

UNDER  
THE BOLSHEVIK  
UNIFORM

BY  
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Thornton Butterworth Ltd

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

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## INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Such are the vast prospects that are to-day envisaged

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

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

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

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

Another simile may prove even more illuminating.

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

\* \* \* \* \*

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

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

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The Soviets' diplomacy and propaganda abroad aim



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*September 25, 1935.*

## CHAPTER I

### FROM THE IMPERIAL EAGLE TO THE RED FLAG

#### I

#### *The Crumbling of the Russian Monarchy*

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

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

The soldiers demanded :

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

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

Peace at the earliest possible moment without annexations or contributions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Why?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This appearance, however, did not correspond with reality.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The officers, generally speaking, opposed a very

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The country reacted by an immense evolution towards

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



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

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

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

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

Rasputin undoubtedly contrived to persuade the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\* \* \* \* \*

The first moments of the war appeared to afford

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Always terrorized by the spectre of reaction, the

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

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

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

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

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

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

## II

*The Liberal Vendée*

The bolshevik power did not however establish itself immediately throughout the entire country.<sup>3</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## IMPERIAL EAGLE TO RED FLAG

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER II  
THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE  
BOLSHEVIK RÉGIME

I

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

## II

*The Wheel-work of the Soviet Organisms*

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

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

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

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

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

### III

#### *The Wheel-work of the Trades Unions*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IV

*The Wheel-work of the Communist Party*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stupendous task ! Reflection reveals it to consist of

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

## v

*The Red Dictatorship*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was obvious that there were small grounds for complacency.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\* \* \* \* \*

In the conditions of such a dictatorial régime the

rôle of the International Committee is necessarily modified.

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

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

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

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

The Red dictatorship as at present exercised by Stalin <sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

## VI

*The Lenin-Marxist Communist Doctrine*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In his analysis of economical, sociological and historical processes, Karl Marx made use of what is known as the "dialectical" method<sup>1</sup>; according to him, each phenomenon passes through three phases, namely, the initial phase or "thesis," in which the characteristic features of the phenomenon are distinctly revealed but are countered by opposing influences, whose action reaches its apogee in the second phase or "antithesis," only to be later absorbed and to yield its place at the final phase which is the "synthesis" or corollary of the said phenomenon and which supervenes when this

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marx had heard of the Russian régime of peasant communities (the "mir") from the Russian revolu-



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It would seem that the answer is in the affirmative.

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is false because its "idea" is false.

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

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

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

VII

*The Red Army*

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

What had occurred may be described as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the actual power of the Red Army?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The recent decree (end of August 1935) obliges the

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To defend their "communist country" and assist in

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

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

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

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

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

### VIII

#### *The G.P.U.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

would suggest that it has recently been transferred to France.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

## IX

*Propaganda*

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

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

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

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

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

The number of establishments for communist instruction is legion.<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

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

Communist University of Moscow (2,000 students).

Communist University of Eastern National Minorities.

Communist University of Chinese Workers.

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

Evening Communist University.

University of the Young Communists.

Evening University of the Young Communists.

Communist University of Young Communists by Correspondence.

Communist Academy.

Institute of Red Teachers, consisting of seven faculties.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER III  
BOLSHEVIK ACTION IN THE  
MORAL FIELD

I

*The Anti-Religious Campaign*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

War had been declared.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And she would throw handfuls of sweets to the children.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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