THE RUSSIAN PEASANT:

AND OTHER STUDIES

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by

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BOOK II
CHAPTERS SIXTEEN TO END

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CHAPTER XVI

THE COLLECTIVE FARM

"To do anything jointly, all in hugger-mugger, as they say, in such a way that you cannot bring the work done by each to a separate reckoning, is repulsive to the peasants. . . . They take very kindly to partnership work, when it is so divided that each receives the remuneration for his own share."—ENGLEHARDT, *From the Village*, 1872–87.

"To withdraw the use of steam-power suddenly will not have the effect of reducing us to the state in which we were before its introduction. There will be a general break-up and time of anarchy such as has never been known. It will be as though our population were suddenly doubled, with no additional means of feeding the increased number."—BUTLER, *Erewhon*.

PAVLOVSKY, THE historian of Russian agriculture, said that peasant agriculture is not merely a means of livelihood: it is a way of life. For centuries it was both the means of livelihood and the way of life, for the overwhelming mass of mankind. Industrial life is a mere *parvenu* beside it, with many of the qualities, good and bad, of the *nouveau riche*. Until a comparatively recent date peasant agriculture made up nine-tenths of Russian life. Even now, when industry has made great strides, over two-thirds of the population of the U.S.S.R. live in villages (*1941*), and a good deal more than half of the whole live by tilling the soil. Since the beginning of the present century, the peasantry has more than once said *No* to the course of history. Its negative is greater than its positive strength. It might—tremendous thought—say *No* to Russian Socialism. Pavlovsky's sentence, which I have quoted above, adds that peasant agriculture does not lend itself to dramatic transformation.

Those who undertook to change the way of life of this half-awakened Titan were indeed armed in marble and triple bronze. He stirred, and muttered threateningly, in the crisis of the first Five-Year-Plan. The resistance which he is now opposing to the Germans gives cause for believing that the new institutions have won his support. But none of us can be certain even now that he may not strike out with those irresistible arms, and sweep them into a heap of fragments. Allowance being made for his lack of the qualities of leadership and organisation—for he is often the giant, led by the dwarf—he is incomparably the greatest potential force on one-sixth of the world's land surface. I make no apology, therefore, for dealing at length with the things which concern him, and for making more of him and his way of life than of all the triumphs of industrialisation. The fate of Russia, and of all that part of the world which depends upon the fate of Russia, lies in the hollow of that callus-covered hand. If the rulers have discovered in collectivisation a way of life which can be made to harmonise with his instincts and to provide the satisfaction of his needs, their system will survive, and external enemies will fail to overthrow it, because of its internal strength. If he is

submitting uneasily to a compulsion which irks him, the skipper must veer off upon another course, or Russia will again become the Land of Fragments depicted in Mayakovsky's play. In this chapter, and the relevant appendices, I have set myself no less a task than to help my readers to a judgment on the chances of this supreme issue.

The observer of Russian historical life soon becomes conscious of a subtle distinction of values between townsman and countryman. The institution of serfdom will not account for the whole of this distinction. There were household serfs quite familiar with the life of the towns: the earliest factories were worked by serfs. But the serf who paid his commutation fee and went off to work on his own account, generally in a town, reached an atmosphere of liberty unattainable to the man who stayed behind to work his master's land. The inferiority, or assumed inferiority, of the plough and the sickle and the flail and the manure-cart seems to constitute the difference. The legal inferiority of the peasant, which survived into the twentieth century, leaves its traces even to-day, when the peasant has been placed by the Constitution of 1936 on a complete political equality with the townsman. The slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat has not yet ceased to ring in our ears: and the status of the peasant as the ally, not the co-ruler, is not wholly forgotten. In the difference between the price paid to the peasant for his delivery of grain, and the price at which the Government passes it on to the State departments, to be processed and exported, or consumed by towns and army, there is a large virtual land-revenue, or land-rent, through which the peasant pays at least one quarter—Mr. Hubbard says three-sevenths—of the whole State expenditure, in addition to his share of indirect taxation. In return he is secured in his collective rights in the land. Other boons he receives in less measure than the townsman—partly because nature and geography have scattered him over vast areas, whereas the townsman's life is by definition concentrated in a few accessible settlements. You will not find the peasant in the holiday homes and sanatoria with which the townsman is generously provided. His so-called cultural opportunities depend, even now, on what his local organisation, the collective farm, is able to do for him: and that varies immensely from one centre to another. The standard of maternity benefit for his wife is half-pay for a month before and a month after child-birth: the corresponding standard for the town-worker's wife is full pay for four weeks before and four after: in the case of the Red Army, the dependants' allowance in the village is half that in the town; these differences are typical of the surviving distinction. Hitherto his work has been very different from that of the townsman—tremendous, back-breaking toil, at certain seasons, when nature demands the completion of certain tasks at shattering speed, with long spells of demoralising idleness and sleep on the stove: by contrast with hours, regular if long, under the watchful eye of manager or foreman. The machine

has brought a relief from the excessive strain of ploughing and harvesting and carrying and threshing: but with it has come a new discipline, the need to spend the old leisure in agricultural or instructional processes unrecognised, or even unnecessary, before; the fixed hours, and the vigilance of the gang-master. He is a factory-hand working in the open air, and his work is piece-work, with payment varying according to output. But his furnace is the sun, his water comes from the clouds, nature is still his supreme arbiter, and the final payer of his wage.

The change to collectivisation has affected the social status of the peasant and affected it in a direction different from that which we should have expected. In becoming, so to speak, a factory-hand, he might have lost some of the dignity of the permanent right-holder in his own allotment of land. But as earlier chapters in these studies have attempted to make plain, of dignity there was none. His work was "black" work, and when he came to town, the factory-hand was his superior. Some of the memories of the time when he alone was subject to judicial and administrative flogging yet survived. The words for peasant, *muzhik*, and for peasant woman, *baba*, had nothing honourable about them. The new name for the collective farmer, *kolkhoznik*, barbarous though it may sound to the Russian scholar, has in fact more dignity. At the Peasant-house in Moscow they now serve the arrival from the country not with *peasant soup*, but with *kolkhoznik soup*. It is the same old soup, but the name gives it a social flavouring. In the collective farm, one peasant out of four holds an office or incumbency of some sort. He is a pig-breeding expert, or what not, and his wife is a dairy-woman, and *in the women's group*. That is very different from being a *peasant*, with the associations which attach to the old status and the old name. Collectivisation is a step up on the social ladder, and I err greatly if this has not been an element of importance in the acceptance of the change. It was otherwise, of course, with the prosperous peasant, who desired no such change; but the prosperous peasant, in his character of *kulak*, was condemned beyond reprieve.

But here I must interpolate an explanation. It is not prosperity that is condemned: one of the objects of the collective farms, as stated in their model statute, is to make the peasant well-to-do (*zazhitochny*). When Stalin addressed the Agricultural Combine Workers about their wages in December, 1935, he told them that the money was their own and they could spend it any way they liked. The prosperity which is derived from the exploitation of the labour of other persons, from usury, from buying cheap and selling dear, became a crime when the U.S.S.R. abandoned the principle of N.E.P. and entered upon the period of Planning. If we say that a man is at liberty to make all that he can by his own work, but nothing by the work of others, we lay ourselves open to the enquiry whether organisation, such as the captain of industry conducts in a capitalist society, is not itself work, and work of a very

valuable order. The answer is that it is of high value: but, in the socialist society, a man must not use his organising gift for his own personal profit, any more than he may use his exceptional nerve or muscle power to rob on the highway. If our supposed interlocutor objects that it was hard for the man who had been allowed, even encouraged, to use his organising gift for his own purposes one day, to be drastically punished the next day for doing the same thing, I shall have no reply to offer, except that revolutions are ruthless things, and that the effect on character of such sudden changes of fundamental principle is likely to be, for a generation or more, disintegrating. The organiser has to learn to use his organising power for the community, as the great military or naval commander does, and to be content with little more than the laurel wreath for his achievement.

In order that I may keep nothing back from the reader, I must add here that the Stakhanovite worker, whose function is more particularly described elsewhere, does perhaps derive a portion of his remuneration from the use of his organising power in the direction of the work of the gang which co-operates with him. Prima facie, it would appear that the case is one in which the adoption of some of the devices of capitalism has involved a breach of normal principle.

The general conception of collectivisation is the conversion of peasant agriculture into a congeries of open-air factories of food and raw materials. But the new agricultural factory differs from the industrial factory, which was, in a certain sense, its model and prototype, because the workers in the former have permanent rights in some of the instruments of production, are entitled to a dividend instead of a wage, and use part of their labour in tiny sub-factories of their own, over the proceeds of which they have complete control. The system is, in fact, an ingenious combination of the individualistic with the socialistic farm, worked out by the favourite Bolshevik method of trial and error, which—we must remember—is still available to make alterations and corrections. How large and how far-reaching these alterations and corrections may be, has been shown by the concession establishing fairs for the purchase and sale of cattle.

The collectives are of three types. The simplest is a mere cultivating or herd-tending partnership, common among the nomads of Kazakstan, and found with some frequency in the North Caucasus, but otherwise occurring only on a small scale. At the other end of the scale is the full Commune, in which the members live together round a common dining-hall and kitchen, and have no separate belongings except trifling objects of personal use. Collectives of this type do not make more than 1% of the whole number. In the vast bulk of the collectives—those of which I write in this chapter—the work is common, the rights in land and in live and dead stock are joint, the surplus product is divided among the members, the incomes are separate, and the members live, and, to a

large extent feed, in their separate families and in their own houses. An important individualistic element in them is the small separate yard, or garden allotment, representing the old *usádba*, ordinarily adjoining the living-house, and worked by the family. I shall use the expression collective farm of this common type of organisation only. It is the Russian *Kolkhoz*: a word which is begotten of the Western word *collective*, and the Russian word for a farm or economic establishment (*khozyaistvo*).

In the collective, thus defined, the land is the property of the State, but the members have rights of permanent enjoyment, subject to their legal obligation to admit other members who have the required qualifications. A cause of great satisfaction has been the distribution to the collectivised farms of certificates of permanent rights in the land accompanied by plans which show its area and boundaries. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the confidence which the receipt of these certificates has created. In the yard, or garden land—which for convenience I shall call simply the yard—attached to each household, the right of permanent enjoyment is vested in the family. This yard was properly only from one acre to five, but larger yards are recognised in some areas, notably in the tracts where cattle-raising is the principal occupation. Abuses have been recently discovered which have led to a reduction of the area. It was found that some collective farmers (those of the Don valley were noted as particular offenders) were neglecting the collective work for the work of the yard, and the process of re-survey revealed the misappropriation from common land of no less than 100,000 acres. A minimum number of work-days on the collective lands has now been prescribed. A growing conviction that the collectivised peasants are giving too much time and industry to their yards and to cottage industry, and even to longer undertakings, including coal-mining, is noticeable.

The implements of cultivation belong generally to the State, so far as all power-driven and large-sized machinery is concerned, but the collective owns some large implements in areas to which the operations of the M.T.S. have not yet been extended, and all smaller and more primitive implements, and may be seen parading them at the rehearsal for the harvesting which takes place in June of each year. The horses belong to the collective. Of the other animals, some belong to the collectives, but most are kept in the sub-farms for animals, which form sections of the majority of collective farms—presumably to fix responsibility for the stock upon particular persons or groups. A very large proportion of the large horned cattle, and of smaller animals, are the property of individual collectivist peasants, who keep them in their yards and feed them on their own produce, and on the fodder which they receive as part of their dividends. It is a little-known fact, but one relevant to the prospects of cattle-rearing in the U.S.S.R., that 65%

of the cows and calves and more than half of the pigs and sheep in the country are owned and tended by individuals. Of the remainder a large proportion are tended in the sub-farms by persons who are individually responsible for their charges, and remunerated in proportion to their success. The large element of individualism in the system, particularly in respect to cattle, has played a leading part in the reconciliation of the people to its collectivist features.

There are a quarter of a million of these collectives, occupying in 1935 94% of the whole cultivated area. The proportion which is collectivised is comparatively low in Georgia, Armenia, and in certain other areas. Elsewhere the percentage ran from 78 to 99 and, prior to the removal of the Germans to Asia, actually reached 100 in the German Volga Republic. In the surplus-food-producing centres, it was everywhere over 90: and in Ukrain, as a whole, it reached 98.

The farm is not identical with the old village. It is often larger. Its average size varies widely in different regions. It is below 600 acres of cultivation in much of the Northern Agricultural belt, in White Russia, in the Trans-Caucasus and in Mahommedan Central Asia. It runs up above 1,800 in Ukrain, and twice or three times as high on the Middle and Lower Volga. For the whole country it averages 1,600 acres. The number of households in a farm averages ninety-five for the whole country: but here also the regional variation is great, from less than fifty in the Far East and the Northern Agricultural region, to 133 in Ukrain, and 152 in the North Caucasus. The units of horse power (apart from the hiring of machines from the M.T.S.) available on the farm average fifty-two, but they go down in particular regions below half this figure. Nevertheless more than half the horse power used in agriculture was still provided by animals before the German attack, and is certainly larger now. In 1935 less than three-quarters of all the cultivated area of the farms were served by the M.T.S. (Machine Tractor Station), with a substantially greater proportion in the more important agricultural areas, and a lower proportion in the north and centre. Nowhere is any but the heaviest of the agricultural work done by the M.T.S. There was everywhere a varying balance of heavy work which must be done by the people themselves, though they were for the most part relieved of the ploughing. The pressure on the oil supply caused by war will greatly increase the proportion of the work to be done by human and animal labour. The collectives had over 8½ million working horses and an average of 29 acres of cultivation to every horse.

There are not less on an average than twelve working members of each collective to every 100 acres of cultivation. After making allowance, on the one hand, for the great amount of mechanisation which has been introduced into agriculture by the M.T.S., and, on the other, for the continuance of the elderly and invalid members and the employment of members on non-agricultural duties—we hear, for instance, of doctors,

as well as veterinary surgeons and book-keepers, on the membership list, and a substantial amount of administrative work is also necessary on farms of this magnitude—the figures are indicative of rural under-employment. Three to five agricultural workers for every 100 arable acres, including permanent grass, are, I understand, found sufficient in Great Britain, except on glass and market gardens. The impression of under-employment is confirmed from other sources. There has been of late years a substantial reduction in the number of peasant households, and the existence of many abandoned houses has been noticed. The Census of 1939 showed a reduction of 5% in the rural population. Evidently a movement to the towns is in progress, in order to meet the demands of increasing industrialisation. Its extension will be economically advantageous at both ends. In the meanwhile it is clear that a remedy for rural over-population is being applied. Mr. Hubbard has criticised as uneconomical the widespread mechanisation which has been carried out: but one of its aims was to establish a pool from which labour for the towns could be drawn.

How much equality, and how much freedom, do the collectives give: what are their fiscal burdens: what has been their effect upon the live-stock and upon the fertilisation of the soil with manure: what upon the land, and upon agricultural production: what upon the condition of the peasant both material and moral: how does the still surviving individualist farmer—now a rarity—carry on his economy: has the new system come to stay or is it likely soon to be displaced by another?—these are some of the questions upon which the reader will desire to have light.

Some degree of egalitarianism was forced upon the Bolsheviks by proletarian demands in the early period of the Revolution. But Marx was not egalitarian, and the Bolsheviks are not: and their non-egalitarianism is not something which has been unwillingly adopted by way of compromise, or surrender. True, it is contemplated that, on the attainment of the final stage of the classless society, when the growth of wealth, unhampered by the restrictions of a system based upon private profit, is expected to make feasible a virtually unlimited distribution of desirable things, the rule will be, from each according to his capacity, to each according to his needs. In the meanwhile, the rule is, to each according to his work, and he who does not work neither shall he eat: to which we must make the important addition that work is *provided*: and under the new constitution formally *guaranteed*.

As between the different farms, it cannot be said that the rule of equality according to work is actually operative. There are wide variations between the areas of cultivation per worker, and still wider variations in the advantages of climate, water, soil, and situation. This is only another way of stating the problem of the differential value of land and of the differential rent to which it theoretically gives rise. If we assume the existence of approximately equal industry and

equal skill, and of approximately equal or insufficiently differentiated taxation, one corporation of collective farmers will grow rich, while another will remain poor. This is actually happening under our eyes. There are so-called "millionaire" collectives, whose income, translated into roubles, reaches hundreds of thousands, because they grow cotton or sugar-beet, or some other valuable crop, or because their cereal cultivation is exceptionally favoured by nature, or because their vegetables and dairy produce are within easy reach of a great consuming centre. But an examination of average yields, as officially published prior to 1936, convinces us, without more ado, that the general lot is very different from this. Nothing less than a drastic differentiation of burdens would prevent the wide variation of prosperity from farm to farm—a variation which does not depend on the qualities and defects of the farmers. To what extent the Soviet Government has attempted to correct this anomaly, we shall see when we come to the subject of taxation.

Within the farms, the principle of remuneration according to work is effectively observed. The collective farmers are divided into gangs or brigades, to each of which are allotted particular land, particular buildings, particular animals, particular implements: and further subdivision into *links* determines with further precision the responsibilities of smaller groups. In some cases the land for which an individual worker is responsible may be seen marked out with wooden tablets. Within the group, the gang-leader appraises the work of links and of individuals, and there is a system of rewards and penalties according to the quality of the results. The general scheme is one of payment by work-days, but the value of the work-day is determined by the social value of the type of work. A doctor, or veterinary surgeon, or book-keeper, who is a member of a collective, may be credited with two days or a day and a half for every day that he has worked. The valuation is determined by the general meeting of the collective. A standard work day is not very exacting, and a good worker may put in more than one between sunrise and sundown. A recent order of general application gives to the Chairman a lump allowance of 600 work-days, with an additional bonus of 250 roubles, if the requirements of the Plan are met in full. In the subfarms which look after the animals there is a system of premia, the milkmaid getting such and such a proportion of the milk, and so on.

The fund from which the payments are made might accurately be described as a dividend. It consists of the residual produce and cash which remain after the demands of the Government and of the M.T.S. have been met, and after setting aside certain funds such as the provision for next year's seeds, which forms a very large percentage of the total crop in Russia, owing to the extraordinary smallness of the yield. Subject to an exceptional provision for the rush of harvest work, there is, or there should be, no hired labour to be paid. A collective may employ an expert—for instance, a dairy expert—at an agreed salary: and it may

employ paid builders for building. Otherwise the principle that no man must make a profit out of the labour of another is strictly enforced, or violated only at the peril of the transgressors: and all the work must be done by the members and remunerated out of dividend. A recent pronouncement of the Council of People's Commissars, animadverting on irregularities, shows that this rule has been often violated, that individualist peasants have been employed on work which should have been done by collective farmers, at rates of pay higher than the dividends earned by the latter, and that, in some cases, the collective farmers have had to seek work outside their farms, in consequence.

The poet Nekrasov shows us seven peasants wandering far and wide, to discover: who can be happy and free in Russia? And the answers which they receive to their question make the poet's picture of rural life in the nineteenth century. How much freedom is there now? The principal limitation is the Plan. I have already pointed out that there was a traditional plan—the three-field rotation—before the Bolsheviks invented Planning: and that it was virtually impossible for the individual to break away from it. The agricultural Plan of the present day, so far as the particular farm is concerned, amounts, in effect, to the device of a particular rotation, since the area of cultivation is limited by the land and resources available. The plan travels upward from the farm: and then back from the central planning authority to the farm again. The regional and local authorities, who deal with it on its way, have to translate it into terms of approved rotations, which, applied to the whole area with which they are severally concerned, will give the result demanded. If it is not agriculturally feasible, it will not be carried out: and, despite a tendency to over-elaboration of detail, which has been recently diminished by dropping the attempt to prescribe the cultivation of particular cereals, pains are naturally taken to see that it shall be feasible, as well as to meet the requirements of the planning authority. On a big question, such as the rotation to be observed, the collective must, ultimately, submit to orders: after it has wrangled about its own share in the distribution of the areas to be devoted to particular crops. The frequent insistence by the higher authorities upon reasonable consideration for the opinions and requirements of the collective farmers, suggests that they are often overridden by local agricultural authorities.

Blunders are, of course, made in agricultural planning. Perhaps the worst was the obliteration of the rice-fields, and their irrigation channels, in Uzbekistan, with the object of universalising the growing of cotton in the area best suited to it. This was done before the local food supply was secured. The order was countermanded, on the discovery that the food was not arriving by the new Turkestan–Siberia railroad as fast as it should: and the people were told to replant a third of the old area with rice: but the season for this had gone by. Another mistaken order was for sowing "in the mud", while the thaw was still in progress,

in order to secure the earlier maturing of the crop. These are errors which experience corrects. In the meanwhile a characteristic fact is that the wrong orders are put down to the machinations of Trotskyist–Bukharinist–Rykorist enemies of the people.*

Normally, the plan is a reasonable thing, in which the cultivators have had their say. The worst which will happen to the collective farmers, if they fall short of requirements, is that they will go without some of the favours which the Government has to distribute, for instance, without a liberal share of advances, or the privilege of the cheap purchase of stock from the state-farm; and will have to pay their tax-in-kind on the total culturable area, though it be larger than the area sown and harvested.

On details of agricultural management, the General Meeting of the collective farmers has a large discretionary authority. This body has caught much of the primitive democratic spirit of the old *Mir*, while learning to submit to the rulings of a modern Communist Chairman. In form, the latter is elected by the General Meeting; but the form is not a reality, and Chairmen are transferred from post to post at the discretion of the Government. I myself have met one, who had been in charge of a glass factory, before he joined the collective, and had just received orders transferring him to a brick factory. His successor, a woman, had been in charge of a Co-operative shop before she joined her new post as Chairman. Neither knew anything of agriculture. Their duty was to supply organising and driving capacity, and both appeared quite fitted to do so. The case may safely be taken to be typical of Bolshevik methods. There was no apprehension that the General Meeting of the collective might elect someone else to the chair.

The General Meeting elects out of its own members a managing Committee for day-by-day business, and a Revision or Audit Committee, which has the function of watching the accounts and scrutinising decisions. The records and accounts are kept by book-keepers, who are often very capable persons, men or women.

The order of the People's Commissars, of which I spoke above, reveals to us that the authority of the General Meeting has, in many cases, been overridden by the Managing Committee, and sometimes even by the Chairman, acting without the Managing Committee. Thus, members of collective farms have been arbitrarily expelled, for insufficient reason, there has been excessive outlay, without the sanction of the General Meeting, on buildings and other capital expenditure, and on the hiring of outside labour, and the dividends have thus been improperly reduced, and their distribution delayed. It was the function of the Revision Committee to bring these irregularities to light, but they have often confined their functions to cursory examination at the end of each

* Bukharin and Rykov, like Trotsky, are now classed among the enemies of the régime.

year. The result, as the Commissars point out, has been disappointment and discontent. If, as I think probable, these revelations were made by peasant members of the Supreme Soviet, meeting at Moscow in January, 1938, they are an interesting justification of the new Constitution: which assists the ventilation of grievances, and exercises a truly democratic function in this respect.

The collective must hire machinery from the M.T.S. of the region in which it is located, or deliver an increased amount of produce to the Government. It is conceivable that a collective might prefer to utilise surplus man-power for the heavy operations, if it were perfectly free to do so. We must recall, however, the extent to which animals and implements were hired from private persons before the establishment of the M.T.S., and the fact that the members of the collective, and not persons hired by them, would have to do the work, if the machines of the monopolist M.T.S. were not available. Mechanisation has very great advantages: among which the saving of agricultural time, in a country having a short open season, is the most important. It seems unlikely that the obligation to employ the M.T.S. is felt as a grievance, so long as the charges are substantially less than those formerly levied by the private lender, as I think they are. An effect of mechanisation, in the form which it has taken in the U.S.S.R., is to make the people closely dependent upon an official agency, as the inhabitants of an irrigated tract in Northern India are dependent upon the irrigation authorities, who decide "turns", and the dates of supply. Recent criticisms of Machine Tractor Stations by the People's Commissar of Agriculture are to the effect that they do not cover the outlay upon them, and that the machines are carelessly housed, or not housed at all.

For six or seven months of each year the collective farmers are prohibited from selling grain except to Government or to co-operative agencies. The object of this restriction is to prevent them from disposing of produce before the claims of the Government and the M.T.S. on the harvest have been met, and the necessary "funds" for seed and so on, set aside. Otherwise they have full liberty of sale. There exist no authorised wholesale dealers, and sales in large quantities, except to co-operatives or to government departments, would come under suspicion of illicit trading. Liberty of sale, in practice, means liberty of retail sale, and it may be exercised in collective markets or otherwise as each producer may find convenient.

The member of the collective farm works under a discipline more closely resembling that of the factory than any to which the peasant, in his agricultural work, has hitherto had to submit. He must keep time, and satisfy the gang-leader, or he will lose his "work-day", if he incurs no worse penalty. The People's Commissars' order of April, 1938, gives us a glimpse of the penalties which may be enforced. A man, or woman, who offends against internal order, may be punished by

public admonition, by posting on the "black" board, by fine, by transfer to lower work, by being required to work for a period without remuneration. In the past, it appears that orders of expulsion have been passed by the Managing Committee, and even by the Chairman. Henceforth—if orders are observed—there is to be no expulsion from the collective except by the General Meeting, and by the vote of at least two-thirds of the members.

I turn to another form of restriction upon liberty: that of family life. Collectives receive women as full members on equal terms with men, and their statutes require them to give to women opportunities of advancement to work for which they are fitted, and to resist attempts to keep them in domestic subordination. The reality of such provisions depend upon economic conditions. The separate wage is of immense importance. I have been told, and I can readily believe, that the first actual reception of a solid dividend for the work done by the women, in solid rye and potatoes, was like the entry upon a new world, where each gazed on each with a wild surmise. A man said he had one complaint to make of the collective: *he no longer received his daughter's wages.* Female labour is very extensively employed on the farms, and the woman's dividend is one of the reasons why there has been acquiescence in collectivisation: *because it has put the women on the side of the Soviets.*

Emancipation from household drudgery involves common catering, the crèche, the public laundry. The provision here is of course far from complete and very uneven. Community kitchens and common catering are in operation for field-work at busy seasons. There are day-nurseries for the children while the mothers are at work, and schools for the older ones. But these, like all other social arrangements in the village, are limited by the amount of the social insurance fund, and the extent of the building accommodation available in each case. In industry, Government is the employer, and sets aside as social insurance a stated percentage on the wages. In agriculture the collective farmers are self-employers. It is they who find the money out of the produce available after harvest, and there are wide variations in the prosperity, and therefore in the provision of social privileges and amenities, in different farms. On the other hand, we must not be misled by a crude comparison of percentages in the two cases. The percentage of 14% or more, in the case of industry, is a percentage on wages. The percentage of 2% or 3% in the farm is a percentage of the whole gross product of the concern. I feel no doubt, however, that the industrial worker does better out of his social insurance than the collective farmer does. Buildings in the collectives for schools, crèches and the like, vary very greatly. Sometimes they are very fine, the homes of former landlords and *kulaks*: sometimes very poor.

The woman has gained in liberty by her membership. The young people have gained also. It may be that the man, the head of the family, as we traditionally call him, has lost what they have gained. At all

events he has less power over his family than he had. Custom and opinion still preserve to him a good deal of power: and the joint-family-working of the "yard" gives him a sphere in which to exercise it. His position in society has gained in dignity for reasons already indicated.

We come next to the somewhat vexed question of the tax-burden, which is often stated by observers at a very low figure. The "single agricultural tax" in cash, which prevailed throughout the greater part of the period of N.E.P., was superseded in 1936 by an income-tax on collectives. But by far the most important part of the tax-burden is the "compulsory sale in the nature of a tax", which goes by the Russian name of *Khlebopostavka*. The contradictions which appear in the accounts given by different observers are due sometimes to the treatment of this compulsory sale as something other than a tax, sometimes to varying local experiences. Since a payment is made by the Government in respect to the compulsory deliveries, it has been, not unnaturally, supposed that they constitute, not a tax, but a sale. But the official description of them shows that they are in the nature of a tax.

There is a difference of opinion, among the investigators of Soviet conditions, between those who think that the régime has unduly favoured the peasant and those who think that it has disfavoured him. The present studies have been recorded in vain if they have failed to show that the general course of Russian history—with certain exceptions—has been to lay the greater burdens upon the peasant. It was he who was the predial serf, who did the "black" work, who, after emancipation, retained the inferior legal status, or had no legal status at all and submitted to beating by everyone dressed in a little brief authority. The "intelligents" who "went to the people" in the seventies of the last century were going against the stream. A quasi-religious sentiment took them to the peasant as to an oracle possessed of a mystical inspiration: but the peasant continued to be slighted and beaten and, for a long time, to be overtaxed and officially neglected. In 1902 and again in 1905 he awakened and gave signs of the same latent power which he had shown at rare intervals in earlier centuries, but with a new addition to it brought by strange allies. Henceforth he had leaders, who sought his alliance, and confirmed his strength with their own. But he was still not an equal, though he had come nearer to being one. Formal equality the Constitution of 1936 gave him. How near is the approach to real equality remains a question in dispute.

Light will be shed on this question if we can reach a secure conclusion regarding the distribution of the burden of taxation. This I have endeavoured to do in an appendix. For reasons there given, I think that the peasant pays between 15% and 18% of his gross produce in direct taxation in addition to the indirect taxation which falls upon him in proportion to his consumption. The direct tax is taken almost entirely in kind for a very good reason. You cannot tax a peasant in cash unless

you provide him with a market: and the Russian *kolkhoznik* has a market only for a very small part of his produce. As to the direct impost of 15% to 18% of the gross produce, it shows the impossibility of escaping from the operation of certain economic laws. If land taxation is light, the person who enjoys the right of cultivation is placed at an enormous advantage over the rest of the community: and unless land taxation is differential—the man who is luckier in the soil, climate, and situation of his lot is better off than the man who is less lucky in these respects. In a state aiming at remuneration according to work, we naturally expect a system of land taxation which leaves as little as possible of the unearned income to any individual.

The impost is to be judged, as you would judge a rent-charge, by its amount, its distribution, and the elasticity of its assessment and collection. We are fortunate in having two standards by which to judge the severity of the 15–18% impost as a general average. The land revenue in British India, along with cesses for local purposes, comes, on an average, to something like the value of 12% of the product. But the Indian peasant, if a tenant, pays a rent which is probably double this percentage, and he is often deep in the books of the moneylender. We have another standard of comparison in a valuation of pre-war and post-revolution burdens on the Russian peasant, made by Mr. Albert Vainstein and published at Moscow, under the auspices of the Council of Labour and Defence, in 1924. We there see the peasant of 1912 paying in indirect as well as in direct taxation, 11·2% of all his income: a somewhat surprising figure, in view of the frequently repeated story of excessive taxation under the Tsarist régime. It must be remembered that, before 1912, not only the poll-tax, but also the redemption payments on account of emancipation from serfdom, had long been abolished, and that in this, as in some other respects, the Tsarist régime was not at its worst when the Revolution occurred.

According to Mr. Vainstein's calculations, the burden on the peasant was somewhat lightened in 1918–19, and made somewhat heavier in 1920–22, but the taxation of 1922–23 was about equal to that of 1912. We see, then, that the present rural taxation is more than the Tsarist taxation of 1912, and more than the taxation of the first five or six years of the Revolutionary period. But the peasant in 1912 was meeting charges on account of debt and of rent for additional land leased by him, which were out of all proportion to the loan-charges upon the collective farmer to-day.

Viewed as a tax or a rent charged for agricultural land by the proprietor State, 15–18% of the value of the gross produce is a moderate, but by no means a very low, charge. It does not justify the suggestion of E. Strauss in *Soviet Russia* that the peasant is favoured as against the urban worker. Criticism must be directed, not against the pitch of the charge, regarded as an average, but against its insufficient varia-

tion according to local conditions, and against a possibility of inelasticity in administration. In these respects the system is open to criticism, for which I must again refer the reader to the appendix. The somewhat indulgent treatment given to the grower of the technical crops is justified, not only by the importance of industrial interests, but also by the desirability, from the agricultural point of view, of diminishing the still great preponderance of cereal crops and of diversifying the range of cropping. The idea that the peasant receives exceptional favour is probably due to the comparatively high prices paid for the technical crops, the growing of which is not within the reach of the majority.

Taxation-in-kind, on a large scale, involves the existence of elevator, or other storage, accommodation, very widely distributed, and of arrangements, which only an organised Socialist Government can possess, for the preservation of perishables, and for putting them through the processes which fit them for the consumer. For instance, wherever there is a milk revenue, there must be creameries, or butter or cheese factories: where there is sugar-beet there must be sugar-boiling plant: and the kind-collecting Government must create all this machinery for processing or distribution, or organise its creation by Co-operative Societies. If we realise all the complexities of such a system, we shall not be surprised that collectivised agriculture, with taxation-in-kind, did not work smoothly from the outset. In a year of plentiful crops, such as 1937, complaints of inadequate storage and of the resultant destruction of food by weather, are still insistent. The People's Commissariat for Food Industry has done excellent work in creating the network of institutions and plant, which was essential to the prevention of muddle and waste: and this organisation of supplies has contributed much to the improved food situation which is so noticeable in the towns since 1933.

The catastrophic destruction of livestock on the introduction of collectivisation is a subject which naturally makes the agricultural authorities wince. It gave, and continues to give, to the enemies of the Soviet Union legitimate occasion for jubilation. Subordinates sometimes try to gloss it over, but there is no concealment in higher quarters of the urgency of the need for recovery. If we seek a correct perspective, we must turn back to the historian of pre-revolution agriculture, G. Pavlovsky, who notes the beginning of a diminution in livestock, in consequence of the increased use of mechanical transport, and the extension of arable land in European Russia—processes which have now been carried farther. As in India, a good many of the horned cattle were of poor quality, and the loss is not all that the figures suggest. But there is growing doubt of the adequacy of the reserves of oil, the Army makes increasing demands for horses, the need of milk products becomes more insistent, the land cries out for manure which is not available in sufficient quantities. This is a subject upon which figures are more eloquent than words, but I have given my statistics in an appendix.

They do not show complete recovery at the time that the animal census of 1938 was taken: but they show progress. Great droughts have before now destroyed hundreds of thousands of animals. But such a holocaust as was this, spread over the whole length and breadth of so vast a country, surely never was since agriculture began. The animals killed were mostly young, and the date when they would have reached breeding and working power is the date when the losses begin to be most felt. Recovery is inevitably slow. A cow cannot produce a calf till two and a half years after she herself was conceived.

More than two-thirds of the horses are in the hands of the collectives. Individual peasants, workers, and employees of local bodies, own 15% of them. The provision of well-bred sires is cared for by a hundred horse-breeding farms, which had 52,000 breeding mares in 1934 and produced the large number of 24,000 young stock. The normal tendency of collectives, whose heavy agricultural work is done for them by the M.T.S., would be to care very little about the production of young stock: and special measures to correct this tendency appear to be necessary. The Government has exempted from the obligation of compulsory deliveries certain areas to be devoted to fodder. In 1935, 11,000 acres of cereals, and 800 of potatoes, were exempted: but more than this is called for. *Pravda* has recently published circumstantial complaints of the lack of provision for adequate veterinary service in Ukrain. Some encouragement has been given to horse-racing.

The large number of animals in the personal ownership of individuals, and tended in their yards, should be a guarantee of the personal attention which they require. In the case of the others, the system of payment by results seems likely to stimulate stockmen and dairy-maids. But the most significant and far-reaching measure for the encouragement of breeding is the recent establishment of fairs for the purchase and sale of cattle. The mode of taxation, which demands a stated quantity of milk in respect to each milch cow, tends to the elimination of the inferior animals. If they can be replaced by something better, this should be advantageous. There are complaints of the quantity and quality of the hay, and in 1935 the hay crop failed over large areas, so that cattle-feed in winter presented great difficulty.

The most important item in the needs of Russian agriculture is increased manuring, and this is closely bound up with an increase in the stock. The Black-Earth zone lacks moisture more urgently than it lacks soil nutrients, but, in the long run, the elements taken from the soil by cropping require to be replaced. In the non-Black-Earth areas, where moisture is generally sufficient, manure has always been a prime necessity. Not only the reduction of stock, but also the disorganisation of the old methods of stock-keeping, caused by collectivisation, have affected the supply of farmyard manure of recent years: and have doubtless made important contributions to the general failure to increase

the yields. The old methods of storage, collection, and carrying out of the manure, developed by long traditional practice, have had to be replaced by new, which are not immediately effective. The potential supply is reckoned at 300 million tons, which, if it could be made actually available, would permit of the application of nearly a ton to every cultivated acre. Actually, 135 million tons of farmyard manure were applied in 1935. The British standard—applicable, of course, to a more intensive agriculture—is understood to be two tons of farmyard manure per acre, with artificials in addition, and with a leguminous crop ploughed in once in four years to restore vegetable humus. Very little use of cleaning crops is made in Russia. Without expecting conformity with the methods of an intensive cultivation such as the British, I think it clear that Russian agriculture has much leeway to make up: and that a very great increase in livestock is essential to success.

A good deal of manure on the treeless steppe is burnt for fuel, and it is difficult to devise any means of checking this practice without extensive forestation. Factories have been set up for artificial fertilisers, and the supply is increasing fairly fast. There is an increasing production of phosphates: but the production of potash salts has only begun. Artificials are used almost exclusively for the industrial or technical crops, primarily for cotton and sugar beet.

I have said enough to prepare the reader for the conclusion in the appendix, that agricultural yields in the U.S.S.R., always very low, do not show any unmistakable signs of rising higher. Doubtless, remarkable results are attained by Stakhanovite workers in particular farms, and there has been an increase in cultivated area resulting in an increase of gross produce. Dr. Otto Schiller, whose outlook upon collectivisation is not a favourable one, has recorded the opinion that in 1935, for the first time after a number of years, the bread supply was secured. There has also been a great extension of the area under the so-called technical crops, and the U.S.S.R. has become virtually self-sufficient in sugar,* flax, and cotton, and to the extent of one-third, also in tea. This, and the extension of fodder grasses, are great achievements. The harvest of 1937, after the serious disappointment of 1936, appears to have been a bumper, and that of 1940 is put by official speakers at a high figure. But the volume and quality of the crops depend almost entirely upon meteorological conditions: and the average yield per unit of area, as shown by the official figures published by the Soviet Government before 1936, continues generally stationary. With a diminution of the manure supply, I do not see how anything better could have been expected.

The agricultural authorities have looked to mechanisation for great

* Sir J. Russell in the *Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture* for February, 1938, cites evidence of a yield of sugar beet per acre higher in 1937 than 1913.

results. Its actual benefits are the following. First, it takes the place of deficient animal-power, and sets both animal and man-power free for other tasks. The value of this benefit depends on circumstances. I have repeatedly pointed out the large proportion of horseless households which has characterised rural Russia since the epoch of the Emancipation, and probably even earlier. As to man-power, there is already under-employment in the village, and mechanisation tends to add to it. But it helps to meet the growing demand of industry for new hands, and—whether in consequence of it, or for other reasons—work, such as hoeing, which was formerly neglected, is now being done. The relief to the rural situation in respect to draught animals is very great. Secondly, mechanisation saves time: a factor of immense importance in so short an open season as that of the greater part of Russia, with advantages both at the beginning and the end of the season. The timely performance of all operations adds much to the product. The caterpillar tractors, which are now to a large extent replacing wheeled tractors, can work in unfavourable weather, which is of great value for the timely beginning of agricultural operations. Of the advantages of the combine-harvesters, also rapidly increasing in numbers, I have something to say below. Small special tractors for hoed crops are being produced in the Putilov works at Leningrad, and the lighter operations of husbandry are being increasingly performed by mechanical means.

On the question whether mechanisation adds to fertility otherwise than by contributing to speed, I have to note that the mere fact of deep ploughing does not necessarily increase production. The soil which is turned up may be less fertile than that which is nearer the surface. Autumn ploughing of land which is left unsown till the spring is a very valuable operation, because it enables the snow to get in. There is nothing new about this practice, which was always observed by the better farmers: but in so far as mechanisation enables more autumn ploughing to be done—and it seems clear that it does so—it contributes directly to fertility.

Collectivisation has contributed to the success of agricultural operations by the improvement, of which it has been the cause, in work-discipline. This naturally varies widely in the quarter of a million of collective farms. But it is plain that some things are now being done, which were left undone or incompletely done before, and that the incentive of payment according to work is a very effective one. An equally important fact is that collectivisation enables the cultivator to concentrate on his job, instead of having to dissipate his attention over a number of different functions, including the financing of his farm and the buying and selling of implements and produce. Collectivisation has also made possible the application to agriculture of the results of scientific research, to an extent hardly to be achieved in dealing with millions of separate peasant holdings. Russian research work has won

the admiration of scientists, and it is not being wasted by the pigeon-holing of its conclusions as it often is in Great Britain. It has carried the wheat-belt further north, and defeated the shortness of the agricultural season by giving an earlier start to growth. Orders go through to the very bottom. When they are wrong orders, they cause extensive mischief. The quality of the research work makes the prospect of judicious orders a promising one.

One of the most valuable influences upon agriculture has been the result, not of collectivisation, but of the increasing industrialisation of the country, which has created new, and enlarged old, centres of demand for dairy products, vegetables, and technical crops, and is slowly but surely diminishing the immense preponderance of cereals. Changes in this direction are particularly noticeable in the Leningrad, Moscow, Ivanovsk, and Gorky (old Nizhni-Novgorod) provinces. If the process of industrialisation continues, as appears likely, it is in this direction that we may look for the surest, if least spectacular, advances of Russian agriculture.

If we now address ourselves to the question of the material prosperity of the peasant under collectivisation, we must begin by saying that it shows enormous variations, from what is wealth by peasant standards, to what is poverty by any standard. Of the former type it is easy to find examples, because the rich collective is naturally the most willingly shown. Suffice it to say that the rich collective, with each member earning on the average 2,400 roubles a year, with half a ton of wheat, 600 lb. of vegetables, 300 lb. of potatoes, and 30 litres of wine, besides the earnings of his "yard", and taking in holiday lodgers into the bargain, actually does exist. That the average is something immensely less than this is an inevitable inference from known facts. Since cereal and other yields have not on the average increased, general material prosperity could be derived only from one or more of the following causes: a reduction of waste: an increase of cultivation in a ratio greater than the increase of population: a change of cultivation to more profitable crops: an increase of animal products: an improved market: non-agricultural earnings: a reduction in the prices of industrial goods, in terms of agricultural products: or a diminution of tax, rent and usury burdens. Under the head of reduction of waste, I have to note one wholly admirable result of mechanisation: in particular of the introduction of combine-harvesters. Hitherto there has always been a substantial loss of crop, caused by the breaking up of the weather before it could be carried home. The combine-harvester has faults of its own, and will not wholly eliminate these losses. But, by the speed which it introduces into harvesting operations, it has reduced them, and is likely to reduce them further, as the supply of this type of machine is extended. The importance of this consideration is shown by the recorded losses in cereals in 1933 and 1934. In the former year they amounted

to 21% of the winter rye, 24% of the winter wheat, 33% of the spring wheat. In 1934 the corresponding figures were, 16%, 19% and 27%: still very large but somewhat reduced. The complete elimination of this source of loss would raise the net supply by something like a fifth, and substantially enrich a large portion of the country.

The cultivated area within the present boundary of the U.S.S.R. increased by 25%—that is to say by 66 million acres, between 1913 and 1935. The creation of the state-farms, on lands not previously under cultivation, accounts for nearly two-thirds of this. I do not know what proportion the 52 million acres, recently taken from the state-farms, was cultivated land, and how much of it was given to existing collectives, and how much to new ones created for the former employees of the state-farms. I think it probable that the increase of the cultivated area of the peasants, partly by drainage of marsh, and partly by the adoption of more scientific rotations, involving a smaller proportion of fallow than the old three-field rotation, and partly by surrender from the state-farms, has not been in a higher ratio than the growth of the rural population since the war. No great projects of irrigation, on the scale familiar in Northern India, have been carried out, but some are in contemplation and smaller projects are actually being carried out. In 1933, 1934, and 1935, 5 million acres in the non-Black-Earth zone were reclaimed from marsh, and probably the drainage of another 4 millions was completed in 1936.

As regards the cultivation of more profitable crops, the growers of cotton and sugar-beet have increased in prosperity. These crops occupy limited belts, well-defined by climate and physical conditions, and, in the case of cotton, very largely dependent on artificial irrigation. The extension of cotton-growing, outside of irrigated areas, has not so far given good results. Some increase of prosperity is probable in these northern and central regions where dairying, and the growth of vegetables, potatoes and technical crops, have recently developed. But three-fourths of the agriculture of the U.S.S.R. is still cereal: gain has resulted from carrying the wheat-belt further north, into what has always been regarded as the deficit-food-producing area: but otherwise conditions in the cereal areas are for the present stereotyped.

Animal products have been gravely diminished by the destruction of stock; but there appears to be hope in pigs and poultry: and collectives, and collective farmers, who have access to good markets for these—that is to say, who are within reach of industrial centres and places of general resort—are likely to be doing well.

A proportion of the village population, even of those who retain rights in the land, and who assist occasionally in cultivation, does not live by agriculture. Some of the surviving individualist cultivators regard agriculture as a secondary occupation, and live by carrying, by costermongering, and, as Stalin observed in a recent speech, by speculation,

by which no doubt he meant buying and selling produce. The number of collective farmers, who live mainly by non-agricultural pursuits, can only be inferred from the number of those who have very few work-days to their credit when the annual dividend comes to be divided. Dr. Otto Schiller puts the non-agriculturist rural population at about 10% of the population of the villages. Rural under-employment is relieving itself by means of these "self-employers": and small domestic manufacture and repair, after a period of discouragement by the Revolutionary Government, has again resumed importance. It is sufficient to cause anxiety to the authorities by the diversion of the labour of collective farmers, but is not on the pre-war scale. There is, of course, a marked exodus from the villages for permanent employment in the towns, despite the theoretical obstacles created by the passport system; because industrialisation is growing rapidly.

The absence of any cost-of-living index, and of any recent statistics of consumption, makes it equally difficult to determine to what extent the "scissors" is now open against the grower of food and raw materials. The village co-operative shops, at all events in the more prosperous collectives, are now very well supplied with semi-luxuries. The demand is now not for head-shawls, sheepskins, felt boots: but for stockings, half-shoes, lipstick, even for gramophones, clocks, and bicycles. But this fact leaves us in our previous ignorance regarding the great multitude of the quarter of a million collectives, which depend upon the growth of cereals, or are for some other reason in the class of the unprosperous. Between a quarter and a fifth of the amount of grain which is compulsorily sold to Government is sold to co-operative institutions at a somewhat higher price in consideration of a supply of manufactured goods. This may mean that manufactured goods, at reasonable prices, are hard to come by: but the great increase in industrial production makes it probable that goods are reaching the rural areas in greater quantity. We must not, of course, calculate the cost of goods in agricultural produce on the basis of the low payments made by Government in respect to the compulsory deliveries: for these compulsory deliveries are a tax, or a rent, in kind. The analysis of taxation in the appendix shows no reduction of burdens upon the peasantry.

Such calculation as is possible of the average income of a collective farmer is given in another appendix. It is plain that the average collective farmer, in order to make ends meet, must use to the utmost his "yard" and its produce: and we are not surprised to learn that, in the vicinity of towns, or where there are favourable market conditions, peasants have recently been taking great pains to develop and improve their yards, which are the exclusive possession of the family. It is easy to see that an area of 1 to 5 acres (½ to 2 hectares) might, in favouring circumstances, and with a little capital outlay, become an important competitor with the claims of the collective; and Trotsky, who had his

eyes wide open for all Soviet failures, said this was already happening. The taxation of collective farmers was revised in August, 1939, with the avowed object of discouraging it. But it can hardly be happening on a great scale: since the resources for glass, or other expensive methods of small-scale cultivation, do not exist except in the "millionaire" collectives. But, when we have emphasised the facts that prosperity is for a comparatively small number of collectives and that, for the vast majority, the *kolkhoznik* soup is still the same soup, both in quantity and quality, as the peasant soup was before, we have still to remind ourselves that—small though the increase in production continues to be—there have been important changes in distribution. What the *kulak* added to the common stock—it is hardly to be supposed that he added nothing—he has ceased to add. What he took from it, has gone back into it again. In some collectives there are people who talk gleefully of their "great inheritance". They at least are conscious that they have gained. On an average, 15% of the property of the collectives is calculated to be derived from the *kulaks*. But this is not the whole of the redistribution which collectivisation has involved. The 8 million horseless households, of which I have more than once had occasion to speak, are now provided with horse-power, partly by the machines furnished by the M.T.S. and partly as co-sharers with their fellow collective farmers. The landless agricultural labourers, scarcely less numerous in 1928 than in 1916, are now partners on equal terms with the landed peasants, if their work is of equal value. These groups at least have made an important material gain.

The agricultural authorities are aware of the weaknesses of the collectives: and at the end of 1935 a conference investigated the means of improving their work outside of the Black-Earth zone, and in White Russia. The low yields, the heavy losses, and the existence of administrative abuses, received attention.

Recent pictures of peasant housing and living arrangements given, for the year 1934, by Mrs. Seema Rynin Allan (*Comrades and Citizens*, 1938) do not, when compared with earlier descriptions, convey the clear impression of a rise in the standard of comfort. A herdsman of a collective farm in the Moscow province, who is a candidate for admission to the Party, lives with his wife, his mother and his three children, in a one-roomed, one-windowed hut of whitewashed clay, entered through the cowshed. The familiar features of the brick stove, with sleeping-quarters for cold weather on top of it, and the wide wooden platform serving for common bed for those who do not sleep on the stove: the long, narrow bench along the wall: the ikon in the corner: the cockroaches and the bed-bugs: the little pig housed under the stove: the window sealed shut with rags and pitch at the first approach of winter: are all reproduced. The family eat with wooden spoons from wooden bowls, but they do eat from a table: there are books and papers in the house:

and the owner is planning to have a hinged pane in his window so that ventilation may be possible. Another picture is of the House of a Tartar Chairman of a collective farm in the Crimea, "one of the most cultured in the village". Here there are three rooms, with floors of clay renewed every few days, perfectly clean and very spacious. But the family uses only one of the three rooms (perhaps because the others are unheated): and, after the visitor has been installed in the one and only bed, lies down on the rug-covered floor, father, mother, children and all, to sleep. There is a table and a chair (only one, it seems), and the host ate at the table, with a knife and fork, but squatted to wash his hands afterwards with water poured into a basin on the floor. There are plenty of rugs on the divan which runs round two sides of the room, as well as on the floor. In the house next door, also quite clean, though the children are dirty, there is no bed, no table, no knives, no forks, no chairs. Everyone sleeps in one long row across the floor, and squats on the floor for meals.

At the other end of this Tartar village is another family, also Mahommedan, which has learned city ways, has a bed for each member of the family, and has furnished its house, "like that of a Russian city-worker", with tables, chairs, starched lace white curtains, books and a picture of Lenin on the wall. And the wife is learning to ride her husband's bicycle! The rural Mahommedan is evidently more "cultured" than the Russian *kolkhoznik*, or perhaps richer.

I turn back at this point to the two villages in the Don Valley which were elaborately investigated by Dr. Shingarev at the beginning of the 19th century (see Chapter IV of these studies): because the Soviet Government has published an account of their present condition, with photographs of the existing buildings. The old tumbledown buildings are changed beyond recognition, and a complete end has been made of the old poverty-stricken conditions. But close study of the volume reveals the fact that the land at the disposal of these two villages is now six times what it was. The changes are therefore due to the transfer of land from the landlord to the peasants, rather than to the transformation of the system of farming. Additions to land on this scale were exceptional: for the average gain to the peasants did not exceed 20%.

That the village is "dark" and "deaf", and needs to be civilised by the influence of the town, is part of the Bolshevik thesis. The aim is "cultural"—which means urbanising in the etymological sense of the word —as well as economic. The model statute lays particular stress on raising the status of women, whose lot in rural Russia has always been a hard and degraded one. They are to be given every possible opportunity of advancement suited to their individual capacities. Attention is to be paid to hygiene. The statute requires the establishment of barbers' shops, baths, plantations of fruit-trees and other amenities. The system is criticised as loosening the family bond, by turning the wife into a "worker", and putting the cottage loom and spinning-wheel largely

out of use: as making an end of national individuality along with peasant customs and costumes: as reducing the influence of the elders upon the children, and consequently weakening the hold of religion. All these things are, in general, true, though the common interest in the yard, and the animals kept there, seems to me to counteract in part the tendency to the dissolution of the family bond. There is, in fact, a change from an old world to a new one, bringing its emancipations and its sophistications, destroying the picturesque uniqueness of village life, introducing a number of new occupations, teaching man to be machine-minded, opening up opportunities of promotion, and compelling an increase of literacy, because the business of administering a large farm cannot be carried on without it. The itinerant cinema and the autobus are active. The town is—whether for good or evil, or more probably for both—brought to the village. One of the consequences may be, perhaps already is, a diminution in the birth-rate of the villages. It has been noticed by Sir John Russell, and I endorse his observation, that this urbanisation of the village has not produced signs of a closer approach on the part of the intelligentsia to village life. A feeling that it is uncomfortable, if not barbarous, to go into "the jungle", is sometimes to be detected. As in India, the dislike of rural solitude is particularly marked in the qualified medical practitioner. Young Soviet employees pull many levers to be posted to the towns.

What, in the meanwhile, is the individualist peasant doing? He is not free to deal with his land as he pleases. Like the collectivised, he must abide by the Plan. But, as has always been the case in the food-importing section of agricultural Russia, agriculture is generally of subordinate importance to him. He is one of the "self-employers", doing only such farming as he must. As a farmer, his position is uncomfortable. The process of collectivisation has hitherto been a continuing one, involving changes as each additional batch of peasants decides to join. This means repeated redistribution, in which those who remain uncollectivised normally receive the worst and most distant land, allotted to them only for one agricultural year. The area and shape of their lots make it impossible for them to benefit by agricultural machinery, even if the M.T.S. were willing to supply it: their taxes and dues are, on paper, much higher than those of the collectivised, and they do not enjoy equal privileges in respect to loans from the State. Recent heavy taxation of their horses has evidently been aimed at the reduction of their openings in the carrying trade, which had been one of their remaining resources. It seems evident that the dissidents must soon be reduced to a still smaller residuum or be driven into the towns. In fact, this process is already completing itself.

Must we conclude that collectivisation has come to stay? We have heard in recent years of the prosecution and imprisonment of Communists in the Yaroslav province—not an area in which collectivisation

has been conspicuously successful—for conniving at reversion to individualist farming, on the ground that it was authorised by the constitution of 1936. I do not think that the case is typical. Time is working for the new system: *vis inertiae* is beginning to be on its side. Dr. Otto Schiller, who closely watched Russian agriculture for many years, and profoundly dislikes collectivisation, said that the peasant does not object to the régime, as such, and blames the local official for his troubles. His feeling, he says, is one of resignation. This is not a feeling out of which combined resistance is likely to arise. A more dangerous threat to the system was that presented by the systematic evasion of which I have said something on an earlier page; 100,000 acres were misappropriated out of the common land to increase the area of the private "yards" in a single region: and many persons, including the local authorities, and the local Communists, must have connived with the law-breakers.

It is probable that the German invaders of Ukrain will seek supporters by setting up landlords there. In 1918 the local peasants showed their detestation of this policy, and it proved to be a valuable asset to the Bolsheviks. A politically more astute, but financially less profitable, move, would be to distribute the land to individual peasants.

The support given to the Soviet régime in the war of 1941–42 shows that it has the support of its people. As regards collectivisation, in particular, there has, of course, been grumbling, but apparently no specific grievance. There is no period of prosperity or freedom with which to contrast the present. The peasant has often been hungry, hungry for mere bread. Now he is, with some exceptions, poor, but not actually hungry for bread. The lack of manufactured goods is a recurrent irritation: but it has been like that, sometimes worse and sometimes better, for a generation, perhaps always: and it is probably less than in recent years. There is no landlord, and no *kulak*, upon whom to centre his jealousies and his hatred. Within his own collective, he sees all equal with himself, equal at least in that all get only what they earn. Outside the collective there may be groups of whom he is envious. He dislikes the official: but he has always disliked the official, a fussy person, making unintelligible demands, even if free from corruption. Taxation comes almost entirely out of a common stock. He is not conscious of paying it in person. There is no beating for him as in the old days, if he fails. He still remembers, or is familiar by tradition with, the tremendous strain of harvest work, often without help from animal strength. Now that strain is taken off him by mechanisation.

The women have gained greatly in freedom and human dignity. The men have come nearer to the achievement of personality, than in the days when they were *muzhiks, homunculi*, "little men". Dr. Schiller tells us that the young are not buoyant and hopeful. I record his opinion, but I question it. There is, of course, variation from year to year. A good harvest makes temporary content.

When the savage onslaught of 1941 has been beaten off, and peace has been restored, the Soviet Government must take up once more the titanic task of rebuilding a "Land of Fragments". It would be vain for me to forecast what the future has in store. But I do not think that a victorious Russia will abandon the system of collectivisation, which has given the advantages of *grande culture* without the incubus of landlordism and has avoided the burden of peasant indebtedness, ordinarily so grave a feature of all peasant societies.

A good sign is that some of the Communists are beginning to study the details of agriculture and learning to talk to farmers in farmers' language. Here is a scrap from a long speech made by Khrushchev, the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party in Ukrain, with the *voces populi* interjected: "You must have your coarse-wool sheep as well as your fine. A jacket from a coarse-wool Rumanian sheep is good for fifteen years' wear. (Applause.) I can't imagine what life in the village would be like without a sheep-skin jacket. (Laughter.) . . . You must do better with your buckwheat. Trophim Denisovich Lysenko [a famous populariser of new farming methods] says, grow millet instead. Millet? But what about your bowl of porridge? (Laughter.) And don't you want buckwheat for the sake of your bees? No honey this morning! What? (More laughter.)"

If the matter is good, this is the way to put it across a farming audience. Kalinin also has the same turn for making plain people understand him. He explained the Census (always a subject of some suspicion, since King David brought a pestilence by numbering the people) by saying that no one builds a house without settling the size and calculating the material, or sows a field without knowing how big it is and what kind of soil it has. It is the language of the Gospel Parables.

After this glimpse of a peasant crowd and its reception of a Communist's little jokes the official journal gives us a picture of the children of the *kolkhoz* practising their violins in a typical suburban drawing-room. Wonderful, past all whooping! This is the kind of collective farm which lets seaside lodgings to summer visitors. Need we tell the reader that there are not many such? Like the Press everywhere, the newspaper is irredeemably urban.

It remains for us to note the effect of the new system on the food supply of the towns and the provision of raw material for industry. Here we can register pure gain. The attempts to collect a land-tax from 25 million peasant households, many of them too poor to pay, or having incontrovertible claims to remission, and to obtain food and raw materials in return for manufactured goods of which the supply was always short and precarious, were evidently destined to failure. They have been replaced by collective claims upon the whole joint produce of a quarter of a million manageable units: claims of which the evasion is made all but impossible by the intimate participation of the Machine Tractor

Stations in the harvesting of the crop. Regarded as a fiscal measure, collectivisation and its accompaniments have given a degree of efficiency undreamed of by the Tsarist, or the early Revolutionary, Government. There is a guarantee of regular deliveries of produce which was formerly lacking. This gain is reinforced by the arrangements for the storage and processing of the produce of which I have already spoken: arrangements which reduce waste to the minimum. The towns are the direct beneficiaries, but the rural areas must ultimately benefit by the growth of industry to which these increased resources give the impulse. In the towns, the advance in material prosperity, since 1933, leaps to the eye of the unprejudiced observer. The enriching fluids certainly pass from village to city. I look with some confidence for the return of the circulation from the heart to the members. I have already noted that the process has begun, in the increasing diversification of cropping in particular areas and the slow diminution of the predominance of cereals.

But the picture of the possibilities will hardly be complete if I fail to remind the reader of what may happen if the sources of Russian oil should fall into the hands of the enemy or be destroyed in the "scorching of the earth". In suffering the decay of the horse population and substituting mechanical power, the Soviet Government has given hostages to fortune. The quotation from *Erewhon* at the head of this chapter conveys a sinister suggestion of the possible consequences.

CHAPTER XVII

URBAN LABOUR (LONDON AND MOSCOW)

"There is violence in a system which compels a man to sell his work like merchandise, however capitalism may veil it: and in one which makes his material existence depend on people who demand particular convictions and beliefs from him. Real liberty demands an economic guarantee."—BERDYAEV, *Christianity and the Class War.*

"In Moscow, as a skilled factory worker, I should be a member of the ruling class, of the new aristocracy. . . . There's a very bright side, the facilities for rest and recreation . . . education, and the care they take of the children."—ARCHIBALD LYALL, *Russian Roundabout*, 1933.

THE *New Survey of London Life and Labour*, based fundamentally on the conditions which preceded the great slump, deals with over 3 million "occupied persons" and their families, in the County of London and nine additional boroughs. It shows a remarkable general improvement in the general standard of living in the forty years which had elapsed since Charles Booth's Survey. Nothing comparable with this for scope or precision exists for Moscow, or any other city in the U.S.S.R. It follows that we can only piece together such imperfect evidences as are available, in the attempt to make a comparison of some of the conditions

of urban labour in the two cities. The period will not be the same for Moscow as for London: because, when the New Survey was being prepared, Moscow was in the throes of the early years of the first Five-Year-Plan and its workers were making sacrifices on a scale which made conditions abnormal. But a comparison of the London of 1928–29 with the Moscow of 1937, will bring together two epochs of more or less stabilised economic conditions—the one for London preceding the slump, and the other for Moscow preceding the disturbances caused by the outbreak of war in Europe.

London Labour is a series of different social strata, not a single group. In its most comfortable strata, it is hardly to be distinguished from the middle class: it has its savings, and is sometimes engaged in buying its house through a Building Society. A steady income of thirty-eight to forty-one shillings a week will buy the absolute necessities for a family of moderate size, without any surplus. It is at this point that the editors draw the poverty line. More than a tenth of the wage-earners draw over eighty shillings a week. More than half of them draw over sixty shillings.

The number of those in poverty during the week of investigation was rather over a tenth of the whole. That means a submerged tenth, who have actually less than enough, with no question of superfluities. This is far better than forty years ago, when the number of those living in poverty (with the cash line adjusted to the lower prices then prevailing) was three times as large. But the proportion of children living in poverty, on the day of investigation, was more than one-eighth of the whole child population. Destitution is something other, and worse, than poverty: and the acutest suffering, caused by destitution and the fear thereof, has been removed, or at least blunted, by the operation of the Social Services.

Very recent enquiry has revealed the existence of a number of scattered and unclassifiable occupations in which adults, working at full-time rates, earn less than a living wage. But, generally speaking, in the causes of poverty there has been a significant change in the past forty years. Formerly insufficient wage-rates, along with old age and illness and the lack of a male breadwinner, were its principal causes. Unemployment then played a small part. Now, in the week of investigation, insufficient employment accounts for nearly half of the total cases of poverty. Though unemployment in London is on a lower scale than in Great Britain as a whole, an average number, on any day of the year, of 134,000 was always unemployed in the period preceding the great slump. The incidence of unemployment on particular groups was much higher than this: and the London average rate in 1931 was 12%.

Every family of moderate size, in which the breadwinner is unemployed, and which is dependent solely on the Unemployed Insurance payment, is below the poverty line. This is because the Unemployment benefit does not profess to provide a living wage over a protracted period. The editor of *London Life and Labour* assumes that when the breadwinner

has for six months lost a quarter of his working time through unemployment, the family will be living below the poverty line: because savings become exhausted, the rent-collector becomes pressing, and the weekly benefit does not reach the thirty-eight to forty-one shillings limit at which the poverty line ends. Unemployment, as a cause of poverty, is in certain respects worse than more permanent causes. "The dynamic poverty caused by a sudden decrease in the usual means of subsistence is likely to produce more conscious distress than the static poverty caused by a low standard of living." The anxiety, and the loss of self-respect when the unemployment is prolonged, are causes of acute mental suffering to sensitive persons. In the cramped conditions of the worker's home, there is a strain upon temper, which is likely to affect domestic happiness.

Seven shillings and sixpence a week, without rent, is the minimum budget for a person living alone. The Old Age Pension of ten shillings a week will not pay for the rent of a room. Public Assistance Committees find that, in one out of six cases of old-age-pensioners, it is necessary to supplement the pension in order that the pensioner may be able to pay rent. Out of the specimen cases of old-age-pensioners visited, the investigators found "nearly one-third of the houses dark, dilapidated, damp or leaky". Generally speaking, the improvement in average conditions of employment and standard of living is "unevenly distributed and unequally consolidated and secured".

The family income is more than the average wage, because the wages of all earners in the family are pooled to calculate the income: but only exceeds it by about one-seventh. The average rent for the tenement is twelve shillings per week, and requires 15% of the family income. But there are very wide variations in rent, from three shillings to twenty shillings for a two-roomed tenement. On the British system, the percentage for the rent is naturally larger as the income becomes smaller and, for the family with the breadwinner unemployed, may easily amount to 25% or more. The three-roomed tenement is more common than any other. Rents above the average are not often the cause of poverty.

The level of real income has risen much faster than the improvement of housing accommodation. In a large number of cases, the surplus income above the poverty line would suffice to pay for decent accommodation, but there is none to which the families could move. The scarcity of houses is particularly marked in the poorer areas: in six of the poorest boroughs less than 1% of the dwellings were vacant at the census of 1931, as compared with 7½% in four of the wealthiest. Excluding middle-class households, nearly 30% of the population are crowded or overcrowded, according to the standards adopted for the London Survey. Nearly 10% are living three or more to a room; about as many, more than two but less than three to a room; rather more are living two to a room. The Manchester standard of overcrowding (which provides for

the separation of the sexes after ten years of age, and requires not more than two and a half persons per bedroom, counting the child as half a person) is equally violated. The editor calculates a deficiency of a quarter of a million houses. Many slum houses are in disrepair and verminous, and most of them are seriously overcrowded. A large number are irreparable, and ought to be pulled down. Drastic re-planning of obstructed areas, which often form pockets of slumdom and degradation, is needed. Sir E. D. Simon, who published an investigation of the same question in London in 1933, says that the houses which have been built to increase accommodation are all beyond the reach of the lower-paid worker: and the requirements are so vast, and the difficulties so special, that exceptional measures are necessary, and the solution will be a long process.

Trade Union organisation in London is very uneven. Some trades are highly organised and others little or not at all. Some unorganised trades receive protection from the Trade Boards Act, which provides for a minimum wage. London is the home of many small and moderate-sized firms as well as of large enterprises. The rapid growth of mechanisation tends to enlarge the scale of undertakings, and to eliminate casual and intermittent employment. Small firms have usually been associated with bad conditions for labour. The small workshop and the home worker still survive, but in a much less degree than forty years ago. There are no general regulations about hours of work.

Beggary survives under the disguise of petty hawking and musical performance. The volume of drinking is immensely diminished, but not the volume of the expenditure on drink. Gambling is responsible for a good deal of distress and corruption, but it is doubtful whether it is so damaging as the drink habit was a generation ago. Professional prostitution has declined and continues to decline. The editor of *London Life and Labour* puts the present number of commercial prostitutes at no more than 3,000.

When we turn from the conditions which lend themselves to statistical estimate to the less easily ponderable considerations affecting human liberty and self-respect, we must draw a distinction between the black-coated worker and the upper grade of mechanic, on the one hand, who are virtually of the middle class, and the rank and file of working men on the other. The British working man is under no legal disabilities which do not apply equally to all Britons: but, if he sleeps out he may get into trouble, and he will be well advised if he is not found "loitering". If he comes under suspicion, he will find it more difficult to satisfy police and magistrates than a man who is able to make a better show, or has a better trick of speech. The law is equal, but its administrators have a preference for the symbols of property, and are disposed to agree with the northern farmer that "the poor, in a loomp, is baad". He may exist, for a time, without working: at all events without doing more than the tramp's

task. In the long run, he must choose between finding employment with someone who is able and willing to give it, and beggary or starvation.

In his bargaining with the potential employer, and in the determination of the conditions of his work, the British worker receives some protection from the law, and some from the activities of the Trade Unions. In combination with others, he may strike for better terms: but it is a risky business, in times when unemployment is extensive. Normally, he must take what is offered, and, within limits, do what he is told. He is not a slave, but the employer and the manager are the masters. He does not own his tools: if he does, he is a self-employer, and not entitled to Insurance benefit when out of work. Beyond his wage, while he continues to receive it, he has no interest in the factory or workshop where he works. It will reject him ruthlessly, when his powers begin to fail, or when his work becomes unnecessary. This ruthlessness is an inevitable condition of survival in a competitive world.

If he is a member of a Trade Union, he has a voice in the choice of officials and in the determination of policy. The Trade Union is a powerful instrument of collective bargaining. Not more than one in three of the wage-earners, in the United Kingdom as a whole, is a member of a Trade Union. The influence of many employers is used to prevent the industrial organisation of their men.

At intervals of four or five years he is able to cast a vote for the choice of a representative in the House of Commons. With rare exceptions every successive Government is dominated by employers and owners of property, and the administration, the financial system, and the newspapers, are under the control of this class. For glaring injustices, recognised as such by the general conscience, he will find champions. But the general conscience accepts the general system, and is not tolerant of protests against it.

Roughly speaking, and subject to important palliatives, property is liberty: and the lack of it means dependence upon the will of those who have it, or of their paid assistants. This is mainly because property alone can give employment. Almost always there is a market for capital. Often there is no market for any but very special skill: and strength and skill perish while property survives.

Property alone can give employment, when the growth of population and the development of industrial civilisation have cut man off from access to the natural sources of subsistence. And property cannot always give it. It can give it, on a large scale, only if there is a market, at a satisfactory price, for the products of labour. Periodically this market fails, and the phenomena of large-scale unemployment appear.

It fails, in spite of powerful efforts, backed by diplomacy, and sometimes by war, to extend it abroad: and in spite of infinite ingenuity bestowed upon the arts of advertisement. Commercial rivalry, taking the form of cheap competition, accounts for something, but the principal

cause is the deficiency of purchasing power. We are often reminded that a few more shillings in the hands of the Indian agriculturist or the Chinese coolie would rehabilitate Lancashire. That the same thing is true of the pockets of the British workman is less commonly mooted. The idea appears at intervals like an unquiet ghost, who finds no vacant chair, at the economic banquet: where business men are too busy with the *hors d'œuvres* or the champagne to see it at all. The same man who would eagerly support a policy for the extension of foreign markets, and expend thousands on the advertisement of an alcohol, an amenity, or a convenience, takes a limited home-market for the great staples for granted. There is enough wealth in a limited circle to give profitable openings in a favourable season. The larger prospect of a nation-wide demand is overlooked: and a deliberate policy of increasing the incomes of all, if contemplated at all, seems like thimble-rigging. And yet it is plain enough that more work is capable of producing more commodities, and that more commodities are the essential pre-requisite of increased real incomes. Only the mechanism of market-exchange stands in the way.

In the meanwhile, it is necessary to restrict output, so that the smaller aggregate may find a market—it may be, and is, in the case of many luxuries and semi-luxuries, only among the wealthier section—at a price that pays the producer. Perishables—we would not exaggerate the extent to which this happens, it is sufficient that it does sometimes happen—are thrown away. Few plants, except for an emergency, work at full capacity.

The mentality of restriction spreads from the entrepreneur to the workman. The notion that there is a limited number of jobs, and that one must do nothing that might reduce the chances of one's fellows, takes root. Nevertheless we have been recently assured on good authority, in respect to the building industry, that the English worker produces about twice the volume that the Russian worker produces in the same time, and that the quality of the work of the Stakanovets builder would never be accepted in the United Kingdom. The Trade Unions fix the task, and fix it as low as their negotiating power will allow. Piece-work seems a trick to bring down time-rates. Interests seem—perhaps are—antagonistic: and profit-sharing a trick for the destruction of working-class solidarity in the struggle with the employer. All the essential conditions of a class-war come naturally into existence. To put the position at its best, the employer and the manager are the workman's opponents in the economic game. He and his fellows are on the defensive. He has no sense of "ownness" in the factory where he works. He knows how the boss lives, and he doubts the fairness of the sharing. When he himself has the advantage, he presses it ruthlessly. Why not? The boss will get rid of him whenever rationalisation makes it convenient to do so. In the meanwhile there is unemployment—a reservoir from which his place can be filled without difficulty unless he behaves himself: and unemployment,

in the anticipation as well as in the reality, is a hell for all who can think and feel.

The millions of working-class homes are so many millions of separate boxes, in which so many millions of women slave at millions of separate tasks, unaided by co-operation, and very little aided by mechanical device or electrical power: tugged at by children, and burdened with children to come: till temper and nerves are frayed into unnatural irritability: while the spectre of economic insecurity stands always at the door.

I have done what I could not to exaggerate these characteristics of British working life. They must be realised, if a just conception is to be formed of the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the life of the urban worker in the U.S.S.R. Let us begin by examining the extent to which actual compulsion to labour—not merely compulsion by the prospect of starvation or semi-starvation as in Great Britain—survives in the U.S.S.R. In doing this, I shall exclude from my purview the subject of penal labour, which belongs rather to prison management or criminal administration.

It is in respect to the timber camps of Karelia, and of northern Russia generally, that allegations of compulsion have been most freely made. A gifted journalist, who was excluded by the Gay-Pay-oo from the timber camps, has told us that forced labour has been employed in Karelia on a gigantic scale: but the enquiries of the Russian Timber Committee of the Timber Trade Federation, of the Central Executive of the Timber and Wood Workers' Union, and of the Anti-slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, all made in 1931, rebut this statement. Albert Rhys Williams in *The Russian Land* appears to be giving us a true picture, when he says that everyone curses Northern Woods, the state exploiting department. "But, at last, with many declarations of mutual esteem, the contracts are signed and the season's work begins." The truth, as I gather it from the evidence, is that the exploitation of timber is not every man's job. It requires some skill, and a good deal of strength: and a conscript force would not be likely to deal with it in a satisfactory fashion. Commercial rivalry has exaggerated, if it has not invented, the charges against the Timber administration of the U.S.S.R.

This is not to say that there is no compulsion of labour under the Socialist Government. The practice descends from two, perhaps from three, lines of ancestry. One is the immemorial usage of purely or mainly agricultural countries, in which no general body of wage-labour has yet come into existence, of calling upon the occupiers of land to deal with emergencies. For certain purposes, such as the seasonal repair of roads, there is actually no alternative, in primitive conditions, to this practice, and there is no more hesitation about turning out the countryside for such work than there is for a hue and cry after a thief. The *trinoda necessitas* of British history is a regularised and limited form of the usage.

All that can fairly be asked is that such demands upon labour shall be limited to real emergencies, evenly distributed, and properly paid for.

Another line by which the compulsion of labour has established itself in the U.S.S.R. is the revolutionary principle: He who does not work, neither shall he eat. At the beginning of the Revolution, members of the *bourgeoisie* were put on to the nastiest tasks, and the literature gives us a picture, too convincing to be anything but true, of the nocturnal summons of the bookish gentleman for the performance of them. The law requires, in public crises, all men between eighteen and forty-five and all women between eighteen and forty (except pregnant and nursing mothers and mothers with no one to look after their children) to do public work. After the Civil War, armies, for which there was no immediate military need, were engaged for a time in felling trees, building roads, and unloading and loading freight cars.

Those who have experience of the employment of unwilling labour are aware that it seldom pays for its own food and lodging, and for the overhead charges of control and management. On a large scale it can only be used effectively for the simplest and most unskilled tasks, scavenging, earth-work, stone-breaking and the like. Though excellent carpets have been made in Indian jails, the business reduced the net expenditure on the convicts without completely defraying it. In this fact lies the true safeguard against the extensive employment of compulsory labour. It was made clearly manifest in the last days of serfdom. For any but the very simplest kind of unskilled task, it *does not pay*. But the Soviet Statute Book contains examples of the use of it. In the spring of 1930, there is to be "rigorous discipline in connection with timber-floating, after the thaw", and labour is to be despatched from collective farms to "seasonal branches of the national economy—construction, floating, agriculture, loading and unloading". Demands for labour for loading and unloading of grain, and of export and import goods, are to have priority: and all unemployed persons (this refers to 1930) are to obey the call for work on these tasks, on pain of deprivation of unemployment benefit. Intellectual workers are included in this order. Labour organisations are to create voluntary brigades of shock-workers to work off accumulations of unloading and loading. As I have already noted elsewhere, the system of agreements with collective farms for the use of their surplus labour involves a measure of compulsion upon individuals.

There is yet a third form which compulsion takes: and that is the use of skilled workers as officials, liable to transfer from one place, and from one job, to another. A decree of October 20th, 1930, empowered the authorities to send skilled workmen in unimportant branches of work to coal-mining, iron, steel, and construction enterprises. A little later, persons having technical experience of railway work were recalled to railway service, and in June, 1931, an order issued that a worker must go where

he is sent. This would not strike a Western critic as a hardship in the case of a postal or a railway official, so long as the conditions of transfer were equitable and all its expenses paid. In proportion as the worker develops into a functionary, to be permanently provided for by the State which employs him, a further development on these lines seems to be perfectly logical. It is an abatement of liberty, paid for, as in the case of the official, by a guarantee of employment and pension. As a consequence, an apparently necessary consequence, of the relations between the Socialist State and the individual, it gives occasion for thought. But, if we desire that kind of liberty which consists in economic security, we must, it would seem, be prepared to sacrifice that kind of liberty which consists in doing what we please at the cost of economic security. Perhaps there is no such thing as doing what we please, except upon a basis of pecuniary independence. It is one of the middle-class illusions, which do not deceive the man who depends upon the wage of his daily labour. He knows that he is free—to tramp or starve.

There is, in fact, a radical contradiction between the British and the Russian type of liberty. A comparison of the status and functions of Trade Unions in the two cases will furnish further illustration of this contradiction. In spite of the attempt made in 1927 to limit its influence, the British Trade Union movement is truly representative of its members, and responsive to the sentiment of the majority of them. Most of the workers are outside of its ranks: but it is likely that its existence confers advantages on more than its members. It is, so far, as free from official and social influence as the British affection for rank and distinction will allow any British movement to be. It honestly aims at the good of its members: that is to say, it seeks the improvement of conditions, the increase of pay, and the lightening of toil. It does not aim at the increase of output and, indeed, appears to be indifferent to this consideration. This is because the increase of output is conceived as advantageous to the employer, and as not advantageous, possibly disadvantageous, to the worker, as involving a reduction in the number of available jobs. The advantage to the community as a whole, including the worker, of increased output, is obscured by the system of distribution.

After a long struggle, beginning with the attempt in the early days of the Revolution to achieve the Syndicalist ideal of industrial and social control by the Trade Unions—an ideal very close to that of the Anarchists—the Trade Unions have settled down in the U.S.S.R. as organs of the State. Membership has long ceased to be compulsory, but the subscription (1% of pay) is so small, and the advantages of membership so obvious, that the movement covers 80–90% of the whole body of urban workers in all categories. In its virtual universality the Trade Union system of the U.S.S.R. is markedly contrasted with that of Britain, and still more markedly with that of the U.S.A.

It has been notorious that elections to Trade Union offices in the

U.S.S.R. were influenced, if not actually dictated, by authority: but, since the introduction of the new Constitution of 1936, Stalin has insisted upon secret voting, and it is probable that these orders have been generally carried out, with such reservations as are implied in the dominant position of the Communist Party. But it is in the functions, rather than in the organisation, that the difference between the British and the Russian Trade Union reveals itself.

The All-Union Joint Trade Union Congress, and its elected Central Committee, have inherited the functions of the former Commissariats of Labour in the Union and the Constituent Republics, and a portion of those of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. If we assume them to be actually democratic in constitution, not only all working-class institutions, including all branches of social insurance, but all factory inspection, and all labour recruiting, are controlled by representatives of the workers themselves. We have the authority of the Webbs for saying that the collective bargaining with the agencies of production, which is carried out by the All-Union Congress of the individual trades, in consultation with the Central Trade Union Committee, is a reality and no mere form. That it was not always so, we learn from S. Zagorsky's work on Wages, published by the International Labour Organisation in 1930. What we there see is an allotment of available funds by agreement between central authorities, followed by a distribution of them over particular industries and undertakings, in consultation with the Trade Unions. In September, 1929, there is a definite ruling that no one can demand an increase in funds determined by the central authority for providing increments in wages. It does not appear that there has been any essential change of procedure since. The officials of the Central Trade Union Committee sit down with the officials representing the various Commissariats, and the State Planning Committee. The clerks bring up the figures, showing how much is available for wages. When the accuracy of the calculation is verified, that amount becomes a sort of artificial wages-fund, out of which all claims are to be met. The rest is merely a question of distribution.

This is all most reasonable: but it is not bargaining, in the ordinary sense of the word, which implies the possibility, on each side, of withholding something from the other. The assumption in the U.S.S.R. is that a Trade Union is to protect, not wage-rates in its particular industry, but the earnings and conditions of all the wage-earners: and this is to be achieved by a general increase of productivity which gives a larger surplus for distribution. Therefore, as it appears to me, there is no bargaining. Beside the width of its functions as the manager of working-class institutions, and of social insurance, and the controller of factory inspection, the Russian differs from the corresponding British movement in two important particulars. It is not a potential organiser of strikes, and it seeks to stimulate productivity and to raise technical proficiency—

that is to say, it has, as one of its aims, co-operation with the Employer State in the increase of output.

There is no law which prohibits strikes. There were seven as recently as 1929–30. It is argued that they are unnecessary because, with the end of the exploiting class, there is no enemy party. The workers are one with the Workers' State, and can have no interest that conflicts with it. The enquiry which precedes the formulation of the collective "bargain" is an ascertainment of facts, not an examination of claims. The amount available for the wages of the worker is the whole balance of the State's receipts after the needs of public expenditure have been met. Simple arithmetic admits of no dispute. That the State may be making demands for military defence, for the adornment of the capital, or for other purposes which to some may seem excessive: that there may be differences between different groups of workers regarding the division of the product, after all exploitation has come to an end: that there may be tyranny of the whole as against the part, of the majority as against the minority, of a favoured minority as against the majority: these contingencies do not enter into consideration.

Can we feel satisfied that the interests of the worker are safeguarded, when the organisation which should protect him is, by a fundamental assumption of the system, precluded from protecting him by strike—in other words, from enforcing its power of bargain by withholding the labour which is the subject-matter of the bargain? The Russian answer is: Yes. Liberty is secured to the class, when its fundamental interests are secured. And the fundamental interests are something corporate, of course. In his early days of power, Trotsky himself put the case thus, as between the Party and the general body of workers. "In the substitution of the power of the Party for the power of the working class, there is in reality no substitution at all. The Communists express the fundamental interests of the working class." And of course, there was no minority, no fraction, no individual, to be taken into account. The true liberty of the individual would be realised in a complete economic security, setting him free for the development of his personality in the classless society.

S. Zagorsky makes plain to us the actual course which the Trade Unions were taking, when he wrote in 1930, to support the claims of their members. They played their part, of course, along with the manager of the factory and the local representative of the Party, as the *Troika* for the decision of industrial disputes. But, since there was no *ultima ratio*, no possibility in the final resort of withholding labour, they did not play it, as responsible negotiators. They satisfied the men by asking for too much, and referred the unsettled differences to the Court of Arbitration; passed the baby, if we may be pardoned for using the language of the market-place. In this shifting of the responsibility of decision, we note a characteristic Russian weakness: which drastic punishments only aggravate.

The notion of the Trade Union movement, as a co-operator with the State in the stimulation of productivity, is shocking to the fundamental sentiment of the British Trade Unionist, who conceives his duty to lie in the direction of protecting the worker against the normal tendency of the employer to exact a larger task. The Russian conception is framed in the interest of the community as a whole, which certainly stands to gain by increased output, and cannot be enriched without it: while the British is framed in the interest of the worker whom the employer must not be permitted to exploit. The encouragement of the pace-maker in Russian industry is carried very far indeed. The shock-worker, who increased his output by sheer power of muscle, and enjoyed the best conditions as the reward of his achievement, has been succeeded by the *Stakhanovets*, of whose function something has already been said elsewhere in these studies. The peculiar danger of piece-work is that this method of remuneration will be used to bring down wage-rates by alteration of the norms. This is actually occurring, and we are not surprised at hearing of discontent among those who cannot stand the pace, and even of murderous attacks upon Stakhanovites. The British worker, from his own peculiar point of view, as one who seeks to checkmate efforts to hasten the pace, would probably call them blacklegs.

The city shops are filled with articles of luxury and semi-luxury for which the average wage is certainly unable to pay. One of Mrs. Seema Rynin Allan's correspondents at Moscow wrote in 1937 with enthusiasm about the varieties of bread, jams, jellies, canned fruit and vegetables at attainable prices. She added that dress material of every kind, from calico to velvet, was available, but at very high prices: and that stockings could be had at prices ranging from 70 kopecks to 20 roubles a pair (from two pence to four shillings!), "not as good as foreign, but can be worn". She mentioned that Moscow had stopped making her particular shade of lipstick: so toilette decorations are evidently not altogether neglected. It is an inevitable inference that the new super-piece-workers are buying many of these things, and that society is being transformed by the growth of a new kind of sectional prosperity, having, indeed, a better claim than the old, because it is graduated according to work, but creative of new jealousies. There seems to be nothing to protect the worker against the temptation to exhaust prematurely his reserves of strength. At the same time we must recognise that the norms of production in Russia are extremely low: and that the only way of raising them to something approaching the Western standard, is to begin by utilising the willingness of the few to do more work, or to organise their work better.

It is low productivity which, next to the dread of foreign attack, continues to be the fundamental anxiety of the U.S.S.R. There is a call in official quarters for a collective Stakhanovism, and the inefficacy of the individual record-breaker, as a means of increasing general productivity, has recently been emphasised. Stalin himself insisted on it in his speech

of March 5th, 1937, to the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Among other "rotten" mistakes which he there enumerated was a boastful confidence in the achievements of the Stakhanovite workers. In April, 1937, the journal of the all-Union Communist Party wrote of the continuing backwardness of the country both in the quantity and in the quality of the product. Something is needed which will effect an escape from the contrary faults of the British and the Russian Trade Union systems: will amend the former by taking account of the community's need of increased production, and the latter by protecting the worker against overstrain. In the meanwhile we can only register the fact that the Trade Union movement in the U.S.S.R. does not defend the individual against overwork. In too many cases he protects himself, by an invincible slackness, confident of the difficulty of replacing him in a society which needs all hands.

But we shall leave a wrong impression if we stop at this point. There are plenty of Russian workers who care nothing for their work. The proportion of labour turnover, and the large number of "flitters", prove this. But a very general characteristic is a pride, of *ownness*, if not of ownership, in the factory and the job. Frau Koerber, who enrolled herself as a worker in the Putilov factory at Leningrad in July, 1931, "continually had the impression of being on a visit to the women workers, because they seem so like hostesses anxious to show their guest all the new household arrangements". Mrs. Margaret Cole made a similar reflection. "The factory is my father", sang the Communist poet. The aim of making the factory a social centre, as well as a place of work, has been deliberate. The best of the modern factories are surrounded by workers' settlements having a complete equipment for all needs, schools, hospitals, clubs, theatres, baths. They remind me of great British Public Schools in their cultivation of *esprit de corps*. The sense of *ownness* goes deep. "You would think they owned the country", wrote Mr. Knickerbocker: "maybe they do, and maybe they don't: but they think so, and I have never seen the slave who thought he was the boss." To help in the completion of the Moscow Subway workers gave up their holidays, and embarrassed the organisers with their volunteer assistance. It was their *own* subway at which they were working. The feeling sometimes extends to the State as a whole. There is a story of a seven-year-old boy visiting the Zoo. He was told that the elephant belonged to the State: and, after a few moments of thought, said: "Then a little bit of it belongs to me". They may have told him that at school, perhaps, but it does not matter how the feeling comes, if it is there. Long experience of special privilege for some members of the group might destroy it: but at present it is still a reality. While it lasts, it is a guarantee of enthusiasm, and will salve many a sore back and shoulders. It is the team-spirit, raised to a higher power, and operating in a wider field.

It is likely that Russians have a special aptitude for a communal feeling

of this kind. It is very noticeable in the theatre, where the perfection of acting is sometimes achieved by perfect drilling and combined effort, without the prominence of particular "stars". It is not new, for Turgeniev in his *Sketches of a Sportsman* has given us an example of it in the old world of serfdom. Extended to a larger sphere, it becomes devotion to the State.

A fourth form of compulsion has recently established itself (October, 1940) in the restriction of the choice of employment by a proportion of the young people. Some of them are selected by the Committees of collective farms for industrial training, and required to remain for a limited period in the trade to which they are allotted. Virtually this is industrial conscription, and the compulsion is fortified by the charging of fees in secondary schools where a more general education is given. This step was taken as a part of the measures for national defence, and may or may not represent a permanent policy.

Alongside of the possibilities of compulsion to be exercised by the Employer State, that State has formulated a fundamental principle for the defence of the status and dignity of the worker. There was a moment when the well-to-do peasant was permitted to hire labour as well as lease land. This was before Stalin and the Communist Party decided on that dramatic turn to the Left which is associated with the first Five-Year-Plan and the collectivisation of the land. It is still permissible to pay a "hired girl" for domestic tasks. In fact, full liberty for women to undertake equal work along with men would hardly be attainable on any other terms. We must take note, however, that the employer of a "hired girl" for domestic work does not make a profit out of her labour: and it is the making of a profit out of the labour of others, which is the head and front of the offence of exploitation. Collective farms may pay experts to help them with their agriculture, masons to do their building work, and extra labour in the emergencies of the harvest season. With these rare exceptions, the employment of one person by another is against the law. The State and the public agencies subordinate to the State have a monopoly of employment: and "exploitation", which means the enjoyment of the profit on one man's labour by another, is forbidden. Trotsky says that inequality of remuneration, and inequality in the income of collective farms, are leading to violation of this principle. It may be so, but the offenders risk punishment and can only act by stealth.

Is the worker better off when his only exploiter is the Employer State or the Employer City or some such public body, than when he must go to the owner of the small workshop, or to the manager of the private firm, or of the Joint Stock Company, to ask for work? It depends in part upon that sense of *ownness* of which I have spoken above. Materially he is no better off. He may even find it harder to resist pressure, when the opposite party has all the weight of public authority. But if he feels himself one with his public employer, his position gains immensely in moral

dignity. And let no one suppose that a gain in moral dignity and self-respect is not desired by the working man. Even where the sense of *ownness* is less strong than it is in the U.S.S.R., the position of the public employee has its attractions. There is a justifiable assumption that caprice will be less arbitrary, and public opinion more powerful. At the worst, and the lowest, there is a satisfaction in getting rid of the fictitious superiority and the leonine partition of the private firm and the private employer. Whatever be the sentiments, good, bad, or indifferent, which prompt the preference, I believe it to be general.

The dictatorship of the Proletariat—that is, of the wage-earner uncorrupted by the mentality of property—though so obviously not to be literally realised in the sphere of high politics, has been no meaningless phrase in the U.S.S.R. "They are a cocky lot", wrote Mr. Knickerbocker. They have had reason to be cocky, elevated as they were to the position of the dominant class, from which the Revolution had ousted the remnants of feudalism and the nascent *bourgeoisie*. "She's no worker", protested the disputant, justifying his rudeness to a woman in the tram. To be of worker stock was an asset in the struggle for favour and promotion. "You were born with a silver spoon in your mouth because you happen to be a proletarian", says the disappointed son of a senator in the play, to the woman student who has been elected to an Assistant Professorship on the strength of her qualification in the Workers' Faculty. The whole of the ration system, twice established, had for its object the securing of the town worker's food and clothing when food and clothing were short. There are signs that this unquestioned dominance of a class is coming to an end. On the one hand, it is being divided by the special pay and privileges of the champion worker. On the other hand, the new Constitution threatens a new equality in politics of the worker and the peasant. But an honourable status, satisfactory to the sense of human dignity, has been secured by the Revolution to the Russian worker in virtue of his work. No one would deny an honourable status to the British worker—*if he touches his cap.*

I have digressed: I hope, not without justifying the digression. The Trade Union, along with the Factory Committee, which is a section of the Trade Union in a particular undertaking, is no longer a potential fighting machine, but an instrument for the improvement of output: which, taken over the whole field, is a necessary condition, if not necessarily the cause, of improved real wages for the workers in general. The aspect of the Trade Union, as an agent in the enforcement of labour discipline, was emphasised in the closing days of 1938 by legislation which halved the insurance benefits of workers who were not members of Trade Unions. But the Trade Union is a forum for the complaints of the worker, and a channel through which the Government addresses him on important questions of social policy. It can generally secure the dismissal of an unpopular manager: it can prevent the unjust dismissal

of an individual worker. It assists in the decision of disputes, without having more than moral force behind its contentions. It administers the laws for the inspection of factories. It administers the funds of social insurance, some milliards of roubles annually, a sum enormously in excess of the aggregate of the contributions to Trade Union funds derived from members. The worker does not contribute to the fund for social insurance and social services. Since the sum for expenditure is taken out of the total set aside for the payment of wages, by agreement between the Central Council of Trade Unions and the Commissariats concerned, it has been argued that he pays indirectly the whole of it. I will not attempt to follow this argument into all the vistas which it opens. At all events the worker is not aware that he contributes, any more than he is aware that he pays the tariff charges which form part of the British fiscal system.

The payment of Unemployment Insurance came to an end in October, 1930, when the marked scarcity of labour required for the first Five-Year-Plan put an end to mass unemployment. It was never administered by the Trade Unions, who took over their functions in connection with Social Insurance only in 1933. While it lasted, it was subject to criticism for its inadequacy, and it made no provision for the large number of unregistered unemployed.

Social Insurance, in general, does not cover the self-employers, and therefore excludes the peasantry, both individualist farmers and members of collective farms. These last have their own arrangements, in the form of a percentage of net produce put aside by each farm for social objects. Since there is wide variation in the productivity of the farms, there is also wide variation in the provision made for these objects. For urban employees there are sickness and medical benefits and old-age benefit at sixty years: and mothers received till recently full pay for two months before and two months after the birth of a child: but the discovery of abuses led, at the end of 1938, to the stricter definition of the conditions, and the reduction of the duration of maternity benefit to thirty-five days before, and twenty-eight days after, confinement. At the same time there was a similar tightening-up in the conditions of sick benefit, in general, by reason of the prevalence of malingering, and other changes were made in the regulations for social insurance with a view to the improvement of labour discipline and the discouragement of labour-flux. It was provided, for instance, that the statutory annual holiday with pay may be taken only after eleven months of continuous service in one and the same enterprise: and incapacitation pensions were varied according to the number of years last worked continuously in the same enterprise. Measures were also taken to enforce the full statutory working day, and to compel the vacation of workers' dwellings in the event of resignation or dismissal. These pills were sweetened by a provision that the economies resulting from the changes made should be expended in

workers' dwellings and other amenities: and new honorific distinctions carrying pecuniary benefits were instituted.

There are admirable rest-homes at the seaside and in the mountains, but they do not suffice for more than a small portion of the working population. Complaints have recently been made of the heaviness of the charges for cost of administration which the residents have to pay. Inevitably favouritism plays a part. There have been scandals, but it does not appear that they are more numerous than in other administrations where favours are dispensed. Children enjoy a large share in these good things, and the children's holiday camp, or a party of children marching off to train or boat for a summer outing, is generally a model of kindly and effective organisation. They are closely shepherded, and taught what to sing, and what to do: but it is difficult to imagine any other way of dealing with children in masses. No person under the age of eighteen is admitted to work: whereas, in England, boys and girls of fourteen to eighteen are working ten to twelve hours a day, and children of twelve are allowed, under certain conditions, to work before and after school hours. There are still beggars upon the Russian streets and at places where travellers resort, so the wage and the social insurance do not cover all cases. The visitor who knew pre-Revolution Russia receives the impression that drunkenness is less than it was. Prostitution has been very greatly diminished: by the extensive employment for women and of equal pay for equal work: but luxury prostitution has made its appearance, along with expensive shops and wide inequality of piece-work wages in the cities. It seems that the existence of luxuries unattainable to the ordinary wage inevitably breeds this phenomenon: which is less simple than that of the hungry woman offering herself for the means of livelihood.

The absence since 1930 of a cost-of-living index, and of family budgets, and of every statistical provision for calculation of the value of real wages, stands in the way of effective generalisation on the general standard of living, even in the towns. The Central Statistical Office maintained a cost-of-living index up to 1929. It was then dropped, not, I think, from the wish to conceal facts, but because rationing, and the introduction of several categories of shops with varying price systems, made calculation impossible. No one who has attempted to thread his way through that labyrinth will be surprised that the official statisticians abandoned the task. But uniform retail prices, or at least a uniform system of calculation, appeared in 1935, when rationing was abandoned, and the reason for the abolition of the cost-of-living index has ceased to exist. Pending its re-establishment, I am aware of no possibility of improving, in principle, upon the method adopted by Mr. Colin Clark in his *Critique of Russian Statistics*, 1939. He gives us good reasons for believing that the real value of the Russian urban worker's wage in 1934 was, on the average, equivalent to that of an English weekly wage of seventeen shillings and seven-

pence. This conclusion is arrived at by applying, to the calculated expenditure per worker, the British scale of prices for the same commodities and services. Thus the Russian expenditure on rent of five roubles a month is represented by the sum of twelve shillings: not because the rouble is supposed to be worth more than two shillings, but because similar accommodation in England would cost that amount.

Before we draw the inference that the average Russian urban worker received, in 1934, a wage rather less than half of that at which *London Life and Labour* drew the poverty line (thirty-eight to forty-one shillings per week), there are some very important differences to be observed between the two cases. One is a difference in the economic constitution of the family. In Britain the family normally consists of a bread-winner, a housekeeper, and a varying number of dependants who break off and form new families a few years after they reach the wage-earning stage. In other words, the bread-winner's wage contains a concealed, or unavowed, wage for his housekeeper. The family income in London is arrived at by adding to the principal wage 13% from other sources, mainly the earnings of former dependants. The one wage has to provide, permanently for two, and over a long period, for three, four or even five persons. In Moscow, on the other hand, the housekeeper is, in a very large number of instances, a direct earner: and the number of dependants actually averages only about $1\frac{1}{5}$ per wage-earner. To make the comparison a true one, we must therefore make it clear to ourselves that the Russian wage of seventeen shillings and sevenpence per week was for $2\frac{1}{5}$ persons, whereas the British wage with which we are mentally comparing it was for a larger number.

Another consideration not to be ignored is that there is a subjective, as well as an objective, element in poverty. What the Russian was able to buy with his wage in 1934 was purchasable in England for a wage below the poverty line in that country. It does not follow that he felt the pinch of poverty in anything like the degree represented by the difference in the figures. His living and eating habits are, traditionally, and today, far less expensive than those of his opposite number in London. He gets as many calories, and possibly as good a supply of vitamins, out of a much cheaper type of food: and he pays, for accommodation which does not shock his sense of decency or even of comfort, an immensely lower rent. Sir John Russell has calculated that the Plan for 1937, assuming its fulfilment in respect to food (and the harvest of that year was exceptionally bountiful, quite unparalleled in the agricultural history of revolutionary Russia), would have given to each inhabitant of the U.S.S.R., per head, quantities of meat, eggs, milk and milk products, margarine and fish, somewhat less than half of those consumed per head in Great Britain: about one-third of the amount of sugar, twice the amount of flour, and 160% of the weight of potatoes. These figures illustrate the radical difference in the standards of diet in the two countries—standards

the relative cost of which is only partially relevant to the respective degrees of well-being.

Meat is certainly, as it always has been, eaten to a very much smaller extent in Russia than in the United Kingdom. Bread is still largely the staff of life in the former country, and it is primarily to changes in the quality and quantity of bread that we must look to find improvement of diet. One change which has been steadily in progress for past years, and is perhaps the most convincing evidence of a general rise in the standard of comfort, is the increased consumption of wheat per head of the population. The figures of the Institute of Agriculture at Rome show that the consumption of wheat per head in pre-war Russia, excluding its use for seed, was over 81 kilograms, about half as much as in Britain, and more than half as much as in the U.S.A. This figure runs counter to the traditional belief in black rye bread as the diet of Russia, but it shows that wheat as well as rye has long been important. The economist Yugov, writing in 1927–28, notes that there has been a general inclination of late years to eat wheaten bread instead of rye, and that between 1922 and 1925–26 the rural consumption of wheat increased by nearly two-fifths and the urban by nearly three-quarters, while the consumption of rye was diminishing in somewhat smaller proportions. In the one year 1926–27 he says that there was an increase of 7–8% in the consumption of white bread. For later years there is no continuous statistical evidence, but there was a similar substitution of wheat for rye between 1933 and 1936, and the change has probably been progressive. The aggregate out-turn of wheat has increased, and the export has diminished, leaving a net balance per head of population greater than formerly, available for consumption, and—since there is no increase in the animal population—presumably consumed by human beings.

Flour and potatoes largely take the place of meat, eggs and milk products. Tea is an article of very exceptional consumption, and beer plays a much smaller part than in the life of the London worker. Fruit is a rarity: and cabbages and cucumbers make up most of the vegetable supply. Canned goods, though now making their appearance in increased quantities, are far less frequently on the table than in Britain. Life generally is simpler and nearer to nature. The differences in diet make a smaller wage go further. But it is in the item of rent that the advantage of the Russian over the British worker is most marked.

Recent investigators have made us familiar with the fact that the housing of the urban workers, by comparison with that of Britain, on the average, is bad. In Moscow, for instance, we know that there is, on the average, only 45 square feet of space (not including kitchen, passage, lavatory, bath and staircase) for each individual: and that a fraction of the people in the city have only 30 square feet per head, which means just room for a bed. We also know that there has been a falling off in building enterprise of late years in consequence of the diversion of

resources to preparation against military attack. I feel no doubt that other considerable towns present a no less unsatisfactory picture. The (illicit) renting out of a room, made available only by increased overcrowding, is still an occasional source of profit. The rate of construction is still quite inadequate, but it is important to get the right perspective. It is with India, and with Tsarist Russia, that the comparison should be made. The report of Mr. Whitley's Industrial Commission shows even more shocking conditions in Bombay and other rapidly industrialised cities. In Tsarist Russia (as in the Russia of to-day) the standard of accommodation, even for what we should call the upper middle class, was low. Dostoievsky has described in *The Idiot* the apartment of an official family: the father (a retired General), the mother, the grown son, the grown daughter, the schoolboy son: all living in four rooms, two of them small. But this family has a lodger, and it takes in Prince Myshkin as a guest. Even if there was no maid living in, they averaged, when at the full complement, 1·75 per room, which *London Life and Labour* would classify as "crowding" for a worker's family. If there was a maid, the case was on the borderline of "overcrowding" for General, Prince, and all. Where did they all live and sleep? We must get out of our heads the notion—it is not a Russian notion, and it is not an Indian notion—that living-rooms and sleeping-rooms must be separate, and that each person is entitled to a room. The nightly ritual, by which each person assumes a special costume, and deposits himself in a special apparatus known as a bed, is a novelty still incompletely assimilated.

The description in *The Idiot* represents conditions in the sixties. At the same period, in the poorer quarters, a single room was often let out to several families, *each of which occupied a corner.* It is a precise parallel to a Bombay case cited by Mr. Whitley, except that in the latter there was a *fifth corner,* made by a large table upon which a fifth family slept. A great deal later (in 1908), the textile workers of Moscow slept, three-fifths of them, on bunks in barracks. There was no question of housing them, any more than there is—or was till very recently—any question of housing the publicly plying *jhampanis* at Simla. They curl up in their rugs in a shed, or in a shop in the bazaar.

The cities of Russia emptied themselves in the early years of the Revolution when the towns were nearly starving: but filled again with great rapidity. Rapid industrialisation in the period of the first Plan brought great waves of population to the urban centres. Much was done. But the majority have hardly yet been rescued from the stage in which migrant labour lay down on the floor of a cellar, or on a piece of cloth stretched between two boards: much as it had formerly lain down in a corner of the field, when the harvest work was heavy. *Town life is still a novelty.*

Just about the time of Stalin's speech in which he called, among other things, for improved living conditions for the workers (see Chapter XIV),

86% of the houses in Moscow were of wood: sometimes covered externally with plaster or concrete: 40% of the streets had no sewage system: whole municipal districts were without any piped supply of water. Life in large aggregations is an art which is slowly learned. If fortune (or misfortune) takes the visitor to the extreme outskirts of the growing city to-day, he will find conditions very much the same: alongside of the bed of a stream, which is just learning to be a drain: and making a mess of the lesson. The ten-year plan for Moscow shows that the new art is being studied with energy and purpose, and that is about as far as the U.S.S.R. has got at present. India, with a much older town civilisation, but even younger in mass industrialisation, has not got any further.

In seeking our perspective we have to recall that excellent communal arrangements, in the form of catering establishments, day crèches for the care of children, workers' clubs, parks for rest and amusement, cheap entertainments, have been provided on a handsome scale, in the cities. The annual budget of social insurance is over 6 milliard roubles, administered by half a million members of Insurance Soviets and Insurance delegates from the Trade Unions, and dealing with pensions and invalidity payments, rest-houses and sanatoria for adults and children, maternity benefits, children's camps, touring, mountain-climbing and physical culture. Holidays with pay, in the mountains and at the sea, are available for the more fortunate. The money value of the benefits from social services has been calculated at 34·5% of the individual wage, whereas it is probably about 16% of it in England. We may reasonably ask ourselves: Is the good home precisely what the gregarious Russian most wants? Perhaps, when he has experience of it, he will want it as much as the Yorkshireman and the Lancashire man want it. For the present it is hardly an attainable goal. Industrialisation is too young to provide it. The bad home, which for the majority takes the place of the good one, is at least inexpensive, and the rent does not swallow a sixth of the whole family income, according to the British example, but rather the thirtieth part.

To return to what is, for the moment, our main theme, the respective real values of the Russian and the British urban wage; the comparative inefficiency of retail distribution in the U.S.S.R. has become, since the abolition of rationing, more than ever closely relevant to the question. The authorities obviously encourage the comic Press to pillory the defects of the state and co-operative shops. The high-and-mighty shopman, the cross shopman, the stupid shopman, the empty shelves, are stock jokes. Efforts are made by the training of the personnel to make the profession a skilled and honourable one: but a preference for the triumphs of productive work, and a dislike for counter-jumping and, more recently, the wish for a seat at the official desk, seem to be ingrained in the more ambitious and efficient of the Soviet workers. Private individuals, working under licence, make and supply certain goods and services, including

tailoring, upholstery, cabinet-making, plumbing, and repairs. The collective farm markets help out the food supply. Model shops have been set up in the great cities, with service of a high standard and delivery to customers' houses. Advertisement, especially for prepared foods and for luxury goods, is a growing practice. But I feel no doubt that inconvenient access to retail supplies lowers the real value of the cash-wage.

In 1928 the International Labour Office concluded that the real value of the Moscow wage was then exactly 50% of the English. There is no evidence that it represented any greater proportion of the latter in 1934, after which date the data for the comparison come to an end. After 1935 the Russian annual compilation known as *Socialist Construction* ceased to be published, probably from the fear of giving economic secrets away to Germany. Mr. Colin Clark has cited figures (he is careful to call them provisional) which show a rise up to 1937 both in agricultural and industrial output, and an increase between 1934 and 1937 by as much as 42% in the average income of the working population taken as a whole. It is possible that an increase is taking place: and that, when satisfactory and complete statistics again become available, the Russian urban standard will be shown to be less far below the British than it has hitherto been. In the meanwhile, I have attempted, in Appendix IV to this study, to show what the Russian urban wage was capable of purchasing in 1937–38. I think it left rather more than 500 roubles a year for each individual to buy clothes and industrial commodities and pay for amenities other than communal.

Outside of wage and price statistics, and of those propagandist statements which naturally awaken the suspicion of the enquirer, there are some indications of an increased divisible product in the U.S.S.R., and of an increasingly efficient method of securing the share of the cities in that product. As explained elsewhere, there was, for the first time in 1937, when there was an extraordinarily good harvest following immediately on a very bad one, evidence of a rise in the out-turn of cereal crops to the acre; and—since the Census shows a diminution of the rural population by 5%—this is accompanied by increased agricultural production per agricultural worker. Hitherto agricultural yields had not increased, mainly because certain advantages of collectivisation had been neutralised by the loss of manure. The use of machinery has made it possible to bring more of the crop home. Additions to cultivated area, and changes in cropping, have increased the gross total and value of the product. The growers of certain crops, especially cotton and sugar-beet, have benefited materially. The export of food has substantially diminished: and the waste of food has been greatly reduced by the operations of the Commissariat of Food, and the processing and storage of meat, fish, milk, grain, vegetables and fruit, which have been consequences of the collection of revenue-in-kind. The growth of industry cannot be estimated in figures, because of the uncertainty and variation of the value of the

rouble: but it is quantitatively very great. There is rather more food, and a good deal more of the product of industry, per head of the population. But, so far as the urban population goes, the arrangements for supply have, in gross, and with some reservation due to bad retailing, been immensely improved by the efficiency of the collection of the revenue-in-kind. There are net gains: and the gains have gone partly to the growers of industrial crops, but mainly to the cities: partly in the form of public amenities, partly in that of an improved standard of living.

The Russian worker, like the British, has his share in the machinery of the workers' State brought periodically home to him by the exercise of his vote, both for the Soviets and for the Trade Union organisation. The practices of issuing instructions to representatives, of receiving reports from them, and of recalling them if their conduct of public business is not satisfactory, are calculated to give to representative institutions a reality which is lacking to them for the working-man in Great Britain, unless he is a particularly active politician. In both cases they contribute something to the worker's self-respect. Whether the contribution is greater in the one case than in the other, I am doubtful. In both there are considerable potentialities for the exceptional man, not much for the rank and file.

There was a statutory seven-hour day, which has recently been suspended to meet the needs of defence. It must be understood, in respect to this and to everything else in the U.S.S.R., that the laws show what the law-makers would desire, rather than what they are actually able to enforce. I myself have travelled on a slow local train with a conductor who was on duty, with such intervals of sleep as he could snatch, for thirty-six hours. Of a woman who supplemented her factory earnings with washing, Mrs. Beatrice King writes:

> "I do not know when she rested, but then I found Russians worked the most amazing hours in some cases. . . . In the household where I stayed in Moscow the servant rose one morning at four a.m. to do the household's fortnightly wash and had not finished at 2 p.m. These long hours at strange times are partly due to the fact that life is not very organised."

It is not organised at all. The visitor at a Russian hotel is aware that the native life is a night life, that the band plays till 2 a.m. and that the servants are clearing up at 3 a.m. In the factory, with its regular shifts, there is better organisation than this. That the ordinary time worker in the factory—that is to say, the mass of the urban workers—got the benefit of the seven-hour restriction, there is no reason to doubt. It was because she worked only seven hours in the factory that Mrs. King's example was able to take up laundry work in addition. But in April, 1933, the newspaper *Labour* was complaining of the disregard of the time rule

in the mines of the Donets Basin. The working day underground was officially six hours: but some miners were working between twelve and eighteen hours a day without extra pay, in consequence of the disorder in the wage system. I take leave to doubt whether anything less than a workers' organisation independent of, or at least secure against the interference by, the Employer State will put an end to abuses of this sort.

Unemployment

Under-employment in the rural areas is, in a certain sense, inevitable so long as the agriculture continues to be predominantly of the type which requires very great reinforcement of labour in certain seasons, and fails to give employment to it during the remainder of the year. Cereal cultivation, still three-quarters of the whole, is of that type. The situation was relieved at one time by rural industries. Some of these were inevitably killed by the competition of the factory. Others survived it, but the Bolsheviks underrated their importance, and tended for a time to tax them out of existence. The mistake was discovered by 1932, when Molotov declared that handicraft industry can and should provide a share of additional products for the local markets, and also supply industry with subsidiary articles and with building materials. The self-employers, largely outside the towns, are now a recognised subsidiary source of supply, and local industries, under the control of local Soviets, also contribute.

In Britain there are approximately three to five agricultural workers to every 100 acres of arable, if land permanently under grass be included. In the U.S.S.R. there are approximately twelve able-bodied rural workers to every 100 arable acres. The two sets of figures are obviously not comparable: for from the second are to be deducted the handicraftsmen and a number of persons who are doing, in the collective farms and elsewhere, work of an administrative or clerical character, who would not be reckoned as agricultural workers in Britain. On the other hand, agriculture is now mechanised in the U.S.S.R. to a great, and increasing, extent. We cannot but conclude that, judged by the British standard, there is very great under-employment in the rural areas of the U.S.S.R.; all the greater, because there is so much less of the glass and truck-farming which occupies a large proportion of the labour in Britain.

It is not only inevitable, for the present, that there should be under-employment in rural Russia: it is also actually desirable, while the country is in the process of rapid industrialisation. The rural under-employment is the reservoir from which the growing needs of the towns are to be met. We should therefore welcome the indications of rural depopulation, the diminution in the number of peasant households, and the large number of deserted buildings, to which some have pointed as indications of rural decay. A process, economically advantageous, is transferring population to the towns. It is far from being completed.

Skilled labour has never suffered from unemployment in the U.S.S.R. But before, and during the first two years of the First Plan, there was much unskilled unemployment in the cities, probably attributable to the influx of peasants seeking work. The registered unemployed ranged between 1 million and 1¾ million between 1925 and 1929, fell to little more than 1 million in April, 1930, and below a million in the later months of that year. A substantial addition to these figures must be made on account of the unregistered unemployed. Unemployed persons who had recently arrived from their villages, and might reasonably be required to return thither, were left unregistered.

In October, 1930, the payment of Unemployment benefit was stopped on the ground of the shortage of labour in all branches of state-industry, and the despatch of the remaining unemployed to useful occupations was ordered. The Commissariat of Labour was censured by the Central Executive Committee for "Right opportunism", on the ground that it had retained hundreds of thousands on Unemployment benefit instead of organising their absorption into industry, which had plenty of room for them. In 1931 there were still 300,000 registered unemployed, who may probably be accounted for by workers in transit from one employment to another, and by the effect of seasonal trade. After that, registration ceased.

In 1932 there was a reappearance of the symptoms of unemployment: to be explained by the combined effects of rationalisation in industry and of scarcity in certain rural areas. Actually the facts point, simultaneously, to shortage of labour, and the excessive employment of superfluous hands—in other words, to bad organisation of labour. We learn, for instance, from the reports made to the Central Executive Committee in February, 1932, that nearly 18¾ million persons were employed by the State when the planned total was 14 millions: and, of these, nearly 5½ millions were employed in heavy industry against the 4 millions contemplated by the plan. The process of reduction, in so far as effect was given to it, involved, at least temporarily, some unemployment, but the absorption of the displaced workers in new factories was expected. This is one of many instances which might be cited to show that command does not always mean performance.

At the same time Magnetostroi was sending recruiting agents all over the U.S.S.R., paying the wages of recruits from the moment of employment, plus their railway fare and living expenses en route to the factory: and still had a labour force 10,000 below requirements. Many labourers were still wandering in search of better food and housing conditions, and much waste of power is thus accounted for. The pressure of the demand for hands is shown by the employment of women on underground work in mines and in all kinds of industrial occupations, including some of the heaviest. Hands were so short of the demand that theatres and cinemas complained that they could find no one to take the part of the

crowd. (*1932.*) By way of contrast to the "ca' canny" of capitalist countries, "Saturday men" (*subbotniki*) were doing voluntary work on holidays, to fill the gap. Today (in 1941) there are "Sunday men" at work to help the military defence. In 1933 steps were taken to obtain miners for the Donets basin on three-year indentures.

Of the fact that mass urban unemployment has come to an end in the U.S.S.R. there appears to be no doubt. But it is naturally argued that the cause of its cessation is a boom, and that the boom is a temporary one, so that we may look forward to the reappearance of a phenomenon with which the history of capitalism has familiarised us. The market fails to absorb the product at a price which covers the maker's costs, including profit: the maker closes down and the worker loses his job. But there is one obvious difference between the individualistic and the socialistic society. In the former the enterprise, however extensive, covers only a portion of the whole economic field: and the costs must be covered and the profits made in that portion or not at all. When a monopoly of enterprise is vested in a public authority, loss in one portion of the field can be accepted with equanimity so long as the net result over the whole of it is satisfactory. Every Government deliberately loses, in the economic sense, over Army, Navy, Roads, Bridges, Drains, Schools, and as a regular matter of routine, covers the losses by its receipts in other directions. A Socialist Government, such as that of the U.S.S.R., having control, direct or indirect, over the whole field of production, can deliberately lose on coal, to recuperate on cottons: is not, in short, dependent upon a profit on each and every item of its multifarious business, if there are good reasons for what is virtually a subsidy, permanent or temporary, in any particular sector.

But are we to consider that this is a difference merely of degree and not one of kind? The individualist producer goes out of business when the market in his own particular sector fails him, that is when the limit of effective demand in that sector is reached. Must the Socialist Government, in the long run, also restrict production when the limit of effective demand over the whole field is reached, and follow the individualist producer into economic retirement, with no advantage other than the comparative duration of the interval of its economic survival? If the Socialist Government possesses no means of changing demand into effective demand, then the answer to this question is Yes: and the claim to have found the secret of preventing mass unemployment drops. The secret lies in the power to make demand effective: in other words, to confer purchasing power as well as to put commodities on the market, and to make the one process a necessary correlative of the other. Those who talk of producers improving their markets by increasing the wages of their workers are feeling after the truth. If all producers did it, and did it simultaneously, they would actually improve their markets. But in proportion as they attained to identity and simultaneity of action, they

would be simulating the action of the Socialist State, which is able to regulate income as well as supply. What happens, potentially at least, in a society organised like that of the U.S.S.R., is that, in the process of putting commodities upon the market, the power to purchase such of them as are not capital goods—in other words, such of them as do not represent public saving—is automatically conferred. In so far as that potentiality is realised in fact, the aim of ending mass unemployment is necessarily achieved. The market is created by the distribution of the wage, as a part of the process which brings the goods there.

Does this mean that every need will be met? No. The art of production is not yet sufficiently advanced. Does it mean that every variety of taste will be catered for as in the luxury shops of London, Paris and New York? No. A great deal of mere caprice, always the privilege of the few, will necessarily be eliminated from the range of choice. Does it mean that there will be no failures and blunders, no forced sales of unwanted commodities, no miscalculations, no woodenness of application, and no resultant losses and suffering? There will be all these things.

The claim is that the true technique has been discovered, not that it will always be unerringly applied, and that it leads to the ending of mass unemployment. In this, a by-product of the Socialist experiment, lies what is perhaps the greatest claim of the U.S.S.R. to the gratitude of mankind. The chief misery of working-class life is economic insecurity. With adequate social insurance, and a technique which promises the end of industrial unemployment, that misery is at an end: until war destroys the foundations of society.

To sum up the pre-war comparison of the conditions of Labour in London and in Moscow: the Russian worker produces much less: has a much smaller real wage, and more uniformly poor accommodation: he pays one-fifth of the London rent: he gets holidays with pay (which the British worker is only now beginning to get): he makes no direct contribution to social insurance: and he enjoys important communal amenities without payment. His wage and his conditions of work are protected, less by Trade Unions than by the absence of unemployment, which makes him a valuable asset. There are no Trade Boards, and the minimum wage is almost a dead letter. Trade Union protection in London is far from general, but it is supplemented in certain trades (those most liable to exploitation) by Trade Boards, which enforce a minimum wage.

For the children of the London worker, the chance of being below the poverty line (that is, of having less than the indispensable necessities) is one in eight. In old age, the chance of being below the poverty line is one in six: the chance of having bad house accommodation is one in three. The Russian worker enjoys greater security in respect to his children, whose health, schooling, and holidays are extremely well looked after. There is no material for a comparison of the conditions in old age.

Widespread fear, which has no parallel in Britain, has existed, perhaps still exists, in Russia in the class which is called upon to make decisions. The managing class in Britain has its anxieties when unemployment is acute. This fear and these anxieties do not extend to the workers in the U.S.S.R. The Russian worker is freer than the British from anxiety, because of the absence of unemployment. He stands higher in the comparative scale of human values, and has no example of disproportionate luxury before him (except in so far as the Stakhanovets or the Soviet bureaucrat begins to set it) to give him a sense of inferiority. He has no cause (other than personal indolence) for restricting output, and has a feeling (which the British worker lacks) that he is working for himself. His wife works hard, but is economically freer, and is largely emancipated from household drudgery. He lives in an obviously advancing and improving world, which breeds hope.

Who shall say how the balance dips? I believe that—given the material minimum required for subsistence—the moral and mental considerations are the more important. In spite of Unemployment benefit and Unemployment assistance, security is one desideratum in Great Britain: and status is another—for status, for the undistinguished mass, too obviously depends upon property. Here is the missing half of liberty for the British worker.

CHAPTER XVIII

RELIGION IN THE REVOLUTION

"Russians are always apocalyptic or nihilist. . . . The spirit of the people could very easily pass from one integrated faith to another integrated faith, from one orthodoxy to another orthodoxy, which embraced the whole of life. . . . And there always remains, as the chief thing, the profession of some orthodox faith: this is always the criterion by which membership of the Russian people is judged."—BERDYAEV, *Origins of Russian Communism.*

THE EARLY Orthodox Church, making no distinction of spiritual and temporal authority, identified itself with a Messianic mission of the Russian people, in which Holy Russia was the God-bearer. The Church played a heroic part in the national history. Almost she might be called the maker of the Russian nation. Her leading figures were, indeed, servants of the Tsars, but they did not hesitate to rebuke injustice, as Elijah rebuked Ahab for the rape of Naboth's vineyard, and they pointed the way to some of Russia's great national recoveries.

The Schism (Raskol) of the seventeenth century marked a turning point. It was the beginning of a breach in the tradition of unity. The quarrel, which wore the superficial appearance of a dispute about forms, revealed itself as a movement of rudimentary nationalism against the invasion of foreign influences, and threw the official Church into a new

subjection to the State. The process of change was thereafter a rapid one. Peter the Great hastened it by putting the Patriarchate into commission under a lay Procurator. Catherine the Great confiscated the land of the monasteries, and the completeness of the fall was made manifest when Gregory Rasputin—neither priest nor monk, but a mere Imperial favourite with the affectation of a Divine Mission and the reality of a debauched life—made high ecclesiastical functionaries and canonised saints by his influence upon the heads of the State.

Against this degradation of the official Church there was a volume of protest from its lay defenders. First the Slavophils, and later the liberal Marxists, spoke with no uncertain voice. But, in the words of Merezhkovsky, "the holy words of the Scriptures, in which we (the laymen) heard the voice of the Seven Thunders, sounded to them (the ecclesiastics) like catechism texts learned by heart". The Church had become a department of the State, and participated in its incompetence and corruption. Priests were required to disclose the secrets of the confessional, in order to assist the State in its repression of revolutionary movements. High ecclesiastical office was for the careerist. The extension of Orthodoxy was a branch of the policy of Russification, and was thrust upon unwilling dissentients. The followers of the Raskol were treated as Orthodox who neglected their religious duties. Both Roman Catholics and Jews were subjected to disabilities. The Church was an oppressor as well as a worldling. Only individuals stood out from the mass as true pastors and true saints.

Karl Marx regarded the organised Churches as enemies to social revolution. By ascribing divine origin or divine sanction to human institutions, they placed them out of bounds except to the impious or the unbelieving. In Imperial Russia the state of the Orthodox Church confirmed, for the revolutionary parties, the inferences which Marx had drawn. Not only this or that Church, but religion in general, assumed the aspect of a defender of oppression: and philosophical theories which might appear to justify the intellectual demand for a transcendental cause became outworks of the hostile citadel to be conquered and demolished. That is why, when the Social Democratic Party at the Communist school at Capri was toying with Mach and Avenarius, and the "god-building" which seemed to be the inevitable accompaniment of their philosophy, Lenin intervened with his insistence upon materialism and thus gave to Bolshevism its anti-religious turn.

His book on Empirio-criticism was no mere essay in philosophy. It was a battering-ram to level fortifications behind which he saw the oppressor sheltering: and it is as an instrument for the destruction of ideas hostile to the Revolution that anti-religious propaganda and anti-idealist philosophical teaching have been employed by the Communist Party.

With the integral completeness characteristic of the Revolution, all

half-way houses and compositions are rejected. Agnosticism is merely a pseudomorphosis of idealism. All teleology, everything which postulates the existence of an aim in nature or the universe, comes dangerously close to god-building. The Menshevising idealism of Deborin, who had once been a Menshevik and never freed himself from the tradition, became anathema at the "new turn in the philosophic front" in 1929, because it treated the categories of knowledge as eternal and unchangeable, and so threatened a compromise with deity. Mechanism, revived on the background of N.E.P., is a form of materialism which robs it of its dynamic principle. Only dialectical materialism, which repudiates idealism but retains the dynamic principle, must displace religion. Without the materialism on the one hand, and the dialectic on the other, we fall, according to the Communist outlook, into fatal error.

The teaching of the Godless is no mere negative. There is an actual substitute for religion, which does not receive the name of religion, and, if religion is necessarily the recognition of the transcendent, is not religion at all. One integral faith can only be driven out by another. Mere scepticism, mere negatives, cannot serve as battering-rams, and it is the battering-ram that is needed. In the heresies to be avoided, on either side of the truth, we are conscious of an atmosphere like that of the early Councils of the Church whose decisions took shape in the Creeds. Idealism means reaction: mechanism, without the dialectic, means fatalism and inertia.

The representatives of the Orthodox renaissance, among whom MM. Nicolas Berdyaev and Sergius Bulgakov are the most remarkable, are well aware of the causes of Communist hostility to religion, and conscious of the lines along which a concordat might be won. Bulgakov accepts the division between Church and State, assures us that Orthodoxy is not the guardian of capitalism, and protests only against the Russian Communism *of to-day*, as denying the freedom of personality. In a very different sphere of life and thought from that occupied by the labours of Berdyaev and Bulgakov, there are some priests who are cultivating Communist favour by colouring church doors and crosses red, and by emphasising the proletarian origin of Jesus the carpenter, of Paul the tent-maker and of Simon Peter the fisherman.

When Nazi Germany made the attack in June, 1941, the acting Patriarch of the Orthodox Church blessed the Russian cause, and it is probable that Orthodox priests and Orthodox believers are as patriotic as the rest of the population. A group of priests in the House of Detention at Leningrad were found by M. Ciliga to have preached the duty of submission to the powers that be: but one monk was recalcitrant. That any of the Churches could forgive the confiscation of Church property is —whatever pious or far-sighted individuals might be able to do—not to be expected; and, for the Roman Catholic Church at least, the refusal of facilities for the religious education of children and of direct contact

between the Vatican and the priesthood, is an insuperable obstacle to a concordat. The more official representatives of the émigré Church have chosen each their own successor to the Imperial Throne: and for these there seems to be no possibility of reconciliation.

The first dealings of the Revolution with the Churches seemed to promise their liberation. The Provisional Government of March allowed the restoration of the Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church, abolished by Peter the Great. Bishop Tikhon, along with a synod to assist him in the ecclesiastical administration, was freely elected to the restored office. The first religious decree of the November Government (*February 5th, 1918*) placed all confessions upon an equal footing, disestablished and disendowed the Orthodox Church, gave freedom of *religious and anti-religious propaganda*, prohibited all but secular instruction in schools where general subjects were taught, but allowed citizens to give and receive religious teaching privately. This deprived the Orthodox Church (like all other landlords) of its landed property, and also of the favour which it had hitherto enjoyed over the other confessions: but gave to the others a liberty and an equality which had hitherto been withheld. In particular, the freedom of religious teaching and propaganda—there was a new liberty for all, formerly enjoyed only by the Orthodox, to make converts—was a valuable concession to the non-Orthodox: while the confiscation of landed property affected few, if any, outside the Orthodox Church, and, within that Church, probably none except the monastic or black clergy, who also enjoyed exclusive access to high ecclesiastical office. Additional orders provided for handing Church buildings and ritual furniture over to associations of worshippers who would be responsible for maintenance. So far, the official policy was one which gave apparently complete satisfaction to all religious communities in Russia except the Orthodox Church: being briefly one of disestablishment and disendowment.

According to an official Soviet computation made in February, 1938, the sequestrations of ecclesiastical property amounted to 2 million acres of land, 1,038 farms including stock, 1,816 houses and hostels, 311 apiaries and eighty-four factories. To this must be added something under a quarter of a ton of gold and 150 tons of silver levied for famine relief in 1921–22. The total of land confiscated has probably been understated: for the Church owned 23 millions of acres in 1905, according to M. Daudé-Bancel, and it owns none now.

The Patriarch Tikhon anathematised the Bolsheviks, not by name but by description, excommunicated all who assisted in the enforcement of the ecclesiastical decree, and condemned the peace of Brest-Litovsk with the Central Powers. (*March, 1918.*) During the Civil War many priests supported the Whites, and it was believed that Roman Catholic ecclesiastics gave assistance to the Poles in the war of 1920. But we learn from a Soviet Government pamphlet of 1919 that, at the time when

Denikin was threatening Moscow, and Yudenich was within a few miles of Petrograd, Tikhon called upon the people to support the Soviets. On the other side, there was a vigorous campaign of propaganda against all forms of religion, accompanied by the exposure of bogus relics, and other action offensive to the Churches. Tikhon was under house arrest in 1920, and at that time alleged that over 300 bishops and priests had been executed since the beginning of the Revolution. Regarding the higher figures sometimes cited, a sceptical attitude is justified. It appears certain that these ecclesiastics were executed for opposition to the Revolutionary Government or for assistance to the Whites in the civil war.

When the demand was made for the surrender of the Church treasure in addition to the immovable property already confiscated, Tikhon gave orders that the clergy should neither assist in the collection nor resist it. Actually there was widespread concealment and resistance, and the Countess Alexandra Tolstoi mentions the execution of seven ecclesiastics on this account. The Government now pursued the policy of dividing the Church by encouraging schism: and the year 1922–23 was one of intense and widespread interest in the cities in ecclesiastical organisation and practice. Among the many Churches which came into existence as soon as the removal of Orthodox privilege gave freedom to the fissiparous tendency, the so-called Living Church demanded freedom for the parish clergy to remarry, admission for them to the episcopate, the use of Russian instead of Church Slavonic in the services, and a popular basis for religion. At its Congress in 1922 it discussed social as well as ecclesiastical questions, including the reform of the marriage laws and the recognition of the Revolution. But neither this nor any of the other religious movements of the time, which were numerous, attracted notice outside of the towns, or exhibited any vitality when official countenance was withheld from them.

The Orthodox Church, as we see it portrayed in the pages of the Rev. Mr. Palmer in the first half of the nineteenth century, had been acutely nervous of attempts to define or change anything: and the suggestion at that time of the summoning of an Oecumenical Council of all the Eastern Churches for the restoration of religious unity would have appeared daring to the borders of recklessness. But the position of the Russian Orthodox Church as only one of a sisterhood of Eastern Churches, and the senior status of the Oecumenical Patriarch at Constantinople, had always been recognised in ecclesiastical theory: and, if so audacious a proposal as the fresh definition of dogma had ever been contemplated, it would have been agreed that only the Oecumenical Council was competent for the purpose. The question of the election of Bishop Tikhon to the newly restored Patriarchate had actually been referred in 1917 to the Oecumenical Patriarch. It was reserved for a Revolutionary Government to countenance the project of an Oecu-

menical Council to make proposals for the restoration of the unity of the Orthodox Church. In 1924 the new supreme ecclesiastical authority, created by the Bolsheviks, took measures to summon such a Council: which, it appears, would actually have sat, but for the objections raised by the Government of the Turkish Republic. We must seek the motives of the Soviet Government in the same direction in which we seek the motives dictating the negotiations for a concordat with the Vatican. Combined with a desire to weaken the influence of religion, and in particular of the Orthodox Church, there was a desire to utilise the surviving influence of the Churches for political purposes. The Eastern Churches, like the Vatican, so long as they continued to be forces, were forces to be used. At a later stage, it became less important to reckon with them, or more important to make an end of their influence in the internal affairs of the U.S.S.R.

National Churches in the non-Great-Russian nationalities were encouraged by the Soviet Government. In Ukrain there arose a Pan-Ukrainian Orthodoxy which gave an outlet to nationalist as well as religious aspirations, and is described as being directed at first as much against Moscow as against Roman Catholic Poland. The new Church here was declared to rest upon the principles of congregationalism (*sobornost*) and of the will of the Ukrainian people: and a lively description is given by N. Brianchaninov, a historian of the Orthodox Church, of the consecration of a Metropolitan of Kiev and his bishops by the laity, no bishop being available for the purpose. All the people present in the Cathedral of St. Sophia "laid their hands upon one another's shoulders: those who were in the front row laid their hands upon the shoulders of the priests": and the priests laid their hands upon the Metropolitan. A further process of consecration was carried out by the elective Rada (the Ukrainian equivalent of Soviet). Thus the ancient principle of congregationalism (which remembered that the Holy Ghost at Pentecost descended upon all the people and not merely on the Apostles) was here carried to the point of conveying the Apostolical Succession to the Episcopate by the hands of the laity. The Ukrainian Church was still conducting services in St. Sophia at Kiev in 1933. By what method the decision to convert the building into a Museum was reached I do not know. In 1937 the restorers were at work upon its mural paintings and mosaics, and services in the building had ceased.

A method of weakening the Orthodox Church was to allow a greater degree of freedom to sectarians such as the Baptists, who were very successful with their welfare work among their flocks. For a time it seemed that the Biblical Christians, escaping all political suspicions, were to enjoy a favoured status in revolutionary Russia. But the State is a jealous State, desiring no competitors with itself in its function of achieving the material and educational advancement of its people. The Baptist Training College in Moscow was closed in 1929.

The Russian Dissenters (Raskolnik) had enjoyed the reputation of the most sober, honest, and steady element in the Great Russian people. Their ideal was an autonomous Church managed by the faithful, and the election of the clergy. During the pre-revolution period, almost all of them were registered against their will as Orthodox, and treated as deserters from the Church, unless they bought themselves off by making payments to the Orthodox clergy. One of Lyeskov's characters, a humble and pious divine, tells with contrition how he collected silver from the dissenters "in order that I might not have to dress my wife as a chanter's wife". In Turgeniev's *Virgin Soil* we hear the die-hard gentleman describe how he once helped the police to catch an old dissenter, who all but jumped out of his cottage window. "And there he had been sitting, as quiet as could be, till that minute, the rascal." To these people the March Revolution came as a liberation. We see them, in the pages of Mr. Albert Rhys Williams, holding their periodical Councils above the Volga with representatives from Archangel, Moscow, the Caucasus and the Caspian steppes, in a new freedom and absence of concealment. The Union of the Godless has no information regarding them: but we catch glimpses of them among the prisoners whom the Yugoslav Socialist, Ciliga, met in his wanderings from jail to jail. One of them was a woman, faithful to the idea of refusal to co-operate with all authority, who declined to countersign her own act of liberation, and therefore remained in prison. Another was a member of one of the Biblical Sects, or possibly an Old Believer, who described to Ciliga a mutual aid association which his people had set up to cover the urban population outside of the factories and the trade unions. Ciliga says that these communities live a sort of innocent underground existence and, when possible, elect as their heads persons who stand high in the Soviet administration. This sidelight is valuable because it shows that religion has gone under the surface. M. Ciliga—I give his statement for what it may be worth—says that the Church has succeeded in modernising itself, and is one of the most powerful and secret forces in Russia. This is almost certainly an exaggeration, except as regards the dissenting sects: which are, I suspect, still an underground influence of importance.

For political reasons, the Roman Catholic Confession had been the worst treated of all the non-orthodox faiths in the period immediately preceding the Revolution. It was very closely associated with Polish nationalism, one of the bugbears of the Tsars. Indeed, it was the religious Confession, Roman or Orthodox, which often determined nationality in the doubtful racial borderlands of the west of the Empire. The definitive loss of all Polish territory might be supposed to have made an end of all causes of friction between the Pope and the Revolutionary Government, in spite of the deep commitment of the Vatican against socialism by the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and other pronouncements of Leo XIII and Pius X. But the Vatican welcomed the opportunity

given by the confusion of the Orthodox Church for the extension of its influence in the East: and the Italian papers emphasised this aspect by cartoons in which the Pope was shown blessing the attack upon Orthodoxy. The Revolutionary Government, which was far from being without an ecclesiastical policy, adjusted to political requirements, offered to submit to examination by the Vatican a circular of the Commissariat of Justice regarding the status of the Roman Catholic Church, and was prepared to contemplate with equanimity some strengthening of its influence as a means of diminishing that of the Orthodox Church. Past history seemed to show that there was nothing extravagant in the hopes of the Vatican: for the Roman confession had exercised a great influence upon the Orthodox during part of the nineteenth century, and the Society of Jesus had for some years held a powerful position in Russia. The prospect for Roman Catholicism seemed the more hopeful because some Orthodox churchmen, deprived of material resources at home, were beginning to turn their eyes towards Rome. But there were occasions of friction in the administration of Roman Catholic relief funds and in the Vatican's claim to Church buildings, which, by revolutionary law, could only be given for specific uses to particular congregations.

In 1923 a group of Polish Roman Catholic ecclesiastics were prosecuted for espionage during the Russo-Polish war of 1920, and one of them, who had retained his Russian citizenship, was executed. The Patriarch Tikhon and other Orthodox ecclesiastics were also on trial for political offences: but Tikhon made his peace by a declaration that he abandoned his opposition to the Soviet Government. These trials, represented abroad as part of a religious persecution, caused a remarkable outburst of indignation. There were protests from Great Britain and Poland, and the long delay in the recognition of the Soviet Government by the Government of the U.S.A. was probably due to the odium which these events excited. The Vatican—evidently desirous at this time not to offend the Bolsheviks—did not join in the chorus of condemnation.

In 1925 formal negotiations took place, through the Papal Nuncio in Berlin, with a view to a concordat, on the questions of education, finance, the appointment of Roman Catholic bishops, the publication of Papal Bulls in Russia, and free communication between the Vatican and the Roman Catholic hierarchy. A Roman Catholic bishop, Mgr. d'Herbigny, came to Moscow under the auspices of the French Ambassador, without the previous cognisance of the Soviet Government, and undertook on behalf of the Vatican the reorganisation of the Catholic clergy in the U.S.S.R. This caused some indignation, and the emissary was expelled in 1926. Negotiations for a concordat finally broke down in 1927, and relations have greatly deteriorated since. In 1931, after the fresh revolutionary legislation against religion, of which I have something further to say below, the encyclical "*Quadragesimo anno*" reaffirmed the Papal condemnation of Communism, conveyed by the Bull *Rerum*

Novarum. The Vatican took a firm stand for the spiritualisation of the old order and condemned the subordination of life to economic ends, and the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world has since been emphasising that no Communist can remain a Catholic. A further pronouncement was made in September, 1937, condemning alike the National Socialism of Germany and the Communism of Russia, both of which offend by their claims to the monopoly of authority by the State.

Islam, like Eastern Orthodox Christianity, is a social or collectivist religion, in which truth is conceived as residing in the congregation: and *'ijma'a*, the *consensus* of the faithful, takes a place similar to that of *sobornost* in Orthodoxy. The concordant decisions of the general assemblies are regarded at least by the Sunnis, that is to say, by the bulk of the Mahommedans outside of Persia, as equal in authority with the Koran: though interpretation has in practice become ossified. There are some 18 millions of Mahommedans in the U.S.S.R., in very different stages of development, religious, social, and economic. Except among the Kirgiz, whose Mahommedanism is superficial, religion is intimately intertwined with social custom and the way of living, and it would be difficult to separate religious from social and customary life. The *Young Bokhariot* movement wanted a constitution based upon the Mahommedan *Shariat*, which might mean a theocracy or a democracy or a combination of both, but would certainly mean the observance of the juridical principles of the sacred law and the authority of the Cadi and the Mufti. The right to polygamy up to a maximum of four wives is a part of the sacred law. Other social practices, of purely customary origin, are nevertheless jealously cherished and associated with religious sanctions: for instance the veiling of women, and the payment of a price for the bride. Both of these had become essentials of social respectability: so much so that a woman for whom no price had been paid found herself regarded as no wife, and committed suicide in consequence. The veil is an effectual preventive of female education beyond the primary stage. Religious endowments, based upon land-owning, form a link between religion and the economic system. Arabic, as the language of the Koran, occupies a position similar to that of Latin in the Roman Catholic Church, and Hebrew among the Jews. There is a chief ecclesiastical directorate of the Muslim Faith in the U.S.S.R. having its headquarters at Ufa, whose pronouncements are in some degree recognised as binding upon the faithful. There are no priests in Islam, but there are men learned in the Koran and in the sacred law, who discharge some of the functions exercised in other religious systems by priests, perform marriages, interpret the law, occupy the judicial posts, and teach the Arabic Koran by rote, generally in the precincts of the mosques, to the children. The Arabic is not ordinarily understood by those to whom the Koran is thus communicated, and is very imperfectly understood by most of the

teachers. The learned live partly by the endowments, and all their influence is naturally employed to defend the existing economic order. It must nevertheless be noted that the interpreters of the sacred law at Bokhara gave a sentence declaring the duty of the rich to divide their lands with the poor when inequalities arise. This it seems was a local pronouncement, and not one of a generally authoritative character.

The Tsars maintained the local theocratic rulers in Central Asia, and the Mahommedan Courts, civil laws and customs, but refused recognition to local languages. The principles of the Soviet Government are to encourage the local languages, in which Arabic is, of course, not included, to instal native administrators when the personnel becomes available, to exercise control through the Communist Party, and to attack native customs inimical to the approved social policy, which includes the emancipation of women. This attack upon native custom, so closely intertwined with religious conceptions, together with the nationalisation of land, affecting the livelihood of the ministers of religion and the religious law, brings the Soviet Government into collision with Mahommedan sentiment. In the early years of the revolution, Soviet power was not firmly established in the Mahommedan areas, and the general relaxation of revolutionary principle in the epoch of the New Economic Policy acted as a buffer to the impact. But from the beginning of the second decade there was increasing insistence. Armed risings in Central Asia have been frequent, and the so-called brigandage of the Basmachi, who are Mahommedan irreconcileables, has been an almost chronic phenomenon. The murder of women who have made themselves prominent in the movement of emancipation is not infrequent. I know no better illustration of Russian methods of dealing with religious sentiment than Mrs. Anna Louise Strong's story of the theological students (*talib ilm*, a notoriously fanatical class) arriving at their University (which had been occupied for the purposes of a political conference) and being told by the clerk that no rooms were available for them. "They just stared and went away." It is something short of persecution, but there is a touch of slighting contempt in it.

The Mahommedan social and economic system in Central Asia was more firmly rooted than the corresponding system in Christian Russia. The landlords were smaller men who lived on the land and maintained a closer touch with their tenants and farm-hands. The tenants, with their share in the crop, and the farm-hands, paid in kind, were interested in the system. There was a free-masonry betwen all these and the representatives of Koranic learning, and religion was inseparably a part of social life. On rumour of active nationalisation, all combined to drive flocks and herds to safety, and the nomad part of the population was virtually secure against effective interference. Only on the irrigated lands, where cotton and rice grew, was the rural population intimately accessible to the demands of alien authority. In the towns the Bolsheviks seem to

have recognised the limits set by popular feeling to communist principle: for the bazaars are active, with little or no pretence of the public control of trade, and Asiatic merchants freely infringe the State's monopoly of import and export.

In the towns the jurisdiction of the Cadi has been ousted by salaried judges sitting alongside of non-professional assessors. It is believed that the latter are often influenced by the tradition of the Mahommedan law. Except among the Kirgiz, where polygamy has been made a punishable offence, the law against it is enforced by refusal to register a second marriage where a first is still in existence: and it is likely that the succession of the children of polygamous marriages is not in practice prevented. The veil and the bride-price are discouraged, but exist. It is likely that the mullahs continue to some extent to enjoy the proceeds of endowment lands, after the latter have been nominally merged in collective farms or in the more individualistic partnerships which are common in Kazakstan. Only a very active and ubiquitous administration could change these things or prevent the teaching of the Koran in the yard outside the mosque. It is reported that in Adjaristan, the portion of Georgia which adjoins the Black Sea at Batum, the mullahs deliberately fixed the hours of their Koran schools so as to clash with those of the Government schools: and made it necessary to instal religious sections in the curriculum of the latter, in which the mullahs were invited to give religious instruction. The Bolsheviks have retained some of the native Russian faculty for concession when resistance becomes unwise.

It is otherwise on the Volga, in Azarbaijan and in the Crimea, where Mahommedan custom had struck less tenacious roots or had already lost strength. In the Crimea the veil has disappeared, and the girls are attending the secular schools and joining the Communist League of Youth. At Bakshi Serai, formerly regarded as a hotbed of reaction, only three mosques remain, out of a former total of thirty-three. Azarbaijan was the first Mahommedan State to replace the Arabic alphabet with the Latin and to adopt legislation for the emancipation of women. Owing to the oil industry, it is permeated by cosmopolitan influences. In the Tartar Republic on the Volga, now prosperous and setting an example in agriculture, little resistance to anti-religious propaganda is encountered. Here too the Latin has replaced the Arabic alphabet. But, generally speaking, there is a kind of strength in mere backwardness, which has made Islam a more thorny plant to handle than Christianity has thus far shown itself to be. To a large extent the old social and religious leaders continue in control, under new titles, and occasionally we catch glimpses of them behaving very much in the old way.

In 1926 the Soviet Government so far recognised the religious authority of the Mahommedan ecclesiastical centre at Ufa, as to allow it to send a delegation to Mecca, for the general Islamic Conference convened by Ibn Sa'ud to make proposals for the future administration of the Holy

Places and for the conduct of the annual Pilgrimage, a matter of extraordinary interest to the whole Mahommedan world. Its attitude at the time contributed to the reinforcement of the position of the Sa'ud. It was the first Government to recognise the title of King of the Hijaz assumed by him, and the first to raise its Consular representative to the rank of Minister. The policy is in essentials the same as that which is exemplified in the proposal for an Oecumenical Council of the Orthodox Church, and in the abortive attempts at a concordat with the Vatican. But the Pilgrimage to the Holy Places of Arabia is rarely allowed to nationals of the Soviet Government: there is no ban upon it, but permission to leave the U.S.S.R. is, as in other cases, difficult to obtain.

There is no objection of principle to the election of a head to an autonomous Church. In 1933, with the acquiescence of the Soviet Government, a body of some eighty ecclesiastics and laymen, some of whom had returned from abroad for the purpose, elected a new Katholikos and a Holy Synod for the Gregorian Church of Armenia, at the ancient ecclesiastical centre of that country. But the policy is opportunist: there has been no election of a later date to the office of Katholikos now vacant; and no election to the Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church, vacated by the death of Tikhon in 1925, has taken place. Some of the functions of Patriarch are being discharged by the Metropolitan Sergius, who returned to the Orthodox, after an interval of allegiance to the Living, Church: and it is understood that he is attempting to arrange a concordat with the Soviet Government. The Russian Orthodox Churches abroad have detached themselves from the Mother Church in the U.S.S.R.

The partial return to a small-scale capitalism in the period of N.E.P. was favourable to the Orthodox Church: but the period of the first Five-Year-Plan renewed revolutionary excitement in all fields of Soviet life. Many of the priests supported the opposition to agricultural collectivisation. Kirshon's play *Bread* illustrates the close association of the clerical and monastic element with resistance to the policy adopted by Stalin. As a consequence, there was fresh, and less liberal, legislation on religious matters in 1929 in the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic—limited in geographical application, as will presently be explained. The most important change was the restriction of the right of propaganda to the anti-religious side of the controversy: and it is this change which, at the present day, arouses the most unfavourable criticism in Britain and the United States of America.

A very carefully studied statement of the facts was made by the Archbishop of Canterbury in a speech in the House of Lords on April 2nd, 1930.

In the first place, it is to be noted that the laws regarding religion are *not federal* laws, but republican laws. So far as I have been able to ascertain, nothing corresponding to the Law of 1929, which withdraws

from the Church in the R.S.F.S.R. (by far the largest republic of the Union) the right of religious propaganda, has been applied to the remaining Constituent Republics, including those in Mahommedan Asia: so the right of missionary enterprise is still in existence in Ukrain, White Russia, and the Republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

But in the R.S.F.S.R.—that is to say, in by far the greater part of the Union, including some Mahommedan areas, such as Bashkiria, Crimea and the Tartar republic—the legal status of religion is laid down in the Law of 1929, and is now as follows. Registered congregations of adult citizens may use the churches and the articles required at their religious services: which include stores of candles, wine, oil, coal and money necessary for the religious ceremonies: and may make collections and receive voluntary donations, but only from registered members, and only for purposes connected with the maintenance of their Church, property and service. They must accept liability for maintenance and insurance and for the payment of local taxes. Local taxes—rates, as we should say—are leviable on the Churches, but not federal or republican taxes. They cannot make compulsory levies, establish central funds, or own property. All such central funds and property, as existed before, have been confiscated. In the second place, they must not propagate religious doctrine outside the limits of the registered congregation, and their priests must limit their activity to the area of residence of their own congregations. We shall see below that this prohibition is not always observed. In the third place, the law prohibits religious instruction in any State, public or private educational institution: it provides that such instruction may only be communicated to adult citizens, and only at special courses of religious instruction given by Soviet citizens, and only by special permission obtained in each case from the authorities. This means that there can be nothing corresponding to Sunday Schools. Only in the family can the young receive religious instruction. Another provision directed against the organisation of the Churches is that communities and groups must obtain permission before holding general meetings—that is to say, presumably, of members of more than one registered congregation: and district and national conferences, if formed, are not juridical persons and cannot own property or enter into legal agreements. The Churches are also debarred from welfare work for their congregations.

Summarised in a sentence, the position is: freedom of conscience for the adult individual, together with the right to impart religion personally to his own offspring: but, otherwise, no pecuniary or other means of making an appeal to the public or of influencing the younger generation: and no ecclesiastical organisation, beyond the individual congregation, except for purely consultative purposes and by the sanction of the temporal authority. The organisations of the Churches have, however, not been broken up: and there have been numerous instances since the

attack by Germany in June, 1941, of the continuing activity of these organisations: and freedom of belief and worship and of family instruction survives. The Government is unfriendly, but, if persecution means the punishment of persons on charges of believing, or of holding or attending religious services, there has been no persecution.

Propaganda varying in intensity from time to time has been conducted against religion by the Union of the Godless, with the co-operation of the Party and of the Communist League of Youth. So far as is known, the funds for it have been derived from the subscriptions paid by members of the Union of the Godless and from the sale of its publications, and not from the Government. In addition to the literature, the Godless Museums, with their exhibits illustrating the part played by the clergy in the old régime, and the share of the national resources enjoyed by them, have been used to influence opinion against religion: and atheism has been taught in all the schools.

For some years past the office of President of the Union of the Godless has been filled, along with other posts, by Emilian Yaroslavsky. He is one of the old Social Democrats anterior to the division between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, who was in exile at Yakutsk at the time of the March Revolution. He has done much journalistic and administrative work, was secretary to the Central Control Commission in 1923 and a member of the Commission of Party Control in 1934. He was employed to re-write the history of the Party—an important instrument for the formation of correct ideology—after Zinoviev's draft had been rejected, in connection with the famous opposition of 1924–27. But he, too, failed to give satisfaction, and his fourth volume was condemned as an abetment of Trotskyism. He has never been in serious trouble, but is not in the first rank of revolutionary leadership. On his sixtieth birthday in February, 1938, he received the honour of the Order of Lenin for his services, and the congratulations of the Government. I have entered into these details because they seem to me to be relevant to the attitude of the Soviet Government towards anti-religious propaganda. It is not treated as a matter of the first importance: some inclination to blow alternately hot and cold upon it is noticeable: and it is significant that the Party Daily, which makes a great feature of every anniversary and emphasises the Party lessons to be drawn from it, gave a very cool summary of the work of Yaroslavsky, and said nothing at all in its birthday issue about the propaganda for which he is responsible. I have myself observed a tendency to convert the Anti-God Museum in the Cathedral of St. Isaac at Leningrad into an *anti-clerical* Museum. The Commissariat of Education has closed the anti-religious faculties at the Universities. A functionary of the Godless Union informed me in June, 1937, that there was a possibility of its being closed: not because of failure, but because its work had ceased to be necessary. The number of its subscribers has fallen off greatly. Its literature is not characterised

by any profound examination of the questions involved, and on some matters, in particular those connected with Islam and with Russian dissent, it has appeared to me to be poorly informed. Trotsky, writing in 1936, described the present attitude of the Soviet Government to religion as one of "ironical neutrality": and he suspected that this is a *preliminary step towards making* use of the Churches as a support for the existing régime. Among the straws which show how the wind is blowing, the vigorous propaganda of 1930 against the observance of Christmas was replaced in 1937 by the advertisement of Christmas trees and Christmas decorations: and *Pravda* published a picture showing the entertainment by young Pioneers of Spanish refugee children round a Christmas tree. On the other hand, the Godless Union, like most other institutions, underwent a drastic purge in 1937–38, and the Communist Party has itself taken up the propagandist cause by instituting short courses for anti-religious training. The Metropolitan of the Living Church, Platonov, has announced his conversion to atheism and has begun to deliver lectures in that sense.

A picture of the position of religion in Soviet Russia was given in April, 1937, by Yaroslavsky, in a report to a meeting of propagandists. He estimates that a third of the adult population in the towns and two-thirds in the villages are still believers. It is untrue that there are no believers except among the old. Among believers there are many persons who are loyal to the Soviet Government. But many decline to work on Sundays and on Holy Days: and many workers and collective farmers serve as members of the Church Soviets. In 1897 there were 295,000 persons employed in the offices of religion, of whom 7,638 were priests. In 1926 only 79,000 were employed in the offices of religion, of whom only 948 were priests. According to the latest figures there are 30,000 registered religious congregations, with 8,338 churches, synagogues and mosques. The buildings are said to have considerable incomes and good choirs, and not badly decorated. Something like half a milliard of roubles is spent annually on places of worship. But the newly created industrial towns, such as Magnitogorsk, Karaganda, and Stalinsk, have no places of worship. There are thirty-seven surviving monasteries.

Many priests, says Yaroslavsky, have learned to assume the mask of loyalty, and some have penetrated into official organisations and collected money for the repair of their churches. It is a common thing for priests to travel with the sacred vessels and vestments and with sacramental wine, and to perform arrears of baptisms, marriages, and funerals, in return for payment, in the places which they visit. It is evident that there are some registered congregations which lack buildings for worship.

There was a good deal of activity among ecclesiastics between the promulgation of the Constitution of 1936 and the general election for the Supreme Soviet, and the claim was made that a registered religious association was empowered by law to nominate candidates for election.

The Government disallowed the claim, and some of those who used their pulpits to press it were prosecuted and punished. Ecclesiastics of all ranks came in for a share of the repressive measures of 1937 on a variety of charges involving disloyalty to the régime.

On the other hand, the editor of a local newspaper was prosecuted and punished in 1937 for advocating the wholesale closure of churches. *Pravda* of May 7th, 1937, while denouncing the notion that there remains no need of anti-religious propaganda and blaming the Union of the Godless and the Communist League of Youth for negligence in this respect, condemns the closure of houses of prayer without the consent of the citizens, and the dismissal of persons from their work for being believers. A recent Census form contained a question whether the householder is a believer or not: with an assurance that his answer will be kept secret: but a revised form omitted the question. The teaching of atheism in the schools continues universal: and believers continue to be debarred from membership of the Party. But the dismissal of school teachers and of other functionaries for the exercise of religion is prohibited by law: and the constitution of 1936 has abolished the disfranchisement of the priest and of other office-holders of religion. It is believed that—outside of the Islamic constituent republics—nothing like a seminary for the training of religious teachers now exists. One of the village investigators, to whom I have made frequent reference elsewhere, tells us that the priest is no longer sent by the ecclesiastical administration, to be accepted willy nilly, but is engaged by the village meeting, which often drives a very hard bargain. Church Soviets, for the management of Church affairs, are general in rural areas. Mr. Hindus, on the other hand, writing of White Russia in 1931, says that the dignitaries of the Church were drafting into the priesthood anyone whom they could find. How the new comers receive their training I do not know: but the method is presumably private instruction.

Yaroslavsky has restated the anti-religious policy by quoting Lenin's maxims emphasising the toleration of all religions and the Party's duty to practise propaganda against them. He calls upon propagandists "to avoid any unnecessary roughness, to listen closely to the mass: not to repulse believers, but help them to free themselves from the influence of religion". I have myself attended religious services including a baptism by immersion. It is untrue that they are restricted in any way.

There is a word to be added here regarding the Jews. Freed by the revolution from all their civil disabilities, they have fallen into a new religious disability along with the followers of the other cults. Up to 1929 they retained their Rabbinical Seminary at Vitebsk for the training of Rabbis. In that year this Seminary was closed. Hebrew, which is to them what Arabic is to the Mahommedans, because it is the language of the Bible and the Talmud, but not the vernacular in use in their homes, was discouraged as being a vehicle for the teaching of religion. But the

appearance of a secular literature in Hebrew has destroyed the basis of this unfavourable discrimination, and the works of Mayakovsky and of Pushkin have been translated into Hebrew. Zionism is frowned upon for political reasons. There is a particularly prosperous Synagogue at Moscow, with paid seats, and an income of eight hundred thousand roubles. There is no anti-Semitism in the Soviet Government, but it occasionally shows itself in the people.

Regarding Buddhism, or that mixture of Buddhism with Shamanism and Animism, which is to be found among Mongolian citizens of the U.S.S.R., very little information has been obtainable by me. The policy is the same, but enforcement presents difficulties even greater than in the case of Islam. We see the *Kem* or Medicine-man, of the Oirat country, in trouble with the Soviet authorities, partly because he is a *Kem* and partly because he is a *kulak*: and we see vigorous and effective efforts being made through the Institute of the Northern Peoples at Leningrad, to equip the most promising members of the nomad tribes with the literacy, the Communism, and the irreligion, which are the Bolshevik equivalents of missionary training. A strong resemblance between the officer corps of the Salvation Army and the instructors at institutions of this type is the most vivid impression left upon my mind; so that I ask myself, when departing from them, what is the effective difference between atheism and theism: and do the gods of one revelation become the devils of the next, as they seem to have done in the passage of the Aryan invaders out of Persia into India, or is the essential feature of all Religion this, that it turns the eyes of man to something greater than his individual self?

Most of the churches in the cities are closed, or turned into museums or clubs, or devoted to other secular purposes. This has sometimes been done forcibly, by the misdirected zeal of propagandists. Stalin's speech on "Giddiness from Success" in March, 1930, called a halt to such proceedings. Some churches, like the Temple of the Saviour at Moscow, which commemorated the victory over Napoleon, have been deliberately demolished to make room for secular improvements. In 1930 the famous Chapel of the Iberian Virgin was destroyed because it obstructed the entrance to the Red Square at Moscow. But by far the greatest number of the abandoned churches have been given up because the congregations could not, or did not desire to, provide the money for their maintenance and insurance, and because there has been a tendency to concentrate resources upon the smaller number required by those who desire to attend Christian worship. Those which remain are crowded at the great festivals. It is safe to say that no one is kept away from church by the lack of liberty to attend the service: and that no Roman Catholic in any of the greater cities who desires to attend Mass has failed to find the priest and the Altar for his purpose. This statement is not applicable to new industrial towns. So far as I am aware no new churches have been built.

In the rural areas the churches generally survive. Sunday and the

religious festivals are kept, baptism, marriages, funerals are often performed by the priest: but the compulsion now is the compulsion of custom, and the worshippers are fewer than they were, and include a smaller number of the young. As a child, evidently familiar with the language of the factory, said to me in an Ukrainian village: "The Church is on half-time." Both a Buddhist temple and a Mahommedan mosque exist at Leningrad, and are well cared for. As to the monasteries, the confiscation of the property by which the monks and nuns lived has killed most of them without reprieve, and there was no occasion for a forcible dispersion. Mr. Littlepage had many priests and mullahs working under him at the gold mines and says they worked well.

I approach with diffidence the question—which naturally presents itself in different aspects to those who do and those who do not believe—whether a revival of religion in the U.S.S.R. is to be anticipated. Actual persecution would revive it, but persecution is not the Bolshevik method, however much zealots may misunderstand and misapply policy. The official Orthodox Church appears to have been definitively discredited: but this is not to say that religion in some other form will not recover influence. The movement represented by Mm. Berdyaev and Bulgakov is a powerful bid for such a recovery. But the possibilities are wider than this. What do we mean by religion? It has taken a thousand forms. There have been religions, like Buddhism in its pure form, without a God. Such may be found in India to-day. Others there have been, like Buddhism again, having the ideal of escape from existence, whereas Christianity condemns despair, and aspires to fuller life. Some, like early Judaism, and its successor in the Sadducee form, have been without a belief in the life of the individual after death, or have hoped for absorption in a greater whole. Some, like Islam, have been without priests and almost without dogma. Some, like Christianity in its Roman form, have lodged all authority in a Church and its visible earthly Head: others, like Christianity in another form, have referred all revelation to a Book: others, like Hinduism, have neither Head nor Book, but only a Tradition and books. Some, like Hinduism, are indistinguishable from a social system: to others, like Buddhism again, the social system is irrelevant. The essential feature seems to be an ideal, expressed in myth or ritual or prayer or mystical communion or ascetic exercise, of an entity or an aim *above and beyond visible humanity, but accessible to it.*

Every religion leaves the ground of ascertained knowledge to imagine this ideal. The Communist holds that there is no knowledge except that which is verifiable by experiment or by experience: but he, too, leaves the ground of ascertained knowledge, when he makes his flight to the hypotheses of the classless society and the redeeming mission of the socialist fatherland. "The Thing came first, and the Thought came after," and yet there was an ideal, burning in the hearts of those first revolutionaries, and, paradoxically, the Thought did come first, however

passionately they might repudiate the sequence. The early Christians, observes Mr. Julius Hecker—but we are not sure that he himself satisfies the canons of the stricter dialectical materialism—were driven by an inner urge which they called God within us: or the witness of the Holy Spirit: and something of the same order is to be observed in the Bolsheviks. He might have added that Orthodoxy, perhaps in consequence of the influence of the Platonic Idea upon the Eastern Fathers, sees in the visible world a reflection or a symbol of a spiritual entity elsewhere: a spiritual entity which it is the task of the Church to reflect with an ever closer approach to perfection: and that the search for a meaning in history, a straining for a vision of the picture to be realised, which is a noticeable characteristic of Russian thought, has its origin here. The pre-existent idea, to which the reality must be brought to conform, is present to the Bolsheviks in their conceptions of a classless society, and of the oecumenical mission of Russia.

Nicolas Berdyaev, in *The Russian Revolution*, analyses the psychological tendencies in Russian Communism, and traces some of them to Christian Orthodoxy. He does more than this, as everyone must do who would draw the picture faithfully. He goes back to the origins: to the conception of a Messianic mission for Orthodox Russia, growing up perhaps in the struggle of Christian against Mongol, and taking shape in the fifteenth-century notion of Moscow as the Third Rome, destined to give to the world what the first and second Rome and Byzantium had failed to give. The Schism, the *Raskol*, of the seventeenth century was the protest against a betrayal of this Messianic idea, when the Church surrendered to the Greeks over the question of ritual; to the Greeks who were envisaged as having themselves betrayed the Church when they yielded to Western error to buy succour for Byzantium against the Turk. There was a second betrayal when the Orthodox State, along with the Church which had become its servant, failed either to advance alongside of the West or to fulfil the Slavophil ideal. Then came the *second Raskol*, the nineteenth-century Schism of the intellectuals who found themselves as much divorced from contemporary life, as conscious of a gulf between themselves and both rulers and people, as had been the dissenters of the seventeenth century. The intelligentsia, whether Westernisers or Slavophils, whether revolutionaries or no, were exiles in their own land, looking either to an ideal past or to an ideal future. The influences of both met and intertwined in the development of the Populist revolutionaries: and the sons of priestly families, with vivid memories of early religious training, played a large part in it. Berdyaev finds in them the sense of sin, the tender conscience, the profound compassion for human suffering, the passion for social justice, the capacity for self-sacrifice, the ascetic contempt of worldly goods, the religious questioning of the value and justification of culture in a world of sin and suffering, the maximalism demanding from man effort and sacrifice without compromise, and the

expectation of an apocalyptic ending in revolution or a Last Judgment; which the early days spent in intimate familiarity with the teaching of Orthodox Christianity might be expected to inspire. In their irreligion—for the revolutionary intelligentsia of the *nineteenth century were* irreligious, though the Slavophils were champions of the Faith—he sees a mere inversion of religious motives and of religious psychology into a non-religious or anti-religious conviction: so that the spiritual energy of Religion flows into social channels. In the anarchist Michael Bakunin he sees the belief in a Russian and Slavonic mission for bringing about a cataclysm of destruction, in which the old sinful world shall perish and a new one—a kingdom of God upon earth—arise upon its ashes.

Marxism introduced certain other elements into Russian Socialism, the idea of class war and the psychology of a conquering class which had been oppressed and felt the resentment of oppression: but also the conception that man is capable of leaping out of the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom: and, in this last, Berdyaev finds an echo of the idea of spiritual liberty which he regards as specifically Christian. For him the anti-religious psychology of Communism is a religious psychology *turned inside out*: and he cites, for a parallel, Dostoievsky's story of the peasant who set up the Blessed Sacrament and shot at it.

The echoes of religious thought in the brain of the anti-religious Communist ring yet further, if more faintly, in that strange passion for confession and self-humiliation which the trials of the Communists fallen into disfavour have revealed to a puzzled world. At the very root of the Russian conception of religion lies the idea of a brotherhood of the faithful, in whose mutual love resides the revelation. For the Roman Catholic, nurtured in an ecclesiastical system which has borrowed the autocracy of the Roman Empire, the Holy Father is the ultimate authority, and under him the priesthood is the interpreter. For the Russian Orthodox, not withstanding the solitary supremacy of the Emperor both in Church and State, truth was republican, and was to be sought in the communion of the Orthodox brethren—laity as well as clergy: for it was not only upon the Apostles, but upon the disciples too that the Holy Ghost descended at Pentecost. This thought disclosed itself in the movement of the *Raskol* in the seventeenth century, but was always present: though it continued shapeless and undefined, till form and definition were given to it by a great Slavophil, Alexander Khomiakov, in the nineteenth century. It is the doctrine of *sobornost*, congregationalism, as I venture to translate it. What excommunication is to the pious Catholic, that, to the Orthodox, is separation from the congregation of the brethren, in which truth and love alike reside. He must seek restoration by the abjuration of all errors and the confession of all sins. *Outside of the congregation he cannot be right.*

The religious conception of the presence of truth in the congregation

passed to the Communists. Trotsky—perhaps with his tongue in his cheek—once set them discussing whether the Party was infallible, when it made a pronouncement after full consideration: and they discussed it gravely and in good faith. I do not mean that any formal doctrine ever took shape: the idea was there, like the echo of an old tune heard in early childhood. To differ from the Party, to be outside the communion, is, by definition, to be wrong and to be excommunicate. Only self-abasement and confession of sins can save the wanderer from that outer darkness.

The revolutionaries of the nineteenth century proclaimed their deeds with pride and defiance. They were conscious that the congregation of the faithful was with them. But the majority now is on the side of the Government: and the offender, alone in an agony of isolation from the brethren, confesses all, and more than all, in the humiliation of his soul.

There are others, of course, who obstinately refuse to confess; and these are not brought to public trial, because their appearance will not make for edification. It is not every man in whose brain the old tune rings so compellingly. But it is in the echo of that old tune that we must seek the explanation of the passion for confession, as of much else that is characteristic of the Communist psychology.

If Communist psychology has in it much that is Christian and Orthodox in its origin, Orthodox Christianity, on its part, prepared the way for some of the conceptions of Communism: and nowhere more clearly than in its vision of a Kingdom of God *upon earth*, of a transfigured universe made perfect for the Second Coming. The period of wars and revolution which precedes it is the period of apocalyptic preparation.

The survival of religious habits in thoughts and action does not mean that the Bolsheviks are likely to become Christian: but merely shows what persistent "residues" these habits are. On the other hand, the notion that there is a pattern somewhere stored up, to which it is desirable to make the life of man conform (such, for instance as the pattern of the classless society), carries with it a conception of teleology, which is, in essence, religious: and is hardly reconcileable with the materialistic doctrine that the deed comes first and the thought comes after. That the Bolsheviks have an ideal is not to be denied, and latterly they have used language which at least admits the word to their vocabulary.

Communism has been the inheritor of much. It has also added much of its own. Orthodoxy trained the heart, but not the will. The sense which Communism has brought to its adepts, that man has the power to make his own history, has steeled the will. The philosophers are able to demonstrate to us that materialism is incompatible with free will. On this basis, the Communists should be lacking in will-power: but I cannot discover any such deficiency. On the contrary, an immensely optimistic energy is characteristic of them. They themselves would probably tell

us that it is the dialectical element in their materialism which makes the difference, and that the philosophers are thinking of a mechanistic materialism.

It is vain to discuss whether Communism is itself a religion. What is more important is to notice that Communism possesses certain of the qualities which have caused religions to spread. Chief among these is an aim (which in the case of Communism is the service of Man) inspiring devotion and creating unity, and linking together the generations in a communion—we must not say of Saints.

Finally, to descend to a different plane of thought, there are the possibilities of ecclesiastical politics from which the solid benefits of toleration may be extracted. Before the intensification of revolutionary action in 1929, the Soviet Government showed what these possibilities were. The recent concession to the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R., which is to have its own Roman Catholic chaplains, and the placing of the French Catholic Church at Moscow at the disposal of the R.C. community there, are happy omens. The clergy ceased, under the Constitution of 1936, to be disfranchised. A victory over Germany, achieved by the help of the Western Powers, will give to the U.S.S.R. a new sense of security, which will make precautions against internal opposition less urgent, and diminish the force of anti-clerical feeling. In the meanwhile it appears that new sects of an evangelical type have emerged during the last decade in Central Russia. Religion—the passionate yearning of Man for something greater than his present solitary self—will yet find many and various expressions; not all of them other-worldly.

CHAPTER XIX

THE NATIONALITIES

"The bureaucracy is constructing for the backward nationalities a bridge to the elementary benefits of bourgeois, and to some extent of pre-bourgeois, civilisation. For many regions and nationalities the régime is discharging the historic task which Peter the Great and his associates performed for old Muscovy, but on a vaster scale and at a quicker pace."—TROTSKY, *The Revolution Betrayed*, 1936.

"The hunger for knowledge displayed by the most primitive peoples in the Union."—KURT LONDON, *The Seven Soviet Arts*.

HANS KOHN, in *Nationalism in the Soviet Union*, has aptly emphasised the parallel between Religion and Nationality. Lonely man, afraid of the unknown, desiring permanence, seeking companionship, finds comfort in both. Nationality provides companionship and gives to man an extension and multiplication of his personality. The desire for continued life finds a collective substitute. The passion with which both Religion

and Nationality are defended against rivals illustrates the devotion of man to something representing a larger self. In one of his early pamphlets on Nationality, Stalin detects the essential likeness, and asserts the natural right of man to both. However much the idea of tolerance may have been violated in the pressure of the daily struggle, it represents at bottom the Bolshevik attitude to both religion and nationality. Both are substitutes for something which is regarded as better and greater. For Religion there is to be no encouragement, but a cold toleration. For Nationality there is to be something warmer than toleration, and, as I shall endeavour to show, a Soviet patriotism has been brought into vogue by the dangers of external attack, while the corporate sentiment of the minor nationalities is nursed by appeals to sectional pride.

Religion and national sentiment sometimes meet inseparably in the way of life of a people. In the mass of the Jews the two appear to be identified. The case of Islam is similar, though more obviously modified by the existence of underlying national distinctions anterior to conversion. In Eastern Europe the identity extends beyond these two examples. On the doubtful racial borderland between Poland and Russia, a Pole is a Pole because he is Catholic, a Russian is Russian because he is Orthodox. Among the Balkan peoples it was the national Church that kept the nationality alive. The spirit of nationality is in essence the love of a greater self. But there are other and rival devotions, and other and rival greater selves, contending with the national devotion and the national self. Setting on one side for the moment the religious devotion and the religious self, we find, in a very cursory examination of recent European and American history, that Socialism has created a loyalty to class which crosses the boundaries between nations, and sometimes comes into conflict with the spirit of nationality. I need not dwell upon this new rivalry. It is embodied in the successive Internationals, illustrated in the fraternal relations between International Labour, and recorded in much revolutionary history. I lay stress upon it here because the conflict between the devotion to class and the devotion to nationality explains much that is otherwise unintelligible in the course of Russian events. It takes two forms, and appears equally under the aspects of opposition between the national and the international, and of opposition between the minor nationality or minority and the federal state.

Let us begin by adverting to a concrete case. When Poland was still a part of the Russian empire, should Polish Socialists exercise a right of national self-determination to separate from Russia, or ally themselves with their Russian class-brethren? Marx and Engels favoured separation, because they wished to weaken the power of Imperial Russia, but they had a poor opinion of the right of self-determination in general, because they did not believe that the working class would have the opportunity of exercising it. They therefore opposed it as a principle while admitting it as a particular expedient. The political aim of destroying Tsarism

ceased to be operative as the Russian Empire lost its strength: and with it there disappeared the reasons which had formerly justified for Polish Socialists the cry of freedom for Poland. Rosa Luxembourg, the Polish Socialist, was therefore among the strongest opponents of national self-determination.

The general Marxian view which passed on to Russian Socialists was the internationalist standpoint, which regards national self-determination with suspicion. The reason why we hear so much in Russian controversies of "*bourgeois* nationalism", as a mark of the counter-revolutionary, is that there is a conviction that not the workers, but the middle class, aspire to national self-determination, in the sense of political separation. Cultural autonomy, on the other hand, which means the use of one's own language in schools and courts and public affairs, along with the encouragement of national literature, drama and art, is the legitimate ambition, and harmonises completely with the international ideal.

Lenin always insisted upon the right of self-determination, extending to political separation, because he saw that the concession of this right to the hitherto oppressed nationalities, such as Ukrain, would win their support for the revolution. But, along with the emphasis on this right, he called upon the workers of all nationalities to organise themselves into unitary groups crossing the boundaries of nationality, as members of the "Party" and members of the Trade Unions. It is here that we hit upon the explanation of the seeming contradiction in Soviet institutions, which with one voice assert this right of self-determination and separation, and with another condemn the attempt to realise such self-determination as *bourgeois* and counter-revolutionary. The position becomes clearer to us if we say that self-determination is a right: but it is the duty of the Party and the Trade Unions to prevent the exercise of it, except so far as cultural autonomy is concerned. The treatment of nationality is parallel to that of religion. In both cases there is the recognition of a right, together with propaganda against its assertion. This is far from being mere hypocrisy: though it is a kind of argument entirely unfamiliar to most of us.

The Russian Empire grew outwards from a Great-Russian nucleus till more than half of its subjects and nearly half of its armies were non-Great-Russian. After the loss of Russian Poland, Finland, the Baltic Provinces and Bessarabia, the U.S.S.R. contained, in 1926, 182 ethnic groups speaking 149 languages. If we ignore the smallest groups, thirty principal nationalities made up nearly 98% of the population. Half of the causes of the revolution had been found in the policy of the Tsars towards their non-Great-Russian subjects. That policy was not a mere caprice of the Autocracy. It had the warm support of the most influential groups, military, official, social and industrial, and of the Great-Russian quasi-garrisons of officials and skilled workers cantoned in the cities of the subject peoples. It was a policy of Russification, religious, cultural

and linguistic, and, in great measure, of Russia for the Great-Russian. "The name Russian means oppressor to the Bashkir," said Lenin, when addressing the Communist Party in March, 1919.

The sentiment of Great-Russian national chauvinism, which had ranged itself behind the Emperors Alexander III and Nicolas II in support of the policy of Russification, survived the Revolution. The Revolutionary leaders found the human material, which was to serve the purposes of socialist uplift in the minor nationalities, infected with an overbearing nationalism of its own, and likely therefore to provoke a responsive growth of local separatism in them. The unevenness of material and cultural development, which the Imperial régime had left behind it, made the search for civilising agencies in local sources difficult and slow. The leaders themselves, in the days before they came to power, had been concerned, not with the urgent day-by-day realities of administering a hungry and anarchical people, but with higher and remoter problems such as that of replacing nationalism by internationalism, and with securing allies for the revolutionary task by the promise of freedom extending as far as the right of secession. These things played an important part in the early period, when cessions of territory and authority had less significance than the preservation of existence and the winning of friends by the reversal of unpopular policies. But a scheme of permanent relations between majority and minorities, in a State made strong for defence against external enemies, was yet to seek: and it was mainly from a man who had personal experience of a *macédoine* of religions and nationalities that the elements of such a scheme were derived.

The man was Stalin, the son of a Georgian father by an Ossetian mother, who had spent his boyhood in the streets of Tiflis, had been educated in its theological seminary, had done his early revolutionary work there and in Batum and Baku, and had intimate knowledge of the prison in the last named place, where he once underwent the punishment of running the gauntlet among the prisoners. The *macédoine* was the Caucasus, out-balkaning the Balkans by its variety of faiths and races. In the post-revolutionary distribution of territories, for which Stalin himself was mainly responsible, the country north of the great range of mountains contains one Mahommedan autonomous republic, Daghestan, six autonomous regions and one autonomous district (Circassian). In the mountains, and to the south of them, are three main republics, which, by the constitution of 1936, are elevated to the constituent status. These are Christian Georgia, Christian Armenia and Mahommedan Azarbaijan. But in Christian Georgia, Adzharians, who speak the Georgian language, have a Turkish culture and an Islamic confession. Adzhar, and Abkazia, are autonomous Soviet Socialist republics included within the Georgian constituent republic. The Nakhichewan Autonomous Soviet Socialist republic is included in the Azarbaijan constituent republic, and so is the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous province. The Armenian constituent

republic contains Kurd national villages with their national Soviets. The oil city of Baku, also within the republic of Azerbaijan, is a kaleidoscope of mixed proletariats. But this is not the whole of the picture. There are (it is perhaps too early to say that there are no longer) deadly quarrels between Georgians and Armenians, between Ossetians, Adzharis and Abkazians, against Armenians, between Tartars on the one hand and Russians and Armenians on the other: not to mention some scores of different languages, and the jarring remnants left by the successive dominations of Persian, Turk and Russian. It is not surprising that Stalin viewed without illusions the prospect of national cultural autonomy for Chechens and Ingushes and other similar Caucasian tribes, or that he had a realistic outlook upon the problem of autonomy for Georgia. He was a member of a minority within a minority, and he knew what those who claim liberty for themselves may do to others who make a similar claim.

In 1913 he made a Marxian study of the question of nationalities. In this he traces the idea of nationality to a *bourgeois* source, but claims that it must be respected as long as it lasts. He rejects the plan of registering nominal lists of all who claim to be members of a particular nationality wherever resident, and of assigning to each of the bodies, thus voluntarily constituted, a protective institution which will look after their religious, cultural and educational needs. The Jews, the one nationality which lacked altogether at that time a territorial basis, he expects to become assimilated to the local populations. He does not propose to recognise at all—this is an important negative—a nationality which has no territory. The general question is to be dealt with by complete equality of personal rights for all, including freedom of conscience, and freedom of movement (which the later Romanov Emperors denied to the Jews): along with cultural autonomy for definite territorial units. He strongly opposes the national organisation either of the Party or of the Trade Unions, which must continue on an international basis, on pain of dissolution into separate units. He condemns even cultural autonomy for backward peoples such as some of those of the Caucasus, on the ground that its tendency will be to perpetuate worthless primitive cultures. In general, he insists upon the adjustment of a nationalities policy to the changing needs of the times: upon an opportunist rather than a dogmatic solution of particular problems.

Stalin, as I read his brochure of 1913, is for tolerance, but not for the perpetuation of backward cultures. He classes the idea of nationality along with religion as something to which all peoples have a right. But—and this is a reservation of great significance, in view of the later development of the nationalities policy—the Social Democracy, as it was termed at that time, in other words the Party, must agitate against bad institutions, and resist whatever is contrary to the interests of the proletariat. As to the right of secession, that must depend upon the needs of the time.

There is no express reference to federation, but the idea of federation was implicit in the contention that the Party and the Trade Unions must remain on an international basis instead of being split up among the nationalities.

The actual policy of the Soviet State to-day, as carried out in practice, whatever the difference of form, corresponds very closely with the outline sketched by the opportunist stateman in 1913: but it has been filled in by the provision of opportunities for the realisation of the promised equality.

The Conference of the Party which met in August, 1913, decided that the nationalities should have the right of self-determination, even extending to secession. It is obvious that the authors did not advert, when they framed this resolution, to the possibility of some minor nationality, occupying territory surrounded by Russian peoples, acting upon the theoretical right. They were not yet responsible for the fuel and food of a whole people, isolated from the productive south, and cannot yet have imagined what such a responsibility would mean. If they did advert to it, they must have contemplated that all the influence of the Party would be thrown against ruinous secessions. The resolution provided for territorial autonomy, with the right to use the local language, and the removal of the Russian yoke in all forms. In effect the decision was one for the abolition of all the much resented measures of "Russification", and, as such, contributed greatly to the victory of the Revolution.

When the Revolution of November came, Stalin was the natural choice for the tasks of the Commissariat of Nationalities. The declaration of November 15th, 1917, announced the equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia, and their right to self-determination, extending to secession and the formation of independent States: the abolition of all national and religious distinctions and restrictions, and the free development of national minorities and ethnographical groups inhabiting the territory of Russia. But the revolution had given to the victorious party, instantly expectant of the accession of new peoples to the revolutionary cause, a new outlook upon the question of nationalities. It was necessary to provide a form of union for the expected allies of the Soviets from outside of Russia. Equality and sovereignty, which meant no more than confederation, even if they meant so much, must be replaced by a more definite bond. In January, 1918, it was announced that the Soviet Russian Republic was constituted on the basis of a free union of free nations, as a federation of Soviet National Republics: and Stalin wrote a new essay, justifying the conception of Federation by the international character of the Revolution. In the light of later events, this article has the special interest of exhibiting Stalin as hopeful of the impending revolution in Germany, Austro-Hungary, Persia and India, as well as in China. The argument is that the nationalities question has now ceased to be one of particular struggles against national oppression, and has become a general one of the liberation of nations, colonies, and semi-colonies

(including such countries as China) from the greed of imperialism: and that the November Revolution has opened the way to that liberation.

The bitter struggle which preceded, and followed, the signature of the ruinous treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany revealed the depths of the national Russian sentiment which survived in Marxian minds: and the losses of territory, permanent and temporary, which took place between 1918 and 1920, by depriving Great-Russia of most of her food and fuel, read a new lesson to the revolutionary leaders. It was demonstrated that Ukrain and the territories north and south of the Caucasus, if not others of the border countries, were indispensable to the very existence of the Russian State. It was easy to argue further that Great-Russia was equally necessary to these countries, in order to protect them against exploitation by an imperialism which had shown itself greedy for their resources. Stalin wrote a third essay in 1920 in which he plainly said that so-called independence for the smaller nationalities of old Russia was an illusion. They have, he wrote, the inalienable right of separation: but—the interests of the masses declare to us that the demand is counter-revolutionary. The course marked out for the nationalities is provincial autonomy: but it is a provincial autonomy allowing of wide variations of form and scope. Even mere treaty relations, he says, such as those existing at that time with Azarbaijan, the principal source of oil, were admissible. A point upon which he insists is that respect must be shown for religion as well as for national feeling, and he vigorously condemns what he calls the shock-tactics of the Great-Russian Chauvinists in endeavouring to force conformity upon the outlying peoples. Mutual confidence must be created by destroying the remains of feudalism and privilege: by conferring those economic benefits which the policy of the Tsarist Government had limited to the Great-Russian centre; by employing local men for local duties; and by giving scope for national education and for the national theatre. Autonomy, he said, is not a mere temporary evil to be eliminated as soon as possible. On the other hand, the whole tenor of his article is to show, what the actions of the Soviet Government have always made clear, that the interests of the revolution and of Socialism, assumed to be identical with those of the masses, come first, and that no breakaway will be tolerated.

A serious difference divided Lenin and Stalin on the question of autonomy in Georgia. Georgia, in Trotsky's phrase, was the heart of the Menshevik Gironde. Fear of the near neighbours, the Turk, produced opposition to the Bolshevik policy of defeatism. In the fourth Duma, and in the period following upon the March Revolution, Georgia provided Menshevik Social Democracy with some of its best leaders. It was a Georgian who read in the Duma the Zimmerwald manifesto against war. Another Georgian, Tsereteli, was a member of the Coalition Ministry with the Kadets in 1917. He might have done much, if moderation had not been a disqualification in a revolutionary epoch. After November

the Georgian leaders resisted Bolshevik domination and formed a separate government which lasted until February, 1921. This Menshevik régime was of a much more moderate character than that established in Russia proper after the Revolution, and harmonised in this respect with the sentiments of the Georgian peasants, who were described as fanatical champions of private property in the means of production. The Georgian Government resisted the attempts to draw them into the civil war on either side, but the Soviet Government's need of petrol made the whole Trans-Caucasus territory a necessary complement to its resources: and, after two internal communist conspiracies had been discovered and thwarted, Georgia was occupied by armed force. A revolt which took place in 1924 lasted only two or three days.

In the interval between the military occupation by Soviet troops and this revolt, the form of federal organisation between the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (R.S.F.S.R.), which includes the great mass of the old Russian Empire between Smolensk and Vladivostok, and the associated territories, was under consideration. Stalin held the less "Liberal" view on nationalist aspirations. In agreement with Ordzhonikidze, another Bolshevik of Georgian birth, and with the Pole Dzerzhinsky, he wished to minimise Georgian independence, and Lenin, then gravely ill, took exception to their " chauvinistic" attitude.

If we may trust Essad Bey, a lively biographer of Stalin, there was an elaborate intrigue to thwart the intentions of the invalid Lenin. Kamenev was sent to Tiflis to deliver a conciliatory speech to the Georgian Assembly: but, learning from Stalin that Lenin had had a second stroke, altered the speech to one reaffirming the Stalin policy, which was also triumphant in the Twelfth Party Congress. Budu Mdivani (reported as having been executed in the Terror of 1937) and certain other Georgians came to Moscow to complain against the conduct of Stalin and Ordzhonikidze: and, Lenin being ill, represented their case to his wife, Madame Krupskaya. Madame Krupskaya is said to have told Stalin that these complaints put upon his conduct a complexion quite other than that represented by him to Lenin: and Stalin is said to have replied in an insulting manner. Lenin contemplated a complete breach with Stalin, but died before he could carry out his intentions. Souvarine in his book on Stalin adds that Trotsky and Madame Krupskaya kept back the facts because they did not wish the Party to know of the quarrels between the leaders.

If all concerned in these transactions were not so determined to prove that it was they, and no other, who had the full confidence and support of Lenin, a very good case could be made out for the view which Stalin took.

Lenin was in very bad health; Stalin had an intimate acquaintance with the conditions of the Trans-Caucasus territory: there were obvious dangers in giving to the Georgians a too powerful position even in their

own country. The national minorities amounted to nearly a third of the population, and to three-quarters of it in the capital city, Tiflis: the hostility between Georgians and Armenians was bitter, and had often broken out into fighting between the two. The notion that Lenin was infallible is not borne out by history, and the claim that non-conformity with his opinions must necessarily damn the dissenter is a mere piece of Communist theology. But the execution fifteen years later of Budu Mdivani, who was the direct occasion of the difference with Lenin—a difference which caused Lenin to condemn Stalin in the document known as his will—is relevant to our estimate of the character of Stalin. The ethics of the Caucasus include the vendetta: and a wise man—wise in his generation—does not leave his enemies, longer than is inevitable, in a condition to pursue their hostility. In the interest of historical truth I must add that the now current picture of the relations between Lenin and Stalin as those of affectionate intimacy is not a true one.

At the end of 1922 the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic agreed, together with Ukrain, White Russia, and the Trans-Caucasus Federation, to a federal union. The result was the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in January, 1924. At the end of that year the Soviet Socialist Republics of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, created by an ethnical rearrangement of the Mahommedan States of Khiva and Bukhara, together with the imperial Russian conquests in Central Asia, entered the Union: and in 1929 the separate Soviet Socialist Republic of Tajikistan was formed for the Shia Mahommedans of Uzbekistan. Under the constitution of 1936 the Trans-Caucasus Federation was broken up, and, in place of it, its three Soviet Socialist Republics, Azarbaijan, Georgia and Armenia, joined the U.S.S.R. as constituent Republics. Two new Soviet Socialist Republics, Kazakh and Kirgiz, also became at that time constituent Republics of the Union. The acquisitions of territory made in 1939–40 have raised the number of full constituent republics to sixteen. But this fact is very far from presenting a full picture of the framework of the Union. There are numerous autonomous Soviet socialist republics (A.S.S.R. is the common abbreviation) and autonomous provinces and national regions: exercising functions which, in the cultural and educational field, are of importance, and help to satisfy the instinct of nationality for small territorial units.

While the Union was still in process of formation in 1923, the Party adopted a Resolution which recited the difficulties and explained the ultimate aim. The first difficulty was the old one of Great-Russian chauvinism, the close associate of the policy of Russification (which had done so much to ruin the Tsars). It was aggravated, said the framers, by the fact that the greater part of the urban working classes in some national Republics (notably Ukrain, White Russia, Azarbaijan, Turkestan) were Great-Russians. A second difficulty was the economic and cultural inequality of the nationalities, "some of which have not so much

as seen, many of which have not passed through, the stage of capitalism" (which Marxians regard as a necessary step towards socialism). Yet a third difficulty was the survival of nationalistic jealousies among the minor nationalities themselves: resulting in internecine squabbles such as those of the Trans-Caucasus territory, and, in Central Asia, between Uzbeks on the one hand and Turkmans and Kirgiz on the other.

One embarrassing survival which is specified in the resolution is the conviction existing among many Soviet officials that the Union is not a federation of equal states, but a transitory stage towards unification: and the consequent attempts of the Commissariats of the predominant partner, the R.S.F.S.R., to dominate the autonomous Commissariats. So far from justifying such encroachments (of which it is not difficult to find examples today), the Resolution declares that the Union of the constituent republics is the first step towards the creation of the future World Soviet Socialist Republic of Labour. Here we see the Party, in a mood of World-Revolution, envisaging the addition to the U.S.S.R. of a German Soviet Socialist Republic and—who knows, how many more, to complete that assemblage of the continents, of which the five-pointed star is the symbol. The attitude is relevant to the question here under consideration, for the prospect of such potential additions inevitably influenced the outlook upon the minor nationalities which had formed portions of the old Russian Empire.

The Constitution of 1924 reaffirmed the right of secession: and declared that the sovereignty of each constituent republic should be restricted only to the extent specified—in other words, that all residuary authority belonged to the constituent unit (as in the United States of America), and not to the federal Union. To both of these assurances, then and always, there was an implied limitation—the all-union unity of the Communist Party, and of the Trade Union organisations.

The figures available to me for the proportion of nationals of the minor nationalities to the total membership of the local organisations of the Communist Party are incomplete, and do not extend beyond the year 1930. For what they are worth, they show a growth in the proportion of local nationals. But Great-Russians make up a very large proportion of the local parties: and in Azarbaijan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Bashkiria, the Tartar Republic and Kazakstan (all of which are predominantly Mahommedan), and in what was till 1941 the German Volga republic, the local nationalities have less than half of the local membership. In Ukrain and White Russia they have slightly more than half. Only in Armenia and Georgia do they predominate greatly over Great-Russians. This does not mean that Great-Russian Communists are deliberately brought in numbers into the minor nationalities, but that Great-Russian factory and transport workers are already established there on a large scale, and naturally gravitate towards the local organisations of the Communist party. The proportion of *locals* in the Trade Unions is on

the whole somewhat higher: but in some cases—*e.g.*, in Azarbaijan, owing to the conditions in the oil-fields, a large number of the Trade Unionists are neither Great-Russians nor locals, but of some other nationality.

Whatever the inferences which we might draw from the local predominance in influential quarters of particular nationalities, the Party, as a determining influence in policy is very strongly centralised in Moscow: and it is from this centre that the driving force takes its direction. It is certain that the right of secession is one which could not be enforced: and that the powers conferred by the successive Constitutions on the local organs of administration were and are inefficacious against the real Government of the U.S.S.R., which I take to be the Politburo of the Communist Party, except in so far as the Party's Secretariat exercises the actual control.

The sixth Congress of the third International, meeting in September, 1928, reaffirmed the right of secession, the complete equality of all nationalities, and the duty of combating all remains of chauvinism, national hatred and race prejudice: and broadened the nationalities policy by the express addition of provisions for the creation of *opportunity*. Since equality is not equality when the potential competitors start differently equipped, and since some of the minor nationalities are in fact backward in varying degrees, the resolution pronounces for assistance to those which lag behind. Another clause is an unmistakable echo of Stalin's strictures of 1913 on the folly of encouraging the survival of unworthy cultures. The guarantee given to the national cultures is to be accompanied by a proletarian policy of developing the content of such cultures. By this time we have reached the complete theory of *constructive levelling* which is characteristic of Soviet policy towards the nationalities.

But Great-Russian chauvinism remained, as it remains today, and in July, 1930, Stalin attacked it once more. He defined its errors as the disregard of differences of language, culture and manner of living: the adoption of the objective of unification: the destruction of national equality of rights: and encroachment upon the national administration and the national press and schools. On the other hand, he stigmatised the contrary deviation of local nationalism, as an attempt to "shut oneself up in one's own national mussel-shell . . . not to see what brings the working masses of the Soviet Union closer together and unites them, and only to see what can keep them apart". He declared for a culture national in form and Socialist in content, ultimately merging in one, Socialist both in form and content, with a common language, when the complete ultimate triumph of world-wide Socialism is achieved. The difference between this ideal of ultimate unity, and "the adoption of the objective of unification" which Stalin had condemned, is evidently one of degree, time and circumstance: and not unlikely to escape the comprehension of ardent followers.

A particularly interesting question is whether the U.S.S.R. has dis-

covered and put successfully into practice a method of dealing with less advanced nations, which enlists their co-operation by allaying their jealousies, and differs fundamentally from the imperialism of European colonising powers. There is a further question applicable particularly to nationalities, such as those of Ukrain and Georgia, which claim a civilisation equal or superior to that of the predominant partner. How far is their sense of equality satisfied, and their national pride reconciled to their constitutional and actual status? Upon the answers to these questions must depend a large part of our estimates of the value of the federal organisation and of the reputation of Stalin as a statesman of the first rank. We shall see that no absolute answers can yet be given. We must look to tendencies rather than to conclusions.

The claims of nationality are sometimes of a character to be satisfied by the equalisation of the rights of individuals. This seems to be the position of the various immigrant peoples of the United States of America, who, with some reservation in respect to the negroes, actually enjoy equal constitutional and legal rights, as individuals, and make no corporate claims for the recognition of their nationality: either because they feel themselves to be in the presence of a culture having a prestige superior to their own, to which they are content to be assimilated, or because they are not so concentrated in particular centres as to be able to make a claim to territorial status. It seemed at one time that the Jews of Russia would be content with the removal of their disabilities, and the right to live where they pleased: but their ambitions, perhaps under the stimulus of the Zionist movement, have now extended further. Generally speaking the nationalities of Russia have a territorial basis, greater or smaller, and make corporate claims: ranging from national autonomy in some form, to the right to a separate cultural existence in respect to language, literature, art and education, the right to a proportionate local provision for education and economic advancement (in particular in respect to railways and industries), and the right to the local employment, not only of local residents, but of natives. Sections of them have organisations abroad, for the most part in Paris, which claim independence, and there have been, particularly in Asiatic Russia, vigorous separatist movements, of which that under Enver Pasha in 1922, for the unification of all Turkestan, was perhaps the most determined. Occasional incidents, such as the murder of Abid Saidov at Bokhara in 1930 for giving evidence on behalf of the Soviet Government, reveal the underground workings of "*bourgeois* nationalism" and a whole section of the prosecution's case against the "Rights and Trotskyist bloc" in 1938 was devoted to plots in Ukrain, White Russia, Kirgizia and Uzbekistan, for separation from the Union. But the signs of popular support for such movements are scanty. The expression "*bourgeois* nationalism" is applied to everything which over-emphasises the fact of the separate corporate existence of any nationality: for instance, to the aspirations of the Zionists: to every

assertion of the national status which goes beyond the equal personal rights and the rights to use the national vernacular for official, educational and cultural purposes, and to foster the national culture: and to the invasion of the rights of one minority by another. The assumption is made that claims such as these proceed from the remains of the "liquidated" classes, and not from workers and peasants. It is probable that this assumption is on the whole true: but the Basmachi of Central Asia, who appear to resemble the Hindustani fanatics on the North-west frontier of India, include irreconcileables of all classes, who refuse to live in a country not governed by a Mahommedan ruler.

We are now in a position to summarise the aims which the Communist Party, or its leadership, has set before itself. The first is to convert all the peoples, not into Russians, which was what the later Tsars desired to make them, but into builders of Socialism, and ultimately into willing members of a Communist society. In every society an attempt more or less conscious, more or less organised, more or less efficient, is made to fashion man according to a particular pattern: sometimes, when one class is intended for a position subordinate to another, according to particular patterns. This, indeed, is the aim of all education and of all forms of moral discipline. A great part of what we mean by liberty is the right of individuals and associations, parents, school teachers, Churches, newspaper proprietors, to mould humanity according to their own plan. In a society such as that of the United States of America or the United Kingdom, the State, as such, takes a very small share in the process, and did, until very recently, take no direct part at all, except the negative part involved in the enforcement of the criminal law. But, in the U.S.S.R., the whole of the work of "making Man" falls upon the State, and its agents including the Communist Party. This is not the whole of the difference between the position of the State as an educator in the two sections of the modern world. In the United States of America and the United Kingdom the aim is to adjust the character and habits of man to the conditions of an existent society based upon property. In the U.S.S.R. it is sought to change man and his habits, and to create, by doing so, a new type of society. The task is thus immeasurably greater, and it falls upon a single totalitarian agency, which has repudiated the traditional co-operation of the Churches, and itself controls, directly or indirectly, the whole of the Press.

There is, of course, the possibility of an entirely different outlook: of an outlook which we may call pluralistic as opposed to totalitarian: surrendering the task of the "making of Man" to agencies other than the State, and often to a ruling class, which has its own privileges to defend and its own aim to attain. But, granted the premise, which is that one bent is evil, and another one is good, it is impossible to surrender the function of guidance to persons who have a different conception of what the bent should be. The magnitude and difficulty of the operation, and the extent

to which it is conducted in the minor nationalities by nationals of the major one, account for some of the friction which is produced by the process. Owing to the close relation, at some points, between religion and nationality, on the one hand, and between communism and religion, on the other hand, the task presents some of the difficulties of a religious mass-conversion. This is particularly evident in the case of the Islamic peoples. No doubt a portion of the conversion will, in fact, be superficial: as when Charlemagne made Christians of the Saxons by driving them into the river to be baptised; or a Chinese Christian general turned the hose upon his troops for a like purpose. Education, in the widest sense, starting from the young Octobrist in the lowest class in the seven-year school, travelling upward to the Pioneer and the higher school, still further to the Communist League of Youth, the technicum and the university, and the propaganda of radio, theatre and press, which accompanies Soviet man and Soviet woman through life, is national in form and socialist in content, and alongside of the activities of the Communist Party, one and indivisible in discipline and inspiration, is the means by which Great-Russian and Georgian, Ukrainian and Tartar, Armenian, Uzbek and Yakut, are to be moulded to the standards of the new society.

Economic considerations have to some extent run athwart of the aim of placating national sentiment. The U.S.S.R. has been divided into economic regions, in order to give local unity to economic policy, and these economic regions are not conterminous with national boundaries. In Central Asia, for instance, there is a single economic region, having its headquarters at Tashkent, which is not the capital of any of the constituent republics, but is admirably situated as a centre for the organisation of the production of cotton and for the textile industry. The Economic Council of this area deals with irrigation, river transport, cotton, silk, local coal and grain, and Asiatic health resorts: in other words, with all the most vital economic problems, and with the recreation of the workers. Ukrain, on the other hand, is divided into two regions, one agricultural and one industrial. We owe to Mr. Batsell (in *Soviet Rule in Russia*) the knowledge that a struggle was in progress for three years between the Tartar and the Chuvash autonomous republics, on the one hand, and the economic region having its headquarters at Samara on the middle Volga, on the other: and that it was necessary to effect a compromise by special administrative arrangements. Another dispute arose from making White Russia (a separate Constituent Republic, with all the susceptibilities appropriate to the status) a part of an economic region having its headquarters at Smolensk in the R.S.F.S.R. That the principle of economic regionalisation should have been extended in this way to the constituent and autonomous republics, shows that their authority in economic matters was not regarded seriously, and confirms the conclusion at which I arrive in a later paragraph that real autonomy,

except in linguistic and cultural matters, does not extend very deep or very far.

Nevertheless there is a genuine aim, which I put in the second place, after the primary aim of making a Socialist, and ultimately a Communist, commonwealth: to get rid of all causes of friction between the nationalities. One of the methods of achieving this elimination of friction in Central Asia has been the revision of boundaries on lines corresponding with ethnical and economic conditions. The purely political demarcation of Khiva, Bukhara and Korezm has been replaced by a delimitation which separates mountaineers from plainsmen, nomads from settled agriculturists, Shia from Sunni Mahommedans. But the principal expedient has been that of social and economic levelling, levelling *up*, as well as levelling *down*, levelling both for the individual and for the corporate body of each of the nationalities. The only historical parallel, and that an incomplete one, with which I am acquainted, is that of primitive Islam, which admitted all races and all colours to the full privileges of Islamic brotherhood and intermarriage, retaining the unconverted in a status similar to that of the disfranchised under the revolutionary constitution of the U.S.S.R. prior to 1936.

When the old régime did not actively disfavour non-Russians (as by depriving them of their lands for the establishment of Russian settlers), it, at all events, took no pains to secure for them equality of opportunity. A deliberate policy of excluding industries from non-Russian areas is contradicted by the great developments in Russian Poland, in which industrialisation was far more advanced than in other sections of the Empire; and an elaborate railway system was in existence. It would rather appear that the Tsarist administration followed the line of least resistance, and accepted the pressure of the most powerful interests. Thus the Central Asian Railway was the result of strategic aims, combined with the desire to bring Central Asian cotton to the mills of Central Russia, and to carry the manufactures of the latter to eastern markets. But there was no deliberate provision of economic opportunity to the outlying sections: and this is what the revolutionary government has supplied: partly in the interests of general economic development, partly in pursuance of the policy of equalising the nationalities. The establishment, over the whole Union, of Machine Tractor Stations, which have mechanised uniformly a large part of all the operations of agriculture, is an instance of the combination of both of these aims. But the most striking example of the new policy is the creation of cotton-spinning and cotton-weaving in the Central Asian Republics, which were formerly purveyors of raw material to the centre. The vested interests of the imperial régime would hardly have allowed this assertion of equality.

It is in the overriding of the vested interests, whether of workers or of *entrepreneurs*, that the merits of a levelling authority, no respecter of classes or persons, reveal themselves. The later Tsars were autocrats in name;

but they were chary of offending their capitalists. The British Government, under a system of unevenly distributed democracy, in an Empire partly parliamentary, partly bureaucratic, must inevitably do more for that section of its people which commands the vote than it does for the voteless section. When Lancashire is at odds with a non-self-governing colony, the odds are that Lancashire wins, and that Imperial Preference makes the market safe for the British producer. This may be politically convenient, but it does not strengthen the bonds of affection in the Empire. The Communist rulers are subject to no such weakness, and they do in fact aim at even-handed justice and equality in the economic sphere for all peoples alike. Industries are very generally making their appearance in areas formerly devoid of them, and there is no preference for the interests of one nationality over those of another, wherever the natural facilities for economic development exist or can be stimulated.

Formerly local labour was not employed even at the oil-wells of Baku, and the subsidiary requirements of the oil industry were provided from outside the Tartar territory. It is still true, and apparently inevitable, that machinery and manufactured goods, timber and food, are coming from outside, but attempts are made to modify these conditions. An increasing proportion of Tartars is employed at the wells, but it is not yet equal to the proportion in the local population. The number of native workers (outside of agriculture) in the whole of the Trans-Caucasus territory, Central Asia, the Tartar republic, Daghestan, Kazakstan and Bashkiria, all of them areas industrially backward, doubled itself in five years preceding the epoch of planning, and has doubtless increased very greatly since, though figures are lacking to confirm the belief.

We learn from Mr. Maurice Dobb's *Soviet Russia and the World* that the Tartarisation of officials and teachers in the Tartar Republic went so far as to involve the dismissal of a number of Russians, and some lowering of standards: and that in Uzbekistan Uzbeks were preponderant in all departments of government except Health and Planning. But at about the same time, the White Russians in White Russia held only a little more than one-third of the administrative posts, when they were more than three-quarters of the population. Jews held more posts, though they were only one-tenth of the number. In this case there was no unfair preponderance of Great-Russians. Mr. Batsell tells us an illuminating story of the struggle over Ukrainisation in the public services of Ukrain in 1926. Great-Russians held one-third of the appointments, though they constituted less than one-seventh of the population: Jews, only half of the number of the Great-Russians, held nearly another third: Ukrainians, with three-quarters of the population, had to be content with 30%, that is with two-fifths of their proportionate share. The question of increasing the Ukrainian element was raised in the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. by an Ukrainian delegate. One very pertinent argument was that the Ukrainian population was mainly rural, and not

likely to be fit for administrative, teaching and clerical work. This argument was equally applicable in White Russia. An Ukrainian delegate argued that a more liberal policy was necessary, to impress the Ukrainian population outside of Ukrain with the benefits of Bolshevik policy. A Great-Russian delegate carried the war into the enemy's country by insisting that the Russian element was oppressed in Ukrain, both linguistically and otherwise. Abel Yenukidze, long the Secretary of the Executive Committee, and one of the victims of the trials of 1937, admitted that the Russian language was essential to Socialist construction: but said that the process of Ukrainisation could not be opposed. Bukharin, at that time high in the counsels of the State, quoted the case of a party leader sent from Moscow to Ukrain, who *returned home sooner than learn the local language.*

Bukharin's anecdote looks very like a glimpse of Great-Russian linguistic chauvinism. It was as though a civil servant should decline an appointment in Wales because the members of the County Council spoke Welsh: or refuse to move from the Tamil to the Telugu section of the Madras presidency because he could not learn the latter language. But the linguistic question really has more sides than one: and there are indications, in some quarters, of the use of the linguistic privilege for obstructive ends. The educational authorities in Tajikistan and the Crimea, in particular, have been charged with ousting the Russian language from the schools, or with deliberately lowering the standard of its teaching. It cannot be ousted without bad consequences to local education as well as to all union unity: because the majority of the local languages have not the literature, or even the vocabulary, which is necessary for the higher teaching. It is only in the Russian, Ukrainian, White Russian, Georgian and Armenian languages that education of University standard can at present be given. Another group of languages is capable of providing secondary education. But a third group requires to be supplemented by the Russian language for the purposes of secondary education: and, for a fourth, the very alphabets and scripts, as well as textbooks and teachers, have had to be created, before any use could be made of them even for primary instruction. Generally speaking, all technical faculties can find no medium except Russian, and many of the national languages are inadequate to the needs of modern life and science. No longer imposed by decree, for the purposes of Russification, for exclusive use by all nationalities, Russian, as a compulsory second language in non-Russian schools, should become a *lingua franca* for the Soviet Union, as well as a channel for the higher education, wherever the local language lacks the content for that purpose.

From the beginning of the academic year in the autumn of 1938, the Governments of all the constituent and autonomous republics have decided to make Russian a compulsory second language in non-Russian schools: an obviously reasonable decision.

The Russian and Ukrainian and White Russian languages retain the script based on that introduced by Cyril and Methodius, the Christianisers of the Slavs, with some simplifications and omissions of superfluous letters. The Tartars and Buriat-Mongolians have adopted the Latin script: which has also been used for the numerous alphabets recently created for hitherto illiterate peoples. The autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Adzharia, which had adopted the Latin script, recently abandoned it for a script founded on the Georgian. The Latin script has been accepted for the Uzbek language, but the Georgians and Armenians retain each its own. In the German Volga republic there was a movement in favour of the substitution of the Latin for the Gothic script. Complete liberty in this respect has been left to all nationalities: but a strong lead was necessarily given to the most backward.

Hans Kohn observes that it was not possible for the U.S.S.R., without surrendering its primary aim of a general culture socialist in content, to recognise those elements of national culture which belong to the feudal or the theocratic epoch. This policy, he says, involves the separation from large national units, such as the Germans and Jews, of those sections which are resident in the U.S.S.R. The close connection—it is virtual identity—of the older Jewish culture with the Jewish religion has raised difficulties in respect to the Hebrew language and literature: but Hebrew is now a recognised subject in the Moscow University: and the best of the Russian literature has been translated into that language and published by authority. There is no basis for any suggestion that the Germans in Russia are cut off from the older German culture. Since Hitler's attack upon Russia, the rebuke of a Russian General to a student, who had declared that he would no longer study German, has been published. The works of Goethe, Schiller and Heine are very widely circulated. Generally speaking, the official attitude towards the older national cultures is a very appreciative one. The work of the thirteenth-century Georgian poet, Rustaveli, was the subject of general interest and ovation at his seven hundred and fiftieth anniversary, and it has been translated into many of the local languages, with the evident aim of giving to all the nationalities a sense of a common inheritance in the monuments of each. As much was made of Rustaveli, and his "Knight in the tiger skin", throughout the Union, as had been made of Pushkin some months before, and the object in both cases seems to have been the same. As pointed out in a later chapter, the aim in recent years has been to create a Soviet patriotism equally distinct from a purely national one and from internationalism: and the events of 1941–42 seem to show that the effort has met with success.

The theatre and the film are regarded as powerful means of popular education: and the national theatre and the national film receive generous encouragement. The U.S.S.R. is divided into film areas on the basis of nationality in order that the cinema may be adjusted to local needs.

We hear, for instance, of a film exhibiting at Tashkent the evils of polygamous marriage. The smallest national section now has its theatre. A play in the Karelian (closely similar to Finnish) language was first presented in December, 1937. Non-periodic literature is published in seventy-three languages. Dictionaries of a scholarly quality (sometimes the occasion of a good deal of pedantic squabbling) begin to fill the shelves.

The extension of linguistic, cultural and other autonomy into very small territorial aggregations is well illustrated by the treatment of the Jews. Biro-Bidzhan, a region in Siberia, somewhat larger than Palestine and believed to be capable of supporting 50,000 families, 40,000 of them in agriculture, has become an autonomous province with its own mainly Jewish provincial executive committee, under the Constitution of November, 1936. Since there is a large non-Jewish population, the economic and educational administrative units are not exclusively Jewish. But the Jews have thus ceased to be a non-territorial minority, like the gipsies, and have a small territorial home of their own. On an even smaller scale they have a quasi-territorial status in European Russia also. In the Crimea, White Russia and Ukrain, there are numerous Jewish Soviets, conducting all their transactions in Yiddish, which is the vernacular of the Russian Jew and of the Jew of much of central and eastern Europe. Jewish Soviets exist wherever there is a considerable Jewish group. In Ukrain a minimum population of 1,000 Ukrainians or 500 non-Ukrainians is entitled to form a Soviet: and a minimum of 25,000 Ukrainians or of 10,000 non-Ukrainians is entitled to form a regional Soviet. A conception of the nature of this regional autonomy can be formed from the fact that the Jewish regional Soviet in the Kherson district had a Jewish Police Commissioner, with a small Jewish jail. There is a considerable number of lower judicial courts in Ukrain and White Russia, where the business is conducted entirely in Yiddish: and there are Jewish police at Kiev and Odessa: and a Jewish registration office for marriages and divorces at the latter place. There are complaints that an equally liberal policy is not pursued in respect to small local units of the Finno-Ugrian race: for instance, that the group (about 145,000) of Karelians at Tver (now re-named after Kalinin) have no administrative unit. But that special arrangements should be expected for so small a territory as this, is evidence of a generally liberal policy. The wide concession of territorial autonomy to small national groups in Ukrain has been made by Ukrainian nationalists the basis of a charge of deliberate weakening of Ukrainian nationalism by the Soviet Government. This is the familiar difficulty of the minority within the minority.

The Soviet Government encourages Yiddish, as the actual vernacular of Russian Jews, and the Jewish theatre in the U.S.S.R. makes use of this language. The Hebrew theatre (Habima) has left the U.S.S.R., and has its headquarters at New York. The large number of Jews employed in the

public offices—it is particularly marked in White Russia and Ukrain—and in such institutions as those of socialist retail trade, is responsible for some growth of anti-Semitism in Soviet Russia, and also perhaps for the fancy that the Soviet Government is predominantly one of Jews. The Soviet Government has set its face firmly against anti-Semitism, and punishes anti-Jewish outrages with severity. It is itself charged with anti-Semitism, because of its repression of the Zionist movement: but is, in fact, neither pro- nor anti-Jew, but gives to the Jewish the same encouragement which it gives to other nationalities, while discouraging the separatism which appears to be involved in Zionism.

The Soviet of Nationalities, which is one of the two coequal chambers of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. under the constitution of 1936, is a device, similar in principle to the Senate of the U.S.A., for securing the equal representation of Constituent Republics as such, and of smaller autonomous units. Each Constituent Republic (with twenty-five deputies), each autonomous republic (with five deputies), and each national region (with one deputy) is represented in this chamber. Smaller numbers were proposed in the first draft, but were deliberately increased by an amendment aiming at making the numbers of the two chambers approximately equal: so as to give to each of them equal weight when joint sessions are held. Another amendment of importance was at the same time made. The first draft provided for indirect election of the members of the Soviet of Nationalities through the Supreme Soviet. It was amended by the substitution, for indirect election, of direct election by the citizens of each unit. Another amendment improved the standing of the Constituent Republics in the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. The Presidium had eleven (now sixteen) Vice-Chairmen, each of whom, by a convention, is the Chairman, either of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of a constituent republic, or of the Council of People's Commissars of the same. The original draft, which had provided for a smaller number of Vice-Chairmen, was amended to provide one for each constituent republic, and so affirm the equality of all the Vice-Chairmen in the Presidium. The care taken to ensure the equality of the smaller national units between themselves is evidence of Stalin's personal vigilance. The increase made in the proportion of the number of deputies to the population in the Supreme Soviets of the smaller constituent republics is another evidence of this care. For instance, whereas the R.S.F.S.R. has a Supreme Soviet consisting of one deputy to every 150,000, Ukrain has one to every 100,000, Georgia has one to every 15,000, Kirgizia has one to every 5,000 and so on. There is no doubt that Stalin's heart is in the success of his nationalities policy, and equality, both corporate and individual, by removing jealousy, eliminates friction. If the actual opportunity and power, which are given by the membership of the Supreme Soviet and the vice-chairmanship of its Presidium, are small: the dignity is considerable, and it is at all events equal for all: and

the smallest constituent republic is coequal with the largest in at least one of the two chambers and in the vice-presidential chairs of the Presidium. The voice of the constitutional government of a constituent republic may be weak in the determination of policy: but the execution of policy offers some scope, and the sphere of administration is not to be despised.

In the statutory allocation of powers between the Union and the constituent republics, the former has control of foreign policy and defence; foreign trade; law of citizenship and rights of foreigners: the prevention of clashes between Union and Constituent Republics by power to admit new Republics, to determine boundaries and to ensure conformity of constitutions; of the monetary and credit system; of the criminal and civil codes: and of general acts of amnesty: all of which are inevitably necessary to the central authority. Other items of a more unusual character are: the courts and judicial processes: a general power for the protection of the security of the State, which would evidently extend to jurisdiction over *all* matters which in the opinion of the Union Government might involve a danger of subversion of existing institutions: a large economic and financial authority of which I give further particulars below: the administration of all transport and communications: the establishment of the fundamental principles in the domain of education (which, literally understood, would certainly cover the languages to be used in the schools): and the same in the domain of public health, and in labour legislation. The powers of the Union in economic and financial matters include the establishment of the national economic plans of the U.S.S.R., the confirmation of the unified State budget of the U.S.S.R., as well as of the taxes and revenues which go to form the all-Union, *the republican, and the local, budgets*: the administration of banks, of industrial and agricultural establishments and enterprises and also of trading enterprises of all Union importance: the organisation of State insurance: the contracting and granting of loans, the establishment of the fundamental principles for the use of land as well as for the exploitation of its deposits, forests and waters: and the organisation of a single system of national economic accounting.

Constituent Republics are entitled to levy only certain specified taxes, at specified maximum rates: and the proportion in which the proceeds are to be divided between them and authorities subordinate to them, is prescribed by the all Union authority.

The absence of an independent budget in each constituent Republic, and of all power to borrow, and the restricted authority of taxation, place the Constituent Republics in a position inferior to that of the States which make up the Federal Union of the U.S.A., of the Provinces of the Dominion of Canada and of the Commonwealth of Australia, and even of the Provinces of British India. Local budget deficits are often made up by central subvention as part of the policy of constructive *levelling up*. A Constituent Republic, dependent upon financial assignments from

the centre, may be treated with great generosity by the Union, but necessarily lacks initiative and authority, and the practical means of resisting encroachment upon its sphere of control.

Such is the *formal* division of power between the Constituent Republics and the Union.

Friction there has often been, particularly in Ukrain. A vigorous effort at conciliation of that Republic was made between 1922 and 1929, when the Soviet Government aimed specifically at "Ukrainisation" of the official language and the administration, against the contrary inclination of Great-Russian zealots. Ukrainian separatists abroad allege that this effort was neutralised by the wide establishment of regional autonomies for non-Ukrainian minorities and by wholesale Jewish colonisation in the Crimea and the south. The Ukrainian-speaking population is one of peasants, and measures which caused discontent among peasants in general were particularly resented by national sentiment in Ukrain. In 1930 a member of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences was imprisoned for forming a society of liberation, and the Academy was closed. The allegations against the Soviet Government include neglect of industrial interests, export of necessary food in periods of scarcity and depletion of Ukrainian finance in the interests of the Union. One of them—that the Donets mineral area has been separated from Ukrain—is evidently based on the fact, already mentioned, that Ukrain has been divided into two economic regions, one agricultural and one industrial; but it is misleadingly stated. The friction took a very serious form at the time of the struggle over collectivisation. In July, 1933, N. A. Skrypnik, an old collaborator of Lenin, Commissar of Education in Ukrain, and a member of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R., whose sixtieth birthday had been celebrated as a State ceremony, protested against the agrarian policy, was called upon to recant, and committed suicide. There were many lesser sufferers on the same account. The purge of 1933 disclosed the presence, as chairmen of the collective farms, of a number of the old officers of the nationalist chief Petliura: and the Commission, returning a month later, after the expulsion of these undesirables, found them again at their posts. About a quarter of the Ukrainian Communists were expelled at this purge, the average for the whole Union being a fifth. In 1935 there were disturbances, with numerous attacks on tax-collectors, Communist agitators, newspaper reporters, chairmen of collective farms, factory foremen and shock workers, and one district chief of political police. This outbreak may have been purely economic, but the line is difficult to draw. In 1937, Lyubchenko, chairman of the Council of People's Commissar in Ukrain, committed suicide to avoid arrest as an enemy of the U.S.S.R. and a betrayer of Ukrainian interests: and Postyshev, who had been a sort of hero of Bolshevisation in Ukrain since the difficulties over collectivisation, was disgraced. A general clearance has been made in the upper ranks of the Communist Party in

Ukrain: and it is understood to have included Stanislas Kosior, formerly a stalwart supporter of Stalin.

In White Russia *Pravda* gave a picture of the purge of 1933, particularly in the region of Vitebsk, where were found many adherents of the Zionist and Jewish Bund parties, along with Social Revolutionaries and National Democrats. One of those questioned by the Commissioners was found to have aired a grievance about the demands of the grain-collectors: and to have said that White Russia was a poor country which ought to be put on the subvention list and receive help instead of making contributions. Another was unmasked as a leader of a Social Revolutionary revolt in 1918. "They made boastful speeches about the White Russian people. They got drunk, and sang, with false notes, White Russian nationalist songs." Not much more serious, perhaps, than, "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," on St. Andrew's night: but we must not expect the fortunate conditions of the British Isles on the doubtful border between Poland and Russia. In 1937 there were more evidences of friction. Chervyakov, chairman of the Central Executive Committee for the past seventeen years and one of the organisers of the Red Army, committed suicide—apparently to avoid arrest—and Goloded, chairman of the Council of People's Commissars for ten years, was arrested as a Trotskyist. A few months later Chervyakov's successor in the chairmanship of the Central Executive Committee was removed from that post. Eight so-called Bukharinists in White Russia were sentenced to death for aiming at the separation of White Russia from the Soviet Union by means of the military intervention of Poland and Germany: an evident echo of the Trotskyist trials: with the addition of a nationalist element.

In the Mahommedan areas nationalist movements, such as *Milli Istiklal* (National Independence), in Uzbekistan, have often been active and have invaded the local sections of the Party. In 1934 Nusratulla, the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee in Tajikistan, was removed on charges of having pursued an unduly nationalistic policy in that republic: and replaced by Rahimbayev. Other Tajiks were also degraded. In 1937 Rahimbayev was in turn disgraced on a charge of supporting the Mahommedan mullahs and of diverting public funds to the mosques. I will not weary the reader with a full list of similar incidents in the constituent and autonomous republics in 1937; but the cases of Lokola, a former chairman of the Executive Committee in Abkhazia, and of nine high officials in Azarbaijan, convicted of a plot to murder Stalin, and executed, deserve notice. The Terror was at least as active in the constituent Republics generally as in the R.S.F.S.R., and separatist movements played a great part in the trial of March, 1938. But Hitler's attempt in 1941 to rouse the Russian Mahommedans to a Holy War on the German side have been met by an appeal from the Mufti Abdurrahman Rasulev to Muslims throughout the world to give aid to the U.S.S.R.

Of the lesser bickerings over the complexities of linguistic policy and

the sharing of public office, I have already had something to say. How strong is the language used over comparative trifles we are able to judge from an article in *Pravda* in December, 1937, which castigates the editor of a Russian Ukrainian dictionary for seeking Ukrainian neologisms to replace perfectly good Russian words in common Ukrainian use. The editor of this learned work has associated with "*bourgeois* nationalists" and was for this reason expelled from the Party. His exclusion of Russian words is characterised as sabotage, *vreditelstvo*. It is a mere straw, but it suggests that the wind of Great Russian and Ukrainian opposition is disappointingly high. I think that Stalin would have been glad to see it abated, for Ukrain is by far the most important of the non-Great-Russian nationalities; but the events of 1941 show that the separatist movement there, in spite of jealousies and sore places, is neither strong nor widespread.

Mrs. Anna Louise Strong, a good observer, writing in 1930, found no traces of race prejudice in Central Asia, where she saw Russians and Uzbeks sitting down together in the co-operative dining-room: but the same was true of the pre-Revolution period. Mr. Littlepage tells a startling, but convincing story, of the Kirgiz outside a hospital during a typhus epidemic flipping lice at the nervous Russian out-patients, and describes a sort of inverted national snobbery which favours the Asiatic against the European and puts the former into places for which they are not really fit. As regards the peoples of the *macédoine* of the Caucasus, Mr. John Lehmann, after a stay of some months in 1937, sums up his opinion by saying that "there seems little reason to question the claim of the local authorities that, in the face of the advance in education and material welfare, old tribal jealousies are rapidly dying out". He adds that the vendetta was hard to eradicate, and that, in upper Svanetia, there were 600 deaths from this cause between 1917 and 1921, but between 1930 and 1932 two only. My own experience in another part of Asia leads me to regard this achievement as unusually rapid. Mr. Lehmann also thinks that the quarrel between Tartars, Armenians and Georgians, has been ended by the socialisation of the three constituent republics. It may be so: but I prefer to await further evidence.

I arrive at these paradoxical conclusions: that the constitution gives little or nothing in the way of actual power to the constituent bodies which are parties to the federation: that the political system is one of intense centralisation, particularly in the vital sphere of finance: that the concessions to local language and culture give a very large part of what national feeling most desires: and that there is such an absence of favour to particular nationalities, and such a constructive effort to make their equality real, that national jealousy and friction are diminished, though not yet eliminated. It is not, except in the sphere of language, liberty: but national *amour propre* is placated: and levelling *up* is in active operation. The Soviet Government has, in fact, reverted to a system more

familiar in Asia and in the Balkan Peninsula than in western Europe, which gives cultural, without political, autonomy. Under the old Turkish Empire, and perhaps in Bulgaria today, it existed, or exists, under the name of the *Millat* system. Essentially it consists in concession to local religions, local languages, local culture, together with the institutions connected with these three: but the Soviet Government has added an element of active encouragement which is all its own. To those nationalities which are only emerging from primitive nomadism and were, under the Tsarist régime, threatened with extinction, the policy brings pure gain. To those such as the Central Asians, who occupy an intermediate place in the order of civilisation, it offers a compromise which is likely to keep discontent within manageable limits.

For Ukrainians, Georgians, Germans, there is a measure of relaxation in the strait waistcoat of the centralised state and an end of certain much-felt grievances. Experience of the consequences of national self-determination in practice makes it reasonable to doubt whether anything better was possible.

There is nothing in the U.S.S.R. corresponding to the device of communal representation, which is so extensively applied in British India: because there is no recognition of non-territorial nationalities and minorities: and because territorial minorities are placated by concessions in local administration: and also because economic classes are eliminated or in process of elimination.

The criticisms of Trotsky on the policy followed towards the Nationalities are to be found in his *Real Position in Russia*, 1927, in his *Stalinite School of Falsification*, 1932, and in his *Revolution Betrayed*, 1936, from which I have quoted, at the head of this chapter, a favourable comment on the treatment of the most backward of them. Apart from his personal strictures on Stalin, in relation to the dispute over Georgia, before Lenin's last illness, he is mainly concerned to show that centralisation is carried too far and the domination of the imported communist and the bureaucrat too strongly enforced. He says that bureaucratic guardianship even deprives the republics of the right of settling land disputes between the local and the Russian population. I think that the aim here was to protect the local population. He criticises the unsatisfactory attitude of the industrial city (where the population, as in the Don Basin and at Baku, is often of a different nationality from that of the surrounding rural area) towards the village: but this was one of the recognised difficulties with which the Soviet Government has always had to grapple, as best it might. The same is true of his strictures upon the supercilious treatment of some of the active revolutionary workers of the minor nationalities, who, he says, were elbowed away as a kind of second-rate communists. He suggests the publication in the Press of Lenin's letter on the question of nationalities which contained reflections upon Stalin, and has been consequently suppressed. There is no doubt that "pious frauds" have

been perpetrated upon the documentary evidence, and that the standard of ethics, generally, is rather that of the palazzo of the Italian Renaissance than of the British Cathedral close: but I am at present concerned, not with the personal characters of the actors, but with the policy which has been pursued: and I do not think that Trotsky's criticisms call for the nullification of the general judgment I have already pronounced.

Like many other things in the U.S.S.R., the policy for the nationalities is not that miracle of completed performance which the propagandists would have us believe, but it is an immense improvement upon the Tsarist policy, and a genuine achievement on the part of its creator, Stalin. I think that other Governments have something to learn from it, particularly in respect to the device of cultural autonomy for peoples not sufficiently advanced to exercise political autonomy, and in respect to the active *levelling up* of the economically backward.

CHAPTER XX

THE NEW RESPECTABILITY

"All things are in flux."—HERACLITUS OF EPHESUS (sixth to fifth century B.C.)

"Russia is full of respectable married people, just as anxious to do well in their jobs and help their children to get a good start in life as their counterparts in the U.S.A. A new kind of respectability is emerging which sometimes seems almost as extreme in one direction as the previous ideas in the other."—LITTLEPAGE and BESS, *In Search of Soviet Gold.*

THE TASK of the November Revolution, as seen by the men who took part in it, was the seizure of power by a hitherto oppressed class which would use it to create a classless society, in which each would work according to his capacity and receive according to his needs. Those who did not fancy that industry was a Fortunatus purse into which all could dip without exhausting it, perceived clearly that the central problem was that of production: because the satisfaction of needs is dependent upon an immense increase of productive power: and, less clearly perhaps, that a long period of time must elapse before the necessary stage of productivity could be reached. An indispensable condition of the attainment of that stage, in the eyes of all, was the world-wide division of labour which would result from the anticipated world-wide revolution. For the rest, the discoveries of physical science were to achieve the conquest of matter, and machines, owned and operated by a public authority in the interests of all, were to take the place of the slaves and serfs and wage-earning proletariats, upon which earlier civilisations had depended. The workers were to become the lords of the machines. There was cold, there was hunger, there was danger from within and from without: but there was a happy certainty of victory, made possible by the close ap-

proach of the moment when the barriers would go down, and the rush of brethren from abroad would relieve the proletarian citadel.

In this imagined world, the Third International represented the aspirations of the proletariats to emancipation from the chains of capital, and of the colonial peoples to freedom from imperialist oppression, and it met each year at Moscow, the centre of a new world of hope, to determine the policies for effecting these deliverances. Defeats, political and other, were no worse than the return of workmen after an unsuccessful strike, submission to the inevitable by men confident of an early resurrection. There were no alliances except of proletariat with proletariat. In such a world nationalism was merely a weakness to be tolerated, a stumbling-block of superstition. The coercive state was necessary so long as cupidity demanded an unfair share of the world's wealth for a class or for an individual: but that would come to an end with the removal of the fetters upon production, the problem of distribution, which had so greatly exercised earlier Socialist thinkers, would solve itself, and men—their reasonable requirements freely met—would cease to snatch advantage and to need restraint. The coercive state would wither away, and give place to a society in which purely economic organisations would settle the relations of mankind. In the meantime, the armed workers, when each day's work was done, would, like the Twelve in Blok's poem, patrol streets and mines and factories, and watch over public security and enforce the proper discharge of public business: or stand forth to protect the achievements of the revolution against attack from within or without. Great establishments of civil functionaries, like regular armies, seemed part of the paraphernalia of a bad old world, vanished for ever into the limbo of nightmares.

At the twenty-first anniversary of the November Revolution, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was an organised state, immensely more efficient and more powerful than the one which it overthrew, exercising all and more than all of the coercive functions of its predecessor, with a military machine as regular, as elaborately equipped, and more numerous than that of any power on earth; paying no more than lip-service to the idea of world-revolution, in close association with capitalist powers, a member of the *bourgeois* League of Nations, seeking in its relations with the outside world the advantages of peace and profitable trade. In building up gigantic projects of State-controlled industry and agriculture, this State had created a host of functionaries, 70,000 of them employed in the one task of tabulating its statistics. 12,520 young people passed out of the higher educational institutions in the fourth quarter of 1937 and were at once taken into the employment of the Government: 7,190 as engineers, 1,049 as agricultural specialists, 1,115 as animal specialists, 1,270 as doctors, 340 as veterinary doctors, 298 as economists, and so on. Of these, 2,224, went into the administrative employment of the Government or the Party: for both have large staffs. The total of civilian re-

cruits for the whole year 1938 was estimated at 91,000. The "Party," once a handful of men and women, steeled to endurance in the school of hardship and exile, had grown to two millions, who occupy all the best and many of the second and third best places in the state: an influential inner ring having a vested interest in things as they are, and enjoying more privilege and more comfort (though not more wealth) than the rank and file of the population. The vision of the armed workers, taking care to see that officials are servants and not masters, had faded away though the ivory gate of dreams. The Soviets themselves, though they had bequeathed their name to the new state, had ceased to be the constituents of the supreme legislature, now remodelled on the lines of a *bourgeois* parliament: and the constitutional bodies, in which the burning questions of earlier years were discussed and settled, had given place to the organs of the Communist Party as the source of policy. The Third International had held only one full meeting since 1928, and was represented by a permanent Executive Committee issuing its instructions to rigidly disciplined national Parties, and following a policy of defence of the Socialist Fatherland. In the discharge of this function, it must help to defend the capitalist states which are the allies of the Socialist Fatherland, and to maintain order among their African and Asiatic subjects. It had gone through a phase in which it ordered the affiliated parties to support the moderate non-Communist Left of the *bourgeois* countries, once condemned as Social Fascists. Lip-service continued to be paid to the idea of world-revolution, but the former engine of change and overthrow was harnessed to the Foreign Office of a world-power, in competition with other world-powers like itself.

It had taken two decades to bring these developments thus far: and they had worked themselves out, not by any new turn, but rather by the prolongation of a curve which began to diverge from the straight line of theoretical principle, from the first moment of the seizure of power. The curve was inevitable as soon as the Soviet Government came into contact with the obstinate realities of existence in a *bourgeois* world. The divergence had taken place, not with a mathematical precision, but with a wavering oscillation, as rival forces pulled first this way and then that: but the dominant influence acted always in the direction which, at the end of the period, we see to have been taken. The result is hateful to the surviving idealists of an earlier period, who tell us that the Soviets have become *bourgeois*: and the intransigence of Trotsky and the bitter struggle associated with his name were the historical issue of the contradiction. But there could have been no reconstruction of industry and agriculture by the State without an army of civil functionaries: and there could have been no safety in a predatory world without a military machine of quantity and quality similar to that of dangerous neighbours, and without alliances and contacts incompatible with a policy of the encouragement of revolutionary movements. I think that Trotsky, if it had been he and

not Stalin who had triumphed in the struggle of 1924–27, would have done very much what Stalin has done, and that his earlier actions and writings, when he was himself in power, afford ample proof of this contention. The task of Socialism is a task of organisation and construction: and there can be no organisation and no construction without the employment of the available human material. Armed workers, giving their spare time to the job of building and defending a new world, cannot take the place of military experts, and equipment, and training, of administrators and statisticians and clerks. That the servants should tend to become masters, should develop bureaucratic tendencies as the phrase goes, is the critical difficulty of all social organisation. The simple course is the quasi-anarchical one of *laisser faire, laisser aller*, which permits the individual to use his organising gifts for his own purposes, that is to say to dominate his fellows who lack those gifts. When we have decided that this is neither justice nor wisdom, we must take our risk of being dominated by those who should be servants of society, and use our brains to find a solution of the peril. The existing régime in the U.S.S.R. is not without expedients for keeping the Party man and the official in their places, as the periodical purge, and the trials and the expulsions of 1936–38, sufficiently demonstrate.

As I read history, the idealists of the Revolution—they would repudiate the title, but it seems the appropriate one, and I note recently, for the first time, the use of the expression the *ideals of communism* in a Party publication—descend from the enthusiasts of the Messianic Mission, for whom Moscow was the Third Rome, though they have translated their hopes into the language of Karl Marx. Since November, 1917, they have been in perpetual struggle with the statesmen: who have sought, by compromise and by opportunism, ruling *as they could*, as statesmen must, to shape their country's course. There has never been unanimity in revolutionary Russia, though there has sometimes been the appearance of unanimity, because opposition has been driven underground: and both the Further Left and the Right have had their share in the oscillations.

In external affairs the first great compromise was the Peace of Brest-Litovsk; signed, against the will of an actual majority of the Central Executive Committee, who desired the continuance of war with Germany in the belief that it would spread the revolution. In the bitterness of the struggle over this national humiliation, the Left, then including Bukharin, plotted to kidnap Lenin: but it is likely that Lenin's solution saved the revolution from destruction by the German armies. The strategic retreat of the New Economic Policy—accompanied by an analogous change in international relations—was made possible by the overwhelming authority of the great leader: but the suicides of many ardent spirits marked the resentment and disappointment with which it was received. When, in the autumn of 1924 Stalin formulated his theory of Socialism in one country, the death of the aspiration to world-wide revolution, except as

something to be reached by a slow process of universal conviction, and the development of nationalism in the international revolutionary state, were already within sight. Along with internationalism, goes the class-war: because, for a struggle crossing national boundaries and linking the proletariats together in alliance, there is substituted the rivalry of nations as integral entities. As soon as it became clear that the other nations were not at once prepared to follow the example of the U.S.S.R., the goal of Socialism in one country was the only alternative to no Socialism at all, or Socialism indefinitely deferred.

The struggle between the original internationalism and the nationalism which has taken its place, has been a long one, and has been fought with varying fortunes. The history of the Third International is a compendium of this struggle. It was brought into existence because the Second International had betrayed the International cause by its support of national war in 1914. It began its career as the avowed champion of World-Revolution: and it was the enthusiasm of one of its meetings which sent the Red Armies to defeat outside of Warsaw. It made a concession to compromise when it damped down the revolutionary spirit in Germany in 1923, and further concessions in the same direction when it endorsed the policy of friendly alliance with the moderate parties abroad, with the Kuomintang in China, with the Trade Union Congress in Great Britain, with Pilsudski in Poland: still more when it adopted the policy of the United Front in 1935. Its schools for Asiatic and colonial propaganda were directed against the Powers with which the Soviet Government desired friendly relations: its extraordinary plan made in 1928 for a Negro Republic in the United States of America was a direct challenge. The long delays between its plenary meetings (after the one held in 1924, there was an interval of four years and after the one held in 1928 there was an interval of seven) seemed to proclaim lukewarmness or neutrality. The signature of the non-aggression pacts, including a clause against intervention in foreign countries on account of their internal condition: the entry into the comity of nations signalised by the endorsement of the Kellogg Pact (*1928*): the acceptance of membership of the League of Nations: appeared to repudiate subversive design. But, even in 1934, the permanent organisation of the Third International was engaged on plans for the encouragement of revolution in three European countries, one of them on terms of intimate political association with the U.S.S.R.

The accession of Italy in November, 1937, to the anti-Komintern pact, already signed by Germany and Japan, called forth a pronouncement, addressed to the peoples of all the world, in which World Revolution takes a place entirely subordinate to the defence of the U.S.S.R., as the Fatherland of Socialism, and of republican Spain and national China, against Fascist attack. This was followed by a declaration by the Chairman of the International that the workers of capitalistic countries should judge each State by its relations with the Soviet Union, not by its relations

with Socialism in general. In effect, this declaration waived the aim of proletarian revolution for those countries which stood with the U.S.S.R. against the dictatorships of Central Europe and the Japanese Empire. Molotov, delivering his report at the ceremonial session of Party and non-Party organs in the Great Theatre of Moscow on November 6th, 1937, formulated the now ruling theory regarding World-Revolution. He said that it had already begun with the revolution of November, 1917; not by the sudden fall of the whole chain, but by the successive fall of individual links. Since November, 1917, the proletarian revolution had become the support of all really progressive movements of the popular masses, *even though not purely communistic*. "Now," he said, "it is the support also of the struggle of the toilers *for their democratic rights against the fascists*, and of the weak countries for their national independence against imperialistic aggression."

In spite of the puzzle which was set to the rest of the world by the Russo-German Pact of August, 1939, the policy of the Third International from 1935 was to bring about a United Front throughout the world of all the left and leftward forces and to use them for the protection of the U.S.S.R., the Fatherland of Socialism, against the apprehended attack of those Powers, in particular Italy, Germany and Japan, which are, by definition, hostile to the tenets of Communism, or prepared to use Communism as a pretext for aggression. Thus the Communists of Great Britain received instructions from Party headquarters, before the General Election of 1935, to support the Labour Party, and sought, without success, to establish intimate relations with that organisation. The Popular Fronts in Spain and France were among the consequences of this policy. Nothing more is heard of the agitation, once so active, in the Asiatic colonies of Great Britain and France for the emancipation of their peoples from the Imperialist yoke; and pains is taken to reassure the representatives of actually or potentially allied states against the apprehension of Communist interference.

And yet the toasts of the Central Committee of the All Union Communist Party for the twentieth anniversary of the Revolution, as given to us in the Party newspaper on October 30th, 1937, included minute libations to the old gods: "Proletarians of all lands! Oppressed peoples of the colonies! Up with the flag of Lenin—Stalin, the flag of the victorious Socialist Revolution! Long live the proletarian revolution in the whole world! Long live the Communist International: the leader and organiser of the struggle against war, fascism and capitalism! Long live World Communism." In the speeches which glorified the new Constitution, it was remembered that there are friends abroad, the toilers of capitalistic lands, who will be encouraged by this crowning achievement of the Soviet Union under the guidance of the Party, and will remember that they too may some day enjoy a similar happiness.

It is just as reasonable to expect the formal surrender of the international

pretensions of Communism, as to ask His Holiness the Pope to give up the oecumenical claims of the Vatican. The reverend age of the latter and their religious derivation from St. Peter, and beyond him from Jesus Christ, must not blind us to the essential similarity of the spirit which is behind both. Each has a gospel of salvation for mankind. The one puts it after the death of the body, the other promises it here and now. Both seek their end by imposing a rigid discipline on conduct, mind and conscience, both have their sworn orders, their martyrs and their devotees. But both have also their worldly diplomacy and their worldly policy; both can be harmless as doves, as well as aiming to be wise as serpents; both have been, in their time, capable of pious fraud, and can make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, can justify the questionable means by the noble end, can be all things to all men.

Every Government of the Left has a further Left, which it cannot ignore; a section which is shocked by compromise, suspicious of concession, impatient of backsliding. A portion of it may be frankly hostile, and may necessitate measures of the kind applied to the followers of Trotsky. But thought is subtle, and its influence penetrates beyond the avowed opposition. It is necessary to placate and neutralise this leftward thought. That is why the Soviet Government was careful to continue to uphold the Third International, as well as to use it as the instrument of its own Foreign Office, while it supported the existing régimes of the Powers from which it hoped for support. It hopes that the world will become Communist, as the Pope trusts that it will become Catholic; but the result is now to be attained by conversion, not by subversion; and, in accordance with Molotov's metaphor, by the gradual slipping of the links off the chain. Communism is to conquer by its superior productivity; a contingency which the capitalist, presumably, does not contemplate.

But before I consider further the relations between the Soviets and the so-called capitalist States, I have something to add as to the replacement of the internationalist ideal by an entirely new Soviet Patriotism. Precisely how wide and how deep was the sentiment of Great-Russian patriotism in the pre-revolution state, it is not easy to say. Patriotism of the *State* was perhaps neither wide nor deep. Patriotism of a mystical entity, of Mother Russia, may have been both. What seems certain is that the minor nationalities of the Empire did not share it. Even here, however, the too assured negative is apt to be contradicted by the citation of an example, such as that of the Ukrainian Gogol, who must have been echoing the feelings of many of his countrymen when he wrote his famous apostrophe to Russia's Troika. But the lesser peoples had little love for the dominant race which suppressed their languages and literatures, tried to replace their religions with its own and kept them in economic subordination to itself.

In a chapter on the Nationalities I have shown that these lesser peoples, their cultures and their economic interests, have been matters of special

concern to the revolutionary régime, and I have suggested that, in spite of a strict financial and administrative centralisation (entirely contradictory to the theoretical principles of the Soviet Government itself), there has been a careful fostering of those things to which local patriotism attaches itself with a special affection—language, literature, drama, art and local traditon. The system has been one of political centralisation and so-called cultural autonomy, and it has been accompanied by measures, quite foreign to the practice of the Tsarist Government, for *levelling up* the economic level in all parts of the Soviet State. That admirable observer, the gold-mining engineer, Mr. Littlepage, goes so far as to criticise the Soviet Government for paying undue regard to the interests of the indigenous peoples and promoting them over the heads of better qualified Russians.

A step of profound significance—for the Cossacks were the instruments of the Tsarist administration, a large part of the strength of the White armies in the civil war, and the most obstinate opponents of the collectivisation of agriculture—was the re-establishment of Cossack regiments in the Red Army. It was more than an amnesty. It was a rehabilitation. A patriotic Cossack song from the opera in Sholohov's *Virgin Soil Upturned* figured prominently in the Soviet Press of the Anniversary week. Along with the Law of 1935 which abrogated the exclusion of the children of the disfranchised from the higher educational institutions, and with the provisions of the constitution of 1936, the inclusion of the Cossacks in the Soviet Red Army was an invitation to all classes to co-operate in the service of the Soviet fatherland. The moral and political unity of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. was strongly emphasised in the speeches of the twentieth anniversay of the Revolution. Soviet patriotism is inculcated by a new turn in the teaching of history, for which Stalin himself gave the cue by a brochure addressed to the writers of text-books. Patriotism both of the whole and of the parts, of the constituent Republics as well as of the Union, is included. Mingled with announcements of record output of potatoes and pig-iron, of roads in the sub-arctic regions, of new water supplies and public baths for cities, of chess champions and polar fliers, with enormities of Trotskyist and Bukharinist enemies and Fascist machinations, we find the poems and portraits of Georgian and Armenian and Tartar minstrels and poets, and notices of a new archæological magazine which throws light upon the prehistory of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., and an account of the recovery from the bottom of the river Bug of a cargo-boat which must have carried Ukrainian corn to Greece 3,000 years ago, when Jason was setting forth to Kolchis to find the Golden Fleece. Among the recurrent adulations of Stalin—half Georgian half Ossetian—the word "native-born" (*Rodnoi*) is constantly repeated as though to reassure his faithful supporters of his unity with all his peoples. At an earlier date more stress would have been laid upon his proletarian origin. From February, 1938, the form of oath

for the Red Army has been changed, and the soldiers now pledge their faith as citizens of the Soviet Union, in lieu of the older international pledge.

In 1933 a schoolmaster was dismissed from his post for making too much of Kutusov and Bagration, the heroes of the Napoleonic war. It was counter revolutionary to cherish the portraits of Tsarist Generals. In June, 1938, the Press was insisting on his restoration to his school. He had become the remembrancer of a Russian triumph.

Patriotism has its obverse in xenophobia and stress is laid on the foreign provenance of the capital invested in Russia, in the pre-revolution epoch, and some of the odium of capitalism is thus shifted from native shoulders. Foreign consulates in Russia are cut down, and foreign associations, even those existing for purely beneficent purposes, are excluded from operation on Russian soil. Statistics are suppressed; suspicions on all hands become more painfully obtrusive; official reticence is carried to a point which seemed morbid, until we learned in June, 1941, that foreign attack was not mere fancy.

How real were the grounds of apprehension and how effectively had the patriotism of the Soviet peoples been aroused to meet the danger, we learned in the next fourteen months.

The aim of the Soviet Government in its relations with foreign Powers was dictated by its experience of the intervention of 1918 and 1919, by the announced intentions of the man who controls the vast might of the German Reich, by the evident ambitions of Japan, and by the willingness of a third Power to share in the spoils. These things thrust into the background the design of bringing about revolution throughout the world, and caused the Soviet Government to look for helpers where they were to be found. It needed time for development, and needed peace. By its non-aggression Pacts it foreswore the claim to intervention for the assistance of proletarian revolution, and by oral declaration at Geneva, it extended this self-denying ordinance to cases in which counter-revolution in the interests of capitalism or fascism was being attempted. It was eager to combat depression and restore economic order in capitalist countries, because the world is its customer and supplier. It courted foreign opinion, and sought to disarm foreign suspicion and prejudice. One of the aims of the new Constitution was to give evidence of liberal and democratic sympathies.

The desire for peace was accompanied by a rapidly growing preparation for war. The explanation of this contradiction was given by Stalin himself in February, 1938, in answer to a correspondent who said that he had been censured by local propagandists for declaring that the final victory of Socialism could be achieved only on the world scale, and told that he was no better than a Trotskyist. Wide publicity was given to the reply, which declared that there were two separate sides to the question of Socialism in one country, one that of internal, the other that of external

relations. In the first sphere the U.S.S.R. has everything that is needed to build a complete socialistic society. In the second she has to deal with capitalistic encirclement, and must strengthen the ties with the workers of *bourgeois* countries, and her own military power. The danger of external attack is constantly emphasised, and one of the first measures put before the first session of the Supreme Soviet in 1938 was the creation of a separate Commissariat for Naval Affairs, with a view to the creation of a powerful fleet.

The figures of expenditure on defence in the years immediately anterior to the German attack are eloquent of the determination to be self-sufficing as a military power. They will be found in one of my appendices. From one-fifth of a total of a hundred milliards in 1937, they grew to nearly one-third of two hundred and fifteen milliards in 1941. Let us see what was the policy which this great outlay was intended to support.

I repeat that Stalin desired peace, almost at any price, and for excellent reasons. Every Russian statesmen must be conscious that, for Russia at all events, war brings profound political disturbance. On the Russian victory over Napoleon there followed—with a considerable interval of years, no doubt, but things moved slowly then—the revolt of the Decembrists. The revelation of Russian weakness in the Crimean war made a revolution which was only prevented from declaring itself as such because an Emperor headed it. He carried it some way to completion and abandoned it; and then—after another war which disappointed Panslavist ambitions—became its victim. A humiliating war with Japan caused a revolution which might have proved fatal to the dynasty if Count Witte had not saved it by a humiliating peace. Finally the first World War made an end of the Tsars.

There were other reasons besides anxiety for the régime which should have caused any Russian ruler of today to make sacrifices for the maintenance of peace. A delicate and difficult process of social and economic change was being carried through; a huge estate, so to speak, was being developed at unexampled speed, industry was being created, military and naval defence was being organised, and the great inchoate achievement would be imperilled by conflict with a first-class Power.

Stalin desired peace; but he firmly expected war. Having regard to Hitler's own announcement of his intentions in Ukrain, and to the actual course of the world's history since Japan attacked Manchuria in 1931, he had the best of reasons for expecting it.

Why then did he miss the opportunity of confronting Hitler with the prospect of war both on the east and on the west, by accepting the overtures of the British Empire and the French Republic for joint defence of Poland against attack? Knowing what we know of Hitler's unwillingness to accept war on two fronts, it is probable that a firm Russo-Franco-British alliance would have averted, or at all events postponed, a European war. Instead of that, the aggressor was encouraged by a pact which

postponed for nearly two years the attack on Russia, but removed the German fear of an immediate war with a first class military Power in the east.

And—for so it seems to many—Stalin shared the spoils of German aggression, and even involved Russia in a troublesome minor war with Finland in order to do so. Was this a mere reversion to a vulgar imperialistic ambition, with all its risks, and its apparent disregard of the policy of peace?

As I see the political position, Stalin made one great miscalculation; and another minor one. His policy was entirely realistic and self-regarding; and he did not believe—having regard to the history of appeasement in Europe—that Great Britain and France could be trusted to stand against aggression. In the light of events we may quite reasonably suspect that he had good reasons for these doubts in the case of France. He was wrong about Britain. But Britain was far away and not a land Power. He therefore thought it best, in the interests of the U.S.S.R., to gain time to strengthen his military position. And, as a part of his measures for the strengthening of his military position, and knowing something of what the *pounce* of a mechanical German Army and its supporting air fleet and navy would be like, he sought to put as great a distance as possible between his advanced posts, military and naval, and the potential enemy, that more time might be given for the assemblage of the Russian reserves. Time was of the essence of his plan of defence, and it was apparent that, while the Germans were ready, Russian mobilisation would be a comparatively prolonged process. The facts entirely justified this forecast. The minor miscalculations were the willingness and the power of the Finns to defend themselves, and perhaps also the rancour with which they would resume the fight as soon as the opportunity should present itself.

In July, 1942, we see the terrible neighbour not yet installed in the principal cities and oilfields, the Russian Armies largely intact and concentrated for resistance, and the great industrial Powers girt up to furnish the needed supplies by routes which daily, however slowly, are being made fit for their duty. In these facts we have the substantial justification of the policies which Stalin has followed.

The new consciousness of the need of consolidating strength at home changed the outlook upon the family, the basic institution of the new as of the old State. Neither Lenin nor the Communist Party in general desired or favoured that anarchy in sexual morals with which the revolutionary epoch began. Both Lenin and his wife Mme. Krupskaya spoke and wrote against it. It was part of the general collapse of the framework of society and the State which characterised the great overturn; and I repeat that the business of the Communist Party, far from being the business of destruction, was that of reconstruction upon the ruins, social, economic and political, of old Russia. But the Marxian outlook upon Woman was

upon a being whose personality had been sacrificed to the tasks of reproduction, child-rearing, and household drudgery: who must be rehabilitated by an economic emancipation. She must cease to be a mere instrument for the creation of a future generation, and become the equal companion of Man, as well as the mother of his children.

It is a delicate adjustment which determines the true balance between woman as a personality and woman as a mother. A little too much this way, and she is Aspasia, free to love and to leave. A little too much the other way, and she is the drudge:

"To suckle fools and chronicle small beer."

There were always many millions of the second type, of whom social history is silent. But the early period of the Revolution rather favoured the first, with effects which were not inconsiderable in the towns. There was the notorious glass of water theory, and there were the equally notorious pairs of silk stockings: there was absolute freedom and ease of divorce at the will of either party, and there was the admission of the right to abortion, so long as it was performed under authorised conditions. These things, combined with the widespread employment of women as wage-earners and social and political workers, and the encouragement of the communal life in the forms of public catering and arrangements for the public care of children, were not favourable to the family. Plans even went so far as to envisage the establishment of children's towns, in which—as in the "public schools" of England—the parents would have a minimum of concern with their offspring: but at this point nature rebelled.

The danger of attack from Germany and Japan brought home the necessity of a nation made strong by its teeming millions, while some reduction in the speed of the annual increase, caused by the spread of urban notions to the rural areas, suggested the possibility of a future falling off. It is an interesting fact—the more curious because of the high place taken by the Θεοτοκος, the Mother of God, in Orthodox Religion—that Woman has no *consort* status. She is dependent for her place in society on her own achievements. The wives and families of the leaders are rarely mentioned. But the Party and official Press made much of a visit paid by Stalin to his mother in Ossetia. It was an announcement that the family was an object of Bolshevik respect. The lesson of the debt of politeness due from young to old began to be inculcated by the Press and educational authorities. It was not unneeded; for youth was, and continues to be, not too respectful to its elders. The League of Youth received a brusque intimation that it was their juniors, and not their seniors, whom they were to instruct. In 1935, the Party and the Government initiated a campaign against the practice of abortion, and ultimately carried legisation which made operations unlawful except in cases of danger to life or health. Doctors performing them were made liable to

imprisonment and women undergoing them to minor punishments. Other clauses placed obstacles in the way of divorces: required the presence of both parties before the registration court, and imposed a rising scale of charges: increased the amount of alimony payable for a child: and offered substantial premia for large families. Additional beds were to be provided in maternity homes and additional crèches and kindergartens to be established. Under these proposals the first divorce was to cost 50 roubles, the second 150 and the third 300: and the party not applying for divorce was to be heard, before the divorce was granted on the application of the other.

While this new law was under discussion, there was a remarkable outburst of criticism, largely on the part of women, against the limitation of the right to abortion. This was grounded upon the low standard of family incomes, the lack of housing accommodation in the cities, and the inadequate supply of nursery requirements from perambulators to baby's bottles. It came from women of all groups, teachers, students, factory workers, office employees and collectivised peasants. Nothing could have been less like the platitudes of laudation—along with judicious criticism of selected details—and assent, with which the columns of the Press are normally occupied For once, the female population of the U.S.S.R. was fully vocal, and there could be no doubt at all what it wanted.

The Soviet Government has its ear very close to the ground, and may have been aware that the men did not fully sympathise with their women on this issue. Mr. Hindus suggests something of the kind when he tells us that Russians do not want their birthrate interfered with, because they expect war. Men are also less acutely sensible of the inconvenience of large families than are women: for reasons which I need not emphasise. The bill went through, and the *head of the Planning Commission*—this is a characteristic touch—announced that the U.S.S.R. would have a population of 300 millions by 1975.

According to a statement made, and not contradicted, at the one hundred and twenty-first annual gathering of the British Medical Association at Dublin in July, 1933, abortion is widely and largely practised in the United Kingdom: and it was widely and largely practised in Russia before it was legalised in 1920. The legal prohibition will not put an end to it but will increase the number of clandestine and more dangerous operations. But a substantial proportion of the quarter of a million births which were annually prevented by operation in hospital will now take place in due course: and since the use of contraceptives—cheap and easily obtainable though they be—spreads but slowly, and space in crèches is quite inadequate, women is in some measure relegated to that prison of domestic duty from which she had recently been delivered. In the meanwhile I note that a lady correspondent of Mrs. Seama Rynin Allan, writing, apparently from Moscow, in 1937, assures her friend that a new factory is being established for the manu-

facture of contraceptives and that everything that is produced is available in any drug-store. This fact is to be balanced against the announcement made in September, 1941, that single and childless citizens (men between twenty and fifty, and women between twenty and forty-five) are to pay an additional income tax, ordinarily amounting to 5 per cent. on salary.

In so far as woman continues in the prison of domestic duty, her economic equality is incomplete, and it is economic equality upon which emancipation ultimately depends. She has gained and continues to gain, by the freedom of divorce, which has made an end of the legal right of property in her as a chattel: by the large openings for industrial employment, and by the system which makes her a co-sharer and a dividend-drawer in the farm: by the enforcement of the law of alimony for children: and by the communal provision for family-catering, for mechanised washhouses, and for the care of the young, so far as these last in practice extend. The housewife, and the woman who is a mother, now figure along with the worker and the woman worker, the collective farmer and the woman collective farmer, the Red Army man, the man of the Red Fleet, the Government employee, the member of the working intelligentsia, and the old-age pensioner, and separate from all of these, as two of the groups of which the citizens of the Soviet Union are made up. But laws do not, in the space of a generation, change popular habits: and the resistance, in the Mahommedan population, to the abolition of the veil and the payment of the bride-price, is only an extreme case, illustrating a general conservative tendency. "We have rounded Seraglio Point: we have not yet doubled Cape Turk." The two aims, of a largely increased population, and of the emancipation of woman, will continue to be mutually contradictory, until a further development of economic strength makes possible a vast extension of accommodation, in maternity homes and in institutions for the reception and charge of young children and of the supply of mechanised laundries and of the requirements of the civilised nursery. In the meanwhile, as a part of its policy for the strengthening of the family, the Soviet Government strikes at the sexual perversions, formerly treated with legal tolerance: and encourages an almost bourgeois standard of sexual ethics. We hear of persons excluded from the Communist Party on the ground of successive divorces.

The children have always been regarded as the treasures of the Socialist State, and, in periods of want, they and their education have been the first charge upon scanty resources. It is a part of the new developments that all the children, whatever their social origin, should be equally treated. Stalin himself gave the key note when he declared that sons were not responsible for the offences of their fathers. In the Budget for 1937 education was the next largest item, after Defence, and a very close second to it. After an interval of experiment, the Bolsheviks have learned not to put too great a strain upon the children, and to abandon educational eccentricities which had attracted them in the early stages. Dis-

cipline, uniforms, examinations, certificates, a place for classical studies, learned titles, have all come back into the schools. A touch of priggishness betrays itself now and again. *Pioneer Truth* has made light of the children's habit of jumping up behind motor cars and so getting free rides. Adult *Truth* rebukes it for this levity, and particularly for some verses in which fun is made of the children who climbed on to a car in the hope of a ride, and found the chauffeur was asleep inside. Are the examinations not at hand, and are there not more serious subjects to occupy the pages of the juvenile journal? Mr. Gradgrind is not solely o British nationality. But his appearance in Russian dress may be no more than a reaction against the spirit which encouraged the child to write to the public press when his mother whipped him.

I have suggested that latter-day Communism—the Communism which reconciles itself with the stage of socialism in one country—hopes to establish its œcumenical claim by its superior productivity. To what extent does it rely, as N.E.P. relied, upon the incentive of personal gain? There are those to whom it seems that the system of piece-work wages, carried to the pitch which it has reached in the case of the Stakhanovite super-piece-workers, and the other champion producers, Ephremovists, two hundred percenters, and the like, represents a new stage of retreat from principles. It is a part of the model statute for collective farms that its members are expected to become well-to-do. The definition of the legal rights of collective farmers in their own yards and the produce of their yards and in their dividends, after the dues of Government and of Machine Tractor Stations have been met, tends in the same direction. There are considerable inequalities from farm to farm, and a number of farms have actually reached the so-called " millionaire" status. One of the earliest advertisements (as distinct from political propaganda) which appeared in Moscow was that of the Savings Banks. The newspapers publish with pride the rising amounts there deposited: and every *plage* and holiday resort has its branches for the convenience of depositors. The law allows of the inheritance of wealth, subject to a very drastic scale of death duties: government loans offer an opportunity of investment free from inheritance tax: and there are even a few individuals who live upon the interest of them. The successful artist or novelist may almost be called rich on the proceeds of his royalties. The town households which keep maids, and have country cottages for summer *villegiatura,* are pretty numerous. There is a pleasant suggestion of leisure in the great prominence now given in the news to sports—not to the gambling sport of the British people, but to skating, tennis, ski-ing, hiking, hockey and parachute jumping. There was a football match at Moscow between a Basque and a Russian team in very hot weather at the end of June, 1937, and *phut-bol* has become a Russian word. The shops are fairly full of semi-luxury goods at substantial prices. Model department stores in the cities will pack your purchases in paper and deliver goods to your address.

Advertisements of sports goods, musical instruments, photographic apparatus, paints and perfumes, superior soap, preserved foods, sweet biscuits, and articles the appearance of which suggests wedding presents, occupy space in the newspapers and the public vehicles. One advertisement showing an extremely respectable family in a well-furnished room, with book-case, sofa, sofa-cushions, dining-table, chairs, and electric light shade, and urging householders to insure their furniture, clothing, musical instruments, *auto-transport*, etc., irresistibly suggested to me Maxim Gorky's story of the man with the smug ideals, who realised his ambition of the *red armchair*, in which he might sit and read the newspaper to his wife and children. Flowers and personal adornment are within the reach of a section of Soviet citizens, and a *Society of Friends of Green Plants* holds exhibitions of flowers at Moscow. White collars and ties are worn by the men in the towns; and even the collective farmer, when he comes up for a conference, thinks it necessary to be photographed in similar vestments.

The differences in the emoluments of the better-paid workers and technicians have combined with the position of the *sovburi*, as the people call them, the huge administrative and clerical staffs, to create the semblance—which bids fair to develop into the reality—of a middle class. In the upper ranks of the Red Army, and in official circles, there is a return to Tsarist manners, and you may see the gentleman, *en grande tenue*, bowing over the lady's hand or kissing it at the end of a dance. Trotsky made much of the fact that an official may be heard *theeing* and *thouing* a subordinate, though this very practice was one to which the revolutionary soldiers of 1917 objected in their officers. The *Moscow Daily News* reported a growing demand for jewellery in 1936, and the opening of an institute of beauty culture and a cocktail hall. The excursion steamers on the new Moscow Volga Canal advertised three classes of fares.

Formerly manual labour was held in higher honour than the life of the desk. It seems that a change has now come about and that literary instruction now offers a superior attraction, which it is necessary to counteract. In October, 1940, not only was the conscription of industry formally introduced—this was quite in harmony with already well-established principle—but fees began to be levied on pupils in secondary schools, with the aim of encouraging technical against literary education.

Lest I should convey a false impression by this picture, I hasten to emphasise that the new economic inequality is not the inequality of the West, for the gambling of the Stock Exchange, and of financial manipulation, is unknown, and one man cannot make money for himself by organising the labour of others, or establish a factory or a commercial business involving the employment of paid labour, or the buying and selling of commodities. Make all that you can by your own labour, but nothing by the labour of others, and nothing by trade: is, in brief, the law of the land since the

end of N.E.P. Nothing approaching to the waste and ostentation of the fashionable quarters of London, Paris and New York exists in the U.S.S.R. The best standard is more nearly that of the London Co-operative Society. If there is any "law of conspicuous waste" in operation in the U.S.S.R., it is not for the individual, but for the city and for public institutions.

Side by side with the growth of inequality between the rank-and-file workman on the one hand and the official and the better-paid technician and *stakhanovets* on the other, there has been a closer approach to equality between the larger categories of the population. The abolition of rationing, and the establishment of zonally uniform prices, (*1934–35*) deprived the urban workers of a privilege which they had enjoyed since the early days of the planning period: and, in spite of the additions made to cash wages, did actually reduce the real wages of that group as a whole. I shall deal in the next chapter with the constitution of November, 1936: but I must note here that it, too, was in theory at least, a political leveller, destroying the class-basis of indirect election by class-organs, and substituting a supreme legislature of the parliamentary type, equalising the franchise for town and country, and putting an end to the disfranchisement of particular classes. All this was, in effect, an invasion of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" by a principle of an entirely different kind. The Society of Old Bolsheviks, which was founded in 1922, with a membership qualified by at least eighteen years' service in the Party, and playing the part of a sort of Elder Statesmen, consulted on large issues, felt very strongly on the subject of this essay in equalisation. It was therefore dissolved in May, 1935, while the draft of the constitution was still in embryo. It is likely also that the abolition of the Communist Academy (founded in 1918) and its absorption, in February, 1936, in the all-Union Academy of Sciences, founded by Peter the Great at St. Petersburg, and transferred by the revolutionary Government to Moscow, were also aimed at the forestalling of opposition to the principles of the constitution.

There are some other indications that the drafters of the new constitution sought to introduce something more closely resembling what the Western democrat regards as a normal democratic constitution. One of these is the importance attached to the non-party element in the list of candidates for election to the Supreme and the local soviets. The "Party" remains powerful; but it has received a reminder—more reminders than one—that it is not indispensable. Stalin evidently has every intention of keeping the "Party" in order, and deals with it just as any determined autocrat might deal with the Church.

As pointed out in the succeeding chapter, the new Constitution, which goes into so many and such meticulous details regarding the system of Government, says practically nothing about the "Party" which guides and controls the working of the whole. Until a few months ago, it was

true to say that Stalin himself had no place in the Constitution. He was merely the General Secretary of the Communist Party; and not a part of the Government recognised as such by the document which purports to define its character. Since then he has become the President of the Council of People's Commissars and is virtually the Prime Minister of the U.S.S.R., and the statement that he is outside the constitution is no longer true. But while he was still outside of it, he was, as he now remains, the unquestioned head of the State, and these were some of the things which the Press and people were saying about him. He is the leader, the teacher, the friend, the father, the saviour. The others are merely his counsellors and pupils. It was the Stalinite Five-Year-Plan, Stalin's constitution, Stalin's block of party and non-party citizens, and it was a Stalinite exploit which the heroes of the drifting floe in the Arctic Ocean accomplished. He is always at his post, always on the captain's bridge, always handling the true compass: he is the giant, the genius of political reason and unbendable will: his name is the symbol of our victories, and the war-flag of our people. To all he is precious, to all he is familiar, to each one he is the close friend, for all he is hope and strength and guidance on the dangerous and difficult path from oppression to freedom and happiness. He is fearless in fight and merciless to the people's enemies, like Lenin: free from every kind of panic, like Lenin; wise and unhurrying in the decision of complex problems, like Lenin. He *loves his people* (sic) as Lenin loved it.

The delegation of literary men, assembled at Tiflis to do honour to an ancient Georgian poet, pay a pilgrimage to Gori, the birthplace of Stalin. Here is the little house with the inscription upon it: "Here was born on December 21st, 1879, the Great Stalin: and here he spent his childhood up to 1883." Amid applause, and the singing of the International, a letter is indited to the leader. Unforgettable day, unforgettable impressions!

The Yugoslavian Socialist, Ciliga, who was exiled to Yeniseisk as an irreconcileable, quotes a popular comparison of Stalin with one of the early Russian Tsars. He is our Ivan Kalita, they say, our "John Moneybag" (Ivan I, 1328–40), who accumulated money, gained a breathing space of forty years from the Tartars by turning revenue collector for them, and so acquired a powerful economic hold over the smaller principalities which set Russia on the path towards unity. The nickname shows how long, and how essentially accurate, popular memories in Russia are.

His name passes into legend, and I append to this chapter a translation of a poem, which tells a sort of good St. Wenceslas story about him. It makes a bizarre foreground to the Moscow trials of 1936–38: but this seemingly impossible combination of the people's father and friend, with the executioner of political opponents, is what actually reveals itself. The warm broad smile, which films and photographs show to us, is a

reality, confirmed by recent close observation. He loves a homely proverb or a quotation from Gogol the humorist, the Russian Dickens. He has no command of literary Russian, and talks in short sentences, shifting from one leg to another, or walking up and down, while the people roar with delight at every sentence. It is not fear that makes this enthusiasm. It is the men in responsible places who have cause for fear. The rank and file are happy with their hero, and confident that he is their friend.

I know nothing more revealing than a sentence of Trotsky making his statement before the international commission in Mexico. It shows us something of both the two enemies. "Stalin was not born a master of frame-ups." There is generosity in that: and a hint of old memories too. Trotsky goes on to say that it is all a matter of the régime: that men take the bent which the system gives to them.

Is Stalin the master of the machine which he has done so much to build up, or is he another Frankenstein faced by his own monster? I might counter with a further question. How long can any dictator continue actually to dictate: and how soon must he begin to be the servant and mouthpiece of his own creation? Trotsky says that it is this latter which has happened to Stalin: but it is possible that he may have been in conflict with a section of the bureaucracy which desired an alliance with Germany in order to ensure peace and its own position.

In March, 1937, he made a characteristic onslaught upon the bureaucracy, and described it as *soulless*. *Krokodil*, the Party's comic paper, plays a part similar to the famous "Labby" of Victorian days, in lashing official abuses and ridiculing indolence and inefficiency. The editors would not do this if they did not know that Stalin chuckled over their criticisms. Both the Bureaucracy and the Communist Party—now not easily to be distinguished from it—suffered severely in the storms of 1936–38. The Sovburi, as the people call them, the Soviet bureaucrats, now constitute a vested interest, making for conservatism, as all vested interests do, and Stalin doubtless feels the necessity of keeping both the " Party" and the official staffs in a proper subjection to control.

The great Russian rulers—Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, Catherine the Great—have not been fortunate in their successors. The burden of autocracy can hardly be lifted on lesser shoulders. If I may be pardoned for attempting to raise a corner of the veil which covers Stalin's inner thoughts, I suggest that his constitution of 1936, with the accompanying hints of a desire to construct a true democracy, show that he has no successor in whom he is able to repose full confidence, and that he seeks to protect his people against the consequences of a less able rule than his own. It may be that S. M. Kirov (murdered in 1934) was his provisional choice, and that the extraordinary consequences which followed upon Kirov's death are explained by the blow then given to Stalin's plans.

In the meanwhile there is much in Stalin—a touch of occasional caprice,

for instance—which recalls the typical despot seeking the good of his people, but indulging his own humours in doing so. His dealings with art and the artists—they form a virtual portion of the machinery of State in the U.S.S.R.—since the end of the period of comparative freedom which characterised the new economic policy—have not infrequently worn a look of caprice.

Modernism in art—if cubes and the like can still be called modernism—is out of fashion. That strange and baffling creation which gives to the Red Square of Moscow its particular *ownness*, the Cathedral of Basil the Blessed, the "Mosque" of Napoleon, is restored to the form in which its original Russian architects conceived it, and pride is expressed in the engineering and technical skill which they displayed in the erection of the "greatest monument of Russian national architecture". A new figure is being performed by the dancers in the cotillion of state, and old favourites among the artists, who have not kept up with each turn in the dance are relegated to obscurity or to disgrace. In some cases it is possible to guess in what respect they have offended: in others I must confess that my imagination is baffled. But I remember Ovid sent to the chilly shores of the Black Sea, and Juvenal stationed at the somewhat warmer First Cataract of the Nile, and Seneca instructed to open a jugular vein in his bath, and I realise that history has a way of repeating itself.

Boris Pilnyak was excluded from the Writers' Association, and therefore from opportunities of publication. He began by welcoming the revolution as a revolt of the Russian people against the false orientation given to Russian life by Peter the Great. One of the characters in his *Snowstorm* sees the Revolution as a blizzard, and the actors in it as snowflakes. This was picturesque, but not in harmony with the conceptions of the purposeful Bolsheviks. He liked the company of Bolsheviks, he tells us, because they had buoyancy and cheerfulness. But he seems to have been always suspect, and he was forced out of the Proletarian Writers' Association, which between 1928 and 1932 made itself supreme in Russian literature, because his novel *Mahogany* was supposed to be tainted with "romantic Trotskyism". To rehabilitate himself he wrote, first a book on Tajikistan (because it was hinted to him that Stalin was deeply concerned to establish the success of his policy with the minority Nationalities), and afterwards *The Volga Flows to the Caspian Sea*: a forecast of the canal system, parts of which have since been carried out. But this latter work, too, contains very thinly veiled criticism and mysterious hints of nonconformity. For instance, there is a parable in it, comparing the scent of violets to the smell of stinking fish, which must have given somebody occasion for searchings of heart. Pilnyak is a chronic dissentient, and there is nothing surprising in his troubles. It will be noticed that it is the Writers' Guild, not the Government, which first took action against him. This is characteristic of present methods. Artists are used to

keep artists in order. But in this case the arrest of the artist followed his disgrace.

Valentin Katayev was excluded from the Party, and I cannot guess why. He was a satirist of Soviet institutions between 1924 and 1928, when self-criticism was the approved order of the day. Afterwards he wrote a hearty farce on the theme of the housing shortage, which must have made tens of thousands laugh. His *Forward O Time!* takes for its subject the beating of the world's record in concrete-mixing, and shows the proper enthusiasm for socialist construction. He never exhibits that antagonism between old and new which provides Soviet literature with its best and most poignant theme, while occasionally approaching dangerously near to the edge of the impermissible: and his offence remains a mystery for me: but I notice that he is again writing on behalf of the Soviet Government in December, 1941, and both he and Ilya Ehrenburg appear to be rehabilitated after a period of eclipse.

Boris Pasternak is a lyrical poet of originality and distinction, who has been compared with Dr. John Donne. It has been said that he makes the impression of seeing the world for the first time. He wrote a poem on the suicide of the poet Mayakovsky—a poem inspired by delicate and profound sentiment: and the Soviet Goverment disapproves of suicide, because people must not exhibit the desire to escape from the new dispensation: just as the Orthodox Church disapproved of it because people must not desert the congregation, upon which the spirit has been bestowed. He had recently been translating some contemporary Georgian poets. He was always aloof: and therein perhaps lay his offence. He was excluded from the Writers Association, like Pilnyak.

A very different person is Bezimensky, a gifted rhymer, frankly political in all his productions, who sang (or said):

> "Let others think of Spring!
> But I walk on, and think persistently
> Of the cost price of Soviet goods."

He did not err by delicacy and aloofness: but he, too, has been in trouble, after losing a portion of his literary reputation in recent years. It may be that he could not dance the new figure set by the cotillion leader. Demyan Bedny, who once came near to being the proletarian laureate, offended against the new historical sense by an unfavourable picture of the ancient Russian *bogatyri*, and fell from favour. The worst that he had suffered in happier years was a drastic reduction of the payment made to him per line of verse: because it was noticed that he repeated his refrains too frequently, which looked like stealing a claim upon the department of accounts. Selvinsky, another of the writers now out of grace, was a constructivist—that is to say, an advocate of plan in literature, to correspond with plan in production. But that, too, is out of the mode.

(*1914*). Tairov, the founder of the Kamerny theatre on a basis of equal

pay for all, from manager to scene-shifter, in days when such experiments called forth the frowns of authority, produced in January, 1935, a composite Cleopatra, for whom both Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw had been laid under contribution. The Egyptian queen was represented as fighting for Egyptian independence. It was a theme which would have met with more approval at an earlier date, when the Communist International was inciting oppressed "colonials" to rebellion against imperialist masters. But it was not the right thing when the Third International began to favour the United Front. Equally, a film based on R. L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* was condemned because it represented the pirates as Irish Revolutionaries, and, for this and other shortcomings, Shumiatsky ceased to be the chief of the Cinema industry.

Afinogeniev, the author of *Fear*, recently killed in an air raid upon Moscow, and Kirshon, the author of *Bread*, both plays with considerable reputations in their time, but both dealing with painful episodes in Soviet life, fell temporarily out of favour. Mr. Robert Byron acutely observed that the people of the U.S.S.R. were beginning to appreciate the joy of life, and did not like to be reminded of the period of stress, which went before. The periodical *Art* has been roughly criticised for neglecting themes of to-day.

Eisenstein has fallen from his high estate in the world of film production. The film is an instrument of propaganda, a means of maintaining the masses at a white heat of enthusiasm: and, to fulfil this object, it must be simple and intelligible, and capable of presentation to the less advanced nationalities of the Union. There were complaints that Eisenstein was too abstract, for the discharge of the function required of the film-producer. He was engaged in the production of a film of the collective farm, but took a very long time over it, spent a great deal of money, did not acquaint himself with the life of the farm, and, finally, was removed to—a *sanatorium*. Those who recall the grim jest of Nicolas I with Peter Chaadaev—he placed the critic under medical observation—will recognise the survival in the U.S.S.R. of the spirit of 100 years ago. It is a new turn, and yet some of the newness is of quite respectable antiquity.

The theatre is to the Bolsheviks what the Church was to the Orthodox. The liturgy of the Church re-enacted the holy mysteries and its decorations represented them for the better understanding of the congregation. In doing this it *caused the great events to happen anew*: did not merely give a theatrical representation of them. The Church could not have tolerated irrelevant or distracting matter in its services or its paintings and did in fact observe a very rigid convention in respect to both. Similarly the Bolsheviks required their dramatists and producers to show to the people the great events and the characteristic life and aims of the Revolution. This is the key to certain demands which, without it, seem to show an unreasonable rigidity of outlook. But the audiences wanted relaxation

and amusement. They did not want, if I may so put it, to be always in Church. Man can endure the heights for a time, but he cannot live at them. I think that the changing history of the Russian theatre is to be explained by these two things: the insistence on a revolutionary liturgy, and the self-protective reaction of the philistine public, who prefer to see *Charlie's Aunt.*

Meyerhold, once described as the creator of the real revolutionary theatre, and the first to reject the monotonous realism of Stanislavsky, honoured with the title of Artist of the People at the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of his activity, had made his stage a forum for the expression of political ideas, and a means of conveying to the masses the watchwords of the revolution. Trotsky called him the passionate experimenter: but also laughed slily, in his *Literature and Revolution,* at the "bio-mechanics" and "constructivism" which turned the actors into highly qualified acrobats, and the stage into scaffoldings symbolical of industrial development, with great wheels indicating a kind of speedometer for the passions represented. He was building a new theatre, with three stages, a sunken pool, and a speedway entrance and exit for motor-cars. It seemed ominous of the agitational mass-play, once all the rage. But the Soviet public is tired to death of the agitational mass-play, longs for something simple, human, and entertaining, let us say the *Geisha.* Stalin, himself an amateur of the theatre, and a frequent visitor to it, sympathises with the low-brows. According to the article in *Pravda* which signed his artistic death-warrant, Meyerhold has more against him than this change of the public taste. We quote it because it is characteristic of the fates of the artists. The writer says that Meyerhold's first production—in the early days of the Revolution—made a hero of a Menshevik traitor, and his second was actually dedicated to—Trotsky. That Trotsky was at that time the organiser of victory against intervention and revolt is clean forgotten. A re-writing of history has converted him into a traitor from the days of the Brest-Litovsk peace onwards. For the rest, the revolutionary producer, in spite of warnings, has never exhibited "Soviet realism", never reflected the problems which interest all Soviet citizens, and his theatre has made itself a foreign body in the wholesome organism of Soviet taste, so that all now ask whether it continues to serve a useful purpose. This was followed by an order of the Committee of Arts, closing the Meyerhold theatre, with the remark that "the re-employment of the producer in some other capacity will be taken into consideration". In the same issue of the paper which published this order there appeared—a cruel reversal of fortune—a special article in praise of Stanislavsky, the veteran of the Moscow Art Theatre; so the whirligig of time brought in its revenges.

A change in popular taste accounted for the temporary eclipse of the promising young composer Shostakovich. His music for the opera of *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* was admirably expressive of the action of the drama. But there were no *tunes* in it, and people much prefer something

which they can pick up and hum over. A review, in the Communist daily, of a ten days' musical festival held to commemorate the twentieth anniversary emphasises the need of a Soviet symphonic classic, of something national, bright, gay and melodious. It contrasts C. Prokofiev's complete failure in his "formalistic" fourth symphony, with the success of later compositions in which he had corrected his former style. Now, it seems, he has attained to a profound simplicity and truth, and shown us what a *Soviet composer*, a serious musician and a great master, can achieve—when guided by instruction.

We should go wrong if we were to suppose that the guidance which brings about these changes is merely official. The public make their own demands upon the artists and press their own tastes. Readers and playgoers write to playwrights and authors and urge their own requirements with no uncertain voice. At the first Writers' Conference grotesque contraptions were paraded by bodies of "consumers", caricaturing the conventional figures supposed to be beloved by literary and other artists, with inscriptions declaring that they had no likeness to reality. In particular, a troop of young Pioneers displayed representations of large-eyed, innocent-looking children, and gave notice that "we are not in the least like this".

An intriguing incident of the stormy period of 1937 was the fall from grace of Natalia Satz, who, as a girl of fourteen and a half, had originated the Children's Theatre, now an important institution of the U.S.S.R. It is a theatre for children, not a theatre in which children act. The three principal children's theatres have large adult companies of some 200 persons each—artists, teachers, psychologists, writers, musicians and supers, as well as actors. I wish I could be certain what Natalia Satz did, or failed to do, so as to come into conflict with the Committee of Art. It is said that she made the children, by the pictures which she presented to them, too keenly aware of themselves as individuals, whereas they ought to be aware rather of their position in society. Perhaps she was merely self-willed and proud of her young achievements. But I confess that the sudden reversal of her fortunes looks like an effect of female jealousy.

It was not for nothing that the Tretiakov Gallery in Moscow selected for its special 1937 Exhibition the works of the painter Surikov, a well-known nineteenth-century realist. It is simple, crude, broad-canvassed, historical, stuff, with a tang of sensation in it, something which everybody can understand. Many visitors to Moscow have probably carried away a recollection of *The Morning of the Execution of the Streltsi*: and the picture of *Ivan the Terrible's Murder of his Son*, by another artist of the same epoch and school: and perhaps are Philistine enough to sympathise with the popular taste which likes such graphic representations.

A change, essentially similar, has made its appearance in architecture. The straight up-and-down buildings of glass, concrete and steel, which have been irreverently described as band-boxes, have given place to a

showy, luxurious, pseudo-classical style, which I may, I hope without offence, describe as nineteenth-century *bourgeois*. The new Workers' Sanatorium at the sea-side resort of Sochi, opened at the twentieth anniversary of the Revolution, and illustrated in the British Press, is a fine example of this relapse. It is Hans Andersen's Goblin, weary of adventure and hungry for comfort, settling down to "take porridge with the huckster." But architects continue to be enthusiastic over the large opportunities and generous expenditure of Russian planning. In looking at the new Moscow with its glorious spaces, it is inevitable that one should be reminded of the Athens of Pericles.

Let us not forget that the terrible Gay-Pay-oo started dance clubs for the young people—to keep them out of mischief—and sanctioned jazz. Man cannot remain for ever on the stretch; any more than Apollo can always bend the bow; and one of the things which has happened to the Russian people is that they—of course before the German attack in June, 1941—felt the need of relaxation after effort. The tendency of certain Communists to rest on their laurels was the subject of severe stricture in June, 1935, when the society of Old Bolsheviks was liquidated. This is a part of the explanation of the Industrial purge which accompanied the Trotskyist purge of 1936–38. There was an interval between the end of the Second Plan and the start of the Third: and, not unnaturally, some of the less heroic took the opportunity to nod. Professor Gleb Struve tells us that Zoschenko, the best humorist in Soviet literature, has found his mouthpiece in the Soviet man in the street: who passively accepts the Revolution, but vaguely regrets the Philistine comfort and happiness which was the lot of the *bourgeois*, before the chips of the world's workshop began to fly so furiously. Of course we know that Art ought not to be an escape from life, but an expression of it: but the poor abuses of the time lack countenance.

We are told that, from the Marxian standpoint, theatre, sport, and physical culture (of which there is increasingly much in the U.S.S.R.) are not mere relaxation from productive labour, but the cultural counterpart to economic and institutional change. It may be so. But we remember that Mackenzie Wallace, who knew his Russia well, said that periods of intense effort were followed by periods of weariness: and that the old peasant-life, bred into the bone of every Russian, consisted of tremendous toil in the fields, followed by collapse on the stove in winter. We know that the artists themselves felt the lassitude in the air: for the all-Union Committee of Art detected them in the attitude of napping, and revised *the terms of their remuneration*, on lines demanding a more regular output.

I would not be understood to say that the new turn was all in the direction of fatigue and the abandonment of effort. How immense is the latent energy we are learning now in 1941–42 when Russia is shedding her blood and burning her great works. Youth is for ever arriving, and putting fresh life into work and play, and the leaders do not flag in their

call or renewed achievement. Plan succeeds to plan, anniversary passes on to anniversary, and socialist emulation conspires with material rewards and individual distinctions to keep energy alive. The natural disposition to lie back and contemplate with satisfaction the gains of previous effort is perpetually being counteracted by a succession of new appeals and new excitements. A whole nation is being stage-managed to admiration. This has been going on, of course, since the start of the first Five-Year-Plan. What is ever fresh is the fertility of invention devising new stimulants to make enthusiasm sparkle.

In the realm of Art, the Soviet novel has been returning, since its revival in 1924, to that close concern with the individual human being and the springs of his action which characterised Leo Tolstoi and the great masters. There was an interruption of this current in the period of the first Five-Year-Plan with its summons for the enlistment of literature under the banner of economic progress. But, since Maxim Gorky returned to the Soviet Union in 1932, the demand has been for Socialist Realism. That is very far from signifying a mere photographic Realism, reproducing a platitudinous actuality. There must be in it a buoyancy, an optimism, a mood of prophecy: it must imagine and forecast the future triumphs of Socialism: must be, in short, not Realism at all, but rather a romantic conviction in the light of which the present is to be transformed. For this new Art, misgivings and doubts are treason to the truth. The artist must be whole-hearted in an assured faith. He is no longer asked to comply with a social command, or to depict the victories of cement-making, or wheat-growing. But he must be inspired with a general vision of success, of the success of the tanks upon which the Soviet Union has entered. It is an echo of the conviction that man can make his own history.

Fortunately for the artist, there is here no minute prescription with which he is to comply under threat of ostracism. He is not free to mope, or to doubt, or to plunge into introspection. The art of escape, turning aside from actual life and its problems, seems to be forbidden to him, and he must see the future in red, if not in *couleur de rose*. As Mr. Hannibal Chollop informed Mark Tapley, "We must be cracked up, sir. We are a model to the airth, and must be jist cracked up, I tell you." He continues by saying: "Our backs is easy ris. We must be cracked up, or they rises, and we snarls." But there is a vagueness in the requirement, which leaves a wide range of choice. Sholohov has satisfied it with his *Virgin Soil Upturned*: although he was not insensible to the tragedy of the *kulak's* dispossession and deportation. Stalin himself has sometimes proved more reasonable than the lesser members of his constellation. It was at his instance that *The days of the Turbins* was restored to the stage: although the singing of the old Russian national anthem, *God Save the Tsar,* was part of the performance: and the sympathies of the audience were enlisted for White officers.

In the drama and the film, as in the novel, the individual human being has come into his own, and the interest is in his character and its expression in action: no longer in that mystical entity, the mass, as it was when such productions as *October*, and *Turk-Sib*, were the approved form of Cinema art. *Chapayev* (issued in November, 1934), the simple story of a hot-headed, stout-hearted partisan leader, and of the political Commissar, who guides him to wisdom, is a film with a hero. *Circus*, the story of a white woman who defies American conventions against miscegenation, and wins the sympathy of the many races of the U.S.S.R., despite the machinations of a villainous German, combines the representation of the heroic individual with the theme of the fascist enemy. It had a success only second to that of *Chapayev*. *The Last Night*, a picture of Moscow on the eve of revolution in November, 1917, might have lent itself to the mass treatment of an earlier epoch of film-production, but is actually full of individual characters distinctly developed. The same thing shows itself in the theatre, where Okhlopkov, a young producer, made a great success of *Aristocrats*, a play with the theme of the building of the Baltic-White Sea Canal by criminals of all types. Pride in the work, and in his own contribution to it, works a change in each individual, differing according to each character. It is no mass conversion.

The emphasis on the personality of individuals, characteristic of latter-day Soviet literature and art, found its analogue in the character-pictures of the candidates selected for the election to the Supreme Soviet, which figured in the Press. Tractorists, collective farmers, smelters, miners, men and women, not necessarily Stakhanovites and by no means all Communists, were depicted, along with their large-scale portraits, to each being allotted half a dozen columns over a third of a newspaper page. There was an insistent suggestion that similar honour was attainable by each and all who learn to do a job well: but the individual did emerge in distinction from the mass, and was made interesting for his own sake. Orders and decorations for good service are bestowed as lavishly as under the Tsarist régime. Stalin and his inner circle of councillors appear on banners and posters with wearisome repetition. If one of them ceases to figure before the eyes of the public, it is an ominous sign, and a warning that his favour is diminished. *The anonymity is gone out of Soviet life*: and the heroes and martyrs are buried, if not in the wall of the Kremlin, at least in that of the Novodevichi monastery, with tablets commemorating their names and achievements. The change is characteristic: and the achievements of individuals in the war with Germany will stimulate it further.

Annexure to Chapter XX

THE BOY IN OUR VILLAGE

The little boy is ill.
  Death sits on his pillow.
His mother's heart will break.
  The earth sleeps under the rain.
The autumn leaves fall:
  There is no sap in them,
It is evening, and the village
  Lies far away in a sleepy hole.
The son is dying, the boy,
  The hope, the joy, the delight.
The father grieves sorely,
  There is lead on his heart.
He looks at the child
  And sees the greyness,
The greyness that is darkening
  The bright face.
It seems, it is already going out,
  The young flame of the eyes,
  They are already growing cold,
  The little fingers.
A doctor! But a wise one!
  He wrings his hands.
Help, help, is needed,
  Such as is not in the village.
A rare, a cruel, chance,
  And no doctor to help.
The father goes out in the street,
  He goes with weary feet.
The sleepy telegraph man
  Opens his hatch.
The father writes, in agitation:
    "Moscow,
      Kremlin,
        To Stalin."
And forth flashes a telegram
  Across the fierce whistle of the wind:
It flies over the hills
  A short and plain one:
It lights up the trees in the woods,
  With its voice like a spark.
The telegram knocks at Kremlin Gate,
  Stalin receives it,
And sorrow, the sorrow of a father,
Gives a squeeze to his heart.

But Death sits beside the boy.
  Measure her strength!
It is she who triumphs. All is over.
  Give up, be silent, yield.
  She knows not that Stalin
    Means a struggle with Death.
She knows not that Stalin
  Means Life for us.

Not a moment is lost:
  Stalin gives the order.
Hurry scurry, the telegraph men
  Send off the telegram, and lo!
The mechanics wake up the pilot:
  And, while it is night at Kazan,
The doctor enters the cabin.
  The aeroplane flies into the sky.
The aeroplane rushes over the clouds,
  The messenger of the Great Friend.
Louder, nearer, the engine,
  Speaks its message of gladness.
The mother flies to meet it.
  Death cowers in the corner.
The doctor enters the room:
  He rolls up his sleeves.
He says gently to Sister:
  "See that all is in order!"
He says to the parents:
  "Father and mother, not another tear!"
The old man, fearless and wrathful,
  Begins to wrestle with Death.
And the boy falls into sleep:
  And Death sneaks away.
There it is, Stalin's heart,
  His life, and his work.
He leads to great happiness
  The peoples of my land.
Foresees the storms and the wars,
Gives their marching orders to the pilots,
Saves the life of the child,
  The boy in our village.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CONSTITUTION OF 1936

"But it is an easy thing for men to be deceived by the specious name of Libertie: and, for want of Judgement to distinguish, mistake for their Private Inheritance, and Birthright, which is the right of the Publique only. . . ."—HOBBES, *Leviathan.*

"Communism has no idea of freedom as the possibility of choice, but only as the possibility of giving full play to one's energy when one has chosen which way to turn."—BERDYAEV, *The Russian Revolution.*

"In the Soviet factory where I worked, every single change in production or administration was the subject of the widest and most heated discussion among the workers. . . . From the floor came not only criticism but constructive proposals. The rank and file contributed enormously to the reorganisation of the factory. If this isn't democracy I don't know what the word means."—CLARENCE HATHAWAY, quoted by Joseph Freeman in *An American Testament.*

CERTAIN FUNDAMENTAL assumptions underlie the Constitution of 1936. It is assumed that a basis, economic, social and political, has been

created, a solid foothold upon which the advancing commonwealth can establish itself, till a further step forward can be taken in the passage through the slough of difficulties. We should be wrong if we were to assume the attainment of a permanent goal. There is, for instance, no pretence that the Communist ideal: *from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs:* is yet within grasp. That is attainable only when production has so increased as to make possible the satisfaction of all reasonable needs. So long as there is less than enough, whether of objects of enjoyment or of leisure, to go round, there remains the possibility of differences over the distribution, and the need of the coercive State to prevent the scramble and the furtive misappropriation which characterise Capitalistic conditions. The State still exists, as Article I makes plain to us—if we needed the assurance—it has not withered away according to the Marxian anticipation. It is a Socialist State: not yet a Communist Society knit by purely economic and social bonds.

And yet, it appears, certain things have become possible which were not possible hitherto, because the material basis for them has now come into existence. The danger from the dispossessed classes has so diminished that it is safe to admit them to a franchise, universal, equal, direct and secret, for all the elective organs of the State. The peasant, always a potential danger to the socialistic ideal and from time to time able to dictate departures from it, is so far reconciled to the process of collectivisation and its results that it has ceased to be necessary to withhold from him the right to equal suffrage alongside of the urban worker. Certain rights, very far from realisation in the capitalistic societies, notably the right to work and the right to leisure, can now be proclaimed: because confidence is felt in the existence of a material basis for their realisation.

Any forecast of the value in practice of this new Constitution, with its significant fundamental assumptions, must begin with an estimate of the reality of those assumptions. It is obvious, for instance, that the Government of the Soviet Union bound, as every Government must be, to self-preservation as its first duty, will not tolerate subversion by the newly enfranchised of the fundamental principles upon which its existence is based. It is even more obvious that the declaration of the right to work will become meaningless if economic conditions do not permit of its fulfilment. We must look therefore, in the first place, not to the intentions of those in power, but to the correctness of their estimate of the stage at which the U.S.S.R. has arrived: and that is to be judged by a review of all the conditions. That is why I have left the constitution nearly to the end of my study.

The events which followed upon the promulgation of the Constitution did not justify an optimistic forecast either of the abatement of internal political difficulties or of the attainment of economic security. Still less did they appear to promise the permanence of that international peace,

upon which depend the direction of resources to useful ends and even the stability of the régime itself. The Soviet Government declared itself beset by internal enemies, hampered by intentional as well as by merely negligent injury to production, and threatened by the treachery of highly placed military commanders. The Party itself was said to be full of spies, and ceaseless internal vigilance was a condition of survival. The excellence of the intentions with which the new constitution had been formulated would not save it, in circumstances such as these, from becoming a dead letter. The Communist Party receives a passing reference in the constitution of November, 1936, in a clause providing for liberty of association. The clause affirms the right of combining in public organisations, and, among others, "for the most active and conscientious citizens from the ranks of the working class and other strata of the toilers, of uniting in the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., which is the vanguard of the toilers, in their struggle for strengthening and developing the socialist system, and which represents the leading nucleus of all organisations of the toilers both public and state". It is again mentioned in the chapter on the Electoral System, where Communist Party organisations are specified among those having the right to nominate candidates for election. Otherwise the Communist Party is outside of the Constitution of November, 1936, as it was outside the previous Constitutions. In fact, it has a separate Constitution. And yet the Communist Party is by far the most important element in the government of the U.S.S.R.—so important, that it comes near to being an *Axiocracy*, a government of the most worthy citizens. The fact that these vast functions are outside the document compels us to regard the new constitution with a qualified conviction.

At the outset, therefore, of our examination of the constitution we find, first, that its reality is dependent upon favouring circumstances, and secondly, that power actually resides elsewhere than in the authorities for whose establishment it makes formal provision. Such contradictions are not unique. Both in the United States of America and in the United Kingdom, the uneven distribution of wealth, and the resultant social influence, contradict in practice the theory of democracy: and the ruling class or group is, in fact, something other than the elected representatives of the people, although it ordinarily makes a scrupulous use of constitutional forms. It is not therefore in a written constitution, or even in an unwritten constitution as expounded by constitutional students, but in the political practice of the adepts, that we must look for the realities of the distribution of power. This is not less, but possibly somewhat more, true, of the U.S.S.R. than of the Western democracies. At the basis of the institutions of every state there lies a fundamental principle. In the West it is private property: in the U.S.S.R. it is socialised property: and in neither will democracy be permitted to violate the fundamental principle. In the one case the Communist Party is the guardian and

guide, in the other the same functions are exercised by a more fluid, less tangible entity, of which wealth is the most easily recognisable characteristic, but having behind it the forces of tradition and inertia. The one desires change, the other desires continuity. Both may be said to drive, the one on a new road, the other on an old one: and both unmistakably occupy the driver's seat and hold his whip.

What emerges is that, in attempting to interpret any particular clause of the constitution, there is a reservation to be made. Chapter I affirms the structure of society, which no one will be permitted to change or to attempt to change. All the rest of the document must be understood as subject to this fixed fundamental determination, which transcends all rights. The preambles to Articles 125 and 126 are equally significant. Freedom of speech, Press, assembly, and demonstration, are guaranteed "in accordance with the interests of the working people, and *in order to strengthen the socialist system*". And the right of association is affirmed "in accordance with the interests of the working people, and for the purpose of developing the *organised* self-expression and political activity of the masses of the people". The rights do not exist independently of these considerations, and are nullified where they run counter to them.

There was a constitution for the revolutionary State in 1918, followed by a federal constitution in 1924 for the four republics which formed a union then. It was during the discussions of this federal constitution that the name of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics originated, the order of the words indicating the type of the new State. It is Soviet Socialist, not Socialist Soviet, as sometimes erroneously written, and each of its constituent members is Soviet Socialist too. The Soviet is—perhaps we should now write, was—an essential institution of the system. In its origin it was a class institution representing the soldiers or sailors of a particular unit, the workers of a factory or mine or unit of transport, the peasants of a village. For the lowest tier of the Soviets, election was direct. In and above the lowest tier, it was indirect, each successive tier making the choice for the one next higher. The principal virtue of the Soviet was its spontaneous growth from the indigenous practice, by which the workers who had left the village for the factory chose their mouthpieces and headmen. The voting was naturally open, by show of hands. The propertied classes, who had no place in the workers' gatherings, were naturally disfranchised in the constitution built upon these gatherings. It was as natural for the peasants' Soviet to be based upon a territorial unit, the village, as for the workers' Soviet to be based upon a production unit, the factory: and when, in 1918, the Congress of Peasants' Soviets was combined with the Congress of Workers and Soldiers' deputies to form a united Congress, each retained its then existing number, so that an inequality of representation came into existence for historical reasons. There was no division of powers in the

primitive Soviets, and no division of them in the Constitutions which were based upon these.

Two features, which bear the imprint of the primitive institution: the instructions which the electors gave to the man or woman of their choice, and the power of recall which they exercised when dissatisfied with the delegate: both eminently favourable to the reality of democracy: have been preserved in the constitution of November, 1936. It is the practice to make a documentary record of the instructions, and of the extent to which they have been fulfilled. Recall became common after a campaign in 1929 for popular vigilance: and, in his one and only election speech in 1937, Stalin emphasised the right, and bade the voters watch their delegates closely and keep them to their duties.

The other characteristic features of the Soviet system, the class composition, the indirect election by open voting, the disfranchisement of class groups, the constituency based upon a production unit, the inequality between peasants and urban workers, the combination of legislative and executive powers, have been abandoned in the new instrument, whose makers set before themselves a parliamentary model, with territorial constituencies, universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage, and the division of powers into legislative, executive, and judicial. We have no difficulty in seeing at a glance why some of these practices have been given up. Open voting was originally a form of protection against secret influence by class enemies. Later it became a means of exercising pressure upon voters for the defence of vested interests. The inequality between peasants and urban voters became an anomaly, in proportion as the town was carried to the country, and the farm became an open-air factory. The actual disappearance of an employing class eliminated the reason for class-disfranchisement.

It was the Seventh All-Union Congress of Soviets in February, 1935, which formally took up the question of a new constitution. That it was only the seventh, after more than eighteen years of revolutionary government, is a point to be noticed at the outset. In the numerous and long intervals between sessions, the work of legislation and of the passing of budgets had fallen upon the Central Executive Committee, in so far as it had not been appropriated by other authorities. How lax had been the observance of forms under the existing constitution is manifest from the history of certain pieces of legislation. The law regulating marriage and divorce fell within the competence, not of the Union, but of the Constituent Republics. Accordingly, the marriage law for the R.S.F.S.R., after more than a year's public discussion, was passed by the Central Executive Committee of the Constituent Republic in 1927. It placed a registered on the same footing as an unregistered marriage: made the registration of divorce, as well as of marriage, gratuitous, and strengthened the provisions for the maintenance of children in the event of divorce. The practice of abortion was at this time legal, when carried out

in a State institution. Circumstances which I have sketched in the last preceding chapter subsequently emphasised the need of encouraging the institution of the family and the growth of the population: and in 1935 the Party and the Government initiated a campaign against abortion. In 1936 the public was invited to debate a measure providing that the operation should be performed only for the preservation of the life of the expectant mother: strengthening the legal provisions for alimony: discouraging divorce by a progressive fee payable for the registration: providing for the payment of bonuses for numerous children, and for increasing the facilities for accommodation in maternity homes, and for nurseries and kindergartens. On June 27th, 1936, legislation was passed, *for the whole of the* U.S.S.R., limiting the right to abortion to specified cases, and modifying the law of divorce and alimony. We may safely call the new law a good one: but it was passed with a notable disregard of constitutional forms, because the legislature of the Union assumed an authority which belonged to the constituent republics.

In a much smaller matter, but one which illustrates constitutional habit, we can hardly help detecting a tendency to revert to the summary methods of the Tsarist Ukaz. A practice of taking intelligence tests of school children was borrowed from the United States of America, and a considerable department of so-called pedologists was set up to apply these tests and to allot children who did not fully satisfy the tests to schools of a special type. After ten years' work, when some 15,000 Moscow children were in special schools, this department was suddenly liquidated by a decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. This decree, apparently issued without consultation with the Department of Education, without reference to the republican units of the federation, or to the authorities in whom the power of legislation is formally vested, without ascertaining the wishes of the public or the parents, demanded the obedience of the People's Commissariat of Education, and effected the reduction of the number of Moscow children in special schools to 6,000. It is easy to believe that the Pedologists had gone astray, and that consultation between them and the school-teachers had been neglected in allotting children to special schools. We can see also that a real principle was at stake. Bolshevism demands a large degree of optimism, and claims to be able to "*make man*" without undue subservience to his antecedents. The Pedologists applied their test, and, in accordance with the static results, sent the pupil to this or the other school: implicitly denying the claim to be able to fashion him in the desired image. The Communist Party may have been substantially right. But the point to which I here draw attention is the summary character of the decree, issued for all the Union by an authority which, from the standpoint of the formal constitution, had not the power to legislate.

It is natural for us to ask ourselves at the outset whether the new Con-

stitutional law is to receive more respectful handling than the old, when the novelty of its establishment is over.

The Seventh All-Union Congress of Soviets appointed a Drafting Commission, with instructions to democratise the electoral system by substituting equal for unequal, direct for indirect, and secret for open elections, and to bring the constitution into harmony with the new order, in which the *kulak* class had disappeared and property had been socialised. Stalin himself became the chairman of this Commission. A story is in circulation that he disapproved of the proposed changes: but there is every indication that he entered heartily into the undertaking and that the draft which issued from the labours of the Commission was in a form which he approved. It is even believed in some quarters that he had contemplated at an earlier date a similar measure of democratisation, and that his intention was thwarted by the murder of S. M. Kirov who was his collaborator in the plan. The draft was published in all the languages of the Union and in numbers sufficient for each adult to have easy access to it, and subjected to a drastic popular examination. The amendments proposed ran into many thousands, but they were almost entirely amendments of detail, not of principle. The draft was then introduced in November, 1935, by a report from Stalin himself in the Eighth Special Congress of Soviets, which consisted, to the extent of more than a quarter of its membership of non-Party persons, and, to the extent of a fifth, of women. He said that the victory of Socialism—not of Communism—was now a fact, and that the frontiers between the different categories of the population were disappearing: that the working class was no longer a proletariat, because it now owned the instruments of production: that the peasantry, now collectivised, was a new peasantry: that the intelligentsia springing now for the most part from workers and peasants, was a new intelligentsia: and that the multi-national state, consisting of equal nations, was now successfully established. He dealt with the amendments by excluding all recitals of historical facts and declaration of intention, as out of place, and by postponing matters of current legislation for consideration by the new organs when brought into existence. There remained a couple of scores of relevant amendments which he proceeded to discuss. Of the great majority he recommended the rejection for reasons which he gave. He pointed out, for instance, that the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet ought to be elected by the Supreme Soviet, because, if he were elected by the whole population, as the amendment suggested, he would enjoy excessive power. It was plainly not intended that a sort of President of the United States should be brought into existence by the election of the chairman of the Presidium. He also gave reasons for refusing to forbid all religious rites, which a zealous anti-religious critic had proposed, and said that the clergy and members of the formerly hostile classes ought not to be disfranchised, because some of them were no longer enemies, and

because the admission of inability to protect the State against such groups would argue weakness. Only in four instances did he advise acceptance of amendments. Three of these, which concerned the interests of the constituent republics, have been mentioned in the chapter on the Nationalities. The fourth was a proposal for the creation of a new Peoples Commissariat for Defence, which is a hint of growing apprehensions of attack from abroad.

No one questioned any of these recommendations, there was no discussion, and the whole project with the approved amendments was passed with enthusiastic acclamation, after a number of speeches of a laudatory kind had been delivered by members of all types, ranging from highly placed functionaries to famous milkmaids—famous, of course, for milking records—and factory workers who had won renown by excellence in productive work. All of them spoke on a single theme, the theme of Socialist achievement carried out under the unequalled leadership of Stalin. Cossacks said they had been called Free Folk, but only now did their really free life begin. A middle-aged woman said she had received the Order of Lenin for the 672 calves that she raised: and now she was going to raise 800. All of them, in terms of factory, farm, or federal republic, said "The country has changed so that we cannot even compare it with the past. You can't see anything that resembles the old life any more."

All, of course, were delegates and said what their constituents wanted them to say. The unanimity, the enthusiasm, the hyperbolical exaggeration of achievement, were eloquent of the power of mass-suggestion. The truth is wonderful, but not so wonderful as this. But the assembly gave a demonstration of that passion of fusion in one pæan of praise and thanksgiving which is characteristically Russian, and closely connected with the traditions of Orthodox Christianity. "Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" sings the Psalmist. It was a congregation of praise and thanksgiving.

There is every sign that earnest thought has been given to the provisions of the new constitution, and that it has by no means been treated as a piece of "spectacle-wiping": which is the Russian expression for what we call *eye-wash*. The short interval between the confirmation of the draft by the Congress of Soviets and the election of the new Supreme Soviet, with its two chambers, was filled with organising and propagandist work of a quality which entirely belies the Russian reputation for easy-going slackness. With one exception—the substitution of thirty-seven new names for candidates who had fallen out of favour in dominant circles, thirty-seven, that is to say, out of a total well over 1,100—the Government kept strictly within the limits of its own law. Forms have been carefully observed, and the observance of forms is important. One other criticism—that the Russian speeches delivered in the constituencies were not translated into the local vernaculars—has some significance, but

it is the only one which I find occasion to make. Whether the registered congregation of certain Churches, which claimed the right to nominate candidates, would have been held, by a Western lawyer, to have established their claim under the wording of the law, I cannot say. The claim was disallowed, without hesitation, as we should have expected. It was not in conformity with the fundamental assumptions which underlie the constitution. That the old arbitrary tendency—so ingrained in the Russian conception of Government—should break out here and there is inevitable; but a close examination of the proceedings indicates a perfectly genuine intention, *at the outset*, to make the form a reality. I must note, however, a breach of constitutional forms on May 28, 1938, when the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. confirmed an order transferring the Kandalaksha region from the Karelian Autonomous Republic to the newly formed Province of Murmansk. Under article 60 of the Constitution this change required the authority of the Supreme Soviet of the Constituent Republic (R.S.F.S.R.) and, perhaps, under article 14, also that of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. The Presidium assumed a function which, under article 49, did not belong to it.

A British observer at Moscow was impressed by the fairness of the counting and the strict observance of secrecy in the ballot. That the poll in the Stalinski electoral circle of Moscow was more than 100% of the voting strength is one of the humours of the election. So many people wanted to plump for Stalin himself that they came from outside to vote for him: and—it seems—their right to record their votes, outside of what we should call their own electoral districts, was conceded.

A hierarchy of Electoral Commissions was appointed, the central one by the old Central Executive Committee now on the point of expiry. The local Commissions registered voters and candidates, appointed "trusted persons" to conduct propaganda on the part of the candidates, counted the votes, and declared the results. All the expenses were borne by the Government, and all the propaganda (it appears) carried out by persons having no necessary connection with the candidates. The Press demanded that not a single voter should be left ignorant of the qualifications of his candidates. Wall-posters with histories of the candidates: talkie records of their voices and sentiments: were among the means employed: the newspapers contained biographies: agitators went out on skis into the *tundra* from the Arctic station of Igarka: aeroplanes carried leaflets: actors came on the stage between the acts at local theatres and described the candidates. An attempt was made to get every voter on the register: in the Tartar Republic this was carried so far that arrangements were made at the hospitals to examine all lunatics (except the violent) to see whether their capacity satisfied the legal requirements. Of course there were mistakes, as indeed there are in the preparation of British electoral rolls and the conduct of British elections, in spite of a long experience. In many places the school-children were impressed to

record the names of the voters. In one area all the names beginning with N were omitted. In another all the infants in arms were entered. The printing in some vernaculars was badly behindhand. *Pravda* was righteously indignant at a mistranslation of the name of the constitution into the Georgian language—an error very likely to catch the eye of Stalin. It also did not like the use in Tajikistan of a primitive method of calculating ages. So-and-so was described as 4 Dog: which meant that he was fifty-one. The figure 4 meant that he had gone through four complete twelve-year-cycles and reached the third year of the fifth: which was named after the Dog. A decade or so more and he would have been a monkey or a hedgehog. The supply of paper and envelopes—at one time a subject of some anxiety—was vigilantly watched by peripatetic correspondents. Careless and backward committees were exposed and pilloried daily. The Communist League of Youth in Ukrain was particularly criticised. Explanations of the way to claim the vote and how to exercise it were published and republished. The arrangements in the voting cabins, and the right of illiterates to take a friend in with them, were fully described.

The great day of the election was a holiday for the whole of the U.S.S.R. Not only is the U.S.S.R., by reason of the rapid growth of its population, a *younger* country than any in the West: but the minimum age for the vote, both for men and women, is eighteen: and the atmosphere of enthusiasm which had been brought into existence gave a particular stimulus to the young. Tarantass, ox-cart, camel, aeroplane, reindeer, dog-teams, skis, horseback, brought the millions to the booths. One story of a pair of brothers who came in by night to vote at 6 a.m. and get back to take their turns at the well, carried one into the arid places of Asia. In Buriat Mongolia the old swore they would be in before the young, and achieved their promise. Lighthouse men came in to Kronstadt by icebreaker: man-of-war's men got into a dinghy, moored to the ship, and did their secret voting thus. Polling was arranged in long-distance trains, in passenger ships, in hospitals, sanatoria and maternity homes. Outside voters were met by welcoming parties at the railway stations and cast their votes in the waiting-rooms converted into booths for the occasion. There were "Welcome" notices outside the polling-booths in the cities, and the officials turned out to meet the early arrivals, who had gathered in long queues. It was a January day, and there were snow-showers, followed by bright sun, in Moscow: a raging blizzard in Franz Joseph Land: semi-tropical sunlight at Baku: and a torchlight procession through the Arctic night somewhere in the north. Concerts and dances followed the recording of the votes. Everywhere, it seems, the festival spirit prevailed and the people kept order for themselves. We hear nothing of any drinking. Enthusiastic country people in Moscow burst into lyrical hyperbole: Moscow, capital of the world! Moscow with the ruby stars on her Kremlin! Stakhanovite workers, who

had promised a ten-day competition, announced new records of work.

So it continued till midnight, when the polling-booths were closed: and many kept up the holiday yet longer. It was another of those demonstrations of unity, of fusion of the brethren and the sisterhood into a congregation of love, which Russians express by the word *sleetnost.* The sentiment of fusion into a greater unity has a real significance in the Bolshevik code. In Afinogeniev's play *Fear,* Elena, the champion of innovation in the physiological laboratory, declares that "our politics is to transform people. Feelings that were considered innate are now dying out. Envy, jealousy, anger, fear are disappearing. *Collectivity, enthusiasm, the joy of life, are growing. And we will help these new stimuli to grow.*"

When the votes were counted and the results announced, it appeared that of 93,639,458 Soviet citizens entitled to vote, 90,319,346 actually voted: a percentage of 96. In Ukrain and White Russia the percentage was above this figure. In none of the constituent republics did it fall below 93½%, the percentage for Uzbekistan. In the vote for candidates of the Council of the Union, 636,808 ballot-papers were found to be invalid, and 632,074 had candidates' names crossed out. In the vote for candidates of the Council of Nationalities, 1,487,582 papers were invalid, and there were 562,402 with candidates' names crossed out. There were perhaps a million among those who voted who did not desire the return of the candidates, or objected with sufficient determination to be willing to spoil their papers. Of the 1,143 deputies elected, 855 were Communists, 288 non-party. One hundred and eighty-four women were among the elected.

Five hundred and sixty-nine seats were filled on the Council of the Union: 574 on the Council of Nationalities. Something like 354 workers and peasants were returned, 120 Red Army and Navy men and aviators, seventy-eight who might be classified as intelligentsia—that is to say, white-collared men who are not officials. A curious item is that of fifty-one members of the Commissariat of Internal affairs, the present title of the political police.

Two features in this election will present puzzles to students of affairs in the United States of America and in the United Kingdom. In the first place, there was only one "Party". In the second place—a still more startling fact—with insignificantly few exceptions, there was only one candidate for each vacancy. Why, then, all the expensive and troublesome machinery of an election, over a country of enormous spaces and indifferent communications: and why the chorus of happy jubilation over the successful, almost unanimous, return of the unopposed?

I have written the preceding chapters in vain if I have failed to convey to the reader the radical difference between the Communist "Party" and any political party known to Britain or America. The word Party,

applied to the former, is indeed a complete misnomer. The Communist Party is an Order of men and women vowed to the realisation and defence of the fundamentals of the Soviet State. It comes near to being a priesthood of a religion of this world. Since there is no intention of tolerating any challenge to the fundamentals, there is also no intention of allowing any alternative order to champion alternative principles. To find a parallel, we must imagine a State, having, not merely a National Church, but an exclusive National Church, with a monopoly of spiritual influence and authority, to which no rival is tolerated by the national law. The Communist Party in the U.S.S.R. has very few resemblances to a political party as we understand it, but it has many resemblances to a Church claiming universal dominion, and realising that dominion within national limits. In the political sense, the U.S.S.R. tolerates no parties at all.

An advantage of a party system in a country such as the United States of America, where government is not party government in the sense in which it is such in Britain—that is to say, where the executive authority is not directly dependent upon a party majority in the legislature—is that it furnishes a useful label from which the ordinary voter may gather the general nature of the policy which he is supporting by his vote, instead of being dependent upon knowledge of the personal views of each candidate. It thus brings together groups of identical or similar opinion and permits of organisation and of the collection of funds, without which the dissemination of political knowledge is likely to be ineffective. The entire absence of a party system—and I regard it as absent in Russia, in spite of the existence of what is called a Party—radically alters the nature of an election. In Britain or the United States the necessary propaganda is conducted by the rival parties and their newspapers, and by the rival candidates, and the money comes out of party or private funds. This gives a very obvious advantage to wealth, and, in any political difference involving the rights of property, it is likely to turn the scale in favour of the property-holder. In the recent election in the U.S.S.R., each candidate for the Council of the Union had, on an average, 182,000 voters to reach, and the expense of the election, without the assistance of an organised party, would, under Western conditions, have been prohibitive. In fact, all costs were met by public authorities, and almost all the propaganda was done by newspapers and "trusted persons" appointed by Electoral Commissions, and the agitators who work under the "trusted persons". All the vast influence of the so-called Communist Party was thrown on to the side of the candidate whom it approved, and supplied the missing label which the Western elector recognises in the party name. In other words, the scales in the U.S.S.R. were weighted on behalf of socialised property, just as in the United States of America and the United Kingdom they are weighted on behalf of private property.

Stalin, contrasting the party system of the West with his own, told us that the questions which he expected the electors to put to the candidates in the U.S.S.R., were such as these. "Have you or have you not built a good school? Have you improved living conditions? Are you a bureaucrat? Have you helped to make our labour more effective, our life more cultured?" In other words, the party label is unnecessary, *because the fundamental requirement of the acceptance of the Socialist system is taken for granted,* and the candidate will be accepted or rejected on his personal record and qualifications. The part played by the party system in the United Kingdom, in consolidating the strength of the executive, is unnecessary in the U.S.S.R. because the real strength of the executive in the latter is independent of the elected bodies.

We come to the second and startling difference between the election in the U.S.S.R. in December, 1937, and what appears to the Western mind a normal election. In an insignificantly small number of constituencies more than one candidate stood for election. *Generally there was only one candidate in each.* What might seem to be the real work was done when the nominations were completed.

The election turned entirely upon the right of nomination. Only the regularity of the nomination, followed by registration of the name of the candidate with the Electoral Commission, could bring the name upon the ballot-paper: and a vote for any name not on the ballot-paper was invalid. In the United Kingdom any ten qualified electors can nominate a candidate: but there is a pecuniary check upon nomination in the requirement for a deposit of £150, which the candidate will forfeit if he does not secure a stated minimum proportion of the votes polled. The constitution of the U.S.S.R. demands, of course, no pecuniary guarantee, which would be contrary to the spirit of its institutions: but Article 141 restricts the right of nomination to public organisations and societies of working people: Communist Party organisations; trade unions; co-operatives; organisations of youth; and cultural societies. Individuals, and groups of individuals not organised in any of these forms, have no right of nomination. Paramount influence is thus secured to those controlling the approved organisations and societies, in particular to the Communist Party. The Communist Party did not use this advantage to prevent the nomination of non-party men and women. On the contrary, a particular emphasis was laid upon the alliance of party and non-party citizens: and, as already noticed, a considerable minority of the latter, obtained nomination and election. But the Communist Party had its instructions to be watchful of the character and antecedents of those proposed for nomination. It was at this point that the directional power exercised by the actual government of the country came into effective operation.

One story of the nomination of a second candidate comes from Riga, in the then independent State of Latvia, where the London *Times* for

many years secluded its special correspondent for the U.S.S.R. It may be true, nevertheless. The peasantry of an electoral circle near Leningrad tried to put up their own candidate, in addition to the legally nominated person. A Communist caused the removal of the peasants' candidate: and was murdered. The peasants' candidate is said to have been tried and sentenced to death. There is another story that the Stakhanovite workers were nominated for a single constituency in the north Caucasus: with less tragical consequences.

What the rulers wanted was to convey the impression, both abroad and at home, of a united people; in order to discourage aggressors, by diminishing their hopes of division and discontent, and to inspire confidence among native supporters. The way to achieve this result was to call forth an outburst of popular enthusiasm, and to give an example of successful organisation. It could not have been done by compulsion. If there was compulsion, it was a compulsion exercised by the people themselves, drawing the minority into the vortex of their own excitement. The remarkably good harvest of 1937 helped greatly. Full stomachs and full bins created the conditions of general jubilation, and displayed the Government in a halo of the rosiest light. Many of the leading candidates told the electors plainly that the merits of this or that candidate were irrelevant. What was wanted was the universal acclamation of the victory of Socialism and its achievements: a union-wide recognition of the first occasion in the world's history on which workers and peasants have been masters of their own country; a general rejoicing in the completeness of the defence against foreign aggression, in the escape from snares of "Trotskyist–Bukharinist–Rykovist wreckers", in the superiority of the Stalinite constitution over the sham democracies of the west, in the attainment of the equal status of workers and peasants, men and women (whether the latter be workers or housewives), and working intelligentsia, in the escape of the lesser peoples from the "prison-house of nationalities", in the elevation of work to a glory and a heroism. This people has a genius for a cosmic emotion, which makes of them a mystical unity; and they responded to the call with a self-abandonment in which there was something dionysiac.

To have felt and realised, though for a moment, this generous excitement, and to have given expression to it in the quasi-sacrament of the nearly unanimous vote, was a contribution to political education, which is likely to have some practical value. One of the results of the campaign, it was noticed, was the sudden emergence of unsuspected talents and energy. Quite unknown persons found themselves, not necessarily as candidates but as political workers, capable of influencing and organising their fellows. I have appended to this chapter a translation of a poem by Vasily Lebedev-Kumach, depicting a sort of Caedmon, who could not sing as all the others did, till he suddenly discovered the gift, or suddenly achieved the expression of the common sentiment in his audience. The

Press published descriptions of some of the simple folk who had come to the front. No system in which the possibility of candidature depends upon the possession of pecuniary means could have produced precisely the same effect. To get the right perspective, we must be clear that this was the first occasion of a popular vote for the supreme legislature. A generation back, there was voting for the four Imperial Dumas. The election of the second of these approached nearest to being a precedent. It was elected on the Witte franchise: but, as Sir Bernard Pares tells us, with much interference by the police, who "detained voting-papers, fixed impossible dates for polling, and in particular did all that they could do to exclude Jews or Liberals". Since the Revolution, the people had had an indirect share in choosing the rarely summoned Congress of Soviets, but all available information confirms the impression that they were not generally aware of their contribution. All the circumstances of this 1937 election touched the popular imagination and brought home the potential greatness of the occasion. Great multitudes felt—with an echo from the Orthodox conception of *sobornost*—that "there is no greater honour than to be the choice of the great Soviet people: no greater happiness and confidence than to express the will of the people". "*The truth of the plain folk*", as our poet of the election meeting puts it—and he is plainly casting back to the notion of the oracle in the *narod*—"lived and lives in him".

The Supreme Soviet, having exclusive power of legislation for the U.S.S.R., is elected for a term of four years and is to hold an ordinary session twice a year. Its members enjoy a conditional immunity from prosecution and arrest. It elects its own Presidium and sets up the Council of People's Commissars, which between them constitute the official Executive. It has no executive powers of its own; and its Presidium has no legislative powers, but issues what are known as decrees; for instance, confers distinctions and honours, and declares general or partial mobilisation. There is thus a formal separation of the legislative and executive authority. At the first session in January, 1938, each member of the Supreme Soviet elected permanent commissions for legislation, budget, and foreign affairs: a step which promised close study of business. The two Chambers sitting jointly, elected a Presidium, with Kalinin as its President, and eleven vice-chairmen, one from each constituent republic. Molotov, chairman of the old Council of Commissars, was then asked to form a new Council, and his selections were confirmed by the Supreme Soviet. The Supreme Soviet then adopted certain changes in the constitution. The territories included in the different constituent republics were more fully specified: three new People's Commissariats were created, one of them being a separate ministry for the Fleet. Of another amendment of greater constitutional importance I shall have something to say below. Three members rose in succession to criticise particular branches of the administration. Zhdanov, while

acknowledging the services of Litvinov, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, complained of the Foreign Office for the weakness of its policy in Japan and in France. The latter country, he said, was tolerant of anti-Soviet activities incompatible with the position of a loyal ally. He also objected to the foreign consulates in the U.S.S.R. as being more numerous than the consulates maintained by the U.S.S.R. in foreign countries: and made severe comments on the administration of both Water-transport and Art. Another critic attacked the Commissariat of Justice, and in particular the People's Commissar of Justice, Krylenko, for spending his time in mountain-climbing and chess-playing, instead of attending to his duties. A third blamed the committee which dealt with the collections-in-kind of agricultural products for inadequate storage arrangements, which, in a year of plentiful harvest, left large quantities of grain exposed to the weather. All these criticisms might have been spontaneous, but I think that soundings had been taken before they were publicly made. The extent to which the Supreme Soviet will become a forum for the ventilation of popular grievances, still remains to be seen.

The status and functions of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet have some peculiar features. Its members are elected by the Supreme Soviet, to which it is accountable in all its activities. But there is no express provision for the removal of any of its members by the Supreme Soviet: and it actually survives (Article 55) the Supreme Soviet to which it owes its existence, and is authorised to dissolve the Supreme Soviet (Article 47) in the event of an irreconcileable difference between the two chambers of the latter. It is apparently to be permanently in session: it convenes sessions of the Supreme Soviet, dissolves it at the end of its four-year-term in ordinary course, and fixes new elections. *Even when the Supreme Soviet is sitting*, it interprets laws made by that body, and may rescind orders and decisions of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. and the Councils of People's Commissars of the constituent republics in case they do not conform to the law. By an important amendment to the Constitution to which I have already referred, it is also empowered to declare martial law. These powers approach so closely to legislative authority, that the difficulty of summoning the Supreme Soviet at short notice on an emergency will supply a plausible reason for extending them to actual legislation.

Experience of democratic politics makes it natural to ask where the power of the purse resides in the new constitution. The annual budget is a "law": and it may be that every project of taxation is a "law", requiring to be passed by a majority in both chambers. It may be, but there is no express constitutional provision to this effect, that appropriations of funds for specific purposes will have to be made by the Supreme Soviet. But in 1937 direct taxation constituted only 3·7% of the total revenues of the U.S.S.R. Indirect taxation, taking effect by additions to prices, was over 86% of it. This distribution of taxation is no casual accident,

but an inevitable condition of a State in which there is no private wealth to tax. One of the political consequences is that the so-called power of the purse rests almost inevitably with the Government. Dr. Robson has noticed that out of 100,000 instructions given by the electors in Moscow to their representatives in 1934, not one complained of extravagance or demanded a reduction of taxation. I think they were not fully alive to the fact that the money came out of their own pockets, because only a small fraction of the taxation was either direct, or collected in the form of a local *octroi*. The Supreme Soviet discusses the budget, and both Chambers have appointed Budget Commissions, but it seems unlikely that we are to look to the power of the purse for a guarantee of its independence and of the reality of its supremacy.

In the final resort, the defence of private rights rests everywhere upon the Courts of Justice: and, as the Courts depend in large measure upon the proper presentation of cases, upon the legal profession which practises in them. It has been said, probably with truth, that a poor man, in the Western democracies, can only be sure of his rights if he can find a lawyer who will take up his case without fee. In the U.S.S.R., charges of political conspiracy or outrage are tried under a special law of 1934, passed immediately after the murder of S. M. Kirov, which assigns the cases to a so-called military tribunal and denies the right of appeal. It is usual for the accused in such cases to be bitterly attacked by the Press and by public associations and virtually condemned before trial. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet now has legal authority to declare martial law (which has sometimes been defined as the will of the military commanding officer). Chapter IX of the Constitution must be read subject to these reservations.

In cases which do not threaten the fundamental assumptions of the Constitution, People's Associate Judges, a kind of non-professional assessors, participate in the trial. All professional judges are appointed by elected bodies, except those of the People's Courts, who are elected by the citizens of the district by universal, direct, equal and secret, vote. The accused is guaranteed the right to defence, which must mean that his lawyer will be paid by the State. Article 112 provides that the judges are independent and are subordinate only to the law. Subject to the reservations to be made as regards political offences, I believe this constitutional promise is likely to be observed. The treatment of ordinary crime in the U.S.S.R. is as considerate as that of political crime is ruthless.

Supervision of the observance of law by all executive authorities—not, of course, by the Courts—is vested in the Attorney-General appointed by the Supreme Soviet, and in his subordinates. The Attorney-General sometimes moves the Courts to correct injustices, and did so in the spring of 1937, to secure justice for some individualist peasants, who had been deprived of their possessions in violation of the new constitution (Article 9).

In adding to the declaration of the rights of citizens (Chapter X) a statement of the guarantees for their exercise, the Constitution has shown conspicuous originality. Earlier declarations of rights—the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, or whatever the formula may have been—have left the means of exercise to the arbitrament of economic and other conditions. Here we find, for the first time, the explicit recognition that the value of rights depends upon the means of exercising them: which should make it difficult for the drafters of future constitutions to stop short at an abstract recital, which keeps the word of promise to the ear and breaks it to the hope. If the guarantee in the U.S.S.R. is, in the nature of things, incomplete, the economic organisation of society gives a measure of reality to it, which is lacking elsewhere.

The statement of rights includes the right to work: guaranteed by the believed discovery of the technique for ending mass unemployment as a disease of the economic circulation; and the rights to rest and to security in old age and invalidity, guaranteed by legislation and by social insurance, along with the provision of the necessary services and buildings, which is in a considerable measure already realised. The right to education comes next: and this has been made a reality, subject to the recent legislation imposing fees for secondary education of the literary type. The equality of women with men—a difficult achievement because both nature and traditional habit assign particular tasks to the female sex—has been brought nearer to realisation by the ending of unemployment, and by a measure of provision for the special needs of the housewife and the child. The equal rights of all citizens, irrespective of nationality or race, are next proclaimed: and for these, as elsewhere pointed out, provision has been and is being secured by the extension of economic opportunity, as well as by cultural independence.

We come next to certain rights the exercise of which is more obviously limited by the fundamental determination of the State to establish a socialist system. Freedom of speech, of Press, of assembly and meetings, of street processions and demonstrations are stated to be "ensured by placing at the disposal of the working people and their organisations printing shops, supplies of paper, public buildings, the streets, means of communication, and other materials requisite for the exercise of those rights" (Article 125). These are not rights of individuals, but rights of "the workers and their organisations", and the exercise of them depends upon those who control the organisations in the interest of the class. Next follows the article regarding the right to unite in public organisations, which is limited in such a manner as to exclude the formation of political parties other than the Communist Party. Inviolability of the person, of homes, and of the secrecy of correspondence, is guaranteed: but is to be understood always as subject to the same overriding political considerations which govern the safeguards upon judicial proceedings.

It has been constantly repeated by Press and platform during the election period and after it that the constitution is the most democratic in the world. Kalinin made a speech on this point which throws so much light on Russian ideas. It is vain to discuss the question without a preliminary agreement on the meaning to be assigned to the word *democratic*. It is probably the most *equal* constitution in the world, because it, or the conditions in which it is promulgated, eliminate the inequalities caused by varying economic conditions. That it enables a majority of the Russian peoples to change its rulers without the use of force or the violation of the law, is plainly untrue: and this provision of a constitutional channel for the changing of rulers is what democracy generally means to the Western mind. It is unlikely, however, that the vast mass of the Russian peoples ever dreamed of such a channel. What they earnestly desire is economic security *and an economic and social levelling*, and these, it seems, in large measure they have.

Differences of means remain because of the considerable variations in the remuneration of work: but these are trifling in comparison with the enormous inequalities produced in the United States of America and the United Kingdom by the private ownership of land and of the instruments of production, which enable the individual to levy tribute on his fellows. The social constitution in these countries enables the man who has the organising gift to use it entirely for his own benefit: just as the social constitution, or the absence of it, in more primitive countries, enables the man with the best muscles to plunder his neighbours. The claim for the Soviet system is that it makes the organising gift the servant of the community. This is what Stalin meant when he said: "We did not build this society in order to restrict personal liberty, but in order that the human individual may feel really free. . . . Real liberty can only exist where exploitation has been abolished, where there is no oppression of some by others, where there is no unemployment, and no poverty. Only in such a society is real, and not paper, personal, and every other, liberty possible." It will be said—and with perfect fairness—that, in so far as these conditions have actually been achieved, and even Stalin does not claim their complete achievement—they are antecedent to the paper constitution, which has only created a machine and put good intentions into solemnly attested language.

I shall not quarrel with this statement of the case. Perhaps all rights, everywhere, are independent of the paper on which they are recorded: and, if they were not independent of it, would not actually exist. In the Soviet Union there is, in fact, a kind of democracy which is altogether *sui generis*: so that the man is master where in Britain he is the dependent, though his mouth is closed on some things where in Britain he can speak his mind. One of the more wholesome features of the Soviet system—having its origin perhaps in the immemorial discussions of the *Mir*—is that, *on what we may call the lower planes of public affairs*, a vigorous

democratic system is actually in existence and has been encouraged by the revolutionary government. It is true that the factory, the farms, the steamer, the office, the shop and the mine, are run under the perpetual criticism of the workers, who freely express their opinions and suggestions through the medium of the wall-newspaper and the factory committee. The dwellings of the workers are managed by committees chosen by the workers and responsible to them, with no interference from distant estate-agents or investment-holders. At a conference of the High Schools, attended by representatives of the pupils, as well as by teachers and persons engaged in educational administration, a girl student's complaint of the attitude of teachers towards questioners received sympathetic attention and was taken up warmly by the Press. Members of the outside public are associated with local bodies for many purposes, for instance for the details of town-planning. The function of patronage (*sheftsvo*) exercised by factory over village, and by associations over certain public departments, carries interest and influence into wider spheres. I am not certain that the procedure of the Party Purge is intended to survive. Hitherto it has given to everybody the opportunity of publicly ventilating grievances against all but the most highly placed. So many officials are Communists, that a purge of the Party came near to being a purge of the bureaucracy. However cavalierly constitutional forms may on some occasions have been treated, important measures have sometimes been submitted to free public discussion for long periods before adoption by the legislature. This is true not only of the two measures of 1927 and 1936 affecting marriage and the family, but also of the momentous decision of 1929 regarding the collectivisation of agriculture. I do not say that public opinion had its way on all these occasions. But it certainly had a good hearing: and a good hearing is something which is highly appreciated.

What I have called democracy *on the lower planes* of public affairs may, or may not, be a preparation for democracy on the higher planes. Among the pre-requisites of successful democracy, and perhaps most important of them, is knowledge. When Abraham Lincoln said that you could not fool all the people all the time, he had in view an order of society in which knowledge was generally accessible to the seeker for it. This implies not only a literate people (which is virtually achieved in the U.S.S.R.), but also a maximum of freedom of expression and ventilation of opinion. The latter is not only not existent in the U.S.S.R., but is impossible to be conceded, so long as the aim of the Government continues to be the remaking of the habits of man in a new image. It is easy to concede it in the United Kingdom or in the United States, where the aim is, not radically to change man, but to perpetuate his adjustment to a long-established order of society. Natural inertia may be trusted to neutralise the preaching of innovators, when innovation is the thing that is dreaded: and the thinkers may without danger be left to publish their

thoughts. But an accompaniment of the attempt to educate man into a new attitude towards life must be the direction of all overt utterance towards that aim, and the stifling of all that runs counter to it. The socialistic habit of mind is not yet sufficiently established to resist the impact of contrary teachings; and, because the U.S.S.R. does not dare to expose its citizens to the possible infection of reaction, it puts a check upon that freedom of thought, without which the knowledge necessary to the exercise of democracy *upon the higher planes* of public affairs is not to be had.

It is otherwise with what we have called democracy upon the *lower planes* of public affairs: for here knowledge is accessible to ordinary everyday experience and does not require to be supplemented by the wider attainments of the thinking few. A man can understand the business of his own collective farm, his own factory, or his own mining shaft, in a degree in which he cannot hope to understand the business of his own State, without the freest possible access to the experience and the thought of others. The regimented output of a government and a Party Press cannot take the place of that stimulating and informing variety which a free literature is capable of communicating. I suggest, therefore, that it is unreasonable to look for anything like democracy upon the higher planes of public affairs, while the country remains, *ex hypothesi*, at school with the Communist Party. The status of pupilage is incompatible with the status of self-government.

The sphere of local self-government is the subject of Chapter VIII of the constitution. Here, as on the higher planes—in the Supreme Soviets of the U.S.S.R., of the constituent republics and of the autonomous republics—indirect election has been replaced by direct. All the Soviets of working people's deputies in territories, provinces, regions, districts, cities and rural localities, are now elected directly by the working people, instead of being, as formerly, arranged in successive tiers, with election from the lower to the higher at each stage. The two most striking characteristics of this chapter are its two great omissions. Except a general statement in Articles 97 and 98, there is no definition of powers and functions: and beyond the declaration that each Soviet is to draw up its own local budget, there is no reference to finance or to taxing power. The first omission is to be ascribed to certain fundamental assumptions of local government which go far back into Russian history. The local is a microcosm of the central authority, so far as civil administration is concerned. It may, and upon occasion it ought, to discharge any or all of the functions of government. There is no such thing as a doctrine of *ultra vires*: and no body of law which fixes and limits powers. It can do anything within the area of its jurisdiction, for which it has the funds and the executive instruments. That local bodies sometimes use these powers in an eccentric way, we gather from a complaint by the Attorney-General of the Union, of bye-laws imposing fines of a hundred roubles for

sleeping in a public place, and omitting to turn the water out of the bath after washing; and prohibiting the use of matches by children, old people, and persons of unsound mind. On the other hand, a local body may at any moment be overridden by the authority next above it, on any of its decisions and any of its actions. In the financial field there is nothing similar to the British system under which each local body is empowered to levy, or to require some other local body to levy on its behalf, rates on the occupiers of property on such scale as its necessary expenditure may justify. The local authority in Britain can, and does (subject to the risk of incurring the indignation of its constituent rate-payers), adjust its income to its expenditure. The local authority in the U.S.S.R., on the contrary, must adjust its expenditure to such share as it is able to secure, in discussion with other local authorities above and below itself, in the proceeds of certain sources of income assigned by the central authority for local uses.

These sources of income assigned for local uses include (somewhat unexpectedly) the inheritance tax and the tax on gifts: which range from an insignificant percentage on values between 1,000 and 2,000 roubles to 90% above 500,000 roubles. It looks like a handsome present to local interests, till we remember that large properties are extremely rare. Other sources assigned to local authorities include taxes (in towns) on buildings, means of transport, and cattle, and on spectacles and amusements: the tax on the totalisator at State race-courses: dog tax: taxes on local gettings of gold and platinum: fees on documents and court fees: a share on subscription to State loans within the locality: charges on summer visitors to country houses in the area of the capitals: an *octroi* and a tax on automobiles at Moscow: and a share in a certain portion of the turnover tax (which, in the aggregate, constitutes the bulk of the revenue of the Union). Almost universally, maximum rates are fixed by the central authority.

The principle determining the claim of a particular local authority to a particular item is, primarily, the locality of collection: and there are standing orders determining in detail how much from any particular source is claimable by each class of local authority: by the authorities of Krai, Oblast, and Autonomous republic; by those of towns: by those of regions: by those of workers' settlements: and by those of villages. The budget of each authority travels upwards, being successively incorporated in the budgets of the authorities superior to itself till, finally, the bulk of the local budgets (but not the whole of them) finds a place in the budget of the Union. I have noted, elsewhere in this study, a tendency to frame local budgets exhibiting large deficits, in the hope that, at a higher stage in the series, provision will be made for restoring the balance by grant. Recourse by local authorities to irregular levies of their own was formerly common. These are now strictly forbidden under penalty: and it is no longer possible, without breach of the law, to camouflage irregular taxa-

tion by voluntary collections: since the specific sanction of higher authority is now required to the latter.

There is little, if any, local financial autonomy: for all the revenue, and a very considerable portion of the expenditure, are determined by orders from outside. In Moscow itself, as we have recently learned from Professor Jewkes, one-sixteenth part of the city's revenues is raised by an *octroi* and by a tax on automobiles, of which the rates are determined by the local authority of the city. Somewhat larger fractions are derived from the profits on local enterprises, and from public utilities: and a somewhat smaller one from the rents of houses and shops. More than two-thirds of the total comes from the State, in the form of an allotment on the turnover tax, a share of income tax, and allocations from social insurance. Three-fifths of the expenditure of the city is on social services, of which the norms of expenditure are laid down by the central power. On the subject of finance in general it will be apparent that the conditions of a society, from which considerable accumulations in private hands are excluded, compel recourse to indirect taxation for the raising of the revenues of the State: and so take, from the familiar language regarding the power of the purse, almost all of its significance. Along with the inevitability of an organisation which brings large numbers of persons on to the official pay-roll, the necessity of raising revenue by adding to prices is part of the payment to be made for a juster order of society: and new expedients must be devised to meet the dangers of bureaucracy, and to take the place of a direct popular motive for the discouragement of extravagance.

Each Constituent Republic has its own constitution, modelled upon that of the Union, with the differences made necessary by the federal character of the latter: and the elections were held everywhere in June, in an atmosphere resembling that of an English Bank Holiday, amid music, dancing and rejoicing, with results which reproduced the unanimity of the elections for the Union.

I have been drastic in my examination of the Stalin constitution: and I do not, in fact, find any reason for expecting it to establish anything like what the West means by democratic institutions. Freedom—or so it seems at present—is to be divided between East and West in mutually exclusive fractions: the one getting such freedom as depends upon economic equality, and the other such freedom as legal and political equality may be capable of creating. I do not infer that the new constitution in the U.S.S.R. is of no importance. Forms, if they are not too flagrantly violated, have a way of adding unto themselves some measure of reality. The constitution has already done something to inspire the sense of unity in sundered millions, to stimulate the political education and ambition of youth, to create self-respect where there was none before, to open up reservoirs of unsuspected ability: and it may yet prove to have established a forum for the effective ventilation of grievances.

Some attempt has been made—it was in a Cossack constituency—to devise methods of keeping the deputy in closer touch with the electors. It was the lack of such methods which made the Viborg 1906 manifesto of the First Imperial Duma so complete a fiasco, and allowed the Constituent Assembly of 1918 to be dissolved without any reaction in the constituencies. The provisions of this constitution that every deputy is bound to report to the electors on his work, and on the work of the Soviet of which he is a member: and may at any time be recalled by decision of a majority of the electors: are devised for the purpose of maintaining the living link between electors and representatives. In the meanwhile we have glimpses of the local deputy raising questions of the timing of trains, the shortage of housing accommodation, and the unjust dismissal of workmen, on behalf of local complainants. We also see him going on tour in a mountainous constituency and criticising the absence of provision against erosion by mountain torrents, the slowness of local posts, and the inadequacy of the supply of articles of prime necessity, and enunciating the important principle that officials should travel about the area of their charges, in order to acquaint themselves with actual conditions. Here he puts his finger on one of the expedients for holding bureaucracy in check.

The new constitution will not enable the Russian peoples to change their rulers without the use of force or the violation of law. In this power, existing in differing degrees and in differing forms, in the U.S.A., the United Kingdom, much of northern and western Europe, the British Dominions and in germ also in British India, consists the essence of Democracy. It is not complete, even in the so-called democratic States, because of the weighting of the scales in favour of wealth. In such degree as it exists, it contains the secret of peaceful political growth. It makes possible the distinction between opposition to the Government and enmity to the State: for lack of which, independent thinkers grow into traitors and differences of opinion become potential revolutions.

The constitution of the U.S.S.R. is not democratic: in spite of the document. Nor indeed do the conditions make democracy possible. What is aimed at is a discipline which shall remake man in a new image, and the co-operation of the patient in the process of remaking. The Russian people is *at school.*

But democracy itself is in flux: and is to be respected rather for its potentialities than for its achievements. The missing half of it—the economic half—is still to be supplied in the West.

The long isolation of Russia from the West, and of the West from Russia, has kept the two halves of Democracy apart from one another. Are we to witness the coming together of the two in a complete whole? Only wishful thinking can answer, with conviction, Yes.

Annexure to Chapter XXI

THE YOUNG MAN'S FIRST SPEECH

When the Secretary of the assembly said:
"It's your turn to speak,"
I looked at the great hall
And felt full of terror:
I've no gift for speaking,
I tell you straight,
It's my first election:
I'm only eighteen:
I can't find the words I want:
I can't stop shaking.
"Comrade Petrov is the speaker
On behalf of the young people."
There was a wave of clapping.
Scales came before my eyes.
Suddenly, not I, but someone else
Cried aloud: "Comrades!"
And I began to speak in plain words,
My own plain words,
Just as I speak with father at the tea-table,
Just as I speak to you now.
We, says I, are still fledglings,
But we have seen joy in life.
Thank you, says I, our fathers,
That you have given wings to us.
Our time has not been long:
Our story is a short one.
But one man there is on the earth,
He is our path, our reason, our conscience.
When life sets puzzles to us,
And sends us a hard piece of thinking,
The question comes plump:
What would *he* have done about this?
When we decide for, or against,
We try to picture
His smile and *his* eyes:
And he doesn't let us down.
Great are his thoughts and deeds:
We have read about them in books and in life.
The truth of the plain folk lived and lives in him.
They call him Stalin—and crash!
Like a cliff falling, came: Long live Stalin!
Three minutes of it, if you please,
Before I could begin again
It seemed to grow lighter:
And a warm flush of brother man
Came in a wave upon the platform.
And I said, when I could get in a word:
"Whoever he be that we vote for,
It's Stalin will be our compass.
We're for the man who fought beside him,
Who was true to his truth.
That's where we trust our fortune,

That's where we trust our happiness.
And—says I, proudly—we young people,
We're boys with heads on our shoulders:
You won't gammon us, and lead us up the garden
With soft sawder and tall talk.
We look at man, and we look at deeds:
Our hearts know the smack of truth.
On Stalin's way, straight as an arrow,
All of us together vote as one."
And there I ended: and all the hall
Clapped me a farewell greeting.
That's how I made my first speech
In a great big meeting.

By VASSILY LEBEDEV-KUMACH.
(Published in *Pravda* of November 21st, 1937.)

Note.—"The truth of the plain folk." In this expression there is an allusion to the deeply rooted idea that truth resides in the congregation of the faithful. It appeared in the "going to the people" of the 'seventies and it survives in Communist thought to-day.

CHAPTER XXII

PERSONALITY OUT OF COLLECTIVISM

"Russia has from time immemorial been the country of the impersonal collective idea. The realisation of this idea was the aspiration of the Church, as well as of all the sects opposed to the Church, and of all the intellectual, cultural, and social currents."—RÉNÉ FULOP-MILLER, *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism.*

"In all matters in which state interests are supposed to be involved, the rights of individuals are ruthlessly sacrificed."—D. MACKENZIE WALLACE.

"Bolshevism is but the extension of the individualist doctrine of the rights of man from the political sphere to the economic. Far from being the opposite of Individualism it is its consistent fulfilment."—OTHMAR SPANN (of Vienna), *Der Wahre Staat*, 1931: as quoted by Karl Polanyi in *Christianity and the Social Revolution.*

"The principle of personality can in no way stand and develop on the soil of materialism."—N. BERDYAEV, *Origins of Russian Communism.*

"Once he has done with the anarchic forces of his own society, Man will set to work on himself in the mortar and crucible of the chemist. For the first time mankind will regard itself as raw material, or at best as a physical and psychic half-finished product."—TROTSKY's speech at Copenhagen in November, 1932.

"What a double-armed power this Russian revolution is: how on the one hand it stifles, and on the other hand it redeems, personality! Whether it does the one or the other, depends upon whether one is an enemy and non-conformist, or a ward and supporter, of the new dispensation."—MAURICE HINDUS, *Red Bread.*

NO ONE has ever questioned the lack, in old Russia, of the sense of human personality. Konstantin Leontiev, a writer whose thought was far from typically Russian, rejoiced in the absence of it, and of its consequences in the conceptions of democracy and liberty. To him it was an

infection, which, starting from nobles and knights, spread downwards as a fashion does, till every base mechanical felt a sense of human dignity and aspired to equality, and the philosophers of the eighteenth century sanctified his aspiration. Russia—old Russia, at all events—fused her people into a congregation, which jointly received the gift of an undivided and indivisible spirit, radically different from the spirit of individuality.

There has been no similar unity of opinion regarding the influence of the doctrines of Communism on the growth of human personality. Some, like Berdyaev, in the quotation at the head of the chapter, hold that Communism is incompatible with appreciation for the value of the individual. Others—dating back to the framers of the Communist Manifesto of 1849—defend the opposite contention, and declare that it favours personality by eliminating anxiety for daily bread and setting man free for other concerns. The question at issue is a vital one. Perhaps it is the question of questions, for any and every society.

Let us begin by making up our minds what we mean when we talk of personality. It is easy to see what we mean by the absence of it. Gleb Uspensky, the story-teller of humble Russian life, wrote a tale in which he described the peasant as living under "the power of the land", and responding to the external stimulus of the daily needs of agricultural life: a life which is still dominated by the caprices of nature: foreseeing, indeed, the goal of the harvest, and the outcome of the primitive plan of the three-field rotation, and to this extent in advance of the amœba which obeys the calls of hunger, reproduction and fear, as from moment to moment they present themselves: but unable to transcend the routine and look *from outside* upon himself and his destiny, still less able to use himself for the fulfilment of conscious purposes of his own. In untranslatable language, he describes this mass of beings living *splosh* (the Russian word), in hugger-mugger, as Shakespeare might have said, in indistinguishable and promiscuous confusion: and has a vision of them as fish rushing together into a net, by an unconsidered impulse of common instinct. If this was true of the common man, much more was it true of woman, doubly imprisoned between stove and threshold, cradle and cooking-pot. The poets saw it and uttered their warning songs. The thinkers began to pick out facts and figures. That process of teaching man to see himself which is the supreme function of art, and so of helping him to make a deliberate use of his powers, had begun: but the common language was yet to seek: and the teachers of all orders might still almost as well have been dumb, since the village was deaf, and the town little more than the village transplanted.

There was one great teacher, inspired by anti-individualist lessons from Buddhism and the Bhagavad-Gita, who applauded the impersonal life. Leo Tolstoi, in depicting Peter Bezukhov's interest in Platon Karataev, took civilised man back to the primitive condition in which life is lived

splosh—if I may again repeat the untranslatable. It was a not uncommon type. Kalinich in the story of Turgeniev (see Chapter III of these studies) is another literary example of it; the life that is so near to nature, the nature of birds and bees and animals, that it is all but indistinguishable from it. It lives from moment to moment, obeys the call of circumstance, foresees little, plans nothing, takes good and evil as inevitable visitations, has no power of looking upon itself from outside, no notion of using itself for remoter aims, is fatalistic in its religions except in so far as it believes that unaccountable authorities outside itself may be won to favour or provoked to anger. I suppose this is what the psycho-analysts mean when they talk about "the unconscious", and perhaps the process of realising personality has something in common with the conquest of the unconscious by the conscious. At all events, the growth of consciousness is a part of it.

What is deficient in the uncompleted personality is partly knowledge, partly will; partly the cognitive, partly the conative faculty, I suppose I ought to say. And the deficiency is always, as actually observed, a matter of degree. It is a lack of something that is perhaps in process of evolution; since some individuals are always conspicuously better furnished with it than others. At the time that Uspensky saw the peasants rushing like fish into the net, and much earlier than that, there were plenty of individuals who had a full consciousness of self as an agent to be used for calculated ends, had remoter aims and deliberately shaped action to attain them. In fact, it would almost seem that the deficiency of some gave the opportunity of abnormal growth to others; that gigantic personalities might emerge, the more easily that the pressure of rival personalities was diminished. Many of the serf-owners, as we see them in literature and in popular memory, exhibit a morbid growth of unbridled character, tending in the direction of sadism and mental alienation, except in the rare instances where it exalted and ennobled; for power, unlimited, like solitude, may make of a man a god, as well as make of him a beast.

Let us now attempt to define the quality or faculty which was missing, or latent, in Gleb Uspensky's peasants, who lived *splosh*, but present in a greater or less degree in some of their contemporaries. For it is the spread of this quality or faculty to wider circles—or its restriction to narrower ones—under the impact of the new attitude to life, that we are attempting to investigate.

It might mean, in its extreme development, the sort of despotic egotism developed in the old male of the monkey herd, supreme among his females, and an object of terror and avoidance to the younger males who have grown out of childhood; in the Cyclops giving his commands to the other denizens of his cave; for it is in these that "character", in a certain sense, has the greatest room to grow. But this meaning is excluded, if we assume the aim to be a wider extension of the faculty or quality which we seek to define. Plainly it is something which is related to social life; and

it must have an element of balance in it, discouraging A from the aggressive attempt to development at the expense of B, and encouraging co-operative effort.

But since society is not always and everywhere the same, and ought to be susceptible of variation and evolution, the desiderated faculty or quality must also have an element of elasticity, to fit itself for change. At its best, it should include that capacity for man to "set to work upon himself" to change himself, which Trotsky postulates in the quotation from the Copenhagen speech set at the head of this chapter. A balance between freedom and discipline is evidently involved: and a hereditary caste system is unfavourable to that which we are seeking. But if one can imagine a distribution of functions in which there was no arbitrariness or fixity, but each fell into his appropriate place by a conscious appreciation of rightness, it would seem that the development of personality had gone far and wide in such a state.

Since capacities differ, some, in a wholesome society, are initiators, and many are imitators. If it were otherwise inventions would perish at birth. There are inevitable differences of function, and each may find his own personality in the discharge of his own function when he has found it.

Perhaps personality means the faculty of finding and recognising your own place and work in society, and of pitching your choice as high as your powers permit. This involves a corresponding function on the part of society—of facilitating and not obstructing the recognition and the choice.

This definition brings us very close to T. H. Green's,* of "the quality in a person of being consciously an object to itself", and it will give us a working basis for the investigation of this final chapter which I have called Personality out of Collectivism. What is there in Soviet Communism which favours, and what is there in it which retards, the conscious search of each for his and her true place?

Let us note in the first place that the suggested definition appears to be that of the Anglican Church Catechism: "to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me", until we see that it does not acknowledge the transcendent source of the demand; and does not recognise an eternal idea to which there must be ultimate conformity, but only an evolving self of unknown potentialities which must be divined. But whether it be the call of a divine being, or man's own reading of his powers, which is to enable him to find and realise his personality, seems to make little difference in practice, since it is he who—whether as an individual, or the obedient son of a church, or the disciple of an institution which keeps his conscience for him—the Communist Party, for instance—must interpret the call, or divine the summons. In the case of the U.S.S.R., which is here under investigation, there exists an analogue of a priesthood, which undertakes a task similar to the keeping of con-

* See *Prolegomena to Ethics*, T. H. Green.

sciences by certain of the churches, and helps the individual to find his duty. In this respect the position of the Soviet citizen is less like that of a Protestant Christian, who reads his own conscience for himself, than that of a Roman Catholic who submits himself to ecclesiastical guidance. This makes easier the adjustment of self to society; but an adjustment which is rather the acceptance of a discipline than that conscious self-harmonisation with one's fellows and their needs, which is what I understand by the development of personality.

In embarking upon the revolutionary undertaking, the Soviets have left the easy way of maintaining an existing order, and attempted the difficult one of change. Socialism is still in the making and still on the defensive. It is inevitable that Russia should be in a sense *at school.* The more complex the society, the newer the type of behaviour which it demands, the more extended and elaborate the functions of the Government, the more difficult is the adjustment of the individual and the harder the task of finding his place, and the more probable it becomes that the conformity will be the result of an external discipline than of an inner harmonisation. When to these things is added a rapidly changing law, or a law which changes on principles not readily intelligible to the masses of men, the difficulty of self-harmonisation is increased and the chances of the disintegration of personality are multiplied.

Anything like caprice in the dominant régime is unfavourable to personality; and autocracy, even in the strongest and ablest, has a tendency to caprice. The Russia of the Tsars was a sufferer in some degree from fickleness in legislation and in administrative practice. But the disintegrating effects of the drastic reversal of standards were carried to extreme, when the more prosperous peasants who had been allowed for a time to hire both land and labour, and had been utilised to restore agricultural production to its pre-war standard—had even been invited to "enrich themselves" as a part of their social duty—were ousted from their lands and houses and deprived of their possessions. A generation which had witnessed that staggering extirpation could hardly recover its sense of stability, or be sure of the distinction between right and wrong.

If we desire to see how Communist rule has affected and how it is likely to affect the development of human personality, we must look, in the first place, at the conditions which were superseded by the Revolution, and not at the conditions existing in western Europe or in the United States of America. As I see the Revolution, it was as though a people, hitherto submissive to the demands of a Solomon and a Rehoboam, had cried: To your tents, O Israel; and had decided, as Tolstoi wished them to decide, that they had no more need of the State. It was the collapse of a social order, leaving ruins upon which one group alone possessed the faith, the courage and the discipline for the task of rebuilding. The Communists did not overthrow the Tsars. The structure gave way, from inherent defects, when shaken by military defeat. The anarchy which

followed was in essence the same which has followed on the break up of other empires. But it was made shorter, and predatory forces were to some extent kept off the carcase, by the emergence of an organised force which took up the task of reconstruction. Such tasks are not easy. Not only do the faults of the old order persist, but they are aggravated by the disordered release of primitive agencies of destruction, and by the peculiarly horrible suspicions—of brother against brother, and neighbour against neighbour—which breed in the slaughter-pits of civil war. The failures and the crimes of the Revolutionary Government are not condoned by the conditions of rebuilding in the Land of Fragments, but they are explained by them. Thomas Carlyle said it might take two centuries to restore normal conditions in revolutionary France. We cannot look for restoration of a normal psychology in Russia in two decades. We can only seek for indications of the direction in which the existing tendencies may ultimately develop, when the disturbing influences have ceased to operate. In the second place we must not build theories upon the supposed tendencies of a materialistic philosophy or upon deductions from the teaching of Karl Marx. A philosophy, like religion, has profound effects upon the thoughts and actions of a people. But it is the actual philosophy, or the actual religion, which exercises influence: and the actual philosophy of the modern U.S.S.R. is something to which Karl Marx and dialectical materialism have made a contribution, but which is made up of other elements, including those of Orthodox Christianity and traditional Russian sentiment. We can only discover what Communist rule has done, and is likely to do, by an examination of facts, some of which are directly attributable to the new régime, while others are only indirectly a product of it.

Assuming a normal proportion between the sexes, the most radical fact in any group of human beings is its average age. Nearly half of the present population of the U.S.S.R. is under twenty-one years of age, and nearly two-thirds of it is under twenty-nine. Only a third of it has anything but a very young child's recollection of what went before the Revolution, and only a third of it has passed the first flush of youth. At the census of 1931, half the population of Great Britain had reached or passed the age of twenty-nine. If hope and energy and susceptibility to fresh impressions are pre-eminently characteristic of youth, we must be prepared to find more of these qualities in the U.S.S.R.: and more sobriety in Great Britain. The former is the younger country, in the most literal sense of the expression. It is significant that officers in their thirties who had shown promise on the Moscow front in 1941–42 were promoted to high commands.

I shall not beg the question of the permanent end of unemployment, and will merely note here that the U.S.S.R. continued to show every sign of industrial boom at a time when the condition of the United Kingdom, and still more that of the United States of America, threatened

recession. The combination of youthfulness with equality of opportunity and a wide variety of openings gives reality to the optimism on which Soviet ethics insist. Messrs Lorwin and Abrahamson noticed, on their visit in 1935 to investigate industrial conditions, the predominance in industry of young workers. In the Tractor Factory at Kharkov, for instance, they found over two-fifths of the workers under twenty-four years of age, and nearly another third of them between twenty-four and thirty. These figures cannot be explained by the presence of a large number of children, for only 2% were under eighteen. Nor was there anything exceptional in the conditions of this factory. It was typical of Soviet life in general, where State departments and scientific institutes as well as factories and workshops are full of young people. In the stations and wintering parties of the Soviet Arctic, where one of the greatest peaceful adventures of the modern world is now being played out, four-fifths of the workers are under twenty-five years of age.

The conditions of the U.S.S.R. at the present day have points of resemblance to those of middle America, at the time of Horace Greeley's famous adjuration to youth: Go west, young man, go west! A vast estate, long neglected, is being opened to enterprise: and methods of exploitation, which are not new to the capitalist countries, but come with all the freshness of gigantic toys to the naïveté of young Russia, are put at the disposal of wondering man. This old world of Scythians and Mongols and immemorial nomadism is transformed, for the nonce, into a new one: and deserts and moss-covered sub-Arctic wastes are yielding up their secrets, as the Oceans yielded theirs when Vasco da Gama and Columbus dared to leave the shore. What the age of discovery did for Western Europe—leaving the East untouched—the twentieth century, with its motor transport and aeroplanes and wireless, is doing for Asia, and the old Russia, which is its vestibule. It is a discovery by land succeeding to discovery by sea. Visitors to an earlier Russia carried away with them an ineffaceable impression of the boredom—*skuchnost*—which was for ever on the lips and in the yawns of the young people of those days: and Chekhov has helped those who had no personal knowledge of it to realise the aimlessness and vacuity of the life in a certain class. There was a sort of self-contempt bred from a sense of lack of direction. The examples and the leading were bad, and energy was frustrated. But that is changed, because youth is able to do what its self-respect approves as good, has found the service which is perfect freedom: and because particular pains is taken to bring to the front the right men and women—a point in which the old régime failed notoriously, if we may trust General Kuropatkin's condemnatory sentence when he bade farewell to his troops at the end of a humiliating war.

The people are young; and there is a career open to the talents. If anyone has any doubt about the scope which offers itself to healthy social ambition, let him seek for an answer to the question—which many must

in this spring of 1942 be putting to themselves—where did Russia find her generals for the remarkable campaign which her soldiers are fighting? They came out of the masses of the people, with no advantages other than those which Nature gave them; and the same is true of the leaders in other walks of life, from Stalin, street-boy of Tiflis and thereafter theological student, downward.

The first question for every Government which would have peace and happiness at home is: what can you offer to youth? and to this question the Soviet Government has the best of answers. Life itself is become an adventure, and a hopeful one. The size and variety of the U.S.S.R., with its many peoples and languages and cultures, all frontierless and open as the United States of America for unbroken thousands of miles, provide a sensation of limitless space, which neutralises the effect of the virtual prohibition of foreign travel. The pioneering is pioneering with a difference, of course. It is no longer Yermak making his way across Siberia in independence of all the world and carving out kingdoms by the sheer force of individual will and the courage of his band: nor Daniel Boone, penetrating Kentucky alone with rifle and knife to stake out claims for a nation. A powerful Government travels with the emigrant, and, by the might of organisation, makes possible triumphs that were beyond the reach of the unaided individual. It is a larger scale of co-operation than the co-operation of earlier days, and its achievements are proportionately greater: though solitary man is not the giant that he was. For most of the peoples, the world has grown smaller: even in America the sense of unlimited space for development has been disappointed: only in the U.S.S.R., during the last two decades, has the world grown larger and more satisfying.

The gain is as great, by comparison with the past it is greater, for women than for men. A limited group of Russian women enjoyed freedom and consideration. For the mass, the path was from stove to cradle, from cradle to wash-tub, from wash-tub to threshold, with crushing field work in the short seasons of haycutting and harvest. It was a series of instinctive responses to particular needs, only differing from that of the animal in its somewhat greater elaboration; and there was no room in it for the growth of a human personality. The Great War created wider opportunities of more varied employment, and women took up many of the burdens dropped by men both in field and factory. The enormous demand for labour of every kind, but more particularly for skilled labour; for school teachers, for doctors, for dentists, for engineers, for farm managers, for sea and river navigators, to which the forward policies of the Revolutionary Government have given occasion, has raised women to a new status. In 1936 over 8 million women were occupied in different branches of State, economic and cultural life. There were 184 of them in the Supreme Soviet elected in 1937. There were at least one woman ambassador and one woman Commissar of the Union.

This has been found compatible with the encouragement of motherhood—a marked contrast with the British system, in which marriage is, for the woman, a cause of exclusion from certain important occupations, particularly educational. Not only generous social services and the absence of the complex due to property, but also the social attitude towards motherhood, as a function valuable to the State, are favourable to the mother: and the house-mistress, *domokhozaika*, takes place along with the female worker and collective farmer and employee, among honoured citizens. We are here in a region in which statistical demonstration is impossible: but I suspect that the facility for marriage (and for dissolving it, when it proves a failure) and the absence of discouragements to child-bearing, constitute points of real superiority in the Soviet social system over the British. Taboos of more kinds than one obstruct the frank and unbiased consideration of this subject: in which religious teachers ought to be prepared to co-operate with sociologists and doctors and statisticians and psychologists: but most of us are conscious of the presence in our midst of a phenomenon as morbid as that of the child-widow in India, and more widely spread.

Self-fulfilment in respect to all the functions of humanity is necessary to bodily and mental health: and love, and the child, are even more radically and more universally important than the job and the gratification of ambition. We Westerners still wear our ill-fitting fig-leaves of the law of family and succession to property, of puritanism and romanticism, and force upon youth an external conformity from which it tends more and more to break away. In the result, because sexual ethics are not adjusted to human needs, sexual practice tends towards anarchy. That Bolshevik Russia has arrived at a perfect marriage law is very improbable. It has, in fact, made important changes in it during the last few years. But in repudiating the notion of a divine origin for rules which demonstrably lack all sanction except that of expedients for local and transient phases of society, it has cleared the ground which the West has left cluttered, and made a contribution to the wholesomeness of life.

The breach between the generations which was the subject of Turgeniev's *Fathers and Sons* has bulked very large in Soviet social history. It was a commonplace with earlier students of the U.S.S.R. that the children were teaching their elders the new manners, and the new morals, and that fathers were everywhere at odds with the sons. The child who gave information against his mother for stealing grain from the collective store was made a hero. It was the obverse of the part of Brutus condemning his sons for treason to the State. Here the child was the champion of the State against the surviving claims of the family. This was in 1932. The military threat of Nazi Germany and imperialistic Japan brought the family back to its place of honour. When, in 1935, Eisenstein produced a film centring upon the clash between father and son in the collective farm, Soviet morals had already reverted towards an

earlier outlook. Stalin gave the signal by a filial visit to his mother, the Communist League of Youth was reminded that its task was to teach the young, not the old, the amendment of the law of the family was set in motion, and the family has again become a bulwark of the State. In proportion as the family re-establishes itself as a fundamental institution, the woman loses something of her new-found liberty. I have pointed out elsewhere how delicate is this unstable equilibrium, till growing wealth makes a larger provision for the artificial aids to female tasks.

The child has not suffered by the reversion to an older conception of his place in society. Rather he has gained by liberation from functions which were not proper to his imperfectly developed powers. It is probable that the young Pioneer, who had been taught to open windows in other people's homes, and to rebuke his father for drinking and beating his mother, suffered psychologically from the strain. The abandonment of eccentric experiments in education, and of the imposition of adult tasks upon the young, has not meant the surrender of the conviction that reconstruction must begin with the children; but rather the adjustment of the treatment to age and strength. The child has been put in his right place, without any diminution of the special care and attention bestowed on his physical welfare and his mental education.

The morals of Bolshevism are hostile both to asceticism and to dissipation. The latter is a waste, a diversion of human powers which society needs for a better purpose: and the ideal—we must use the word—is an active one, an ideal of cheerful work and cheerful play, such as Maxim Gorky envisaged when he drew his picture of Nil, in *The Townsmen*: with no introspection, and no aloofness, no seeking for solitude: a life (like the froth-blower's) lived in public, where every man feels another shoulder next to his, and loves to feel it so. The State is a jealous State which makes a totalitarian demand upon every faculty, and every act of man, and claims to know his thoughts. There must be no escape from life, whether it takes the form of suicide, or of flight from the U.S.S.R., or of recourse to those forms of art which serve as opiates. The artists must, as Stalin once put it, be engineers of human souls. If a man seeks to walk alone, his path is an uneasy one.

The conflict between the individual and collective man is illustrated in literature. An audacious example is Yury Olesha's novel *Envy*, written and published at Moscow in 1927, before the control of the Proletarian Writers' Association had established itself. It is a picture of two groups of people, one of them healthily adjusted to the new surroundings, the other consisting of social misfits. The leading example of the former is Andrei Babichev, the capable, robust, business-like organiser of a catering establishment, and the proud inventor of a sausage at 35 kopeks, for the better nutrition of Soviet workers. He is friendly to the student Kavalerov, whom he twice picks out of the gutter; but Kavalerov is a morbid egoist, who cannot forgive Andrei for his banal success and his patronage

of himself. Another of the misfits is Ivan, the brother of Andrei, who half consoles himself for his inferiority to the successful brother, by imagining that he has invented a marvellous machine. Ivan gives dangerous advice to Kavalerov: "The only thing is to quit the scene with *éclat*, to slam the doors, to leave a scar on the ugly mug of history." The coming epoch, he says, will be glorious: he loves it, and he hates it. Since he and Kavalerov have no part in its achievement, "take vengeance: show you're as good as it: and the vengeance should be taken on Andrei, who has wronged both of us". We see the apparent makings of an assassination, to be perpetrated out of pure spite and injured vanity: but the conspirators have not in them the stuff for such extremes. The plot ends in a Magistrate's Court, where Ivan tells a queer tale of his plan for a "conspiracy of feelings". The new era, he says, will create new states of mind in place of the old. Before the old feelings, such as honour, love of woman, jealousy and ambition, pride and compassion, finally depart, he wants to shake up the burnt-out bulb and make it yield a short last flash, which shall at least be beautiful: to marshal the ancient human passions in their final march past. In this parade he wants to exhibit Kavalerov as an incarnation of Envy.

It is the artist's protest against the exclusion of his traditional themes, glorified by the poets, and by the muse of History herself. It is also an illustration in its extreme form of the social misfit and of the struggle of solitary with social man, which is a characteristic theme. Though the worthy and useful Andrei and the Magistrate who represents Soviet justice have the best of it against the individualistic scallawags, the author makes the latter the mouthpieces of his satire upon the new *respectability*, which does not allow man to be himself. In the closing scene the two disreputables drink a toast to the chief of the old sentiments, to Indifference: and Ivan promises to Kavalerov a roistering night. It is the opiate for disappointment, doubly shocking to Bolshevik morals, which call upon man to face up to facts.

For those who find the adjustment to social life hard to compass, I suspect that family life, at its best, furnishes a valuable help to the growth of personality, by providing, as it were, a recognised escape into a more sympathetic *milieu*. It seems to be the normal field for the operation of that principle of *withdrawal and return*, to which Mr. Toynbee has pointed as a beneficent influence in life. The rehabilitation of the family, to be completed later on by the improvement of housing accommodation, still notably deficient, is a favourable influence, therefore, in the conditions of Soviet Russia.

It was part of the Bolshevik code never to conceal, or slur over, a defeat or a mistake: but to drag all facts to light and analyse them so as to win the full value of the lesson. There have been some remarkable confessions of error, of which Stalin's "Dizziness from Success" speech was perhaps the most striking. Kalinin has a particular gift for disarming

opposition by these acknowledgments of mistake. "Of course we make many mistakes," said he in October, 1919, when White armies were threatening the capitals: "because we did not learn to rule before. But we cannot place at our head a wise man of another class, because he will betray us." Another confession was made by him when the policy of agricultural requisitions was changed in 1921. The people of Russia understand a confession: and it is a way of establishing brotherly relations with them, which has contributed to the successes of the Soviet Government. The criticisms of Public Departments which are an almost daily feature of the Soviet Press represent the small change of the habit of confession by Government. But alongside of this frankness there are some suppressions of fact, when fact might be discouraging to national optimism, and some making of scapegoats. The full figures of the harvest of 1936, which was a partial failure, have never been published, though from our Western standpoint, the failure was nature's work, not the Government's. Condemnations of the Railways, of Retail Trade, and of other departments of the administration, are generally accompanied by the statement that Trotskyist–Bukharinist–Rykovist saboteurs have had too free a hand and must be checked. The constant instilment of suspicion against enemies, unknown and only vaguely imagined, must have a deleterious effect upon national character. It is the present-day Russian equivalent for that diversion of popular anger upon the Jews, which is the corresponding device in Nazi Germany. It has the excuse of civil war mentality, but it is none the less mischievous for that.

How much of individual freedom is there in the U.S.S.R.? If freedom means a share in choosing his own masters, the ordinary citizen lacks it, in spite of the constitution of 1936. If it means security against the application of extraordinary laws and extraordinary procedure when he is charged with a political offence, he has none of it. Democracy, as I have tried to make plain elsewhere, exists only on the lower planes. A man, or a woman, may criticise the factory management or any of the party rank and file, but must keep his mouth shut about the higher policy and the higher politicians, unless very careful soundings have been taken in advance. In the United Kingdom and the United States of America it is the other way round: caution about the boss, complete freedom to say the worst of the President or the Prime Minister.

In so far as freedom means a facility for self-fulfilment, a power as well as a right, to pursue the ends which have his whole-hearted approval, the citizen of the U.S.S.R. stands better. That there is more planning by the State, and less planning by the individual, may cramp the personality of the born captain of industry, who cannot reconcile himself to placing his powers at the disposal of the community, as a statesman or a military commander does. The man of the rank and file has no opportunity anywhere of planning anything more than the disposal of his own income, and not much of that. In the U.S.S.R. his real wage is small, but he has a very

high degree of economic security. So far as we are able to judge at present, he runs no risk of mass unemployment, and the social services guarantee his subsistence in sickness and old age, and—till October, 1940, when fees were introduced in secondary schools—a completely free education for his children up to the highest standard which they are capable of reaching. He has no need to go cap in hand to his brother-man for work, and his factory committee (or the absence of unemployment) protects him from wrongful dismissal. There are others with higher wages than his, perhaps even eight or ten times as great (unless he is one of the super-piece-workers), but there is no obtrusion of unbridled luxury to remind him of an inferior status, and none of that swollen wealth which represents in reality both economic and political power over fellow-beings. He has as much (or as little) property as his Western analogue, and an equal facility for saving, and greater communal amenities. He has opportunities for self-improvement, and may fit himself for more important work if he has the capacity for it. He lives in a society which honours labour, and does not honour money-getting. The dignity of toil has a meaning here, outside of the books of the Sunday-school moralists, and his toil is what he has to contribute to the common pool. Sometimes, unless he is one of the "flitters", he has a sense of *ownness* in his factory and his job. If he is a collective farmer, he probably has some special task on the farm which gives him a sense of improved status. There is a genuine significance in that verse of the Internationale which declares that he who was naught today is all. It is a life which admits of a solid self-respect, and the power to retain self-respect is a large part of liberty.

I must qualify the picture by adding that there is no safeguard against pace-making in industry. The majority protects itself quite efficiently by a natural indolence: but, in the more eager, over-work is quite usual. Among the older Communists it has been noticed as an almost normal feature.

Let us consider for a moment, from the point of view of the development of personality, the change which has been made by the collectivisation of the farms in the position of the peasant. He was a man of all work, not only a cultivator and a manager of beasts, but a buyer and a seller, a man of business on a small scale. But both nature and tradition compelled him to a narrow routine. The "power of the land" was upon him, and punished every weakness, every neglect, with hunger. Not only must he obey the course of the seasons and adapt his minute economy to their caprices; but the ancient procedure of his fellow-toilers, partly helping, partly thwarting, but wholly restrictive, prescribed and enforced each detail of his practice. Inevitably he moved with the herd, under the switch of compelling circumstance. There was no escape, except into the drink-shop: or into the town where another sort of compulsion awaited him in the discipline of the factory: unless he sought it in aimless wandering.

As a member of a collective farm, he is less of an all-round manager of a tiny agricultural business and more of a specialised functionary, with no individual responsibility for the success of the concern on its business side, and no anxiety regarding debt. As before, the general lines of work are laid down—partly by a plan, which was formerly the traditional plan of the open-field three-rotational system, and now purports to be based on the needs of scientific agriculture: and partly by the judgment of the co-sharers, in whose decisions he himself has a voice, varying in effectiveness according to the esteem in which he is held. The main difference is in a certain variety in the choices of occupation which lie before him. He is no longer called upon to do a little of everything and, almost inevitably, to do some of it ill, for he is one partner in a joint task, and there is a reasonable likelihood that different parts of it will be allotted according to capacity and liking. One man will find himself in the cattle shed, another in the farm office, another at the seed store, another with the hoe.

There is room for difference of opinion as to the way in which this change may be expected to work. Expressed in one word, it is a change to specialisation of function: accompanied by a sharing of the burden of financial responsibility. Leisure, or at all events a measure of freedom from responsibility, seems more likely now than before. The fact that there is more scope for choice seems to me to favour the development of personality.

And, now, as to the place of the citizen in the world of politics: he must keep his mouth shut about the higher policy: and the desire to open it on this subject is likely to be speedily suppressed, when it takes a more determined form than ordinary grumbling. One of the consequences of the ubiquity of the Party is that discontent is discovered and nipped in the bud. There is grumbling, of course, when things for one cause or another go amiss, and sometimes there is discontent of a more serious kind. What happens to the man or woman who dares to become a mouthpiece on such occasions? The answer is to be sought in the history of the series of judicial trials and administrative expulsions and dismissals which continued between 1936 and 1938. The protest may have so much popular support behind it, or may so commend itself to superior authority by its evident reasonableness, that the particular wrong will be amended. We see this happening in the occasional unexpected interventions of Stalin himself, to support a person aggrieved by the conduct of an intermediate authority: and the occasional dramatic reversals of a course of action which has created a general sense of injustice. There is an element of luck, almost an element of caprice, in these instances of successful resistance: the same kind of luck, the same kind of caprice, which we naturally associate with every despotic system, with Haroun-al-Rashid making his midnight visitations in Bagdad, as with the disguised Kalinin making purchases of bad soap in a careless store. Otherwise, the man

who has the courage to take a stand apart from or ahead of his group, and to assert his own canon of right and wrong, or is suspected of having it, is likely to be victimised.

He is victimised in other countries beside the U.S.S.R., but usually by his employers, when he receives the sympathy and sometimes the effective support of his fellow-workers. He may be shot by Pinkerton guards or mauled by Nazi bullies. But the terrible charges of counter-revolutionary activity, or of association with Trotskyist–Bukharinist–Rykovist spies and traitors, which serve as heavy artillery against the rebel mentality in the U.S.S.R., and involve a virtual excommunication, are not available to crush resistance, and sympathy with resistance, in the United Kingdom or in the United States of America.

The worst of these thunders are certainly reserved for persons who occupy responsible positions, and for the managing group. If the rank and file of the workers were generally endangered by the Terror, the régime would be in peril. It is because they are confident that the scourge is directed against the offending Communists or against the technical intelligentsia, that they remain indifferent to it, and even manifest sympathy with the executioners.

The Terror of 1936–38 was carried at least as far down as it was safe to carry it. It must be understood that I am speaking now, not of executions and imprisonments, but of fines, expulsions, and dismissals. The Central Committee of the Party published revelations which disclosed to us educational establishments left without staff, and local Co-operative shops without attendants, in consequence of the infliction of punishments afterwards recognised to be unjust. The Press turned upon the informers, and we learned from it that 80% of the captains of the Volga steamers were subjected to fine or other punishment of a minor character in 1937: and that no less than 132,000 shop assistants were in disgrace for alleged peculation and waste, till higher authority stepped in and reinstated them.

The modern intelligentsia is no longer the sedentary, literary, philosophising, discussion circle of a Russian Bloomsbury. In the early twentieth century that type was already being supplemented or replaced by a technical intelligentsia, brought into existence by the needs of incipient industrialisation. At the present day it is largely of proletarian or peasant origin, trained in the schools and technicums of the Revolutionary period: and it ranges from the doctor, the agronomist, the schoolmaster, the engineer and the manager, to the white-collared (or black-coated) workers, who keep the books and do the clerical work. Despite the quick passage, both upward and downward, which characterises Soviet life, and the general spread of education, levelling distinctions, the difference between the brain-worker and the manual worker continues to assert itself, and continues to be something tangible and recognisable. Fraulein Koerber gives us a glimpse of it in her account of the investigation into

factory conditions by what was then the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate. "Workmen don't mind this inquisition. They just confess to mistakes. But an intellectual thinks it terrible to be spied upon and questioned and called to account." And a doctor comments upon this: "*No citizens of the Soviet Union have private lives.*" The sensitiveness of the old intelligentsia has been inherited by the new: and it is the symbol of a separation from the rank and file. This explains why the Terror was not a Terror for the latter. As regards the principal delinquents, the leaders of the "Trotskyist–Bukharinist–Rykovist–*bourgeois*–nationalist–counter-revolutionary" conspiracies, the people accepted with a religious faith what the newspapers told them, and clamoured—long before the trials were completed and the accused found guilty—for the blood of the traitors. There were signs, at one moment, of a reawakening of the old Russian pitifulness, which could not bear the execution of criminals by formal sentence of Court: but these were rapidly organised out of existence by a nation-wide demonstration of gratitude to the political police. As to the minor offenders in industry and agriculture, there was no sense of unity between them and the rank and file. I have dwelt upon this subject here in order to explain my own conclusion that fear has not affected the psychology of the masses. But the impression is given that when anything goes wrong, no matter what the cause, scapegoats will be found and sacrificed without mercy, and that any general movement of sympathy for the victim will be diverted by a barrage of organised propaganda: vilification of the accused, or glorification of the instruments of his punishment, or both: and that not one man, just and tenacious of purpose, will dare to stand firm against the people taught to clamour for the predetermined sentence.

The terrifying efficiency of organised propaganda, eliminating truth by calculated suppression and misrepresentation, and dinning the prescribed formulas into the ears of millions prepared for their reception by universal education, is ominous of a more complete regimentation than any merely negative censorship. The Tsars only played with the control of thought: their worthy and somewhat somnolent (not to say thick-headed) censors passed the most transparently subversive suggestions—Chernyshevsky's reference to tyrannicide conveyed in the apologue of *Judith and Holofernes*, for instance. The greatest innovation of the Bolsheviks in the "bears' corners" of old Russia is an efficient administration. Their orders go right through to the bottom: they have harnessed the writers and artists themselves to their censorship: they have secured an effective monopoly of truth and filled the market with their own brand of the article, and the smuggler of the precious commodity has little chance of competition with merchants in whom all powers are concentrated.

I must not leave this subject of propaganda without a *caveat* against the assumption that it has no analogue in the West. There are some uncom-

fortable things to be said about the domination of private interests there also. Outside of the newspapers (as well as in them) Western propaganda takes the form of commercial advertisement. It stares from every hoarding, loads every postman, and, in the United States, even occupies a portion of the ether. Taking this Western propaganda in the mass, it immensely exceeds that of the U.S.S.R., and its aims are more blatantly sectional or selfish. Propaganda in the U.S.S.R. is more ubiquitous because it is conducted by radio as well as by Press, poster and platform. It has the uniform aim of confirming the foundations of a Socialist state: and it lacks the saving virtue of self-contradiction.

What some of the Soviet writers might say, and say in Russia, if the physical possibility of utterance were anyhow achievable, we gather from a novel, *We*, by Evgeny Zamyatin: piratically published at Prague in the Czech language and translated into English and French, but never published in Russian. It was written ten years before Huxley's *Brave New World*, or we might suspect an unconscious plagiarism. Zamyatin is a ship-building engineer, imprisoned in 1906 for being a Social Democrat, and resident in England during the first World War, after which he wrote a satire on the British entitled *The Islanders*. He is markedly original, and a chronic rebel, who described Five-Year-Plan drama as like too-early-born babies, with big heads and swollen ideologies, but weak bodies. The Association of Russian proletarian writers, which despotically ruled over Russian literature between 1928 and 1932, expelled him on account of the Czech issue of his *We*, and he lived permanently in France from 1932, after a term of imprisonment in a Soviet jail for what he calls *irony*. He was influenced, like many Russians, by the novels of Charles Dickens: and his vision of the six-storeyed houses of St. Petersburg, as ships on an ocean, irresistibly recalls that writer.

We is a picture of the year 4600 in the Unique State, where the Benefactor rules, and Boards of Guardians have control of the population. Everything is mechanised, everyone is known by a number, all live in houses of glass, and the Unique State is separated from the world beyond by a wall of green glass which none must pass, and behind which there is an unknown expanse of wild unregulated life, where strange creatures move and have their being. The cure for strange sensations in the denizens of the Unique State is an operation for the removal of the imagination. The most heinous offence is unorthodoxy, and the obstinately unorthodox end on the machine of the Benefactor. The Benefactor is re-elected annually: on the day known as the Day of Unanimity: and it would be "as absurd to take account of contrary votes as to make a record of the coughing of a few sick persons in the hall". There are two forces in the world: Entropy and Energy. One is for happy tranquillity, for equilibrium: the other seeks to destroy equilibrium and tends to painful perpetual movement. The people of the Unique State have chosen Entropy.

An attempt at revolt on behalf of the alternative principle ends with the victory of the Benefactor and of the Guardians. The hero, D. 503, is himself subjected to the operation for the removal of the imagination (which makes people resemble tractors, with a mechanism in place of legs): and, thereafter, is perfectly content to assist in the restoration of order, and to betray all concerned in the conspiracy of insurrection.

There is a good deal in this story which recalls the fable of the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoievsky's *Brothers Karamazov*: and the substitution of happiness for liberty which he claimed to have successfully effected. The inhabitants of Paradise had the choice between happiness without liberty and liberty without happiness. In eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, says a poet in *We*, "the idiots chose liberty, and, of course, they have always sighed after their chains. *There* is the unhappiness of man. He wanted his chains. We have found the way to give him back his happiness. . . . All the complexities of good and evil have disappeared. All is simple, paradisiacal, childlike. . . . *It protects their restraints, that is to say their happiness.*" In another passage the Benefactor declares that true love to man must be cruel, and must aim at the pitiless eradication of that which interferes with his happiness.

It is plain that man is *at school* with the Communist Party in the U.S.S.R., and is being taught, supposedly for his own good, a particular set of lessons: and that the process involves the employment of nearly the whole machinery of art and literature, Press, radio and platform. Other systems of government, and other social or religious systems, have feebly attempted a similar control. The Roman Catholic Church has its *Index expurgatorius*. The British Universities of a century ago excluded all but Anglicans. There are Blasphemy laws for the defence of Religion. What differentiates the Communist system is the greater thoroughness—a thoroughness which it shares with Nazi Germany—with which it postpones liberty of thought to a scheme of human happiness—or perhaps I should say, of human justice. It would seem that the deliberate intention to remake man upon a new pattern, inevitably postulates in a greater or less degree such a restriction of liberty, and that the restriction can only be brought to an end when the remaking is complete.

To what extent are breaches in this monopoly of access to the mind of man suffered to exist? The Churches are discouraged, and have no right to spread their teaching. The national cultures and languages, on the other hand, are encouraged and might make some breach in the panoply of Communistic teaching: but it is insisted that culture shall be socialist in content, even though it be national in form. The film is almost purely propagandist. The visiting of foreign countries, once the source of a large part of the education of a class, is rarely permitted. The presence in the U.S.S.R., for extended periods, of foreign subjects is almost entirely prohibited, and there is increasing strictness in respect to visas even for temporary visitors. The schools teach at least one foreign language, and the

classics of all tongues are published in hundreds of thousands, with no apparent restriction upon content. With certain exceptions,—for instance, those of Count Tolstoi's writings which directly preach anarchy—there is no ban upon the classics of Russian and other Soviet national literatures: and of these, too, hundreds of thousands of copies are published. Regarding the Soviet national literature of to-day there was a considerable degree of freedom in the period preceding the epoch of the Plans. Between 1928 and 1932—that is to say, before the return of Maxim Gorky to the U.S.S.R.—the Association of Proletarian writers ruled with a rod of iron, and insisted upon the appropriate literature of the Plan: so that a knowledge of cement-mixing, and paper-making and of the principles of retail supply, became for the Soviet writer an important accomplishment. The milder yoke of Socialist Realism, which means little more than a roseate outlook upon the achievement and the promise of the U.S.S.R., succeeded to these four years of rigorous social demand. But in 1937 artist after artist fell victim to new criteria of idea and performance. What I have said of literature is equally true of the drama and of dramatic production, in which some old favourites fell into disrepute for reasons at which I have sometimes been unable to guess. In all this an element of caprice and unforeseeability makes itself apparent.

I think it probable that the artist has never been wholly free. He has always stood in need of a patron. Whether his patron was a Greek City State, or a Renaissance Pope, or a British merchant desiring to perpetuate his virtues in a flamboyant dedication, or his bodily properties in a picture or a statue, or a first-night public in quest of a mild pornography to soothe brains wearied by office and counter, he had to accept orders: perhaps even to flatter those upon whom his livelihood depended. But sometimes a Benvenuto Cellini played the part of a spoiled child of genius and insisted upon his own way even against a king: or a Thucydides wrote history to be a possession of all men for ever, rather than a prize essay for an occasional recitation: a John Bunyan wrote his *Pilgrim's Progress* in Bedford jail out of pure zeal: a Fra Angelico painted, on his knees, the saints as the spirit showed them to him. How much of work such as this would find its way into existence against an inquisition so all-pervading as that of the U.S.S.R.—for an inquisition it is—I cannot pretend to guess. There would certainly be less of it, and some of it would be diverted into less spontaneous channels. The world would be the poorer for the loss of it. The artist and the thinker help man to know himself by holding up a mirror which reflects him and his surroundings. Each of them, I take it, has a mirror of his own, making one or another aspect visible, according to his powers and the bent of his genius. Humour and satire, as well as tragedy and lyric, make their contribution to the result. If personality grows partly by man's knowledge of himself and of his surroundings, every diminution of the freedom of the artist and the thinker must tend to retard its growth.

Here we arrive at the most serious criticism which I have to make of the Soviet Government. A few, a very few, persons in every age and every country, possess the gift of adding to man's knowledge of himself and of the world in which he lives, of scattering the living seed of thought and understanding. To take away the wings of the artist and the thinker is to incur the danger of an arrested civilisation. This is not, of course, the Bolshevik view. Thought is conceived as conditioned by social and economic relations, and the individual expresses only what these relations have put into his mind. The deed comes first, and the thought comes after. There will be change in the thought when existing contradictions have resulted in a new synthesis of the relations.

And yet—man is capable of making his own history. This, if not pure Marxian, is at least pure Marxian as understood in Russia: and the idea has been as the blast of a trumpet, summoning sluggard and despondent man to battle with the stars. How to harmonise it with the rival conception that the deed came first and the thought came after, let philosophers dispute. Somehow the lion has contrived to lie down with the lamb, and Hercules of the Seven Labours has been able to identify himself with the fatalist. I can only, in all diffidence, suggest that it is the dialectical element in materialism which has made the miracle possible: while continuing to cherish a private conviction of my own that the Russian is not a philosopher at all, but rather one who uses all the philosophies to justify a moral passion for the regeneration of mankind and the fulfilment of the messianic mission of Moscow. This is why there is no real danger of this people becoming obsessed by dogma, despite the rigidity of their quasi-philosophers. *When they find that a rule does not fit life, they give the preference to life:* in other words, fall back upon more primitive and enduring convictions. Their gift for breaking rules will save them from being pedantic. For the same reason Planning will not hurt them: for they will change the Plan whenever it has gone amiss. This is what has been called "the broad Slavonic nature". But it is not race that has made it. The illimitable spaces of Europasia—there is no line of distinction between the two continents or between Mongol and Slav, they mingle naturally and imperceptibly—have created the tolerance and the all-humanitarianism in a melting-pot of peoples. There was room for all.

On this note I close. It is not the satisfying note of prophecy; but rather one of confidence in the character which these conditions must create, when they enter into alliance with the new conviction that man is able to make his own history. Fate gave to this people a great inheritance; and they have learned to believe that they can dominate it.

APPENDICES

I. Census of 1939

No detailed Census report has been published. But it is known that the figure of total population is 170 millions and that subsequent additions of territory raised it to about 190 millions before the outbreak of war in June, 1941. The particulars given below are of the 170 millions shown by the Census.

The town population was 17·9% of the whole in 1926, and 32·8% of the whole in 1939. The rural population showed an absolute decrease of 6 millions. These facts reflect the progress of industrialisation.

Of the 170 millions, sixty-one are children under fifteen, and seventy-one are men and women between fifteen and thirty-nine. Youthfulness is thus a characteristic of the population. Over 45% of the population are under twenty years of age.

88·2% of the males, and 66·6% of the females, are literate.

49·73% of the population are workers by hand and brain in urban and rural areas. 46·9% are collective farmers and "co-operative" hand-workers (by which we must understand workers in State or collective concerns, or workers in what is sometimes called the socialised sector). 2·6% are individual farmers and hand-workers. The proportion not occupied in any gainful employment is 0·04%.

The northern nomads known as Nentsi (formerly called Samoyeds) co-operated well in the Census and travelled down to meet the enumerators. This evidence of co-operation with the régime is of interest.

There are some particulars of production in another Appendix below.

II. Consumption of Cereals in U.S.S.R.

The latest figures of consumption are those of 1926 and 1927, which show an average per head per annum (including consumption by animals) of 200 kilograms of unground corn in the towns and 260 in the country. To maintain this rate 42½ million tons of corn are required. 14 millions must be allowed for seed and seed reserves, 5 for losses in storage, 2 for industrial purposes, perhaps 1½ for export. The total is 65 millions: and if the cereal crops of recent years have been correctly estimated there should be a wide margin for the improvement of food supplies. Dr. Otto Schiller, who had no figures before him later than 1935, supposes them to be greatly over-estimated, mainly because of losses in harvesting: which are being reduced by the use of combine harvesters. But the estimates assume only the traditional low Russian yield: and the figures justify an optimistic view of the cereal food supply when losses and waste are eliminated: and show the possibility of accumulating a reserve against the recurrent droughts.

A decision of 1937 provided for the establishment over the next three years of a million and a half tons seed reserve. Government purchasing agencies were authorised to pay higher prices in 1937–38 for grain which meets the requirements of selected seed.

Most of the 1937 crop was expected to meet growing consumption needs and the appreciable change from black bread to white. Military reserves, believed in Moscow to be nearly a full year's supply, were likely

to be replenished. Exports were expected to increase from the low 1936 figure of 321,311 tons to a level more closely approaching the 1935 figure of 1,606,092 tons. The annual pre-war export of Russian grain, which averaged 10 million tons, is not likely to be repeated in this generation.

III. Budget for 1937

(Taken from G. F. Grinko's *Financial Programme of the U.S.S.R. for 1937*. Party Publishing House. 1937.)

Figures accepted by the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. with amendments made by the Budget Commission (see pages 477, 478).

The figures given for the budget of 1937 do not complete what the Soviet authorities call the full or *svodny* budget. To get that for 1937, we have to add 6,060 millions of roubles to be collected and credited and expended locally. The total revenue and expenditure of the whole U.S.S.R. (including all authorised local items) is 104,129 millions revenue and 103,179 expenditure approximately.

Out of these amounts the order of the Central Executive Committee fixes the figures for the budget of the whole Union at:—

Revenue	75,504
Expenditure	74,554
Plus balance	950

And those for the budgets of the constituent republics, exclusive of allocations for local budgets, at:—

Revenue	6,632.
Expenditure	To be determined by each constituent Republic.

And those for the local budgets through the State budgets of the constituent republics at:—

Revenue	15,933
Expenditure	To be determined by the local authorities according to the amount allotted to each.

And (implicitly, though not explicitly) those for the local budgets, otherwise than through the State budgets of the constituent republics, at:—

Revenue	6,060.
Expenditure	To be determined by local authorities.

The most striking feature on the revenue side of this budget is the very great preponderance of indirect taxation, in particular of the turnover tax, which takes effect by additions to prices. On the expenditure side, one-fifth goes in defence, and nearly another fifth in education.

"Local" in the foregoing includes autonomous republics, territorial

(All figures in millions of roubles.)

REVENUE

1. Turn-over tax		76,795
Including: Heavy Industry	8,860	
Light ,,	11,382	
Food ,,	20,387	
Spirits ,,	6,190	
Committee for collection of agricultural products	24,106	
State Trade	2,605	
2. Deductions from profits		6,304
Including: Heavy Industry	1,331	
Light ,,	829	
Timber ,,	37	
Food	1,800	
Local ,,	542	
Undertakings of Agricultural Department	40	
Ditto of State Farms Department	30	
Rail transport	687	
Undertakings of department of Internal trade	175	
Committee for collection of agricultural products	58	
Undertakings of department of external trade	37	
State credit institutions	245	
Organs of State Insurance	319	
Other disbursements	170	
3. Income tax and other taxes on undertakings and organisations:		
(*a*) Tax on non-trading operations	390	
(*b*) Income tax on collective farms	530	
(*c*) Tax on State farms	46	
(*d*) Others	6	
Total		972
4. Receipts from State Insurance		3,700
5. State loans:		
(*a*) By subscription	4,375	
(*b*) Savings banks	1,200	
(*c*) From State Insurance	400	
Total		5,975
6. Direct taxes:		
(*a*) Agricultural tax from collective farmers and individual peasants	650	
(*b*) Town tax for cultural needs	1,465	
(*c*) Village tax for ditto	530	
Total		2,645
7. Other revenue:		
(*a*) Import duties	860	
(*b*) Revenue from coinage	15	
(*c*) ,, ,, timber	180	
(*d*) Miscellaneous	622	
Total		1,677
Grand total of Revenue		98,069

EXPENDITURE

A. State Economy:			
Industry			12,397
Including: Heavy Industry		5,217	
Defence ,,		2,328	
Light		1,603	
Timber		1,274	
Food		1,042	
Local		375	
Cinema		163	
Agriculture: Under Commissariat of State farms		2,064	
Under Commissariat of Agriculture		6,790	
Grant for mineral fertilisers		205	9,059
Transport and communications			8,533
Including: Commissariat of Communications		4,698	
Ditto of Water Transport		1,133	
Northern Sea Route		580	
Roads (Commissariat of Internal Affairs)		831	
Civil Air Fleet		301	
State trade, supply and collecting organisations			3,035
Commissariat of external trade			19
Committee of Reserves			1,687
Moscow Metro			458
Hydro-meteorological service			128
Miscellaneous			3,875
Total of State Economy			39,585
B. Social and Cultural Measures			26,604
(*a*) On State budget direct		10,870	
(*b*) Through local budgets		15,734	
Including:			
(1) Education		18,270	
(*a*) On State budget direct	7,842		
(*b*) Through local budgets	10,428		
(2) Health		7,528	
(*a*) On State budget direct	2,472		
(*b*) Through local budgets	5,055		
(3) Physical culture		97	
(*a*) On State budget direct	44		
(*b*) Through local budgets	53		
(4) Protection of labour		710	
(*a*) On State budget direct	511		
(*b*) Through local budgets	199		
C. Commissariat of Defence			20,102
D. ,, ,, Internal Affairs			2,699
E. ,, ,, Justice and Procuration			149
F. Administration			1,618
G. State Loans			2,579
H. Banks of long-term investment			1,382
J. Reserve funds of Union and constituent Republics			1,855
K. Miscellaneous			544
Grand total of expenditure			97,119
Excess of revenue over expenditure			950
Total			98,069

(*krai*) and provincial (*oblast*) authorities; town and regional and village soviets. There are detailed orders assigning specified shares of particular taxes and particular sources of revenue, to particular groups of authorities, from the constituent republics downwards: each member of each such group getting its specified share of the proceeds collected in its own local area.

All taxes and imposts not specifically authorised are forbidden under penalty. There is specific prohibition of bridge tolls, charges for night watchmen, local additions to prices, and surcharges. Taxation of trade done by collective farms, by collective farmers, and by individualist peasants, is allowed only to the extent sufficient for keeping markets clean and in good order. Voluntary collections are forbidden except by specific permission of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. The authorised local taxes and imposts include taxes on buildings in towns, on horses and vehicles in towns, on cattle in towns, amusement tax and totalisator tax on State race-courses, charges upon documents and by way of court fees, dog tax in towns, payments for discharge of waste water. Inheritance taxes are credited to local purposes. Other sources of local income are, a share of the important turn-over tax in certain cases and a percentage on local collections for State loans. Maximum rates of taxation are prescribed by the central authority.

I have not full details of the budgets of the years following 1937. The following abstracts show in milliards of roubles rapidly rising proportions and totals of expenditure on defence.

The abstract budget of 1938 provided for a total expenditure of 121, of which 23 was for defence (19%).

The abstract budget of 1939 provided for a total expenditure of 154, of which 40 was for defence (26%).

The abstract budget of 1940 provided for a revenue of 184, and an expenditure of 180, of which defence accounted for 57, nearly one-third, and culture and health for 43.

The abstract budget of 1941 was:—

Revenue 216, including:		Expenditure 215, including:	
Turnover taxes	124	Industry	39
Assessment of profits	31	Agriculture	13
State Insurance	10	Transport and communications	6·5
M.T.S. income	2·6	Education	26·6
State loans	13	Health	11
Taxes and duties levied on population	12	Social maintenance	3·4
		Defence and Navy	71

The expenditure on defence and Navy exceeds that of 1940 by 26·3%. It is nearly one-third of the whole: though the whole includes expenditure on industry and agriculture.

IV. What the Industrial Wage in the U.S.S.R. Would Purchase in 1937–38

Stalin told the 18th Party Congress that the annual average wage of the industrial worker amounted to 66 roubles per week in 1938. An addition is to be made to this sum to arrive at the family earnings, which

are certainly a larger proportion than in London, because of the extensive employment of women. Mr. Colin Clark's calculation of 23 dependants to 19 workers gives approximately $1\frac{1}{5}$ dependant to each worker. I take an average family as consisting of two workers and $2\frac{2}{5}$ dependants, total $4\frac{2}{5}$. The wage will be 112 roubles per week, if 70% of the principal wage be allowed as the wage of the second worker.

They will pay

R. 0·75 in income tax.
R. 2·25 in State loan (virtually compulsory).
R. 2·65 in house rent (4% of the wage of the principal earner).

The two wage-earners must be assumed to take twelve mid-day meals in the factory canteen, since factory feeding has in recent years been made compulsory. The cheapest meal consists of a bowl of soup, of the solid Russian type, made from cabbage and potatoes, with bread. The newspaper *Industriya* gives 0·78 rouble as the price. I deduct from the income R. 9·36 on this score, and also R. 1·20 for tram fares, assuming 5 kopeks per journey for twenty-four journeys. This leaves R. 96 out of the wage of the two workers.

The following food prices are quoted from newspaper statements at various dates in 1937 and 1938, and at various places on the main railway lines in European Russia:—

Black bread. R. 0·83–0·85 per kilo.
Rye and wheat flour (evidently of superior quality). R. 1·30–4·40 per kilo at Harkov.
Wheat flour. R. 1–1·50 per kilo at Armavir.
Potatoes (perhaps a wholesale price). R. 0·40–0·65 per kilo at Armavir.
Lard. R. 13–14 per kilo at Moscow.
Butter. R. 15–17 per kilo at Moscow. R. 15–24 per kilo at Armavir.
Milk. Prices varying from R. 1·20 to R. 1·75 per litre, at Leningrad, Moscow and Armavir. A litre is a small fraction over a quart.
Eggs. Prices varying from R. 0·30 to R. 0·45 each at Kalinin (the old Tver) and Armavir.
Sugar. Prices varying from R. 3·50 to R. 4·50 per kilo.
Cabbage. R. 1 per kilo at Moscow.

Other food prices of 1937 and 1938 for which I have no record of the documentary authority are:—

Pork. R. 10–11·50 per kilo.
Salt Herrings. R. 8–9 per kilo.
Cucumbers. R. 0·40 per kilo.
Margarine. R. 12–14 per kilo.
Tea. R. 60 per kilo.
Beef. Second quality, R. 8–10 per kilo.

It will be seen at a glance that tea and meat are beyond the reach of the average wage-earner as a part of the normal diet. It is evident that he does not use lard, or butter, or margarine. I have little doubt that the

fat which he does use is sunflower and hemp oil, for which I am unable to quote prices: but both are comparatively cheap. These, together with black bread, potatoes, cucumbers, cabbage, milk and eggs, and perhaps salt herring, are the articles of food that are ordinarily within his reach.

For the prices of clothing, no documentary evidence is available except in the cases of shoes and goloshes. I give the following figures for what they may be worth.

Shoes. The authorised price for shoes is R. 19·50: but certain retail shops in Leningrad were called to account in October, 1938, for charging R. 40·50.

Goloshes. Price R. 13·50–15 per pair in the summer of 1938. (I can say from personal experience that these were extremely good and durable.)

Man's suit. R. 200–750.
Woman's woollen dress. R. 78–135.
Man's shirt. R. 240.
Woman's shirt, R. 220–360.
Thick woollen socks. R. 1·95 per pair.
Thick woollen stockings. R. 3·50 per pair.

The relative cheapness of foot and leg gear will naturally attract attention. I think it must be deliberately subsidised.

Certain other prices are:—

Cinema. R. 1·50–4·50.
Singer sewing machine. R. 150–170.
Bicycle. R. 200–250.
Radio set. R. 600.
Electric kettle. R. 52–54.
Coal (per cubic metre). R. 30.
Haircutting. R. 1·60.
Shaving. R. 1.
Cigarettes (25). R. 1–4·50.

A warning must be given against the practice of certain writers (*e.g.*, of Mr. Paul Haensel in "The Public Finance of the U.S.S.R.," published in the *Tax Magazine,* 1938) of translating rouble prices into their American or English equivalent, on the basis of the officially fixed rate of exchange. The rouble is enormously over-valued, and the prices arrived at by this method are very misleading. Mr. Jacob Miller, who lived for a year in Moscow in 1937, calculated it to be worth 2*d.* for the purchase of clothing, 3*d.*–4*d.* for food bought in shops, 4*d*–5*d.* for canteen meals. In 1935 and 1937 the traveller found it pretty safe to assume that his rouble had a purchasing power of 2*d.* or 2½*d.*, though he had acquired it at a cost five times as great. A kilogram of bread per diem is not more than a sufficient ration for a working adult. But since the adults get bread with the factory meal, and the children probably get it with their school meal, I shall allow half a kilo p.d. of bread for each of the individuals, adult and non-adult, making—

15½ kilos for the week: cost at R. 0.85 per kilo	R. 13.20
And half of that quantity of potato at R. 0.65 per kilo . .	R. 5.0
And food other than bread on the basis of Mr. Colin Clark's estimate	R. 24.0
And fuel on the same basis	R. 4.0
And light	R. 4.0
Total	R. 50.20

There remains Rs. 46 for industrial goods including clothing, and miscellaneous outlays for 4⅝ persons, for the week. This means a little over 10 roubles a week per head.

A labourer from the western Ukrain (formerly Polish territory, annexed to the U.S.S.R. in 1939) who worked in the Donbas mines in the winter of 1939–40 gave to the editors of the Ukrainian bulletin the following account of the life of the workers there. To the compiler of this appendix it appears a convincing account. To complete the norm a miner works seven hours a day. Since the pay is low, men work longer to earn more. A hard worker can earn 2 norms a day. A skilled worker received 6 roubles, and an unskilled 3 roubles, 50 kopeks, per norm. Workers with families have one room and a kitchenette, for which they pay 26 roubles a month. Unmarried live in barrack style, for which they pay 18 roubles per month. Married men buy their own furniture. All other supplies must be bought at the Co-operative. Prices are high. One is allowed 2 kilograms of bread at a time: but sometimes this has to do for several days. One kilo of white bread sells at R. 2·70, and of black bread R. 1·50. Could never get any cheese. At times could get half a kilo of butter at R. 25 per kilo. Sausage R. 12–35 per kilo: but no sausage over R. 18 was ever offered for sale. A litre (nearly a quart) of milk R. 3, but hard to get. Eggs only obtainable once in two months, price R. 1·50 per egg. Apples or pears R. 5 per kilo, but only obtainable at latter end of October. Sugar R. 50, salt R. 0·60, white (presumably fat) bacon (only rarely obtainable) R. 35, potatoes R. 0·60 (can buy only 2 kilos at a time) per kilo. A friend got a wing and leg of a roasted chicken in a restaurant for R. 5. (Roast chicken is far from being the luxury in Russia that it is in England. The bird is much smaller and skinnier.)

Some details of the price of clothing follow: and the informant says that in one month he earned R. 230 and spent R. 450: having sold one of his quilts for R. 600.

A kilogram is 2·2 lb.

Mr. Jacob Miller, to whose personal experiences in Moscow throughout a year of employment in the office of the Planning Commission much weight must be attached, calculates that in 1937–38 a Moscow worker's family would consist of two earners and three dependents, total five persons: and that its expenditure at London prices would amount to about 42 shillings per week. That is a trifle above the *London Life and Labour* poverty line of 38*s.*–41*s.* His calculation of "income" allows, over and above wage, for "other income", which means unavowed payments by factory managements in order to secure labour which is in scant supply. He puts the family income at 120 roubles a week, including this "other income", and not including social benefit, classified under the head of social wage.

V. Agricultural Production and Yields of Important Crops per Acre

The tabulated figures below are taken from official statistics. No detailed statistics have been published after 1935. In 1936 the harvest was a disappointing one, and the gross production of cereals has been estimated by the London *Economist* at less than 70 million tons, a set-back to the figures of 1931 and 1932. In 1937 the *Economist* thought 111 million tons of cereals a possible figure. Traditional yields in Russia are so very low that an extraordinary rise may take place. 1938 is said to have been the driest year of the century and the crop poor. M. Molotov said that 1939 was better by 11 per cent. M. Kalinin stated in a speech that the gross cereal crop of 1940 was about 110 million tons. But it is impossible to accept these casual statements as a substitute for regular detailed statistics.

Below are figures for the whole U.S.S.R., showing sowings, gross production and yields, of important crops for a series of years for which detailed statistics are published.

I. Sown Area in Million Acres.

U.S.S.R.	1913.	1929.	1930.	1931.	1932.	1933.	1934.	1935.
Total sown	252	283	305	326	321	309	314	317
Cereals	227	232	242	249	237	242	249	247
Technical	11	21	25	33	36	29	26	25
Vegetables	9	18	19	22	22	21	21	24
Fodder	5	12	16	21	25	17·5	17	20·6

II. Gross Production, in thousands of tons.

	1913.	1928.	1929.	1930.	1931.	1932.	1933.	1934.	1935.
Cereals	80,100	73,320	71,740	83,540	69,480	69,870	89,800	89,400	90,100
Raw cotton	740	820	860	1,113	1,290	1,270	1,320	1,180	1,700
Flax fibre	330	320	360	430	550	500	550	530	550
Sugar beet	10,900	10,140	6,240	14,000	12,000	6,560	8,990	11,360	16,200
Sunflower seed	Not known	2,100	1,700	1,600	2,500	2,200	2,350	2,080	1,850

III. Yields, in pounds per acre.

	1913.	1928.	1929.	1930.	1931.	1932.	1933.	1934.	1935.
Cereals	778	723	687	778	613	641	806	778	806
Raw cotton	916	778	751	641	549	540	586	549	787
Flax fibre	293	219	201	229	210	183	210	220	238
Sugar beet	15,388	12,072	7,428	12,393	7,914	5,890	6,796	8,793	12,118
Sunflower seed	Not known	494	448	439	503	393	519	540	494

Except for sunflower seed, the increase of gross production is demonstrated. The cereal yield in 1933 and 1935 is high, but as the figures for 1913, 1930 and 1934 are identical, it cannot be said that there is evidence of continuous increase. The yields of raw cotton, flax fibre and sugar beet, though higher than in the intervening years, are lower than in

1913. Nothing is demonstrated by the figures for sunflower seed. The conclusion is that the increase in cultivated area up to 1935 was accompanied by a stationary, and in some crops diminished, yield per unit of area.

It will give us a standard of comparison with western Europe if we note that an average crop of wheat in Britain is 33 bushels, in Russia 15: and that the average for milk and wool in the latter country is about half of the German. This low productivity is not new. In 1910 the yield of wheat in Russia per unit of area was identical with that of India: half of that of Japan: one-third of that of the United Kingdom.

As to the method by which yields are calculated, there is no regular system of crop inspection and record, such as is necessary for early warning of the approach of scarcity and for determining claims to the remission of the demand. But for the purposes of the payment to be made to the M.T.S., crop yields are calculated, not more than twelve days after the beginning of harvest operations, by a commission composed of the chairman of the canton Executive Committee, the director of the M.T.S., the chairman of the collective farm and certain officials of the Agricultural Commissariat. There is always, even now, when combine harvesters are coming into frequent use, a proportion of the crop which is lost, because the short open season comes to an end before all can be carried, and it does not appear that any allowance is made in the statistics for this loss.

VI. Live Stock

The following are the figures in millions, for horses and other stock in a series of years for which detailed official statistics are available:—

	1928.	1929.	1930.	1931.	1932.	1933.	1934.	1935.
1. Working horses . .	23	24	21	20	16	14	13	12
2. Large horned cattle .	70	67	52	48	41	38	42	49
3. Cows (included in 2.) .	31	30	27	24	21	20	20	20
4. Sheep and goats . .	147	147	109	78	52	50	52	61

In 1914 the density of large horned cattle per 1,000 acres of crops was 148, in European Russia including Finland, Russian Poland and the Baltic provinces. In 1935 the density of large horned cattle in the territories of the U.S.S.R., European and Asiatic was 123.

A census of animals was taken at January 1st, 1938.

The figures which have been published do not show, separately, the number of working horses. In other respects they are comparable with the tabular statement above. They are as follows, in millions:—

	1933, Spring.	1934, July.	1937, Jan. 1st.	1938, Jan. 1st.
Horses	16·6	15·7	15·9	16·2
Large horned cattle . .	38·4	42·4	47·5	50·9
Cows (included in the above) .	19·7	19·6	20·9	22·7
Sheep and goats . . .	50·2	51·9	53·8	66·6

There is a slow recovery, but—so far as regular detailed statistics go—the pre-collectivisation numbers are very far from having been restored. Horse-breeding is the most backward branch of animal husbandry.

VII. Taxation of the Peasant in Kind and in Cash

The principal authorities consulted by me on this subject (all in Russian) are:—

Financial and Economic Manual of Information of the Collective Farm: compiled by E. M. Gailis, S. S. Maslov, and N. P. Sidelkin. State Publishing House of Collective and state-farm literature. Moscow. 1936.

Agriculture of the U.S.S.R. Annual. Volume 1935. Edited by A. I. Muralov and others. Published by the same State Publishing House. Moscow. 1936.

Money Impost on the Income of Collective Farms. By Liubarsky and Khmelev. State Finance Publishing Department. Moscow. 1937.

Socialist Construction. Annual volumes published in 1935 and 1936. (No later publication to date.)

By far the greater proportion of the taxation of the peasant of to-day is in kind, and takes the form of compulsory deliveries paid for at a very low conventional price. This is officially described as a "compulsory sale in the nature of a tax". The relation of the conventional price to the actual value cannot be determined by ordinary methods, because there is no wholesale trade in the produce other than that conducted by the Government itself, and it would be obviously inappropriate (even if it were in practice feasible) to make use of the retail prices at which the peasants dispose of their small available balances in the collective markets and elsewhere. I have therefore taken the prices at which the Government passes the produce on to its own departments (such as the Commissariats of Food and Export Trade) as representing the wholesale prices which the peasants might hope to obtain in a non-socialist economy. On this basis they obtain, for their compulsory deliveries of cereals, about one-eighth of the wholesale price.

When the system of agricultural taxation in cash which prevailed during the period of the New Economic Policy was brought to an end by the closure of the free market in grain, and by changes in the value of money which destroyed the fiscal significance of the "single agricultural tax", the Soviet Government reverted to what was virtually a system of requisition under the name of "contracting". In January, 1933, this system was replaced by the levy in kind on the more important agricultural products, which continues to-day: and the markets were opened for the free sale of the balance by the peasants. The demand is not for a fractional share of the product, but for a stated quantity per unit; the quantity varying, in the case of cereals, in different parts of the country, within limits represented by the figures 1 to 5: with provision for reduction, and even for remission, in the case of serious failure, but otherwise rigidly fixed. The unit on which the levy is calculated was not in 1934–35 the unit actually cultivated, but the unit planned for cultivation. Thus, an acre of planned cultivation with grain in the Crimea was assessed to a

compulsory delivery four or five times as great as an acre planned for grain in the North of Russia or in the Trans-Caucasus territory: with a score of intermediate charges in other areas: and in all cases the taxpayer received in 1936, 120–130 roubles per metric ton for wheat, and 60–100 for rye and the cheaper cereals: which is about one-eighth of the wholesale price as defined above. If we call the compulsory delivery of cereals x, the tax upon the peasant under this head was $\frac{1}{8}x$.

Since cereal cultivation accounts still for three-quarters of the whole of Russian agriculture, we shall reach an estimate of the burden of taxation in kind upon the peasant, if we are able to ascertain what $\frac{1}{8}x$ was in 1934 and 1935.

A similar system was applied also to potatoes, sunflower and fodder grasses. The price paid for potatoes in 1935 was 40 roubles per metric ton, and that for sunflower seed 80–150 roubles. In order to encourage recourse to the Machine Tractor Stations there was a higher charge made where these are not employed. The individualist peasants, who have not accepted collectivisation, were penalised by a yet higher charge. There was also a higher charge in Central Asia for irrigated land, which is naturally expected to produce a higher yield.

The demand applies equally to the crops grown by collective farmers on their own yards or garden plots: and, in the case of potatoes, was levied on them at a higher rate than on the collectivised lands, though not at so high a rate as on the individualist peasants.

Other taxes in kind were levied upon meat, milk and wool, but not on skins: and collective farms, collective farmers (in respect to the animals kept on their own yards) and individualist peasants, were all liable for these imposts. Deliveries of meat might be made, alternatively, in live animals: namely, in large horned cattle, sheep, pigs, rabbits, hens, geese, ducks and guinea fowls. Within the collective farms there are sub-farms for the charge of animals, in order to fix the responsibility for them: and each such sub-farm must deliver a prescribed weight in respect to each brood animal: and each collective farm household must also deliver a stated weight. For the sub-farms, the rates were: 30 kilo. for each cow, 120 for every brood sow, and 8 for every ewe of one year and more: reduced by one-third in Central Asia, the Trans-Caucasus, the Far East and Kazakstan. The rate of payment by Government was $1\frac{1}{2}$ roubles per kilogram. The obligation to deliver milk was scaled at the highest figure for the dairying villages in the provinces of Leningrad and Moscow, where individualist peasants were required to deliver as much as 250 litres (that is to say 255 quarts) annually for each cow, with lower rates for collective farmers. The conventional price was approximately 10–15 kopeks per quart. The rates of delivery for wool ran up as high as $3\frac{1}{2}$ kilos for collective farms and collective farmers, and to 4 kilos for individualist peasants, for each merino sheep of the best breed. I have no information of the conventional prices paid for wool by the Government: but all these items of animal produce are on a similar footing, as parts of a tax-in-kind on which there was no pretence of paying more than a fraction of the full value.

There remain the "technical" crops—cotton, flax, sugar beet, hemp, tobacco, coarse tobacco (*makhorka*)—which continue to be dealt with by a system of so-called "contracting". The purchaser being the monopolist

state, but a monopolist state which has, for the present at all events, an unlimited need of these products, prices are determined by the consideration that a motive is to be given to the peasant for adequate attention to particular products. Cultivation is encouraged by premium prices for deliveries in excess of contract: and by particularly high prices in areas where the crop is a novelty. Thus, sugar beet was priced at 60 roubles per metric ton in the Far East, in Georgia and Armenia: and 50 roubles in the Kirgiz and Kazak constituent republics: but at half or less than half of these prices where the crop was well established. The prices paid for cleaned cotton range, according to quality, from 805 to 1,758 roubles per ton for American, and from 1,560 to 3,960 for Egyptian. Flax ranges from 2,000 to 4,000 roubles per ton.

I lack all data for comparing these conventional Government prices for technical crops with the prices at which the Government passes on the produce to its industrial departments. On April 20th, 1938, cotton was selling at 9·05 cents per pound at New Orleans, or roughly 200 dollars per metric ton. If the rouble is worth 6 cents, 200 dollars represents a price of 3,333 roubles, nearly double the conventional price paid by the Government of the U.S.S.R. for cleaned cotton of the American type. Thus the price for cotton was far more favourable to the peasant than was the price for cereals: and I suspect that the case would be found to be similar with all the technical crops. There was, and is, a definite policy of high payment for crops of this category.

I turn back to the calculation of the burden on cereals and to the ascertainment of the value of $\frac{7}{8}x$ in 1934 and 1935.

Official figures enable me to state with *almost* arithmetical correctness the proportion of the cereal crop of the collective farms which was delivered to Government in discharge of the obligation of "sale in the nature of tax".

1930.	1931.	1932.	1933.	1934.	1935.
27·5%	36·8%	27·5%	21·6%	19·5%	19·4% (approx.)

As the new system of taxation was introduced from 1933, I take the average of the three latest years, which is just over 20%.

I wish that I could claim that $20\% = x$. Unfortunately the official figures combine repayment of seed loans with compulsory deliveries, and I have no means of dividing the two. I can only say that it is improbable that in any particular year the repayment of seed loans exceeded 5% of the total: and then fix x tentatively at 19%. Thus I make $\frac{7}{8}x = 16{\cdot}6\%$, and suggest that this percentage of the gross cereal crop goes in taxation in kind.

There still remains a source of error. For, the demand being not a particular fraction of the whole, but a fixed amount per unit, the larger the harvest the smaller the proportion. If the harvest of 1937 was anything like as good as is reported, the tax burden on cereals in that year was proportionately less than 16·6%, and may even have been down to 12% or 13%. This would bring it very near to the average of land revenue and cesses in British India. As to the non-cereal products, in the absence of data for precise calculation, I can only say that I feel sure that the burden on them was lighter than on cereals because the con-

ventional price paid to the peasants was higher as indicated by the figures for cotton.

There remain the cash taxes, which are specified in the Budget (Appendix III); the income tax on collective farms, introduced on July 30th, 1926, and replacing the former cash tax calculated on the planned savings of the current year, which fell with undue severity on cereals: the agricultural tax on collective farmers in respect to their yards or garden plots and on individualist peasants: and the village tax for local purposes: which, taken together figure in the budget for 1937 at 1,710 million roubles. This is rather more than 7% of the amount derived from the Committee for the collection of agricultural products (see Appendix III): which represents the difference between Government's payments to peasants and the credits taken against the processing and trading departments. It will suffice to raise our figure of 16·6 to 17·9% in order to arrive at the approximate direct burden upon the peasant in a year not differing greatly from the triennium 1933, 1934, 1935.

A change in the method of rural taxation was made in 1939–40. In lieu of an assessment varying according to the area of planned cultivation, the Soviet Government adopted the system of varying the assessment according to the potential culturable area of each farm. I can make this statement clearer by saying that the collective farm was to pay in accordance with what it was capable of doing, rather than what it actually proposed to do. But in distributing the assessment over the farms, the Government aimed only at getting the same aggregate of products as before, though by a changed method. It seems unlikely, therefore, that my calculation of the proportions taken by the Government is disturbed by the change.

Mr. Baykov is quoted by Professor Dobb as arriving at the figure of 15% for a typical collective farm in 1938. I have pointed out already that the figure for the earlier years was liable to variation according to the volume of the crop. If the reader concludes that the compulsory delivery of crop is something like 15–18% of the gross yield (not including, of course, the extra deliveries on account of the service done by the M.T.S.), but that the collective farm which has a considerable area of technical crop, beet, flax, or cotton, bears a lighter burden than this, he will probably get as near to the truth as Soviet statistics will enable him to get.

General taxation is almost entirely indirect: and, in so far as the peasant is a purchaser of commodities, he pays this general indirect taxation in addition to 15–18% of direct. Must we infer that he is unfairly carrying a double burden? If we regard him as the proprietor of the land, entitled to the use of it without paying any equivalent of rent, the answer to this question is, Yes. But this conclusion would lead very far. Since the value of the land differs enormously, according to climate, soil, and access to markets, the right to the use of it without payment would involve inequalities of fortune, unearned by personal effort, incompatible with a Socialist society.

What is wrong with the fiscal system of the U.S.S.R. in respect to land, is not that the average impost is excessive or that the peasant pays a double share of taxation, but that the range of differentiation (from one to five) is inadequate for a country so vast as the U.S.S.R., and that the

provision for failures and partial failures is insufficiently elastic. The Government has been very generous with its advances for agricultural purposes: arrears of repayment are a constant subject of complaint: and arrears have twice recently been remitted by general orders which apparently ignored local conditions.

Theoretically the individualist peasant pays considerably more than the quantities levied upon the collective farm. The excess is far greater than the 10% which is usually cited by Soviet officials: as may be seen by reference to any of the notifications reproduced in the *Financial and Economic Manual*. But I think it doubtful whether the whole of the excess is actually collected. It is far less easy to discover the cultivation of an individualist, who does not, *ex hypothesi*, employ the Machine Tractor Station. At least a part of the excess is an insurance against concealment. On April 19th, 1938, the Council of People's Commissars animadverted on these irregularities. They said that the individualist peasants use their horses for the private carrying trade and must henceforth pay a horse tax: that they do not deliver meat to the State, and their obligations are often transferred to the collective farms, which are more amenable: and they are often engaged to labour on collective lands at rates of pay higher than those of the "work days" received by collective farmers.

VIII. Other Obligations of the Peasant

Apart from taxation, the Collectives sell, at a price fixed substantially above that for compulsory deliveries, part of their produce to co-operative organisations, in consideration of the supply of manufactured commodities on favourable terms. This was a very small item in 1932 and 1933. In each of the years 1934 and 1935 it amounted to 3½ million tons—less than a quarter of the amount of the compulsory deliveries. From the year 1936 the price paid by the Co-operatives for this grain varies very widely, according to the amounts delivered: a higher price per unit being paid for a larger quantity. The price, at its highest, is much below what I have assumed to be equivalent to a wholesale price in a free market: but, so far as wholesale purchases are concerned, Government and the Co-operatives are monopolists: and it is probable that the collectives could not find retail purchasers for the whole of their surplus. If we could be sure that the alternative of sale in the open market actually existed—which is unlikely in areas distant from consuming centres—it would be possible to infer from these sales, at a low price, to Co-operative institutions, in return for the supply of commodities, that the "scissors" was very wide open against the growers of food and raw materials, and that they were therefore glad of every opportunity of obtaining manufactured goods on reasonable terms.

A milling charge of 10–12% which was levied on all grain brought to the State mills, has been recently abolished.

The report of the People's Commissar of Agriculture in January, 1938, showed that the bulk of the ploughing in 1937 was done for the collective farms by the Machine Tractor Stations. The proportions were nearly two-thirds of the ploughing for spring crops, including both the preliminary winter ploughing and the ploughing before sowing: and more than three-quarters of the ploughing for winter crop. For other

agricultural operations such recent figures are not available. In 1935 the M.T.S. did a sixth of the spring sowing, a fifth of the winter sowing, nearly a quarter of the harvesting of grain, near half of the harvesting of sugar beet, and more than half of the threshing of cereals. They did no cotton-picking and practically none of the harvesting of flax. Except in ploughing and threshing, the greater part of the operations of agriculture is still not mechanised, and half of the traction power is still animal.

The services of the M.T.S. have been paid in kind since 1933, and in varying fractions of the total crop. On cereals and sunflower, the fraction is a smaller one in the case of a smaller crop, a larger one in the case of a larger crop.

Some figures given by Dr. Otto Schiller and reproduced by Miss Warriner in *Economics of Peasant Farming*, Chapter IX, convey the erroneous impression of excessive taxation of the peasant because they combine payments to the M.T.S. (which are payments for services rendered) with tax payments, and also because the percentages have been wrongly calculated or wrongly copied. I reproduce the table below, with the percentages correctly calculated. The figures are in millions of hundredweights.

	1932.	1933.	1934.	1935.
1. Harvest in the ear	1,334	1,714	1,706	1,756
2. Grain losses in harvesting . . .	341	492	408	324
3. Harvest in granary	993	1,222	1,298	1,432
4. Sales and deliveries by collective farms, including payments to M.T.S. as well as tax payments to the State . .	376	481	538	601
5. Percentage of (4) on (1) . . .	27	28	31	34
6. Percentage of (4) on (3) . . .	38	40	41	42

Dr. Schiller thinks that, in a plentiful year, the charge made by the M.T.S. amounted to more than 20%. But in the aggregate the deliveries to the M.T.S. for work done make a much smaller proportion than this. There are now nearly 6,000 M.T.S., but there are still many farms not served by them, or only partially served. In 1935 a shortage of petrol interfered with the completion of winter ploughing. If the charge upon the harvest on account of work done by the M.T.S. should ever reach the general level of 20%, it will still be much lower than the proportion charged in the period of N.E.P. by the private persons who then made a practice of hiring out their animals and implements to the poorer peasants.

Another charge upon the peasant, which cannot be classified with taxation, is the compulsory insurance of his house. A peasant's house, upon which the insurance charges remain unpaid for three years, is forfeited to the Government. This is a measure designed to provide against the ruinous consequences of fires among mainly wooden buildings.

IX. The Income of the Collective Farmer

An attempt at a calculation of average income, so far as grain is concerned, can be made because we know the number of "work days" earned in 1935 and the approximate quantity of grain which was distributed in dividends. It must be understood that it is a very rough calculation, that it excludes the items of potatoes and vegetables that the collective farmer enjoys in addition the proceeds of his yard or garden plot, and that the variations from one collective to another are very wide indeed. There is a substantial number (but not a large fraction) of so-called millionaire collectives, the cash value of whose income calculated at the prices paid for compulsory deliveries and for "contracts", amounts to a million roubles or more: but the average income is something very different from this. The *average* number of "work days" per member in 1935 was 181: indicating that, *on an average,* half of the working time is still unoccupied. It appears that each household contained an average slightly exceeding two working members, for the number of work days per household was 378. In cereals a work day averaged 2·3 kilos. If we take the average family at five, it received about 154 kilos. per head per annum: and a kilogram of grain is a short daily ration for a working man. The information about money receipts is even more incomplete. Dr. Otto Schiller calculated them at 50 kopeks to a rouble for every work day: from 200 to 360 roubles for a family in the year. He pointed out that a winter coat costs 150 and a pair of high boots over 200. But families on incomes of this standard do not wear coats and high boots, but sheepskin, and birchbark sandals or rag wrappings: and the number who wear these, and these only, is still very large. The present writer has no doubt that the growers of technical crops often make substantial incomes: but technical crops are still only one-fourth of the whole, and over large areas are not grown at all.

Mr. Hubbard (*Economics of Soviet Agriculture.* Macmillan & Co., 1939), taking into account only the cash income of the collective farmer, reproduces from *Planned Economy* a calculation that the average expenditure per head in 28 provinces in the year 1937, was:—

Clothing and footwear	76 roubles
Consumable goods (tea, sugar, etc.)	27 „
Non-consumable goods (house-linen, domestic utensils, etc.)	25 „
Cultural goods (books, toys, etc.) . . .	9 „

Small though these figures are, they are higher than in 1935 or 1936.

Calendar.

To find the Old style date from the New:—
Up to the year 1900: subtract 12 days.
From 1900: subtract 13 days.

Note.—The Soviet fiscal year was from October 1st to September 30th. At the end of the calendar year 1930, this was replaced by the calendar year. Between October 1st and December 31st, 1930, there was a short financial year to fill in the gap.

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