution, there is a reservation to be made. Chapter I affirms the structure of society, which no one will be permitted to change or to attempt to change. All the rest of the document must be understood as subject to this fixed fundamental determination, which transcends all rights. The preambles to Articles 125 and 126 are equally significant. Freedom of speech, Press, assembly, and demonstration, are guaranteed "in accordance with the interests of the working people, and *in order to strengthen the socialist system*". And the right of association is affirmed "in accordance with the interests of the working people, and for the purpose of developing the *organised* self-expression and political activity of the masses of the people". The rights do not exist independently of these considerations, and are nullified where they run counter to them.

There was a constitution for the revolutionary State in 1918, followed by a *federal constitution in 1924 for the four republics which formed a union* then. It was during the discussions of this federal constitution that the name of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics originated, the order of the words indicating the type of the new State. It is Soviet Socialist, not Socialist Soviet, as sometimes erroneously written, and each of its constituent members is Soviet Socialist too. The Soviet is—perhaps we should now write, was—an essential institution of the system. In its origin it was a class institution representing the soldiers or sailors of a particular unit, the workers of a factory or mine or unit of transport, the peasants of a village. For the lowest tier of the Soviets, election was direct. In and above the lowest tier, it was indirect, each successive tier making the choice for the one next higher. The principal virtue of the Soviet was its spontaneous growth from the indigenous practice, by which the workers who had left the village for the factory chose their mouthpieces and headmen. The voting was naturally open, by show of hands. The propertied classes, who had no place in the workers' gatherings, were naturally disfranchised in the constitution built upon these gatherings. It was as natural for the peasants' Soviet to be based upon a territorial unit, the village, as for the workers' Soviet to be based upon a production unit, the factory: and when, in 1918, the Congress of Peasants' Soviets was combined with the Congress of Workers and Soldiers' deputies to form a united Congress, each retained its then existing number, so that an inequality of representation came into existence for historical reasons. There was no division of powers in the

primitive Soviets, and no division of them in the Constitutions which were based upon these.

Two features, which bear the imprint of the primitive institution: the instructions which the electors gave to the man or woman of their choice, and the power of recall which they exercised when dissatisfied with the delegate: both eminently favourable to the reality of democracy: have been preserved in the constitution of November, 1936. It is the practice to make a documentary record of the instructions, and of the extent to which they have been fulfilled. Recall became common after a campaign in 1929 for popular vigilance: and, in his one and only election speech in 1937, Stalin emphasised the right, and bade the voters watch their delegates closely and keep them to their duties.

The other characteristic features of the Soviet system, the class composition, the indirect election by open voting, the disfranchisement of class groups, the constituency based upon a production unit, the inequality between peasants and urban workers, the combination of legislative and executive powers, have been abandoned in the new instrument, whose makers set before themselves a parliamentary model, with territorial constituencies, universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage, and the division of powers into legislative, executive, and judicial. We have no difficulty in seeing at a glance why some of these practices have been given up. Open voting was originally a form of protection against secret influence by class enemies. Later it became a means of exercising pressure upon voters for the defence of vested interests. The inequality between peasants and urban voters became an anomaly, in proportion as the town was carried to the country, and the farm became an open-air factory. The actual disappearance of an employing class eliminated the reason for class-disfranchisement.

It was the Seventh All-Union Congress of Soviets in February, 1935, which formally took up the question of a new constitution. That it was only the seventh, after more than eighteen years of revolutionary government, is a point to be noticed at the outset. In the numerous and long intervals between sessions, the work of legislation and of the passing of budgets had fallen upon the Central Executive Committee, in so far as it had not been appropriated by other authorities. How lax had been the observance of forms under the existing constitution is manifest from the history of certain pieces of legislation. The law regulating marriage and divorce fell within the competence, not of the Union, but of the Constituent Republics. Accordingly, the marriage law for the R.S.F.S.R., after more than a year's public discussion, was passed by the Central Executive Committee of the Constituent Republic in 1927. It placed a registered on the same footing as an unregistered marriage: made the registration of divorce, as well as of marriage, gratuitous, and strengthened the provisions for the maintenance of children in the event of divorce. The practice of abortion was at this time legal, when carried out

in a State institution. Circumstances which I have sketched in the last preceding chapter subsequently emphasised the need of encouraging the institution of the family and the growth of the population: and in 1935 the Party and the Government initiated a campaign against abortion. In 1936 the public was invited to debate a measure providing that the operation should be performed only for the preservation of the life of the expectant mother: strengthening the legal provisions for alimony: discouraging divorce by a progressive fee payable for the registration: providing for the payment of bonuses for numerous children, and for increasing the facilities for accommodation in maternity homes, and for nurseries and kindergartens. On June 27th, 1936, legislation was passed, *for the whole of the U.S.S.R.*, limiting the right to abortion to specified cases, and modifying the law of divorce and alimony. We may safely call the new law a good one: but it was passed with a notable disregard of constitutional forms, because the legislature of the Union assumed an authority which belonged to the constituent republics.

In a much smaller matter, but one which illustrates constitutional habit, we can hardly help detecting a tendency to revert to the summary methods of the Tsarist Ukaz. A practice of taking intelligence tests of school children was borrowed from the United States of America, and a considerable department of so-called pedologists was set up to apply these tests and to allot children who did not fully satisfy the tests to schools of a special type. After ten years' work, when some 15,000 Moscow children were in special schools, this department was suddenly liquidated by a decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. This decree, apparently issued without consultation with the Department of Education, without reference to the republican units of the federation, or to the authorities in whom the power of legislation is formally vested, without ascertaining the wishes of the public or the parents, demanded the obedience of the People's Commissariat of Education, and effected the reduction of the number of Moscow children in special schools to 6,000. It is easy to believe that the Pedologists had gone astray, and that consultation between them and the school-teachers had been neglected in allotting children to special schools. We can see also that a real principle was at stake. Bolshevism demands a large degree of optimism, and claims to be able to "*make man*" without undue subservience to his antecedents. The Pedologists applied their test, and, in accordance with the static results, sent the pupil to this or the other school: implicitly denying the claim to be able to fashion him in the desired image. The Communist Party may have been substantially right. But the point to which I here draw attention is the summary character of the decree, issued for all the Union by an authority which, from the standpoint of the formal constitution, had not the power to legislate.

It is natural for us to ask ourselves at the outset whether the new Con-

stitutional law is to receive more respectful handling than the old, when the novelty of its establishment is over.

The Seventh All-Union Congress of Soviets appointed a Drafting Commission, with instructions to democratise the electoral system by substituting equal for unequal, direct for indirect, and secret for open elections, and to bring the constitution into harmony with the new order, in which the *kulak* class had disappeared and property had been socialised. Stalin himself became the chairman of this Commission. A story is in circulation that he disapproved of the proposed changes: but there is every indication that he entered heartily into the undertaking and that the draft which issued from the labours of the Commission was in a form which he approved. It is even believed in some quarters that he had contemplated at an earlier date a similar measure of democratisation, and that his intention was thwarted by the murder of S. M. Kirov who was his collaborator in the plan. The draft was published in all the languages of the Union and in numbers sufficient for each adult to have easy access to it, and subjected to a drastic popular examination. The amendments proposed ran into many thousands, but they were almost entirely amendments of detail, not of principle. The draft was then introduced in November, 1935, by a report from Stalin himself in the Eighth Special Congress of Soviets, which consisted, to the extent of more than a quarter of its membership of non-Party persons, and, to the extent of a fifth, of women. He said that the victory of Socialism—not of Communism—was now a fact, and that the frontiers between the different categories of the population were disappearing: that the working class was no longer a proletariat, because it now owned the instruments of production: that the peasantry, now collectivised, was a new peasantry: that the intelligentsia springing now for the most part from workers and peasants, was a new intelligentsia: and that the multi-national state, consisting of equal nations, was now successfully established. He dealt with the amendments by excluding all recitals of historical facts and declaration of intention, as out of place, and by postponing matters of current legislation for consideration by the new organs when brought into existence. There remained a couple of scores of relevant amendments which he proceeded to discuss. Of the great majority he recommended the rejection for reasons which he gave. He pointed out, for instance, that the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet ought to be elected by the Supreme Soviet, because, if he were elected by the whole population, as the amendment suggested, he would enjoy excessive power. It was plainly not intended that a sort of President of the United States should be brought into existence by the election of the chairman of the Presidium. He also gave reasons for refusing to forbid all religious rites, which a zealous anti-religious critic had proposed, and said that the clergy and members of the formerly hostile classes ought not to be disfranchised, because some of them were no longer enemies, and

because the admission of inability to protect the State against such groups would argue weakness. Only in four instances did he advise acceptance of amendments. Three of these, which concerned the interests of the constituent republics, have been mentioned in the chapter on the Nationalities. The fourth was a proposal for the creation of a new Peoples Commissariat for Defence, which is a hint of growing apprehensions of attack from abroad.

No one questioned any of these recommendations, there was no discussion, and the whole project with the approved amendments was passed with enthusiastic acclamation, after a number of speeches of a laudatory kind had been delivered by members of all types, ranging from highly placed functionaries to famous milkmaids—famous, of course, for milking records—and factory workers who had won renown by excellence in productive work. All of them spoke on a single theme, the theme of Socialist achievement carried out under the unequalled leadership of Stalin. Cossacks said they had been called Free Folk, but only now did their really free life begin. A middle-aged woman said she had received the Order of Lenin for the 672 calves that she raised: and now she was going to raise 800. All of them, in terms of factory, farm, or federal republic, said “The country has changed so that we cannot even compare it with the past. You can’t see anything that resembles the old life any more.”

All, of course, were delegates and said what their constituents wanted them to say. The unanimity, the enthusiasm, the hyperbolic exaggeration of achievement, were eloquent of the power of mass-suggestion. The truth is wonderful, but not so wonderful as this. But the assembly gave a demonstration of that passion of fusion in one pæan of praise and thanksgiving which is characteristically Russian, and closely connected with the traditions of Orthodox Christianity. “Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” sings the Psalmist. It was a congregation of praise and thanksgiving.

There is every sign that earnest thought has been given to the provisions of the new constitution, and that it has by no means been treated as a piece of “spectacle-wiping”: which is the Russian expression for what we call *eye-wash*. The short interval between the confirmation of the draft by the Congress of Soviets and the election of the new Supreme Soviet, with its two chambers, was filled with organising and propagandist work of a quality which entirely belies the Russian reputation for easy-going slackness. With one exception—the substitution of thirty-seven new names for candidates who had fallen out of favour in dominant circles, thirty-seven, that is to say, out of a total well over 1,100—the Government kept strictly within the limits of its own law. Forms have been carefully observed, and the observance of forms is important. One other criticism—that the Russian speeches delivered in the constituencies were not translated into the local vernaculars—has some significance, but

it is the only one which I find occasion to make. Whether the registered congregation of certain Churches, which claimed the right to nominate candidates, would have been held, by a Western lawyer, to have established their claim under the wording of the law, I cannot say. The claim was disallowed, without hesitation, as we should have expected. It was not in conformity with the fundamental assumptions which underlie the constitution. That the old arbitrary tendency—so ingrained in the Russian conception of Government—should break out here and there is inevitable; but a close examination of the proceedings indicates a perfectly genuine intention, *at the outset*, to make the form a reality. I must note, however, a breach of constitutional forms on May 28, 1938, when the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. confirmed an order transferring the Kandalaksha region from the Karelian Autonomous Republic to the newly formed Province of Murmansk. Under article 60 of the Constitution this change required the authority of the Supreme Soviet of the Constituent Republic (R.S.F.S.R.) and, perhaps, under article 14, also that of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. The Presidium assumed a function which, under article 49, did not belong to it.

A British observer at Moscow was impressed by the fairness of the counting and the strict observance of secrecy in the ballot. That the poll in the Stalinski electoral circle of Moscow was more than 100% of the voting strength is one of the humours of the election. So many people wanted to plump for Stalin himself that they came from outside to vote for him: and—it seems—their right to record their votes, outside of what we should call their own electoral districts, was conceded.

A hierarchy of Electoral Commissions was appointed, the central one by the old Central Executive Committee now on the point of expiry. The local Commissions registered voters and candidates, appointed “trusted persons” to conduct propaganda on the part of the candidates, counted the votes, and declared the results. All the expenses were borne by the Government, and all the propaganda (it appears) carried out by persons having no necessary connection with the candidates. The Press demanded that not a single voter should be left ignorant of the qualifications of his candidates. Wall-posters with histories of the candidates: talkie records of their voices and sentiments: were among the means employed: the newspapers contained biographies: agitators went out on skis into the *tundra* from the Arctic station of Igarka: aeroplanes carried leaflets: actors came on the stage between the acts at local theatres and described the candidates. An attempt was made to get every voter on the register: in the Tartar Republic this was carried so far that arrangements were made at the hospitals to examine all lunatics (except the violent) to see whether their capacity satisfied the legal requirements. Of course there were mistakes, as indeed there are in the preparation of British electoral rolls and the conduct of British elections, in spite of a long experience. In many places the school-children were impressed to

record the names of the voters. In one area all the names beginning with N were omitted. In another all the infants in arms were entered. The printing in some vernaculars was badly behindhand. *Pravda* was righteously indignant at a mistranslation of the name of the constitution into the Georgian language—an error very likely to catch the eye of Stalin. It also did not like the use in Tajikistan of a primitive method of calculating ages. So-and-so was described as 4 Dog; which meant that he was fifty-one. The figure 4 meant that he had gone through four complete twelve-year-cycles and reached the third year of the fifth: which was named after the Dog. A decade or so more and he would have been a monkey or a hedgehog. The supply of paper and envelopes—at one time a subject of some anxiety—was vigilantly watched by peripatetic correspondents. Careless and backward committees were exposed and pilloried daily. The Communist League of Youth in Ukrain was particularly criticised. Explanations of the way to claim the vote and how to exercise it were published and republished. The arrangements in the voting cabins, and the right of illiterates to take a friend in with them, were fully described.

The great day of the election was a holiday for the whole of the U.S.S.R. Not only is the U.S.S.R., by reason of the rapid growth of its population, a *younger* country than any in the West: but the minimum age for the vote, both for men and women, is eighteen: and the atmosphere of enthusiasm which had been brought into existence gave a particular stimulus to the young. Tarantass, ox-cart, camel, aeroplane, reindeer, dog-teams, skis, horseback, brought the millions to the booths. One story of a pair of brothers who came in by night to vote at 6 a.m. and get back to take their turns at the well, carried one into the arid places of Asia. In Buriat Mongolia the old swore they would be in before the young, and achieved their promise. Lighthouse men came in to Kronstadt by icebreaker: man-of-war's men got into a dinghy, moored to the ship, and did their secret voting thus. Polling was arranged in long-distance trains, in passenger ships, in hospitals, sanatoria and maternity homes. Outside voters were met by welcoming parties at the railway stations and cast their votes in the waiting-rooms converted into booths for the occasion. There were "Welcome" notices outside the polling-booths in the cities, and the officials turned out to meet the early arrivals, who had gathered in long queues. It was a January day, and there were snow-showers, followed by bright sun, in Moscow: a raging blizzard in Franz Joseph Land: semi-tropical sunlight at Baku: and a torchlight procession through the Arctic night somewhere in the north. Concerts and dances followed the recording of the votes. Everywhere, it seems, the festival spirit prevailed and the people kept order for themselves. We hear nothing of any drinking. Enthusiastic country people in Moscow burst into lyrical hyperbole: Moscow, capital of the world! Moscow with the ruby stars on her Kremlin! Stakhanovite workers, who

had promised a ten-day competition, announced new records of work.

So it continued till midnight, when the polling-booths were closed: and many kept up the holiday yet longer. It was another of those demonstrations of unity, of fusion of the brethren and the sisterhood into a congregation of love, which Russians express by the word *sleetnost*. The sentiment of fusion into a greater unity has a real significance in the Bolshevik code. In Afinogeniev's play *Fear*, Elena, the champion of innovation in the physiological laboratory, declares that "our politics is to transform people. Feelings that were considered innate are now dying out. Envy, jealousy, anger, fear are disappearing. *Collectivity, enthusiasm, the joy of life, are growing. And we will help these new stimuli to grow.*"

When the votes were counted and the results announced, it appeared that of 93,639,458 Soviet citizens entitled to vote, 90,319,346 actually voted: a percentage of 96. In Ukrain and White Russia the percentage was above this figure. In none of the constituent republics did it fall below 93½%, the percentage for Uzbekistan. In the vote for candidates of the Council of the Union, 636,808 ballot-papers were found to be invalid, and 632,074 had candidates' names crossed out. In the vote for candidates of the Council of Nationalities, 1,487,582 papers were invalid, and there were 562,402 with candidates' names crossed out. There were perhaps a million among those who voted who did not desire the return of the candidates, or objected with sufficient determination to be willing to spoil their papers. Of the 1,143 deputies elected, 855 were Communists, 288 non-party. One hundred and eighty-four women were among the elected.

Five hundred and sixty-nine seats were filled on the Council of the Union: 574 on the Council of Nationalities. Something like 354 workers and peasants were returned, 120 Red Army and Navy men and aviators, seventy-eight who might be classified as intelligentsia—that is to say, white-collared men who are not officials. A curious item is that of fifty-one members of the Commissariat of Internal affairs, the present title of the political police.

Two features in this election will present puzzles to students of affairs in the United States of America and in the United Kingdom. In the first place, there was only one "Party". In the second place—a still more startling fact—with insignificantly few exceptions, there was only one candidate for each vacancy. Why, then, all the expensive and troublesome machinery of an election, over a country of enormous spaces and indifferent communications: and why the chorus of happy jubilation over the successful, almost unanimous, return of the unopposed?

I have written the preceding chapters in vain if I have failed to convey to the reader the radical difference between the Communist "Party" and any political party known to Britain or America. The word Party,

applied to the former, is indeed a complete misnomer. The Communist Party is an Order of men and women vowed to the realisation and defence of the fundamentals of the Soviet State. It comes near to being a priesthood of a religion of this world. Since there is no intention of tolerating any challenge to the fundamentals, there is also no intention of allowing any alternative order to champion alternative principles. To find a parallel, we must imagine a State, having, not merely a National Church, but an exclusive National Church, with a monopoly of spiritual influence and authority, to which no rival is tolerated by the national law. The Communist Party in the U.S.S.R. has very few resemblances to a political party as we understand it, but it has many resemblances to a Church claiming universal dominion, and realising that dominion within national limits. In the political sense, the U.S.S.R. tolerates no parties at all.

An advantage of a party system in a country such as the United States of America, where government is not party government in the sense in which it is such in Britain—that is to say, where the executive authority is not directly dependent upon a party majority in the legislature—is that it furnishes a useful label from which the ordinary voter may gather the general nature of the policy which he is supporting by his vote, instead of being dependent upon knowledge of the personal views of each candidate. It thus brings together groups of identical or similar opinion and permits of organisation and of the collection of funds, without which the dissemination of political knowledge is likely to be ineffective. The entire absence of a party system—and I regard it as absent in Russia, in spite of the existence of what is called a Party—radically alters the nature of an election. In Britain or the United States the necessary propaganda is conducted by the rival parties and their newspapers, and by the rival candidates, and the money comes out of party or private funds. This gives a very obvious advantage to wealth, and, in any political difference involving the rights of property, it is likely to turn the scale in favour of the property-holder. In the recent election in the U.S.S.R., each candidate for the Council of the Union had, on an average, 182,000 voters to reach, and the expense of the election, without the assistance of an organised party, would, under Western conditions, have been prohibitive. In fact, all costs were met by public authorities, and almost all the propaganda was done by newspapers and “trusted persons” appointed by Electoral Commissions, and the agitators who work under the “trusted persons”. All the vast influence of the so-called Communist Party was thrown on to the side of the candidate whom it approved, and supplied the missing label which the Western elector recognises in the party name. In other words, the scales in the U.S.S.R. were weighted on behalf of socialised property, just as in the United States of America and the United Kingdom they are weighted on behalf of private property.

Stalin, contrasting the party system of the West with his own, told us that the questions which he expected the electors to put to the candidates in the U.S.S.R., were such as these. "Have you or have you not built a good school? Have you improved living conditions? Are you a bureaucrat? Have you helped to make our labour more effective, our life more cultured?" In other words, 'the party label is unnecessary, *because the fundamental requirement of the acceptance of the Socialist system is taken for granted*, and the candidate will be accepted or rejected on his personal record and qualifications. The part played by the party system in the United Kingdom, in consolidating the strength of the executive, is unnecessary in the U.S.S.R. because the real strength of the executive in the latter is independent of the elected bodies.

We come to the second and startling difference between the election in the U.S.S.R. in December, 1937, and what appears to the Western mind a normal election. In an insignificantly small number of constituencies more than one candidate stood for election. *Generally there was only one candidate in each*. What might seem to be the real work was done when the nominations were completed.

The election turned entirely upon the right of nomination. Only the regularity of the nomination, followed by registration of the name of the candidate with the *Electoral Commission*, could bring the name upon the ballot-paper: and a vote for any name not on the ballot-paper was invalid. In the United Kingdom any ten qualified electors can nominate a candidate: but there is a pecuniary check upon nomination in the requirement for a deposit of £150, which the candidate will forfeit if he does not secure a stated minimum proportion of the votes polled. The constitution of the U.S.S.R. demands, of course, no pecuniary guarantee, which would be contrary to the spirit of its institutions: but Article 141 restricts the right of nomination to public organisations and societies of working people: Communist Party organisations; trade unions; co-operatives; organisations of youth; and cultural societies. Individuals, and groups of individuals not organised in any of these forms, have no right of nomination. Paramount influence is thus secured to those controlling the approved organisations and societies, in particular to the Communist Party. The Communist Party did not use this advantage to prevent the nomination of non-party men and women. On the contrary, a particular emphasis was laid upon the alliance of party and non-party citizens: and, as already noticed, a considerable minority of the latter, obtained nomination and election. But the Communist Party had its instructions to be watchful of the character and antecedents of those proposed for nomination. It was at this point that the directional power exercised by the actual government of the country came into effective operation.

One story of the nomination of a second candidate comes from Riga, in the then independent State of Latvia, where the London Times for

many years secluded its special correspondent for the U.S.S.R. It may be true, nevertheless. The peasantry of an electoral circle near Leningrad tried to put up their own candidate, in addition to the legally nominated person. A Communist caused the removal of the peasants' candidate: and was murdered. The peasants' candidate is said to have been tried and sentenced to death. There is another story that the Stakhanovite workers were nominated for a single constituency in the north Caucasus: with less tragical consequences.

What the rulers wanted was to convey the impression, both abroad and at home, of a united people; in order to discourage aggressors, by diminishing their hopes of division and discontent, and to inspire confidence among native supporters. The way to achieve this result was to call forth an outburst of popular enthusiasm, and to give an example of successful organisation. It could not have been done by compulsion. If there was compulsion, it was a compulsion exercised by the people themselves, drawing the minority into the vortex of their own excitement. The remarkably good harvest of 1937 helped greatly. Full stomachs and full bins created the conditions of general jubilation, and displayed the Government in a halo of the rosiest light. Many of the leading candidates told the electors plainly that the merits of this or that candidate were irrelevant. What was wanted was the universal acclamation of the victory of Socialism and its achievements: a union-wide recognition of the first occasion in the world's history on which workers and peasants have been masters of their own country; a general rejoicing in the completeness of the defence against foreign aggression, in the escape from snares of "Trotskyist-Bukharinist-Rykovist wreckers", in the superiority of the Stalinite constitution over the sham democracies of the west, in the attainment of the equal status of workers and peasants, men and women (whether the latter be workers or housewives), and working intelligentsia, in the escape of the lesser peoples from the "prison-house of nationalities", in the elevation of work to a glory and a heroism. This people has a genius for a cosmic emotion, which makes of them a mystical unity; and they responded to the call with a self-abandonment in which there was something dionysiac.

To have felt and realised, though for a moment, this generous excitement, and to have given expression to it in the quasi-sacrament of the nearly unanimous vote, was a contribution to political education, which is likely to have some practical value. One of the results of the campaign, it was noticed, was the sudden emergence of unsuspected talents and energy. Quite unknown persons found themselves, not necessarily as candidates but as political workers, capable of influencing and organising their fellows. I have appended to this chapter a translation of a poem by Vasily Lebedev-Kumach, depicting a sort of Caedmon, who could not sing as all the others did, till he suddenly discovered the gift, or suddenly achieved the expression of the common sentiment in his audience. The

Press published descriptions of some of the simple folk who had come to the front. No system in which the possibility of candidature depends upon the possession of pecuniary means could have produced precisely the same effect. To get the right perspective, we must be clear that this was the first occasion of a popular vote for the supreme legislature. A generation back, there was voting for the four Imperial Dumas. The election of the second of these approached nearest to being a precedent. It was elected on the Witte franchise: but, as Sir Bernard Pares tells us, with much interference by the police, who "detained voting-papers, fixed impossible dates for polling, and in particular did all that they could do to exclude Jews or Liberals". Since the Revolution, the people had had an indirect share in choosing the rarely summoned Congress of Soviets, but all available information confirms the impression that they were not generally aware of their contribution. All the circumstances of this 1937 election touched the popular imagination and brought home the potential greatness of the occasion. Great multitudes felt—with an echo from the Orthodox conception of *sobornost*—that "there is no greater honour than to be the choice of the great Soviet people: no greater happiness and confidence than to express the will of the people". "*The truth of the plain folk*", as our poet of the election meeting puts it—and he is plainly casting back to the notion of the oracle in the *narod*—"lived and lives in him".

The Supreme Soviet, having exclusive power of legislation for the U.S.S.R., is elected for a term of four years and is to hold an ordinary session twice a year. Its members enjoy a conditional immunity from prosecution and arrest. It elects its own Presidium and sets up the Council of People's Commissars, which between them constitute the official Executive. It has no executive powers of its own; and its Presidium has no legislative powers, but issues what are known as decrees; for instance, confers distinctions and honours, and declares general or partial mobilisation. There is thus a formal separation of the legislative and executive authority. At the first session in January, 1938, each member of the Supreme Soviet elected permanent commissions¹ for legislation, budget, and foreign affairs: a step which promised close study of business. The two Chambers sitting jointly, elected a Presidium, with Kalinin as its President, and eleven vice-chairmen, one from each constituent republic. Molotov, chairman of the old Council of Commissars, was then asked to form a new Council, and his selections were confirmed by the Supreme Soviet. The Supreme Soviet then adopted certain changes in the constitution. The territories included in the different constituent republics were more fully specified: three new People's Commissariats were created, one of them being a separate ministry for the Fleet. Of another amendment of greater constitutional importance I shall have something to say below. Three members rose in succession to criticise particular branches of the administration. Zhdanov, while

acknowledging the services of Litvinov, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, complained of the Foreign Office for the weakness of its policy in Japan and in France. The latter country, he said, was tolerant of anti-Soviet activities incompatible with the position of a loyal ally. He also objected to the foreign consulates in the U.S.S.R. as being more numerous than the consulates maintained by the U.S.S.R. in foreign countries: and made severe comments on the administration of both Water-transport and Art. Another critic attacked the Commissariat of Justice, and in particular the People's Commissar of Justice, Krylenko, for spending his time in mountain-climbing and chess-playing, instead of attending to his duties. A third blamed the committee which dealt with the collections-in-kind of agricultural products for inadequate storage arrangements, which, in a year of plentiful harvest, left large quantities of grain exposed to the weather. All these criticisms might have been spontaneous, but I think that soundings had been taken before they were publicly made. The extent to which the Supreme Soviet will become a forum for the ventilation of popular grievances, still remains to be seen.

The status and functions of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet have some peculiar features. Its members are elected by the Supreme Soviet, to which it is accountable in all its activities. But there is no express provision for the removal of any of its members by the Supreme Soviet: and it actually survives (Article 55) the Supreme Soviet to which it owes its existence, and is authorised to dissolve the Supreme Soviet (Article 47) in the event of an irreconcilable difference between the two chambers of the latter. It is apparently to be permanently in session: it convenes sessions of the Supreme Soviet, dissolves it at the end of its four-year-term in ordinary course, and fixes new elections. *Even when the Supreme Soviet is sitting*, it interprets laws made by that body, and may rescind orders and decisions of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. and the Councils of People's Commissars of the constituent republics in case they do not conform to the law. By an important amendment to the Constitution to which I have already referred, it is also empowered to declare martial law. These powers approach so closely to legislative authority, that the difficulty of summoning the Supreme Soviet at short notice on an emergency will supply a plausible reason for extending them to actual legislation.

Experience of democratic politics makes it natural to ask where the power of the purse resides in the new constitution. The annual budget is a "law": and it may be that every project of taxation is a "law", requiring to be passed by a majority in both chambers. It may be, but there is no express constitutional provision to this effect, that appropriations of funds for specific purposes will have to be made by the Supreme Soviet. But in 1937 direct taxation constituted only 3.7% of the total revenues of the U.S.S.R. Indirect taxation, taking effect by additions to prices, was over 86% of it. This distribution of taxation is no casual accident,

but an inevitable condition of a State in which there is no private wealth to tax. One of the political consequences is that the so-called power of the purse rests almost inevitably with the Government. Dr. Robson has noticed that out of 100,000 instructions given by the electors in Moscow to their representatives in 1934, not one complained of extravagance or demanded a reduction of taxation. I think they were not fully alive to the fact that the money came out of their own pockets, because only a small fraction of the taxation was either direct, or collected in the form of a local *octroi*. The Supreme Soviet discusses the budget, and both Chambers have appointed Budget Commissions, but it seems unlikely that we are to look to the power of the purse for a guarantee of its independence and of the reality of its supremacy.

In the final resort, the defence of private rights rests everywhere upon the Courts of Justice: and, as the Courts depend in large measure upon the proper presentation of cases, upon the legal profession which practises in them. It has been said, probably with truth, that a poor man, in the Western democracies, can only be sure of his rights if he can find a lawyer who will take up his case without fee. In the U.S.S.R., charges of political conspiracy or outrage are tried under a special law of 1934, passed immediately after the murder of S. M. Kirov, which assigns the cases to a so-called military tribunal and denies the right of appeal. It is usual for the accused in such cases to be bitterly attacked by the Press and by public associations and virtually condemned before trial. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet now has legal authority to declare martial law (which has sometimes been defined as the will of the military commanding officer). Chapter IX of the Constitution must be read subject to these reservations.

In cases which do not threaten the fundamental assumptions of the Constitution, People's Associate Judges, a kind of non-professional assessors, participate in the trial. All professional judges are appointed by elected bodies, except those of the People's Courts, who are elected by the citizens of the district by universal, direct, equal and secret, vote. The accused is guaranteed the right to defence, which must mean that his lawyer will be paid by the State. Article 112 provides that the judges are independent and are subordinate only to the law. Subject to the reservations to be made as regards political offences, I believe this constitutional promise is likely to be observed. The treatment of ordinary crime in the U.S.S.R. is as considerate as that of political crime is ruthless.

Supervision of the observance of law by all executive authorities—not, of course, by the Courts—is vested in the Attorney-General appointed by the Supreme Soviet, and in his subordinates. The Attorney-General sometimes moves the Courts to correct injustices, and did so in the spring of 1937, to secure justice for some individualist peasants, who had been deprived of their possessions in violation of the new constitution (Article 9).

In adding to the declaration of the rights of citizens (Chapter X) a statement of the guarantees for their exercise, the Constitution has shown conspicuous originality. Earlier declarations of rights—the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, or whatever the formula may have been—have left the means of exercise to the arbitrament of economic and other conditions. Here we find, for the first time, the explicit recognition that the value of rights depends upon the means of exercising them: which should make it difficult for the drafters of future constitutions to stop short at an abstract recital, which keeps the word of promise to the ear and breaks it to the hope. If the guarantee in the U.S.S.R. is, in the nature of things, incomplete, the economic organisation of society gives a measure of reality to it, which is lacking elsewhere.

The statement of rights includes the right to work: guaranteed by the believed discovery of the technique for ending mass unemployment as a disease of the economic circulation; and the rights to rest and to security in old age and invalidity, guaranteed by legislation and by social insurance, along with the provision of the necessary services and buildings, which is in a considerable measure already realised. The right to education comes next: and this has been made a reality, subject to the recent legislation imposing fees for secondary education of the literary type. The equality of women with men—a difficult achievement because both nature and traditional habit assign particular tasks to the female sex—has been brought nearer to realisation by the ending of unemployment, and by a measure of provision for the special needs of the housewife and the child. The equal rights of all citizens, irrespective of nationality or race, are next proclaimed: and for these, as elsewhere pointed out, provision has been and is being secured by the extension of economic opportunity, as well as by cultural independence.

We come next to certain rights the exercise of which is more obviously limited by the fundamental determination of the State to establish a socialist system. Freedom of speech, of Press, of assembly and meetings, of street processions and demonstrations are stated to be “ensured by placing at the disposal of the working people and their organisations printing shops, supplies of paper, public buildings, the streets, means of communication, and other materials requisite for the exercise of those rights” (Article 125). These are not rights of individuals, but rights of “the workers and their organisations”, and the exercise of them depends upon those who control the organisations in the interest of the class. Next follows the article regarding the right to unite in public organisations, which is limited in such a manner as to exclude the formation of political parties other than the Communist Party. Inviolability of the person, of homes, and of the secrecy of correspondence, is guaranteed: but is to be understood always as subject to the same overriding political considerations which govern the safeguards upon judicial proceedings.

It has been constantly repeated by Press and platform during the election period and after it that the constitution is the most democratic in the world. Kalinin made a speech on this point which throws so much light on Russian ideas. It is vain to discuss the question without a preliminary agreement on the meaning to be assigned to the word *democratic*. It is probably the most *equal* constitution in the world, because it, or the conditions in which it is promulgated, eliminate the inequalities caused by varying economic conditions. That it enables a majority of the Russian peoples to change its rulers without the use of force or the violation of the law, is plainly untrue: and this provision of a constitutional channel for the changing of rulers is what democracy generally means to the Western mind. It is unlikely, however, that the vast mass of the Russian peoples ever dreamed of such a channel. What they earnestly desire is economic security and an economic and social levelling, and these, it seems, in large measure they have.

Differences of means remain because of the considerable variations in the remuneration of work: but these are trifling in comparison with the enormous inequalities produced in the United States of America and the United Kingdom by the private ownership of land and of the instruments of production, which enable the individual to levy tribute on his fellows. The social constitution in these countries enables the man who has the organising gift to use it entirely for his own benefit: just as the social constitution, or the absence of it, in more primitive countries, enables the man with the best muscles to plunder his neighbours. The claim for the Soviet system is that it makes the organising gift the servant of the community. This is what Stalin meant when he said: "We did not build this society in order to restrict personal liberty, but in order that the human individual may feel really free. . . . Real liberty can only exist where exploitation has been abolished, where there is no oppression of some by others, where there is no unemployment, and no poverty. Only in such a society is real, and not paper, personal, and every other, liberty possible." It will be said—and with perfect fairness—that, in so far as these conditions have actually been achieved, and even Stalin does not claim their complete achievement—they are antecedent to the paper constitution, which has only created a machine and put good intentions into solemnly attested language.

I shall not quarrel with this statement of the case. Perhaps all rights, everywhere, are independent of the paper on which they are recorded: and, if they were not independent of it, would not actually exist. In the Soviet Union there is, in fact, a kind of democracy which is altogether *sui generis*: so that the man is master where in Britain he is the dependent, though his mouth is closed on some things where in Britain he can speak his mind. One of the more wholesome features of the Soviet system—having its origin perhaps in the immemorial discussions of the *Mir*—is that, on what we may call the lower planes of public affairs, a vigorous

democratic system is actually in existence and has been encouraged by the revolutionary government. It is true that the factory, the farms, the steamer, the office, the shop and the mine, are run under the perpetual criticism of the workers, who freely express their opinions and suggestions through the medium of the wall-newspaper and the factory committee. The dwellings of the workers are managed by committees chosen by the workers and responsible to them, with no interference from distant estate-agents or investment-holders. At a conference of the High Schools, attended by representatives of the pupils, as well as by teachers and persons engaged in educational administration, a girl student's complaint of the attitude of teachers towards questioners received sympathetic attention and was taken up warmly by the Press. Members of the outside public are associated with local bodies for many purposes, for instance for the details of town-planning. The function of patronage (*sheftso*) exercised by factory over village, and by associations over certain public departments, carries interest and influence into wider spheres. I am not certain that the procedure of the Party Purge is intended to survive. Hitherto it has given to everybody the opportunity of publicly ventilating grievances against all but the most highly placed. So many officials are Communists, that a purge of the Party came near to being a purge of the bureaucracy. However cavalierly constitutional forms may on some occasions have been treated, important measures have sometimes been submitted to free public discussion for long periods before adoption by the legislature. This is true not only of the two measures of 1927 and 1936 affecting marriage and the family, but also of the momentous decision of 1929 regarding the collectivisation of agriculture. I do not say that public opinion had its way on all these occasions. But it certainly had a good hearing: and a good hearing is something which is highly appreciated.

What I have called democracy *on the lower planes* of public affairs may, or may not, be a preparation for democracy on the higher planes. Among the pre-requisites of successful democracy, and perhaps most important of them, is knowledge. When Abraham Lincoln said that you could not fool all the people all the time, he had in view an order of society in which knowledge was generally accessible to the seeker for it. This implies not only a literate people (which is virtually achieved in the U.S.S.R.), but also a maximum of freedom of expression and ventilation of opinion. The latter is not only not existent in the U.S.S.R., but is impossible to be conceded, so long as the aim of the Government continues to be the remaking of the habits of man in a new image. It is easy to concede it in the United Kingdom or in the United States, where the aim is, not radically to change man, but to perpetuate his adjustment to a long-established order of society. Natural inertia may be trusted to neutralise the preaching of innovators, when innovation is the thing that is dreaded: and the thinkers may without danger be left to publish their

thoughts. But an accompaniment of the attempt to educate man into a new attitude towards life must be the direction of all overt utterance towards that aim, and the stifling of all that runs counter to it. The socialistic habit of mind is not yet sufficiently established to resist the impact of contrary teachings; and, because the U.S.S.R. does not dare to expose its citizens to the possible infection of reaction, it puts a check upon that freedom of thought, without which the knowledge necessary to the exercise of democracy upon the higher planes of public affairs is not to be had.

It is otherwise with what we have called democracy upon the lower planes of public affairs: for here knowledge is accessible to ordinary everyday experience and does not require to be supplemented by the wider attainments of the thinking few. A man can understand the business of his own collective farm, his own factory, or his own mining shaft, in a degree in which he cannot hope to understand the business of his own State, without the freest possible access to the experience and the thought of others. The regimented output of a government and a Party Press cannot take the place of that stimulating and informing variety which a free literature is capable of communicating. I suggest, therefore, that it is unreasonable to look for anything like democracy upon the higher planes of public affairs, while the country remains, *ex hypothesi*, at school with the Communist Party. The status of pupilage is incompatible with the status of self-government.

The sphere of local self-government is the subject of Chapter VIII of the constitution. Here, as on the higher planes—in the Supreme Soviets of the U.S.S.R., of the constituent republics and of the autonomous republics—indirect election has been replaced by direct. All the Soviets of working people's deputies, in territories, provinces, regions, districts, cities and rural localities, are now elected directly by the working people, instead of being, as formerly, arranged in successive tiers, with election from the lower to the higher at each stage. The two most striking characteristics of this chapter are its two great omissions. Except a general statement in Articles 97 and 98, there is no definition of powers and functions: and beyond the declaration that each Soviet is to draw up its own local budget, there is no reference to finance or to taxing power. The first omission is to be ascribed to certain fundamental assumptions of local government which go far back into Russian history. The local is a microcosm of the central authority, so far as civil administration is concerned. It may, and upon occasion it ought, to discharge any or all of the functions of government. There is no such thing as a doctrine of *ultra vires*: and no body of law which fixes and limits powers. It can do anything within the area of its jurisdiction, for which it has the funds and the executive instruments. That local bodies sometimes use these powers in an eccentric way, we gather from a complaint by the Attorney-General of the Union, of bye-laws imposing fines of a hundred roubles for

sleeping in a public place, and omitting to turn the water out of the bath after washing ; and prohibiting the use of matches by children, old people, and persons of unsound mind. On the other hand, a local body may at any moment be overriden by the authority next above it, on any of its decisions and any of its actions. In the financial field there is nothing similar to the British system under which each local body is empowered to levy, or to require some other local body to levy on its behalf, rates on the occupiers of property on such scale as its necessary expenditure may justify. The local authority in Britain can, and does (subject to the risk of incurring the indignation of its constituent rate-payers), adjust its income to its expenditure. The local authority in the U.S.S.R., on the contrary, must adjust its expenditure to such share as it is able to secure, in discussion with other local authorities above and below itself, in the proceeds of certain sources of income assigned by the central authority for local uses.

These sources of income assigned for local uses include (somewhat unexpectedly) the inheritance tax and the tax on gifts : which range from an insignificant percentage on values between 1,000 and 2,000 roubles to 90% above 500,000 roubles. It looks like a handsome present to local interests, till we remember that large properties are extremely rare. Other sources assigned to local authorities include taxes (in towns) on buildings, means of transport, and cattle, and on spectacles and amusements : the tax on the totalisator at State race-courses : dog tax : taxes on local gettings of gold and platinum : fees on documents and court fees : a share on subscription to State loans within the locality : charges on summer visitors to country houses in the area of the capitals : an *octroi* and a tax on automobiles at Moscow : and a share in a certain portion of the turnover tax (which, in the aggregate, constitutes the bulk of the revenue of the Union). Almost universally, maximum rates are fixed by the central authority.

The principle determining the claim of a particular local authority to a particular item is, primarily, the locality of collection : and there are standing orders determining in detail how much from any particular source is claimable by each class of local authority : by the authorities of Krai, Oblast, and Autonomous republic ; by those of towns : by those of regions : by those of workers' settlements : and by those of villages. The budget of each authority travels upwards, being successively incorporated in the budgets of the authorities superior to itself till, finally, the bulk of the local budgets (but not the whole of them) finds a place in the budget of the Union. I have noted, elsewhere in this study, a tendency to frame local budgets exhibiting large deficits, in the hope that, at a higher stage in the series, provision will be made for restoring the balance by grant. Recourse by local authorities to irregular levies of their own was formerly common. These are now strictly forbidden under penalty : and it is no longer possible, without breach of the law, to camouflage irregular taxa-

tion by voluntary collections: since the specific sanction of higher authority is now required to the latter.

There is little, if any, local financial autonomy: for all the revenue, and a very considerable portion of the expenditure, are determined by orders from outside. In Moscow itself, as we have recently learned from Professor Jewkes, one-sixteenth part of the city's revenues is raised by an *octroi* and by a tax on automobiles, of which the rates are determined by the local authority of the city. Somewhat larger fractions are derived from the profits on local enterprises, and from public utilities: and a somewhat smaller one from the rents of houses and shops. More than two-thirds of the total comes from the State, in the form of an allotment on the turnover tax, a share of income tax, and allocations from social insurance. Three-fifths of the expenditure of the city is on social services, of which the norms of expenditure are laid down by the central power. On the subject of finance in general it will be apparent that the conditions of a society, from which considerable accumulations in private hands are excluded, compel recourse to indirect taxation for the raising of the revenues of the State: and so take, from the familiar language regarding the power of the purse, almost all of its significance. Along with the inevitability of an organisation which brings large numbers of persons on to the official pay-roll, the necessity of raising revenue by adding to prices is part of the payment to be made for a juster order of society: and new expedients must be devised to meet the dangers of bureaucracy, and to take the place of a direct popular motive for the discouragement of extravagance.

Each Constituent Republic has its own constitution, modelled upon that of the Union, with the differences made necessary by the federal character of the latter: and the elections were held everywhere in June, in an atmosphere resembling that of an English Bank Holiday, amid music, dancing and rejoicing, with results which reproduced the unanimity of the elections for the Union.

I have been drastic in my examination of the Stalin constitution: and I do not, in fact, find any reason for expecting it to establish anything like what the West means by democratic institutions. Freedom—or so it seems at present—is to be divided between East and West in mutually exclusive fractions: the one getting such freedom as depends upon economic equality, and the other such freedom as legal and political equality may be capable of creating. I do not infer that the new constitution in the U.S.S.R. is of no importance. Forms, if they are not too flagrantly violated, have a way of adding unto themselves some measure of reality. The constitution has already done something to inspire the sense of unity in sundered millions, to stimulate the political education and ambition of youth, to create self-respect where there was none before, to open up reservoirs of unsuspected ability: and it may yet prove to have established a forum for the effective ventilation of grievances.

Some attempt has been made—it was in a Cossack constituency—to devise methods of keeping the deputy in closer touch with the electors. It was the lack of such methods which made the Viborg 1906 manifesto of the First Imperial Duma so complete a fiasco, and allowed the Constituent Assembly of 1918 to be dissolved without any reaction in the constituencies. The provisions of this constitution that every deputy is bound to report to the electors on his work, and on the work of the Soviet of which he is a member: and may at any time be recalled by decision of a majority of the electors: are devised for the purpose of maintaining the living link between electors and representatives. In the meanwhile we have glimpses of the local deputy raising questions of the timing of trains, the shortage of housing accommodation, and the unjust dismissal of workmen, on behalf of local complainants. We also see him going on tour in a mountainous constituency and criticising the absence of provision against erosion by mountain torrents, the slowness of local posts, and the inadequacy of the supply of articles of prime necessity, and enunciating the important principle that officials should travel about the area of their charges, in order to acquaint themselves with actual conditions. Here he puts his finger on one of the expedients for holding bureaucracy in check.

The new constitution will not enable the Russian peoples to change their rulers without the use of force or the violation of law. In this power, existing in differing degrees and in differing forms, in the U.S.A., the United Kingdom, much of northern and western Europe, the British Dominions and in germ also in British India, consists the essence of Democracy. It is not complete, even in the so-called democratic States, because of the weighting of the scales in favour of wealth. In such degree as it exists, it contains the secret of peaceful political growth. It makes possible the distinction between opposition to the Government and enmity to the State: for lack of which, independent thinkers grow into traitors and differences of opinion become potential revolutions.

The constitution of the U.S.S.R. is not democratic: in spite of the document. Nor indeed do the conditions make democracy possible. What is aimed at is a discipline which shall remake man in a new image, and the co-operation of the patient in the process of remaking. The Russian people is *at school*.

But democracy itself is in flux: and is to be respected rather for its potentialities than for its achievements. The missing half of it—the economic half—is still to be supplied in the West.

The long isolation of Russia from the West, and of the West from Russia, has kept the two halves of Democracy apart from one another. Are we to witness the coming together of the two in a complete whole? Only wishful thinking can answer, with conviction, Yes.

Annexure to Chapter XXI

THE YOUNG MAN'S FIRST SPEECH

When the Secretary of the assembly said :
"It's your turn to speak,"
I looked at the great hall
And felt full of terror :
I've no gift for speaking,
I tell you straight,
It's my first election :
I'm only eighteen :
I can't find the words I want :
I can't stop shaking.
"Comrade Petrov is the speaker
On behalf of the young people."
There was a wave of clapping.
Scales came before my eyes.
Suddenly, not I, but someone else
Cried aloud : "Comrades!"
And I began to speak in plain words,
My own plain words,
Just as I speak with father at the tea-table,
Just as I speak to you now.
We, says I, are still fledglings,
But we have seen joy in life.
Thank you, says I, our fathers,
That you have given wings to us.
Our time has not been long :
Our story is a short one.
But one man there is on the earth,
He is our path, our reason, our conscience.
When life sets puzzles to us,
And sends us a hard piece of thinking,
The question comes plump :
What would *he* have done about this?
When we decide for, or against,
We try to picture
His smile and *his* eyes :
And he doesn't let us down.
Great are his thoughts and deeds :
We have read about them in books and in life.
The truth of the plain folk lived and lives in him.
They call him Stalin—and crash !
Like a cliff falling, came : Long live Stalin !
Three minutes of it, if you please,
Before I could begin again
It seemed to grow lighter :
And a warm flush of brother man
Came in a wave upon the platform.
And I said, when I could get in a word :
"Whoever he be that we vote for,
It's Stalin will be our compass.
We're for the man who fought beside him,
Who was true to his truth.
That's where we trust our fortune,

That's where we trust our happiness.
 And—says I, proudly—we young people,
 We're boys with heads on our shoulders:
 You won't gammon us, and lead us up the garden
 With soft sawder and tall talk.
 We look at man, and we look at deeds:
 Our hearts know the smack of truth.
 On Stalin's way, straight as an arrow,
 All of us together vote as one."
 And there I ended: and all the hall
 Clapped me a farewell greeting.
 That's how I made my first speech
 In a great big meeting.

By VASSILY LEBEDEV-KUMACH.

(Published in *Pravda* of November 21st, 1937.)

Note.—"The truth of the plain folk." In this expression there is an allusion to the deeply rooted idea that truth resides in the congregation of the faithful. It appeared in the "going to the people" of the 'seventies and it survives in Communist thought to-day.

CHAPTER XXII

PERSONALITY OUT OF COLLECTIVISM

"Russia has from time immemorial been the country of the impersonal collective idea. The realisation of this idea was the aspiration of the Church, as well as of all the sects opposed to the Church, and of all the intellectual, cultural, and social currents."—RÉNÉ FULOP-MILLER, *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism*.

"In all matters in which state interests are supposed to be involved, the rights of individuals are ruthlessly sacrificed."—D. MACKENZIE WALLACE.

"Bolshevism is but the extension of the individualist doctrine of the rights of man from the political sphere to the economic. Far from being the opposite of Individualism it is its consistent fulfilment."—OTHMAR SPANN (of Vienna), *Der Wahre Staat*, 1931: as quoted by Karl Polanyi in *Christianity and the Social Revolution*.

"The principle of personality can in no way stand and develop on the soil of materialism."—N. BERDYAËV, *Origins of Russian Communism*.

"Once he has done with the anarchic forces of his own society, Man will set to work on himself in the mortar and crucible of the chemist. For the first time mankind will regard itself as raw material, or at best as a physical and psychic half-finished product."—TROTSKY'S speech at Copenhagen in November, 1932.

"What a double-armed power this Russian revolution is: how on the one hand it stifles, and on the other hand it redeems, personality! Whether it does the one or the other, depends upon whether one is an enemy and non-conformist, or a ward and supporter, of the new dispensation."—MAURICE HINDUS, *Red Bread*.

NO ONE has ever questioned the lack, in old Russia, of the sense of human personality. Konstantin Leontiev, a writer whose thought was far from typically Russian, rejoiced in the absence of it, and of its consequences in the conceptions of democracy and liberty. To him it was an

infection, which, starting from nobles and knights, spread downwards as a fashion does, till every base mechanical felt a sense of human dignity and aspired to equality, and the philosophers of the eighteenth century sanctified his aspiration. Russia—old Russia, at all events—fused her people into a congregation, which jointly received the gift of an undivided and indivisible spirit, radically different from the spirit of individuality.

There has been no similar unity of opinion regarding the influence of the doctrines of Communism on the growth of human personality. Some, like Berdyaev, in the quotation at the head of the chapter, hold that Communism is incompatible with appreciation for the value of the individual. Others—dating back to the framers of the Communist Manifesto of 1849—defend the opposite contention, and declare that it favours personality by eliminating anxiety for daily bread and setting man free for other concerns. The question at issue is a vital one. Perhaps it is the question of questions, for any and every society.

Let us begin by making up our minds what we mean when we talk of personality. It is easy to see what we mean by the absence of it. Gleb Uspensky, the story-teller of humble Russian life, wrote a tale in which he described the peasant as living under “the power of the land”, and responding to the external stimulus of the daily needs of agricultural life: a life which is still dominated by the caprices of nature: foreseeing, indeed, the goal of the harvest, and the outcome of the primitive plan of the three-field rotation, and to this extent in advance of the amoeba which obeys the calls of hunger, reproduction and fear, as from moment to moment they present themselves: but unable to transcend the routine and look *from outside* upon himself and his destiny, still less able to use himself for the fulfilment of conscious purposes of his own. In untranslatable language, he describes this mass of beings living *splosh* (the Russian word), in higger-mugger, as Shakespeare might have said, in indistinguishable and promiscuous confusion: and has a vision of them as fish rushing together into a net, by an unconsidered impulse of common instinct. If this was true of the common man, much more was it true of woman, doubly imprisoned between stove and threshold, cradle and cooking-pot. The poets saw it and uttered their warning songs. The thinkers began to pick out facts and figures. That process of teaching man to see himself which is the supreme function of art, and so of helping him to make a deliberate use of his powers, had begun: but the common language was yet to seek: and the teachers of all orders might still almost as well have been dumb, since the village was deaf, and the town little more than the village transplanted.

There was one great teacher, inspired by anti-individualist lessons from Buddhism and the Bhagavad-Gita, who applauded the impersonal life. Leo Tolstoi, in depicting Peter Bezukhov's interest in Platon Karataev, took civilised man back to the primitive condition in which life is lived

splosh—if I may again repeat the untranslatable. It was a not uncommon type. Kalinich in the story of Turgeniev (see Chapter III of these studies) is another literary example of it; the life that is so near to nature, the nature of birds and bees and animals, that it is all but indistinguishable from it. It lives from moment to moment, obeys the call of circumstance, foresees little, plans nothing, takes good and evil as inevitable visitations, has no power of looking upon itself from outside, no notion of using itself for remoter aims, is fatalistic in its religions except in so far as it believes that unaccountable authorities outside itself may be won to favour or provoked to anger. I suppose this is what the psycho-analysts mean when they talk about “the unconscious”, and perhaps the process of realising personality has something in common with the conquest of the unconscious by the conscious. At all events, the growth of consciousness is a part of it.

What is deficient in the uncompleted personality is partly knowledge, partly will; partly the cognitive, partly the conative faculty, I suppose I ought to say. And the deficiency is always, as actually observed, a matter of degree. It is a lack of something that is perhaps in process of evolution; since some individuals are always conspicuously better furnished with it than others. At the time that Uspensky saw the peasants rushing like fish into the net, and much earlier than that, there were plenty of individuals who had a full consciousness of self as an agent to be used for calculated ends, had remoter aims and deliberately shaped action to attain them. In fact, it would almost seem that the deficiency of some gave the opportunity of abnormal growth to others; that gigantic personalities might emerge, the more easily that the pressure of rival personalities was diminished. Many of the serf-owners, as we see them in literature and in popular memory, exhibit a morbid growth of unbridled character, tending in the direction of sadism and mental alienation, except in the rare instances where it exalted and ennobled; for power, unlimited; like solitude, may make of a man a god, as well as make of him a beast.

Let us now attempt to define the quality or faculty which was missing, or latent, in Gleb Uspensky's peasants, who lived *splosh*, but present in a greater or less degree in some of their contemporaries. For it is the spread of this quality or faculty to wider circles—or its restriction to narrower ones—under the impact of the new attitude to life, that we are attempting to investigate.

It might mean, in its extreme development, the sort of despotic egotism developed in the old male of the monkey herd, supreme among his females, and an object of terror and avoidance to the younger males who have grown out of childhood; in the Cyclops giving his commands to the other denizens of his cave; for it is in these that “character”, in a certain sense, has the greatest room to grow. But this meaning is excluded, if we assume the aim to be a wider extension of the faculty or quality which we seek to define. Plainly it is something which is related to social life; and

it must have an element of balance in it, discouraging A from the aggressive attempt to development at the expense of B, and encouraging co-operative effort.

But since society is not always and everywhere the same, and ought to be susceptible of variation and evolution, the desiderated faculty or quality must also have an element of elasticity, to fit itself for change. At its best, it should include that capacity for man to "set to work upon himself" to change himself, which Trotsky postulates in the quotation from the Copenhagen speech set at the head of this chapter. A balance between freedom and discipline is evidently involved: and a hereditary caste system is unfavourable to that which we are seeking. But if one can imagine a distribution of functions in which there was no arbitrariness or fixity, but each fell into his appropriate place by a conscious appreciation of rightness, it would seem that the development of personality had gone far and wide in such a state.

Since capacities differ, some, in a wholesome society, are initiators, and many are imitators. If it were otherwise inventions would perish at birth. There are inevitable differences of function, and each may find his own personality in the discharge of his own function when he has found it.

Perhaps personality means the faculty of finding and recognising your own place and work in society, and of pitching your choice as high as your powers permit. This involves a corresponding function on the part of society—of facilitating and not obstructing the recognition and the choice.

This definition brings us very close to T. H. Green's,* of "the quality in a person of being consciously an object to itself", and it will give us a working basis for the investigation of this final chapter which I have called Personality out of Collectivism. What is there in Soviet Communism which favours, and what is there in it which retards, the conscious search of each for his and her true place?

Let us note in the first place that the suggested definition appears to be that of the Anglican Church Catechism: "to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me", until we see that it does not acknowledge the transcendent source of the demand; and does not recognise an eternal idea to which there must be ultimate conformity, but only an evolving self of unknown potentialities which must be divined. But whether it be the call of a divine being, or man's own reading of his powers, which is to enable him to find and realise his personality, seems to make little difference in practice, since it is he who—whether as an individual, or the obedient son of a church, or the disciple of an institution which keeps his conscience for him—the Communist Party, for instance—must interpret the call, or divine the summons. In the case of the U.S.S.R., which is here under investigation, there exists an analogue of a priesthood, which undertakes a task similar to the keeping of con-

* See *Prolegomena to Ethics*, T. H. Green.

sciences by certain of the churches, and helps the individual to find his duty. In this respect the position of the Soviet citizen is less like that of a Protestant Christian, who reads his own conscience for himself, than that of a Roman Catholic who submits himself to ecclesiastical guidance. This makes easier the adjustment of self to society; but an adjustment which is rather the acceptance of a discipline than that conscious self-harmonisation with one's fellows and their needs, which is what I understand by the development of personality.

In embarking upon the revolutionary undertaking, the Soviets have left the easy way of maintaining an existing order, and attempted the difficult one of change. Socialism is still in the making and still on the defensive. It is inevitable that Russia should be in a sense *at school*. The more complex the society, the newer the type of behaviour which it demands, the more extended and elaborate the functions of the Government, the more difficult is the adjustment of the individual and the harder the task of finding his place, and the more probable it becomes that the conformity will be the result of an external discipline than of an inner harmonisation. When to these things is added a rapidly changing law, or a law which changes on principles not readily intelligible to the masses of men, the difficulty of self-harmonisation is increased and the chances of the *disintegration of personality are multiplied*.

Anything like caprice in the dominant régime is unfavourable to personality; and autocracy, even in the strongest and ablest, has a tendency to caprice. The Russia of the Tsars was a sufferer in some degree from fickleness in legislation and in administrative practice. But the disintegrating effects of the drastic reversal of standards were carried to extreme, when the more prosperous peasants who had been allowed for a time to hire both land and labour, and had been utilised to restore agricultural production to its pre-war standard—had even been invited to “enrich themselves” as a part of their social duty—were ousted from their lands and houses and deprived of their possessions. A generation which had witnessed that staggering extirpation could hardly recover its sense of stability, or be sure of the distinction between right and wrong.

If we desire to see how Communist rule has affected and how it is likely to affect the development of human personality, we must look, in the first place, at the conditions which were superseded by the Revolution, and not at the conditions existing in western Europe or in the United States of America. As I see the Revolution, it was as though a people, hitherto submissive to the demands of a Solomon and a Rehoboam, had cried: To your tents, O Israel; and had decided, as Tolstoi wished them to decide, that they had no more need of the State. It was the collapse of a social order, leaving ruins upon which one group alone possessed the faith, the courage and the discipline for the task of rebuilding. The Communists did not overthrow the Tsars. The structure gave way, from inherent defects, when shaken by military defeat. The anarchy which

followed was in essence the same which has followed on the break up of other empires. But it was made shorter, and predatory forces were to some extent kept off the carcass, by the emergence of an organised force which took up the task of reconstruction. Such tasks are not easy. Not only do the faults of the old order persist, but they are aggravated by the disordered release of primitive agencies of destruction, and by the peculiarly horrible suspicions—of brother against brother, and neighbour against neighbour—which breed in the slaughter-pits of civil war. The failures and the crimes of the Revolutionary Government are not condoned by the conditions of rebuilding in the Land of Fragments, but they are explained by them. Thomas Carlyle said it might take two centuries to restore normal conditions in revolutionary France. We cannot look for restoration of a normal psychology in Russia in two decades. We can only seek for indications of the direction in which the existing tendencies may ultimately develop, when the disturbing influences have ceased to operate. In the second place we must not build theories upon the supposed tendencies of a materialistic philosophy or upon deductions from the teaching of Karl Marx. A philosophy, like religion, has profound effects upon the thoughts and actions of a people. But it is the actual philosophy, or the actual religion, which exercises influence: and the actual philosophy of the modern U.S.S.R. is something to which Karl Marx and dialectical materialism have made a contribution, but which is made up of other elements, including those of Orthodox Christianity and traditional Russian sentiment. We can only discover what Communist rule has done, and is likely to do, by an examination of facts, some of which are directly attributable to the new régime, while others are only indirectly a product of it.

Assuming a normal proportion between the sexes, the most radical fact in any group of human beings is its average age. Nearly half of the present population of the U.S.S.R. is under twenty-one years of age, and nearly two-thirds of it is under twenty-nine. Only a third of it has anything but a very young child's recollection of what went before the Revolution, and only a third of it has passed the first flush of youth. At the census of 1931, half the population of Great Britain had reached or passed the age of twenty-nine. If hope and energy and susceptibility to fresh impressions are pre-eminently characteristic of youth, we must be prepared to find more of these qualities in the U.S.S.R.: and more sobriety in Great Britain. The former is the younger country, in the most literal sense of the expression. It is significant that officers in their thirties who had shown promise on the Moscow front in 1941-42 were promoted to high commands.

I shall not beg the question of the permanent end of unemployment, and will merely note here that the U.S.S.R. continued to show every sign of industrial boom at a time when the condition of the United Kingdom, and still more that of the United States of America, threatened

recession. The combination of youthfulness with equality of opportunity and a wide variety of openings gives reality to the optimism on which Soviet ethics insist. Messrs Lorwin and Abrahamson noticed, on their visit in 1935 to investigate industrial conditions, the predominance in industry of young workers. In the Tractor Factory at Kharkov, for instance, they found over two-fifths of the workers under twenty-four years of age, and nearly another third of them between twenty-four and thirty. These figures cannot be explained by the presence of a large number of children, for only 2% were under eighteen. Nor was there anything exceptional in the conditions of this factory. It was typical of Soviet life in general, where State departments and scientific institutes as well as factories and workshops are full of young people. In the stations and wintering parties of the Soviet Arctic, where one of the greatest peaceful adventures of the modern world is now being played out, four-fifths of the workers are under twenty-five years of age.

The conditions of the U.S.S.R. at the present day have points of resemblance to those of middle America, at the time of Horace Greeley's famous adjuration to youth : Go west, young man, go west ! A vast estate, long neglected, is being opened to enterprise : and methods of exploitation, which are not new to the capitalist countries, but come with all the freshness of gigantic toys to the naïveté of young Russia, are put at the disposal of wondering man. This old world of Scythians and Mongols and immemorial nomadism is transformed, for the nonce, into a new one : and deserts and moss-covered sub-Arctic wastes are yielding up their secrets, as the Oceans yielded theirs when Vasco da Gama and Columbus dared to leave the shore. What the age of discovery did for Western Europe—leaving the East untouched—the twentieth century, with its motor transport and aeroplanes and wireless, is doing for Asia, and the old Russia, which is its vestibule. It is a discovery by land succeeding to discovery by sea. Visitors to an earlier Russia carried away with them an ineffaceable impression of the boredom—*skuchnost*—which was for ever on the lips and in the yawns of the young people of those days : and Chekhov has helped those who had no personal knowledge of it to realise the aimlessness and vacuity of the life in a certain class. There was a sort of self-contempt bred from a sense of lack of direction. The examples and the leading were bad, and energy was frustrated. But that is changed, because youth is able to do what its self-respect approves as good, has found the service which is perfect freedom : and because particular pains is taken to bring to the front the right men and women—a point in which the old régime failed notoriously, if we may trust General Kuropatkin's condemnatory sentence when he bade farewell to his troops at the end of a humiliating war.

The people are young ; and there is a career open to the talents. If anyone has any doubt about the scope which offers itself to healthy social ambition, let him seek for an answer to the question—which many must

in this spring of 1942 be putting to themselves—where did Russia find her generals for the remarkable campaign which her soldiers are fighting? They came out of the masses of the people, with no advantages other than those which Nature gave them; and the same is true of the leaders in other walks of life, from Stalin, street-boy of Tiflis and thereafter theological student, downward.

The first question for every Government which would have peace and happiness at home is: what can you offer to youth? and to this question the Soviet Government has the best of answers. Life itself is become an adventure, and a hopeful one. The size and variety of the U.S.S.R., with its many peoples and languages and cultures, all frontierless and open as the United States of America for unbroken thousands of miles, provide a sensation of limitless space, which neutralises the effect of the virtual prohibition of foreign travel. The pioneering is pioneering with a difference, of course. It is no longer Yermak making his way across Siberia in independence of all the world and carving out kingdoms by the sheer force of individual will and the courage of his band: nor Daniel Boone, penetrating Kentucky alone with rifle and knife to stake out claims for a nation. A powerful Government travels with the emigrant, and, by the might of organisation, makes possible triumphs that were beyond the reach of the unaided individual. It is a larger scale of co-operation than the co-operation of earlier days, and its achievements are proportionately greater: though solitary man is not the giant that he was. For most of the peoples, the world has grown smaller: even in America the sense of unlimited space for development has been disappointed: only in the U.S.S.R., during the last two decades, has the world grown larger and more satisfying.

The gain is as great, by comparison with the past it is greater, for women than for men. A limited group of Russian women enjoyed freedom and consideration. For the mass, the path was from stove to cradle, from cradle to wash-tub, from wash-tub to threshold, with crushing field work in the short seasons of haycutting and harvest. It was a series of instinctive responses to particular needs, only differing from that of the animal in its somewhat greater elaboration; and there was no room in it for the growth of a human personality. The Great War created wider opportunities of more varied employment, and women took up many of the burdens dropped by men both in field and factory. The enormous demand for labour of every kind, but more particularly for skilled labour, for school teachers, for doctors, for dentists, for engineers, for farm managers, for sea and river navigators, to which the forward policies of the Revolutionary Government have given occasion, has raised women to a new status. In 1936 over 8 million women were occupied in different branches of State, economic and cultural life. There were 184 of them in the Supreme Soviet elected in 1937. There were at least one woman ambassador and one woman Commissar of the Union.

This has been found compatible with the encouragement of motherhood—a marked contrast with the British system, in which marriage is, for the woman, a cause of exclusion from certain important occupations, particularly educational. Not only generous social services and the absence of the complex due to property, but also the social attitude towards motherhood, as a function valuable to the State, are favourable to the mother: and the house-mistress, *domokhozaika*, takes place along with the female worker and collective farmer and employee, among honoured citizens. We are here in a region in which statistical demonstration is impossible: but I suspect that the facility for marriage (and for dissolving it, when it proves a failure) and the absence of discouragements to child-bearing, constitute points of real superiority in the Soviet social system over the British. Taboos of more kinds than one obstruct the frank and unbiased consideration of this subject: in which religious teachers ought to be prepared to co-operate with sociologists and doctors and statisticians and psychologists: but most of us are conscious of the presence in our midst of a phenomenon as morbid as that of the child-widow in India, and more widely spread.

Self-fulfilment in respect to all the functions of humanity is necessary to bodily and mental health: and love, and the child, are even more radically and more universally important than the job and the gratification of ambition. We Westerners still wear our ill-fitting fig-leaves of the law of family and succession to property, of puritanism and romanticism, and force upon youth an external conformity from which it tends more and more to break away. In the result, because sexual ethics are not adjusted to human needs, sexual practice tends towards anarchy. That Bolsheviek Russia has arrived at a perfect marriage law is very improbable. It has, in fact, made important changes in it during the last few years. But in repudiating the notion of a divine origin for rules which demonstrably lack all sanction except that of expedients for local and transient phases of society, it has cleared the ground which the West has left cluttered, and made a contribution to the wholesomeness of life.

The breach between the generations which was the subject of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* has bulked very large in Soviet social history. It was a commonplace with earlier students of the U.S.S.R. that the children were teaching their elders the new manners, and the new morals, and that fathers were everywhere at odds with the sons. The child who gave information against his mother for stealing grain from the collective store was made a hero. It was the obverse of the part of Brutus condemning his sons for treason to the State. Here the child was the champion of the State against the surviving claims of the family. This was in 1932. The military threat of Nazi Germany and imperialistic Japan brought the family back to its place of honour. When, in 1935, Eisenstein produced a film centring upon the clash between father and son in the collective farm, Soviet morals had already reverted towards an

earlier outlook. Stalin gave the signal by a filial visit to his mother, the Communist League of Youth was reminded that its task was to teach the young, not the old, the amendment of the law of the family was set in motion, and the family has again become a bulwark of the State. In proportion as the family re-establishes itself as a fundamental institution, the woman loses something of her new-found liberty. I have pointed out elsewhere how delicate is this unstable equilibrium, till growing wealth makes a larger provision for the artificial aids to female tasks.

The child has not suffered by the reversion to an older conception of his place in society. Rather he has gained by liberation from functions which were not proper to his imperfectly developed powers. It is probable that the young Pioneer, who had been taught to open windows in other people's homes, and to rebuke his father for drinking and beating his mother, suffered psychologically from the strain. The abandonment of eccentric experiments in education, and of the imposition of adult tasks upon the young, has not meant the surrender of the conviction that reconstruction must begin with the children; but rather the adjustment of the treatment to age and strength. The child has been put in his right place, without any diminution of the special care and attention bestowed on his physical welfare and his mental education.

The morals of Bolshevism are hostile both to asceticism and to dissipation. The latter is a waste, a diversion of human powers which society needs for a better purpose: and the ideal—we must use the word—is an active one, an ideal of cheerful work and cheerful play, such as Maxim Gorky envisaged when he drew his picture of Nil, in *The Townsman*: with no introspection, and no aloofness, no seeking for solitude: a life (like the froth-blower's) lived in public, where every man feels another shouldèr next to his, and loves to feel it so. The State is a jealous State which makes a totalitarian demand upon every faculty, and every act of man, and claims to know his thoughts. There must be no escape from life, whether it takes the form of suicide, or of flight from the U.S.S.R., or of recourse to those forms of art which serve as opiates. The artists must, as Stalin once put it, be engineers of human souls. If a man seeks to walk alone, his path is an uneasy one.

The conflict between the individual and collective man is illustrated in literature. An audacious example is Yury Olesha's novel *Envy*, written and published at Moscow in 1927, before the control of the Proletarian Writers' Association had established itself. It is a picture of two groups of people, one of them healthily adjusted to the new surroundings, the other consisting of social misfits. The leading example of the former is Andrei Babichev, the capable, robust, business-like organiser of a catering establishment, and the proud inventor of a sausage at 35 kopeks, for the better nutrition of Soviet workers. He is friendly to the student Kavalero, whom he twice picks out of the gutter; but Kavalero is a morbid egoist, who cannot forgive Andrei for his banal success and his patronage

of himself. Another of the misfits is Ivan, the brother of Andrei, who half consoles himself for his inferiority to the successful brother, by imagining that he has invented a marvellous machine. Ivan gives dangerous advice to Kavalero: "The only thing is to quit the scene with *éclat*, to slam the doors, to leave a scar on the ugly mug of history." The coming epoch, he says, will be glorious: he loves it, and he hates it. Since he and Kavalero have no part in its achievement, "take vengeance: show you're as good as it: and the vengeance should be taken on Andrei, who has wronged both of us". We see the apparent makings of an assassination, to be perpetrated out of pure spite and injured vanity: but the conspirators have not in them the stuff for such extremes. The plot ends in a Magistrate's Court, where Ivan tells a queer tale of his plan for a "conspiracy of feelings". The new era, he says, will create new states of mind in place of the old. Before the old feelings, such as honour, love of woman, jealousy and ambition, pride and compassion, finally depart, he wants to shake up the burnt-out bulb and make it yield a short last flash, which shall at least be beautiful: to marshal the ancient human passions in their final march past. In this parade he wants to exhibit Kavalero as an incarnation of Envy.

It is the artist's protest against the exclusion of his traditional themes, glorified by the poets, and by the muse of History herself. It is also an illustration in its extreme form of the social misfit and of the struggle of solitary with social man, which is a characteristic theme. Though the worthy and useful Andrei and the Magistrate who represents Soviet justice have the best of it against the individualistic scallawags, the author makes the latter the mouthpieces of his satire upon the new *respectability*, which does not allow man to be himself. In the closing scene the two disreputables drink a toast to the chief of the old sentiments, to Indifference: and Ivan promises to Kavalero a roistering night. It is the opiate for disappointment, doubly shocking to Bolshevik morals, which call upon man to face up to facts.

For those who find the adjustment to social life hard to compass, I suspect that family life, at its best, furnishes a valuable help to the growth of personality, by providing, as it were, a recognised escape into a more sympathetic *milieu*. It seems to be the normal field for the operation of that principle of *withdrawal and return*, to which Mr. Toynbee has pointed as a beneficent influence in life. The rehabilitation of the family, to be completed later on by the improvement of housing accommodation, still notably deficient, is a favourable influence, therefore, in the conditions of Soviet Russia.

It was part of the Bolshevik code never to conceal, or slur over, a defeat or a mistake: but to drag all facts to light and analyse them so as to win the full value of the lesson. There have been some remarkable confessions of error, of which Stalin's "Dizziness from Success" speech perhaps the most striking. Kalinin has a particular gift for disarming

opposition by these acknowledgments of mistake. "Of course we make many mistakes," said he in October, 1919, when White armies were threatening the capitals: "because we did not learn to rule before. But we cannot place at our head a wise man of another class, because he will betray us." Another confession was made by him when the policy of agricultural requisitions was changed in 1921. The people of Russia understand a confession: and it is a way of establishing brotherly relations with them, which has contributed to the successes of the Soviet Government. The criticisms of Public Departments which are an almost daily feature of the Soviet Press represent the small change of the habit of confession by Government. But alongside of this frankness there are some suppressions of fact, when fact might be discouraging to national optimism, and some making of scapegoats. The full figures of the harvest of 1936, which was a partial failure, have never been published, though from our Western standpoint, the failure was nature's work, not the Government's. Condemnations of the Railways, of Retail Trade, and of other departments of the administration, are generally accompanied by the statement that Trotskyist-Bukharinist-Rykovist saboteurs have had too free a hand and must be checked. The constant instilment of suspicion against enemies, unknown and only vaguely imagined, must have a deleterious effect upon national character. It is the present-day Russian equivalent for that diversion of popular anger upon the Jews, which is the corresponding device in Nazi Germany. It has the excuse of civil war mentality, but it is none the less mischievous for that.

How much of individual freedom is there in the U.S.S.R.? If freedom means a share in choosing his own masters, the ordinary citizen lacks it, in spite of the constitution of 1936. If it means security against the application of extraordinary laws and extraordinary procedure when he is charged with a political offence, he has none of it. Democracy, as I have tried to make plain elsewhere, exists only on the lower planes. A man, or a woman, may criticise the factory management or any of the party rank and file, but must keep his mouth shut about the higher policy and the higher politicians, unless very careful soundings have been taken in advance. In the United Kingdom and the United States of America it is the other way round: caution about the boss, complete freedom to say the worst of the President or the Prime Minister.

In so far as freedom means a facility for self-fulfilment, a power as well as a right, to pursue the ends which have his whole-hearted approval, the citizen of the U.S.S.R. stands better. That there is more planning by the State, and less planning by the individual, may cramp the personality of the born captain of industry, who cannot reconcile himself to placing his powers at the disposal of the community, as a statesman or a military commander does. The man of the rank and file has no opportunity anywhere of planning anything more than the disposal of his own income, and not much of that. In the U.S.S.R. his real wage is small, but he has a very

high degree of economic security. So far as we are able to judge at present, he runs no risk of mass unemployment, and the social services guarantee his subsistence in sickness and old age, and—till October, 1940, when fees were introduced in secondary schools—a completely free education for his children up to the highest standard which they are capable of reaching. He has no need to go cap in hand to his brother-man for work, and his factory committee (or the absence of unemployment) protects him from wrongful dismissal. There are others with higher wages than his, perhaps even eight or ten times as great (unless he is one of the super-piece-workers), but there is no obtrusion of unbridled luxury to remind him of an inferior status, and none of that swollen wealth which represents in reality both economic and political power over fellow-beings. He has as much (or as little) property as his Western analogue, and an equal facility for saving, and greater communal amenities. He has opportunities for self-improvement, and may fit himself for more important work if he has the capacity for it. He lives in a society which honours labour, and does not honour money-getting. The dignity of toil has a meaning here, outside of the books of the Sunday-school moralists, and his toil is what he has to contribute to the common pool. Sometimes, unless he is one of the “flitters”, he has a sense of *ownership* in his factory and his job. If he is a collective farmer, he probably has some special task on the farm which gives him a sense of improved status. There is a genuine significance in that *verse of the Internationale* which declares that he who was naught today is all. It is a life which admits of a solid self-respect, and the power to retain self-respect is a large part of liberty.

I must qualify the picture by adding that there is no safeguard against pace-making in industry. The majority protects itself quite efficiently by a natural indolence: but, in the more eager, over-work is quite usual. Among the older Communists it has been noticed as an almost normal feature.

Let us consider for a moment, from the point of view of the development of personality, the change which has been made by the collectivisation of the farms in the position of the peasant. He was a man of all work, not only a cultivator and a manager of beasts, but a buyer and a seller, a man of business on a small scale. But both nature and tradition compelled him to a narrow routine. The “power of the land” was upon him, and punished every weakness, every neglect, with hunger. Not only must he obey the course of the seasons and adapt his minute economy to their caprices; but the ancient procedure of his fellow-toilers, partly helping, partly thwarting, but wholly restrictive, prescribed and enforced each detail of his practice. Inevitably he moved with the herd, under the switch of compelling circumstance. There was no escape, except into the drink-shop: or into the town where another sort of compulsion awaited him in the discipline of the factory: unless he sought it in aimless wandering.

As a member of a collective farm, he is less of an all-round manager of a tiny agricultural business and more of a specialised functionary, with no individual responsibility for the success of the concern on its business side, and no anxiety regarding debt. As before, the general lines of work are laid down—partly by a plan, which was formerly the traditional plan of the open-field three-rotational system, and now purports to be based on the needs of scientific agriculture: and partly by the judgment of the co-sharers, in whose decisions he himself has a voice, varying in effectiveness according to the esteem in which he is held. The main difference is in a certain variety in the choices of occupation which lie before him. He is no longer called upon to do a little of everything and, almost inevitably, to do some of it ill, for he is one partner in a joint task, and there is a reasonable likelihood that different parts of it will be allotted according to capacity and liking. One man will find himself in the cattle shed, another in the farm office, another at the seed store, another with the hoe.

There is room for difference of opinion as to the way in which this change may be expected to work. Expressed in one word, it is a change to specialisation of function: accompanied by a sharing of the burden of financial responsibility. Leisure, or at all events a measure of freedom from responsibility, seems more likely now than before. The fact that there is more scope for choice seems to me to favour the development of personality.

And, now, as to the place of the citizen in the world of politics: he must keep his mouth shut about the higher policy: and the desire to open it on this subject is likely to be speedily suppressed, when it takes a more determined form than ordinary grumbling. One of the consequences of the ubiquity of the Party is that discontent is discovered and nipped in the bud. There is grumbling, of course, when things for one cause or another go amiss, and sometimes there is discontent of a more serious kind. What happens to the man or woman who dares to become a mouthpiece on such occasions? The answer is to be sought in the history of the series of judicial trials and administrative expulsions and dismissals which continued between 1936 and 1938. The protest may have so much popular support behind it, or may so commend itself to superior authority by its evident reasonableness, that the particular wrong will be amended. We see this happening in the occasional unexpected interventions of Stalin himself, to support a person aggrieved by the conduct of an intermediate authority: and the occasional dramatic reversals of a course of action which has created a general sense of injustice. There is an element of luck, almost an element of caprice, in these instances of successful resistance: the same kind of luck, the same kind of caprice, which we naturally associate with every despotic system, with Haroun-al-Rashid making his midnight visitations in Bagdad, as with the disguised Kalinin making purchases of bad soap in a careless store. Otherwise, the man

who has the courage to take a stand apart from or ahead of his group, and to assert his own canon of right and wrong, or is suspected of having it, is likely to be victimised.

He is victimised in other countries beside the U.S.S.R., but usually by his employers, when he receives the sympathy and sometimes the effective support of his fellow-workers. He may be shot by Pinkerton guards or mauled by Nazi bullies. But the terrible charges of counter-revolutionary activity, or of association with Trotskyist-Bukharinist-Rykovist spies and traitors, which serve as heavy artillery against the rebel mentality in the U.S.S.R., and involve a virtual excommunication, are not available to crush resistance, and sympathy with resistance, in the United Kingdom or in the United States of America.

The worst of these thunders are certainly reserved for persons who occupy responsible positions, and for the managing group. If the rank and file of the workers were generally endangered by the Terror, the régime would be in peril. It is because they are confident that the scourge is directed against the offending Communists or against the technical intelligentsia, that they remain indifferent to it, and even manifest sympathy with the executioners.

The Terror of 1936-38 was carried at least as far down as it was safe to carry it. It must be understood that I am speaking now, not of executions and imprisonments, but of fines, expulsions, and dismissals. The Central Committee of the Party published revelations which disclosed to us educational establishments left without staff, and local Co-operative shops without attendants, in consequence of the infliction of punishments afterwards recognised to be unjust. The Press turned upon the informers, and we learned from it that 80% of the captains of the Volga steamers were subjected to fine or other punishment of a minor character in 1937: and that no less than 132,000 shop assistants were in disgrace for alleged peculation and waste, till higher authority stepped in and reinstated them.

The modern intelligentsia is no longer the sedentary, literary, philosophising, discussion circle of a Russian Bloomsbury. In the early twentieth century that type was already being supplemented or replaced by a technical intelligentsia, brought into existence by the needs of incipient industrialisation. At the present day it is largely of proletarian or peasant origin, trained in the schools and technicums of the Revolutionary period: and it ranges from the doctor, the agronomist, the schoolmaster, the engineer and the manager, to the white-collared (or black-coated) workers, who keep the books and do the clerical work. Despite the quick passage, both upward and downward, which characterises Soviet life, and the general spread of education, levelling distinctions, the difference between the brain-worker and the manual worker continues to assert itself, and continues to be something tangible and recognisable. Fraulein Koerber gives us a glimpse of it in her account of the investigation into

factory conditions by what was then the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate. "Workmen don't mind this inquisition. They just confess to mistakes. But an intellectual thinks it terrible to be spied upon and questioned and called to account." And a doctor comments upon this: "*No citizens of the Soviet Union have private lives.*" The sensitiveness of the old intelligentsia has been inherited by the new: and it is the symbol of a separation from the rank and file. This explains why the Terror was not a Terror for the latter. As regards the principal delinquents, the leaders of the "Trotskyist-Bukharinist-Rykovist-bourgeois-nationalist-counter-revolutionary" conspiracies, the people accepted with a religious faith what the newspapers told them, and clamoured—long before the trials were completed and the accused found guilty—for the blood of the traitors. There were signs, at one moment, of a reawakening of the old Russian pitifulness, which could not bear the execution of criminals by formal sentence of Court: but these were rapidly organised out of existence by a nation-wide demonstration of gratitude to the political police. As to the *minor offenders in industry and agriculture*, there was no sense of unity between them and the rank and file. I have dwelt upon this subject here in order to explain my own conclusion that fear has not affected the psychology of the masses. But the impression is given that when anything goes wrong, no matter what the cause, scapegoats will be found and sacrificed without mercy, and that any general movement of sympathy for the victim will be diverted by a barrage of organised propaganda: vilification of the accused, or glorification of the instruments of his punishment, or both: and that not one man, just and tenacious of purpose, will dare to stand firm against the people taught to clamour for the predetermined sentence.

The terrifying efficiency of organised propaganda, eliminating truth by calculated suppression and misrepresentation, and dinning the prescribed formulas into the ears of millions prepared for their reception by universal education, is ominous of a more complete regimentation than any merely negative censorship. The Tsars only played with the control of thought: their worthy and somewhat somnolent (not to say thick-headed) censors passed the most transparently subversive suggestions—Chernyshevsky's reference to tyrannicide conveyed in the apologue of *Judith and Holofernes*, for instance. The greatest innovation of the Bolsheviks in the "bears' corners" of old Russia is an efficient administration. Their orders go right through to the bottom: they have harnessed the writers and artists themselves to their censorship: they have secured an effective monopoly of truth and filled the market with their own brand of the article, and the smuggler of the precious commodity has little chance of competition with merchants in whom all powers are concentrated.

I must not leave this subject of propaganda without a *caveat* against the assumption that it has no analogue in the West. There are some uncom-

fortable things to be said about the domination of private interests there also. Outside of the newspapers (as well as in them) Western propaganda takes the form of commercial advertisement. It stares from every hoarding, loads every postman, and, in the United States, even occupies a portion of the ether. Taking this Western propaganda in the mass, it immensely exceeds that of the U.S.S.R., and its aims are more blatantly sectional or selfish. Propaganda in the U.S.S.R. is more ubiquitous because it is conducted by radio as well as by Press, poster and platform. It has the uniform aim of confirming the foundations of a Socialist state: and it lacks the saving virtue of self-contradiction.

What some of the Soviet writers might say, and say in Russia, if the physical possibility of utterance were anyhow achievable, we gather from a novel, *We*, by Evgeny Zamyatin: piratically published at Prague in the Czech language and translated into English and French, but never published in Russian. It was written ten years before Huxley's *Brave New World*, or we might suspect an unconscious plagiarism. Zamyatin is a ship-building engineer, imprisoned in 1906 for being a Social Democrat, and resident in England during the first World War, after which he wrote a satire on the British entitled *The Islanders*. He is markedly original, and a chronic rebel, who described Five-Year-Plan drama as like too-early-born babies, with big heads and swollen ideologies, but weak bodies. The Association of Russian proletarian writers, which despotically ruled over Russian literature between 1928 and 1932, expelled him on account of the Czech issue of his *We*, and he lived permanently in France from 1932, after a term of imprisonment in a Soviet jail for what he calls *irony*. He was influenced, like many Russians, by the novels of Charles Dickens: and his vision of the six-storeyed houses of St. Petersburg, as ships on an ocean, irresistibly recalls that writer.

We is a picture of the year 4600 in the Unique State, where the Benefactor rules, and Boards of Guardians have control of the population. Everything is mechanised, everyone is known by a number, all live in houses of glass, and the Unique State is separated from the world beyond by a wall of green glass which none must pass, and behind which there is an unknown expanse of wild unregulated life, where strange creatures move and have their being. The cure for strange sensations in the denizens of the Unique State is an operation for the removal of the imagination. The most heinous offence is unorthodoxy, and the obstinately unorthodox end on the machine of the Benefactor. The Benefactor is re-elected annually: on the day known as the Day of Unanimity: and it would be "as absurd to take account of contrary votes as to make a record of the coughing of a few sick persons in the hall". There are two forces in the world: Entropy and Energy. One is for happy tranquillity, for equilibrium: the other seeks to destroy equilibrium and tends to painful perpetual movement. The people of the Unique State have chosen Entropy.

An attempt at revolt on behalf of the alternative principle ends with the victory of the Benefactor and of the Guardians. The hero, D. 503, is himself subjected to the operation for the removal of the imagination (which makes people resemble tractors, with a mechanism in place of legs): and, thereafter, is perfectly content to assist in the restoration of order, and to betray all concerned in the conspiracy of insurrection.

There is a good deal in this story which recalls the fable of the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*: and the substitution of happiness for liberty which he claimed to have successfully effected. The inhabitants of Paradise had the choice between happiness without liberty and liberty without happiness. In eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, says a poet in *We*, "the idiots chose liberty, and, of course, they have always sighed after their chains. *There* is the unhappiness of man. He wanted his chains. We have found the way to give him back his happiness. . . . All the complexities of good and evil have disappeared. All is simple, paradisiacal, childlike. . . . *It protects their restraints, that is to say their happiness.*" In another passage the Benefactor declares that true love to man must be cruel, and must aim at the pitiless eradication of that which interferes with his happiness.

It is plain that man is *at school* with the Communist Party in the U.S.S.R., and is being taught, supposedly for his own good, a particular set of lessons: and that the process involves the employment of nearly the whole machinery of art and literature, Press, radio and platform. Other systems of government, and other social or religious systems, have feebly attempted a similar control. The Roman Catholic Church has its *Index expurgatorius*. The British Universities of a century ago excluded all but Anglicans. There are Blasphemy laws for the defence of Religion. What differentiates the Communist system is the greater thoroughness—a thoroughness which it shares with Nazi Germany—with which it postpones liberty of thought to a scheme of human happiness—or perhaps I should say, of human justice. It would seem that the deliberate intention to remake man upon a new pattern, inevitably postulates in a greater or less degree such a restriction of liberty, and that the restriction can only be brought to an end when the remaking is complete.

To what extent are breaches in this monopoly of access to the mind of man suffered to exist? The Churches are discouraged, and have no right to spread their teaching. The national cultures and languages, on the other hand, are encouraged and might make some breach in the panopoly of Communistic teaching: but it is insisted that culture shall be socialist in content, even though it be national in form. The film is almost purely propagandist. The visiting of foreign countries, once the source of a large part of the education of a class, is rarely permitted. The presence in the U.S.S.R., for extended periods, of foreign subjects is almost entirely prohibited, and there is increasing strictness in respect to visas even for temporary visitors. The schools teach at least one foreign language, and the

classics of all tongues are published in hundreds of thousands, with no apparent restriction upon content. With certain exceptions,—for instance, those of Count Tolstoi's writings which directly preach anarchy—there is no ban upon the classics of Russian and other Soviet national literatures: and of these, too, hundreds of thousands of copies are published. Regarding the Soviet national literature of to-day there was a considerable degree of freedom in the period preceding the epoch of the Plans. Between 1928 and 1932—that is to say, before the return of Maxim Gorky to the U.S.S.R.—the Association of Proletarian writers ruled with a rod of iron, and insisted upon the appropriate literature of the Plan: so that a knowledge of cement-mixing, and paper-making and of the principles of retail supply, became for the Soviet writer an important accomplishment. The milder yoke of Socialist Realism, which means little more than a roseate outlook upon the achievement and the promise of the U.S.S.R., succeeded to these four years of rigorous social demand. But in 1937 artist after artist fell victim to new criteria of idea and performance. What I have said of literature is equally true of the drama and of dramatic production, in which some old favourites fell into disrepute for reasons at which I have sometimes been unable to guess. In all this an element of caprice and unforeseeability makes itself apparent.

I think it probable that the artist has never been wholly free. He has always stood in need of a patron. Whether his patron was a Greek City State, or a Renaissance Pope, or a British merchant desiring to perpetuate his virtues in a flamboyant dedication, or his bodily properties in a picture or a statue, or a first-night public in quest of a mild pornography to soothe brains wearied by office and counter, he had to accept orders: perhaps even to flatter those upon whom his livelihood depended. But sometimes a Benvenuto Cellini played the part of a spoiled child of genius and insisted upon his own way even against a king: or a Thucydides wrote history to be a possession of all men for ever, rather than a prize essay for an occasional recitation: a John Bunyan wrote his *Pilgrim's Progress* in Bedford jail out of pure zeal: a Fra Angelico painted, on his knees, the saints as the spirit showed them to him. How much of work such as this would find its way into existence against an inquisition so all-pervading as that of the U.S.S.R.—for an inquisition it is—I cannot pretend to guess. There would certainly be less of it, and some of it would be diverted into less spontaneous channels. The world would be the poorer for the loss of it. The artist and the thinker help man to know himself by holding up a mirror which reflects him and his surroundings. Each of them, I take it, has a mirror of his own, making one or another aspect visible, according to his powers and the bent of his genius. Humour and satire, as well as tragedy and lyric, make their contribution to the result. If personality grows partly by man's knowledge of himself and of his surroundings, every diminution of the freedom of the artist and the thinker must tend to retard its growth.

Here we arrive at the most serious criticism which I have to make of the Soviet Government. A few, a very few, persons in every age and every country, possess the gift of adding to man's knowledge of himself and of the world in which he lives, of scattering the living seed of thought and understanding. To take away the wings of the artist and the thinker is to incur the danger of an arrested civilisation. This is not, of course, the Bolshevik view. Thought is conceived as conditioned by social and economic relations, and the individual expresses only what these relations have put into his mind. The deed comes first, and the thought comes after. There will be change in the thought when existing contradictions have resulted in a new synthesis of the relations.

And yet—man is capable of making his own history. This, if not pure Marxian, is at least pure Marxian as understood in Russia: and the idea has been as the blast of a trumpet, summoning sluggish and despondent man to battle with the stars. How to harmonise it with the rival conception that the deed came first and the thought came after, let philosophers dispute. Somehow the lion has contrived to lie down with the lamb, and Hercules of the Seven Labours has been able to identify himself with the fatalist. I can only, in all diffidence, suggest that it is the dialectical element in materialism which has made the miracle possible: while continuing to cherish a private conviction of my own that the Russian is not a philosopher at all, but rather one who uses all the philosophies to justify a moral passion for the regeneration of mankind and the fulfilment of the messianic mission of Moscow. This is why there is no real danger of this people becoming obsessed by dogma, despite the rigidity of their quasi-philosophers. *When they find that a rule does not fit life, they give the preference to life:* in other words, fall back upon more primitive and enduring convictions. Their gift for breaking rules will save them from being pedantic. For the same reason Planning will not hurt them: for they will change the Plan whenever it has gone amiss. This is what has been called "the broad Slavonic nature". But it is not race that has made it. The illimitable spaces of Europasia—there is no line of distinction between the two continents or between Mongol and Slav, they mingle naturally and imperceptibly—have created the tolerance and the all-humanitarianism in a melting-pot of peoples. There was room for all.

On this note I close. It is not the satisfying note of prophecy; but rather one of confidence in the character which these conditions must create, when they enter into alliance with the new conviction that man is able to make his own history. Fate gave to this people a great inheritance; and they have learned to believe that they can dominate it.

APPENDICES

I. CENSUS OF 1939

NO DETAILED Census report has been published. But it is known that the figure of total population is 170 millions and that subsequent additions of territory raised it to about 190 millions before the outbreak of war in June, 1941. The particulars given below are of the 170 millions shown by the Census.

The town population was 17.9% of the whole in 1926, and 32.8% of the whole in 1939. The rural population showed an absolute decrease of 6 millions. These facts reflect the progress of industrialisation.

Of the 170 millions, sixty-one are children under fifteen, and seventy-one are men and women between fifteen and thirty-nine. Youthfulness is thus a characteristic of the population. Over 45% of the population are under twenty years of age.

88.2% of the males, and 66.6% of the females, are literate.

49.73% of the population are workers by hand and brain in urban and rural areas. 46.9% are collective farmers and "co-operative" hand-workers (by which we must understand workers in State or collective concerns, or workers in what is sometimes called the socialised sector). 2.6% are individual farmers and hand-workers. The proportion not occupied in any gainful employment is 0.04%.

The northern nomads known as Nentsi (formerly called Samoyeds) co-operated well in the Census and travelled down to meet the enumerators. This evidence of co-operation with the régime is of interest.

There are some particulars of production in another Appendix below.

II. CONSUMPTION OF CEREALS IN U.S.S.R.

The latest figures of consumption are those of 1926 and 1927, which show an average per head per annum (including consumption by animals) of 200 kilograms of unground corn in the towns and 260 in the country. To maintain this rate 42½ million tons of corn are required. 14 millions must be allowed for seed and seed reserves, 5 for losses in storage, 2 for industrial purposes, perhaps 1½ for export. The total is 65 millions: and if the cereal crops of recent years have been correctly estimated there should be a wide margin for the improvement of food supplies. Dr. Otto Schiller, who had no figures before him later than 1935, supposes them to be greatly over-estimated, mainly because of losses in harvesting: which are being reduced by the use of combine harvesters. But the estimates assume only the traditional low Russian yield: and the figures justify an optimistic view of the cereal food supply when losses and waste are eliminated: and show the possibility of accumulating a reserve against the recurrent droughts.

A decision of 1937 provided for the establishment over the next three years of a million and a half tons seed reserve. Government purchasing agencies were authorised to pay higher prices in 1937-38 for grain which meets the requirements of selected seed.

Most of the 1937 crop was expected to meet growing consumption needs and the appreciable change from black bread to white. Military reserves, believed in Moscow to be nearly a full year's supply, were likely

to be replenished. Exports were expected to increase from the low 1936 figure of 321,311 tons to a level more closely approaching the 1935 figure of 1,606,092 tons. The annual pre-war export of Russian grain, which averaged 10 million tons, is not likely to be repeated in this generation.

III. BUDGET FOR 1937

(Taken from G. F. Grinko's *Financial Programme of the U.S.S.R. for 1937*. Party Publishing House. 1937.)

Figures accepted by the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. with amendments made by the Budget Commission (see pages 477, 478).

The figures given for the budget of 1937 do not complete what the Soviet authorities call the full or *svodny* budget. To get that for 1937, we have to add 6,060 millions of roubles to be collected and credited and expended locally. The total revenue and expenditure of the whole U.S.S.R. (including all authorised local items) is 104,129 millions revenue and 103,179 expenditure approximately.

Out of these amounts the order of the Central Executive Committee fixes the figures for the budget of the whole Union at:—

Revenue	75,504
Expenditure	74,554
Plus balance	950

And those for the budgets of the constituent republics, exclusive of allocations for local budgets, at:—

Revenue	6,632
Expenditure	To be determined by each constituent Republic.

And those for the local budgets through the State budgets of the constituent republics at:—

Revenue	15,933
Expenditure	To be determined by the local authorities according to the amount allotted to each.

And (implicitly, though not explicitly) those for the local budgets, otherwise than through the State budgets of the constituent republics, at:—

Revenue	6,060.
Expenditure	To be determined by local authorities.

The most striking feature on the revenue side of this budget is the very great preponderance of indirect taxation, in particular of the turnover tax, which takes effect by additions to prices. On the expenditure side, one-fifth goes in defence, and nearly another fifth in education.

“Local” in the foregoing includes autonomous republics, territorial

(All figures in millions of roubles.)

REVENUE		
1. Turn-over tax		76,795
Including: Heavy Industry	8,860	
Light	11,382	
Food	20,387	
Spirits	6,190	
Committee for collection of agricultural products	24,106	
State Trade	2,605	
2. Deductions from profits		6,304
Including: Heavy Industry	1,331	
Light	829	
Timber	37	
Food	1,800	
Local	542	
Undertakings of Agricultural Department	40	
Ditto of State Farms Department	30	
Rail transport	687	
Undertakings of department of Internal trade	175	
Committee for collection of agricultural products	58	
Undertakings of department of external trade	37	
State credit institutions	245	
Organs of State Insurance	319	
Other disbursements	170	
3. Income tax and other taxes on undertakings and organisations:		
(a) Tax on non-trading operations	390	
(b) Income tax on collective farms	530	
(c) Tax on State farms	46	
(d) Others	6	
Total		972
4. Receipts from State Insurance		3,700
5. State loans:		
(a) By subscription	4,375	
(b) Savings banks	1,200	
(c) From State Insurance	400	
Total		5,975
6. Direct taxes:		
(a) Agricultural tax from collective farmers and individual peasants	650	
(b) Town tax for cultural needs	1,465	
(c) Village tax for ditto	530	
Total		2,645
7. Other revenue:		
(a) Import duties	860	
(b) Revenue from coinage	15	
(c) " " timber	180	
(d) Miscellaneous	622	
Total		1,677
Grand total of Revenue		98,069

EXPENDITURE

A. State Economy:		
Industry		12,397
Including: Heavy Industry	5,217	
Defence	2,328	
Light	1,603	
Timber	1,274	
Food	1,042	
Local	375	
Cinema	163	
Agriculture: Under Commissariat of State farms	2,064	
Under Commissariat of Agriculture	6,790	
Grant for mineral fertilisers	205	9,059
Transport and communications		8,533
Including: Commissariat of Communications	4,698	
Ditto of Water Transport	1,133	
Northern Sea Route	580	
Roads (Commissariat of Internal Affairs)	831	
Civil Air Fleet	301	
State trade, supply and collecting organisations		3,035
Commissariat of external trade		19
Committee of Reserves		1,687
Moscow Metro		458
Hydro-meteorological service		128
Miscellaneous		3,875
Total of State Economy		<u>39,585</u>
B. Social and Cultural Measures		26,604
(a) On State budget direct	10,870	
(b) Through local budgets	15,734	
Including:		
(1) Education	18,270	
(a) On State budget direct	7,842	
(b) Through local budgets	10,428	
(2) Health	7,528	
(a) On State budget direct	2,472	
(b) Through local budgets	5,055	
(3) Physical culture	97	
(a) On State budget direct	44	
(b) Through local budgets	53	
(4) Protection of labour	710	
(a) On State budget direct	511	
(b) Through local budgets	199	
C. Commissariat of Defence		20,102
D. " " Internal Affairs		2,699
E. " " Justice and Procuration		149
F. Administration		1,618
G. State Loans		2,579
H. Banks of long-term investment		1,382
J. Reserve funds of Union and constituent Republics		1,855
K. Miscellaneous		544
Grand total of expenditure		<u>97,119</u>
Excess of revenue over expenditure		950
Total		<u>98,069</u>

(*krai*) and provincial (*oblast*) authorities, town and regional and village soviets. There are detailed orders assigning specified shares of particular taxes and particular sources of revenue, to particular groups of authorities, from the constituent republics downwards: each member of each such group getting its specified share of the proceeds collected in its own local area.

All taxes and imposts not specifically authorised are forbidden under penalty. There is specific prohibition of bridge tolls, charges for night watchmen, local additions to prices, and surcharges. Taxation of trade done by collective farms, by collective farmers, and by individualist peasants, is allowed only to the extent sufficient for keeping markets clean and in good order. Voluntary collections are forbidden except by specific permission of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. The authorised local taxes and imposts include taxes on buildings in towns, on horses and vehicles in towns, on cattle in towns, amusement tax and totalisator tax on State race-courses, charges upon documents and by way of court fees, dog tax in towns, payments for discharge of waste water. Inheritance taxes are credited to local purposes. Other sources of local income are, a share of the important turn-over tax in certain cases and a percentage on local collections for State loans. Maximum rates of taxation are prescribed by the central authority.

I have not full details of the budgets of the years following 1937. The following abstracts show in milliards of roubles rapidly rising proportions and totals of expenditure on defence.

The abstract budget of 1938 provided for a total expenditure of 121, of which 23 was for defence (19%).

The abstract budget of 1939 provided for a total expenditure of 154, of which 40 was for defence (26%).

The abstract budget of 1940 provided for a revenue of 184, and an expenditure of 180, of which defence accounted for 57, nearly one-third, and culture and health for 43.

The abstract budget of 1941 was:—

Revenue 216, including:	Expenditure 215, including:
Turnover taxes 124	Industry 39
Assessment of profits 31	Agriculture 13
State Insurance 10	Transport and communica-
M.T.S. income 2.6	tions 6.5
State loans 13	Education 26.6
Taxes and duties levied on	Health 11
population 12	Social maintenance 3.4
	Defence and Navy 71

The expenditure on defence and Navy exceeds that of 1940 by 26.3%. It is nearly one-third of the whole: though the whole includes expenditure on industry and agriculture.

IV. WHAT THE INDUSTRIAL WAGE IN THE U.S.S.R. WOULD PURCHASE IN 1937-38

Stalin told the 18th Party Congress that the annual average wage of the industrial worker amounted to 66 roubles per week in 1938. An addition is to be made to this sum to arrive at the family earnings, which

are certainly a larger proportion than in London, because of the extensive employment of women. Mr. Colin Clark's calculation of 23 dependants to 19 workers gives approximately $1\frac{1}{3}$ dependant to each worker. I take an average family as consisting of two workers and $2\frac{2}{3}$ dependants, total $4\frac{2}{3}$. The wage will be 112 roubles per week, if 70% of the principal wage be allowed as the wage of the second worker.

They will pay

R. 0.75 in income tax.

R. 2.25 in State loan (virtually compulsory).

R. 2.65 in house rent (4% of the wage of the principal earner).

The two wage-earners must be assumed to take twelve mid-day meals in the factory canteen, since factory feeding has in recent years been made compulsory. The cheapest meal consists of a bowl of soup, of the solid Russian type, made from cabbage and potatoes, with bread. The newspaper *Industriya* gives 0.78 rouble as the price. I deduct from the income R. 9.36 on this score, and also R. 1.20 for tram fares, assuming 5 kopeks per journey for twenty-four journeys. This leaves R. 96 out of the wage of the two workers.

The following food prices are quoted from newspaper statements at various dates in 1937 and 1938, and at various places on the main railway lines in European Russia:—

Black bread. R. 0.83–0.85 per kilo.

Rye and wheat flour (evidently of superior quality). R. 1.30–4.40 per kilo at Harkov.

Wheat flour. R. 1–1.50 per kilo at Armavir.

Potatoes (perhaps a wholesale price). R. 0.40–0.65 per kilo at Armavir.

Lard. R. 13–14 per kilo at Moscow.

Butter. R. 15–17 per kilo at Moscow. R. 15–24 per kilo at Armavir.

Milk. Prices varying from R. 1.20 to R. 1.75 per litre, at Leningrad, Moscow and Armavir. A litre is a small fraction over a quart.

Eggs. Prices varying from R. 0.30 to R. 0.45 each at Kalinin (the old Tver) and Armavir.

Sugar. Prices varying from R. 3.50 to R. 4.50 per kilo.

Cabbage. R. 1 per kilo at Moscow.

Other food prices of 1937 and 1938 for which I have no record of the documentary authority are:—

Pork. R. 10–11.50 per kilo.

Salt Herrings. R. 8–9 per kilo.

Cucumbers. R. 0.40 per kilo.

Margarine. R. 12–14 per kilo.

Tea. R. 60 per kilo.

Beef. Second quality, R. 8–10 per kilo.

It will be seen at a glance that tea and meat are beyond the reach of the average wage-earner as a part of the normal diet. It is evident that he does not use lard, or butter, or margarine. I have little doubt that the

V. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND YIELDS OF IMPORTANT CROPS PER ACRE

The tabulated figures below are taken from official statistics. No detailed statistics have been published after 1935. In 1936 the harvest was a disappointing one, and the gross production of cereals has been estimated by the London *Economist* at less than 70 million tons, a setback to the figures of 1931 and 1932. In 1937 the *Economist* thought 111 million tons of cereals a possible figure. Traditional yields in Russia are so very low that an extraordinary rise may take place. 1938 is said to have been the driest year of the century and the crop poor. M. Molotov said that 1939 was better by 11 per cent. M. Kalinin stated in a speech that the gross cereal crop of 1940 was about 110 million tons. But it is impossible to accept these casual statements as a substitute for regular detailed statistics.

Below are figures for the whole U.S.S.R., showing sowings, gross production and yields, of important crops for a series of years for which detailed statistics are published.

I. Sown Area in Million Acres.

U.S.S.R.	1913.	1929.	1930.	1931.	1932.	1933.	1934.	1935.
Total sown	252	283	305	326	321	309	314	317
Cereals	227	232	242	249	237	242	249	247
Technical	11	21	25	33	36	29	26	25
Vegetables	9	18	19	22	22	21	21	24
Fodder	5	12	16	21	25	17.5	17	20.6

II. Gross Production, in thousands of tons.

	1913.	1928.	1929.	1930.	1931.	1932.	1933.	1934.	1935.
Cereals	80,100	73,320	71,740	83,540	69,480	69,870	89,800	89,400	90,100
Raw cotton	740	820	860	1,113	1,290	1,270	1,320	1,180	1,700
Flax fibre	330	320	360	430	550	500	550	530	550
Sugar beet	10,900	10,140	6,240	14,000	12,000	6,560	8,990	11,360	16,200
Sunflower seed	Not known	2,100	1,700	1,600	2,500	2,200	2,350	2,080	1,850

III. Yields, in pounds per acre.

	1913.	1928.	1929.	1930.	1931.	1932.	1933.	1934.	1935.
Cereals	778	723	687	778	613	641	806	778	806
Raw cotton	916	778	751	641	549	540	586	549	787
Flax fibre	293	219	201	229	210	183	210	229	238
Sugar beet	15,388	12,072	7,428	12,393	7,914	5,890	6,796	8,793	12,118
Sunflower seed	Not known	494	448	439	503	393	549	540	494

Except for sunflower seed, the increase of gross production is demonstrated. The cereal yield in 1933 and 1935 is high, but as the figures for 1913, 1930 and 1934 are identical, it cannot be said that there is evidence of continuous increase. The yields of raw cotton, flax fibre and sugar beet, though higher than in the intervening years, are lower than in

1913. Nothing is demonstrated by the figures for sunflower seed. The conclusion is that the increase in cultivated area up to 1935 was accompanied by a stationary, and in some crops diminished, yield per unit of area.

It will give us a standard of comparison with western Europe if we note that an average crop of wheat in Britain is 33 bushels, in Russia 15 : and that the average for milk and wool in the latter country is about half of the German. This low productivity is not new. In 1910 the yield of wheat in Russia per unit of area was identical with that of India : half of that of Japan : one-third of that of the United Kingdom.

As to the method by which yields are calculated, there is no regular system of crop inspection and record, such as is necessary for early warning of the approach of scarcity and for determining claims to the remission of the demand. But for the purposes of the payment to be made to the M.T.S., crop yields are calculated, not more than twelve days after the beginning of harvest operations, by a commission composed of the chairman of the canton Executive Committee, the director of the M.T.S., the chairman of the collective farm and certain officials of the Agricultural Commissariat. There is always, even now, when combine harvesters are coming into frequent use, a proportion of the crop which is lost, because the short open season comes to an end before all can be carried, and it does not appear that any allowance is made in the statistics for this loss.

VI. LIVE STOCK

The following are the figures in millions, for horses and other stock in a series of years for which detailed official statistics are available:—

	1928.	1929.	1930.	1931.	1932.	1933.	1934.	1935.
1. Working horses	23	24	21	20	16	14	13	12
2. Large horned cattle	70	67	52	48	41	38	42	49
3. Cows (included in 2.)	31	30	27	24	21	20	20	20
4. Sheep and goats	147	147	109	78	52	50	52	61

In 1914 the density of large horned cattle per 1,000 acres of crops was 148, in European Russia including Finland, Russian Poland and the Baltic provinces. In 1935 the density of large horned cattle in the territories of the U.S.S.R., European and Asiatic was 123.

A census of animals was taken at January 1st, 1938.

The figures which have been published do not show, separately, the number of working horses. In other respects they are comparable with the tabular statement above. They are as follows, in millions:—

	1933, Spring.	1934, July.	1937, Jan. 1st.	1938, Jan. 1st.
Horses	16.6	15.7	15.9	16.2
Large horned cattle	38.4	42.4	47.5	50.9
Cows (included in the above)	19.7	19.6	20.9	22.7
Sheep and goats	50.2	51.9	53.8	66.6

There is a slow recovery, but—so far as regular detailed statistics go—the pre-collectivisation numbers are very far from having been restored. Horse-breeding is the most backward branch of animal husbandry.

VII. TAXATION OF THE PEASANT IN KIND AND IN CASH

The principal authorities consulted by me on this subject (all in Russian) are:—

Financial and Economic Manual of Information of the Collective Farm: compiled by E. M. Gailis, S. S. Maslov, and N. P. Sidelkin. State Publishing House of Collective and state-farm literature. Moscow. 1936.

Agriculture of the U.S.S.R. Annual. Volume 1935. Edited by A. I. Muralov and others. Published by the same State Publishing House. Moscow. 1936.

Money Impost on the Income of Collective Farms. By Liubarsky and Khmelev. State Finance Publishing Department. Moscow. 1937.

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By far the greater proportion of the taxation of the peasant to-day is in kind, and takes the form of compulsory deliveries paid for at a very low conventional price. This is officially described as a "compulsory sale in the nature of a tax". The relation of the conventional price to the actual value cannot be determined by ordinary methods, because there is no wholesale trade in the produce other than that conducted by the Government itself, and it would be obviously inappropriate (even if it were in practice feasible) to make use of the retail prices at which the peasants dispose of their small available balances in the collective markets and elsewhere. I have therefore taken the prices at which the Government passes the produce on to its own departments (such as the Commissariats of Food and Export Trade) as representing the wholesale prices which the peasants might hope to obtain in a non-socialist economy. On this basis they obtain, for their compulsory deliveries of cereals, about one-eighth of the wholesale price.

When the system of agricultural taxation in cash which prevailed during the period of the New Economic Policy was brought to an end by the closure of the free market in grain, and by changes in the value of money which destroyed the fiscal significance of the "single agricultural tax", the Soviet Government reverted to what was virtually a system of requisition under the name of "contracting". In January, 1933, this system was replaced by the levy in kind on the more important agricultural products, which continues to-day: and the markets were opened for the free sale of the balance by the peasants. The demand is not for a fractional share of the product, but for a stated quantity per unit; the quantity varying, in the case of cereals, in different parts of the country, within limits represented by the figures 1 to 5: with provision for reduction, and even for remission, in the case of serious failure, but otherwise rigidly fixed. The unit on which the levy is calculated was not in 1934-35 the unit actually cultivated, but the unit planned for cultivation. Thus, an acre of planned cultivation with grain in the Crimea was assessed to a

compulsory delivery four or five times as great as an acre planned for grain in the North of Russia or in the Trans-Caucasus territory: with a score of intermediate charges in other areas: and in all cases the taxpayer received in 1936, 120-130 roubles per metric ton for wheat, and 60-100 for rye and the cheaper cereals: which is about one-eighth of the wholesale price as defined above. If we call the compulsory delivery of cereals x , the tax upon the peasant under this head was $\frac{7}{8}x$.

Since cereal cultivation accounts still for three-quarters of the whole of Russian agriculture, we shall reach an estimate of the burden of taxation in kind upon the peasant, if we are able to ascertain what $\frac{7}{8}x$ was in 1934 and 1935.

A similar system was applied also to potatoes, sunflower and fodder grasses. The price paid for potatoes in 1935 was 40 roubles per metric ton, and that for sunflower seed 80-150 roubles. In order to encourage recourse to the Machine Tractor Stations there was a higher charge made where these are not employed. The individualist peasants, who have not accepted collectivisation, were penalised by a yet higher charge. There was also a higher charge in Central Asia for irrigated land, which is naturally expected to produce a higher yield.

The demand applies equally to the crops grown by collective farmers on their own yards or garden plots: and, in the case of potatoes, was levied on them at a higher rate than on the collectivised lands, though not at so high a rate as on the individualist peasants.

Other taxes in kind were levied upon meat, milk and wool, but not on skins: and collective farms, collective farmers (in respect to the animals kept on their own yards) and individualist peasants, were all liable for these imposts. Deliveries of meat might be made, alternatively, in live animals: namely, in large horned cattle, sheep, pigs, rabbits, hens, geese, ducks and guinea fowls. Within the collective farms there are sub-farms for the charge of animals, in order to fix the responsibility for them: and each such sub-farm must deliver a prescribed weight in respect to each brood animal: and each collective farm household must also deliver a stated weight. For the sub-farms, the rates were: 30 kilo. for each cow, 120 for every brood sow, and 8 for every ewe of one year and more: reduced by one-third in Central Asia, the Trans-Caucasus, the Far East and Kazakstan. The rate of payment by Government was $1\frac{1}{2}$ roubles per kilogram. The obligation to deliver milk was scaled at the highest figure for the dairying villages in the provinces of Leningrad and Moscow, where individualist peasants were required to deliver as much as 250 litres (that is to say 255 quarts) annually for each cow, with lower rates for collective farmers. The conventional price was approximately 10-15 kopeks per quart. The rates of delivery for wool ran up as high as $3\frac{1}{2}$ kilos for collective farms and collective farmers, and to 4 kilos for individualist peasants, for each merino sheep of the best breed. I have no information of the conventional prices paid for wool by the Government: but all these items of animal produce are on a similar footing, as parts of a tax-in-kind on which there was no pretence of paying more than a fraction of the full value.

There remain the "technical" crops—cotton, flax, sugar beet, hemp, tobacco, coarse tobacco (*makhorka*)—which continue to be dealt with by a system of so-called "contracting". The purchaser being the monopolist

state, but a monopolist state which has, for the present at all events, an unlimited need of these products, prices are determined by the consideration that a motive is to be given to the peasant for adequate attention to particular products. Cultivation is encouraged by premium prices for deliveries in excess of contract: and by particularly high prices in areas where the crop is a novelty. Thus, sugar beet was priced at 60 roubles per metric ton in the Far East, in Georgia and Armenia: and 50 roubles in the Kirgiz and Kazak constituent republics: but at half or less than half of these prices where the crop was well established. The prices paid for cleaned cotton range, according to quality, from 805 to 758 roubles per ton for American, and from 1,560 to 3,960 for Egyptian. Tax ranges from 2,000 to 4,000 roubles per ton.

I lack all data for comparing these conventional Government prices for technical crops with the prices at which the Government passes on the produce to its industrial departments. On April 20th, 1938, cotton was selling at 9.05 cents per pound at New Orleans, or roughly 200 dollars per metric ton. If the rouble is worth 6 cents, 200 dollars represents a price of 3,333 roubles, nearly double the conventional price paid by the Government of the U.S.S.R. for cleaned cotton of the American type. Thus the price for cotton was far more favourable to the peasant than was the price for cereals: and I suspect that the case would be found to be similar with all the technical crops. There was, and is, a definite policy of high payment for crops of this category.

I turn back to the calculation of the burden on cereals and to the determination of the value of $\frac{2}{3}x$ in 1934 and 1935.

Official figures enable me to state with almost arithmetical correctness the proportion of the cereal crop of the collective farms which was delivered to Government in discharge of the obligation of "sale in the nature of tax".

1930.	1931.	1932.	1933.	1934.	1935.
27.5%	36.8%	27.5%	21.6%	19.5%	19.4% (approx.)

Since the new system of taxation was introduced from 1933, I take the average of the three latest years, which is just over 20%.

I wish that I could claim that $20\% = x$. Unfortunately the official figures combine repayment of seed loans with compulsory deliveries, and have no means of dividing the two. I can only say that it is improbable that in any particular year the repayment of seed loans exceeded 5% of the total: and then fix x tentatively at 19%. Thus I make $\frac{2}{3}x = 16.6\%$, and suggest that this percentage of the gross cereal crop goes in taxation in kind.

There still remains a source of error. For, the demand being not a particular fraction of the whole, but a fixed amount per unit, the larger the harvest the smaller the proportion. If the harvest of 1937 was anything like as good as is reported, the tax burden on cereals in that year was proportionately less than 16.6%, and may even have been down to 12% or 13%. This would bring it very near to the average of land revenue and cesses in British India. As to the non-cereal products, in the absence of data for precise calculation, I can only say that I feel sure that the burden on them was lighter than on cereals because the con-

ventional price paid to the peasants was higher as indicated by the figures for cotton.

There remain the cash taxes, which are specified in the Budget (Appendix III); the income tax on collective farms, introduced on July 30th, 1926, and replacing the former cash tax calculated on the planned savings of the current year, which fell with undue severity on cereals: the agricultural tax on collective farmers in respect to their yards or garden plots and on individualist peasants: and the village tax for local purposes: which, taken together figure in the budget for 1937 at 1,710 million roubles. This is rather more than 7% of the amount derived from the Committee for the collection of agricultural products (see Appendix III): which represents the difference between Government's payments to peasants and the credits taken against the processing and trading departments. It will suffice to raise our figure of 16.6 to 17.9% in order to arrive at the approximate direct burden upon the peasant in a year not differing greatly from the triennium 1933, 1934, 1935.

A change in the method of rural taxation was made in 1939-40. In lieu of an assessment varying according to the area of planned cultivation, the Soviet Government adopted the system of varying the assessment according to the potential culturable area of each farm. I can make this statement clearer by saying that the collective farm was to pay in accordance with what it was capable of doing, rather than what it actually proposed to do. But in distributing the assessment over the farms, the Government aimed only at getting the same aggregate of products as before, though by a changed method. It seems unlikely, therefore, that my calculation of the proportions taken by the Government is disturbed by the change.

Mr. Baykov is quoted by Professor Dobb as arriving at the figure of 15% for a typical collective farm in 1938. I have pointed out already that the figure for the earlier years was liable to variation according to the volume of the crop. If the reader concludes that the compulsory delivery of crop is something like 15-18% of the gross yield (not including, of course, the extra deliveries on account of the service done by the M.T.S.), but that the collective farm which has a considerable area of technical crop, beet, flax, or cotton, bears a lighter burden than this, he will probably get as near to the truth as Soviet statistics will enable him to get.

General taxation is almost entirely indirect: and, in so far as the peasant is a purchaser of commodities, he pays this general indirect taxation in addition to 15-18% of direct. Must we infer that he is unfairly carrying a double burden? If we regard him as the proprietor of the land, entitled to the use of it without paying any equivalent of rent, the answer to this question is, Yes. But this conclusion would lead very far. Since the value of the land differs enormously, according to climate, soil, and access to markets, the right to the use of it without payment would involve inequalities of fortune, unearned by personal effort, incompatible with a Socialist society.

What is wrong with the fiscal system of the U.S.S.R. in respect to land, is not that the average impost is excessive or that the peasant pays a double share of taxation, but that the range of differentiation (from one to five) is inadequate for a country so vast as the U.S.S.R., and that the

provision for failures and partial failures is insufficiently elastic. The Government has been very generous with its advances for agricultural purposes: arrears of repayment are a constant subject of complaint: and arrears have twice recently been remitted by general orders which apparently ignored local conditions.

Theoretically the individualist peasant pays considerably more than the quantities levied upon the collective farm. The excess is far greater than the 10% which is usually cited by Soviet officials: as may be seen by reference to any of the notifications reproduced in the *Financial and Economic Manual*. But I think it doubtful whether the whole of the excess is actually collected. It is far less easy to discover the cultivation of an individualist, who does not, *ex hypothesi*, employ the Machine Tractor Station. At least a part of the excess is an insurance against concealment. On April 19th, 1938, the Council of People's Commissars animadverted on these irregularities. They said that the individualist peasants use their horses for the private carrying trade and must henceforth pay a horse tax: that they do not deliver meat to the State, and their obligations are often transferred to the collective farms, which are more amenable: and they are often engaged to labour on collective lands at rates of pay higher than those of the "work days" received by collective farmers.

VIII. OTHER OBLIGATIONS OF THE PEASANT

Apart from taxation, the Collectives sell, at a price fixed substantially above that for compulsory deliveries, part of their produce to co-operative organisations, in consideration of the supply of manufactured commodities on favourable terms. This was a very small item in 1932 and 1933. In each of the years 1934 and 1935 it amounted to 3½ million tons—less than a quarter of the amount of the compulsory deliveries. From the year 1936 the price paid by the Co-operatives for this grain varies very widely, according to the amounts delivered: a higher price per unit being paid for a larger quantity. The price, at its highest, is much below what I have assumed to be equivalent to a wholesale price in a free market: but, so far as wholesale purchases are concerned, Government and the Co-operatives are monopolists: and it is probable that the collectives could not find retail purchasers for the whole of their surplus. If we could be sure that the alternative of sale in the open market actually existed—which is unlikely in areas distant from consuming centres—it would be possible to infer from these sales, at a low price, to Co-operative institutions, in return for the supply of commodities, that the "scissors" was very wide open against the growers of food and raw materials, and that they were therefore glad of every opportunity of obtaining manufactured goods on reasonable terms.

A milling charge of 10-12% which was levied on all grain brought to the State mills, has been recently abolished.

The report of the People's Commissar of Agriculture in January, 1938, showed that the bulk of the ploughing in 1937 was done for the collective farms by the Machine Tractor Stations. The proportions were nearly two-thirds of the ploughing for spring crops, including both the preliminary winter ploughing and the ploughing before sowing: and more than three-quarters of the ploughing for winter crop. For other

agricultural operations such recent figures are not available. In 1935 the M.T.S. did a sixth of the spring sowing, a fifth of the winter sowing, nearly a quarter of the harvesting of grain, near half of the harvesting of sugar beet, and more than half of the threshing of cereals. They did no cotton-picking and practically none of the harvesting of flax. Except in ploughing and threshing, the greater part of the operations of agriculture is still not mechanised, and half of the traction power is still animal.

The services of the M.T.S. have been paid in kind since 1933, and in varying fractions of the total crop. On cereals and sunflower, the fraction is a smaller one in the case of a smaller crop, a larger one in the case of a larger crop.

Some figures given by Dr. Otto Schiller and reproduced by Miss Warriner in *Economics of Peasant Farming*, Chapter IX, convey the erroneous impression of excessive taxation of the peasant because they combine payments to the M.T.S. (which are payments for services rendered) with tax payments, and also because the percentages have been wrongly calculated or wrongly copied. I reproduce the table below, with the percentages correctly calculated. The figures are in millions of hundred-weights.

	1932.	1933.	1934.	1935.
1. Harvest in the ear	1,334	1,714	1,706	1,756
2. Grain losses in harvesting	341	492	408	324
3. Harvest in granary	993	1,222	1,298	1,432
4. Sales and deliveries by collective farms, including payments to M.T.S. as well as tax payments to the State	376	481	538	601
5. Percentage of (4) on (1)	27	28	31	34
6. Percentage of (4) on (3)	38	40	41	42

Dr. Schiller thinks that, in a plentiful year, the charge made by the M.T.S. amounted to more than 20%. But in the aggregate the deliveries to the M.T.S. for work done make a much smaller proportion than this. There are now nearly 6,000 M.T.S., but there are still many farms not served by them, or only partially served. In 1935 a shortage of petrol interfered with the completion of winter ploughing. If the charge upon the harvest on account of work done by the M.T.S. should ever reach the general level of 20%, it will still be much lower than the proportion charged in the period of N.E.P. by the private persons who then made a practice of hiring out their animals and implements to the poorer peasants.

Another charge upon the peasant, which cannot be classified with taxation, is the compulsory insurance of his house. A peasant's house, upon which the insurance charges remain unpaid for three years, is forfeited to the Government. This is a measure designed to provide against the ruinous consequences of fires among mainly wooden buildings.

IX. THE INCOME OF THE COLLECTIVE FARMER

An attempt at a calculation of average income, so far as grain is concerned, can be made because we know the number of "work days" earned in 1935 and the approximate quantity of grain which was distributed in dividends. It must be understood that it is a very rough calculation, that it excludes the items of potatoes and vegetables that the collective farmer enjoys in addition the proceeds of his yard or garden plot, and that the variations from one collective to another are very wide indeed. There is a substantial number (but not a large fraction) of so-called millionaire collectives, the cash value of whose income calculated at the prices paid for compulsory deliveries and for "contracts", amounts to a million roubles or more: but the average income is something very different from this. The *average* number of "work days" per member in 1935 was 181: indicating that, *on an average*, half of the working time is still unoccupied. It appears that each household contained an average slightly exceeding two working members, for the number of work days per household was 378. In cereals a work day averaged 2.3 kilos. If we take the average family at five, it received about 154 kilos. per head per annum: and a kilogram of grain is a short daily ration for a working man. The information about money receipts is even more incomplete. Dr. Otto Schiller calculated them at 50 kopeks to a rouble for every work day: from 200 to 360 roubles for a family in the year. He pointed out that a winter coat costs 150 and a pair of high boots over 200. But families on incomes of this standard do not wear coats and high boots, but sheepskin, and birchbark sandals or rag wrappings: and the number who wear these, and these only, is still very large. The present writer has no doubt that the growers of technical crops often make substantial incomes: but technical crops are still only one-fourth of the whole, and over large areas are not grown at all.

Mr. Hubbard (*Economics of Soviet Agriculture*, Macmillan & Co., 1939), taking into account only the cash income of the collective farmer, reproduces from *Planned Economy* a calculation that the average expenditure per head in 28 provinces in the year 1937, was:—

Clothing and footwear	76 roubles
Consumable goods (tea, sugar, etc.)	27 " -
Non-consumable goods (house-linen, domestic utensils, etc.)	25 "
Cultural goods (books, toys, etc.)	9 "

Small though these figures are, they are higher than in 1935 or 1936.

Calendar.

To find the Old style date from the New:—
 Up to the year 1900: subtract 12 days.
 From 1900: subtract 13 days.

Note.—The Soviet fiscal year was from October 1st to September 30th. At the end of the calendar year 1930, this was replaced by the calendar year. Between October 1st and December 31st, 1930, there was a short financial year to fill in the gap.

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