



The Chinese revolution complicated the debate by making it absolutely necessary for the revolutionary tendency to raise clearly, regardless of what it might cost it, all the questions of principles and tactics. Without the events of Canton, Shanghai, Hankow, the Opposition would have been able to temporize awhile, perhaps until the moment when, a few months thence, the grain crisis would compel the rulers to recognize the existence of the wealthy peasant and the seriousness of the problem of industrialization. But the Chinese revolution was moving towards tremendous victories, calculated to counterbalance by their international consequences the subsiding of the European proletariat.

The taking of Shanghai by the trade unions, the occupation of the concessions and the factories of Hankow after the amazing campaign from the South to the North, directed in reality by the former head of the Urals partisans, Blücher, the movement of the peasants—all testified that inestimable possibilities were opened up. . . . We knew, however, that Chiang Kai-shek was personally allied with Stalin—Stalin, whom he duped—and that the Kuomintang was preparing the disarmament, if not the slaughter, of its communist members (it is always on the pretext of disarming that there is a slaughter). For the first time, in broad daylight, the bureaucratic régime stubbornly sabotaged a prodigious revolutionary movement, because its own (national) interests, contrary to those of the proletariat, forced it to. A revolution of the Chinese workers and peasants, triumphing with the support of the U.S.S.R., would have come into conflict immediately with the imperialist powers. But the Political Bureau did not want any trouble. It did want prestige, and for the sake of prestige it spilled torrents of coolie blood, as in the senseless and magnificent (magnificent for the courage of the victims) insurrection of Canton, concocted by unscrupulous agents—a Lominadse, a Heinz Neumann—in the criminal hope of celebrating a ringing success on the opening





day of the Fifteenth Congress of the Soviet Union Communist Party. While heads were falling by the thousands in China, the congress pronounced the expulsion of the Opposition. The Communist International untiringly approved everything, without having to overcome the slightest nausea when it stood before the deepest pools of blood, the most enormous or the most pettifogging knavery.\*

From now on, it becomes known that expulsion means arrest, prison, deportation. Remember the date when the party ceases to be a voluntary organization, since one must stay in it—in silence—under pain of prison. The Soviet gaols will now fill up with October fighters. Trotsky, carried off by force in Moscow, leaves at night for Alma-Ata, sentenced by administrative measure to three years of deportation. Only yesterday, the Press and the T.A.S.S. agency had sent out an official communiqué denying the rumours about deportations. . . . Zinoviev tries to duck responsibility by manœuvring. He submits, together with Kamenev and their whole crew, not without piling up all imaginable mental reservations. This Jesuitry will become a demoralizing leaven of the worst sort for the last of the Bolsheviks.

Tomorrow, the leading coterie of the Political Bureau will rend itself apart again. "Never", declares Stalin, "has the leadership of the party been as united as it is today. . . ." It doesn't matter much, the party will remain silent. Tomorrow will begin the drama of the collectivization, when all the strength of the country will be strained to the breaking-point by vast and needless sufferings. The party will remain silent.

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\* Throughout the black hours, series of enthusiastic telegrams came to the Soviet journals from the Central Committees of the various parties. Now that the past has congealed, you must re-read the stupefying prose of the Cachins, the Sémarads, and the Doriots on the Chinese revolution in order to plumb the abyss of their servility or ignorance, re-read them while thinking of how much blood every line of these communiqués cost the workers there! I followed those events day by day in a lengthy study published at the time by *Clarté*: "The Class Struggle in the Chinese Revolution". In order to spare me a premature departure for some Central Home, a Parisian comrade had to put his signature in place of mine under the article devoted to the Canton Commune.





What has happened, after all? I do not mention secondary episodes, in order the better to delineate the physiognomy of the event. One thing: the bureaucracy, separating itself from the working class, has just liquidated the Bolshevik Party. It has retained only the sign-board and a few hostages. It installs itself in power for its own benefit. Rakovsky will be right when he writes from the depths of his exile in Barnaul, parodying Lenin's words, "We have a bureaucratic State, with worker and peasant survivals."\* The doctrine of national socialism—"in a single country"—becomes official. Whoever objects to it disappears between midnight and three in the morning in a G.P.U. Ford.

Let us summarize :

The defeat of the Opposition is the defeat of the party and the working-class, overcome by a caste or a class of *parvenus*. It can be explained only from the international angle, by the two defeats of the revolution in Europe and in Asia, to which it is directly linked : Germany in 1923, China in 1927.†

\* Remember that Lenin's phrase was : "We have a workers' and peasants' State with bureaucratic deformations."

† The most probing recital of these events, so far as they relate to the U.S.S.R., will be found in Boris Souvarine's *Staline*, Chap. IX. "The Opposition succumbed primarily under the weight of its own mistakes . . ." writes the author (p. 436). I do not think of denying that the Opposition committed a number of secondary mistakes and no doubt some capital errors, above all from the standpoint of the detached observer judging after the fact. . . . But it is enough to consider from a little height, that is, without lending an exaggerated importance to individual attitudes and to details, the unchaining of the facts, in order to get an idea of the injustice and the lack of justice of this evaluation. Comparing the attitude of Trotsky towards the party which exiles him and the "deference of Robespierre for the Convention of Thermidor", our comrade concludes : "In both cases, the actual power of empirical politicians triumphed, by a cynical combination of force and astuteness, over doctrinaires poorly equipped with a practical sense." Isn't it plain that the practical sense of revolutionists is basically different from that of the empirical politicians *who represent other social formations* ? The practical sense of Liebknecht has little in common with that of Noske. The practical sense of revolutionists who deem it necessary to fling themselves under the chariot wheels because it is in the higher interests of the proletariat, is just as different from that of the *parvenus* to whom the morrows of the great defeats of the working-class offer invaluable opportunities for better installing themselves in power. Souvarine ought to know this, after all, for he, too, was a "doctrinary" vanquished by the "empiricists" because of his devotion to the International of the great years.

On the state of mind of the oppositional communists and the situation in the U.S.S.R. at that time, see Panait Istrati, *Vers l'autre Flamme*, above all Vol. II, *Soviets* 1929. (Paris, 1929.)





## III

INDUSTRIALIZATION AND COLLECTIVIZATION  
(1928-34)

TWO months after consummating the defeat of his adversaries by political-police methods, Stalin, in a blind alley, in all haste will have to apply their programme, soon to be crudely expanded and disfigured.\* In February 1928 *Pravda* declares that the grain is not coming in, the peasants, their taxes paid, refusing to sell it to the State, whose printed engravings do not have sufficient commodity-equivalents. The weakness of industry sets the agrarians against the collectivist State. The theses of yesterday are so much idle talk. The bureaucracy takes a radically new direction: an abrupt turn-about-face. It must be acknowledged that, dominated by the instinct of preservation, it will display an extraordinary power.

It had refused to foresee and it had deported those who did foresee, because the question of power took priority over everything else. Now there is going to be a scarcity of grain for the cities and the Army. Instead of applying a political pattern, Stalin is reduced to improvisations. Had he entertained the idea, up to now, of encouraging the enrichment of the peasants and a backsliding towards a régime of bourgeois small property, as advocated by Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky—the right wing? It is not hard to believe, in view of the zeal he displayed in defending the N.E.P., that is, the compromise with the agrarians,

\* "This shows", writes Trotsky, "how a correct policy makes it possible for the Marxian tendency to fecundate developments" even when it is overpowered and hounded. . . . (*The Workers' State, Thermidor and Bonapartism.*)





against an Opposition which only demanded its correction. But in order to beat the Opposition, the leading coterie was obliged to defend itself constantly against the unbearable accusation of being Thermidorian. And since it has a bad conscience on this point, it has begun to outbid its opponents. Impossible to retreat now. All of Stalin's ideas will look like caricatures, six months or a few years late, of Trotsky's ideas. Special commissions hastily revise the variants of the first Five-Year Plan, and the battle starts in the countryside.

For several years the bureaucratic régime will go from exploit to exploit, piling up difficulties only to overcome them, mobilizing all its resources in men and natural wealth, drawing drafts on the future that are senseless at first sight. The collectivization seems at times to be a prodigious second stage of the revolution : the conquest and transformation of the countryside. Sympathetic intellectuals, too far removed from the working-class, and too foreign to Marxism to make the necessary discrimination between violence and revolutionary action—not all violence is revolutionary, and not only revolutionary action is necessarily violent—will admire at leisure the reservoirs of strength in the case.

This ought, perhaps, to be the moment to reflect on the nature of this State, the most virile in existence at the moment. Forged by a new class which has just acceded to power, its cadres of functionaries are composed of rugged *arrivistes* of a new kind. Many of them fought well, had their hours of true grandeur and heroism, learned to remove obstacles, to make light of suffering and of privation, and are sincerely inclined to think that "the revolution, it is we".

To be sure, they have become wise, bloated, they have settled down ; but that which they are no longer capable of doing *for* and with the proletariat, they are quite able to do for their own benefit. They recoiled before the vast difficulties of the industrialization



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when they were asked to face them for the revolution. Now that it is a matter of defending their own privileges, their position in the State, their power, they no longer fall back. The possible conflict with the peasants frightened them, and yesterday they clung to the N.E.P. But now that their unintelligence has imparted to this latent conflict an exceptional gravity, they declare war upon the peasantry. Yesterday it was a matter of continuing the socialist revolution ; today it is a question of their own salvation. Yesterday, moreover, all the questions were bound up with the democratization of the party and the trade unions, that is, with their abdication. No longer capable of the slightest exploit in favour of the International, and above all incapable of the slightest abdication, they will display a fine energy in order that they themselves may endure. Let us render them this much justice, and let us leave the mediocre pleasure of admiring them to the *littérateurs* smitten with conformism.

The bureaucracy disposes of still immeasurable moral resources. The masses have been stirred to their depths, the ideas, the promises, the phrases of the ardent years have not yet lost their effectiveness. The dim socialist consciousness of millions of men, the great memories, the tradition of October, can be mobilized. The skill of the Stalinists will consist in combining these spiritual forces with others that are plainly retrogressive, with the old bourgeois individualism, dressed in the proletarian apparel of the new *arrivisme*, the national spirit, the servile instincts of peoples who never knew freedom, the harshness of military men trained in the school of terror, the amoralism of vulgar Marxists. . . .

A paradoxical thing, but set-backs that would bring to ruin any other ruling caste will consolidate this one. The more unpopular and the more responsible for the calamities inflicted upon the country it feels itself to be, the more resolute it will prove to be





in defending itself by all means. A vast misery will spring from its policy, but in this misery the tiniest material benefits become precious. It will now suffice to offer a worker a plate of soup the least bit nourishing and a shelter the least bit habitable in the winter for him to attach himself to the privileged amid the general destitution. . . . In that way a stratum of subordinate bureaucrats will be formed in the enterprises, in the party cells, and in the villages where the collectivization is to result in a new differentiation between leaders and led. Around the former will gravitate a clientele eager to serve. The misery will consolidate those who conjured it up.

The industrialization is directed like a march through conquered territory. The propaganda department thinks up a whole vocabulary of communiqués : firing-lines, shock brigades, assaults on fortresses, impregnable positions, breaches, Order of the Red Flag of Labour, Order of Lenin, insignia of honour. The collectivization is like installing an army in a conquered land, according to the worst rigours of war. . . .

Let us return to the facts.

At the end of 1927 Stalin reproaches the Trotskyists for advocating industrialization "with a vengeance" because they condemn the industrialization at a slackened pace. He denounces their project of a forced loan to be floated in the country, as likely to violate the N.E.P. and to embroil the party with the peasants. The opposition is expelled.

January-February 1928 : Stalin declares war on the *kulaks*, that is, the rich peasants, and begins the liquidation of the N.E.P. Labour detachments spread throughout the country in order to constrain the peasants to surrender their grain to the State and the nationalized co-operatives at ridiculous prices. It is the return to requisitioning. Since a fierce resistance is encountered, all the greater because the requisitions are illegal and run contrary to the often-repeated





promises to the agrarians, and since nobody presumes to predict the end of this resistance, a solution is dictated : dispossess the agriculturist by making him enter a collective farm, the *colkhoz*, to which he will bring all his goods and in which he will find himself under the control of an administration appointed by the party. But if he refuses ? We will force him. From requisitions,\* the shift is made in 1929-30 to forced collectivization.

At the outset the idea of a complete collectivization does not occur to anyone. Much more reasonably, the Government thinks of creating collective farms only to the extent that it is able to provide the *colkhozes* with the agricultural machinery necessary for large-scale motoculture. This would have been the only, the genuine socialist policy, and the peasants would have promptly convinced themselves of the benefits of the new mode of production over small-scale and primitive cultivation. But we know the margin between the socialist intentions of the bureaucratic Government and its real action, dictated by interests which are no longer those of the community. It now turns out that the agriculturists who were most tenacious in their resistance to collectivization, who remained individual proprietors in spite of the persecution, are obviously better off than the dispossessed of the *colkhozes*, who no longer even dispose freely of their arms. Stalin declares that the co-existence in the same villages of free agriculturists and collectivized agriculturists threatens the very existence of the *colkhozes*.

The collectivization must therefore be complete, and he orders it. The resisters will be called *kulaks*, designated as enemies of the people and be "liquidated as a class". The well-off peasants, or those so labelled for the needs of the case (and many of them once

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\* The original procedure was to take an inventory of the stocks of grain, flax, etc., in the possession of the peasants. The proprietors were summoned to make known their reserves and to sell them to the State at the legal price. These measures having yielded no satisfactory results, confiscation was resorted to.





fought well for the soviets), are suddenly driven from their homes by the thousands, packed together in cattle-cars, and sent in trainloads to the subarctic tundras, the forests of Siberia, the marches of Narym, the sandy wastes of Kazakstan. All the deserts of the vast Russias are going to swarm with little white crosses.

Several million peasants will undergo this fate. It will be the greatest transplantation of populations that history has ever known, and its concrete details are atrocious. I still hear a comrade recount the resistance of the women of a Kuban Cossack village. They had undressed, thinking that nobody would dare to take them, nude, from their dwellings and lead them to the train by force. The young communists, the party and G.P.U. men, surrounded the village, in which all the men had previously been arrested, dragged from their homes the dishevelled women and their children, crazed with fear and rage, and brutally drove this naked flock to the station. . . . The children, the old folk, and the feeble succumbed *en masse*. The newspapers, however, overflowed with copy on the collectivist enthusiasm of the agrarians. In *Monde* I read the shocking prose of Barbusse on the miracle of the collectivization.

Oh, the abominable wretchedness of obsequious intellectuals! What can be imagined that is more contrary to the socialist spirit than these falsehoods and these atrocities? Must we recall the opinion of Engels on the socialist attitude towards the middle classes and more specifically towards small peasant property?—or the constant recommendations of Lenin: to fight the well-to-do agriculturist who is becoming a small capitalist, but not to coerce the peasant masses; to make an ally out of the middle peasant?

In his day, Lenin's policy towards the peasants, in spite of mistakes and abuses, assured the victory of the Reds in the civil war. The policy of Stalin led to





a disaster in 1930-31 : fallow fields, crops rotting on the ground, the reduction of corn-sown land, the disappearance of the emaciated cattle abandoned or surrendered to *colkhazes*, which are organized by circular letter amid general ill will, and which allow the cattle to perish. . . . When the uprisings are counted by the hundreds, when throngs of agriculturists are seen carrying off their belongings and their urchins, trying to cross the frontiers at the risk of being massacred—and at times they are massacred—in order to take refuge in Chinese Turkestan, in Rumania, in Poland, Stalin understands and calls a halt to the manoeuvre. Enough !

*The dizziness from success*—he writes—is making subordinate bureaucrats lose their heads (for the policy of the Central Committee itself, it goes without saying, is, was, and will be correct) ; they have abused constraint. There is not much success to be seen in all this. Henceforth, the collectivization must be strictly voluntary and considered complete when it reaches 68 per cent, and that is just where they are. There is no point in continuing the demolition of churches.

Hesitant concessions to the peasants will follow, granted reluctantly, more on paper than in reality. Considering the point that has been reached, moreover, the misery is so great that no measure can have an immediate effect. The power hesitates between the system of *sovkhazes*, large nationalized agricultural enterprises where the workers get wages, the *colkhazes*, and the *artels*, which have more liberal statutes, more like those of a co-operative, in reality. Its choice will finally fall on the *artel*, in which it will seek to interest the peasant. . . . *Colkhoz* markets are opened in 1932, where the agriculturist can sell for his private benefit under certain conditions. The members of the *artels* and the *colkhazes* are authorized little by little to keep as their private property their dwellings, a kitchen garden, poultry, small cattle, a cow. . . . In 1935 the slogan of the enrichment of the *colkhozniki* is launched.





The State solemnly gives the land to the *colkhozes* in perpetuity.

In 1931 the scarcity has become a famine. In 1932-33 the famine is general in the countryside of Russia, which was once and ought to be today the bursting granary of Europe. People tell each other in whispers of cases of cannibalism. A famine organized by the State, it must be said. The harvests, appreciably reduced by the disorganization and by the resistance of the peasants, have not been so bad ; but sometimes the State takes everything—to feed the cities, to give reserves to the Army, to export. For several years the country will not consume the fruits it produces in abundance because they will be sold below cost in the West.

It goes without saying that the industrialization according to the successive, increasingly ample plans is completely distorted. The quasi-complete collectivization was not foreseen in the plans. It necessitates the creation of gigantic factories for agricultural machinery and it undermines the very foundation of Soviet industry by producing a scarcity of raw materials.

The industrial cultures, flax, cotton, hemp, the oleaginous plants, are in a no less grievous condition than are the grain cultures. Yet it is impossible to go into reverse gear without avowing the bankruptcy of a policy and changing the leading group. There is nothing left but to persevere, by giving the Press the order to proclaim every day that economic victories are the envy of the universe. . . . The actual solution adopted : constrain the workers to work more and to consume less, as little as possible. Since the forcibly proletarianized rural masses offer vast reserves of labour, there is no need to respect any iron law of wages, or to take into account any physical wear and tear.\*

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\* Doctors who permitted themselves to show the connection between rest, working conditions, food, and industrial accidents were denounced as public enemies.



The food ration of the worker will often fall well below what is strictly necessary. No matter, the exhausted will be speedily replaced. The first Five-Year Plan announced an increase in real wages of 71 per cent at the end of the fifth year. In actuality, nominal wages almost doubled, but the rouble fell on the market to exactly one-fortieth of its purchasing power in 1926, and the co-operatives granted only famine rations to the workers. A precision-machinist working in Moscow told me in 1933 : "I get 270 roubles, but I live much worse than I lived in 1926 with an unemployment allotment of 27 roubles."

In fact, he was bony and pale. The shock brigades tied the worker to his crew, obliging him, at the end of his working-day, to sacrifice half of his leisure hours in good-will work in the shop. The socialist emulation made the shock brigades compete with each other. The distribution of products to the workers took place in secrecy in the reserved stores where a multitude of privileged or unfavoured categories was created. People lived on petty favouritism, on combinations, on petty speculation, on pilfering, on clandestine work at home for the open market. At the first opportunity the worker fled the factory or changed jobs in the hope of gaining by the exchange. . . . According to official statistics, there was a complete turnover in the personnel of the big Ukrainian factories in three months.

The party demanded of the workers a solemn commitment not to quit the plant before the end of the Five-Year Plan. The workers voted unanimously, of course, for the resolutions and deserted the following morning. Administrative measures intervened more effectively in the same direction.

The law of August 7, 1932, declaring collective property to be sacred, makes thieves liable to capital punishment. Some poor devils of peasants will be shot for a few kilogrammes of grain. The fields will be put in a state of siege, flown over by inspection aeroplanes, and traversed by mounted guards ! The death penalty





for any kind of sabotage. The death penalty for serious negligence in the railway service. One railway catastrophe following the other at an augmented rate, the signalman, the driver, or the station-master will be shot, as the case may be, without succeeding in remedying the disorganization of transports.

In November 1932 a new law prescribes immediate discharge for any unjustified absence, and discharge means depriving the worker and his family of bread-cards, as well as the loss of lodgings, if the lodgings are attached to the enterprise. The famine is at its peak, these Draconian measures do not check the evil, it is impossible to keep the personnel of the factories at a stable point. At the end of 1932 the Council of People's Commissars re-establishes—in a much more aggravated form—the régime of internal passports abolished by the revolution as “a police instrument of oppression of the masses” (*Small Soviet Encyclopaedia*). The passports will be delivered in the factories, and the worker, deprived of the right to move about as he pleases, for the passports are subject to strict registration formalities, will be fixed for good in his place of work. . . .

The terror, the ultimate method of coercion when men have nothing more than their lives to lose, is aimed just as directly at the technicians and the intellectuals. Some, honest men, contest the value of hastily recast and militarily applied plans. They foresee disastrous results, and sometimes they even refuse to comply with demands which they consider absurd but which are in reality only demagogic, whether it be for the purpose of bluffing foreign opinion, of duping domestic opinion, or, in the case of zealous administrators, of pulling the wool over the eyes of the Government.

Others follow the course of “the worse the better”, thinking that “this can't last”. Some of them sabotage, thinking that the hour has finally struck for the long-awaited catastrophe of Bolshevism. And, indeed,





never has the situation been so bad since the worst moments of the civil war and the blockade. Some engineers are subsidized by émigrés whom they keep informed or by spies who flatter them. Above all, scapegoats are needed. The policy of the Central Committee has provoked the destruction of the cattle by the peasants who preferred to slaughter them rather than turn them over to the *colkhazes*; there is no more meat, there will be no more leather. Professor Karatygin is shot, accused of sabotage, together with forty-seven other specialists and administrators of the Department of Meats and Canned Foods.

The unfortunates confessed to infinitely more than can be believed, undoubtedly because they were threatened with shooting unless they did confess. Five Shakhty engineers are shot, almost convicted of intelligence with foreign legations. The Industrial Party of the engineer Ramzin, who has just the appearance of an *agent provocateur*, is tried.\* Tried and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment are old socialists, preposterously accused of having fomented intervention against the U.S.S.R. upon instructions from the Second International. They are strange trials, in which the accused accuse each other more than they are themselves accused, going to the point of flagrant enormities in their self-flagellatory zeal. There are no few doubts about what is at the bottom of them. That will not be known, however, until later, in part when certain of the condemned will disclose in prison the behind-the-scenes story of these sinister comedies concocted out of wholecloth. Those who do not lend themselves to the game also disappear, like old Bazarov, one of the founders of Russian socialism,

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\* Condemned to death, pardoned with all his fellow accused, Ramzin never stopped teaching and working for Soviet industry up to the moment when, in 1936, he was rehabilitated because of services rendered. The treatment which this organizer of treason, sabotage, and intervention—according to his own confessions—together with his accomplices, benefited by, is in singular contrast to that which was inflicted upon so many socialists and communists. . . .





and the erudite Riazanov. The whole directing personnel of the Commissariat of Agriculture is arrested, composed of men from the right, advocates of a return to small peasant property (Kondratiev, Makarov).

Two years later, in March 1933, their successors are shot, two Under-Commissars of the People, several influential communists (Connor-Poleschuk, Wolfe, Kovarsky), thirty-five persons in all, on vague accusations of sabotage and of intelligence with countries abroad. Historians, physicists, geologists, bacteriologists fill the prisons. The historian Platonov dies there, the historian Kareyev is set free a dying man, the historian Tarlé is sent to Alma-Ata after long months of secrecy, the physicist Lazarev has a similar fate, one of the greatest Russian bacteriologists dies in a Leningrad prison hospital.\* Then it is noticed that the G.P.U. has exaggerated and new instructions demand that the intellectuals be reassured. Now it is overly clever examining magistrates who are arrested, now it is they who are shot—all this in the dark, in secret—while the engineers who were incarcerated yesterday, in the anguish of an execution suspended over their heads, receive premiums and decorations. . . .

The Five-Year Plan is finished in three years here, in four years there, in five years elsewhere, in six or seven years in still another place, as in river transport—in brief, without any plan ! Reports, not written by humorists, point to the prodigious development of passenger transportation by railway. A fever of moving has gripped the disturbed and famished population. You travel in order to find shoes, tea, bread, soap, to flee excessive exploitation ; you travel because wherever you are you feel bad. And all the forecasts of the transportation economists are exceeded, there is more travelling done than there was in California during the great gold-rush ! How you travel is another matter. . . . The cities grow before your very eyes, at

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\* Lazarev and Tarlé have since been rehabilitated just as arbitrarily as they were condemned.





least so far as population is concerned, faster than Chicago not long ago, faster than San Francisco : for the villages have become uninhabitable.

In the party the dry guillotine functions without cease. Not always dry. . . . In 1930 the president of the Council of People's Commissars of the R.S.F.S.R., Syrtsov, together with a group of left-wing Stalinists, is denounced as a counter-revolutionist and removed. In 1932 two Old Bolsheviks, directors of the Commissariat of Agriculture, Eismont and Tomlachev, disappear in prison. The former secretary of the Moscow party organization, Riutin, the family of the old communist worker Kayurov, intellectuals of the Bukharin school, the Sliepkovs, Astrovs, Maret-skys, Eikhenwalds, are expelled and imprisoned. The right-wing tendency, which secretly advocates peace with the peasants and a moderate policy (Rykov, Tomsy, Bukharin, Smirnov), is driven out of the Political Bureau, persecuted in turn, reduced to reiterated recantations. Nationalist tendencies come to light among the communists of the federated republics, in the Ukraine, in Central Asia. The G.P.U. is on guard and there are expulsions, imprisonments, and deportations of whole governments.

Thousands of Ukrainian communists and intellectuals are arrested in 1933. Skrypnik, an old member of the Central Committee, October fighter, Stalinist from the outset, People's Commissar of Education in the Kharkov Cabinet, blows his brains out so as not to see several of his protégés shot. Shumsky, leader of the Ukrainian Communists, is sent to the Solovietsky Islands.

Giant factories rise from the ground, Moscow will have its subway, the G.P.U. builds itself veritable dungeons in the heart of almost every town, new cities rise in the boreal steppes (like Kirovsk, formerly Khibinogorsk, near the appatite beds of Northern Russia), dammed rivers operate powerful electrical stations, an automobile industry is created out of





nothing, the aviation of the U.S.S.R. becomes perhaps the most formidable in the world. The plan has been executed chaotically. Upon analysis, all its forecasts, retail prices, intervals, results, prove to be false, distorted, or erroneous. But what remains is that the country has given itself a new and powerful industrial equipment—at the cost of blood, built literally upon bones, as Tsar Peter built his capital of Petersburg and began the construction of the port of Rogerwick.

Fighting a rebellious peasantry in its entirety, whose passive resistance seemed constantly on the verge of turning into active resistance, unpopular among the overworked proletarians and among the bullied intellectuals, the Government felt at certain times the chill of death pass over its face. A thrust on one of the frontiers might have provoked the fall of the régime. Stalin brought the U.S.S.R. to the brink of the abyss. Dominated by the fear of the war, he subjected the Five-Year Plan to a new transformation, discreet and expensive, and it became an armaments plan unique in the world. The resources that might have left the Russian people a bit of well-being went into that plan. But, in exchange for that, the Italian General Graziani, confidant and envoy of Mussolini, was the first to marvel at the sight of the results obtained, truly grandiose. . . .

Who can fail to recall, with this picture before him, the pages of *Capital* where Marx describes the relentless mechanism of primitive capitalist accumulation? One is tempted to speak of a primitive socialist accumulation, just as cruel as the other, just as anti-socialist in its methods and in the treatment inflicted upon man. But we are still far from concluding.





## IV

THE GREAT WRETCHEDNESS  
(1931-34)

**B**EGINNING with 1929-30, the famine spreads over the immense country like leprosy. People learn to make bread of oil-cakes, to eat bark and herbs.

Little children have swollen bellies, epidemics perpetuate themselves : typhoid, exanthematic typhus carried by lice (soap is a rare product), dysentery, cholera. Public rumour announces cases of the plague in Stavropol (Northern Caucasus) during the winter of 1932-33. Whole regions—I have lived in them—are sapped by malaria. There is a shortage of medicaments. The nomadic populations of Central Asia are decimated by hunger and maladies. Build, build, build, export, shoot, build. This is what was called the epopee of the great plan.

What characterizes the conditions of the people in those years ?

1. In the countryside the expropriation and the deportation of anybody who gives the appearance of resisting, even passively, any one of the instructions of the authorities—and God knows that there are plenty of them, that they vary, that they contradict each other ! The forced collectivization and its consequences.

2. In the industrial centres, over-exploitation. The working-day is no longer limited in fact ; the shock brigades, the brigades of enthusiasts, the young communists make the day limitless. The rest days become days of voluntary labour, imposed in reality,





in order to outstrip the production plan, to make up statistics, to meet a deficit, to publish a fine communiqué. . . .

3. In the provisioning of the cities, the system of reserved stores. Every category of workers, every factory—and within each factory the ordinary workers, the shock workers, the technical men, the bureaucrats—has its private store, closed to the other categories, with special rations and prices, confidential or secret. No displays, just a card that is open-sesame. As a rule, the reserved stores of the foreigners, the high functionaries, the G.P.U., the well-paid specialists, are sufficiently supplied with merchandise. Those of the ordinary workers and of the population at large are dirty and virtually empty. The Government intervenes in order to fix the minimum rations of the workers and fixes them at a level appreciably below requirements. A meat-card is created in the large centres in 1932, for workers doing especially hard work, and it entitles the bearer to two kilogrammes of beef per month.

The rations vary greatly and can often be delivered only on paper. The housewife arrives at the store only to learn that there is no sugar left. She is promised that the sugar due in January will be available in February, but in February the January sugar coupon is annulled.

Nothing is simpler. In the large cities the worker receives, as a rule : 400 to 600 grammes of black bread a day, 200 to 300 for the wife and for each child ; a kilogramme of sugar per month on a co-operator's card ; monthly, a half-litre of sunflower-seed oil, 50 grammes of tea, a kilogramme of salted herring, a piece of laundry soap, 800 grammes of food pastes. The rations were substantially smaller in the provinces, where the women, children, and old folk usually had food-cards refused them. I saw this placard in a bureau : "Grand-parents have no right to food-cards." Bread is suppressed for certain days. There isn't any on the market, trading in bread is forbidden. Food grains





like millet are sold by the glass and the glass costs as high as two or three roubles.

4. Inflation everywhere. Silver money withdrawn from circulation, not without some unlucky hoarders' being shot by a firing-squad, the currency gradually depreciates in value, since there is no real exchange except on the semi-clandestine market where it is worth one-fortieth of the 1926 value. In the reserved stores, the purchasing power of the rouble varies according to the status of the purchaser. A stenographer of the G.P.U., with a monthly wage of 100 roubles, provided with an admission card to the stores of the political police, obtains for her 100 roubles products worth 2500 or 3000 roubles on the market. In another reserved store, the 100 roubles of the stenographer of a technicians' office are worth practically 1200 roubles. The 100 roubles of the stenographer of a Soviet bureau are worth a maximum of 300 merchandise roubles of the moment. Finally, the 100 roubles of the stenographer of a school, a co-operative, a hospital, a small artisans' enterprise are worth exactly . . . 100 paper roubles. This system rested upon the division of the exploited, secret privilege, combinations.

The economists are forbidden to speak of inflation. The compulsory rate of a purely theoretical exchange, since foreigners make their purchases in Torgsin and pay their hotels in valuta, remains unalterable. A theory of socialist money is elaborated, according to which it no longer needs a coverage of gold or commodities, but serves in the hands of the party for the distribution of the products in a class spirit. . . . Of what class?

5. Everywhere, the extortion of gold, and the Torgsin. The possession by private persons of precious metals, in the form of jewels, watches, silver plate, was and remains permitted. The possession of foreign valuta was also permitted and was never legally prohibited. The banks leased strong-boxes to citizens





and guaranteed them the secrecy of deposits. No Press campaign invited the citizens to part with their gold and their valuta. The extortion of gold, entirely illegal, not clandestine at the beginning, probably denied abroad, therefore betokened, in its arbitrariness, a complete contempt for the individual and the law. The State stores, like Mostorg of Moscow, continued to sell gold jewels. . . .\*

The extortions began in 1930-31 with nocturnal domiciliary visits to the homes of people enjoying a certain ease—doctors, dentists, lawyers, former watch-makers (it is curious that the writers, although richer as a rule, were not touched). They continued in the form of systematic searches of the homes of all persons supposed to be in possession of jewellery or valuta. As the gold disappeared into hiding-places, the G.P.U., which was also executing a plan providing a certain return from every locality within a fixed period, turned to sequestrations. It was, indeed, made clear to the persons taken from their homes that they were neither under arrest nor charged with a crime. Men and women remained for weeks or months behind bars, insulted, threatened, forced to live standing up, packed in like herrings, thirty, forty, fifty to a small room, deprived of drinks, of air, deprived of the possibility of satisfying their wants, brutalized, submitted to treatment that I prefer not to describe. I have known many victims of these extortions and they were neither capitalists nor former capitalists. Those who had hidden a watch, a wedding-ring, a bracelet, a treasury note, finished by handing it over; those who had nothing, finished by convincing the extortionists that there was nothing to get. . . . One of my Leningrad neighbours was thus sequestered three times in one year.

In the same period, in addition to the empty

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\* In this way the extortions are dependent upon a sort of State banditry which is absolutely contrary to revolutionary expropriations, whose great honesty may be brutal or painful; expropriations, carried on in broad daylight, invoke and create a new law.





co-operatives and the reserved stores with private entrances, the richly furnished stores of the Torgsin, "State Society for Trading with Foreigners", are opened. There, in exchange for gold—jewellery, gold fillings, gold dust, moneys, all of it taken in by weight regardless of artistic or numismatic value!—and foreign valuta, Soviet citizens are able to obtain products unobtainable anywhere else. The Torgsin would demonstrate if necessary that the possession of gold and of valuta is legal, but who cares about that? A new scandalous privilege is established in broad daylight for the benefit of possessors of a few bits of gold, foreigners, relatives of émigrés. . . . The Torgsin stores naturally become centres of speculation, where the G.P.U. multiplies its raids. They were the only stores where medicaments, cloth, shoes, soap, food of good quality, all "articles of export" could be obtained. . . . Crimes committed for the sake of gold multiplied considerably.\*

The enormity of it all, besides the challenge to the public conscience, is that the Soviet worker, unless he has an émigré aunt who is able to send him a few pounds, cannot procure the products which he himself manufactures.

6. Everywhere the atrociously widespread application of the death penalty by administrative and secret measure. The execution of peasants, who are often called terrorists, for having spoiled the looks of a functionary, or embezzlers, for having stolen a sack of grain. The execution of habitual criminal offenders and of prostitutes who are declared incorrigible. The execution of priests guilty of having protested against the demolition of churches. The execution of hoarders of small silver money. The execution of technical men accused of sabotage. The execution of depraved functionaries. The execution of persons of

\* A prominent doctor of Saratov, known for his learning and his devotion, was killed in 1932 by bandits who stole his gold teeth. The communist director and sub-director of the Astrakhan Torgsin were shot in 1935. Acts of this kind were extremely numerous.





various sorts accused of espionage. The execution of hostages in the concentration camps after attempts at escape. The execution of former officers. The execution of agents of the G.P.U. . . .

No statistics have been published, none are publishable. Anybody who is acquainted with Russian life knows that the death penalty has entered into the morals of the country and that innocent blood has flowed in streams.

7. Everywhere the bureaucratic State increasingly accentuates its police-State aspect. The G.P.U. meddles in everything. There is not a scientific or industrial establishment, there is not a bureau, which does not have its Secret Service and its informers. They are in the dwellings, in the hospitals, in the co-operatives; they are among the writers, the artists, the priests,\* they are everywhere. Party members are obliged to become informers at the first summons. In 1933 "political services" are created in transportation and in the *colkhazes*. Agents of the G.P.U. can be seen substituted in actuality for the rural soviets and for the lower committees of the party. On this basis they do such bad work and the police organization of work in the fields reveals itself to be so utopian, that the "political services" of the countryside are abolished in 1935, at the moment when the G.P.U. becomes a State within the State. At the end of 1933 the restoration of internal passports places the entire population under the meticulous control of the political police.

In order to get an idea of the life of the Soviet citizen during these years one must picture the worker preoccupied with obtaining, stamping, checking, and re-registering a bread-card, which is refused to half

\* In Leningrad I was astonished at the election to the Academy of Sciences of a professor with no discernible merit. "Now look here," I was told, "don't you understand? He's one of them!" The G.P.U. pushed its impudence to the point of convoking the savants, who were not disposed to vote for this candidate, in order to deliver a lecture to them. The Autocephalic Church of the Ukraine had an informer at its head for a certain period of time.





the workers on various pretexts ; the housewife running from one empty store to another, and registering in a queue at the doors of a fish-shop early in the evening, pauper No. 758, in order to wrangle the next morning over a ration of salt fish ; the worker exposed to spying in the shop, coming home to comment at the table on the arrests made the night before, finding rhymed apologies for the death penalty in his paper, not knowing where he can get a spare shirt, fearing to be driven out of the big city by being refused a passport, because his son has married the daughter of a former small merchant ; wondering what risky combination to resort to in order to get hold of a pound and buy some precious medicament at the Torgsin. . . . Hemmed in by the police, by poverty, by lies.

In the political order the soviets, the trade unions, the co-operatives, the Communist Party disappear together. Nothing remains of them but expensive and fairly cumbersome sign-boards, an army of red-tape functionaries, and words. You go to vote in the elections to the soviets in a cortège, music at the head, hands raised in unanimity ; or else the vote takes place in the factory during working-time, with all doors closed. Certain soviets never meet. Nobody knows whom he has elected, nobody is interested. The trade unions collect dues and distribute among the active—that is, the right-thinking—elements special tickets for trips to the country and the theatres. They support a numerous bureaucracy in the plant and they build workers' clubs, which are unnecessary palaces, amid the hovels where the workers live.

The co-operatives deliver to their members the mediocre rations we know of, and sell small quantities of low-quality calico prints at high prices. They exhort the co-operators to be good enough to increase their annual dues payments, which cannot be less than the monthly wage of the person involved and which are raised every year. Ways are thought of by which the





consumers grant them a credit. Do you want to buy an overcoat? Then you obtain, through your factory committee, in your capacity as shock worker, the favour of being inscribed on an order form, you pay the price of the article ten months in advance, and maybe, although it is by no means sure, you will end by getting an overcoat next year. . . .

The party is exceedingly powerful, but it is no longer a workers' party in the traditional sense of the term. At one and the same time, it resembles a religious order in the Jesuitical sense, a militia, and a career army. Its bureaux distribute the promotions, the jobs, the sinecures, the pensions, the passports, the food rations, the clothing, the lodgings, the theses, the professorships, the insults, the years in prison, the death sentences, the pardons. . . .



## V

### THE LAWS

LET us consider for a moment the evolution of Soviet legislation in the course of these last years. The laws of a country reflect its social condition. We already know the law of August 7, 1932, which declares socialist property to be sacred. For the first time in our epoch, in a civilized country, the death penalty will be applied for theft, sometimes for insignificant thefts, and that under conditions where theft is accounted for by the deepest poverty.\*

A law on high treason had been promulgated some time earlier as a result of numerous defections that had taken place in the diplomatic, military, and commercial personnel of the missions abroad. Numerous functionaries, dreading the terror, remained abroad. Some of them betrayed, like the first secretary of the legation in Paris, Bessedovsky, the G.P.U. agent in Istanbul charged with watching Trotsky, Agabekov, and the military attaché in Stockholm. Defections and betrayals ran into the hundreds. The director of the State Bank deserted in Berlin; a personal secretary of Stalin's ran away. These episodes disclosed the

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\* In Moscow in 1932 I saw a worker sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for having stolen a package of pencils in the factory. I borrow from Comrade Yvon, of the *Révolution Proletarienne*, the following examples taken from the Russian Press: "For having made unauthorized use of things belonging to the *colkhos* (horse, fishing-boat), *colkhos* members were sentenced to death in accordance with the decree of August 7. . . ." — "Paraskeva, 28 years old, mother of three young children, and Pashchenko, Anna, 40 years old, illiterate, poor *colkhos* members, were sentenced, in virtue of the decree of August 7, by the judge of the Eysk region, to ten years in prison for having stolen 4 kilogrammes of grain. Upon protest of the prosecutor, the Supreme Court reversed the decision and, applying another law, reduced the penalty to one year of obligatory labour. . . ." (*Pravda*, April 28, 1934.)





profound uneasiness of the bureaucracy and the low quality of the personnel called upon to replace the eliminated October generation. (The scandals that took place within the country demonstrated the same thing.) Henceforward, any functionary who refused to return from abroad would be outlawed ; in case of arrest on Soviet territory, he would be executed by a firing-squad upon the establishment of his identity. For Soviet citizens on a private trip the penalty might be reduced a degree.

A law of March 30, 1935, punishes with five years of imprisonment the carrying, the manufacture, or the possession of a knife or a side-arm. It is a confession that the number of murders has become disquieting.

A law of April 8, 1935, extends all the penalties for ordinary crime to children twelve years old, including, of course, capital punishment. Adults who shall have encouraged criminality, mendicancy, or infantile prostitution will incur five years in prison. For the first time in a civilized country children are liable to the death penalty. It is a confession of the tremendous misery, a confession that they are losing their heads in face of them, that they do not know how to combat them, that for the legislator armed with a Browning the old socialist ideas on the responsibility of society towards a criminal, on the education and the re-education of delinquents, and finally on the death penalty solemnly condemned by the International Socialist Congress of Copenhagen (1910)—are old ideas that no longer have any importance. Even before this law the death penalty was applied by administrative measure to young former offenders. And the life of a twelve-year-old *gamin* sent to the Northern labour camps doesn't amount to very much.\*

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\* In the Orenburg region, where I was deported, there were several crimes committed in 1934-35 by children. If the papers are to be believed, some Pioneers who were defending socialist property were killed by young counter-revolutionists of their own age. Motions were put through in the schools demanding that the death penalty be applied to the guilty. Then the campaign ceased on command. I do not know the epilogue of these affairs. The law of which I am speaking having provoked lively





On June 9, 1935, *Pravda* published the text of a Draconian law on the punishment of crimes against the fatherland. Espionage, passing over to the enemy, *the crossing of the frontier to another country without a passport*, are punishable by death and the confiscation of all property; no attenuating circumstance may be allowed if a military man is involved. The adult members of the culprit's family, if they know his intentions without reporting them, shall be punished with from two to five years in prison and the confiscation of property. If completely ignorant of his designs, they shall be deported for five years to the remote regions of Siberia. For the first time in a civilized country, the law dictates informing in the midst of families, pitilessly chastises innocents, and punishes by death the simple crossing of the frontier! (And I underscore the fact that the worker has no possibility of obtaining a passport for abroad.) What necessity does this monstrous law correspond to? The text provides against flight abroad in an aeroplane. Aviators had deserted in the Far East. The Press, however, justified the new law only by "the increasing love of the fatherland among the Soviet workers, a love which brings them to show themselves merciless towards traitors. . . ." Krylenko, Prosecutor of the Republic, will speak this language at the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets. It is necessary, literally, to take the reverse of this official gibberish in order to explain a law which could correspond, in reality, only to the most alarming wave of disaffection and defeatism.

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protest at the congress of the Unitary Federation of Education (Angoulême, August 1935), pedagogues of the Stalinist tendency sought to defend it by arguing that the excellence of Soviet pedagogy makes children adults at the age of twelve. These singular educators, obviously poorly informed on the psychology of growth, did not dream for a moment of explaining how it happens that the precocious maturity of the young people is translated primarily into an increase of criminality. If the case were otherwise, would not the Soviet legislator have to grant the twelve-year-old children the right to vote, to be elected to office, and to occupy what are called responsible posts? One blushes at having to discuss remarks that denote only the decay of an ideology.





A 1935 law punishes homosexuality with three years in prison. Krylenko justifies it by saying that sexual inversion is the tare of degenerated bourgeois classes. Prison treatment for degenerates, therefore, seems to him to be indicated.\* And how can it be admitted that the tares of the bourgeoisie, vanquished almost twenty years ago, should still be deep-rooted? You do not know, really, what to be more amazed at: the vapidness of this argumentation or the ignorance of the legislator, contemporary of Freud and of Havelock Ellis, who deliberately ignores the scientific attainments of half a century of sexology.

A law punishes with three years in prison the production and dissemination of pornographic works, pornography not being defined therein. It will suffice for me to recall that the application of a text of this kind in France would have lodged in prison for many years such men as Flaubert, Baudelaire, Richepin, Zola, Descaves, and in our time many others. . . .

It would be no more than right to expect a power which invokes the name of socialism to set the example of human respect, some scientific intelligence, the application of the principles for which the socialists of all countries have fought since the dawn of the First International. What we see is, on the contrary, a clearly retrogressive legislation, in comparison with that of the advanced capitalist countries, one which does not bear up under comparison with that of the fascist countries. All reactions resemble each other.

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\* The Soviet diplomat Florinsky, Chief of Protocol of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, was one of the first to be sentenced in virtue of this law.





## VI

A TURN : THE STABILIZATION OF THE ROUBLE  
(1934-35)

IN 1934 a turn appears in the offing. The peasants are broken down, the power has come to understand.\* The concessions it has made to the collectivized agriculturists enable them to live from hand to mouth. They adapt themselves. By unexpected luck, the harvests have been good for several years in succession. The gold production, intensified in the placers of Siberia, has permitted the reconstitution of a treasury, exhausted at the beginning of the industrialization by purchases abroad and by the losses incurred on the fall of the dollar and the pound sterling. It becomes possible to cease the disastrous exportation of food to the foreign market. The Government has restored the grain reserves. It is perceived that despite a skilful admixture of pitiless chastisement and trifling compensation, undernourished labour is clearly unprofitable. It slows down on the job by every means, so that at bottom it resembles a vast strike-on-the-job.

Productivity is very low. The new equipment requires a greater effort on the part of the worker, which he can contribute only if he receives in exchange for it a wage representing a fairly adequate food equivalent. The Political Bureau decides, towards this

\* It was certainly high time that it did understand, in view of the fact that half the livestock had been destroyed in four years.

		Stock (in millions of heads)					
		Horses	Horned Cattle	Sheep and Goats	Swine		
In 1929	.. ..	34.0	.. 65.1	.. 147.2	.. 20.3		
In 1933	.. ..	16.6	.. 38.6	.. 50.6	.. 12.2		

The destruction of horses continued in 1935. These official statistics seem to me to understate the truth.



end, on the stabilization of the rouble on a par with bread.\* It does not want a financial reform and it denies the rumours that are circulating on this subject, for obviously a reform would involve a much more general stabilization of wages and a readjustment of wages to prices. . . . Beginning with January 1, 1935, bread-cards are abolished. Bread will be sold openly in the State stores and on the markets, but its price will be greatly increased. The kilogramme of brown bread becomes the commodity-equivalent of a paper rouble.

Let us examine this operation more closely. At first blush the reform appears to be a blow to the worker because the price of bread, recently doubled, undergoes still another increase. The State allots, it is true, a general increase of wages of 10 per cent, made public with a great to-do and aimed to cover up the price increase. What the newspapers do not explain is that the increase applies not to the wage as a whole, but to the sum expended on purchases of bread by the card. Thus, the worker earning 100 roubles per month will not get an additional 10 roubles. She will be told : "According to your bread-card, which gives you the right to 400 grammes per day, at 60 kopecks the kilogramme, you spend 18 roubles per month for bread ; 10 per cent of that gives you an increase in your monthly wage of 1·80 rouble. Here they are."

Now, the bread ration of this worker was well below her needs and henceforth she will buy not less than 800 grammes of brown bread per day at 1 rouble the kilogramme, which will mean a monthly expenditure of 24 roubles ; hence, an actual reduction in wages of 4·20 roubles ! But she doesn't care a fig for a paper wage whose fluctuations upset or enrapture naive economists abroad. What matters to her is to be able to buy bread freely at an accessible price. Before the reform, her 100 roubles in wages represented 12

\* On inflation : according to the official documents, the circulation of paper money increased from 2028 million roubles in 1929 to 7734 million roubles in 1935.





kilogrammes of black bread at the co-operative's price and—at the outside—20 kilogrammes of bread at 4 roubles on the clandestine market. Hence, she really earned 32 kilogrammes of black bread per month and she was doomed to permanent inanition. From now on, her 100 roubles are worth 100 kilogrammes of bread. She will eat her fill. I am harping on these calculations a little. They remain literally exact. The vast majority of the Soviet women workers still earn less than 100 roubles. On the clandestine market the price of a kilogramme of black bread varied between 3 and 8 roubles; the main thing was to find it.

The pegging of the rouble to bread was therefore an immense relief to the workers: they emerged from a state of hunger. The observer living in the country has the feeling of seeing a bared economic organism throbbing. Where are the mysteries of money? One of the effects of the stabilization of the rouble is the rebirth of Soviet trading in the form of stores opened by the State in increasing number, and an activation of the free market. Where are the mysteries of the exploitation of labour? At one stroke you perceive one of the great advantages of the bureaucratic mechanism and of managed economy: exploitation there is visible at first glance. Not to discern it, you must have the boundless ingenuousness of a bourgeois guided around by the Intourist, or the subtle good will of a left-wing writer who has come over to the revolution a dozen years after the embalming of Lenin.

It is better to follow the commercial operation that occurred in 1935. The Government decrees the shutting-down of reserved stores—those centres of corruption, demoralization, squandering, and privilege. They are replaced by stores open to the public, which transform the physiognomy of the cities in a few months.\*

\* The stores reserved for the personnel of the Government, the G.P.U., the party committees, continue to exist half-secretly; to be more exact, illegally. The rule: in the absence of any control by public opinion, the bureaucracy never acts honestly and itself transgresses all the laws and all the regulations which it enacts.





The co-operative feeding of the workers at minimum prices is abolished. The new State stores sell at the "commercial" prices—it is the consecrated term; that is, at the market prices, ten to twenty times higher. But you can find everything there.

I do not have at hand the comparative index numbers. May I be permitted to refer to my personal experience? In Leningrad, in 1926, a family of four persons enjoying a standard of living comparable to that of the skilled worker in France or Belgium spent 2.50 roubles per day for its food. In order to eat in about the same way in 1935 it would have to spend around 40 roubles per day. So far as food is concerned, therefore, the value of the rouble has fallen to about one-sixteenth of what it was ten years ago. By how much have nominal wages risen in this space of time? The social inequalities have increased. The wages of the vast majority of wage earners have not doubled, the rise being about 80 per cent. The stabilization of the rouble thus leads us to record a substantial reduction in real wages in the past ten years.

From 1931 to 1935 the masses of workers and peasants lived on famine rations; properly speaking, there were no longer wages. You worked in the factory not in order to earn 100 printed roubles that were much easier to procure by speculating a little on matches, but in order not to lose your bread-card, your lodgings, your passport, your party card. . . . An inestimable step forward, however little it may be, for wages are henceforth a reality. Emerging from the black years, the workers have few demands. The standard of living of the new workers driven towards industry by the misery of the countryside is very primitive; they are overjoyed at no longer being hungry. Faces are clearing up.

Stalin, who did not show his face in public for almost two years, at the beginning of the collectivization mounts the tribune and declares: "Life has





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become more joyous." Millions of gramophone-records reproduce these precious words. Little girls holding bouquets in their arms march across the screen singing : "Life has become more joyous." Red calico is hung above the streets, proclaiming that "life has become more joyous". Squadrons returning from manœuvres cry out in a manly voice that "life has become more joyous". Tourists stirred by the sights note down in their memorandum books that "life has become more joyous". The newspapers show every day the portrait of the gifted Leader surrounded by his collaborators, who applaud smilingly. They have become more joyous. The newspapers show the Father of his Country drawing to his bosom a little Tartar girl, a little Mongol girl, a little Uzbek, a little Tadjik girl, a little Samoyed girl. . . . It rains decorations.





## VII

## THE KIROV AFFAIR : A YEAR OF TERROR

A RELAXATION had to take place in internal policy after this reform. The foreign policy rendered this relaxation eminently desirable. The offers of a united front made to the socialists in the West could not reasonably be accompanied by the continuation of political persecutions in the country. The U.S.S.R. could try to look like an advanced, civilized State, in contrast to Hitlerite Germany, where the heads of communist militants were falling, where books were being burned on the public squares, where Jews, liberal intellectuals, socialists, and communists populated the concentration camps, where Hitler had his own companions-in-arms assassinated on June 30, 1934. . . . But, skilful at manœuvring though it is, the bureaucracy is neither perfect master of itself, nor capable of dominating the forces that it evokes against itself. Its realistic, selfish, military, and administrative mentality, devoid of all scruples, causes it to ignore the moral values, which have a certain existence just the same. In the absence of any control, it goes far in its abuses. In the absence of any contact with the rather hostile masses, it remains inclined to panic.

On the eve of the abolition of bread-cards, Kirov, the representative of the Political Bureau in Leningrad and confidant of Stalin, falls, brought down by a revolver-shot in the head, fired by a communist, Leonid Nikolayev. An unprecedented fact : one of the recognized leaders of the party falls under the fire of a party member. Perhaps it would have been wiser to





regard this assault as the act of a desperate person or a madman. (It is quite possible that he was one in reality ; everything is shady in this tragedy ; darkness, police provocation, lies, massacre.) The Government preferred to confer upon it, amid a hideous uproar, the character of a political action. Undoubtedly convinced in its innermost heart that in the eyes of its Bolshevik opponents, the founders of the party, and the October fighters who remained in the party it deserved death, the bureaucracy inculcated an entire tendency. Here, it thought, was a good opportunity to get rid of it.

Let us follow the events. On December 1, the day of the *attentat*, there appears a decree of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets introducing a modification into the penal procedure and providing for the completion of the preliminary examination of all terroristic affairs within ten days and their immediate transmission to military tribunals, judging *in camera* without admitting defence counsel. The death sentences shall be executed immediately after the pronouncement of the verdict. More expeditious and harsher than many despots, the Executive renounced its right of pardon.

On December 2 and 3, the arrest of all the young communists of Nikolayev's circle. Removal of the head of the Leningrad G.P.U., Medvedyev, Fomin, and others. (Later, they will be sentenced to severe penalties for having failed to prevent an attempt at assassination of whose preparation they were aware. The reasons given for this sentence establish the fact that there was police provocation.) The same day more than 100 persons are discovered in the prisons of Leningrad, Moscow, Minsk, and other centres, charged with terrorism. They had been arrested before the *attentat* of Nikolayev, without having themselves committed any *attentat* ; most of them, it appears, for having entered the U.S.S.R. illegally. By retroactive application of yesterday's decree, 114 persons will be





condemned and immediately executed on December 5, 10, and 11.\*

The innocents are shot, but with regard to the guilty one the law that has just been promulgated, limiting the preliminary examination to ten days, is violated. Ten days do not suffice to make Nikolayev and his fellow accused say what it is insisted that they be made to say. The preliminary examination is prolonged to December 20.

On December 16 the arrest in Moscow of fifteen former leaders of the Leningrad Opposition who were readmitted into the party after several recantations. Among them the oldest member of the Central Committee of Lenin's time, the former chairman of the Leningrad soviet and the Communist International, Zinoviev ; and the literary executor of Lenin's works, former chairman of the Moscow soviet, Kamenev. Both of them belonged with Stalin to the ruling triumvirate that ousted Trotsky from power. An official communiqué announces that "their complicity in the *attentat* not being established, they will be deported".

On December 30 the secret trial, sentencing, and execution within the hour of fourteen young Leningrad communists. According to the official communiqué, they confessed to having formed an oppositional group of the Zinoviev tendency. Two of them, knowing of Nikolayev's intentions, are supposed to have confessed that they assisted him. They were all former active militants of the Communist Youth.

In December and January, throughout the U.S.S.R., from 2000 to 3000 members of the party

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\* Here the most bitterly unpleasant reflections force themselves upon you. Let us not recoil from them. Several Bulgarians were shot, and the Sofia Press underlines the forbearance of Göring towards Dimitroff, Popoff, and Taneff ! If, on the morrow of the Marseilles *attentat*, in which Alexander of Yugoslavia lost his life, the Belgrade Government had acted like the Stalinist Government, how many socialists and communists would have been ordered massacred ! Do they imagine that in the class struggle they can give the enemy such examples and such precedents with impunity ?



who once belonged to the Zinoviev tendency are arrested.

On January 18, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Yevdokimov, Safarov, Fedrovo, Gertik, Bakayev, and many of their comrades are sentenced to terms ranging from five to ten years' imprisonment, for having formed a tendency within the party. A hundred other communists are sent into concentration camps or deported. Those are the published figures ; the number of those condemned is actually much higher. According to the unspeakable custom, the accused testified against themselves without restraint or dignity. Nevertheless, whatever may have been their complaisance before the tribunal, they confessed only to the crime of having grumbled a few times.

In December, January, February, in almost all the places of deportation, the most prominent Trotskyists, the majority of whom had recently come out of prison after having spent five years in it (since 1928), are arrested, sent to Moscow, put in confinement. They will soon be subjected by administrative measure to new terms of five years' imprisonment. That is the fate of my Orenburg comrades, Pankratov and Pevzner. Yakovin is arrested in Stalinabad, Solntsev in Western Siberia. Solntsev, one of the most talented of the young leaders of the Opposition, will soon die of the consequences of a hunger strike. . . .

At the end of February begins the purging of Leningrad. The T.A.S.S. agency communicates to the Press that two hundred former nobles, superior officers, gendarmes, and policemen of the old régime have been expelled from the city for infraction of the law on passports. The T.A.S.S. agency lies, as usual. *Thirty, fifty, perhaps a hundred thousand persons* are not just expelled from Leningrad ; they are deported from it to the regions of the Volga, the Urals, Central Asia, Siberia. All of them were previously supplied with regulation passports, which shows that no doubts had been raised about their political





loyalty. Citizens who are not the object of a single charge are sent to the concentration camps by the thousands. The decrees of the G.P.U. simply say : "——is considered socially dangerous and is interned for three [or five] years." The man to the concentration camp—forced labour ; the woman deported. As a rule, they are not former servitors of the old régime, but engineers, scholars, artists, functionaries, workers ; in a word, collaborators of the new régime. Whole families leave, with the sick, the invalids, the pregnant women, the dying. . . . The dying lie on the railways, the pregnant women give birth in the stations.

A French technician, sympathetic to communism, who lived in Leningrad in this period, writes :

Last March and April [1935], I witnessed the arrests in Leningrad, followed by deportations *en masse* ; the total number of the deported, counting their families, must have come close to a hundred thousand. . . . The railway stations were bottled up for two weeks. The railway had to refuse to accept baggage. The unfortunates sold their personal property on the railway platforms, and eight days later the State stores could be seen chock-full of second-hand furniture to sell. . . . I knew several of the deported. They were very honest collaborators in Soviet technique and science, petty bourgeois in origin, who rallied or who were, in any case, very resigned, guilty at most of imprudences of language reported by stool-pigeons. Some of them were former socialists or democrats like those who are called to join the ranks of the People's Front. . . .

I confirm this testimony on every point.\* Some twelve or fifteen hundred of the Leningrad deportees came to Orenburg. Among them were many women,

\* Berger, "U.S.S.R. 1935", in *La Révolution Proletarienne*, September 25, 1935, reproduced as a pamphlet by the Society of the Friends of the Truth About the U.S.S.R. I was personally acquainted with the deportation of two guardians of the Hermitage Museum, Troynitsky and Philosphov, well known in the scholarly world ; of the young architect Tkachenko, soon afterwards pardoned, but whose family was left in deportation ; of Mme Doctor Kerensky, sister of the former head of the provisional Government. . . . Leningrad theatre artists were sent to the sands of Kazakstan, to the hamlet of Toorgay, which can be reached only by caravan, on camel-back.





children, old folk, whom poverty promptly decimated. Whole trains passed by, loaded with poor souls sent into Kazakstan. They were often refused work ; they were generally paid less than the others because they were not free to depart. The G.P.U. sent them into godforsaken villages or transferred them to its sheds in the North. Stalin meanwhile delivered a speech in which the Press saw a turn towards humanism. . . . He recommended to think of the man, he revealed that "the cadres decide everything". We could see this slogan displayed on every wall in letters eighteen inches high. Under these posters I met architects, doctors, jurists, navigators, shipbuilders, high-class engineers, physicists, musicians—deported without knowing why, useless, idle, demoralized, exposed to the vexations of the entirely uncultured local authorities. Persons of German or Polish origin were numerous among these deportees. Others had relatives abroad and thought that a harmless correspondence must have sufficed to render them suspect. . . . The purging of Leningrad seems to have been undertaken on the personal initiative of Stalin.

In May the Societies of the Old Bolsheviks and the Former Hard-Labour Prisoners are dissolved by administrative measure. Their members kept up a certain frankness in speaking within very restricted circles. Several are arrested (notably the anarchists Novomirsky and Sandomirsky), and both clubs are shut down. Vera Figner, Lydia Akimova, Anna Korba, each of whom devoted half a century of exemplary service to the revolution—half of it in convict prison—will no longer have a tranquil corner where they can say, in all intimacy, what they really think.

The Yenukidze affair breaks out in the summer. Aveli Yenukidze, old Georgian Bolshevik, has fulfilled since 1918 the delicate functions of secretary of the Central Executive of the Soviets. He countersigns all the decisions of the presidency of the U.S.S.R. Respected for his unassailable probity, he





is suddenly accused of political demoralization, driven from the party, driven out of public life. He disappears. It is whispered about that he sent packages to his nephew, Lado Yenukidze, young Trotskyist imprisoned for years. That's serious. His friends, his collaborators, their families, their friends, their acquaintances—all are thrown into prison, interned, deported. . . .

The real reasons behind this affair remain obscure. Perhaps old Yenukidze knew too well the history of Bolshevism in the Caucasus, the history that a zealous *arriviste*, Lavrenti Beria, whose sudden rise coincides with the elimination of the old man, is in the process of recasting in order to aggrandize the place occupied in it by the Leader. In the big meetings of the party, the orators of the Central Committee, who recoil from no enormity, affirm that the complicity of Yenukidze in the assassination of Kirov has been demonstrated. . . . And this palace drama serves, in the propaganda carried on abroad, to show how the régime struggles against bureaucratic corruption !

The second Kamenev trial probably took place at about the same period, a secret trial in which 36 accused figured, of whom two were executed (one of them a G.P.U. agent). An alleged plot against Stalin was involved. Kamenev countered the accusation with the most clear-cut denials. He was sentenced to ten years in prison. Anybody who knows the moral physiognomy of this writer, one of the most cultured and most moderate men in the Bolshevik Party, has no need of his denials. The story of this trial was told by Dr. Anton Ciliga, who met Kamenev in the Verkhne-Uralsk prison.

A police purging of the party takes place in the meantime. All the members who, in 1927-28, manifested sympathy for the Opposition, even though they have become right-thinkers for the past six years and been assigned to positions of confidence, are





expelled, arrested, sent to concentration camps or deported, most of them on the charge of Trotskyism. Trotskyism is rediscovered in mathematics, in music, in chess. . . . Several thousand communists are in this batch.

Then begins the official purging of the party, by verification of the individual files. It will send from 150,000 to 200,000 communists to prison. . . .

My conviction, founded upon a knowledge of the men, of the milieu, of the doctrines, is that the *attentat* of Nikolayev was the gesture of an isolated individual. At the very most, the terrorist gave a few confidences to his two or three closest comrades, among whom the G.P.U. acknowledged that there was an informer. The significance of this *attentat* is none the less profound. Supervening in a heavy atmosphere of unanimity, saturated with official optimism, it reveals an inward-driven crisis, and what a crisis ! It also shows the blind alley into which led the tactic of disavowal and apostasy, adopted more out of cynicism than cowardice by the oppositional elements readmitted into the party after Zinoviev and Kamenev.

Revolutionary action cannot be suited to such recantations, undoubtedly dictated by a sort of inquisition but agreed to out of sordid motives foreign to true socialist courage. Woe to those who forget that the proletariat cannot be served by cowardly manoeuvres, by abdications of conscience, by mental reservations, by capitulations and impostures. . . . Let us not be astonished that a youth should reach the point, in this suffocating atmosphere, of despairing of everything save his own despair. Let us not be astonished, either, that the bureaucracy should seize upon this occasion to rid itself of its hidden adversaries. The madness and the cruelty which make it lose all sense of moderation are amazing as a confession of tremendous moral weakness ; but the political calculations, which result in the measures taken against the Zinoviev tendency, are wretchedly, sordidly





correct. Such an opportunity to bury these men will not present itself again.

The point of view of the only Opposition whose intransigence has broken with these practices for eight years is expressed by Trotsky in these words :

The unjustifiable atrocities, born of the bureaucratic methods of collectivization, as well as the abominable brow-beatings and violences inflicted upon the best elements of the proletarian vanguard, inevitably arouse rancour, hatred, the thirst for vengeance. Terroristic states of mind can be seen emerging among the youth. . . .

But

if the bureaucrats, in their self-adoration, imagine that they are making history, we do not share their illusion. It is not Stalin who has created the bureaucratic apparatus, but the apparatus that has created Stalin in its own image. The replacement of Kirov by Zhdanov has changed nothing. . . . The replacement of Stalin by some Kaganovich would produce no greater change. . . .

The bureaucracy established the authority of its new representative figure by publicity methods by which it submits Stalin to a plebiscite every day—Stalin, whose authority, in the long run, is its very own.

That is why individual terrorism is impotent and ridiculous in our eyes. We have not unlearned the first elements of Marxism. The destinies of the bureaucracy and of the Soviet régime depend upon factors of a world historical importance. Only the successes of the international proletariat can restore to the Soviet proletariat its self-confidence.\*

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\* L. Trotsky, "The Terrorism of Bureaucratic Self-Defence", *Bulletin of the Opposition*, in Russian, September 1935.



## VIII

### A DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTION

1936

THE nineteenth year of the revolution could, in its turn, be a year of relaxation. The raising of the material condition of the masses is slightly increased. Measures of tolerance are enacted towards the believers, some churches are going to reopen, they will be permitted to ring their bells. A circular letter moderates the ostracism, with regard to work, against persons who once belonged to the bourgeoisie. The Cossacks, restored to their rights, recover their uniform and are invited to resume their traditions as small proprietors and soldiers. Access to the institutions of higher learning is granted the children of capitalists, tradesmen, priests, officers. The Press announces, finally, the early adoption, on the proposal of the Leader, of a new Soviet Constitution which will be "the most democratic in the world". Universal suffrage, secret ballot, liberties. The draft of it is submitted to the masses. A concert of eulogies immediately rises to the Leader. The journals relate that an academician deems "this monument of Stalinist wisdom to be imperfeetible" and that a provincial piano-teacher compares it with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Those are not exceptional notes, they set the general tone. The constitutional text is translated into several languages, is placed on sale abroad under the title : "A Happy People".

The first article of the new fundamental law defines the U.S.S.R. as "a socialist State of workers and peasants". And the functionaries? It turns out that





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the real holders of power are ignored. Article 10 recognizes the personal property of citizens, protected by the law. Inheritance is guaranteed. So it always was, at least in law. . . .

Article 124 guarantees as in the past—which never prevented anything—religious freedom and the freedom of anti-religious propaganda, which seems to be rather superfluous. Article 125 guarantees the citizens the freedom of speech, of Press, of assemblage, and of demonstration. It is copied without alterations from the previous Constitutions which were never applied. Article 127 guarantees the inviolability of the person : “no person may be placed under arrest except by decision of Court or with the sanction of a State attorney”. Administrative penalties seem to be abolished. But what are the decisions of the Court worth and who is it that guarantees the respect of the Constitution tomorrow more than today? Article 128 establishes the inviolability of domicile and the secrecy of correspondence, already established by international postal conventions, which never prevented the Black Cabinet from reading all correspondence sent abroad and from confiscating a notable part of it. The citizens have the right to work, to rest (paid vacations), to education.

Here is something new, on the contrary, and more serious. Article 126 makes clear that “the most active and politically conscious citizens from among the working class and other strata of the toilers unite in the Communist Party . . . which represents the leading core of all organizations of the toilers, both social and State”. The Constitution thus affirms the leading role of the Communist Party, the only legal party, and implicitly signifies that the non-communist citizens are neither among the most active nor the most conscious. What remains of the freedom of speech, of the Press, of assemblage, of demonstration, where only one single party can exercise them? Actually, this is a tremendous retreat in comparison with the



previous Soviet Constitutions. What remains of universal suffrage if the elections must take place on the slates of a single party and of branch organizations directed by this party? A plebiscitary comedy on the Italian or German style, which will at most permit the elimination, at the bottom, of the candidates who are most odious to the population because of their venality or their brutality.

The structure of the State is profoundly altered. Having disappeared in actuality a long time ago as organs of power, the soviets now disappear in law, reduced to the role of municipalities. The soviet system gave the workers considered as forming the revolutionary class, the political hegemony over the peasant masses; the equality of vote will now permit the bureaucracy to foist upon them, in any given case, rural majorities. The new legislative and executive organ, the Supreme Council, formed by two chambers elected for four years (Council of the Union and Council of Nationalities, equal in rights), is not a parliament because it is formed only by a simulacrum of consultation of the electoral body and is no longer a congress of soviets. . . . The question is why the word "soviets" still figures in the name of the State. It can only be for the purpose of abusing the historical tradition.

Instead of the seven federated republics, there will now be eleven, the Transcaucasian Federation being dissolved: Russia, the Ukraine, White Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakstan, Kirghizistan (comprising a large number of lesser republics and autonomous territories). Article 17 allows each republic the right to separate from the Union. . . . But the People's Commissariats of Defence, of Foreign Affairs, of Foreign Trade, of Ways and Communications, of Posts and Telegraphs, of Water Transport, of Heavy Industry, of Defence Industry are common to all the republics; the apparatus of the Commissariat





of the Interior, a veritable ministry of police, is in fact the most centralized and the most potent, even though there are supposed to be parallel Commissariats of the Interior in all the republics ; the machinery of justice is likewise centralized. . . . The federated republics thus have no more possibility of expressing an intention to separate than the elector will have, for example, to vote socialist, for lack of a socialist candidate.

Abroad, this draft of the Constitution, called "liberal and democratic", is fairly well received. In the country itself, the party opens up a campaign of discussion, persons allow themselves to express criticisms, and the Press soon apprises us that "the counter-revolutionary elements" who thus manifested themselves are being treated as they deserve. . . .

The liberal year suddenly changes face in August. On the 12th appears a decree lowering the age of military service from 21 years to 19 years. The classes of 1914 and 1915 are to be called to the colours in a few days, which yields an increase of immediately available effectives of 500,000 men. The Finnish and Swedish journals announce the deportation *en masse*, as a strategic measure, no doubt, of the inhabitants of the frontier regions of Karelia towards Vologda in the interior. On August 14 a communiqué of the Supreme Procurator of the U.S.S.R. announces that a trial will be opened on the 19th before the Supreme Military Tribunal, against three of the oldest leaders of the party, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Ivan Smirnov, and thirteen of their accomplices, accused of having organized terroristic *attentats*. . . . The mere wording of the accusation leaves no room for doubt : probabilities and truth have nothing to do with the current political operation. Lenin's companions are doomed to capital punishment.

. . . At the Extraordinary Congress of the Soviets in November 1936, the new Constitution is triumphantly adopted by unanimous vote.





## IX

## THE ZINOVIEV-KAMENEV-SMIRNOV TRIAL

AS far back as June 5, *Pravda* had hurled a strange threat of annihilation in the direction of the "Trotskyist monsters", accused vaguely of having turned to "espionage, plots, and terrorism". On August 1, upon a signal from the Political Bureau, the Secret Service launches a campaign. Not another day passes without the Press announcing the discovery of centres of Trotskyist counter-revolution in the party organizations and the editorial boards of the official organs. Many arrests are thus made public ; but a far greater number of them remain secret. In Minsk the editors of the *Zvezda* (*Star*) reveal themselves as counter-revolutionists, as do the Directors of Education and of the Censorship. In Leningrad, entire party committees are affected. In Stalinabad (Tadjikistan), the governmental milieux are decimated. In Armenia too ; there the secretary of the party, Khanjian, blew out his brains rather than lend himself to the proscriptions.

In Leningrad, Moscow, Kharkov, Dniepropetrovsk, Kiev, Baku, Gorky (Nizhni-Novgorod), there is nothing but arrests. Plots are discovered in all the republics of Transcaucasia and Central Asia ; arrests of leaders. A vast case of treason is mentioned in the Ukraine, where, among the guilty, is named one of the founders of the first soviets in that country (together with Eugenie Bosh and Piatakov), who returned by miracle from the shambles of the civil war, Yuri Kotsiubinsky, later secretary of the legations at Vienna and Warsaw. The former Commissar of War of the Petrograd Commune, Kliavs-Klavin, is





arrested ; a cousin of Stalin, Dimitri Djughashvili, is arrested. The language of the journals changes suddenly : it is no longer a question of counter-revolutionary actions, but of treason, of separatism, of terrorism, of espionage, of sabotage. . . .

And it becomes plain that the great political operation in progress differs profoundly from all the preceding ones by the fact that the victims are chosen this time from within the Stalinist party, from among its most faithful and most important functionaries, all of whom, however, belong to the Old Bolshevik generation, the one that accepted all the responsibilities from 1917 to 1923. Even before opening, the Zinoviev-Kamenev-Smirnov trial appears like an attack directed basically at this generation. Perhaps it is also a case of being unable to prepare the death of the former leaders of the party without subduing the entire old party in advance, by means of terror. The innumerable persons accused of Trotskyism are in reality docile functionaries of the Stalinist party who made their career in the struggle against all the Oppositions. . . .

The indictment is published only on the very day when the proceedings are started : not without reason. A hundred times over it involves Trotsky, the indomitable outcast, exiled at the moment in Norway. It is important to make it impossible for Trotsky to reply in the Press or to put to those who accuse him any precise questions that may blow up the indictment before the executions. It is the Kirov affair, already exhausted by two trials and several waves of repression, that rebounds again. Part of those accused in the 1935 trial for moral complicity have disappeared. Why ? In exchange, new culprits have been found, several of whom—men with great names in the history of the revolution—had been arrested twenty-three months before Nikolayev's *attentat*.

They include Ivan Nikitich Smirnov, former precision-machinist, one of the founders of the party,



veteran of the illegal work under the old régime, October fighter, later the inspirer of the Fifth Red Army which challenged Kolchak, president of the Revolutionary Committee that sovietized Siberia, People's Commissar of Posts and Telegraphs, oppositionist of 1923 who rallied to Stalin in 1928, appointed director of the automobile plants of Nizhni-Novgorod ; Sergei Mrachkovsky, one of Trotsky's collaborators during the civil war, in which his name became illustrious ; Ter-Vaganyan, younger by ten years (born in 1893), militant and Marxian theoretician ; an Old Bolshevik administrator, Holtzman. . . . Zinoviev, Kamenev, Yevdokimov, the latter a former worker, one of the defenders of Petrograd in 1919, subsequently secretary of the Central Committee ; Bakayev, who was head of the Cheka in Petrograd in the gravest hours of the civil war : these men were already judged, as we know, in January 1935 for being politically responsible for the assassination of Kirov—a thorough-going investigation had not made it possible to establish against them any evidence of actual complicity—and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

Reingold, former Under-Secretary of State for Finances ; Dreitser, one of the victors over Kolchak in 1919, and one of the heroes of the Polish campaign in 1920 ; Pikel, man of letters, former secretary of Zinoviev, complete the list of the Bolshevik group of the accused. All ex-oppositionists, they have been capitulators since 1928–29. Smirnov and Holtzman retained hidden sympathies for the Trotskyist Opposition. Zinoviev and his friends broke with it, we already know, back in 1928. Five other accused are unknowns. They are young people of German origin or formation, *whom their fellow accused see for the first time* (except for a single one, Moissei Lurye, known to Zinoviev).

The thesis of the indictment, *propped exclusively by the confessions of all the accused*, is this :





At the end of 1932 the ex-Trotskyists readmitted into the party, Smirnov, Mrachkovsky, and Ter-Vaganyan, came together with Zinoviev and Kamenev in order to constitute with them a clandestine central committee (they say a "centre" in order not to profane the respected words "Central Committee") of the Opposition and to prepare terroristic *attentats* against the party leaders. An instruction from Trotsky bade them do it. At the end of 1934 Kirov was actually killed ; this was supposed to be on the order of Zinoviev, who is himself supposed to have received it from Trotsky. Trotsky and his son, Leon Sedov, send to Russia several terrorists from abroad, who obtain the necessary passports and visas with the co-operation of agents of the Gestapo, or Secret Police, of the Reich. These are Olberg, Berman-Yurin, Fritz David, Moissei and Nathan Lurye, who admit having prepared *attentats* against Stalin, Kaganovich, Voroshilov, Zhdanov, Kossior, Postyshev, Ordjonikidze, and others [sic].\*

The trial opens on August 19, at 12.10 p.m., in the large Hall of the Columns of the Moscow House of the Trade Unions, in the presence of a numerous audience, hand-picked by the Secret Service, and of some foreign journalists, three military judges, a secretary, an assistant judge. Ulrich, "Army jurist", one of the oldest judges of the revolutionary tribunals, renowned for his harshness, presides. Vyshinsky indicts. Procurator-General of the U.S.S.R., he is a former Menshevik social democrat who turned at the end of the civil war.

The accused begin by renouncing the aid of counsel. Many of them, however, could have made good use of it. But they have their reasons, too, for not defending themselves, since they will accuse themselves unremittingly. Lawyers, without even

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\* There is no mention of an *attentat* against the president of the Council of People's Commissars, Molotov (an omission remedied in the Novosibirsk trial of November 1936.—TRANSLATOR).



contesting the confessions of their clients, would not have failed to ask the tribunal if the intention to commit a crime, which was not committed, indeed constitutes in the eyes of Soviet law a crime liable to capital punishment; if complicity by virtue of adherence to an unexecuted plan, by virtue of outlining such a plan or promising co-operation in it, can be punished just as severely as a crime really accomplished; if, finally, the failure to execute a projected crime is not a strongly attenuating circumstance. . . . Nine of the accused,\* acknowledged strangers to the Kirov affair, will in fact be sentenced only for *attentats* which did not take place and the mention of which would have provoked smiles if the slightest smile were admissible in all this.

Berman-Yurin was supposed to shoot Stalin at the XIII Plenum of the Executive of the Communist International; but he did not succeed in obtaining an admission card. . . . David, however, did succeed in penetrating the Congress of the Communist International, but he found himself too far away and he lacked resoluteness. . . . Nathan Lurye saw Voroshilov's car in the street but judged that it was moving too fast to be shot at. Elsewhere, in Cheliabinsk, *he thought* of going to a factory where Kaganovich and Ordjonikidze were to speak, in order to shoot them. . . . In Gorky, Olberg was able only to "draw up the plan" of an *attentat* which his arrest prevented him from accomplishing. . . . These things are seriously related in a country where terrorism has had its *virtuosi* and its practised technicians.

The accused who accuse themselves—without producing the slightest material proof of their allegations—of these crimes of intention were always arrested before being able to make an actual gesture. How did they enter the U.S.S.R.? It is known how

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\* Dreitser, Pikel, Olberg, Berman-Yurin, Holtzman, Fritz David, Rein-gold, the two Luryes.





difficult it is for the ordinary mortal to obtain a Soviet visa. Olberg, Lett by birth, speaking Russian and German, was nevertheless able to sojourn in the U.S.S.R. with the passport of a citizen of Honduras, which he declared he had bought with the co-operation of a Hitlerite agent. They are disquieting figures, who reek of intrigue and provocation. *Agents provocateurs* or the playthings of *agents provocateurs* no doubt may be entertained on that score. Three of them once belonged to the German Communist Party and, within this party, to the coterie of Heinz Neumann\*—not to the Opposition.

The only official report of the proceedings published, far from being verbatim, is obviously edited for the purposes of agitation. Each time that a defendant discusses a point of detail—the only thing he permits himself—the report states: "The accused tries in vain to dispute that . . ." How does he try it? Is it really in vain? On the other hand, the fragments of dialogues in which the accusation has the advantage are given almost in full. Almost, for the initiated reader discovers at every point gaps, passages without context, badly fitted patching, contradictions that are slid over. . . . The manner in which the proceedings are conducted is unqualifiable. We are witness to an atrocious comedy. Everything is reduced to a sort of dialogued lecture repeating the texts of the indictment: confessions that vie with one another, petty amplifications of remarks made or heard, not a piece of evidence, not a single witness apart from selected defendants, monstrous gaps through which you shudderingly see that all is false. . . . All the speeches can be summed up in a few lines:

"Yes, we did form a clandestine terroristic organization in 1932. Yes, we did receive and approve the

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\* Neumann was Stalin's man of confidence for a long time. Played a role in the Canton insurrection of 1928. Fallen into disgrace, his group was liquidated by the G.P.U. Reported imprisoned in the U.S.S.R. (?)



instructions from Trotsky to wipe out Stalin and his principal collaborators. Yes, we did prepare the assassination of Kirov, and other *attentats*, which failed. Yes, we do repent, we are aware of the magnificent work of Stalin and our complete defeat as oppositionists. Yes, we did not even have a political platform, because the triumph of the general line left us bankrupts, we did not even have any principles left to defend. . . . Yes, we are the basest of wretches, the accomplices of the Gestapo, the instruments of fascism, we do merit the supreme punishment. Yes, we do now admire the gifted Leader ; we would like to live for him, we do consent to die for him. Only one man in this world is worse than we, more criminal, more fascistic, more vile and more perverse : Trotsky."

There is the tone, and it endures : it endures for whole sessions. A howl of death rises from this hall towards the exile of Norway, rises and rages with such hatred, such perseverance, that the very reality of it is exceeded and you hear nothing more than a horrible raving. . . .

But what is the meaning of these revelations made in open court by Kamenev, Zinoviev, and their confidant Reingold, a new personage who emerged to take up the role of an attentive listener around the old leaders, for years, and to tell everything today ? A pretence is made at being surprised by them, as if everything had not been rehearsed during the preliminary examination. It is suddenly learned that Sokolnikov, who in 1917 collaborated with Lenin in drawing up the programme of the party, who signed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty in 1918, who represented more recently the U.S.S.R. at London, is in the plot, together with Serebriakov, a former secretary of the Central Committee ; Karl Radek, whose inculcation is announced by the journals at the very time they are publishing his envenomed diatribes against the accused and Trotsky ; Bukharin, the most renowned of the





former theoreticians of the party, now director of *Izvestia*, who demanded under his own signature an investigation against himself; Rykov, who succeeded Lenin in the presidency of the Council of People's Commissars, today People's Commissar of Posts, Telephones, and Telegraphs; Tomsy, founder and for many years leader of the Soviet trade-union organization; Smilga, who played such a great role during the October Revolution and the civil war; Piatakov, Under-Secretary of State for Heavy Industry, member of the Central Committee; Uglanov, former secretary of the Central Committee. . . .

It is learned that the Old Bolsheviks Gertik, Grinstein, Radyn, Faivilovich, Hertzberg, Arkus (one of the directors of the State Bank), Sharov, Shliapnikov, Medvediev, Eismont; the heroes of the civil war, Schmidt, Gayevsky, Putna (military attaché in London); the historians and publicists Sliepkov, Anyshev, Seidel, Friedland, Yakovlev; the former head of the Communist International of Youth, Shatskin; Stykhold, who is one of the first group of the organizers of the Red Army—it is learned that all these men and many others are terrorists or the accomplices of terrorists! Most of them are in prison; many of them, like Eismont, Riutin, Smilga, since 1932-33. . . .

A veil falls, the truth bursts out in full. All the surviving members of the Central Committee that made the October Revolution, Stalin excepted, are indicted. The whole Bolshevik Old Guard is compromised. It is the trial of a generation and of an epoch. A journal of émigrés will be able to publish this sarcastic cartoon: two citizens standing under a monument of Lenin ask, "What is he saying? He is repenting for having collaborated with Trotsky. . . ." Another veil falls at a stroke, the police machination appears in all its hideousness. Why *sixteen* accused on these benches? Who has chosen them? How? The prosecutor Vyshinsky declares that twelve men accused of the same plot are the object of a separate investigation.



Why? Thirty-eight other accomplices are mentioned in the course of the hearings. The very numbering of the dossiers cited shows that the preliminary hearing was directed at thirty-eight inculpatated persons, at least. But only the sixteen present consented to lend themselves to this stage-play. The others are bargaining or resisting, they are not yet ready.

The conditions under which the secret examination must have been held may be guessed by observing that the depositions of the most disquieting young figures, like Olberg, run to as high as 262 pages (and it is on the last page, at his last interrogation, that he suddenly remembers his relations with the Gestapo !); whereas those of the Old Bolshevik leaders run between 10 and 32 pages. The examination of the former began at the beginning of the year. Ter-Vaganyan, on the contrary, made his confessions only on August 14—that is, the very day when the prosecutor signed the indictment, less than a week before the trial. Only at the very last moment was he skewered with the others to be shot. . . .

The scenario is so sloppy that it does not bear the slightest examination. Did the terrorist central committee (the “centre”) exist? According to the indictment, it is supposed to have been formed at the *end of 1932*: from certain depositions it is seen that it nevertheless ceased its activity in the *autumn of 1932*. Before it was formed? Smirnov says that it never met. . . . Zinoviev says that it existed “actually up to 1936”, when all its alleged members were in prison, some since the last days of 1932, others since the end of 1934. The prosecutor, in his indictment, corrects it and affirms “up to 1934”. . . . Zinoviev exaggerates! But another accused exaggerates still more in his confessions. Holtzman, an Old Bolshevik who looks like a paunchy business man, who bears himself with dignity, who, after the verdict, will refuse to solicit a pardon, confesses to having made an appointment with Trotsky’s son, Sedov, for the Hotel Bristol in





Copenhagen ; to having gone with Sedov, still in Copenhagen, to see Trotsky and there receiving instructions on the necessary terrorism.

We shall soon learn that there is no Hotel Bristol in Copenhagen ; and that Sedov never went to this city, where Trotsky spent only eight days in 1932 amid a well-known circle which can provide not a few witnesses. We will learn that it can easily be proved that Sedov was in Berlin at the time, from which he had daily telephonic conversations with his father, a list of which can be found on the communications registry kept at both ends of the wire. The thought comes to mind that Holtzman gave these details in order to facilitate the refutation of the lie that was forced on him.

These are the only verifiable precise details in this affair, for great care is exercised not to ask for any. If everything had not been kept secret until the last moment, if the trial and the execution had not been hurried through in a few days, Trotsky, in the foreign Press, would have been able to put simple questions like the following to the *agents provocateurs* : "You affirm that you saw me on this date and at that place. Did I wear a beard or not ? Describe the hotel, the room, the surroundings. . . ." But when he was first enabled to read the "confessions" that dealt with him, the accuser-accused were already dead.

One of the most dubious of the accused, Olberg, citizen of Honduras and charged with teaching in Stalinabad, finally brings proof that the terrorist instruction of Trotsky exists. Sedov had him read it in Berlin : "In the message that he wrote when he was deprived of his Soviet nationality, Trotsky affirmed the necessity of killing Stalin." At last we have proof ! This message of Trotsky to the Executive of the Soviets, dated Prinkipo, March 1, 1932, was published in various languages. Some of the lines have a prophetic ring today :





Oh, to be sure [wrote the outcast] Stalin has not yet said his final word. We know his arsenal : Lenin weighed him and appraised him. But all that he has left is personal vengeance. . . . You know Stalin as well as I do. Many of you, in your conversations with me or those close to me, have judged him many times without illusions. The strength of Stalin has always lain not in himself but in the bureaux : in himself, at most, to the extent that he is the most consummate incarnation of the automatism of the bureaux. . . . Stalin has led you into a blind alley. You cannot emerge from it without liquidating Stalinism. You must trust to the working class, give the vanguard of the proletariat the possibility of revising the whole Soviet system, from top to bottom, by free criticism. The last urgent advice of Lenin must finally be put into effect : remove Stalin !

The terrorist instruction is therefore Lenin's. The prosecutor, Vyshinsky, insists upon making two of the accused admit that the Lenin's word *remove* means *kill* when it is pronounced by Trotsky. Ter-Vaganyan confesses to having received from Trotsky the advice to "fight the leadership of the party violently". He is made to admit that *violently* meant "by assassination". And there you are.

These reports are edited with such dishonesty that it is impossible for us to know definitely if Smirnov\* did confess or not, and what it is that he did confess. Because of his high moral authority, the man who could be called the Lenin of Siberia, the former head of the Fifth Red Army that beat Kolchak, the man who, together with Trotsky, saved the young republic in the battle of Sviashsk, is indispensable here. A former oppositionist who went over in 1928, his sympathies for the Opposition are genuine ; he once saw Sedov in Berlin, he collaborated secretly in the *Bulletin* published abroad. The indictment declares that he acknowledged having belonged to the clandestine "centre", having remained in touch with Trotsky up to 1933, having received from

\* The Old Bolshevik Party counted three Smirnovs, all three enjoying a great authority. Ivan Nikitich suffered the fate that is known ; the other two, one of whom belongs to the extreme left (Vladimir) and the other to the right, are in prison.





Trotsky, through his son Sedov, the instruction to resort to terrorism.

At the session of August 20, according to the official report, he replies in the affirmative to the question: "Did you receive from Trotsky the instruction to resort to terrorism?" This seems to be categorical, but exactly fifteen lines before we see that "Smirnov tries to deny everything"; and forty lines farther on that he "tries to deny having transmitted the instruction", which, moreover, is no longer an instruction of Trotsky, but a personal opinion expressed by Trotsky's son. These are strange scenes; we are on the brink of a revelation or of a rupture of something. The prosecutor reads a fragment of Smirnov's deposition (confession) at the preliminary examination of August 13 (the eve of the publication of the indictment, and from this date alone it follows that Smirnov's resistance was broken only at the last moment, probably under the pressure of an affair already entirely concocted in the name of State reasons). "Well?" asks the prosecutor. Smirnov is silent. The prosecutor bids him re-read himself, aloud, several lines of the deposition. Smirnov obeys, in a mechanical voice, and they pass on. How can you fail to have the impression before this scene that the accused was on the point of breaking the pact that bound him to the accuser?

From now on Smirnov is lost; even though he was arrested twenty-three months before the Kirov affair itself: this troublesome witness must not live. It is not finished: "For three hours," say the newspapers of August 21, "Smirnov does all he can to duck responsibility. . . ." The report becomes an inextricable tissue of contradictions and patchwork. The prosecutor having committed the imprudence of asking the accused, "When did you leave the 'centre'?" Smirnov replies: "I didn't think of leaving it because there was nothing to leave. . . ."

Vyshinsky: "Didn't the 'centre' exist?"





Smirnov : "What are you talking about?"

This is said contemptuously—the Russian words are much more significant—everything collapses. . . . The prosecutor appeals to his assistants, the other accused. Did the "centre" exist? They reply in chorus : Yes, yes, yes, yes. And the report resumes : "Smirnov again tries to deny that . . ." And so on throughout. When he is asked if his fellow accused are lying, he is silent. He has the air of saying : "I am playing the part agreed upon, but don't expect me to put my heart into it. . . ." And he lets fall, in Zinoviev's direction, this phrase full of contempt : "Zinoviev speaks like this because he is Zinoviev"—and that means : a man who never stands up.

On the other hand, what zeal the other accused display ! So much so that they get into a fix at every turn. Lucky that there are no defence lawyers ! They are talking about a fantastic letter of Trotsky's on terrorism and defeatism, received from abroad and written in sympathetic ink on a page of a magazine. Dreitser received it, he said, with the writing brought out, and sent it 4000 kilometres farther to Mrachkovsky, in Kazakstan. Both of them recognized the writing. Good ; but the second recipient also declares that he received this letter written in sympathetic ink *not brought out* ! Nobody pursues the point. I pass over many secondary episodes in order to keep to the essentials. Never does the complaisance of the victims stand out clearer than when they are asked for the reasons that made them act : "The feeling of our defeat and the triumph of Stalin", they reply. Kamenev, old, white-haired intellectual, the most refined politician among them, perhaps the most authentic statesman there has yet been in Russia, replies subserviently as it was so obviously agreed in advance that he would reply :

"The thirst for personal power."

And the only word that ought to be on every lip which, by itself, implies a capital accusation, a





fighting platform, a sufficient explanation of the trial—the word *bureaucracy*—is not once pronounced! All the open or covert Oppositions see in the bureaucratization of the régime the ruin of the proletarian revolution. The old leaders of the party who are here have written and said it more than once. But, faithful to the commitments made, these politicians do not put a single political question. And you understand why not one oppositionist, not one authentic Trotskyist, figures in the trial! Yet there are no less than half a thousand of them, in captivity for eight years. Not at all complaisant. There are some inculcated in affairs linked with this one, for the aim is to get rid of them; but they will be strangled in the dark. They will not be permitted to explain themselves before the foreign journalists, have no doubt on that score.

Hours are taken up in speaking of the Kirov affair. Bakayev, Zinoviev, Kamenev admit that they prepared this *attentat* down to its minutest detail. In the course of the two investigations of 1934–35 they succeeded in deceiving the inquisition even while confessing what it asked them to confess at that time. . . . But why isn't there brought forward in court the letter written by the murderer of Kirov to explain his action, a letter that has never been published? Why isn't there once mentioned the attempt that was made so maladroitly at that time to implicate Trotsky in the affair by resorting to the services of a Lettish consul? Why are there not once mentioned the facts, which have remained secret, about the trial of the heads of the Leningrad G.P.U., sentenced at that time for not having prevented the act of Nikolayev the preparations for which they were acquainted with? Finally, why is there such a complete silence on the second trial of Kamenev, a rigorous secret to this day, which ended on July 27, 1935, with a sentence of ten years' imprisonment, but which is referred to in the indictment without the slightest



comment? \* So it was three times that they tried to break the resistance of old Kamenev ; first trial in January 1935, second trial in July 1935, third trial in August 1936. . . .

Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Reingold accuse the former groups of the workers' Opposition, of the right wing of the party, of the left-wing Stalinists, one after another, of having been in solidarity with them. Let us quote Kamenev : "Tomsky told me : Rykov thinks as I do . . . and Bukharin too, but Bukharin, for tactical reasons, wants to gain the confidence of the party. . . ." After three days of violent discussions in his party cell, old Tomsky, hounded by his denouncers, who insult him in the customary meeting-room phrases, returns home and puts an end to his days. A hopeless situation. Throw light on it? Impossible. Defend oneself? What for? Undergo this horrible cat-and-mouse game, confess what they demand you confess, humiliate and debase yourself, begin all over again, go to prison? Everything is finished, the reaction is indeed the stronger, farewell revolution. Tomsky killed himself on August 23, the very day of the opening of a hearing against him, Rykov, and Bukharin (the latter two will benefit by a no-cause !). It is a dignified end. †

The examination takes hour after hour to go over the same material without adding anything to it except a luckless excursion into the political domain. In order the better to prove that Trotsky advocated defeatism in case of war, Vyshinsky exclaims that . . . But I had better translate it, it is too brilliant :

"But perhaps all this is an invention, imagination, empty chatter of the accused who are trying to say as much as they can against the others in order to mitigate their own fate ? No ! This is not an invention, not

\* See Chapter VII.

† Along the road followed by Stalin this is the third famous suicide. Skrypnik, Old Bolshevik, People's Commissar in the Ukraine, Stalinist from the beginning, blew out his brains in 1933 ; Lominadse, once the leader of the young Stalinist left wing, in 1935.





fantasy ! It is the truth ! Who does not know that Trotsky, together with the accused Zinoviev and Kamenev, several years ago formulated his Clemenceau thesis, that they said that in case of war they would wait until the enemy was within eighty kilometres of the capital in order to take up arms against the Government of the Soviets, to overthrow it ? This is an historical fact. It cannot be denied. And *that is why* it must be admitted that the depositions of Berman-Yurin and Fritz David in this connection correspond to the truth. . . ." (*Izvestia*, August 23, p. 2, col. 8.) The *that is why* which I underlined is really rather good. But what is this Clemenceau thesis, "defeatist and insurrectionary" ? Was Clemenceau a defeatist and did he take up arms against the Government of France ?

Asked in 1927 about the attitude that the Opposition would observe towards the ruling bureaucracy in case of war, Trotsky replied, in substance : "We would do what Clemenceau did against Poincaré in France. The Germans were at Noyon, the War was being lost, but the criticism of Clemenceau did not disarm the country ; quite the contrary. We would criticize mercilessly a Government which could only sabotage the defence of the revolution, we would end by putting the bureaucrats in their place and carry on the war as revolutionists." At that time the Opposition excluded all resorting to violence or to mass action ; it took up its position inside the party and sought to be the instrument of a reform of the régime. It had to be muzzled before the "Clemenceau thesis" could be converted with impunity into a defeatist and insurrectionary thesis. This gives us a good idea of the value of the political arguments of the prosecutor.

We certainly do not know just what Smirnov did confess. The summation says textually : "Smirnov denies with the greatest obstinacy. He has only admitted having been one of the leaders of the illegal Trotskyist centre. . . . Even then, he confessed it in a



humorous form. . . .” “Yet I have every reason to contend”, continues the prosecutor, “that he confessed to the following . . .”, and that is to having transmitted a terroristic instruction which he denies having transmitted. . . . You can perceive the procedure of logical analysis—in which the logic, by the way, is very peculiar—which is used to elaborate such confessions. “You confess to being a Trotskyist, and Trotskyist means defeatist and terrorist ; hence, you confess to being a defeatist and terrorist. . . .”

Smirnov is embarrassing. Imprisoned for almost two years prior to the Kirov affair, how is he to be inculcated? The prosecutor devotes more than an hour to him. And all of a sudden, from a few words in his peroration, we learn that the accused said in the hearing a mass of things that are not to be found in the published trial reports, that they made allusions to the terrorism of the great party of the People’s Will which executed Alexander II in 1881. Didn’t they recall that Lenin’s brother, Alexander Ulianov, was hanged in 1887 for having participated in a plot against Alexander III? Here, Vyshinsky raises his voice. “These comparisons do not bear criticism. As Bolsheviks, we have always been the opponents of individual terrorism, but we pay homage to the sincerity and the heroism of the terrorists of the People’s Will. . . . But you, you are a band of arrant counter-revolutionists, you represent the vanguard of the international counter-revolution. You aligned yourselves against the freedom and the happiness of the people ! . . . I demand, Comrade Judges, that these mad dogs be shot, one and all !”

The journals clamour on that day : *Shoot the mad dogs !*

The accused now rise, one after another, to pronounce their last words. They are new indictments of themselves, of Trotsky, new acts of impassioned contrition before the party and its Leader. They proclaim that they deserve death, that they merit no





indulgence, that they ought to be shot, that it would be doing a good deed to shoot them !

Yevokimov exclaims : "We were bandits, assassins, fascists, agents of the Gestapo. I thank the prosecutor for having demanded for us the only penalty that we deserve."

Dreitser, Reingold, Bakayev speak the same language. Bakayev, convulsed, leans in the direction of Zinoviev, aged, wasted, his mane like a woman's, and upbraids him for having brought them all to this. . . .

Pikel expatiates on the ideological errors of Zinoviev, recalls that he himself was once a prosecutor and, in that capacity, a collaborator of Ulrich, who is judging him this evening, and suddenly launches into an exalted eulogy of the Stalinist draft of the Constitution, which has revealed to him the "true soul of Bolshevism". . . .

Kamenev and Zinoviev once more denounce Trotskyism—in which they are probably sincere, having spent a large part of their lives in combating it—proclaim their indefectible attachment to the party, renew their confessions, express their shame at being there by the side of dubious figures who come from police stations, like the Olbergs, Berman-Yurins, Davids, and Luryes. And there, too, they must be fully sincere.

"I adjure my sons", says Kamenev, "to employ their lives in defending our great Stalin !" He grows indignant, in passing, at the fact that the foreign Press will exploit this trial. . . . "I am fifty-four years old and I am not afraid of death. Not having known how to live to serve the revolution, I am ready to serve it by dying." And these words, for me, ring true ; they are true.

Zinoviev takes upon himself all the responsibility for the plots. Holtzman speaks contemptuously of the fascist scamps, his fellow accused, and adds that he asks for no clemency. Since all the reports are abridged





and adulterated, it is hard to extract the true meaning of the words. Holtzman behaved with dignity, he seems to have been a genuine oppositionist. His last words are perhaps a slap in the face of the *agents provocateurs* and they say clearly that he expects nothing from the judges.

The reports of the last words of Smirnov are also peculiar. According to the Soviet journals, he reproaches himself for having resumed the struggle against the party in 1931, denies all responsibility for what might have been done after his arrest (and nothing was done before it), bids his comrades break with Trotskyism, "for our country has no other road but the one it is following, has not and cannot have any other leaders than those whom history has given it. . . ." A reserved resignation to accomplished facts. . . . "I accept in advance the verdict of my party."

The Olbergs, Davids, and others implore the clemency of the judges.

. . . . .

Even before the trial a campaign began in the factories, where the party secretaries had resolutions voted for with enthusiasm, demanding the death penalty for the enemies of the people. All the journals are inundated with reports of this kind, which they publish :

At the Stalin automobile plant in Moscow, the non-party worker Semenova says : "The Trotskyist-Zinovievist monsters sought to darken our happy life . . ." We demand that they be annihilated, they must no longer crawl on our land !

The writer Count Alexis Tolstoy, White émigré at the beginning of the revolution, uses the same language at the assembly of men of letters of Leningrad.

Little Eva Nerubina, schoolgirl in Stalino, writes a poem that ends with these words : "Let us shoot





them like dogs !” Transmitted by telephone the same day to *Izvestia*, it is printed in more than a million copies.

From the depths of the Far East, by telegraph, it is reported that the old Chinese workers Shi Gang-li and Chiang Lian-siay declare : “Trotsky is a dog !”

A woman worker of Cheliabinsk exclaims : “We love our great Stalin like a first-born son, like a beloved father. . . . I ask for only one thing : wipe out these monsters !”

The miners of the Stalin pit write to the “Great Leader of the great people, to the friend and beloved teacher, to the hope of toiling humanity, Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin”, that he must, “with tenfold vigilance, track down and annihilate these wretches”.

The *Izvestia* editorial of August 23, probably written by Bukharin, asserts that “They have nothing in their souls unless it be a bestial hatred, matured in ten years, against *Our sun Stalin* and his genius, victorious over counter-revolutionary impurity. . . .” “There will be no pity shown !” (The verdict has not yet been pronounced, let us note, at the moment when the official organ of the Government affirms it so categorically.) “. . . The entire people demands that . . . these mad dogs be shot, one and all !” These words recur everywhere. No doubt the Leader himself had pronounced them and approved them for propaganda. In these days he has become at once “*Our sun*” and “*Our well-beloved*”, as he is called by the active members of the party who assemble in Moscow and by peasants who send him a message.

The journals unleash a similar campaign for an investigation to probe to the bottom, relentlessly, the complicity of the other surviving companions of Lenin, Bukharin, Rykov, Uglanov, Radek, Piatakov. There is no longer a question of Tomsky, as if the investigation into his case has become superfluous. The professors Speransky, Lavrentiev, Oberhardt, Razenkov—and others—supplicate Stalin not to





forget that "science regards HIM as a leader, a well-beloved father, a banner . . .".

"They are beasts with human faces," says a worker of Lipetzik, "they must be treated like bandits. . . ." The academician Komarov is also of this opinion.

Friedrich Adler, de Brouckère, Citrine, Schevenels, having sent a brief telegram to the Soviet Government in the names of the Labour and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions, asking that the accused be given the guarantees of justice considered normal in civilized countries, are treated as accomplices of the terrorists and of the Gestapo by *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. "The only ones who can take up the defence of these blackguards—the accused—are rascals who have lost all conscience and who voluntarily accept the shameful role of supplicants of the head of the Gestapo, Himmler."

In Russia, Adler and de Brouckère would not be able to escape ten years of imprisonment as "accomplices of the — dogs". Eight academicians and fifteen professors demand the death penalty for the accused and praise the "great beloved sage, our Leader" . . . .

The Artist Emeritus of the Republic, Klimov, writes, enchanted at having read the verses of the schoolgirl Eva Nerubina : "Yes, let us shoot them like dogs . . ."

The worker Stepanov declares : "I am seventy years old and I have been working for fifty-two years in this factory. . . ." From the heights of his half-century of servitude he demands that these rascals be annihilated so thoroughly that not a trace of them is left.

Former ambassador of the Soviets, one of the men of October, one of the good fighters of the civil war, an old friend of Trotsky, one of the oppositionists of 1923-27, the same Antonov-Ovseyenko who was the first to enter the Winter Palace at the head of the sailors, writes that since 1928, when he had recognized





his mistake, he declared himself ready to shoot his former political friends.

Piatakov, himself also a former oppositionist, Rakovsky, linked to Trotsky by twenty years of friendship, deported for seven years, and rallied to Stalin only yesterday—both kneel to worship the Leader and demand, in terms that you blush to quote, the death of their former comrades. . . .

A death resolution, voted in the factories, proclaims that "the life of our leader Stalin is the most precious life for humanity". The editor of *Izvestia* writes in his editorial of August 24 that "the true humanism, the only humanism, lies in the defence of the régime which, under the leadership of the great Stalin, assures the new life, the free life, to millions of men". And he concludes by quoting an opportune phrase of the great proletarian humanist, Maxim Gorky : "If the enemy does not surrender, you knock him down."

Who would dare, under the fire of this totalitarian artillery, to abstain from voting for a resolution—only to disappear the same night, as an accomplice of Friedrich Adler, of de Brouckère, of the Gestapo, of the terrorists ? In Rostov-on-Don, the professor of sociology Khalilov says before his students that he has found this trial "peculiar". This seems to be suspicious, the phrase is promptly reported, a newspaper of September 1 announces, in relating the incident, the arrest of this "terrorist Trotskyist".

. . . . .

The verdict is rendered on August 24, at two in the morning, as was to be expected : death for all. According to the law of December 1, 1934, verdicts of death pronounced in affairs of terrorism are not subject to appeal or recourse and must be executed forthwith. The sixteen listen, impassive ; several of them—dubious supernumeraries—have "a flippant manner", according to the journalists.



I shall never forget [writes the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*] the expression of Zinoviev, his head bowed, his hands joined as if in prayer, as Ulrich read the sentence in a dry voice, in short pithy sentences. . . .

With the reading terminated, are they going to conduct the victims directly to the place of execution? No, a stay of seventy-two hours is granted them, an exceptional and illegal act, so that they may address an appeal for clemency to the Executive of the Soviets. Holtzman and Ivan Smirnov refuse to do so. The Executive is old Kalinin, their comrade of yesterday, who takes his orders from Stalin. No doubt the Leader deems it wise not to give any, but since he does not give the order for clemency, the death sentence becomes mandatory. Besides, all this has already been deliberated by the Political Bureau. Nadyezhda Constantinova Krupskaya, according to certain accounts, writes to Stalin to ask him for a pardon for men whom she has known for so many years; he has her answered that he cannot put any pressure upon the highest magistracy of the State. Really, he cannot. . . . This timid intervention will soon be expiated by Lenin's widow when she signs a hideous statement on the execution of the terrorists. "You've got to, Nadyezhda Constantinova, because the Socialist Press is exploiting your name. . . ." Poor woman.

The Executive having rejected the appeals, the execution takes place at the dawn of the 25th, even before the expiration of the legal stay. The reason for this precipitateness seems to lie in the fear of foreign intercession.

As a rule, the condemned is called upon at night to quit his cell. He does not know where he is going, the turnkey does not know where he is conducting him. The elevator brings him down to the main floor. There, when he is made to take a cement staircase, powerfully illuminated, he begins to understand. . . . He follows a cement corridor bordered by gutters. He knows nothing; as a rule he does not even know





that he has been condemned to die, if the G.P.U. has invoked the death penalty administratively. A man—who himself knows only one thing, and that is that he must kill the one who is being brought to him—emerges behind him on padded feet and sends a bullet through his head. The water-spouts are opened, the body rolls into a trap or is pushed into a recess. Next !

It may be that it was not even deemed necessary to apprise the sixteen of the rejection of their appeal. Called by surprise, before the expiration of the legal stays, they understood only at the last minute. But in this last minute they perceived many things ; and few men have died with such frightful bitterness—betrayed and tricked. . . . No witnesses ; the cellar smothers all sounds ; a few reliable executioners act without knowing anything exactly. Silence, secrecy.

I was confined in the Lubianka when the thirty-five functionaries of the Commissariat of Agriculture were executed there for a bizarre affair of sabotage and intelligence with Poland (March 1935). No sound disturbed the silence of the perfect prison.

The newspapers of August 25 print on the first page the smiling portraits of the Leader at the Tushino airport, where an aerial celebration took place. In small type, in the bottom corner of the fourth page, under the miscellaneous section, a notice records the fact that justice has taken its course.

Since it is over [writes *Pravda*], we breathe better, the air is purer. Our muscles acquire a new vigour, our machines turn faster, our hands are nimbler. . . . We shall see new industrial records. . . .

It was never before known that blood lubricated machinery so well. . . .

*Izvestia* says that a “storm of approval is passing over the country ; the workers are thanking the Supreme Tribunal by the millions”. Their will is done !



Had not Mme Doctor Sophie Bortman, children's doctor, written : "No mercy for the enemies of the people" ? The Government listened to the doctor. The workers of the dramatic theatre named after Gorky approve. Peasants of Voronezh approve. "Long live the great friend, the father and the teacher of all the workers. . . ."

The *Pioneers' Pravda* expresses the joy of the children. Colony No. 5, formed of abandoned orphans, thanks the "beloved Chekists" for having shot the bandits and declares : "This verdict is ours." Little ones, boys and girls eight and ten years old, exclaim with joy : "Let these dogs perish. . . ."—"Oh, how we should have liked to shoot them ourselves !" And they send a message of affection to the well-beloved Leader.

Alexis Stakhanov exults. Mary Soban, member of the Communist Youth, the daughter of an American worker, relates before an audience of Rostov workers, that when her mother and she heard the loud-speaker announce the verdict, they could no longer contain themselves and they clapped their hands. "So great was the satisfaction of this honest proletarian family." The writers are content. The artists applaud. The woman worker Yevdokimova of the "Commune de Paris" plant in Moscow exclaims, happily : "These dogs died like dogs !" (A Yevdokimov has just been shot.) Stakhanovists deplore the fact that Trotsky is alive. The academician Williams considers that the verdict was "dictated by the noble sentiments of the proletarian humanism in the interest of the happiness and the freedom of millions of workers".

Why did a social democrat have to come along to darken the bright memories of this day ? Professor Tandler, Viennese physician, refugee in Moscow, died suddenly upon learning of the execution. You can clearly recognize there the feebleness of a petty-bourgeois nature. . . . He must have been, at bottom, a "masked enemy".



## X

### EXPLANATION AND SEQUEL OF A CRIME

THE correspondent of the Havas News Agency, having attended the trial, gives his opinion in circumspect terms. He thinks that the accusations and the confessions are not entirely devoid of foundation ; but that it cannot be said up to what point the accusations are founded, and that, in any case, the element of truth they do contain has been widely exploited for definite purposes. . . .

Bowdlerized though the official accounts of the trial are, they reveal to the reader who knows the men, their ideas, and their struggles, the modicum of truth that there is in this whole affair. The Old Bolsheviks dedicated a black hatred—and still do—to Stalin, whom they dread even more than they honour him by command—a hatred based on resentment, fear, and political hostility. They had capitulated to him in vain, they could not meet together intimately without grumbling, without asking themselves how it would all end, what to do—what to do, despairingly, in order to get out of the blind alley.

The whole spurious plot so laboriously erected by the inquisitors becomes clear when one reopens an authentic enough document dated July 11, 1928. It consists of notes written down by Kamenev on his conversations with Bukharin, meant to be sent to Zinoviev, then in exile in Voronezh. (The Trotskyist Opposition got hold of it and published it in a tract.)

Bukharin arrived, agitated, "shivering, his lips trembling" ; he seemed to be "at his wits' end". "The G.P.U. is trailing me and watching you. Let



nobody know that we have seen each other !” What does he say ?

*“Stalin’s policy is fatal for the revolution. He is leading us to the abyss. . . . He is an intriguer who subordinates everything to his thirst for power. He changes his theory in order to get rid of somebody at the proper moment.”*

On these intensely tragic pages, certain lines are stained with blood today, ten years later. The besetting refrain : “He will strangle us all.”

*“What is to be done? The subjective conditions are maturing in the central committee for removing Stalin, but they are not yet ripe. . . . Stalin knows only vengeance . . . the dagger in the back. Remember his theory of sweet revenge. . . .”*

(One summer’s eve, talking frankly with Dzerzhinsky and Kamenev, Stalin is supposed to have said : “To choose the victim, to prepare every detail of the blow, to gratify an implacable revenge and then to go to bed. . . . There is nothing sweeter in the world.”)

Bukharin compares him with Genghist Khan, speaks of the police régime, enumerates all those among the leading figures of the party who dream of removing Stalin but do not yet dare, who flinch at the last moment, who take fright as soon as it is spoken of. Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky, Uglanov, still in power, already feel themselves lost. . . .

*“Aren’t we finally going to combine against him, dare to defend ourselves ? . . . He will strangle us. . . .”*

No, there is no plot, there is no terrorism. A plot was impossible, in this atmosphere of proscription, of police surveillance, of informing, of doctrinal divisions. No plot—but hatred, fear, and hopeful waiting, behind the appearances—which deceived nobody—of fidelity to the well-beloved Leader.





Let us try not to reason here as readers of detective stories and let us bear in mind that we are dealing with political people *par excellence*. All those who knew a Zinoviev in the international congresses and a Trotsky in exile know that, for these men, the personal life is not separable from political action and that the latter takes precedence over everything ; know that men of this training are incapable of thinking otherwise than as Marxian politicians, and that, on the other hand, they are capable of breaking instantly with anyone who departs to any serious extent from Marxian methods. But so long as we remain faithful to these methods, *remove Stalin* means to break with the bureaucratic policy of the Leader, to drive him from power. It is a matter of a political action and not of an assassination, which would very likely have an opposite result, since it would not affect the bureaucratic machine and would only decapitate a clique which is really provided with many heads. On the other hand, assassination would politically discredit its authors. The General Secretary suddenly placed in a minority, resigning in an instant, locked up for greater security—that is what was dreamed of in so many of the secret meetings. It would actually have been a political event and it did seem possible, since all the old men of the early days feared him and wished for his elimination. An assassination, on the other hand, would have transferred the power to a Kaganovich (or a Voroshilov), propped up by the High Commissar of the Secret Service, and would have permitted precisely the Stalinist coterie to rid itself, by means of repressions, of its political opponents.

At the moment of the Kirov affair, imprisoned Trotskyists—whom I know—asked themselves if it was not a Stalinist second edition of the “Röhm stroke”. Finally, one can follow Trotsky’s reactions, day by day, in the numerous articles he published. Quoting an old article which he gave in 1911 to the *Kampf*, a Viennese socialist magazine, he writes :



"Whether or not the terrorist act, even if 'successful', throws the ruling circles into turmoil, depends upon the concrete political circumstances. In any case, such turmoil can only be of short duration ; the capitalist State is not founded upon ministers and cannot be destroyed with them. The classes it serves will always find new men ; the mechanism remains whole and continues its work.

"But the turmoil which the terrorist act introduces into the ranks of the toiling masses themselves is far more profound. If it is enough to arm oneself with a revolver to reach the goal, what need is there for the strivings of the class struggle ? If people in high positions can be intimidated by the noise of an explosion, what need is there then for a party ?"

To this article, which counterposed to terrorist adventurism the method of preparing the proletariat for the socialist revolution, I can add nothing today, twenty-three years later.

On the act that cost Kirov his life, Trotsky delivered the following judgment :

The subjective motivations of Nikolayev and his partisans are a matter of indifference to us. Hell itself is paved with the best of intentions. So long as the Soviet bureaucracy has not been removed by the proletariat, a task which will eventually be accomplished, it fulfils a necessary function in the defence of the workers' State. Should terrorism of the Nikolayev type spread, it could, aided by new, unfavourable conditions, render service only to the fascist counter-revolution.\*

Since Plekhanov's break with the future terrorists of the People's Will (*Narodnaya Volya*) around 1879, this has always been the inflexible doctrinal attitude of the Russian Marxists, even in the epochs when terrorism, pursued by the Social Revolutionary Party, proved effective in the struggle against the autocracy. Trotsky represents in this case a half-century of tradition. Let us take note that he grants the Stalinist bureaucracy a function, useful in spite of everything, in the defence of the proletarian State. We know that he has not hesitated to break, in the course of recent years, with all those among the militants of the international Opposition who expressed doubts on

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\* Trotsky, *The Kirov Assassination*, pp. 16 f. (New York, 1935.)





the proletarian nature of the Soviet State or who advocated, with regard to this State, any other attitude but that of unconditional defence in the event of war.

The policy of Zinoviev and Kamenev consisted in getting back into the good graces of the party in order to be present on the day of the regroupment. However baffling may be their lying confessions—that extraordinary political and moral suicide that made their execution possible—the explanation is clear to anybody who knows these men, and it is contained in a few words : devotion to the party, usefulness.\*

Founders of the Old Bolshevik Party, unable to conceive of living outside its ranks, they professed that it was necessary to stay inside at all costs, even at the cost of forswearing thoughts, of abdicating all dignity (is one's dignity put on the scales when the interests of the revolution are involved ?), of feigning to bow to the officially worshipped Leader, regarded in their innermost heart as the worst grave-digger of the revolution. Hence their reiterated capitulations, their double game of being and yet not being oppositionists, their infernal position as perpetual suspects. In order the better to discredit them—for these men, the only surviving companions of Lenin, remained formidable rivals because of their basic attachment to Bolshevism and of their past—the most humiliating apostasies were periodically demanded of them. They came out of prison or they returned from the hamlets of Central Asia in order to ascend the tribune of the congresses and make their apologies—once more—before the Leader. Then they returned to the shadows, and everybody knew that they existed, retaining their judgments at bottom. They existed in spite of the humiliations inflicted and accepted. They would continue to exist so long as they were alive. The ordered disavowals

\* I translated as "usefulness" a Russian word which would be more accurately rendered by "conformity with the aim pursued"—that dreadful little phrase that I heard pronounced there so often.—TRANSLATOR.



did not diminish them any more because the profound reason for the statements was known—their attachment to the party. . . . Besides, in a country without law, everybody knows that the only defence left lies in evasion, the only salvation in cowardice. You adapt yourself, you “play ’possum”, you wait. And the power, which knows it, is infuriated at these passive men. . . .

That is why the following language, approximately, is used to them in the private conversations in the cells situated several storeys above the execution cellar :

“You are, whatever you may say or do, our unalterable opponents. But you are devoted to the party—we know that too. The party demands a new sacrifice of you, more complete than the preceding ones. A political suicide. The sacrifice of your consciences. You will confirm it by yourselves providing for capital punishment. Only then will it be possible to believe that you are really disarming before the Leader. We demand this sacrifice from you because the republic is in danger. The shadow of war hovers above us, fascism is rising all around us. We must strike at Trotsky in his exile, at all costs discredit his nascent Fourth International, make a holy alliance around the Leader, whom you execrate but whom you acknowledge, because he is the strongest. If you consent, you have a chance to live. If you refuse, you will disappear, in one way or another.”

When you know, as does anyone who has lived there for a long time, the psychosis of war that the leaders spread throughout the U.S.S.R., you understand the power of this appeal addressed, after all, infinitely more to the spirit of devotion than to the spirit of cowardice. And it is all the more effective because most of the accused were old opponents of Trotsky, long ago disposed to discredit him by any means. (Smirnov and Holtzman were exceptions and





their attitude was very peculiar ; but the same general reasons also held good for them. Smirnov, bowing before reasons of State, seems to have consented only to *confessing one thing.*)

To refuse would perhaps mean to give oneself more chance to live, but it would surely mean to break with the party. They could not refuse. . . .

Others, in all probability, did refuse. Shall we ever know ?

A half-certainty guaranteed them life, in addition to the promises that were probably made to them. First, Soviet law was explicit in the days when there was a Soviet law. *The law does not punish or avenge*, it confines itself to defending society. The criminal who has disarmed, who by his confessions and his attitude has rendered himself powerless to do harm, may not be punished for what he has done ; he must not be subjected to vindictiveness ; he may only be isolated from society for a certain time, as a measure of precaution and towards the end of re-education. They flatter themselves on applying this principle to the—at first glance—most incorrigible old offenders. Tourists are readily made to visit the G.P.U. colony at Bolshevo, not far from Moscow, where a number of bandits with more than one life on their consciences work in guarded freedom, go to the club, study Stalin, take part in the Stakhanovist brigades. Panait Istrati, amazed, exclaimed upon leaving it : “What a pity that one must have assassinated several persons in order to enjoy such welfare !” They had neglected to tell him that, in addition, one must have given away his accomplices.

Two precedents were no less explicit. The principal defendants in the two large similar trials, likewise prepared with the shrewdest admixture of lies, fear, and devotion, in accordance with the case, were not executed. The engineer Ramzin, who accused himself in 1930 of having formed a clandestine Industrial





Party, sabotaged the industrialization, prepared a foreign intervention in contact with the general staff of a power which is today very friendly, never ceased working for the Commissariat of Heavy Industry and was recently rehabilitated along with his principal accomplices. He is rich and esteemed. (I should very much like to know what happened, on the other hand, to the two Leningrad teachers who were driven out of the trade union for having refused to vote for the death penalty against this traitor. The fault surely still weighs heavily upon their destiny.)

The old socialists who accused themselves shortly afterward of the same crime, although it flew in the face of all probability, in a trial which was a bewildering imposture from beginning to end (they admitted having prepared a foreign intervention under instructions from the Socialist International), are alive ; in various prisons, to be sure. To prepare a foreign intervention against the country is, after all, a greater crime than that which Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their fellow accused were bidden to charge themselves with ; and the founders of the party, the heroes of the civil war (Mrachkovsky, Smirnov, Dreitser), could not, in all good logic, be treated with greater severity than the traitors. . . . But good logic amounted to nothing in all this.

There was, therefore, a sort of bargain concluded between the accused and the Leader, accepted out of devotion to the party and with a remnant of human and political hope. "He won't dare, he won't go that far ; after all, he too is one of the old ones of the party"—that is what they must have said to themselves in their horrible moments of doubt.

And they understood their mistake only at the very last moment, when their hands were tied to make them go downstairs. . . .

What impulses did Stalin obey in dispatching the old members of the Political Bureau ? The clearest is the consecration of personal power. If he has himself





called "Leader of Leaders, the most gifted genius of all times, sun, our father", it is not only in order to breathe the low-grade incense which escapes from his own Press services. His power is absolute, unchecked, perpetual. Who would think of voicing an objection if it pleased him to designate his successor? It will be asked of him, some day, like a favour that he will confer upon his good people. . . . The consecration of a personal power, which is in such contradiction to socialist principles and the Bolshevik tradition, cannot be effected without the elimination of the Old Guard of October 1917. However passive the remnants of it may be, it is impossible for them not to think, and by that alone they constitute a threat for the future.

In spite of the persecutions, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smirnov benefited by a somewhat privileged political position. The party, the entire country knew that those old ones, after having built up the party with Lenin and made the revolution, no longer shared, for the last twelve years, the responsibility of the power. The millions of victims of the forced collectivization, of the years of famine, of the years of terror against the workers, did not permit any reproach to be made against these men. Hence, one could dishonour them officially, continue to debase them or, silently, as with Smirnov, to immure them. Yet through it all they retained a certain grandeur and could make up a replacement crew.

There is no more replacement crew.

The consecration of the personal power is only one of the aspects of the consecration of a policy. It may be said that the Soviet Thermidor, which lasted for years, is consummated. *Il Messagero*, the Italian fascist organ, was not mistaken in declaring that the *enragés* of the Russian revolution had been put to death. The bureaucracy fears above all else the explosive power of the ideas which it pretends, out of necessity, to adhere to in order to retain the old banners. It must put an end to the generation that incarnates these



ideas. The Old Bolsheviks—and I understand by them the men who stood firm until the death of Lenin—are today in the anachronistic position of the former Jacobins under the Thermidorian reaction.

Now, the socialist revolution, frustrated by the *parvenus*, differs from the bourgeois revolution (1789, 1793, 1800) in this sense, that it does not lead to a stable order in harmony with itself. Until it will have discharged the agreement, signed by the victorious insurgents of October 1917, which will be presented to it inevitably, tomorrow or the day after, by millions of workers, it will live under the menace of internal convulsions. The bureaucracy does not exercise a legitimate authority; it cannot invoke either the divine right of the old régime or the natural laws of bourgeois positivism; it is reduced to disavowing itself by asserting that it is "fighting the bureaucracy"—really!—that it only represents the workers, that it is working for the welfare of the workers. . . . A false situation that cannot be perpetuated and that can last only thanks to a constant intervention in the ranks by the ministry of police of the totalitarian State. But it is wise in foreseeing the coming turns. They are undoubtedly being prepared. It may be that we are on the eve of great changes at home or of grave events abroad. In either case, the revolutionary potential of the masses must come into play. The problem is to reduce it by anticipation : \* a clean-up in the rear, in case of war; a warning to the Russian proletariat that the events in Spain, supervening after the great June strikes in France and Belgium, are stirring up the depths, dangerously. . . .

The Opposition nevertheless exists under a multitude of forms. Invisible, it is silent, sometimes betraying itself by a joke. So much the worse for the joker. The

\* The crime is that, in reducing it, the revolution is disarmed before the future. If there are no socialist or communist replacement crews at the next turn of history, *who* will take over the directing of events? Do not think that the relentless bureaucratic reaction is not stirring up currents of anti-socialist reaction, also still latent.





Opposition also exists under a form the very heroism of which may appear to be absurd : several thousand intransigents of all the shadings of working-class thought—and some without shadings, having formed themselves as best they could, without knowing exactly what they are—represent it in the prisons, the concentration camps, the places of deportation. The most dangerous and, moreover, the most numerous are those who adhere to the October Revolution, primarily the Trotskyists. They have a leader, eminently intransigent, a figure that has become legendary as the equal of Lenin, the organizer of the insurrection and the organizer of the victory, the only oppositionist who never capitulates, the deportee of Alma-Ata, the banished of the Island of Prinkipo, the banished of Norway, the banished of Mexico. . . . He is out of reach, he is missing from the batch of the shot, and so long as he remains alive the replacement crew will be able to come together again, since a head subsists and it is precisely the grandest head. Terrorism had to be invented because only this charge permitted the execution of the one while indirectly striking the other, Trotsky. How ?

By making life as hard for him as possible. It must be said that, in this respect, the Stalinist Government has permitted itself a good deal, with a curious success. It is foreboding. Never did the ministers of the Tsar, who did often fall under the fire of authentic terrorists, dare to demand in such terms the expulsion of a socialist leader from a country of Europe. Since the U.S.S.R. must speak to all the countries where Trotsky may find exile in the same language it used towards Norway, it follows that it means to have him refused asylum everywhere—that is, to impose his internment upon the foreign Governments. The stupefying thing is that it has succeeded for the time being. A precedent is thus created which the totalitarian régimes will know how to profit by, let there be no doubt about it. The Stalinist reaction has just dealt a



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direct blow at the right of asylum—one of the last frail guarantees of the freedom of opinion in the world.

By disqualifying the idea of the Fourth International, which has become disturbing to the leaders of the Third, since they feel that they have left a vast empty space in the labour movement by abandoning all revolutionary activity and perspective. Dimitroff writes :

We see today why Trotsky needs to create a Fourth International and who is served by this dirty collection of infuriated petty-bourgeois individualists, self-infatuated upstarts, agents of the Gestapo and other police.\*

By making Trotsky indefensible for the imprisoned Trotskyists who will be called up to dissociate themselves from an "agent of the Gestapo". No doubt they will be able to reply : "Oh, we know that ! It's exactly what was said about Lenin and all the rest of us in 1917. Just remember Alexinsky's documents, and the sealed train, and the millions of the German General Staff that we were supposed to have received when we didn't have a spare shirt. . . ." But

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\* This article by Dimitroff, which at the same time heaps insults upon the leaders of the Socialist International, would be worth quoting in full if it were not really so futile. The Hottentots are sometimes calumniated by having attributed to them morals that are supposed to be expressed in this saying : "If I steal the cow of my Kaffir neighbour, that's all right ; if he tries to steal mine, that's a crime." Dimitroff knows better than anyone else how a high-treason trial is staged in a totalitarian régime : and having come back safe and sound from the Leipzig trial he is in a position to make some not uninteresting comparisons between the greater or lesser propensities for legal assassination in the Hitlerite and Stalinist régimes. I note in passing that he has the effrontery to write : "The documents presented at the trial have proved . . ." etc. ; and "everything required of a public trial in order to prove the terroristic culpability of the Trotskyist-Zinovievists was there in abundance". Now, there was not a single piece of material evidence to prop up the accusation ; not a single proof figured in the trial ! To finish with Hottentot morals : a dispatch published by the Soviet agency, T.A.S.S., protested at the same time against the scandalous procedure followed by the Japanese in Manchukuo. Desirous of seizing the lands of certain White Russians, the Japanese arrested them, made them confess, in the course of a secret preliminary investigation, that they had engaged in espionage for the Reds, tried them scandalously without guarantees of justice, and put them before a firing-squad. . . .





the custom is not to allow any reply. Up to now Trotskyism was outlawed as a form of opposition ; beginning with the Zinoviev trial, it is outlawed as a form of high treason, which justifies recourse to the harshest measures against the intransigents. . . .

By making discussion impossible between oppositional and Stalinist communists. Many of the latter, ignorant of the history of the first ten years of the revolution, imagine in all good faith that they are severing the cause of the proletariat by giving their adhesion to the bureaucratic régime.

They live on counterfeited ideas. At the moment when the official Communist Parties, obeying the gifted Leader, are passing from internationalism to nationalism, from the class struggle to class collaboration, from anti-militarism to militarism, from the proud thoughts of Lenin to a suspiciously combinatory neo-socialism, it must be seen to that no conversions are conducted between Stalinist workers and oppositional communists. Between the two there is now blood.

The struggle between the Oppositions and the bureaucracy is no longer one of two different tendencies of the labour movement, but has become a class struggle.

No more correct general judgment of this crime has been delivered than that of Otto Bauer : "The execution of the sixteen is a tremendous misfortune for the international working class." We cannot yet measure its consequences. In the Russian revolution, this trial marks a date comparable to that of the 9th of Thermidor, without aiming to draw the analogy too closely. Supervening at the moment when the working class needs moral unity and active solidarity—rising above the divergence of doctrines and tactics—in order to live and triumph, at the moment when non-party workers, socialists, anarchists, syndicalists, Stalin-communists, and Trotskyists are lying down to sleep in Spain in the same trenches, and dying from the





same bullets, this legal massacre of great militants of the Russian revolution is surrounded by such odious circumstances that it signifies not only a cruel schismatic leaven, but a new decline in human values which we all need in order to breathe. . . .

Socialism will not vanquish fascism unless it brings men entirely different morals from those. From all this bloodshed, from this irruption of lies, from all these police intrigues, from this debasement of the vanquished, from this ferocity of the victor, from this Borgian justice instituted in the first State of the workers and peasants, from this devotion to the party that leads to a nameless demoralization—shame, sordidness, horror, discreditment, and anguish rebound upon idea-forces of a vital importance. Years will be needed, after these infamies, to rebuild in the mind of the masses the idea of the proletarian party, that puissant cohort of free men associated by common thought and discipline of action. Years will be needed to resuscitate the emancipating conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat of Engels and of Lenin.

And how much further the human dignity of our time has been humiliated !

On the morrow of the trial, the arrests continue, accompanied by alterations in the governmental personnel. Karl Radek is arrested. He is not only a companion of Lenin ; he was with Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, and Leo Tyschko in Berlin, in the tragic days of 1919. Chance alone enabled Radek to escape their fate, in that same Moabit prison where his friend Tyschko had just been brought down. For years he heaped up vileness in the service of the Leader ; the worst was, perhaps, the vileness of yesterday, the unspeakable article he was made to write to demand the death penalty against his comrades of thirty years of struggles. Semi-official spokesman of Stalin in foreign policy, he suddenly disappears, and when the European Press is stirred





up about it *Pravda* finally denounces him as a suspicious counter-revolutionary intriguer.

Will he be tried with Sokolnikov, Putna, Serebriakov, as is anticipated? After the outcome of the trial of the sixteen, are similar agitational spectacles, founded upon the complaisance of the accused, still possible? Yes, if the accused are unaware of the fate of the sixteen. . . . The head of the Secret Service, Yagoda, is abruptly dismissed; he is transferred to Posts, Telephones, and Telegraphs, with his associate Prokofiev, one of the oldest Chekists. Did he concoct yesterday's affair too maladroitly? At all events, he knows too many things; besides, he, too, is an old one from 1917. Moreover, in 1927-28 he sympathized with the Oppositions which wished in the dark for the elimination of Stalin. Rykov and Rukharin benefit by "not enough evidence".

Then the ones who were shot did tell the truth in accusing themselves, in accusing Trotsky, in accusing Radek, but lied in accusing Rykov and Bukharin? Believe it who can. The strictly political and perhaps provisional no-cause leaves them at the mercy of the Leader. Pardoned, they no longer really have any influence; sooner or later it will be perceived that their mere presence is disconcerting and they will have to be put out of the way. Piatakov disappears, undoubtedly inculcated. Arrests everywhere. The proscriptions have their logic. The whole October generation must be outlawed. Whatever its last representatives may be made to do, to say, and to write, words no longer count. Stalin knows that these men may some day take hold of themselves again and that, in their heart of hearts, they are his implacable judges.

The very precipitateness with which the trial was announced, conducted, and terminated shows pre-meditation. Now we understand the bizarre Yenukidze affair of 1935 and the dissolution, at the same time, of the Society of the Old Bolsheviks. The secretary of the Bureau of the Executive of the Soviets, devoted





though he was to Stalin, might have hesitated to reject the appeal for pardon of the sixteen. The Old Bolsheviks might have muttered against the decapitation of the old party.

Yagoda makes way, at the head of the Secret Service, for a functionary chosen by the Leader : Yezhov. A new generation formed out of yesterday's unknowns and who represent nothing more than the good pleasure of the General Secretary thus occupy the leading posts, little by little : Zhdanov in Leningrad, Khrustchev in Moscow, Lavrenti Beria in Tiflis, Yezhov in the Ministry of Police. . . .





## XI

STALIN'S FIRST FOREIGN POLICY  
(1927-34)

IN the beginning the foreign policy of the proletarian revolution is essentially a rupture with the past. It consists in appealing, in the midst of the World War, from the imperialist Governments to the assassinated peoples, in publishing and tearing up the treaties, in abolishing secret diplomacy, in proclaiming the will to peace of the workers. Later on, the ups and downs of the revolutionary movement in Europe force Soviet policy through several different phases, but there is a great continuity of spirit in all of them. When the hard-pressed Republic is desperately resisting the Germans, the diplomatic notes of Chicherin are S-O-S calls incessantly addressed to the proletarians of the world. Towards 1920, the Republic being saved, the Communist International consolidates its power of radiation, and its policy, paralleling the policy of the Council of People's Commissars, is one of revolutionary expansion, that is, of active support to the revolutionary attempts in Europe and in Asia. Lenin deems necessary the risky offensive against Warsaw, for its success would signify the sovietization of Poland, would bring closer the victory of the proletariat in Germany, and would deal a decisive blow to the Versailles system. At the same epoch, a Congress of the Peoples of the Orient meets in Baku, showing the interest that the Communist International has in the revolutionary possibilities of Asia.

Lenin writes his theses on the national and colonial question. A short time previously, Russian troops





commanded by Blumkin, in the shadow of Kuchuk-Khan, had attempted to arouse the North of Persia. Finally, in 1923, the Comintern and the Soviet Government are ready to give thorough-going support to a German revolution whose failure—let us remember—inaugurates the political crisis in Russia.

Towards 1927-28, at the moment when the bureaucracy arrives brutally in power, the Chinese revolution is in its ascendant phase. The forecasts of Lenin are being realized—shouldn't this be the time to recall his theoretical advice? But another social stratum holds the levers of command and it must proceed from a different ideology. The Chinese Communist Party is ordered into enslavement to the Kuomintang, which first paralyses it, then compromises and strangles it. The admirable trade unions of Shanghai are surrendered, after their victory, and despite the admonitions of a handful of militants, to the headsmen of Chiang Kai-shek, who is in partnership with Stalin and whose arms have been assured success by heads of the Red Army, like Blücher and Olgin. The International forbids the Chinese Revolutionists to form soviets at a time when only councils of workers could have put themselves at the head of the mass movement. You see communist ministers, directed by agents of Stalin, participating in the Wuhan coalition Government, which represses strikes and agrarian uprisings. Day after day the toiling masses are led into ambush.

Victories which would have been easy, according to all indications, escape them at the last moment. The departments and the emissaries of the International collaborate with the heads of the reaction. There isn't a trace of the doctrine and the strategy of Lenin in all this. For the class struggle Stalin substitutes the conception of the "*bloc* of four classes", formulated in the bureaux by an Old Menshevik who came over belatedly. Stalin considers that the important thing is not to frighten either the Chinese





bourgeoisie or the powers. . . . Where Lenin sought to exhaust the revolutionary possibilities, he seeks, by extending his sway as widely as possible, to exercise a moderating influence in order to guarantee the security of the bureaucratic State.

The interests of the *parvenus* prove to be opposed to an extension of the revolution and are aimed much more at extending the national sphere of influence of the Russian power.

Protests arise by the thousands. Stalin, unmasked by the Opposition and unable to overcome it save by vying with it, executes an abrupt turn-about-face. The insurrection of Canton is unleashed on the occasion of a party congress assembled in Moscow (the Fifteenth Congress), and the Comintern launches the slogan of soviets right in the midst of the débâcle of the Chinese revolution. . . . \* Defeat after defeat, blood upon blood, incoherence, the infamy of mean tricks—are all added to the most revolting errors: a Chen Du-hsiu, great communist militant, is drenched with abuse—while a Kuomintang headman decapitates his son—because he passes over to the Opposition. At the end of March 1927 twenty Chinese communists who had taken refuge at Karakhan's, in the Soviet legation at Peking, and been arrested there in defiance of international law, are executed by slow strangulation, among them the scholar and poet Li Ta-chao.

During the collectivization, the foreign policy of the U.S.S.R.—from which the activity of the Comintern cannot be separated—presents two aspects: the U.S.S.R. is actually disinterested in what is happening in the world, but maintains, for propaganda uses in the interior, an extremist ideology that dominates, in turn, the tactic of the sections of the International. Before this, communist circles in Moscow ascribed to Stalin the intention of liquidating the Red Inter-

\* Stalin's representative in Canton, Lominadse, committed suicide in 1935 in Magnitogorsk, at the moment of being arrested.





national of Labour Unions—to begin with—and of relegating to second place the Communist International, whose impotence and corruption he bitterly derided; but surnamed “the grave-digger of the revolution” by the oppositionists, he is compelled to try playing a different role on the world scene.

He is unable to admit the defeat of the Chinese revolution, in which his responsibilities are terrific; and the official thesis, supported every day by the Press, is that the Chinese revolution is marching from victory to victory. . . . Are there not Soviet territories in Hunan, peopled, it is affirmed, by 40,000,000 inhabitants, and “as large as France”? The revolution is also rising in Germany, as proved by the electoral successes of the German Communist Party. . . . The International prescribes to the Western parties the tactic of “class against class”, an absurd tactic of isolation destined primarily to fight the socialists, who are labelled social fascists. The slogan is: destroy the social democracy first in order to vanquish fascism.

During the Red plebiscite in Prussia, you see the communists unite with the Nazis against the social-democratic Government of Otto Braun: an insane strategy, and it would be interesting to know what Thälmann, who applied it so zealously, thinks of it today.\* Right in the midst of the depression of the French labour movement, Molotov, speaking of the “radicalization of the masses”, explains that the question of power stands before the French proletariat. . . . The report of Stalin to the Sixteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1930) would be of a stupefying ignorance were it not a masterpiece of demagogy destined to deceive the masses in the country itself. Souvarine sums it up very exactly in eight lines:

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\* It will be remembered that in 1925 the German Communist Party had made it possible for Field-Marshal von Hindenburg to be elected to the presidency of the Reich by maintaining the candidacy of Thälmann against the social democrat Müller. The united votes of the two Labour Parties would have carried the socialist candidate.





The globe is mined with antagonisms, the most acute of which opposes the United States to England ; the League of Nations is rotting on its feet ; socialism is losing all its influence and the Communist Parties are marching from victory to victory ; the stabilization of capitalism is coming to an end and the revolution is rumbling everywhere ; the bourgeoisie is looking for a way out in the war against the U.S.S.R., above all in France, "the most aggressive and the most militaristic in the world", etc. . . .\*

At this moment the economic crisis coincides with a deep crisis in the labour movement, the counter-revolution is threatening everywhere, it can be seen rising in Germany with sure tread—and it can even be unfailingly predicted that the anti-socialist tactic of the Comintern will give it an easy victory. For having proposed, while there was still time, the united front of the labour parties against Nazism, Trotsky—clamorous voice in the desert—will be treated as a Hitlerite by *Pravda*. This criminal tactic will result in the crushing of the German proletariat without a struggle : for, divided at this point, it is no longer capable of any effective resistance. The last-minute attempts at a united front will be nothing more than poor gestures of distraction.

The explanation of this policy by the agitational needs in the interior of the U.S.S.R. is inadequate. A very complex psychological phenomenon must also be taken into account. The bureaucracy appeals for the industrialization and the collectivization to the revolutionary energies ; its own ideological evolution has not yet been completed. It has not yet matured, in 1932, for the complete abandonment of the Bolshevik doctrine. This abandonment will become psychologically possible only a few years later, after the economic victory at home.

From another angle, the responsibilities of the Stalinist reaction for the disaster in Central Europe go far beyond mere questions of tactics. The Marxists explain the victory of the October Revolution in

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\* B. Souvarine, *Staline*, p. 478.





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Russia by the fact that at the decisive moment the bulk of the middle classes (the peasants) supported the proletariat. At the moment when the German crisis opens up, the desolating experience of the forced collectivization is under way in the U.S.S.R., followed all the more closely in Germany because the famine and the terror affect the old German colonies of Russia and give birth there to a mass movement of emigration. Can the middle classes of Germany be expected to pronounce themselves in favour of communism under such conditions? In this sense the Stalinist reaction supplements the work of the Versailles Treaty, which it will soon be reduced to defending.





## XII

STALIN'S SECOND FOREIGN POLICY  
(1934-36)

THE collapse of working-class Germany suddenly creates a new situation in 1933. The "Comintern line", traced by the Leader, has always been right : anybody, in Russia or elsewhere, who permits himself to doubt this is a traitor. . . . But what is Hitler going to do ? If he perseveres in the path of the Rapallo Treaty, the Stalinist reaction remains ready to come to terms with him as it did with Mussolini, the only foreign chief of State who has never been attacked personally in the Soviet Press.

Waiting expectantly, *Pravda* still writes at the end of 1933 that the working class should not distinguish between the fascist States and the pseudo-democratic States. The resolute hostility of the Third Reich is needed, its armaments, its negotiations with Poland and Japan, before the bureaucracy returns to a more correct evaluation of the importance of democracy—even bourgeois—for the working class of the West. On this point, too, the ideas of Marx, Engels, and Lenin no longer have any standing with the bureaucracy. And how could it show itself sincerely attached to workers' liberties in other countries when it itself refuses these liberties to the workers ? But the U.S.S.R. has lost its natural ally, the German proletariat. What is to be done ?

To the successes and the excesses of the reaction in the interior there corresponds, as was to be expected, beginning with 1934, a foreign policy which strives primarily towards a *rapprochement* with certain great





capitalist powers. By lavishing assurances that have not been published, the U.S.S.R. obtains *de jure* recognition from the United States. Diplomatic relations are resumed with Bulgaria and Rumania. Under what conditions? Communists are demonstratively hanged in Bulgaria while the first plenipotentiary minister of Tsar Boris is received in the Kremlin. About three thousand Rumanian communists and socialists are arrested on the eve of the arrival in Bucharest of the first plenipotentiary minister of the U.S.S.R.

"We will not surrender an inch of our territory", proclaims Stalin; but he renounces Bessarabia, still depicted on all Soviet maps as a territory forcibly torn from the Republic. The U.S.S.R. enters the League of Nations in September 1934. The Geneva organism ceases to be a league of imperialist pirates for the defence of the Versailles Treaty of brigandage (all these are expressions of Lenin, and Stalin himself repeated them more than once), and it becomes the safeguard of peace in the world.

The generation of Lenin and Trotsky refused to weigh minutely the intentions of the diplomats between July 25 and August 4, 1914, in the question of the origins of the War. In its eyes the two imperialist coalitions, equally interested in a new division of the world, were equally culpable. But by the Versailles Treaty, the victorious coalition created a situation pregnant with the worst dangers for civilization. You can see today how correct was the revolutionary criticism of this treaty. No matter, a purging of the libraries will suffice.

The totalitarian State sets in motion its machine for manufacturing ideas. The Radeks will multiply their allusions to German war-guilt. A signal to the Press—and articles, fillers, chronicles, couplets dedicated to the fatherland—plain fatherland and no longer proletarian—will follow in droves, creating a whole new vocabulary. Squadrons of Soviet aero-



planes land in Prague and in Le Bourget. Czechoslovakian and French squadrons arrive in Moscow. Banquets. On May 2, 1935, MM. Laval and Potemkin sign in Paris the Franco-Soviet agreement of "mutual assistance in case of non-provoked aggression on the part of a European State". (France refuses flatly to intervene in case of Japanese aggression in the Far East.) A similar pact is signed between the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia. In May, M. Pierre Laval proceeds to Moscow, is received by Stalin. At the end of their interview, an official communiqué attests that "M. Stalin understands and fully approves the policy of national defence pursued by France in order to maintain its armed force at the level of its security".

M. Stalin therefore formally disapproves of socialist and communist anti-militarism. For the two fundamental theses of Lenin, "No national defence in a capitalist régime" and "transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war", M. Stalin substitutes his understanding and his unreserved approval. . . . \* If the French bourgeoisie is led to fight to defend its colonies (and, at bottom, that is the most real danger of war), it will be able to count on the Red armies. . . . For his part, M. Pierre Laval, who at least has the incontestable merit of not claiming to be either a socialist, a Leninist, or the leader of the world proletariat, and who is only making a good business deal in all this, understands and undoubtedly approves the progress of Soviet armaments proclaimed from the top of various tribunes by Marshal Tukhachevsky.

\* "... The president of the Council, M. Laval, recorded the fact that it was on the initiative of M. Stalin himself that the paragraph concerning the policy of national defence of the French Government had been included." (*Le Petit Parisien*, June 20, 1935.) "Addressing himself directly to M. Péri, who represents the communist group in the commission [of Foreign Affairs, in the Chamber of Deputies], M. Laval declared: 'Why did I go to Soviet Russia to conclude an act of peace, if I am to be perpetually attacked in France and discommoded in my activity by those who call themselves here the translators of Soviet thought and doctrine? There is a hypocrisy in that that has lasted long enough.'" (*Le Petit Journal*, same day.)





Effectives in 1930, 600,000 men ; in 1934, 940,000 men ; in 1936, 1,500,000 men.\*

On September 22, a decree re-establishes ranks in the Soviet Army. Another decree creates five marshals of the U.S.S.R. Edicts provide for the creation of new insignia of command, gold and silver stripes. The marshals will wear gold stars two inches in size on their collars and sleeves. The Commissars of the Secret Service will be no less bedizened than the new generals. . . . There remains to ask oneself what titles, what stripes are to be thought up for the one who dispenses all of them and whom his panegyrists call "the Grand Marshal of Socialism". Let us wait. The Turkmen poets compare him with the sun, and he smiles.

Only autocrats can decide upon peace and war at their pleasure, without consulting assemblies. . . . Without the constitutional organs of power having deliberated thereon, M. Stalin declares one morning that if Japan makes an attempt upon the territorial integrity of the Mongolian Republic, the U.S.S.R. will intervene. M. Stalin says it to Mr. Roy Howard, a bourgeois journalist from America, and the Soviet workers thus learn, incidentally, that their blood has been disposed of. In other respects, too, the con-

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\* According to Tukhachevsky's report to the Soviet Congress in 1935, the growth of the forces of the U.S.S.R. in the course of the first Five-Year period was 300% for the aerial army ; 2475% for speed tanks ; 760% for light tanks ; 792% for medium tanks ; 535% for submarines ; 1100% for coastal guards ; 470% for torpedo-boats ; for machine-guns it varies between 250% and 700%.

Other figures, no less imposing, were given at the Extraordinary Congress of the Soviets in November 1936. Admiral Orlov made known that, in comparison with the forces existing on January 1, 1935, the increase of the submarine fleet is 715% at the end of 1936. . . . The under-chief of the aerial forces has just announced from the tribune that the U.S.S.R. has 7000 aeroplanes, 2000 of them of the first class, at its disposal. . . . "Germany and Japan", he says, "are trying to bring into play 18,000 aeroplanes all told. If it were necessary, we would be able to supply 100,000 aviators. . . . In a few months, we shall dispose of several hundred aeroplanes capable of 600 kilometres an hour. . . . In the whole World War, 17,500 tons of explosives were thrown by enemy aircraft upon the territories of France, England, and Russia. Five flights of the Soviet bombardment fleet would suffice today to transport the same quantity of explosives." (Session of November 29.)





versation of M. Stalin with Mr. Roy Howard deserves to be dwelt upon. Here is the principal passage :

Mr. Howard : "Does this, your statement, mean that the Soviet Union has to any degree abandoned its plans and intentions of bringing about a world revolution?"

M. Stalin : "We never had such plan and intentions."

Mr. Howard : "You appreciate, no doubt, Mr. Stalin, that much of the world has long entertained a different impression?"

M. Stalin : "This is the product of a misunderstanding."

Mr. Howard : "A tragic misunderstanding?"

M. Stalin : "No, a comical one. Or, perhaps, tragi-comic."

Is the tragedy of the world revolution, therefore, to end for M. Stalin as a farce? Is the Bolshevism of the bureaucrats drowned in combinations to go to the point of forswearing the past of the Bolshevism of the revolutionists? The habit of lying with impunity and the necessity of lying enormously here bring the Leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the Third International into a blind alley. Nothing is more tragi-comic than his remarks. What? Wasn't the Third International, the party of the world revolution, founded in Moscow? Did not M. Stalin himself take the floor in its congresses and its commissions? Did he not intervene—alas!—in order to guide the activities of the various Communist Parties?

Wasn't all this printed throughout his book, *The Problems of Leninism*, translated into all the European languages? The Finnish revolution, supported by Russian troops in 1918; the soviet revolutions in Bavaria and Hungary; the communist insurrections in Germany; the march of the Red Army on Warsaw in 1920 and the formation at the rear of this army of a revolutionary committee of





Poland with Markhlevsky and Dzerzhinsky ; the aid given by the Russians "in money, artillery, arms, and counsel" to Kemal Pasha ; the role of the Red Army in the sovietization of Georgia ; the mobilization of the Russian party in 1923 to support the German revolution which was considered ready ; the role of the Comintern in the revolutionary attempts in Bulgaria (1923-24) ; the magnificent role of the Russian communists in the Chinese revolution of 1927 ; the role of a Blücher, today marshal of the U.S.S.R., in the victorious march of the Kuomintang army from Canton to Shanghai ; the role of the Russians in the organization of the Soviet territories of China from 1928 to 1935 ;\* the role of the Russians in the foundation of the republics of Tana-Tuva and of Mongolia, which are in reality Soviet protectorates—are all these tragi-comic misunderstandings ?

Would it not have been much more honest and much less stupid on the part of M. Stalin to say simply : "We did once follow a policy of solidarity and of revolutionary expansion, but we are now abandoning it" ?

At this moment, and undoubtedly for this reason, the epopee of the last rear-guard battles of the Chinese revolution is coming to an end. A new manoeuvre is executed in China in 1934-35 : the abandonment of Eastern China, populous and relatively industrial, by the small Soviet armies under the command of a revolutionist of rare temper and value, Mao Tse-tung. From Hunan they withdraw painfully towards Chendu and farther north, in the purely agricultural regions of the centre. They seek to draw closer to the frontiers of Mongolia. . . . They abandon the populations who relied upon them and, giving up the rekindling of a real hearth of the

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\* This role, like that of the Stalinist bureaucrats throughout the Chinese revolution, was not always a glorious one. It has been made public in the U.S.S.R. that the G.P.U. of the Chinese soviets liquidated several Trotskyist conspiracies. Revolutionists have therefore massacred other revolutionists—by order—in the mountains of Hunan.





revolution in artisan and industrial China, they gain the steppes of Central Asia.

They cut the communications between Nanking and Chinese Turkestan, where Soviet influence is filtering in. The spectre of Bolshevism departs the fertile valleys of old China, leaving the field free to imperialist competition. There can be no question of maintaining soviets in China while seeking the friendship of the big colonizing powers.

The policy of the Third International undergoes a parallel evolution. And how could it be otherwise? Just like the Government of the U.S.S.R., the Executive Committee of the International gets its instructions from the Political Bureau of the Russian Communist Party, that is, from the General Secretary of this bureau. . . . The International has not met in congress for seven years; and now a World Congress is suddenly convoked in Moscow in 1935. There, Dimitroff, invested by Stalin, makes solemn proposals for a united front to all the socialists of all countries. It is no longer a matter of "arousing the socialist workers against their traitorous leaders" and of denouncing social fascism.

The Comintern sheds its skin and extends a fraternal hand to those it insulted yesterday. To fight war and fascism—for it is no longer a problem of fighting capitalism, generator of wars, and of preparing the proletarian revolution—the Comintern shows itself ready to make any concession, provided that the question of the Russian socialists is not raised, provided that it is not asked finally to open up the prison gates for them. Cynicism and a vast contempt for human nature are needed in order to make these offers of collaboration to international socialism, while at the same time meaning to keep in Soviet prisons *all* Russian socialists. But the bureaucracy cannot yet make any concession at home, not even the smallest real one, to workers' democracy. The seriousness of Dimitroff's offers is attested in France by





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the change of attitude of the Stalinist leaders of the C.G.T.U.,\* who, after having resisted unity for years, abruptly accept all the conditions of Jouhaux.

The fusion of the two French C.G.T.s results in reducing to nothing the Red International of Labour Unions, in which the C.G.T.U. was the only existing organization outside of the statified Soviet unions. The Stalinists commence, by means of that boring-from-within which has already yielded them astonishing results among the intellectuals, the systematic conquest of the united C.G.T.

The French Communist Party changes face, tactic, programme, language, ideology, without any apparent effort, without a change in personnel, like an astonishingly well-trained party in which those who pull the strings can obtain anything with ease. It rallies to national defence, becomes a good French party, allies itself amicably with the socialists and the radicals against whom it employed the tactic of "class against class" not so long ago, situates itself at the right wing of the socialists, no longer mentions the dictatorship of the proletariat, expresses its admiration for Joan of Arc, seeks to bring to power the same M. Daladier whom it treated as an assassin on February 6, 1934, defends the Versailles Treaty, worships to-day everything that it burned yesterday. And faced with the menace of the fascist leagues, the socialists accept an alliance with the Communist Party without seriously raising the question of the fate of their brothers in Russia. You have the impression that with the Franco-Russian Alliance once more ratified, the Third International, foreseeing the war, is endeavouring to cement in advance the sacred union. Dimitroff

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\* Unitary General Confederation of Labour, the Red trade unions controlled by the Communist Party. The C.G.T., the General Confederation of Labour, is the former parent body, a minority of which separated from the radical-controlled Lille Congress in 1921 and remained under the control of the moderates until the recent re-unification.—TRANSLATOR.





and Thorez assiduously play their role in the "policy of peace" of Stalin.\*

Where does this policy of peace lead to, and is it proper to call it that? The Stalinist bureaucracy sincerely wants peace to the exact extent that it is afraid of war. It knows that it will not be possible for it to fight for a long time to come, for several serious reasons :

1. The precarious state of transportation (worn railways, no highways, a road network that is beneath any criticism, too few motors, in spite of the immense effort spent—successfully—in the creation of an automobile industry).

2. The indigence of the masses and the latent conflict between these masses, especially the peasants, and the power.

3. The discontentment of the nationalities among whom it is constantly necessary to repress nationalist tendencies, which are quite capable of moving speedily to the point of separatism.

Should I underline again the fact that the reaction itself has created these perils? The wearing-out of transports results from the anarchic execution of the Five-Year Plans ; the régime's conflict with the masses, we already know. If the problem of nationalities is more complex in itself, the forced collectivization and the dictatorship of the secretariats gave it its present gravity.

The Red Army leaves every observer with an impression of youth, of solidity, of virility. Completely re-equipped in the last six or seven years by a Government which was not hampered by any control of expenditures, still profiting by the moral achieve-

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\* The same tactic produces elsewhere simply clownish results. In the August 1936 number of *Lo Stato Operaio*, official organ of the Italian Communist Party, we find an appeal for the reconciliation of all Italians, from which we quote the following remarkable lines :

"Italian people ! Fascists of the Old Guard ! Young fascists ! We communists adopt as our own the fascist programme of 1919, which is a programme of peace, of freedom, of defence of the interests of the workers, and we say to you : Let us fight unitedly to realize this programme !"



ments of October 1917, object of a constant selection of men and of a labour of totalitarian education pushed farther than anywhere else, it would certainly perform marvels in the vastest battles and in the most scientifically conducted ones. . . . The young men who comprise it did not go through the War. From childhood on, they have been prepared for it, not without fortifying them against "demoralizing pacifism", "petty-bourgeois sentimentality", "debilitating intellectualism", and other evils of the same order.

The exploits of this generation would undoubtedly give the world something to think about and would cost the enemy dearly. Could they be decisive? With these million men consumed in a few months, the outcome of the events would depend for the U.S.S.R. on the economic situation at home, on the state of mind of the masses and of the international proletariat. Knowing this, the régime exerts itself to postponing the conflicts which it considers likely. Will it be able, tomorrow or after tomorrow, to master the circumstances which it is nevertheless contributing to create? Will it want to, when it feels itself strong enough? \* What psychosis of encirclement will its policy create in Germany? What an impulsion it gives to the armaments of the capitalist countries by making the country look like an entrenched camp filled with aeroplanes, tanks, mechanized artillery, new inventions!

The régime's policy of security is strictly that of the ruling bureaucracy. The security of the first republic of the workers would demand other measures and

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\* In perspective, another problem may be visualized in a certain number of years. Knowing the mentality of the rulers of the present régime, it is permissible to ask if they will be able to resist the temptation to make war when they feel themselves ready. A caste of empirical and tough *parvenus* seems to have all the requisite qualities for joining the imperialist game. But before that time other factors will intervene, such as can, if not annul, then at least counterbalance its influence: the awakening of the proletariat of the West is today an achieved fact; the awakening of the Russian proletariat is only a matter of time. When the day comes, it will be the working class of the U.S.S.R. upon which it will depend to impose peace or to conduct the revolutionary war.





would rest on other associates. In times gone by the Red Army—of which Sokolnikov once said before me to French comrades, during a parade under the Kremlin walls: “Look at the army of the Third International!”—was able to conquer without marshals, led by worker-commissars roughly dressed in black leather, to whom the offer of stripes would have appeared even more laughable than insulting. It conquered, thanks to the profoundly revolutionary character of a policy whose honesty in breaking with all diplomatic intrigue really corresponded to the aspirations, conscious or not, of the masses of the entire universe.

A Government of the workers would perhaps have an excellent opportunity today to apply the old socialist programme of the armed nation, in order to put an end to militarism and the psychological reactions which it determines from country to country. But in order to arm the nation it would be necessary to be its emanation, to have nothing to fear from it. Having gone over from militant internationalism to national socialism, refused all freedom to the workers and maintaining itself against them by police and terror methods, the bureaucratic régime is aware that it can no longer count upon the unreserved support of the advanced elements of the international proletariat and consequently the toiling masses influenced by these elements. It finds it safer to come to terms with the bourgeoisie of certain countries. Everything is connected. In foreign policy as in domestic policy, the incompatibility of the two conceptions is absolute. All proletarian socialism must be abandoned in order to maintain the dictatorship of the *parvenus*.

False and dangerous situations often result from that. When in July 1936 the civil war breaks out in Spain, the Stalin Government rallies first of all to the non-intervention agreement and observes it scrupulously,





quite the contrary to Germany and Italy, which send the rebels aeroplanes and munitions. The U.S.S.R. does not want a Spanish revolution, for she dreads the complications in Europe, and, at home, the consequences of the awakening of the revolutionary spirit in the world. The latter is perhaps the reason for the Zinoviev-Kamenev-Smirnov trial and for the vast police operations undertaken against the Old Bolsheviks most faithful to the bureaucracy itself. But the technical intervention of the fascist powers threatens to guarantee the victory of General Franco ; that would mean the disruption of the Mediterranean equilibrium and the encirclement of France, the only actual ally of the U.S.S.R.

The policy of non-intervention which is translated into conference at Plymouth while the Italians occupy the Balearics, and Caproni bombers and Junkers take off to give Madrid to the mutinous generals, proves to be a pretty sorry deception. The Soviet ambassador to Great Britain, Maisky, simply declares to the Non-Intervention Committee that the U.S.S.R. will henceforward behave exactly like certain other powers signatory to the pact. Thus, the Capronis will meet the Soviet bombers in the Castilian air ; the Italian fighting-tanks will collide with the tanks from the Sormovo plants. At the beginning of November, the straightening-out of the situation beneath Madrid is achieved, Republican Spain seems to be saved. As a consequence, Stalin, who has just had his former comrades of Lenin's Political Bureau shot, acquires a new popularity in Russia and in the labour circles of the world. He will be pardoned many executions if he takes on the appearance of saviour of the Spanish working class. It goes without saying that his inaction in this situation would have doomed him to the most profound discreditment.

But to him it is not a matter of supporting a workers' revolution ; it is a matter of maintaining a certain equilibrium of the powers and of manœuvring





with the masses, to whom whopping lies must be told. And the Communist Party of Spain declares, obedient to the instructions it receives, that its only aim is "the defence of republican order in the respect of property". Its spokesman in Madrid, Señor Hernandez, adds that if the anarchists are not of this opinion, it will not be hard to bring them to heel (August). Whether you want it or not, a revolution is taking place on the peninsula as an inevitable defensive reaction. The property of the mutineers should have been confiscated, and the exploitation of the expropriated industries should have been confided to the trade unions. Tomorrow the need of reconstructing on the ruins will impose a managed economy and rationing, while the sacrifices and the exploits, the armament and the actual situation will give the political preponderance to the workers' organizations.

The Stalin communists are the only ones, in the generality of Catalonia, to wish for the return, pure and simple, to the social State prior to the civil war, whereas the radicals even of the Catalan left (*Esquerra*) declare themselves disposed to tread the path of social reform "as far as necessary". You see the bureaucracy seeking to guarantee its grip on the labour movement in Spain and doing it very openly. A party of oppositional communists, basically hostile to the bureaucratic system, exists in Spain, more influential in many localities than the Stalinist party.

It is the P.O.U.M., the Workers' Party of Marxian Unification, founded by an old oppositionist of the Third International, Maurin,\* and by a former friend of Trotsky, Andrés Nin, who for ten years filled the office of secretary of the Red International of Labour Unions in Moscow. In October–November, the Soviet ambassador to Madrid and the Communist Party, acting jointly, obtain the eviction of the P.O.U.M. from the Defence Junta of Madrid, the

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\* Maurin was shot by the rebels.





prohibition of the newspaper of this party—it is the first assault upon freedom of opinion within the anti-fascist front—while a gang sacks the headquarters of the P.O.U.M. Youth with impunity. In Barcelona the consulate of the U.S.S.R. goes so far as to denounce the oppositional communists, in a note to the Press, as “paid agents of international fascism”.

The Stalinist sheet, *Treball*, makes it exact, “Agents of Franco-Hitler-Mussolini”, and draws its proofs from the Moscow trial. . . . You see the Stalinist bureaucracy intervene in Spain in order to prepare there the repression of the revolutionary tendencies that combat it and to profit by the aid it lends the Republic in order to assure its own political hegemony within it.



## CONCLUSION

*No problem has been resolved.*

**D**OES this régime offer any guarantees of stability? The importance that repression has there demonstrates the opposite, in spite of the solidity of the apparatus. The agrarian problem is not resolved. In the *colkhazes* themselves you can see taking shape a whole category of farmers in the process of enrichment, who, sooner or later, will emerge as *kulaks* on a new basis and among whom the spirit of property will inevitably manifest itself. In order to be life-worthy, the collectivization would have to be accepted because it conforms to the interests and the mentality of the agrarians. The labour problem is not resolved. In one way or another, before many years have elapsed, the new working class in the process of formation will launch the struggle.

The problem of nationalities is not resolved. So long as the nationalities have not obtained a freer statute within the Union, which only a Soviet democracy could offer them, they will breed separatist aspirations. The economic problem is not resolved. You cannot live indefinitely on a paper rouble, which is used essentially to defraud the workers of a part of their real wage and which, as a consequence, only provides the book-keeping of the State with a thoroughly defective instrument. The difficulty of exchange between town and country, the scarcity of commodities, the low *per-capita* consumption, the housing crisis, the transportation crisis, the lack of roads, the enormous disproportion between the war industries and the others, demand solutions that will not be found without crises. The spiritual problem is not resolved by the totalitarian management of all in-



tellectual and moral activity ; in the long run the sterility and suffocation will make themselves felt by debilitating the whole social organism.

The political problem, far from being resolved, can only arise in increasingly disturbing terms. The selection of new leaders is taking place by methods that lead inevitably to the power of servile and unscrupulous *arrivistes*. The institutions are lacking in flexibility. They are incapable of development. Up to now, the political spirit of some old bureaucrats (Marxists, after all, by virtue of their previous training) permitted them to make up for the defects of the mechanism. We have seen that all this resulted in imposing upon the country enormous overhead expenses and immeasurable suffering. But there is no longer a replacement crew that offers the socialist guarantees of the Old Bolshevik generation. Who will be the masters of this despotic apparatus tomorrow ?

The problem of the Oppositions is not resolved. That they are all in prison and that the men who represent them die behind bars settles nothing. Soviet society, far from becoming more homogeneous, becomes increasingly differentiated from year to year. It therefore has many ideologies confronting each other. A Soviet democracy could count upon the masses to make its socialist tendencies prevail. The repression, by creating a vacuum in people's minds and by preventing the development of innovating revolutionary thought, threatens to leave the masses disarmed some day in face of reactionary currents.

*A new régime of exploitation has installed itself.*

The dictatorship of the proletariat has given way to the dictatorship of the bureaucracy over the proletariat and society. The exploitation of labour is restored, to the profit of the newly privileged. Through the medium of the totalitarian State, the Soviet worker is sometimes exploited by foreign capitalism. When, in 1931-32, at the peak of the world crisis, the





U.S.S.R. exported its wood, petrol, fruits, and food-stuffs below net cost, while hunger installed itself permanently in the homes of the builders of the Five-Year Plan, isn't it plain that by the juggling of prices on the international market capitalism made the Russian workers pay the costs of the crisis? It would be in place to investigate what part of the surplus value is taken off the wages of the Soviet workers and consumed by the bureaucracy and what other part is contributed in various forms to foreign capital. The economic explanation for the disarmament of the old animosities between Stalinism and the bourgeoisie of various great powers need not be sought elsewhere.

"We are moving towards the disappearance of the State by the re-enforcement of the State", declared Stalin and his theses-maker, Stetsky, in 1934. This impudent formula, diametrically opposed to the programme of the October Revolution, well corresponds to the needs of a class of new exploiters.

However, the usurpation of power by this class "was possible and has endured only because the social content of the bureaucratic dictatorship is determined by the relations of production established by the proletarian revolution" (L. Trotsky). The bureaucracy cannot yet find its salvation outside of the preservation of collective property and managed economy. In this sense it continues, in a certain measure, the socialist work by methods which, it is true, are flatly anti-socialist. Borrowed now from the arsenal of capitalism, now from the pre-capitalist routine of old Russia, these methods fall with all their weight—if not in a rain of blood—upon the heads of the workers. From the usurpation an inexorable logic generates the terror against the masses and the most serious economic mistakes, which, in turn, by creating panic and stirring up dangers, bring in their wake disastrous psychoses among the leaders.

The industrialization was a colossal exploit, due less to the totalitarian State than to the functioning of





the potential of the revolution. If the bureaucracy was able, almost with impunity, to treat the workers as it did, it is because it swore to them every day to employ their sweat and their blood in the construction of socialism. To what extent did it work for socialism? To what extent did it work to the discreditment and the ruin of socialism by piling up errors and crimes? The future will tell, and the future does not depend exclusively upon the bureaucracy. If it seems to us just to acknowledge certain merits in the work of the Russian bureaucrats, it is in the manner in which Marx, in the *Communist Manifesto*, acknowledges the revolutionary and creative role of the bourgeoisie.

*A Soviet democracy would have done better.*

But right here, on a theoretical point, we are forced to a severe judgment. All that was done in the U.S.S.R. under the dictatorship of the *parvenus* would have been done much better by a Soviet democracy (standing behind a dictatorship against the fomenters of capitalist restoration).

The authentically workers' and peasants' State would have been able to save the costs of maintaining the privileged class. Equalitarian in its aspirations, concerned with assuring all the workers at least a minimum of welfare, it would not have been obliged to foist upon them overwork, the famine, and now the terror. Its policy would easily have been firmer, more clear-sighted, and more human, the special interests of the ruling *camarillas* being unable either to distort or divert it. From 1924-25 it was possible to curb the formation of a rural bourgeoisie without leaving the framework of the N.E.P., without achieving it as a result of that civil war against the peasantry that was the forced collectivization.

Begun at the right time, the industrialization would have improved the relations between town and country; Russia would not have known the famine of 1932-34 and the perils which that famine gave birth





to. Hence, it would not have been obliged to devote the best of its last forces to armaments, which, in turn, have become a source of danger, because of the anxiety they create among eventual adversaries. Useful admonitions to the rulers were not wanting. Since 1922 Trotsky has advocated an industrialization plan to ward off the conflict between the socialist State and the countryside. Sokolnikov, Piatakov, Preobrazhensky took up these ideas again on numerous occasions, even before they became the programme of an Opposition.

The bureaucracy itself could, it seems, have a less disastrous policy without difficulty, if it had displayed more general culture and socialist spirit. Its infatuation with administrative and military methods, joined to a penchant for panic in critical moments, reduced its real means. In despotic régimes too many things depend upon the tyrant.

The industrialization, pursued in a republic of free workers enjoying—even if poor—a genuine well-being, would have changed the face of the world to a very appreciable degree. What would the radiating force have been of a U.S.S.R. that was genuinely sovietic, truly socialistic, in which human dignity would be revealed as superior to what it is in the old countries, richer and better equipped? Would the rise of fascism in several countries of Europe, drawing behind it a part of the middle classes, have been possible in face of this example?

*The past of Russia weighs heavily upon the present of the U.S.S.R.*

A great role in this failure of the socialist revolution is played by the influence of old Russia. The factors engendered by its historic formation continue to operate with an amazing power. In political morals especially, the continuity is terrible. Malicious or ignorant critics sometimes ascribe to the socialism they seek to combat, what harks back in reality to the past,



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to the Russia of the Tsars Alexis Mikhailovich the Silent, Ivan Vassilievich the Dreadful, Peter the Great (who was also in reality the Madman, the Cruel, the Knave, the Barbaric), Nikolai I the Policeman.

The historian Kliuchevsky devoted a study to the testimony of foreigners on the Muscovy of the sixteenth century. There on every page you find again the present-day reality : the absence of juridical notions, the miserable condition of the people, the wiles of the great, their distrust of foreigners, their desire for an enclosed empire, their tendency to isolation due to the inferiority complex of Russia with respect to her Western neighbours. You find it all again, even down to the economic endeavours : in the sixteenth century the tsars establish model farms with the assistance of foreign specialists ; they import equipment, suffer defeat after defeat in their innovations, not without torturing and executing the subordinates whom they make responsible for them.

They establish a monopoly of the fur trade, of Volga fish, of rich stuffs. Fishermen and hunters owe all they get to the stores of the monarch. The local authorities live by extortion. Obscure intrigues cause the power to shift from one category of nobles to another, the ousted ones being exiled, with their families, to the same regions as today. Assemblies of notables sanction these changes as a formality ; iniquitous trials, concocted against the vanquished in the dark of secret chancelleries and torture chambers, terminate in horrible executions.

On the plane of repression, the historical continuity leads to the most monstrous resurrections. The arbitrary and mysterious proceedings that a denunciation sufficed to set in motion are revived in our days.

The same prisons fulfil the same functions. Monasteries like those of Suzdal and Solovietsky, where heretics were sent, have become "solitaries" for socialist heretics. Villages lost in the northern snows, where for centuries the tsars sent their disgraced





servitors, are still peopled with political exiles. As in the olden days, the whole family of the outlaw is punished with him, for nothing in Russian society ever dictated the respect of the individual: it does not count. As in the past, the power, when it turns to ferocious injunctions, imposes upon all its voluntary and involuntary supporters the bond of a shrill complicity. Peter I demands that his *boyards* participate—with their own hands—in the executions over which he presides in the Red Square. Stalin makes all citizens demand the death penalty for those whom he wants to be rid of.

Woe to him who refuses to bow, in either case! Guarantees of justice do not exist and never did exist for anybody. As under Alexis Mikhailovich (1645–76) and under Nikolai I, it is a crime to want to make a trip abroad and you are suspect for a correspondence with London or Paris. Nikolai I made all Russia adopt models of churches. From the make-up of the periodicals, through the construction of prisons, to the construction of workers' clubs, everything is done today on the standard models of the central Government. The more dreaded a tsar was for his police, his gallows, his implacable fiscal laws, his crafty spirit, the more the eulogies of the courtiers surrounded him with a servile concert: "Our Father, the well-beloved, the emancipator, the great, the anointed of God". . . .

It was necessary for Stalin to have the oldest companions of Lenin shot for the official Press to call him: "Our Sun". What atrociously edifying details there are in these unparalleled annals! Around 1860 the most remarkable of the Russian thinkers, the uncontested spiritual guide of the young generation, Chernychevsky, was mysteriously thrown into the Petropavlovsk fortress, judged by a secret commission on forged evidence, condemned to hard labour, defamed and sent to prison. He remained in Siberia for twenty years, reduced to burning what he wrote. . . .





Kamenev, also deported, wrote a biography of Chernychevsky, before disappearing in his turn in a gaol, seeing all his manuscripts confiscated, being tried three times before secret and complaisant tribunals, on the basis of falsehoods that will be studied later on, and being finally shot. Chernychevsky was accused of complicity with the exiled Alexander Herzen. Kamenev was accused of complicity with the exiled Leon Trotsky. Sixty-six years apart, the fate of the biographer surpasses in tragedy the fate of his subject. Both perished for socialist thought.

*New overturns are inevitable.*

In order better to transform Russian society, bent under the heavy heritage of history, more and better workers would have been needed; a more enlightened and numerically stronger working class. The Russian Marxists, while accepting all the responsibilities in order the better to exhaust the revolutionary possibilities, saw that clearly. At the moment of quitting Zürich for Russia, in March 1917, Lenin wrote :

The great honour of beginning the series of revolutions caused with objective inevitability by the War has fallen to the Russian proletariat . . . [which] is less organized, less prepared and less class-conscious than the proletariat of other countries. . . . Russia is a peasant country, it is one of the most backward of the European countries . . . [but it can] give tremendous sweep to the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia, and may make our revolution a prologue to the world socialist revolution, a step forward in that direction. . . . In Russia socialism cannot triumph directly and immediately. But the peasant mass may bring the inevitable and ripe agrarian upheaval to the point of confiscating all the immense holdings of the landowners. . . . Such an overturn would, in itself, not be socialistic as yet. But it would give a great impetus to the world labour movement. . . .\*

The titanic work accomplished between 1917 and

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\* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XX, Bk. I, pp. 85 f. (New York, 1929.)





1923-27—between the collapse of the old régime and the consolidation of the Thermidorian reaction—powerfully attests the revolutionary capacity of the workers and the vitality of socialism. Compromised today, the continuation of this work will depend upon new, inevitable, and even imminent struggles. Tomorrow history will bring face to face : (1) the privileged class assembled around the bureaucracy ; (2) the peasants ; (3) a new working class in the process of formation. Millions of peasants have entered into industry in the course of the last ten years, still further weakening the class-consciousness of a proletariat exhausted by the preceding struggles. The large factories are transforming them into workers. A young generation has arisen to fill the gaps. Tomorrow this working class will necessarily engage in a struggle for better conditions of material and moral existence. It will undoubtedly begin with the most elementary demands. In any case, it will engender a painful evolution while waiting to accomplish again, very probably, a revolution.

Already one can discern the direction in which it will have to orient itself. Trotsky emphasizes in *The Revolution Betrayed* that it will only have to make—in the present state of things—a political revolution : to reconquer power. It will not need to affect the property régime. It will demand a more socialistic distribution of the national income : increase in wages and restrictions on the privileged, first step towards their abolition ; the freedom of opinion and, now, the legalization of Soviet parties, the separation of the parties from the State, the freedom of speech, of Press,\* of assemblage, of association, of demonstration ; guarantees of individual liberty at least equal to those that capitalist society accords its members in the most civilized countries ; and the immediate

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\* What form, for example, might the freedom of a nationalized Press assume ? Lenin proposed in 1917 to grant every group representing a certain number of workers (10,000) the right to publish a paper.





suppression of the unspeakable régime of interior passports, the destruction of the police apparatus (G.P.U., Secret Service provided with discretionary powers, administrative punishment); the passing-over from the permanent Army to the armed nation and, immediately, the democratization of the Army by the suppression of ranks and decorations; the establishment of the legality and impartiality of the courts, the restoration of the right to defence counsel. It will be necessary for the revolution to renew the tradition of socialism, to affirm the value of human life by abolishing the death penalty. All this presupposes the restoration of the régime of the soviets, that is, of a genuine democracy in which, whatever its representative and legislative institutions may be, the assemblies of workers will have their word to say on all things.

The Stalinist bureaucracy seems to be neither susceptible of developing in this direction nor capable of abdicating. On the contrary, it is very conscious of the working-class threat and resolved to defend itself without worrying about the means. Everything points to the fact that the Russian working class will be obliged to sustain a stubborn and bloody struggle, which has, after all, already begun in the boundless resistance of the political prisoners. Bloody it already is. . . . Wherever evolution is not possible, the violence of the masses must sooner or later impose its solutions.

The awakening of the Russian working class is conceivable only in relation with the awakening of the working class of the West. And, just as for the other belligerent countries of 1914-18, one can set approximately the years 1938-40 as the time when, the lean years passed by, the masses of the U.S.S.R. will have more or less finished the recuperation of their physical strength. They will reach maturity somewhat later than the Western proletariat, for the civil war prolonged their ordeals until 1920.

If the power of the bureaucracy appears to be





formidable, it is certain that some day it will collide with an incalculable workers' power which will have on its side economic necessity, the aspiration of the masses, the constantly invoked tradition of October 1917. A spontaneous general strike was on the point of crushing the autocracy in 1905. It seems to us that the working class of the U.S.S.R. will have no more effective weapon, at least at the beginning of tomorrow's struggles, than the general strike. And if the totalitarian State concentrates all power within its hands, it will perhaps discover that in aligning the unanimity of the toilers against the privileged, it is working its own doom. . . .

*A capitalist restoration is hardly likely.*

The essential thing today is that war should not interrupt the reconstitution of the Soviet proletariat and the recuperation of the strength of the Western proletariat. The bureaucracy may, it is true, hurl the U.S.S.R. into some disastrous adventure at the end of which (and it knows it, which is a guarantee of peace for us) it would inevitably meet its doom, but in such a chaos that a counter-revolution, of the peasants at first—which would re-establish the rights of small rural property—would become highly possible.

The socialization of the means of production corresponds so well to the needs of the community that a capitalist restoration still does not seem predictable. The Soviet Thermidor was accomplished on the plane of collective property. Trotsky judges that the bureaucracy would be led to alter the property régime to its own advantage if its domination were prolonged without encountering any resistance. Another hypothesis, just as disturbing, seems to me more plausible: the rulers of the régime, seeking support in the foreign bourgeoisie, will come to terms with it for some sort of joint exploitation of labour. The bureaucracy, thus paying tribute to international



capitalism, would assure itself of valuable alliances, of peace, or of chances of victory in the war; the collective ownership of the means of production would be maintained, and capitalist exploitation—indirect—restored in addition to statified exploitation.

*Socialized economy, the plan, and the psychological achievements remain.*

What then remains of the conquests of the proletarian revolution?

Socialized economy, directed by a single plan, whose power proved extraordinary during the period when capitalism floundered in the crisis. A stage is crossed in economics. The accession of the backward nationalities of the old empire to civilization. The vigorous rough draft of a transformation of man. It is no longer deniable that the masses can triumph, impose a new property system, organize collectivist production: that man can live without the direct power of exploitation over his fellow man, without need or profound desire to enrich himself; that new incentives to work, more efficacious than the old, can be found in the collective interest; that the equality of races and of sexes, the priority of labour, socialist ethics and thought have powerfully begun the renovation of society; that we have acquired an historical experience of incalculable scope.

Nineteen years after having conquered power, the workers of Russia must still prepare themselves to reconquer all at the cost of new battles. But their point of departure is no longer the centuries of oppression and of defeat. They have behind them imposing victories. It has proved possible to rob them of the fruits of these victories, to be sure. They know, they feel, however, that no curse weighs down upon them. The exploits of yesterday guarantee them the future. Nothing is ended, everything begins.





## POSTSCRIPT

*The Crisis of the Stalinist Régime.*

I PUT the finishing touches to this book in January 1937. Many of my best friends hesitated to approve its publication. Their attachment to the revolution impelled them to ask if I was not drawing too black a picture of the Soviet Union of today ; if the involuntary or even unconscious resentment of an outlaw was not playing some part in the book. May I be permitted to dwell for a moment on the latter point ? Individual destinies scarcely count in the dramas in which the future of the world is at stake. Like nature itself, history in the making is neither just nor unjust : it is necessary. Sometimes it grinds down those who fervently seek to make themselves its instruments. That's not very important, provided the right road is found, the end reached, and that marching men clear the bar. The revolutionist imbued with this conviction is no longer subject to rancour, bitterness, resentment, to the puny little considerations of his insignificant personal adventure. Little would we mind being iniquitously, absurdly swept aside if the new society were really born. But that is precisely what is such a long way off.

The past year shows that all the Oppositions which, in the last fourteen years, stood up against the bureaucracy régime underrated its profoundly counter-revolutionary power and, still more, its inhumanity. The judgments formulated hitherto by the left Opposition, to which I belonged, sinned only in indulgence and optimism, because the Opposition stuck to preserving at all costs the last chances, however feeble, of a political redressment, of a great reform which would have brought the Soviet Union





back to the road of socialism. Let us therefore cast up the balance of the twentieth year. . . . A pitiless year, marked by numerous trails of blood.

I wrote above, in connection with the Zinoviev-Kamenev-Smirnov trial: "the trial of a generation and an epoch". An estimate of higher than 10,000 is made of the Old Bolsheviks, fighters of the October 1917, and the civil war, who have been driven out of public life, arrested, and who disappeared in the months to follow. Suspicion grows apace, and, since the accusations hurled at the heads of Lenin's companions who have been massacred are incredible, the whole of the old party must be wiped out, because it understands their enormity.

Karl Radek, Rakovsky, Piatakov—upon command—had just asked in abominable terms for the death of their comrades of a lifetime, when they were arrested in turn, with numerous others, as accomplices of the sixteen who were shot. The "Trotskyist" conspiracy, in short, embraced all the founders of the Soviet Union. A second trial, that of the seventeen, opened on January 23, before the Supreme Military Tribunal, presided over by the same Ulrich, with the same prosecutor, Vyshinsky. It was an enlarged repetition of the trial of August 1936. The seventeen confessed, confessed that they had been Trotskyists, that they had planned the dismemberment of the Soviet Union, that they had had intelligence with Japan and Germany, that they had organized 3500 railway wrecks (a sub-Commissar of the People for Transportation, by the name of Lifschitz, took upon himself this preposterous charge), that they had organized a mass of *attentats* which did not take place.

Now they were repenting and, doomed to the death penalty, they worshipped the Gifted Leader. There is no more mystery in these command confessions of men wedged in between their devotion, their demoralization, and death, than in those of the Zinoviev trial. With some two or three exceptions,





the seventeen did not know of the execution of the sixteen, so that they too had reason to count upon the clemency incontestably due their obliging behaviour. The hastily patched-up imposture ended by refuting itself when a witness (Romm, the Washington correspondent of the Moscow *Izvestia*) related an interview that he allegedly had with Trotsky in Paris, in the Bois de Boulogne, at the end of July 1933. Trotsky was soon to prove without difficulty that after his arrival in France towards the end of July he had confined himself to Royan, in the Lower Charente district, some 503 kilometres from Paris. . . . Piatakov related, amid general stupefaction, that in December 1935 he had proceeded from Berlin to Oslo by aeroplane in order to receive instructions from Trotsky. The Norwegian authorities promptly established the fact that not a single foreign aeroplane had arrived in Oslo in that period. Instead of proceeding to other easy verifications, there was a hurried shooting of Piatakov, whose obviously false confession blew up the trial. Falsehood upon falsehood, imposture upon imposture, blood upon blood. The trials of the Inquisition were cleaner. At least the sorcerers had the excuse of hysteria and the inquisitors that of faith.

The trick played, badly played, thirteen men are executed in the night between the 1st and 2nd of February, 1937. Which men?

Three friends and collaborators of Lenin :

Yuri Piatakov, who sovietized the Ukraine in 1918, considered by Vladimir Ilyich, in his testament, as one of the most competent administrators in the party, who went back to Stalinism in 1928, one of the directors of Soviet finances and of the industrialization, sub-Commissar of the People for Heavy Industry up to the day when he was arrested. (And the People's Commissar of Heavy Industry, Sergei Ordjonikidze, member of the Political Bureau, will die, following this execution, of a quite comprehensible embolism.)





Leonid Serebriakov, former railwayman, former secretary of the Central Committee, who once carried out confidential missions in the United States, an oppositionist deported in 1927 who went back to Stalin in 1928.

Nicholas Muralov, Old Bolshevik, one of the heroes of the three Moscow insurrections (1905, February 1917, October 1917), military governor of Moscow after the seizure of power, an old Trotskyist oppositionist who was broken by eight years of persecution.

Two great combatants of the civil war, Drobnis and Boguslavsky, a director of the chemical industry, a director of transportation, some victims of minor stature, spies, *agents provocateurs*.

Gregory Sokolnikov, of the Central Committee of October 1917, later People's Commissar of Finance, then ambassador to London, is spared : ten years of prison. Karl Radek, the journalist ready to say or do anything, the closest man to Stalin among all the former oppositionists who came over to him, saved the trial by his statements, knavish but more intelligent than those of his fellow accused. There is no doubt that he made his conditions in advance. Ten years' imprisonment. Let us bear in mind that he said two extremely interesting things : that he is not confessing out of concern for the truth but "out of concern for utility" (*Izvestia*, January 30, 1937, p. 2, col. 3), and that "the Trotskyists of France, of Spain, and of other countries will pay for it with their heads if our example teaches them nothing". The threat is direct.\*

Those shot are either buried or cremated. Their families are deported—poor families ! Official com-

\* How can we fail to recall it after the Communist Party of Spain has provoked the fall of the Caballero Cabinet on the question of outlawing the P.O.U.M. (Workers' Party of Marxian Unification) and obtained this measure from the Negrin Cabinet, followed by the apprehension of all the leaders of the P.O.U.M. and the arrest of a thousand of its active workers ? This at the risk of killing the Spanish revolution and of weakening irremediably the Republic.





muniqués make known that the successor of Lenin as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Alexis Rykov, and the ideologist of the early days of the revolution and of Stalinism, Nicholas Bukharin, both arrested, have "refused to confess their crimes". Obviously: they know what confessions lead to. They disappear without a trial, like all the unobliging accused, who number hundreds.

We are now in March 1937. The Old Bolshevik generation is liquidated. Its last few survivors, the Krestinskys, Rudzutaks, Bubnovs, Antonov-Ovseyenkos, Litvinovs, compromised and deprived of influence, must disappear sooner or later. It becomes plain that the two trials of imposture have marked the phases of a vast police blow against the men of 1917. At the beginning of April, the heavy machine for grinding down revolutionists makes a sudden lurch in another direction. Stalin undertakes to rid himself of those who were the docile instruments of his recent stroke; he is afraid of his too-well-informed accomplices. After having perfidiously removed him and shifted him from the Commissariat of the Interior to that of Posts and Telegraphs, he causes the arrest of his Minister of Police, the Fouché of the Russian revolution, the organizer of all the repressions for more than ten years, the creator of the most populated concentration camps in the world, the stage-manager of the first trial—Henrick Grigorievich Yagoda, a 1917 Bolshevik. In his fall, Yagoda brings with him almost the whole leading personnel of the G.P.U. I can no longer have any doubt about it: the examining magistrates who; in the secrecy of the prison cells, dictated the false confessions of the Zinovievs and the Piatakovs, were promptly shot.

Yagoda can be reproached for everything [I wrote]. All the crimes desired of him he committed on command, and he could not commit a worse and more unpardonable crime than to defend himself, for that he could only do by accusing. . . . Lost beyond redemption.





At the present moment, it is not known what has become of him.

The inexorable logic that necessitates the disappearance of those who hold the worst State secrets places the Gifted Leader in a blind alley. Nobody in his entourage is henceforth sure of the morrow ; and in face of everyone's hypocritical fear, masked by adoration, he himself feels sure of nobody. No genuine collaboration is any longer possible with him, no sharing of power. The members of the Political Bureau come together in meeting, they hesitate to look each other in the face, and everyone weighs his lightest word. The party destroyed, the governmental circles decimated, the political police decimated, only the Army subsists, a still intact force, having at its head great soldiers of the civil war.

At the top of the military hierarchy stands Voroshilov, whose prestige in the country is less compromised than that of Stalin. The head of the morale of the Army, a vast organization of education and of police surveillance, Yan Gamarnik, sub-People's Commissar of Defence, collaborated for a long time with Yagoda : he understands everything, he knows everything, he must therefore disappear. He commits suicide forty-eight hours after having been elected a member of the Moscow Party Committee ; according to an unofficial version, he is supposed to have been killed while resisting those who came to arrest him. Dead, he is suddenly denounced, early in June, as an "enemy of the people, Trotskyist traitor, agent of the enemy". This signifies that the services which he directed are going to be pitilessly purged ; and they are of essential importance in the Army.

The blow struck at Gamarnik reaches Voroshilov, who was unable to defend his principal collaborator ; it reaches the whole High Command, until now spared by the proscriptions, although made alert for many months now by the arrests of such noted generals as Vitovt Putna, Dimitri Schmidt, and Primakov, men





with the finest service records behind them. What is taking place at that moment? The obscurity of the communiqués published on the Tukhachevsky affair makes you think of smoke-screens. Undoubtedly, the High Command did murmur ; nothing, nothing more than this was or is possible. Men of war, knowing each other for twenty years, asked themselves, in the intimacy of their confusion, to what disasters the suspicious madness of the Leader is leading the country—and what to do. Timid objections on their part to the purges being planned or carried out, anxious words exchanged among intimates—these sufficed for them to be shot without trial after being arrested by surprise. Two successive and contradictory communiqués are thereupon published : one speaks of a trial behind closed doors, of high treason in the interest of Germany, of confessions ; the other, issued several days later and signed by Voroshilov (without doubt for the purpose of thoroughly involving his responsibility and of ruining his credit), mentions Trotskyism and denounces a plot against Stalin in vague terms.

Whatever the case may be, eight of the most remarkable chiefs of the Red Army were shot on June 2 or before. At one stroke, Stalin decapitated the extraordinary staff of the generals of the revolution. Tukhachevsky, Army commander at the age of twenty-five, conqueror of Kolchak in 1918-19, gloriously vanquished beneath Warsaw in 1920, victor over Antonov's peasant mutiny in 1921, Marshal of the U.S.S.R. ; Kork, Yakir, Eidemann, Primakov, Feldman, whose biographies are epic, yesterday the commanders of the most important military regions—shot, shot ; Muklevich and Levandovsky, disappeared. The names of all who disappeared are not yet known. Voroshilov, discredited. Whether his closest collaborators had been traitors, or he allowed them to be massacred as such without it having been true, what credit does he deserve ? There remain the Marshals





Blücher and Yegorov, who, in order to compromise them, were made to figure among the judges of a secret trial which most likely never took place. . . .

No reaction follows in the prostrated country. The dark blows come in raging succession, ravaging all circles. Proletarian writers and dramatists, those who dictated yesterday the official theses and patterns, are denounced in their turn as Trotskyists, enemies of the people, because they were once grouped around a distant relative of Yagoda, an agitator and an infinitely servile bureaucrat, Leopold Auerbach, former general secretary of the Association of Proletarian Writers ; with him go to the prison the Polish émigré Bruno Jascinski, the dramatist Kirshon, the novelist Libedinsky, and a host of others. Purgings of the Academy of Sciences. Arrests of the barristers Chlenov and Pashukanis. Purgings everywhere. Proscription upon proscription. What other régime could afford the senseless luxury of thus decimating its cadres ?

The death of Yan Gamarnik has other repercussions in the country of his birth, White Russia, where the principal members of the Government are accused of treason. The president of this republic, Cherviakov, puts an end to his days (in June) and they have the effrontery to write that it is the result of "family trouble". In July comes the brusque removal of the president of the most important republic of Central Asia, Feisula Khodjaev, noted personality of the Soviet Mussulmanic world ; his brother is alleged to have committed suicide. The persecutions grow apace : no sooner does a man fall than all his collaborators and friends follow him.

The same repressions, inexplicable to an uninitiated mind, in the sphere of production. All you have are "Trotskyist nests" successively discovered in the chemical, electrical, military, and motor industries, in metallurgy, in the gold-mines, in the Central Planning Commission. . . . What is the general resultant disorganization, what are the effects of this





panic and this savagery on the productivity of the enterprises? It is impossible to learn. Sober official communiqués announce executions by the dozen in the Far East. "Agents of the enemy, Trotskyist traitors, enemies of the people . . ." Who is thus being shot? What is becoming in this frightful nightmare of the genuine oppositionists, imprisoned, interned, deported for years now—the ones who refuse to submit? It is impossible to learn.

Let us endeavour to conclude. Is there, then, a scattered Opposition throughout the country, among all the functionaries, the military men, the administrators, the intellectuals? No. Whoever knows how the present directors were selected, on the basis of servility and passive obedience, cannot have the slightest doubt on this score. But there is disorder, panic, terror, mute reproof, passive resistance—atomic, as it were. Not being sure of the morrow, nobody dares to assume a responsibility. All the statistics, all the balances, all the figures are false because nobody ever dares tell the truth, because everybody takes refuge in lies, in irresponsibility, in what is expedient. Every text is falsified. The problem is to repeat the words of yesterday while killing yesterday's ideas. That's the result of despotic methods of administration and the suppression of all freedom. The totalitarian machine has worn the social texture down to the thread.

After Thermidor, that is—without wishing to force the analogy—after the liquidation of the revolutionary generation, comes Brumaire—that is, the liquidation of the Thermidorian generation. The new privileged caste or class seeks in this way to guarantee its reign. The present crisis is that of its cadres and its methods. The men of the revolution had to be eliminated, so that the newly privileged might install themselves solidly. In this respect, the Thermidorians themselves, Stalinists from the first hour, were not sufficiently sure. But—in its struggle for





power against the Oppositions, the toiling masses, the traditions of October, Marxian thought—the bureaucracy, led to resort unceasingly to violence, finished by isolating itself from the country and by having at its disposal nothing except simple and barbarous methods of government, extremely costly from the economic standpoint and disastrous from the standpoint of the selection of the cadres.

Stalinism, which incarnates the bureaucracy, is beginning to suffocate it ; it is not lifeworthy, for it allows nothing to live. It is defined by fear, by knavery, by terror, by a frenetic determination to endure. It can stay on top only by paralysing to a very large degree the economic life itself of the country : it has now become an obstacle to the very development of the productive forces. If, on the other hand, it is swept away—for the directing coterie is henceforward at the mercy of its own blunders—the bureaucratic reaction, appealing to new men without socialist training of any sort, will most likely seek its salvation, at home, in concessions to small peasant property, in seemingly democratic reforms, in a reconciliation with the non-party people, rendered indispensable by the liquidation of the Bolshevik Party ; and abroad in a more intimate co-operation with the capitalist States. In either case, the socialist idea remains momentarily vanquished, the workers having no interest at the board ; in either case the bureaucratic régime stabilizes itself without resolving anything and continues to repress harshly any allusion to the real aims of the October revolution ; in either case, given the nationalization of the means of production, a proletariat of more than twenty million young men continues to mature, amidst poverty and oppression, for those inevitable struggles that are calculated before long to change the face of this sixth part of the world.

PARIS,

*July 1937.*





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