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FROM
LENIN



TO

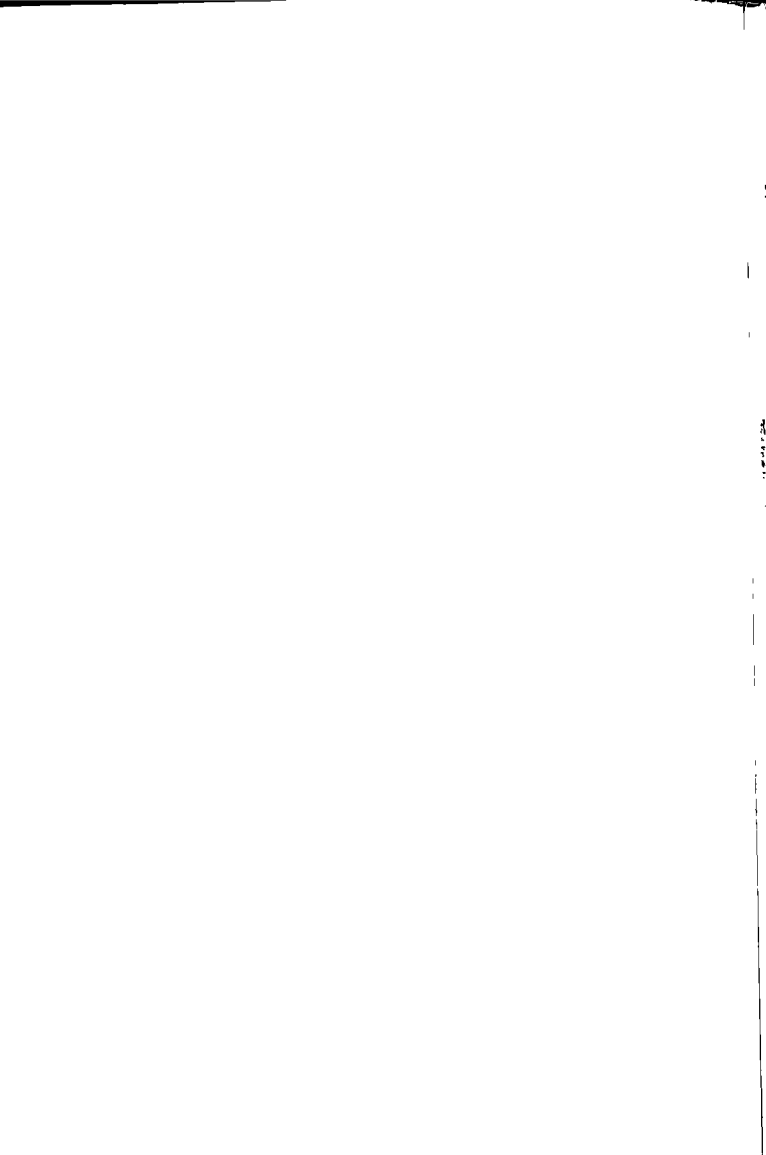
STALIN



BY VICTOR SERGE

PIONEER PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK



Victor Serge

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FROM LENIN
TO STALIN

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Translated from the French

By RALPH MANHEIM



PIONEER PUBLISHERS

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FROM LENIN TO STALIN

A Note About The Author

Victor Serge (Victor Lvovich Kibalchich) was born in Brussels on December 30, 1890, of parents who were Russian revolutionary émigrés. His father had been an officer and later a physician, and was a sympathizer of the Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) party. One of his relatives, a chemist belonging to this party, was hanged in 1881 after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II.

Serge's childhood was spent in Belgium and England. One of his younger brothers died of want. At fifteen he was apprenticed to a photographer in Brussels. Later he became successively a photographer, a draughtsman, an office worker, a linotype operator—after he had learned the trade in anarchist print shops—a journalist and a translator. . . . At fifteen, he became a member of the socialist *Jeune Garde* in Ixelles; then a militant member of the *Groupe Révolutionnaire* in Brussels. He contributed to the *Temps Nouveaux*, *Libertaire* and *Guerre Sociale*. He took part in demonstrations and trials. He spent some time in company villages in the north of France and took part in militant activity in Paris. Editor of *l'Anarchie* in 1910, during the period of illegality, he was arrested and called on to denounce the members of the underground group, of whom several killed themselves and others died on the guillotine. He was convicted under the infamous laws then in force and condemned to five years imprisonment. After being freed in 1917, he became a linotypist in Barcelona, a member of the C.N.T. (Confederacion Nacional de Trabajo), a contributor to *Tierra y Libertad*, and took part in the first revolutionary attempt of July 1917. He then left for Russia, but was arrested in Paris and interned by the Clemenceau government in a concentration camp. He was exchanged in January 1919, as a Bolshevik hostage, for an officer in the French Military Mission, who was being held in Russia, and finally arrived in Petrograd.

He became a member of the Russian Communist Party and a colleague of Zinoviev on the Executive Committee of the Communist International during the civil war. He then became a gunner in a special battalion, a member of the military defense staff, and com-

missar of archives in the secret police under Krassin in 1919. He participated in the first congresses of the C.I., and became editor of the *Communist International*. He spent considerable time in Germany (during the preparation of the 1923 uprising) and in Austria. Since 1923, he has been a member of the Opposition. Returning to Moscow in 1925, he devoted himself to literary work and the internal party struggle. Expelled from the party and imprisoned in 1928, he was imprisoned and deported to Orenburg in 1933. He was banished from the U.S.S.R. and deprived of Soviet citizenship without legal grounds in 1936.

Principal works: Translations of the works of Lenin, Trotsky and Zinoviev; Gladkov's novel *Cement*. He wrote *The Year One of the Russian Revolution*; the following essays: *The Class Struggle in the Chinese Revolution*; *Les Coulisses d'une sûreté générale* (the Okhrana); *Literature and Revolution*; and three novels: *Les Hommes dans la prison*; *Naissance de notre force*; *Ville conquise*.

On current events: *The Sixteen Who Were Shot*; Translation of Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*; *Destin d'une Révolution*.

Works suppressed by the Soviet censorship: *Les Hommes perdus*, a witness' testimony; *La Tourmente*, a novel; poems.

From Lenin to Stalin

MARCH 1917
THE HEADLESS REVOLUTION

The entire first phase of the Russian Revolution seems to me today to have been dominated by the utter honesty of Lenin and his group. It was this that attracted all of us to him, regardless of our nationality and our viewpoint. In Spain early in 1917, I discussed the Russian Revolution with a group of militants who were even then talking of seizing Barcelona and setting up a new Commune (one day in July we posted its program on the walls). Salvador Seguí, one of the founders of the C.N.T., whose portrait I have drawn as closely as I could in my novel, *Naissance de notre force* (he was assassinated two years after our conversation), questioned me on the subject of Bolshevism, which was fast becoming the world's greatest anxiety and its greatest hope. We were not Marxists, yet in the distorted echoes of Lenin's words that reached us, we could discern a remarkable integrity.

"Bolshevism," I said, "is the unity of word and deed. Lenin's entire merit consists in his will to carry out his program. . . . Land to the peasants, factories to the working class, power to those who toil. These words have often been spoken, but no one has ever thought seriously of passing from theory to practice. Lenin seems to be on the way. . . ."

"You mean," said Seguí, bantering and incredulous, "that socialists are going to apply their program? Such a thing has never been seen. . . ."

I explained that just this was going to happen in Russia. It required all the ignorance and frivolity of the Western press to imagine that the Russian Revolution could be stabilized on the basis of democratic half-measures, while widespread misery, intensified by the most brutal repression, put before the Russian people all the basic problems: land, peace, power. An inexorable logic drove thousands of men into action, but they needed a clear conception of methods and aims. Would they achieve it? That was the question. The masses do not always at the decisive moment find men capable of expressing

unflinchingly their interests, their aspirations, and their latent power. The cultured classes, that is to say, the propertied classes have plenty of representatives, plenty of conscientious guides and good servants—nor do they hesitate to draw them from the common people if that becomes necessary. The poorer classes are poor in men and that is one of their greatest tragedies. The Paris Commune of 1871 carried on its struggle under incompetent leadership, groping and divided, while Blanqui, the only mind who might have thought clearly for the revolutionists, was shut up in the dungeons of the Taureau. If in 1932 the German working class had had at its disposal the firm intelligence of a Rosa Luxemburg and the revolutionary passion of a Karl Liebknecht, would it have capitulated without a struggle to the rising wave of Nazism? Would we have witnessed the countless retreats of the Social Democracy and the pitiful manoeuvres of the communists?

There are times when a people needs only a man and some men. . . . I advisedly say "one and some," for the former is nothing if not backed up by an active group which has faith in him and in which he has faith: in other words, a party. Given a party, an intellect, a will, history will be made.* But if society does not have these elements of crystallization, nothing will happen; reformism will land the revolution up a blind alley, and much blood will flow in vain. Throughout Europe the revolutions of 1848 were abortive. More recently certain ephemeral *mysticisms* have arisen—to use a fashionable, rather meaningless word—on the one hand, the mysticism of the plan, on the other, the mysticism of the leader and of violence. And the plan remains a plan, the leader is deflated, and glorified violence turns into a café brawl. . . .

In its beginnings the Russian Revolution was at once grandiose in its inner necessity and pitiful in its outer helplessness. On the very day when the textile workers of Petrograd launched the strikes which less than a month later led to the downfall of absolutism, the Bolshevik Committee of one district of the capital advised against the strike. Just as the troops were about to mutiny—and it was this mutiny that brought about the downfall of the empire—those same revolutionists were timorously considering whether to advise a return to work. The revolutionists of every party, who had spent their entire life preparing for the revolution, did not realize that it was at hand,

*A trade union federation may conceivably play the same role; or an alliance, a front, or a bloc, though heterogeneity of these formations is a cause of weakness. It is wise to attach more importance to realities than to words. The anarchist F.A.I. in Spain has always claimed not to be a party, but it is one in the most effective sense of the word.

that the victory had already begun. Caught in the stream of events, they moved with the crowds, according to the mood of the moment. Suddenly, there was no longer an empire, no longer a ministry, no longer a Tsar. The minister of the interior, a septuagenarian with a quivering lower lip, met a socialist he thought he recognized in a hall of the Tauride Palace, and caught him by the sleeve. "What can I do for you, sir?" asked the socialist. "I am Protopopov. I beseech you, have me arrested. . . ."

The bourgeoisie itself, not numerous in Russia, and due to its economic situation very much aloof from the masses of the people, had politically ceased to exist. If at that time (February, old Russian calendar; it was March according to the western calendar), a Lenin or a Trotsky had been present at the first Council of the Workers and Soldiers, at the first soviet which was chaotically formed in the sub-committee rooms of the Duma—a clear mind gifted with the extraordinary audacity which one must have during periods of great turmoil to see things as they are and to draw the necessary inferences—Russia might have been able to economize by having only one revolution. The power of the Soviets was the center of everything. There was then no other. One hundred and fifty thousand men in arms, the whole garrison, and more than half a million workers, listened to no other voice than that of their Soviet of Deputies. . . . But their only spokesmen were the socialists of the three influential parties, the Social Revolutionaries, the Menshevik-Social Democrats and the Bolshevik-Social Democrats, all equally moderate, that is to say, frightened and incapable of controlling events by force of intelligence.

The negotiations regarding the question of power were farcical despite the grandeur of the moment. All the socialists had but one concern: to abdicate. At two o'clock in the afternoon of February 27th—when the downfall of the old régime was already irrevocable—Miliukov, the most able politician of the liberal bourgeoisie, thought that "it is still too soon" to form a provisional government, for no one can tell which way things may turn. Let us wait and observe. The bourgeoisie abdicated in the face of the tempest. On the first of March, the newly formed Executive Committee of the Soviet asked the bourgeoisie to form a government without even stipulating a program. Essentially eager to abdicate, the socialists asked nothing more for themselves than freedom of propaganda; quite a new thing, it is true, throughout Russia and Siberia. . . .

A fine example of disinterestedness for all peoples and ages! Socialists, having all the power in their hands, and upon whom alone it depended whether freedom of agitation should be given to others or not, handed over the power to their "class enemy" upon the condition that the latter should promise them . . . freedom of agitation! Rodzianko was afraid to go to the telegraph office and said to Chkhaidze and Sukhanov: "You have the power, you can arrest us all." Chkhaidze and Sukhanov answered him: "Take the power, but don't arrest us for propaganda." . . . Fearing, nevertheless, that the bourgeoisie might not agree to take the power on the proposed conditions, Sukhanov delivered a threatening ultimatum: "Either we or nobody can control the elements . . . there is but one way out—agree to our terms." In other words: accept the program, which is your program; for this we promise to subdue for you the masses who gave us the power. Poor subduers of the elements!*

The liberals gave in to this gentle violence and formed the Provisional Government. They still hoped to cede power in their turn to the monarchy, insisting only that it be constitutional. They tried to save the dynasty. There was a contest to see who could do the most abdicating: Nicholas II abdicated in favor of Grand Duke Michael; the Grand Duke in favor of a problematical constituent assembly. . . .

THE REVOLUTION FINDS A MAN

Thus the Russian Revolution occurred spontaneously: at the beginning it seemed to have no one to help it along. And a great lesson may be drawn from this: such events can neither be hastened nor precipitated. Anyone is blind who imagines that he can be for or against historical necessity. But if men who distinguish its real features put themselves at its service, they will enable it to yield the greatest possible harvest; and the better they are able to integrate themselves into the inexorable course of events and consciously derive their underlying laws, the more they will be able to achieve. Only such men can be revolutionists—and it is a matter of no consequence that many of them are by personal predilection the most peaceful of bookworms. When the moment comes, they leave the libraries to pile paving stones on the barricades, to assist the section committees with their advice.

Until Lenin's arrival in Russia, the revolution marked time.

*L. Trotsky: *History of the Russian Revolution*, Vol. 1, pp. 171-2. Sukhanov's memoirs give a detailed account of these negotiations. In 1931 Sukhanov was sentenced to ten years imprisonment in Moscow for forming a socialist group.

The year 1917 was the fourth year of the World War. For a thousand days every able-bodied man in all the great countries of Europe had been in uniform. The flower of the youth of a continent, an entire generation of young men were mowed down. Thirty million men had been mobilized. It was the epoch of the cannon. Europe was traversed by battle lines, from the North Sea to the Adriatic, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. Along these blood-soaked frontiers, thousands of combatants died each day. It was a war of trenches, mines, tanks, airplanes, gas, submarines and poisonous lies. At the front, soldiers met their death by their "own" firing squads or on the enemy barbed wire; behind the lines men trafficked in their blood and steeped themselves in insipid military communiqués.

1917 was in France the year of Clemenceauism, of General Nivelle, and the offensive of April 16th. The "break-through" at the Chemin des Dames. The useless battles of Flanders and Verdun, the drive of the tanks at Cambrai. Serbia, the North of France, Belgium, and Poland were heaps of corpses. Germany declared unrestricted submarine warfare against England. Merchant vessels were torpedoed, neutrals were drowned. Death stalked the seas.

There was fighting in Macedonia, Mesopotamia, Palestine, in the distant corners of the African Bush. The United States entered the war. Blacks, Hindus, Australians, Canadians, Portuguese were in arms; the blood of all races flowed into one pool and one stench. America milked the belligerents of all the gold they had left.

The Central Powers broke through the Italian Front at Caporetto; the Germans and Austrians drove toward the Piave. Zeppelins over London. Gothas over Paris. Gothas over Venice. French planes over Stuttgart. Air aces on both sides downed their fiftieth enemy plane. Parades, decorations.

Behind the lines, the cannon and munition manufacturers of both sides coined profits. Martial law, censorship. Women and old men in anguish. Appalling poverty, debauchery, the bread card, the coal card; all humanity at the mercy of stupidity and hatred. Conscientious objectors were persecuted in Great Britain, defeatists in France, internationalists everywhere. Churches, political parties, intellectuals, both in the Central Powers and in the Allied camp, preached war to the bitter end. Wartime socialism was introduced on both sides. The whole of science and technology was used to destroy the living strength of the human species and the achievements of civilization. Employed rationally, the wealth that was dissipated in explosives would have amply sufficed—if we may speak in Utopian terms—to give ease and comfort to all in a renovated society.

It was the fourth year of the war for the partitioning of the globe among the financial imperialists.*

Suddenly, in that black year, the crash of an empire drowns out the sound of the cannon. The Russian people demand peace for all the peoples, land to the peasants, the factories to the workers. The Russian people is in arms, for the war has given them guns. This people has more deaths behind it than any other. More oppression, more misery. This people is capable of anything. Will it have the

*Victor Serge: *Lénine, 1917*, 3ff. (Librairie du Travail).

necessary audacity of will? Will it achieve consciousness of its strength?

On April 3, 1917, Lenin arrived at the Finland Station in Petrograd. With him came Gregory Zinoviev and others. He was almost an unknown—N. Lenin, V. I. Ulianov. The man was forty-seven years old, and already had a revolutionary past of thirty years duration. In his youth, the shadow of the gallows had crossed his life; the executioner of Tsar Alexander III had hanged his elder brother. At twenty-three, he founded in St. Petersburg one of the first Russian Marxist groups. He spent several years in exile in Siberia. By 1913 he had become known to the leaders of the Russian labor movement as an uncompromising doctrinaire (through the formation of the *Iskra*—Spark—and the split of the Social Democratic Labor Party of Russia into the intransigent Bolsheviks, or the revolutionary majority, and the Mensheviks, the opportunist minority). As an émigré in London, Paris, Switzerland, Finland, and Cracow, scarcely known outside of his party, he had worked untiringly at his proudly proclaimed “trade”—of theoretician, propagandist, and organizer of the proletariat—in a word, of revolutionist. His party of intransigents—whom the Socialist International pleased to call “fanatics”—formed, or rather forged, by him, had unlimited faith in him. He had directed this party wisely during one revolution (1905). He was much talked of in political circles, as were his writings on materialist philosophy and political economy; he was a scholar. The minutes of International Socialist Congresses mention his activity; journalists, on the lookout for celebrities, never even noticed his presence. At Stuttgart, in 1907, where Lenin supported Rosa Luxemburg, Hervé was very much in the limelight; Lenin passed unnoticed. But at the time of the greatest betrayals, in August 1914, when the majority of the celebrities of socialism, syndicalism, anarchism, suddenly became converted to support of the war, Lenin—sure of the future when everything seemed lost for the labor movement, enslaved to delirious patriotism—Lenin began, stone by stone, to lay the foundations of the Third International. At Zimmerwald, in 1915, internationalists were terrified to hear him talk calmly of revolution.

In the fourth year of the war, this man left his Zurich home with calm determination. Months later he was “the most hated and most loved man on earth.” With unflagging intelligence and firmness, he directed the first social revolution of modern times.

In that dusk of civilization, he brought the proletariat a new reason for living.

To conquer.*

He said, "The war has for its aim a new partition of the world among the Great Powers, dominated by the financial oligarchies."

"Change the imperialist war into a civil war."

"Form a new Socialist International which will be an International of revolutionary action."

He saw plainly the limits of the possible, but he meant to exhaust these limits. He did not proclaim socialism in Russia, but the expropriation of the big estates for the benefit of the peasants; workers' control over production; a democratic dictatorship of the toilers, with the hegemony of the working class at its core.

Hardly off the train, he asked the party comrades, "Why didn't you seize power?"

And at once he comes out with his April Theses, outlining the program for the seizure of power. He is called mad, delirious. He smiles maliciously, sits down at a finely wrought desk in the palace of one of the Tsar's favorites, and begins once again to write. The experienced militants censure him; *Pravda* disavows him. But suddenly it becomes apparent that he has the ear of the man in the street, and of the man in the factory and barracks! His whole genius consists only in his ability to say what these people want to say, but do not know how to say—in his ability to say what no politician or revolutionist has until now succeeded in saying.

In three weeks, without a struggle, he had a majority in the party; it was no longer a question of fusing with reformists and attempting to stabilize the parliamentary republic.

"The party wants a more democratic proletarian and peasant republic, in which the police and the standing army will be replaced by the armed people."**

The party wanted a "people's autocracy," in which the people had the right to elect and recall functionaries; in which the legislative and executive powers were united in the councils of workers' and soldiers' deputies (soviets); "the right of all nations to self-determination"; the "nationalization of banks, trusts, and cartels"; confiscation of the land to be immediately turned over to the peasants organized in soviets; a general peace, which was to be "a workers' peace, directed against all the capitalists."

*Victor Serge: *op. cit.* 5ff.

**Lenin's speech on program at the Party Conference, April 24-29, 1917.

There was nothing in the program which could not be carried out; on the contrary, it would have been difficult and dangerous at this time not to carry it out. But force and courage were required to insure its success; it was necessary to break with theoretical inertia, and to break with powerful interests. Many men were making a living out of the war, and Russia was tied to her allies. The propertied classes, threatened with the loss of everything, would defend themselves; despite their weakness, they would put up some very serious resistance. Their challenge must be accepted. Lenin's merit consisted in being a revolutionist in time of revolution.

THE SECOND HEAD OF A REVOLUTION

When an idea is in the air of an epoch, that is to say, when the general conditions for its birth and growth are present, men begin to have a presentiment of it, and it is frequently conceived by several men at the same time. This is how the truth of a period comes to fruition. It is true of the sciences as well as of politics, which is, in some ways, a science and an art at the same time. Darwin and Wallace discovered almost simultaneously the theory of natural selection, suggested no doubt by the aspect of the young capitalist society then in full process of development. Joule and Meyer discovered the law of the conservation of energy almost simultaneously. Marx and Engels arrived at the same conclusion as to the foundations of modern society and, in twenty-five years of admirable intellectual collaboration, founded scientific socialism. The Russian Revolution was to realize in action—but action nourished by solid thought—a collaboration just as remarkable: that of Lenin and Trotsky.

Expelled from France in 1916 by an order signed by Malvy (Jules Guesde was in the cabinet), as a result of a provocation; then deported from Spain as an undesirable element, Trotsky went to New York, where he stayed for a short time, engaged in revolutionary activity; and then to Canada whence he planned to set sail for Russia. Interned in a concentration camp with his wife and children, he finally was set free, thanks to the intervention of the Petrograd Soviet. He arrived in the capital on May 5, 1917, and his first speech, delivered as soon as he got off the boat, demanded the seizure of power. His personality, as an orator, journalist, and organizer, sometimes seemed to overshadow that of Lenin, which at first glance appeared less striking. Lenin was good-natured, unassuming, ordinary in appear-

ance; an outsider would scarcely have noticed him; he spoke with extreme simplicity, and it was not so much his language as the force of his reasoning which moved his audience. He wrote, without particular gift or concern for form, what he had to say and nothing more. Never in his life did he make the slightest concession to the demon of literature. Trotsky, on the other hand, would nowhere have passed unnoticed, with his shock of hair, the erect carriage of his head, the intensity of his blue-gray eyes. He had about him something authoritative and compelling. On the platform, his voice had a metallic ring, and each sentence was like a sharp thrust. He was to become the orator par excellence of this revolution. His written style is consummately skillful. But the main thing was that the hour which had struck was the hour he had awaited, foreseen, and desired all his life. In the Social Democratic party he was the theoretician of the permanent revolution, which means a revolution which cannot, and will not, be extinguished before it has completed its work, and which consequently can be conceived only on an international plane.

By his knowledge of languages and peoples, he was the most European of the Russian revolutionists. Lenin had, however, one incontestable superiority over him: his party, formed through fourteen years of struggles and labors, from 1903 to 1917. We have seen how this party changed its state of mind and its program after Lenin's arrival in Russia; it might be said to have arrived at conceptions which had for a long time been familiar to Trotsky, yet Trotsky and his group entered it. The documents of the period were for years not to separate the names of these two men who, by and large, thought and acted as one, translating the thought and action of millions. These were the two heads of the revolution. Upon them was concentrated all the popularity, and they bore all the hatred. Every day Maxim Gorky in his *Novaya Zhizn* denounced these two criminal fomenters of anarchy:

Lenin, Trotsky and their cohorts are already intoxicated with the poison of power, as is proved by their shameful attitude toward freedom of speech, personal liberty and that group of rights for which democracy has struggled. . . .

Lenin and his acolytes believe themselves entitled to commit every crime. . . .

Lenin is not an all-powerful magician, but a cynical sleight-of-hand performer who cares neither for honor nor for the life of the proletariat. . . .

Vladimir Lenin is introducing a socialist régime in Russia . . . full steam ahead into the mire. Lenin, Trotsky, and all those who with them are headed

for ruin in the quagmire of reality, are apparently convinced that a Russian can best be led by holding out to him the right to disgrace himself. . . .

Thus wrote Maxim Gorky in 1917.*

When, at the beginning of the civil war, the Social Revolutionaries considered killing the leaders of Bolshevism, they had these two in mind. They shot at Lenin and wounded him; bombs were planted to blow up Trotsky's train. Terrorists sought to ambush him at a railroad station; by the purest chance he took another route. The documents and writings of the period infallibly place these two collaborators at the heart or at the peak of events. Jacques Sadoul's *Notes sur la Révolution Bolchévique*, John Reed's *Ten Days that Shook the World*, Guilbeaux's *Portrait authentique de Lénine* give valuable accounts of the period. In 1923, André Morizet, just back from Moscow, wrote a book and called it *Chez Lénine et Trotski*. "Trotsky," wrote Sadoul to Albert Thomas, "dominates the insurrection. He is its soul of steel, while Lenin is its theoretician."**

The Provisional Government, having in June 1917 launched vast offensives on all fronts—at the urgent demand of the Allies, whose sole concern was to relieve the Western front at all costs—suddenly found itself confronted by disaster. Its shock battalions were cut to pieces by machine guns, the main bodies of troops disbanded. It was of no avail to flog the soldiers (it had come to that), or shoot them, for whole regiments simply melted away in the summer's heat. Men left the front, carrying their guns and ammunition along with them, demanding that peace be concluded. The garrison and the factories of Petrograd went out into the streets, urged on by the anarchists, but against the advice of the Bolsheviks, who felt that the country was not yet ripe for the seizure of power.

Kerensky could count on loyal Cossacks in sufficient number to quell the disturbance. The next day, the Bolsheviks were outlawed. Lenin and Zinoviev hid in a hut near the Baltic Sea, in Finland, where Lenin wrote his work on the State. Trotsky allowed himself to be arrested, at the risk of being murdered or executed, so that at least one of the two should openly proclaim his responsibility.

At this point a poison for use against them was discovered, a most

*J. Sadoul: *Notes*, p. 76 (Edition de la Sirène).

**Quoted by B. Souvarine: *Staline*, 184ff.

effective kind of poison, which failed only by a hair's breadth in killing them and the nascent revolution with them.

SLANDER, A STRONG POISON

During the night of July 4, 1917, a mysterious rumor spread through the corridors of the Soviet. Proofs had been discovered of the treason of Lenin and Trotsky. Irrefutable documents, stolen from the German General Staff, were to be published. Telegrams in code. Signed receipts. They had received millions!

The press of the whole world ran the news in streamer headlines: *the Bolsheviks are paid agents of Germany!*

The threads of intrigue led to Stockholm, where there was a German espionage agency. Kerensky felt that "facts of extreme importance" had been unearthed. A letter had been published—seized in the mail somewhere, it seemed—in which a German Baron "congratulated the Bolsheviks on their work," and predicted "the joy that would be felt in Berlin." It was recalled that Lenin, Zinoviev and a dozen other Russian socialists had reached Russia by crossing Germany in war time—in a "sealed railway car." (In Germany, Lenin had refused to see anyone, and especially the social democrats. . . . "Liebknecht, yes," he said, "and gladly.") The liberal Minister, Paul Miliukov, spoke of the rôle of German gold in the Russian Revolution. An investigation was started which history did not permit to be completed, or even to be formally discontinued. Events were moving too fast. A former agent of the Russian counter-espionage service, after having informed us that "the agents in the course of their investigations manufactured their own documents," later came to the rather startling conclusion that not only the Bolsheviks but the anti-Bolsheviks as well were guilty of treason. In his opinion, the only ones not guilty of treason were the counter-espionage agents; they simply spent their time manufacturing documents of a treasonous nature. . . .

"The counter-espionage reports on Lenin's previous activity," wrote this Mr. Ustinov, "on his connections with the German General Staff, and on the fact that he had received German gold, were so convincing that he should have been hanged at once."

Kerensky did not do anything about this, however, since he himself was a "well-known" traitor.

If I mention these facts, it is because slander, throughout the Russian Revolution, has had a curious history, and because it has today reappeared in identical form. The legend of the German gold rapidly died down in 1917—and slander played no part in the social struggles of the epic years; it was not to reappear until ten years later, in 1927-1928. But from then on it soared to dizzy heights.

THE MARCH TO POWER

In September 1917, General Kornilov's *putsch* collapsed pitifully, and the situation was completely transformed. Reality, stronger than slanderous legends based on facsimiles forged in the offices of the secret service, showed who the revolutionists were and who the phrase-mongers, fakers and counter-revolutionists. The Kerensky cabinet demonstrated clearly that it was nothing more than a phantom government, buffeted about between two possible dictatorships: either the generals, who on the reactionary side were the only men gifted with sufficient insight and force (for in periods of social instability any military second-rater is intelligent enough to comprehend the benefits, to the financiers, of authority), would resume their activity and the revolution would go the way of Bonapartism, or else the workers, soldiers and peasants, the Soviets, the Bolsheviks, would conquer by force, since there was no other way. What compromise could there be between military dictatorship and proletarian dictatorship?

Lenin and Trotsky see this plainly and hence they demand, suggest, proclaim and initiate the advance toward insurrection. The one, at the head of the party, which he succeeds in convincing not without resistance; the other, at the head of the Petrograd Soviet where he forms a Revolutionary Military Committee, distributes arms to the workers and persuades the Soviet to decide that the revolutionary garrison will not obey the Provisional Government and will not leave the city. He has organized the insurrection before the actual uprising.

In their private conversations these two men sometimes expressed concern. They felt themselves too indispensable.

"If we are killed," asked Lenin of Trotsky, "do you think Bukharin and Sverdlov will manage?"

I once drew this portrait of them. Though it was written in 1919, I see no reason to modify a single line of it.

The experts are gone. Two men remain at the center of the Supreme Council.

With its careworn faces, and papers covered with specialists' figures, the Council resembles the directors' meeting of a firm that is terribly in the red. Debit: the White terror in Budapest, the defeat in Hamburg, the silence of Berlin, the silence in Paris, the vacillations of Jean Longuet, the loss of Orel, the threat to Tula. More debit: that yesterday we were nothing; that we have arisen from poverty, from darkness, from continuous defeat. Credit: the news from Italy, the strikes in Turin, the rivalry between Washington and Tokyo, the statements of Serrati and of Pierre Brizon. Credit: the consciousness, the will, the blood of the proletarians. Further: the frightful liabilities of a civilization bearing the ulcer of war in its flesh. And propaganda has transferred the 11,000 assassinated by the White terror in Finland to the credit side. . . .

At the moment, amid the silence of the toiling masses, the entire struggle is embodied in these two leaders. It is they whose wearisome effigies are everywhere to be seen; in homes, offices and clubs; in the papers and in the displays of sycophant photographers who vie with one another for the honor of snapping their pictures. Once, when they were in good spirits, after a great success in the nationalization of the coal mines, they exchanged an ironic remark or two on the subject of the new icons. "Look at all the portraits! Don't you think they're going too far?" "The drawbacks of popularity, my friend, are the sycophants and imbeciles who puff it up." Both of them were sarcastic but there the resemblance ended: the one, good-natured with a large, bald forehead, rather prominent cheekbones, a prominent nose, a wisp of reddish beard, a striking air of health, simplicity, sly intelligence. When he laughed, his eyes narrowed and sparkled green. He had an enormous prominent forehead, a big mouth, a jovial expression revealing Asiatic traits mingled with the European. . . .

The other was a Jew. At times he had about him the forceful ugliness of an eagle; in his glance there was piercing intelligence. He carried his head like a leader of men; and had an air of inner certainty that shortsighted observers might have taken for pride; his laugh was a Mephistophelian mask—and in it there was something misleading—for this man retained the capacity for joy of a young man with all life's struggles ahead of him.

They laughed at their own portraits. "I only hope," said one, "that we live long enough to make them stop printing these." "I hope," said the other, "that we live long enough not to be canonized."^{*}

But they were not leaders in the sense that this word has assumed since the appearance of the Duce, the Ghazi, the Führer, and the Beloved Leader in the U.S.S.R. Their popularity was not manufactured nor imposed; it grew up spontaneously on the basis of the confidence they earned. Their actions and their words were discussed everywhere. And more than that. They answered their enemies with a shrug of the shoulders; to the workers they explained their position and sometimes found themselves out-voted. They were only the first among comrades, and they would have accorded a cold reception to the dangerous imbecile who took it into his head to place them above their comrades or above the party. The life of the Politbureau and

^{*}*Ville conquise* (Rieder). Writing these words at Leningrad, I could not use the names. If I had, the Black Chamber would not have passed my MS.

the Central Committee was at all times collective. The party discussed, tendencies appeared and disappeared, and opposition elements, which must not be confused with counter-revolutionists, agitated unceasingly in broad daylight during the whole civil war—until 1921. They were not to disappear completely until 1925-1926, when in consequence all internal life disappeared from the party. Lenin invited old opponents, Martov and Dan, the Menshevik leaders, to speak in the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets. Anarchists belonged to the committee. The Left Social Revolutionaries participated in the power for several months at the beginning of the régime. They were eliminated only after having attempted an uprising and fired cannon in the very streets of Moscow in July 1918. No one thought of fighting for a totalitarian state; men fought and died for a new kind of freedom. Bolshevism triumphed by proclaiming to the masses and to the world a democracy of free workers, such as had never before been seen. The first Soviet Constitution drawn up by Sverdlov guaranteed every liberty to the toilers. No one, for example, thought of abolishing the freedom of the press the day after the victorious insurrection. The Bolsheviks' aim was "to take the monopoly of the press from the bourgeoisie." With this end in view it was necessary to suppress the reactionary press which, moreover, specialized in campaigns of slander. But, said Trotsky, "every group of citizens should have printing presses and paper at his disposal." And Lenin put forth a proposal that every group of citizens supported by 10,000 to 15,000 toilers should have the right to issue a paper if it wished.

THE VICTORY OF NOVEMBER 7, 1917

We cannot overemphasize the fact that in the course of the last ten years, the words "leaders," "parties," "Soviets," "masses," have altogether changed their meaning, and have come to signify the exact opposite of what they meant during the great years of hope and victory. The whole history of the early days has had to be laboriously made over, and the process is not yet completed. At the time of the November insurrection, the leaders were only the foremost, the most respected and most authoritative of the militants; the Bolshevik party was the political organization which best expressed the popular sentiment. From this fact came its popularity and the effectiveness of its activity.

With the aid of some little known texts, we shall try to give a general picture of their activity during the decisive days.

Bukharin tells us in a document which appeared in 1922:

It was in Petersburg during the Democratic Conference. Try to visualize the Winter Palace; Kerensky was there, just back from Moscow after the unfortunate experiment of a government conference in that city, where the workers received him by calling a strike so general that the waiters at the Hotel Metropole refused even to wait on the delegates. . . . But first I want to tell a little story about our party life at that time, which is still half a secret. Lenin was in hiding. Immediately before the Democratic Conference convoked by Kerensky, our Central Committee met. Our tactics were perfectly clear. Agitation and propaganda among the masses and preparation for the insurrection which was imminent. I had no sooner come in than Miliutin came up to me and said: "Comrade Bukharin, we've just received a little note."

This note said: "You are scoundrels and traitors if you do not immediately send Bolsheviks into the mills and factories, and if you do not have the rascals in the Democratic Conference surrounded and arrested." The whole letter was written in that style and was full of threats. We were all amazed; no one up to that time had dared to bring up the question so bluntly. No one knew what to do. Finally a decision was taken. This was perhaps the one time in the history of our party that the Central Committee unanimously decided to burn a letter from Lenin. The affair was never made public. At that time we were to the right of Lenin who, as you see, is not always for moderation and timeliness and is capable of wide swings to the left, and of being mistaken. . . . We rejected his demands because we felt that though we were unquestionably able to take over Moscow and Petrograd and to dissolve the Democratic Conference, we could, nevertheless, not maintain ourselves in power throughout the rest of Russia. But at the Conference I saw a characteristic little scene which showed up clearly the general state of mind. After Kerensky, Trotsky took the floor. Kerensky's group was surrounded by sailors whom Kerensky had brought there to protect the Democratic Conference against a Bolshevik *coup*. I saw Trotsky come down from the platform after his speech, and together we went over among the sailors who started to wave their bayonets and ask Trotsky whether it would not soon be time to make use of them. The few troops of the Provisional Government were already on our side.

This was in the middle of September. Six weeks later, the day of the second Congress of the Soviets, the insurrection broke out. In Petrograd it triumphed easily, in Moscow at the cost of much suffering and bloodshed. In several places there had been spontaneous uprisings before this date, notably in Kazan and in Tashkent, where the soviets and the troops had not waited for instructions. For some time Kronstadt and the Baltic Fleet had obeyed no one but themselves. Kronstadt was strongly under the influence of the Bolsheviks and anarchists; the Navy obeyed the directives of the party.

Antonov-Ovseyenko, today Soviet consul general in Barcelona, tells the following story of the capture of the Winter Palace:

I drive to the local military headquarters at top speed. We pass our sentries in Millionaya Street; there is disorganized firing around the palace, several soldiers have just surrendered. Darkness. Shots ring out. The chatter of machine guns. A crowd of sailors, soldiers and Red Guards rush up the street and then retreat, hugging the walls when the cadets open fire from behind their log barricades. Finally the cannons utter a muffled roar. Again and again. That is the Peter Paul fortress (situated on the other side of the Neva). "Shouldn't we ask them to surrender?" suggests Chudnovsky, who has just arrived at the head of some men from the Pavlovsky regiment. He is bold and loquacious as usual. I agree. The sound of the cannon has had its effect. The Woman's Battalion starts to weep, and cries out that they will never do it again. The military school surrenders; the cadets lay their guns on the sidewalk in bundles and leave under escort. Chudnovsky wants to let them keep their guns, but I won't allow it. Other cadets resisted for an hour longer. It was hard to attack them, the only approach being a narrow, winding stairway. Several times they forced the crowd back. At length, however, they weakened and sent a message that they were giving up all resistance. With Chudnovsky I went up into the apartments of the palace. The remains of barricades, mattresses, arms, cartridge cases, crusts of bread were scattered everywhere. A motley crowd rushed up after us. We invaded the upper floors; the cadets surrendered. Suddenly we find ourselves in a vast hall, before a door guarded by a row of young people with rifles crossed. They hesitate for a moment. Chudnovsky and I approach this last defense of the Provisional Government. They seemed petrified. We had difficulty tearing their rifles from their grasp. "Is the Provisional Government here?" "It is here," one of the cadets replies obsequiously. And then he whispers: "I am with you." This is the last bourgeois government of old Russia. These thirteen men—for Kerensky had fled that morning "to summon help"—were no more than wan shadows sitting around a table. We arrest them. The crowd wants to kill them on the spot, but we escort them safely to the Peter Paul fortress.

On board the cruiser *Aurora*, anchored in the Neva several hundred yards away, revolutionists were awaiting the order to open fire in earnest (they had already fired some blanks) on the Palace.

We were about to give a last order which might have been fatal both for the ministers of the "democracy" and for the Palace. We decided to wait another quarter of an hour, feeling instinctively that the situation might change. We were not mistaken. The last few minutes were ticking away when a new messenger arrived straight from the Winter Palace. "The Palace has been taken." This time our rejoicing was double, because we had been on the point of opening fire, and this unknown sailor—no one bothered to identify him—had saved the Palace.

With a friend of mine, I immediately drove to Smolny. Our sailors had procured the car. They had just taken five autos from bourgeois and functionaries in the vicinity.

The streets of Petersburg were calm and silent. Not a sign of insurrection. Revolutionary sentries warmed themselves around bonfires at street intersections. They let us by without any trouble. We even saw crowded street cars

with their lights on. In a word, there was not a trace of revolution. At Smolny the delegates of the Congress were leaving their meeting after the first session of the Executive Committee of the Soviet Republic, which had been formed with astounding rapidity. It was all over. I went back on board and went to bed.

The next day we decided to purify the atmosphere a bit, by showing the bourgeois rabble our revolutionary bayonets. Patrols of sailors set out for the center of town with orders to disperse any crowds. They did succeed in calming the general effervescence. They usually brought back trophies of revolvers, sabres, rifles, and even bombs; they also brought in suspects: officers, drunks, gentlemen excessively bourgeois in appearance, soldiers of the shock battalions. They were all treated with the greatest forbearance: after a brief questioning, they were dismissed. The soldiers were advised, amid great gayety, to go back to their apron strings; the drunks were given jam to eat and then sent upstairs to sleep. This friendly reception soon caused the building to be full of drunks. Thereupon the sailors thought up another method which in the autumn season was quite drastic, and that was to dip the drunks in the river. That sobered them up immediately, and we were soon rid of them.*

On October 26th (November 8th) Jacques Sadoul wrote to the deputy Albert Thomas in Champigny-sur-Marne:

My dear Thomas: This is the day of the insurrection. This morning on my way to the Mission, I saw the corpse of General Tumanov, an adjunct in the War Ministry, fished out of the Moika. The soldiers arrested him last night and killed him with their bayonets. Amid laughter they placed him on a low cart in a ridiculous pose and led him off to the morgue. The news is good for the Bolsheviks. The Winter Palace was bombarded, then pillaged. All the works of art, tapestries, paintings were savagely destroyed. The Woman's Battalion, which defended it, was taken prisoner and shut up in a barracks, where the poor girls are said to have been raped as much as anyone can be.

Many of them are young women of the bourgeoisie. Most of the members of the Provisional Government were arrested. Kerensky fled. The army is in the hands of the revolutionists.

All that Sadoul says on the pillage of the Winter Palace is false. Perhaps a few women soldiers were not treated with all the respect due to a disarmed enemy. But on the whole, there were practically no excesses. From the same letter:

Again I see the great leaders. I make the acquaintance of Lenin and Trotsky. . . . Interlude at one o'clock in the morning. I interview Trotsky at length. A few minutes later he is elected Minister, or rather People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs.

First question: his opinion on the insurrection.

"Every revolution has its hazards, but the chances of success are enormous. The preparations were made with the greatest care. The organization extends over the whole Russian territory, and a thousand committees have been set up: almost the entire army has been won over. The peasant masses will be won over

*Reminiscences of Flerovsky.

Первый Совет Народных Комиссаров избран на 2-м Всероссийском съезде Рабочих, Солдатских, и Крестьянских Депутатов, 26-го октября 1917



First Council of People's Commissars. Elected at the Second All-Russian Congress of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, October 26, 1917 (Nov. 8, 1917). Reading left to right: Miliutin, Nogin, Trotsky, Lenin, Stalin, Rykov, Lunacharsky, Shliapnikov, Ovseyenko, Oppokov (Lomov), Skvortsov (Stepanov), Krylenko, Dybenko, Teodorovich, Avilov (Glebov).

СОВЕТ НАРОДНЫХ КОМИССАРОВ В 1917 ГОДУ

Каково же было значение Октябрьской революции? Не только потому, что она открыла новую эпоху в истории человечества, но и потому, что она открыла новую эпоху в истории России. Октябрьская революция открыла новую эпоху в истории России. Октябрьская революция открыла новую эпоху в истории России.

Вот почему Октябрьская революция открыла новую эпоху в истории России. Октябрьская революция открыла новую эпоху в истории России. Октябрьская революция открыла новую эпоху в истории России.



Л. Д. Троцкий



В. И. Ленин



А. Н. Рыков

Вот почему Октябрьская революция открыла новую эпоху в истории России. Октябрьская революция открыла новую эпоху в истории России. Октябрьская революция открыла новую эпоху в истории России.



В. П. Милиutin



Д. А. Луначарский



Н. С. Крыленко



П. И. Дыбенко



Н. И. Теодорович



А. Ф. Шлиапников



И. П. Ногин



А. В. Скворцов-Степанов



Е. А. Авилев (Глебов)



Н. С. Теодорович



М. И. Теодорович



А. В. Авилев (Глебов)

The Council of People's Commissars in 1917. Reading left to right: Trotsky, Lenin, Rykov, Miliutin, Ovseyenko, Krylenko, Dybenko, Nogin, Shliapnikov, Lomov, Lunacharsky, Skvortsov-Stepanov, Teodorovich, Glebov-Avilov, Stalin.

by the division of the estates of the big landowners. Based on these two elements, the movement must succeed. One sweep of the broom was sufficient to drive out the weak-kneed mediocrities of the former government.”*

In Moscow the street battles lasted for six days. There were terrible episodes such as the massacre of the workers of the Kremlin arsenal by the defenders of the democratic order. Before the insurrection, Muralov had undertaken the study of insurrectional technique. He was an agronomist, a fine giant of a Bolshevik. As early as February he had had the splendid idea of occupying the public buildings with a few companies of soldiers, and this brought about the fall of Tsarism in the old capital. He writes:

I looked for a pamphlet put out by our party in 1905 on the tactics of street fighting, but I did not find it. It had disappeared in the course of a house to house search. So I was obliged to rely on my memory. In addition I tried to lead some officers I knew to these topics of conversation.

Muralov fought like a fiend. At the moment when everything seemed lost for the Soviet fighters:

... the artillery joined our infantry, and we regained courage. I no longer remember how many cannon there were, but Vladimir Smirnov, the commander of our artillery, must remember. . . .

In the notes of Vladimir Smirnov I find a dynamic page on this subject:

When I informed the soldiers that we were surrounded and that the Revolutionary Committee instructed them to retreat (It was night. They were sleeping, utterly tired out.), they replied calmly: “We are staying.”

The next day we attacked in one place with a certain success, and this encouraged us; the following day a group of our people occupied the tower of the Strastnaya monastery, where the cadets had ensconced themselves with a machine gun. That night I was sent with two comrades to the Khodynka artillery brigade, and we brought back two or three cannon, one of which we set up in Strastnaya Square to fire on the mansion of the former Governor General. A few shells were sufficient to dislodge a corps of students. When they were conducted to the Soviets, it took considerable effort to persuade the soldiers of the guard not to shoot them. The Revolutionary Committee then decided on a general attack, and I was commissioned to ask the 55th Infantry for reinforcements. We set out in a closed Red Cross car. We were stopped en route by students of the officers’ training school and taken to Alexander High School in Arbat. They began to search us. Recognizing me, a young officer of the 55th tore off my tunic, crying out that I was a Bolshevik and that I should be stood up against the wall. I passed one or two nights there, and then one evening a cannon boomed, and they marched us out, about eighty to a hundred prisoners.

**Op. cit.* pp. 57-59.

An escort of students marched us to the Kremlin. The leader of the escort, one Prince Trubetskoy, told the soldiers to "jab a bayonet into the back of anyone who dared to turn his head." At the Kremlin the officers received us with insults. One of them cried out: "Either we're done for, or we'll beat this rabble." I passed the night in the barracks of the 55th regiment. Next evening a terrific explosion was heard: our artillery was firing on the Kremlin from the Mount of Sparrows. . . . The following day they marched about forty of us out, to shoot us we thought, but when we had reached the Nikolskaya gate, they had us pass before the sentinel and let us go. The Red Guards in front of St. Vassili church leveled their rifles at us, but we cried out that we were Reds. After that I went to the district soviet. They suggested that I take a little rest, and I ran to my home where I hadn't set foot for two weeks. I ate dinner and went to the Zamoskvoretschie headquarters. . . .

All this happened nineteen years ago. Muralov and Smirnov are living, and as I write these lines, I think of them with great emotion. In 1927 both sided with the party opposition against Stalin. Both were expelled from the party. Both were arrested. Vladimir Smirnov has been in prison ever since, except for a few days in 1932, when he was deported, rearrested in exile, and handed another five year sentence—without known reasons. He had grown almost blind in his cell in Suzdal. Where is he today? Nikolai Muralov was for a long time military governor of the Moscow region. He was exiled to the forests of the Tara nearly eight years ago. In his exile he worked at his trade of agronomist. Recently he was arrested, accused of some fanciful plot, of high treason, intelligence with Hitler and so on. He seems headed for the executioner.

THE GREAT YEARS

This is the beginning of the great years. I shall not attempt to describe all their alternating moments of despair and enthusiasm. I shall only indicate their principal dates and their general aspect. Immediately after the seizure of power the ministries were empty; functionaries, technicians, directors of factories, capitalists and managers had in their turn discovered the strike and systematic sabotage. Red Guards, who were simply workers with a gun slung over their shoulder, sought out the leading functionaries of the ministries in their homes; a few were locked up, and others developed a certain degree of good will. . . . But the first months of this struggle went by with neither excesses nor terror. A counter-revolutionary effort in Petrograd and vicinity was easily broken by Trotsky, aided by

Colonel Muraviev, who later turned traitor and was killed. Hardly anyone was arrested, and those who were, were soon released. Among these were Krasnov, Ataman of the Cossacks, who took advantage of our leniency to start a civil war in the Don country—and Purishkevich, the anti-Semite leader. Lenin and his co-workers did not contemplate the total nationalization of heavy industry, but rather an effective workers' control and the growing participation of the socialist state in mixed trusts, in which the capitalists would retain some place.

The first question to be solved was that of the war. The soldiers were tired of fighting. "They are voting with their feet," said Lenin mockingly to those who wanted him to continue the war, a revolutionary war this time. "They are simply leaving the front." The Soviets proposed a general peace, but only the Central Powers consented to the opening of negotiations. General Dukhonin, who had refused to offer the enemy an armistice, was massacred by the sailors. (It since became a popular parlance to "send someone to Dukhonin's headquarters," meaning the hereafter. . . .) The Central Powers accepted in principle a peace without annexations and indemnities, but at the Brest-Litovsk negotiations Trotsky and Joffe, in the presence of Count Czernin, von Kühlmann and General Hoffman, were asked to sanction vast annexations under the name of "liberations." Thereupon they walked out and issued an appeal to the peoples themselves. The Soviets stopped the war, at the same time refusing to sign a shameful treaty. Trotsky had favored this solution as a means of feeling out the revolutionary possibilities in Germany; he thought that socially the enemy was no longer able to undertake an offensive against the Russian people. He was mistaken, though the Austrians were of the same opinion. William II put an end to the controversy by ordering an advance, whereupon Lenin forced through the Central Committee the decision to sign a less favorable peace, which sacrificed the revolution in Finland and Ukraine. "We must sacrifice territory," he said, "in order to gain time." Sokolnikov, a member of the Central Committee, signed the treaty of Brest-Litovsk without taking the trouble to read it.

The Allies regarded this separate peace as a betrayal, although Lenin and Trotsky would have accepted the aid of France and England in defending the young Republic. "Accept arms from the imperialist bandits," Lenin scribbled on a piece of paper. In Russia the national sentiment, strong in the middle classes, was injured. This sentiment became a source of strength to us in the civil war.

The civil war began in the South by the formation of small national armies, known as White Armies, which rallied to the banner of the counter-revolution; the eastward movement of the Czechoslovak troops through the Volga regions gave the Allies the idea of using them to overthrow the Soviets in conjunction with the Social Revolutionaries. Various officers' plots followed in the big cities. A White insurrection gained the upper hand for a time in Yaroslav. The summer of 1918 was frightful. Famine, cholera in Petrograd, plots, assassinations, revolts of the Social Revolutionaries—who shared the power; Dora Kaplan fired several bullets into Lenin's chest as he was leaving a factory meeting. (And Lenin insisted that she should not be shot; although her execution was announced, I have reasons for believing that it did not take place and that Dora Kaplan was still alive many years later.) The Red terror then began; it was partly carried on by the People's Commissars to legalize and control the terror that was everywhere breaking out spontaneously. Hostages, counter-revolutionists, officers, well-known members of the bourgeoisie were executed by the hundreds. The Russian Revolution had its September days, its Fouquier-Tinville, its Carriers, its Jean-Lebons, its Fouchés—and the Fouchés in particular had a radiant future ahead of them. The same historic situation in two different countries and at intervals of a hundred and twenty-five years produced the same effects with the same result, which was to raise all the energies of the revolution to the highest pitch in a situation that was almost desperate.

The first Red troops retreat on every occasion. Kazan, the key to the Volga, is lost. Trotsky, Ivan Smirnov, and a group of militants arrive by special train in the midst of this debacle. They themselves—followed only by the personnel of the train—join battle in Svaijsk—and gain a decisive victory. The next day Trotsky enters the port of Kazan on board a gunboat and sets fire to the White fleet.

Our luck had changed. The morale of the troops recovered. Trotsky signed this order:

The soldiers of the workers' and peasants' Red Army are not cowardly rabble. They want to fight for the liberty and happiness of the working people. If they retreat or fight badly, it is the fault of the commanders and commissars.

I serve notice that if a unit gives ground, the political commissar will first be shot. Then the commander.

Courageous soldiers will be rewarded in accordance with their merits. They will receive commands.

The cowards, the traitors and profiteers will not escape our bullets. For this I assume responsibility before the Red Army.

Many revolutionists disapproved this manner of speech and action, but Lenin approved it heartily. In any case, the defeat was ended. Kazan was retaken; the Red Army was reconstituted out of nothing, became day by day stronger and began to be victorious almost everywhere, despite the technical intervention of the Western powers in favor of the Whites.

Through the civil war that they have begun, the former propertied classes lose everything. The logic of struggle demands this. The famine necessitates rationing in the cities and requisitions in the country, where as a result peasant uprisings break out. To an ever increasing extent, the economy must be directed with a view to war, and stringent measures of nationalization are extended to the whole of production. Factory owners ask to be nationalized, as they cannot live otherwise. In the fall of 1919, the Whites under Admiral Kolchak are the masters of Siberia; they constitute the "supreme government" of Ukraine under General Denikin, who is preparing for a march on Moscow. In the North, thanks to British battalions, they dominate a vaguely socialist government presided over by old Tchaikowsky, a veteran of the first struggles against Tsarism; and General Yudenich is preparing to take Petrograd, where the people are dying of hunger in the streets and dead horses are piled up in front of the Grand Opera. All that remains of the Soviets is the old Duchy of Muscovy, and that too is menaced. Then in one month a veritable miracle occurs. Yudenich is crushed under the very walls of Petrograd, where Trotsky has set up barricades; a defeat north of Orel disposes of Denikin; his army, harassed in the rear by Makhno and his black* troops, disintegrates and finally, in total disarray, boards ship at Novorossisk; a Red Army, led by Ivan Smirnov, hurls the Whites back in the Urals, while the Red guerillas begin their pitiless campaigns in Siberia. A few months later Admiral Kolchak is handed over to the Reds by Allied officers afraid for their own skins, and shot one moonlit night near Irkutsk with one of his weeping ministers. Their bodies are thrown into the Angara through a hole dug in the ice.

In 1920 the English set sail from Archangel, as the French set sail from Odessa the year before; a Revolutionary Committee, presided over by Ivan Smirnov, organizes Soviet Siberia. Dzerzhinsky, the head of the Cheka—the extraordinary commission which was the organ of the terror—was just suggesting the abolition of the death

* Refers to the black flag of the anarchists.

penalty when Joseph Pilsudski, the former terrorist of the Polish Socialist party, decided the moment had come to hurl his troops against Kiev. The Poles entered Kiev just before the Second Congress of the Communist International. But at this moment the Red Army includes almost two million men. The country is looking forward to peace. The national sentiment is so strong that old generals like Polivanov and Brussilov appeal to the former officers to take up arms. Trotsky's train is at all points of the front. The Poles are driven from Kiev. Lenin at once conceives the project of an offensive against Warsaw to make Poland a Soviet state, thereby scrapping the Treaty of Versailles, whose fatal consequences he has just denounced. A Revolutionary Committee for Poland is formed with Marklevsky and Dzerzhinsky at its head; the Sixth Army, led by Tukhachevsky and Smilga, advances on Warsaw, in spite of the objections of Trotsky, who considers this immense operation too risky. The workers and peasants of Poland fail to rise, and this once again proves that the revolution cannot be brought into a foreign country at the point of a gun. Pilsudski, supported by Weygand, wins the battle of Warsaw. Russia loses a common border with Germany, and Germany loses its chance of revolution.

These immense efforts have raised the tension in the interior to the highest pitch. The entire system rests on the discipline of the party, on organized famine in the cities, on requisitions in the country. The consequence is peasant uprisings, at the end of 1920 and the beginning of 1921. The most serious of these is in the region of Tambov, where the peasant army attains a force of 80,000 men under the leadership of a former school-teacher by the name of Antonov. In the Ukraine Makhno attempts to form an anarchist federation in the region of Gulai-Polye. An opposition grows within the party, dissatisfied with its authoritarian centralism. The Kronstadt sailors rebel.

I followed these events very closely, and it seems to me unquestionable that measures taken in time could easily have countered all these evils. It would have been relatively simple to reach a compromise with Kronstadt and avoid useless massacres in the very heart of the revolution. The danger made the Central Committee merciless, and we must admit that the danger was great. An exhausted Russia was in no condition to resume the revolutionary effort. In the wake of the Kronstadt sailors we feared uprisings of a totally different sort, a peasant reaction which would have destroyed everything. The Kronstadt situation was settled by cannon brought up over the ice. Then Lenin understood that a change of direction was necessary and

put forward the N.E.P.—the New Economic Policy. This meant an end to requisitions, free trade in grain, concessions to foreign capitalists, tolerance toward the small trader, the artisan, and even small-scale industry.

Less than a year later, the country was pacified, the famine ended. The old wounds were healing. The future could be viewed with confidence.

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

The Communist International was founded in 1919 in Moscow. Two Frenchmen attended its first congress: Henri Guilbeaux and Jacques Sadoul. The former had been condemned to death for communicating with the enemy, while the latter was nearly convicted of the same offense. The German, Eberlein, was sent by the Spartacus League to argue in favor of deferring the foundation of an International, regarded as premature by Rosa Luxemburg and her group. (Rosa had just been assassinated in Berlin along with Karl Liebknecht.) Subkhi, a Turk, who was soon to be massacred by the Kemalists, represented his country. . . .

. . . I am today the sole survivor among the early administrative staff of the C.I. I was working in the second district of Petrograd when Zinoviev sent for me; that same evening a group of militiamen whom I had been instructing in certain subjects escorted me through the total darkness of the streets, lest I be robbed of the pound of black bread I had with me. In one of the vast, empty rooms of the Smolny Institute, I met a tall, ageless fellow in a shabby soldier's blouse (I happened to be wearing a magnificent Austrian officer's tunic—clothes were becoming scarce). He had a high forehead, spectacles. There was something ascetic, smiling, yet immensely serious about him. He introduced himself:

"Vladimir Mazin (Lichtenstadt), old Maximalist, ten years in Schlüsselburg. And you?"

"Thirteen years of revolutionary activity in three countries, five of imprisonment, nineteen months of internment, etc."

That meant we could work together. Now that we were in power, we were surrounded by revolutionists of the latest vintage, who would have been glad to turn against us at the first sign of bad weather. Already they occupied a good many offices, each one demanding his little bit of power, his special ration of herring and

tobacco—and an automobile at the first possibility. Thus, our exchange of references was not useless.

The executive committee of the C.I. existed only on paper. Zinoviev attended to everything, occasionally consulting Lenin, but more often, Radek and Bukharin, who put in brief appearances in our office. Mazin and I were emissaries, functionaries, secretaries, editors, translators, printers, organizers, directors, "members of the collegium," and then some. There were tragi-comic moments, such as when Zinoviev summoned me (we lived next door to one another, defended by the same machine gun) and announced in great haste:

"It seems that the English are landing tomorrow. Maybe we're done for, but we're going to try to handle them. You know English. You must write some leaflets and pamphlets at once. . . ."

"But, look here, Gregory Yevseich, I don't know enough English. . . ."

"That doesn't matter. Do the best you can. The Cheka has an Englishman in prison—I've been having plenty of trouble over him—he will help you with the English. . . ."

Mazin was a man of rare moral qualities and unusual intelligence, one of the finest, most complete men I have met in all my life. He was the last survivor of the terrorist group that had blown up Stolypin's villa. The revolution had liberated him from the Schlüsselburg where he had shared a cell with Ordjonikidze. In prison he had written a great book on Goethe. Today he is at rest beneath the granite flags of the Leningrad drillground; he was killed defending the city. He said to me: "We have had to take on ourselves the right to decide the life and death of others; we must, therefore, set an example." He set an example.

The first days of the International were the days of heroic camaraderie. We lived in boundless hope. There were rumblings of revolution in the whole of Europe. Manuilsky returned from France—it is true that he understood nothing of what he had seen there—and proved to us that the demobilization marked the beginning of a revolution. He drew this conclusion from a splendid demonstration he had witnessed. Ridel, returning from Italy (he is dead, so I can name him), was less optimistic: in Italy the revolution was in men's hearts and in the nature of things, but had found no leaders. Only one man dared to affirm its possibility: the anarchist Malatesta. The socialists feared it. Mussolini and his gangs had offered their services; should they be accepted? Shablin, later murdered in Bulgaria, said with fine assurance: "We shall take power when we so desire." Soviets came to

power in Munich and Budapest. In Vienna, Doctor Bettelheim embarked on an adventure which was quickly disowned.

And the dead mingled with the living. Levine was executed in Munich; Tibor Szamuely, who had spoken to us but a short time before in Moscow, blew out his brains, escaping from the defeat of Red Hungary, (in reality more swindled than defeated by old Clemenceau, who had persuaded Bela Kun to halt a victorious offensive). . . . Corvin was hanged in Budapest. Muna arrived from Czechoslovakia, reporting that the lid was about to blow off there. Bela Kun coming from Vienna was (in a single session) twenty times called an imbecile by Lenin for an inept attempt at a *putsch* in Berlin. He subsequently went to Crimea where he organized the most atrocious and useless massacres of our revolution. Rakhia, the Finn, who was shortly to be shot by his own party comrades, came and went discreetly from one frontier to another. The American, John Reed, athletic and good-humored, was released from prison in Finland. He died in 1921.

Then with victory came the great flourishing—I was going to say “vogue”—of the International. So many people joined it, now that they felt it was becoming a power, that the Russians decided to take precautions against politicians, opportunists and adventurers: these precautions were the 21 conditions for membership which split the unified Socialist Party of France at Tours, the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany at Halle, the Italian Socialist Party at Livorno. Mingled with the revolutionists, politicians put in an appearance at the Kremlin: Marcel Cachin, yesterday’s arch-patriot (and still a patriot at heart), suddenly converted to militant internationalism. L.-O. Frossard came with him, looking very wise. The brilliant Bordiga denounced Lenin’s opportunism at every opportunity, and in the evening led parades of singing students through the delegates’ hotel; the Hindu, Manabendra Nath Roy, came in search of arguments and munitions for agitation in India, and apparently found happiness in the arms of a Mexican girl as slender and beautiful as he, but dazzlingly blonde. The Hungarian, Rudniansky, was to turn traitor (he is now in the Solovietski Islands, I have been assured). Among the Italians, there were old Lazzari, Serrati, Angelica Balabanoff, representing the tradition of Italian socialism; young Terracini of the *Ordine Nuovo*; among the English: Sylvia Pankhurst, Gallacher, later Newbold; the Dutch: Wijnkoop, Sneevliet; among the French: Raymond Lefèvre, poet and thinker, meditating on *Revolution or Death*; the anarchist, Lepetit, a sturdy



Trotsky addressing the Fourth Congress of the Communist International.



Above is a conversation between Trotsky, Lenin and Kamenev, People's Commissar of War, President of the Council of People's Commissars and President of the Moscow Soviet respectively.

young fellow; Vergeat, of the Metal Workers; Rosmer, silent and hard-working, in whom one immediately sensed an absolute probity and devotion; Fernand Loriot, forty-eight years old, but a revolutionist of the war days; Boris Souvarine, biting, imperious, unruly, perpetually asking embarrassing questions. Among the Germans: Paul Levi, who had the appearance of a young Marxist statesman. Angel Pestaña brought us the adherence of the Spanish C.N.T. Some time later a young Catalan teacher with severe features arrived in Moscow: he was Joaquin Maurin. And with him, a laughing young fellow with gold-rimmed spectacles, Andres Nin . . . : Vuyo Vuyovich, bold and crafty, who at twenty-five was an old "professional revolutionist," gaily crossed all the frontiers of Europe.

The Russians at the Congress were: Lenin, with his astounding simplicity; Trotsky, erect in a white tunic, attending between journeys; Karl Radek, malicious, voluble, monkey-like, the most satanic of debaters; Zinoviev, the inexhaustible chairman, with his long, unruly hair; Bukharin, in whom science became amusing and almost juvenile.

The Third International of the early days, for which men fought and many died, which filled the prisons with martyrs, was in reality a great moral and political force, not only because following the war the workers' revolution was on the ascendant in Europe and was very nearly victorious in several countries, but because it brought together a multitude of passionate, sincere, devoted minds, determined to live and die for communism. The mountebanks and petty adventurers hardly counted in the ensemble. Where are all these men today?

Lazzari, Serrati, Loriot are dead. Paul Levi, expelled from the Party, committed suicide during an attack of delirium. Lefèvre, Lepetit, Vergeat are dead.* Terracini has been in prison in Italy for many years. Roy, expelled from the Party, is in prison in India.** Balabanoff, expelled, is an active socialist. Bordiga, expelled, enjoys a strictly limited liberty in Italy. Faithful to their convictions, Rosmer, Souvarine (and with them Pierre Monatte and Jacques Mesnil, French communists of the earliest days) were expelled long ago. Vuyo Vuyovich is in prison in Russia at Verkhne-Uralsk. All the Russians for that matter. . . . Joaquin Maurin, founder of the

*Permit me once again to refute here the odious legend surrounding their death at sea. I was well acquainted with the circumstances of their departure. I was the companion of their last days in Russia, and I know that their death resulted solely from an accident facilitated by their own impatience.

**He has recently been released from prison. (Tr.)

P.O.U.M. in Spain, expelled and slandered by the official C.P., was shot by the Spanish fascists; expelled and banished from the U.S.S.R., Andres Nin, Minister of Justice in the Catalonian Generalidad,* is denounced daily by the local Stalinist press as an "agent of international fascism" (*sic*); Sylvia Pankhurst and Newbold have been expelled; gone also is the indefatigable Sneévliet. . . .

The C.I. has squandered its forces, disdained its great talents, dispersed, hunted, persecuted the men of good will who came from the ends of the earth to offer their services. . . .

THE N.E.P. AND THE OPPOSITION

In a few years time the N.E.P. restored to Russia an aspect of prosperity. But to many of us this prosperity was sometimes distasteful and often disquieting. The socialist power retained all the levers of government and manœuvred them ably with its personnel of revolutionary workers and intellectuals. At least seven-eighths of industrial production was nationalized. The nation breathed once more: life began to be more pleasant; breaths of liberalism touched the ruling circles. Writers encountered a tolerance such as today seems unheard of, a tolerance which made possible several real masterpieces. Kamenev, chairman of the Moscow Soviet and of the Supreme Council of Labor and Defense, spoke of authorizing the publication of a daily paper independent of the party. . . . The general level of wages somewhat exceeded the pre-war scale; consumption was slightly below the pre-war level.

A persistent anxiety took hold of us communists. We had accepted all the necessities of the revolution, including the hardest and most repulsive; we had seen the best among us go to their death; we had submitted to the bitterest constraint in expectation of the harvest. Then, immediately following the Kronstadt killings—our blackest memory—Lenin gave the signal for retreat, saying: "We must learn from the bourgeoisie. We must learn how to carry on commerce; we shall sell everything except alcohol and icons**—and almost all of us agreed that he was right, for the previous régime with its requisitions, its total nationalization of distribution (born of the war and

*Nin was removed from this post, following the expulsion of the P.O.U.M. from the Generalidad.

**In this he was mistaken. Not long after his death the Politbureau decided, against the votes of Krupskaya, his widow, and of Trotsky, to restore the alcohol monopoly, suppressed by Nicholas II at the beginning of the war. The sale of vodka adds precious revenue to the budget of the U.S.S.R. but costs the people dear.

not of any preconceived intention), was obviously untenable. And now the cities we ruled over assumed a foreign aspect; we felt ourselves sinking into the mire—paralysed, corrupted. . . . Money lubricated and befouled the entire machine just as under capitalism. A million and a half unemployed received relief—inadequate relief—in the big towns. Saloons were open until three o'clock in the morning in the heart of the cities. There was gambling, drunkenness, and all the old filth of former times. We knew that most of the money thus squandered had been stolen from us; we knew the state had been cheated out of this money by crooked brokers and functionaries. The bathing establishments and hotels were haunted by painted women, resembling in every way their sisters of Whitechapel or Barbès. Classes were reborn under our very eyes; at the bottom of the scale, the unemployed receiving 24 rubles a month; at the top, the engineer receiving 800; and between the two, the party functionary with 222, but obtaining a good many things free of charge. There was a growing chasm between the prosperity of the few and the misery of the many; there were countless suicides. There was talk of broadening the rights of inheritance. Stalin proposed in a barely veiled form the restoration of landed property for the rich peasants. There was squalid, heart-breaking poverty, an ulcer in our young society, while wealth was arrogant and self-satisfied. Our socialist militia arrested the poor apple-woman who neglected to take out a license, while the fat shopkeeper, enriched by the sale at speculative prices of articles manufactured by our socialist industry, looked on and decided that by and large, order was returning. . . . The young people drank, old people drank, drunkenness became a plague. And the worst was that we could no longer recognize the old party of the revolution. The old militants, those who had experience of prison and the love of ideas, were only a handful; and these few were placed in jobs isolating them from the rank and file. Even those who had joined during the civil war felt lost in the wave of late-comers, the comfortable new conformists who, at bottom, cared exceedingly little about the future of the proletarian revolution, desiring only to live in comfort and without complications. Shortsighted and unintelligent like all petty profiteers, they did not understand that such tactics lead to more and worse complications later on.

Our anxiety at seeing this degradation of the State and these first symptoms of the bourgeoisification of Soviet society was, of course, not emotional; it was intellectual and based on economic data. Lenin died—on January 21, 1924—haunted by this anxiety, which is

expressed in his last writings and speeches. "Is not the helm escaping from our hands?" he asked. Ill, stricken in his brain, he had spent his last strength in seeking arms against the worst and most immediate evil: the bureaucratic degeneration of the party. Already bureaus were replacing the party; the worker, the militant rank-and-filer hardly dared open his mouth. We sensed the coming omnipotence of the functionaries. Some few announced that the dictatorship of the proletariat was being replaced by the dictatorship of the secretariat (the epigram is Souvarine's). Shortly before his death, Lenin proposed to Trotsky—who was hostile to the bureaucratic system—an action in common for the democratization of the party. As General Secretary, the Georgian, Stalin, obscure during the civil war, was becoming more and more influential, using his technical functions to fill the various bureaus with his creatures. He was the obstacle to Lenin's last efforts, and the last letter dictated by Vladimir Ilyich when the finger of death was upon him, was a letter of rupture addressed to Stalin.

In terms of economic policy, the problem was expressed by the relationship between industry and agriculture. The latter was recovering more rapidly than industry; the peasant accumulated reserves of grain, because he was offered too low a price for it; and the low price of wheat resulted in high prices for manufactured goods, whose quantity was not up to the demand. The country was approaching an irremediable economic crisis, a crisis which might arouse a hundred and twenty million peasants against the socialist power and place it at the mercy of foreign capital by forcing it to import (on credit? and under what conditions?) great quantities of manufactured goods. To forestall this crisis certain measures had to be taken before it was too late.

These measures were:

- (1) To restore democracy in the party, so that the influence of workers might be felt; to ventilate the State bureaus. This was the obvious condition for the success of all economic measures.

- (2) To adopt a plan for industrialization and appreciably rebuild industry within a few years.

- (3) In order to obtain the resources necessary for industrialization, force the well-to-do peasants to deliver their wheat to the state.

In general to limit the private acquisition of wealth and privilege, to combat speculation, to limit the power of the functionaries.

This was the gist of the program of the Opposition in the party.

Hence its slogan: "Against the merchant, the rich peasant and the bureaucrat."

Beginning in 1923, the Opposition found a leader in Trotsky; the bureaucratic system began to find its incarnation in Stalin.

Beginning in 1923, an agitational campaign unlimited in its violence was launched against Trotsky; he was everywhere denounced as anti-Leninist, the evil spirit of the party, the enemy of the Bolshevik tradition, the enemy of the peasants. His old disagreements with Lenin, dating from 1904 to 1915, were exploited by professional polemicists under Stalin's orders; under the name of Trotskyism they forged an entire, distorted ideology which was made into the most criminal heresy. In vain Trotsky's brilliant pen uttered the most consistent thoughts. The official press, circulated in the millions, smothered his voice, and tirelessly hammered away at its campaign of falsification. We subsequently learned the inside story of these campaigns; we learned that neither error nor passion was behind this deliberate falsification of facts and ideas. We have a number of signed statements, regarding the "fabrication" of Trotskyism . . . (though it is true that several of their authors were recently shot).

At first, the organizer of the Red Army, still chairman of the Supreme War Council and acclaimed by *Pravda* but a few months before as the "organizer of the victory," was so popular in the army and throughout the country that he might, with good chances of success, have attempted a *coup*. But in so doing, he would simply have had to substitute army rule for bureau rule; such a *coup* would have started the socialist revolution on the track hitherto pursued by bourgeois revolutions. And his aim was not to play the Bonaparte, even with the best of intentions, but, on the contrary, to prevent bonapartism. It was not by a *pronunciamento* that the Opposition sought to bring about the inner renewal of the revolution, but by the time-honored socialist method of appealing to the workers. Trotsky relinquished his executive positions, let himself be demoted without resistance, resumed his place in the rank-and-file—and the struggle continued. Everything, in the last analysis, depends on the international situation. After the failure of the revolution in Germany in 1923 (the Chemnitz Conference, the Hamburg insurrection, the violent repression of the workers' government of Saxony,

the dictatorship of general Von Seeckt), a wave of depression passed over Russia, and the bureaucracy had its own way for three years.

ZINOVIEV

During this period Gregory Zinoviev was the leading member of the Politbureau; Kamenev the second, and Stalin the third. "Lenin's co-worker since 1907, theoretician, popularizer and orator—an unruly shock of hair, a somewhat flabby, clean-shaven face, a careless appearance, well-rounded gestures, a low voice which can become strident when he wants to be sure of being heard, a ruthless tongue"* —Zinoviev is the chairman of the Soviet in Petrograd, which he renames Leningrad by decree, and has been the chairman of the Communist International since its foundation. His drama, which now commences, proceeds from a profound conviction, a certain ambition, and a distinct mediocrity of character.

His capacities as an agitator cut him out to be the indefatigable second of someone greater than himself in thought and character. In twenty years of day-to-day work he made himself the mouthpiece, the factotum, the popularizer of Lenin. Now that Vladimir Ilyich was dead, he considered himself destined to succeed him. In the International, he was a man of shady little schemes; at home, the exponent of repression. Into ideological struggles, he introduces intrigue and trickery in increasing doses; by gradual steps he introduces repression in the party: none the less the defeats of the C.I., of whose incompetent leadership there can be no doubt, redound to his discredit. From 1923 to 1925, he joined forces with Stalin to keep Trotsky from the power to which his unlimited popularity and Lenin's known choice entitled him. People began to whisper that Lenin had left a sort of testament, which had been concealed by the Central Committee. It was not long before this text passed from hand to hand. In it Lenin gave evidence of a perspicacity which history has only too well confirmed. All his judgments on his co-workers have since been verified. ". . . the October episode of Zinoviev and Kamenev was not, of course, accidental . . ." he says. Bukharin is a remarkable theoretician, but somewhat prone to scholasticism.

*Victor Serge: *L'An Un de la Révolution Russe*, p. 308.

... Comrade Trotsky ... is distinguished not only by his exceptional ability—personally, he is, to be sure, the most able man in the present Central Committee—but also by his too far-reaching self-confidence and a disposition to be far too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs.

These two qualities of the two most able leaders of the present Central Committee might, quite innocently, lead to a split. . . .

Stalin is too rude, and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us communists, becomes unsupportable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore, I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint another man who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority—namely, more patient, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc. This circumstance may seem an insignificant trifle, but I think that from the point of view of the relation between Stalin and Trotsky which I discussed above, it is not a trifle, or it is such a trifle as may acquire a decisive significance.*

Lenin wrote these lines on January 4, 1923, less than a year before his death. In other confidential notes he castigates the brutality of Ordjonikidze and pronounces a severe judgment on the Soviet state. It is "a bourgeois Tsarist machine . . . barely varnished with socialism." He commends Piatakov as one of the good administrators, with important reservations as to his political abilities. . . .

From this time on, Stalin demonstrated a consummate ability at intrigue and the manipulation of the party controls. At the outset, the fight against Trotskyism astounded the country. The revolution, accustomed in the main to rough, healthy ways, did not expect this deluge of lies, of veiled slanders, of manufactured revelations—this heart-breaking schism of its leaders who until then had seemed to be admirably united. The party did not expect this sudden intrusion of the mailed fist into its inner life.

Stalin intimates that he played the part of peacemaker; that he was opposed to expulsions; opposed to "the letting of blood"—thus permitting all the unpopularity of his campaigns to fall on Zinoviev. He likewise manoeuvres so as to make Zinoviev and Kamenev appear responsible for all the failures of the agrarian policy which led to the enrichment of a minority of peasants and a critical shortage in the State grain collections. He lets Zinoviev take the responsibility for the defeats of the International. In the corridors of the Kremlin he is overheard saying that the branches of the C.I. are full of "clowns, bluffers and paid politicians," and that if he were the master, he would promptly "cut off their credit, for those people can no longer be of any service to the cause of the revolution. . . ."

In the meantime Stalin completes the job of packing all the party

*From *The Suppressed Testament of Lenin* (Pioneer Publishers).

secretariats (excepting those of the Leningrad region, controlled by Zinoviev) with his creatures. In 1926 his work is done, he is the master of the party, of a party in whose ranks utter silence reigns; a party in which majorities, docile because they profit by being docile, do nothing but vote the resolutions prescribed by the Central Committee and submitted by the secretaries. At the Fourteenth Congress, Zinoviev is suddenly put in the minority, isolated, and rendered responsible for all internal and foreign difficulties. . . . It is not too late for him to retire to a secondary position, as several others do, and retain his small share of power. But despite everything the socialist in him is stronger and more devoted than the statesman, even stronger than ambition. The controversy turns on questions of prime importance. Stalin announces the new policy of "socialism in one country," which would be totally meaningless if it did not signify a renunciation of international solidarity. No compromise is possible. Stalin enters into combination with the rightists of the C.C. (Rykov, Tomsky, Bukharin) to continue an agrarian policy of enriching the kulaks. Stalin completes his task of strangling the party: Zinoviev goes over to the Opposition; in an embarrassing about-face he joins his adversary of the day before, Trotsky, accepting his program for democratization of the party—and consequently of the government—for industrialization and pressure on the "kulak, the nepman and the bureaucrat." The Chinese Revolution tragically sharpens the struggle.

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL AND THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

There had been six large parties in the Third International: those of France, Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. Since the defeat of the proletarian revolution in Finland, Hungary, Germany and Italy (1918-1922), the International had been able to raise the question of power in Germany and in Bulgaria; but these attempts had led to disaster, without bloodshed in Germany, with dreadful massacres in Bulgaria. The cause of the proletarian revolution in the West seemed lost for many years to come. And now an immense light was rising in the East; the Chinese masses had been stirred from their apathy, and were advancing from victory to victory. Hong-Kong was blockaded by Canton, a revolutionary republic was formed in south China, with Soviet advisers and instructors,

Borodin in the Cabinet, Galen (that is, Blücher, the former guerrilla chief of the Urals) in Chiang Kai-shek's new-formed army, Voitinsky in Peking. Lenin was growing as popular as Sun Yat-sen. Galen-Blücher led Chiang Kai-shek's army northward, the trade unions took possession of Shanghai and Hankow. Everyone wondered what revolutionary power would arise out of the victory of a workers' and peasants' revolution throughout the extent of the yellow continent. The destinies of Eurasia were changing, and with them the destiny of our times. Yet we knew the inside of these victories; with our own eyes we saw the workers of Shanghai, Canton, Hankow and Nanking led into ambush by our bureaucrats.

By this time the bureaucracy has, in actual fact, driven the workers from power in the U.S.S.R. Of the dictatorship of the proletariat, only the name remains. In the key positions, revolutionists have been replaced by functionaries. Policies are no longer inspired by the general interests of the Russian and international proletariat but by the functionaries' wish not to be bothered. Stalin becomes their idol. They fear the victory of the Chinese Revolution even more than they pretend to desire it. They never dare when the hour for daring has struck. Their entire tactics consist in manoeuvres to avoid complications. This leads to worse complications, but then it is too late.

We *know* that Chiang Kai-shek is preparing the open betrayal of the unions and his communist allies. We know that he is preparing a *coup* against the proletariat of Shanghai which has accomplished one of the finest insurrections in modern history. We are not permitted to speak. And Stalin takes the floor in Moscow before thousands of workers and solemnly assures them that we have nothing to fear from Chiang Kai-shek. "We shall break him after having made use of him." This speech had not yet been published when, on the following day, the wires informed us of the event we had predicted: the massacre of the workers of Shanghai (1927). Stalin has the text and the proofs of his unfortunate speech removed from the office of *Pravda*; they will never be seen again. He is reduced to stealing his own speech.*

On all this I shall quote only one document of the time, the report delivered at the Fifteenth Party Congress, by Chitarov, a Russian communist, who had been sent to China. Stalin uses it to condemn those who, in China, had faithfully executed his orders. . . .

*Malraux in *Man's Fate* has thrown some light on these episodes. His previous book, *The Conquerors* was forbidden in the U.S.S.R. *Man's Fate* has not yet been translated into Russian and if it does appear in Russian, it will not be without the characteristic mutilations.

For twenty days there was in Shanghai a people's government in which the communists had the majority. . . . This government was inactive although a military *coup* was expected at any moment . . . because the government of Wuhan had not confirmed it in its power (this government included two communist ministers). . . . Hsueh Yoh, the leader of the first division, came to the comrades and informed them of the preparations for the *coup* . . . he was ready to join us with his troops against the military. The leaders of the C.P. replied that they knew about the plot but did not wish to break with Chiang Kai-shek prematurely; they ordered Hsueh Yoh to go to the front or to resign by way of proving his loyalty to the general. The first division left the city; the second replaced it; and two days later the workers of Shanghai were shot down *en masse*.

The Kremlin's policies were bearing splendid fruit. And this was only the beginning.

During the period when the revolutionary forces have reached their highest pitch, the Chinese C.P. [read: the Communist International] beats an unceasing, systematic retreat. It consents to submit all its organizations, trade unions, peasant leagues, etc. to the Kuomintang; it renounces all initiative without authorization of the Kuomintang; it orders the voluntary disarmament of the workers of Hankow; consents *de facto* to the violent liquidation of all the peasants' organizations. . . .

. . . in Hunan the counter-revolution triumphed on the 21st and 22nd of May (1927) under circumstances which are hardly credible. There were 1700 troops in the capital and 20,000 organized and armed peasants in the environs. However, the officers succeeded in taking power, in shooting the peasant leaders and establishing their dictatorship. . . . The peasants were on the point of taking possession of the city, which they could have done without difficulty, when they received a message from the Central Committee of the C.P., ordering them to avoid an armed conflict and to pose the question through governmental channels. The provincial committee sent the Red detachments the order to retreat. Two detachments did not receive the order on time; they attacked, and were surrounded and exterminated. . . .*

Today, beneath my pen these are little black lines like other lines, but how much poor men's blood they represent no one will ever know. May they serve to enlighten other workers in a country nearer to us, constrained by force of circumstances to accept and submit to the authoritarian counsel of those responsible for what happened then.

What is the blood of Chinese workers to Stalin? Facing the Fifteenth Congress, he must attempt to counterbalance the effect of all these defeats and of the mass expulsions he has just pronounced (for, previous to the Congress, no longer daring to face debate on his responsibilities, he has had his principal adversaries, Trotsky and Zinoviev, expelled for infraction of discipline). He requires a victory in China, if only for an hour; and if he cannot have a victory, a few

*Official proceedings of the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.

more thousand heroic martyrs. In this case all criticism could be stifled by invoking the respect for the dead and "in order not to play into the hands of reaction." He sends to Canton his cousin, Lominadze, and Heinz Neumann, a young German as courageous as he was unscrupulous, to embark on a new revolutionary effort. . . .

. . . So on the night of December 10, by a coincidence with the Congress, leaving no doubt as to its spontaneity, a local uprising breaks out in Canton. Stalin's agents have fomented this action in order to obtain for their chief a victory bulletin as an argument against the "pessimism of the Opposition." The result is a revolutionary rear-guard action, isolated, artificial, and doomed to failure. The Canton Commune, surrounded by the military forces of the Kuomintang, lasted only forty-eight hours; its fall was accompanied by a dreadful slaughter. More than 2000* communists, or supposed communists, are massacred or tortured on the spot. At the Congress, one of Stalin's emissaries in China reported that about 30,000 Chinese workers had been put to death; in a period of only five months from April to August 1927, after the mad Canton *putsch* and the bloody repression which prolonged its echo for several weeks, the most conservative observers estimate a total of about 100,000 victims of the incoherent policies pursued under the ægis of "Moscow." Chinese communism is just about annihilated. A handful of survivors, among them the former secretary, Chen Tu-hsiu, went over to the Opposition and were expelled from the party.** Thus ends the cycle of aberrations and adventures from which Stalin, at the price of 100,000 human lives, emerges forever disqualified as a theoretician and strategist of the revolution.***

This is the historian's point of view. In reality, Stalin emerges from these unspeakable disasters fortified and almost glorified. The defeat of the revolution in Asia assures his victory at home. In Russia, the revolutionary spirit is gravely compromised. More than ever "socialism in one country" is valid, because the revolution has been defeated everywhere else. Enough complications. The epigones wish to take it easy, to have done with adventures. . . . What a fist he has, this Georgian! Long live the fist!****

The subalterns were not to be so kindly treated by fate. Lominadze, his cousin, who turned Oppositionist after these events, blew out his brains in Sverdlovsk in 1935 when about to be arrested. Heinz Neumann has disappeared from the scene; he is said to be imprisoned in the Soviet Union. He had permitted himself some critical remarks; and he knows too much. Several of the young unknowns, shot with Zinoviev, were his political associates.

* Actually 5700 were killed. (Tr.)

** A number of them were imprisoned in the Soviet Union. The son of Chen Tu-hsiu was beheaded in Shanghai.

*** B. Souvarine: *Staline*, p. 434.

**** Not so long ago, in 1934-1935, and even in the first months of 1936, the Soviet press and the communist press throughout the world made much to-do over the victories of the Soviets in China. What has become of these Soviets? Or rather, what has been done to them?

From Paris, Berlin, London, Guatemala; from everywhere, the Central Committees of the Communist parties, appointed and paid by him, wire their approval of everything: the friendship of Chiang Kai-shek, the expulsions, Canton, the eternal correctness of the policies of the executive of the C.I., the whole, absurd, bloody business. Thälmann—who never wearies of announcing the inevitable seizure of power in Germany—Doriot, Barbusse, Marcel Cachin, and all the others approve, greet with enthusiasm, approve everything—*everything*.

DISCORD IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The last meetings of the Central Committee prior to the expulsion of the leaders of the Opposition (end of October 1927) were tempestuous. They are reminiscent of the session of the Convention in which Robespierre could not make himself heard. Let us excerpt a few characteristic passages from the *official* minutes in which obviously the insults have been attenuated.

TROTSKY: Through the present apparatus, through the present régime, the proletarian vanguard undergoes the pressure . . . [*The noise increases more and more. The orator can hardly be heard.*] of the upstart bureaucrats including the worker-bureaucrats [*Tumult, whistling*], of the administrators, the petty bosses, the new-born proprietors, the privileged intellectuals of city and country. . . .

VOROSHILOV: Zinoviev, it's outrageous!

SKRYPNIK: The platform of the Central Committee wasn't made for such infamy.*

SKVORTSOV-STEPANOV: He's Dan, the Menshevik, in disguise.

TROTSKY: The pressure of all those elements who are beginning to show the proletariat their fists, saying: "It is no longer 1918." It is not the leftward zigzags which are decisive but our policy as a whole. It is the choice of cadres, the support of the masses. It is impossible to resist the enriched peasants while stifling the proletarian units. These things are incompatible. . . . [*Increasing noise, whistling.*]

VOICES: Gravedigger of the revolution! Shame! Down with him! Down with the rascal! The renegade!

TROTSKY: Leftward zigzags will encounter the resistance of the majority. Today, "enrich yourselves," but tomorrow [*Noise, cat-calls.*] . . . we shall obtain nothing from the rich peasants. . . . Behind the bureaucrats the bourgeoisie is coming back to life. . . . [*Noise, cat-calls, cries of: "Down with him."*]

*Skrypnik, a conspicuous militant since the beginning of the revolution, faithful to Stalin from the outset, committed suicide in 1933 in the Ukraine in the course of a vast campaign of repression against his Ukrainian comrades.

VOROSHILOV: That's enough. For shame! [*Whistling, boots, increasing tumult. Nothing can be heard. The chairman rings his bell; whistling. Voices cry: "Down from the platform." The chairman adjourns the meeting. Comrade Trotsky continues to read, but not a word can be distinguished. The members of the Central Committee leave their places and begin to disperse.*]*

Zinoviev's speech gets the same reception.

ZINOVIEV: The lessons of the last years are clear to everyone. We propose only a return to the régime of Lenin.

VOICES: Don't confuse it with yours.

ZINOVIEV: No one demands ideal, perfect democracy. We understand that the times are hard. . . .

VOICES: Down with him! Down! [*The chairman rings his bell.*]

ZINOVIEV: One moment more. [*Noise. The chairman's bell.*]

VOICES: Down with him. Get out.

ZINOVIEV: In two words, our entire fight in the party today revolves around this dilemma: either you will give us an opportunity to appeal to the party and speak to the party, or you will have to put us in prison. . . . There is no other alternative. . . . [*Laughter, boots, the chairman rings his bell.*]

VOICES: Enough. Down from the platform. Get out. [*Zinoviev descends from the platform amid boots and cries. Increasing tumult.*]

Almost ten years later (I digress here to show how far the falsification of the past can go under a totalitarian régime) at the Novosibirsk trial on November 21, 1936, the witness Shubin states:

The alliance between the Trotskyists and the accused Stickling, today an agent of the *Gestapo*, was concluded in 1927. The purpose was to restore capitalism in the U.S.S.R. and to set up a fascist dictatorship. This decision was taken in a secret conference presided over by Trotsky, which took place in a forest near Moscow.

The court in pronouncing sentence considered these facts as proved, and they were sufficient to justify nine death sentences, one of which affected a German. Six unfortunates were executed after having thus confessed—everything they were instructed to confess.

These scenes in the Central Committee were duplicated in the lower organizations and even in the street. I had occasion to speak, or rather to try to speak, before gatherings shaken with a sort of frenzy. We were given the floor for five minutes after three-hour harangues. And against each one of us they unleashed five, six, sometimes ten "activists" eager to procure the favor of the secretaries. The crowd looked on passively, with a certain anxiety; they were often on our side, but they were afraid. "You understand," said the printers in my unit. "First, there's unemployment in the trade. Besides, I have children. If I join up with you and you are defeated,

* *Pravda*, November 2, 1927.

what's going to become of me and all my kids?" On the anniversary of the October Revolution, we tried to demonstrate, within the ranks of the party, but with our own slogans. I was almost cut to pieces in Leningrad when three hundred of us Oppositionists (among us Lashevich, a former army commander, and Bakayev, a former head of the Cheka) clashed with the militia before the doors of the Hermitage. At Moscow, Smilga, he too an old army chief and one of the founders of the republic, had placed portraits of Lenin and Trotsky on his balcony. In consequence his house was entered and pillaged. Trotsky was fired on in the street. Two of our people who attempted to set up a sign on the Red Square, were beaten unmercifully. Party committees organized strong-arm gangs against us, equipped with whistles and authorized to strike hard; they were transported in trucks to reinforce the right-thinking elements in the meetings where we attempted to speak. In Moscow these fascist proceedings were organized by the secretary of the regional committee, Riutin, a man who happened to be sincere in his blindness. . . .

In 1932, enlightened by the course of events, this Riutin went over to the Opposition. He drew up a draft program in which he called Stalin "the great provocateur, the destroyer of the party." The G.P.U. dubbed his words incitement to assassination and condemned him to death. They did not, however, dare to execute him. No one knows what has become of him.

DEFEATS, PROSCRIPTIONS, CAPITULATIONS

We were beaten, and our defeat did not disturb the general indifference. Was this Thermidor? Or was it not? There was no end of discussions on this theme of historic parallels; and history pursued its course.

The Third International had changed its face. A curious combination of circumstances now brought together in its leadership a number of men, all of whom bore responsibility for its heaviest defeats: docile and comfortable, they had regained favor by passive obedience. Several of them are to this day in the high leadership of the C.I., where they continue to take it easy. The most conspicuous of them are: Bela Kun, the man of the defeat in Hungary and of some affairs that are even worse from the moral point of view; Kuusinen, who in 1918 contributed mightily to the downfall of proletarian Finland, and who subsequently had the merit of admitting it in a highly inter-

esting political confession; Kolarov and Dimitrov, who had three times led the Bulgarian party into unspeakable disasters; and until recently, Heinz Neumann, who reached maturity in the German defeats and showed his full abilities in the Canton catastrophe. . . .

The aspect of the government and the press underwent the same change. In Georgia, Mensheviks had come into power and persecuted old Bolsheviks. While the men who had fought in 1917 were expelled from the party—soon to be deported—newcomers, who had been counter-revolutionists during the civil war, carved out splendid careers for themselves by their zeal in approving the new leader. Zaslavsky, who had been one of those to call Lenin a "German agent," occupied a position of authority on *Pravda*; Vishinsky, a right wing socialist, who in 1918 had been involved in the sabotage of the food administration in Ukraine, became prosecuting attorney at the supreme court; Maisky, a former member of the counter-revolutionary government of Samara, went into the diplomatic service (he now represents the U.S.S.R. in London); another former enemy, Khinchuk, likewise became a diplomat (he is today in Berlin). We shall not mention the lesser lights; there are too many of them. In the party yesterday's subalterns were coming to the fore. Men like Kirov, Kuibyshev, Mikoyan—passable second raters—or persons entirely unknown during the great years, such as Kaganovich.

The T.A.S.S. agency published at the beginning of 1928 a denial of the "slandorous rumors" to the effect that the Moscow government planned to deport the Oppositionists who had been expelled from the party. Three or four days after this denial, the deportations began. Who was deported? The first group to go included Trotsky, Karl Radek; Preobrazhensky and Serebriakov, the former secretaries of the Central Committee; Ivan Smirnov; Beloborodov, one of the real leaders of the Revolution in the Urals, where he signed the Romanovs' death sentence; Muralov, Vladimir Smirnov, and Timothy Sapronov, all three of them heroes of the Moscow insurrection; Smilga, one of the best heads of the civil war; Rakovsky, who sustained the revolution in the Ukraine during the hardest years.

The vocation of defeated revolutionist in a totalitarian state is a hard one. Many abandon you when they see the game is lost. Others, whose personal courage and devotion are above question, think it best to manœuvre, to adapt themselves to the circumstances. Piatakov abjures his former convictions and friendships. In the embassies, Krestinsky, Sokolnikov, Antonov-Ovseyenko do likewise. What else can they do? Either they may take themselves off to the lost villages

of Kazakstan or remain, strive to be of service, and wait. Diplomats—even the diplomats of a revolution—rarely have a stomach for martyrdom. . . . They condemn their oppositionist acts and thoughts, plead for pardon, and debase themselves as much as desired.

Are they opportunists? No. These old Bolsheviks have no private life outside of their political activity; they attach little importance to what the bourgeoisie calls position, or even to happiness. Are they cowards? Ahead of them are nearly ten years of the most intolerable life, leading up to the most frightful end. Their attitude combines a great courage, an absolute devotion without phrases or gestures—a courage which does not hesitate to cloak itself as pusillanimity, a devotion which does not shrink before the worst humiliations—with a very real intellectual and moral deficiency. Too much attached to the party, they fear to see reality as it is. The party is finished. They shrink back before this final realization. They do not sense that in debasing themselves, they debase the revolution; that it is better to remain erect and proud in error than to give an example of such abasement even for the best of causes. They aim to manoeuvre, in the belief that the main thing is to remain within the party until the day when spontaneously the decisive struggles break out which will make party reform possible. Radek from his exile castigates their capitulation. He writes:

All of Zinoviev's tactical calculations consist in this: a new wave must inevitably pass over the party; when this happens, we shall be in exile, while he will be in the party. But Zinoviev will be deceived in the end. It is the correctness of one's political views, the confidence one has merited, which will be decisive. . . .

The crime of Zinoviev and Kamenev is not to have understood that we cannot disarm, even if there is a favorable turn in the party. . . .

Radek wrote well, but a few months later he did exactly as Zinoviev and Kamenev had done.

Radek was gifted with an unusual flexibility of mind; outwardly he was cynical and witty. He possessed an absolute devotion to the party, that is, to the working class, whose political organization is the party. He engaged in revolutionary activity in Russia, Poland, Austria and Germany, passed through many prisons, escaped from innumerable perils; before becoming Lenin's co-worker, he was the companion in struggle of Rosa Luxemburg in Berlin, Bremen, and elsewhere. He was in Berlin with Rosa and Karl Liebknecht when the Spartacist uprising broke out, which he correctly but vainly advised

against. Arrested together with Karl and Rosa, he was spared their fate only by chance: his importance was not known. A bullet grazed him in Moabit prison where his friend Leon Tyshko (Jogisches) had just been killed.

And now he was once again imprisoned, this time in the U.S.S.R. After his capitulation, he meets some Oppositionist comrades firmer than he at a little railroad station in Siberia. They are surrounded by G.P.U. agents conducting them to their respective destinations. We have received the story of this political encounter. It follows:

RADEK: The situation of the country is extremely grave. That of the Central Committee is catastrophic. The right and the center are preparing to throw each other into prison. The right is strong. It may double or triple its sixteen votes. Moscow is without bread. . . . The discontent of the working masses may turn against the Soviet system. We are facing peasant uprisings. All this obliges us to return to the party at any cost.

"And what is your attitude toward Leon Davidovich [Trotsky]?"

RADEK: Complete rupture. He is revising the doctrine of Lenin.

"Will you demand the abolition of article 58?" [The article of the penal code under which the Oppositionists were exiled.]

RADEK: Never. For those who will follow us, it must be upheld. For those who organize discontent among the masses, we shall maintain article 58. We ourselves were responsible for our deportation and imprisonment. The youth that joins the Opposition has nothing in common with Bolshevism; it is anti-Soviet.

Radek added that the Opposition platform had become that of the party. Proof: the five-year plan. The G.P.U. agents interrupted our discussion. They pushed Radek into the car, reproaching him for agitating against Trotsky's banishment. On the platform of the car, Radek was still crying out:

"I agitate against the banishment of Trotsky? Ha, ha, ha. I was explaining to these comrades that they must return to the party."

And he began to plead with the G.P.U. agents. "Leave them alone. Give them time to reconsider. Don't embitter them."

Without a word the agents pushed him into the car. The express began to move.

Without a word the G.P.U. continued to push Karl Radek for nine years, until they had pushed him into the cell which he now occupies, a few stories above the executioners' cellar.

. . . At the same period, I was expelled from the party to which I had belonged for eight years. As I could not be reproached for infraction of discipline, the Control Commission asked me if I approved the decision of the Fifteenth Congress to expel the Opposition. I replied that in this, as in all other matters, I submitted to party discipline but that I did not approve the decision; I said that I even considered it a costly error which it would be difficult to repair.

The Commission consisted of ten persons: stupefaction was visible

on all their faces. A working woman arose, doubting whether she had heard correctly, and asked me in an earnest voice: "Did you say, comrade, that the party congress was mistaken? Do you believe that the party congress can be mistaken?"

I explained that to err is human, that great workers' parties had been known to accumulate mistakes and absurdities and finally degenerate. With every word I spoke, my heresy increased. I was expelled then and there.

A few days later at about midnight, two young fellows knocked at my door, one of them in a soldier's cape, the other in civilian clothes. They seized my correspondence with Barbusse and a text of Lenin's that aroused their suspicions, and asked me to follow them. I spent six weeks in a cell in the old Leningrad prison, in company with an engineer of that city, accused of having sold for his own account a few cubic meters of ice from the Neva, and a crazy mystic suspected of espionage because he was a Pole. He was a poor devil, impressively filthy, who passed his hours kneeling on the cement in prayer; he had been caught selling crosses near the cemetery and that had seemed very grave. The little boy who gave us insipid tea in the morning disappeared one night, shot. One of the occupants of a nearby cell threw himself from the fifth floor gallery to the pavement below. This man was a storekeeper, accused of tax fraud—he must have had weak nerves. Altogether the times were delectable for everybody. My foreign friends were able to get me out. But afterwards my life was not an easy one. For to be expelled from the party was to be a public enemy.

And, of course, everybody understands that neither the books nor the articles of a public enemy can be published. That his slightest movements, his correspondence, his words, his relationships will be watched over. That he will not be helped to earn a living, but will be hindered to some extent. That he will be paid as little as possible for his work, and that it will be even better, circumstances permitting, not to pay him at all. That when, during the famine, the organized writers share their rations of cheese, honey-cake, sausage and other food-stuffs, secretly allotted them by the party committee, either none at all or the least possible will be given to this dangerous non-conformist. You can understand that his wife, his sister-in-law, his brother-in-law, his father-in-law, his cousins and, in case they associate with him, his second cousins, will have all sorts of troubles and very serious ones. Thus, in the course of the years, I assembled a profound knowledge of the workings of a totalitarian state. Until

the day when, in the street this time, two citizens with that unmistakable appearance, asked me to follow them. The times were less kindly, and I was not to emerge so soon. But that is another story, of purely secondary interest.

FROM LENIN TO STALIN

Everything has changed.

The aims: from international social revolution to socialism in one country.

The political system: from the workers' democracy of the Soviets, the goal of the revolution, to the dictatorship of the general secretariat, the functionaries, and the G.P.U.

The party: from the organization, free in its life and thought and freely submitting to discipline, of revolutionary Marxists to the hierarchy of bureaus, to the passive obedience of careerists.

The Third International: from a mighty organization of propaganda and struggle to the opportunist servility of Central Committees appointed for the purpose of approving everything, without shame or nausea.

The defeats: from the heroism of the German and Hungarian defeats in which Gustav Landauer, Levine, Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Jogisches, Otto Corvin met their death, to the heart-rending background of the Canton Commune.

The leaders: the greatest militants of October are in exile or prison. From Lenin to Stalin.

The ideology: Lenin said: "We shall see the progressive withering away of the state, and the Soviet State will not be a state like the others, but a vast workers' commune. . . ." Stalin proclaims that "we advance toward the abolition of the state by way of the strengthening of the state" (*sic*).

The condition of the workers: the equalitarianism of Soviet society is transformed to permit the formation of a privileged minority, more and more privileged in comparison with the disinherited masses who are deprived of all rights.

Morality: from the austere, sometimes implacable honesty of heroic Bolshevism, we gradually advance to unspeakable deviousness and deceit.

Everything has changed, everything is changing, but it will require the perspective of time before we can precisely understand the real-

ities. Too much attachment to the régime, too many illusions about the men, too much love for the land, the country, the dead—too many great memories blind us all, more or less.

It here becomes apparent that moral criteria sometimes have greater value than judgments based on political and economic considerations.

Politics and economics with their infinite complexities permit the deception of statistics and slogans. Even with much knowledge, a clear insight into them is often impossible. While the indignity, the injustice, the traps set for those who only yesterday were comrades, the human degradation, the intrusion of the common police into party discussions—these things reveal the truth. Those who say: "Politics first: Let him throw us into prison, as long as he pursues a correct policy," are very much mistaken.

It is untrue, a hundred times untrue that the end justifies the means. Justice is not made by iniquity, the world and men are not transformed by means of chains, loud-speakers crying out falsehoods, and vast agencies of intellectuals paid to cram people's heads full of lies. Every end requires its own means, and an end is only obtained by the appropriate means. Though the socialist revolution may, in times of crisis, be forced to make use of the old weapons left by bourgeois society, afterwards it must find its own weapons. It can only progress by improving the material and moral condition of the masses. More personal well-being, more liberty, less lies, more dignity, more respect for humanity. The socialism which proceeds otherwise gives in to a sort of inner counter-revolution, discredits itself and risks suicide.

1928 plunged us headlong into that kind of socialism. Basic economic factors can plainly be seen to determine this evolution. Not that it was fatal; on the contrary, the Russian experience is all the more precious because it shows that economy can be governed, but that the consequences of a policy cannot be evaded. Let us consider the interrelation of cause and effect.

The party bureaus, beginning with the Politbureau, which is a veritable Directory,* lost years before deciding for industrialization. For years they let the kulaks—the rich peasants—make themselves comfortable. In order not to appear to give in to the Opposition, in order to retain power, the Politbureau rejected the suggestions for

*Body of five men who governed France after the downfall of the Convention, October 26, 1795, to November 9, 1799. Their régime was one of reaction against the revolution. (Tr.)

industrialization and deported those favoring a forced loan from the rich peasants—a suggestion offering obvious advantages.

They decapitated the old party, but immediately afterwards, the government was without grain. Why should the peasant sell his wheat under such disadvantageous conditions? The cities lack bread. The army likewise. Stalin finds himself up a blind alley.

The grain that cannot be bought from the peasants must be taken from them. The Politbureau orders seizures by applying an unforeseen interpretation of Article 107 of the penal code, regarding the concealment of food supplies.

The peasants begin to hide their grain. The farmers sow less. What is the use of sowing if your harvest is going to be stolen?

By way of forcing the peasant to work, he is obliged to enter a coöperative supervised by the State, the *kolkhoz*.

If he refuses?

Those who refuse are called kulaks or agents of the kulaks, dispossessed of all they own and sent to the north with their families.

Many refuse. When partial collectivization has been introduced, it turns out that the peasants who have remained independent are much better off. As a last resort, the régime proclaims total collectivization—with enthusiasm, write Barbusse and several others—and the expropriation and mass deportation of the kulaks. This produces millions of dispossessed, expropriated peasants. . . .

In order to forestall the total ruin of agriculture, the most rapid industrialization is necessary. The five year plan, revised and corrected to promise an output which six months before was considered out of the question, must be executed with enthusiasm.

And so it is. But the first consequence of the agrarian crisis, which in places degenerates into a scarcely concealed civil war, is to starve out the cities. Hastily, food cards are printed. From now on the workers receive rations so scanty as to be laughable. In November, 1929, according to the official placards in Moscow, the highest monthly ration for a worker, belonging to a coöperative, is:

3 lbs. of sugar	1 ½ lbs. of macaroni
2 oz. " tea	1 lb. " herring
1 lb. " vegetable oil	1 lb. " household soap
6 lbs. " grits	

And that is the ration of the privileged proletariat in the large centers.

The undernourishment of the workers diminishes the productivity

of labor. Rationing, the forced exchange rates and the inflation reduce the buying power of the paper ruble—in which the workers receive their pay—to about 40 percent of its buying power in 1926. The worker leaves the factory or remains there only for form, and makes his actual living by petty theft, small business deals and speculation. By reselling a pair of stockings he earns more than by three days' labor. The worker must be *forced* to work by draconic legislation. In order to attach him to the industrial centers, internal passports are devised which deprive the population of the right to move about freely and make it possible to deport anyone the administration wishes without formality.

Before entering the *kolkhozes*, the peasants slaughter their cattle. It seems just as well to gorge themselves with meat for once in their lives and secretly sell the leather, as to give their cattle to the State, with whose methods they are only too familiar. The cattle disappear.

These years are a nightmare. Famine comes to Ukraine, the Black Lands, Siberia, to all the Russian granaries. Thousands of peasants flee across the frontiers to Poland, Roumania, Persia or China. They escape. A certain number of them are killed attempting to cross the border. But the rest escape.

The death penalty is restored for good in the cities and in the country. For the theft of a sheaf of wheat from a *kolkhoz*: the death penalty. By virtue of the decree of August 7, 1932, socialist property is declared sacred; its theft is punished by death.

What can the five year plan yield under these circumstances? The population has been promised an era of abundance after so many sacrifices. The fifth year of the plan is accompanied by total famine. Who is responsible? Name the culprits and shoot them.

For years Stalin, the all powerful, is silent. (Until the end of 1933.)

To find the guilty parties all you have to do is telephone an order to the G.P.U. They will be arrested this very evening. Tomorrow they will have confessed, and the day after tomorrow, they can be executed. After that, all you have to do is reprint the telegrams of enthusiastic approval, of admiring confidence, and of felicitations for the building of socialism, that will pour in from all the capitals of the earth.

No meat nor canned goods? Professor Karatygin and forty-seven accomplices confess in secret session with the G.P.U. to having disorganized the manufacture of canned goods and the meat supply for counter-revolutionary motives. And they are shot. (1930.)

The five year plan encounters obstacles? It has been sabotaged by a secret "industrial party" collaborating with the French general staff. Professor Ramzin (an agent provocateur) confesses. He is condemned to death, pardoned, rehabilitated, and rewarded. (1930.)

The people are not convinced? Nine old socialists confess to having conspired for French military intervention in the U.S.S.R. under the directives of the Socialist International. What difference does it make that these directives are highly improbable and that the falsehood of their testimony is proved incontrovertibly? They have confessed. Ten years of imprisonment. (1931.)

Leningrad goes through a summer without either fruit or vegetables. Five managers of coöperatives are shot. But the following summers there is again no fruit and vegetables. . . .

Obviously, no one can justify this régime except by command—aside from those who, having brought the nation to such a pass, would inevitably be shot if they lost their power. The weight of its responsibilities renders the bureaucracy implacable. It must defend itself. Its entire policy since the consecration of its power, has been aimed solely at the preservation of that power and has been dominated by fear and panic.

The Stalinist bureaucracy no longer pursues the policies of the working class, but its own policies. This is the inner significance of its acts.

Woe to anyone who raises his voice against the bureaucracy! Each year, prior to all holidays and congresses, thousands of suspected Oppositionists are arrested. The authentic Oppositionists have been imprisoned since 1928. Woe to him who says nothing. Silence is interpreted as evasion, as an attempt to elude crushing responsibilities. No. Under all circumstances the citizen must approve everything in a loud voice—everything, *everything*! Nothing remains but magnificent resolutions voted unanimously. And death sentences. The poets vote in verse in the newspapers.

Nothing can be expected from foreign socialists. They understand too well. And what is happening can only be justified by a revolutionary passion as blind as it is insincere. The Communist International announces in 1928 that "Germany, France, Poland have entered upon a period of revolutionary upheavals." Doriot invites the peasants to prepare "to take the land by force of arms." Class against class. In Germany where the Nazi wave is mounting, the official doctrine of the C.I. is that fascism will only be overcome over the dead body of the social democracy. When in 1932 the Nazis obtain a

plebiscite in Prussia for the purpose of overthrowing Otto Braun's social democratic cabinet, the Communist Party of Germany—on Stalin's personal recommendation—joins forces with the Nazis, and the *Rote Fabne* calls this the "Red plebiscite."

I have lived through what I describe. But I wish to quote some unpublished or little known statements, whose absolute veracity I can guarantee.* I am sure that no one will contest a single line. . . .

INDUSTRIALIZATION AND COLLECTIVIZATION

Life in a *kolkhoz*:

The members of the *kolkhoz* have for two months received no pay for their labor, consisting of transporting wood and feed. Fifty percent of the revenue goes to the *kolkhoz* treasury, fifty percent for taxes and rent. What remains for the workers? No one knows. The president pays himself several flour certificates each month and refrains from all physical labor. "The first few months," he tells us, "the members of the *kolkhoz* must live by their own resources." But the poor have no reserves. They wear out their clothes at work without compensation. All this lends credence to the kulaks' assertion that a "new serfdom" is being instituted.

In a neighboring village, forty women have recovered their cows by force, shut them up in the houses, and said to the authorities of the rural soviet: "You can fire, but you can't have our cows." However, the cattle is taken. . . . It is hard to believe that such abominations are done in the name of socialism. The rumor is circulating that Zinoviev and Kamenev have been deported to the provinces. . . .

(M. R. Letter written in April 1930.)

In March 1930, Stalin authorized a certain number of peasants to leave the *kolkbozes*. His message finds fault with the local authorities for becoming "drunk with success. . . ."

The *kolkbozes* are emptying. Eighty peasants in this hole-in-the-ground came to the public prosecutor to complain that they had been forced by violence to join the *kolkhoz*. Presidents of *kolkbozes* have been assassinated in the vicinity. Everywhere the women demand and take their cattle. . . . In the cities there is neither butter, meat, eggs, nor potatoes, and even the capitals are on microscopic rations. For a long time we have seen neither meat nor fish. During the last few days the coöperatives have at last received some horse sausage.

(Q. N. Letter written in April 1930.)

*The reader desiring to go deeper into these questions may consult my book: *Destin de la Révolution* (Fate of the Revolution).

A factory worker writes:

They are squeezing us, and how! Twenty-five percent increase in the productivity of labor and 1.9 percent increase in wages. For three years, wages have not varied, though production has very much increased. Five men to the brigade instead of six, without change of equipment. The system of bonuses is applied in such a way that, allowing for 20 to 30 percent a month, they should be paid every six months, but in reality no one hopes to receive any. We live on 55 rubles a month. . . .

(M., March 23, 1930.)

On collectivization in Central Asia:

The peasants receive minimal advances; the apportionment of the profits takes place at the end of the year. If the *kolkhoz* has made a profit, the salaries are not paid in entirety unless the sums paid into the collective capital are above the sum of the salaries. Otherwise, the *kolkhoznik* only receives a given percentage of his nominal salary. (See *Ruling of the Uzbekistan Kolkhoz Center*.) The peasants, collectivized by force, have no stimulus to work.

. . . The peasants have replied to the forced collectivization by selling their possessions, sabotaging the work and revolting. A considerable rebellion broke out in one district of Sir Daria and lasted three weeks. . . .

. . . The peasants say with right: "The Army is well fed and dressed; it will not support us. . . ."

(L. L. Letter written on March 27, 1930.)

Another comrade writes that two hundred abandoned horses are wandering around near the village to which he has been deported. We hear of nothing but revolts, assassinations, outbreaks of rage and despair, deportations, mass migrations.

In a message to the government, the Abkhazes of Southern Caucasus offer it all their possessions; with oriental politeness, they thank the government for all the benefits it has heaped upon them and ask only one favor: permission to emigrate to Turkey.

An American correspondent, utterly devoted to Stalin's interests, sets at 2,000,000 the approximate number of those deported and exiled in 1929-1930. (*New York Times*, February 3, 1931.) But the truth appears far worse if we realize that the dekulakization continued without let-up through the following years, and that the official figures vary between 5 and 10 million in their estimate of the number of kulaks. . . . (In 1933, shortly after the end of the first five year plan, the Rostov press, accidentally breaking through its forced silence, notes the mass deportation of three Cossack towns in Kuban, totalling about 50,000 persons; and more than 100,000 inhabitants of the same region had preceded them on the road northward.) We can, therefore, assume that at least 5,000,000 peasants, without distinction of age or sex, have been hunted from their homes and given over to undeserved misery or death.*

*B. Souvarine: *Staline*, p. 480.

A Siberian exile writes:

I wish to relate what I have seen of the ousting of the kulaks in one region alone. First, we witnessed the arrival of 3,000 deported kulaks. Many of them were poor or middle peasants. Some of them had received decorations for bravery in the civil war, but their decorations had, of course, been taken from them. According to the plan, they were supposed to cut timber, but no arrangements had been made for them. The crowding in the barracks soon caused an epidemic of typhus. In the forests it was even worse. They were sent into the woods with their wives, I do not know why, in mid-winter without any warm clothing. . . .

They were preparing for a general revolt under the leadership of former soldiers. We succeeded in preventing this new calamity by persuading the authorities to abrogate the order sending them into the forests. . . .

All this closely resembles sabotage on an enormous scale.

A friend who has passed through a good many *kolkbozes* tells me that nothing remains of the old villages, and that a return to individual holdings would no longer be possible without terrible upheavals. About fifteen percent of the farmers are firmly for the *kolkbozes*. These are the young communists. They do everything; they work beyond human strength. The other peasants go into the *kolkbozes* because they cannot do otherwise, but they make sure to enter with empty hands. "From now, on," they say, "we are State peasants. Just like workers. . . ."

(X. Letter written August 5, 1931.)

The poor peasants are also treated as enemies:

The peasants' assemblies are being purged. A nearby soviet has just announced the expulsion of twenty poor peasants, some of whom are sincerely devoted to the régime. All are condemned as "agents of the kulaks." Their crime is that they have not always kept silent, that they have said their condition has grown worse, and asked if there would be another five year plan. (The reporter said this question played into the hands of the kulaks.)*

This great drama of the Russian countryside is described in a remarkable literary document written, as it happens, by an official apologist: Sholokhov's novel: *Cleared Land*.

Lest the mistakes and the crimes of the bureaucratic régime be imputed to socialism, we must here make a short digression on a point of doctrine. Socialism does not involve this treatment of the peasants; but is, on the contrary, opposed to it. The socialist peasant policy is quite different, and the proletarian parties of the future will draw profit from the Russian experience, as an example not to follow. (It is, however, by no means impossible that a fascist bureaucracy in the service of finance capital, plunged by circumstances into a grain shortage, should apply the Stalinist methods to small farm holdings. . . .)

*The Russian *Bulletin of the Opposition*, appearing in Paris, has published a great many such letters.

Lenin tirelessly repeats: "Do not force the peasants. . . ." The state founded by the Bolsheviks calls itself a state of workers and peasants: that is its official title. Though sanctioning the fight against the rural bourgeoisie as against any other bourgeoisie, Lenin's recommendation as passed by the Second Congress of the C.I. was that this bourgeoisie must not be expropriated immediately after the seizure of power.* He writes:

Engels emphasized that socialists have no thought of expropriating the small farmers, but rather seek to show them by force of example the advantages of socialized and mechanized agriculture.

And elsewhere, in one of his fundamental speeches on the N.E.P., introduced as a policy of conciliation with the rural population:

"The very principle of our dictatorship is to maintain the alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry, in order that the proletariat may retain power."**

Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed*, emphasizes the part played by improvisation—owing either to ineptitude or the force of circumstances—in collectivization. A few months before proclaiming total collectivization, the Politbureau conceived that the process would have to take many years.

. . . From his exile in Constantinople, Trotsky never ceased to protest severely against what he considered a "fatal economic adventure." No more than you can build a trans-atlantic liner by assembling hundreds or thousands of fishing smacks—he wrote with bitter irony—can you create modern, large-scale agriculture by forcing small farmers to pool together their ploughs, their oxen and their chickens. . . . True socialist collectivization must be brought to the farmer by showing him the unquestionable advantage of its mechanization and planning.

Take care not to remind anyone of these elementary Marxist truths. It will not be good for your health.

Let us return once more to the Soviet Union. From a letter from Moscow, April 1933:

A strike just occurred in a printing plant employing from 500 to 600 workers. Causes: during forced stoppages owing to lack of paper, the workers received only 75 percent of their wages, and bad food at the coöperative. The communists also stopped work and will be judged by the Control Commission. Several functionaries were immediately dismissed and all the workers' demands acceded to; three of the "ring-leaders" are in prison.

*Theses of the Second Congress of the C.I. on the agrarian question.

**Speeches at the Third Congress of the C.I., July 1921.

... Panic reigns as a consequence of the distribution of passports. About 30 percent of the inhabitants have been refused passports for Moscow and expect to be ordered to leave the city by the first of May.

... Last winter was just as hard as the winter of 1919. Typhus raged. In the small stations we saw the sick abandoned, devoured by lice. Railroad tickets for certain regions quarantined for typhoid were refused. This was the case for North Caucasus and Central Asia, where there is more than typhus: in those places the uprisings have assumed the proportions of a local civil war.

... A communist writer said to me recently: "Why do I no longer write? What would you have me write at the present time? I'm only waiting for a chance to be sent to the Pamir, or to the Arctic Ocean on an ice-breaker. That's the best you can do at a time like this."

Impressions of Ukraine at the same period:

Kharkov has appreciably grown. There are many new factories and coöperative houses. Thousands of persons, however, spend their evenings without light and almost without heat. Entire sections of the city lack electricity. The movies are closed, the dwelling houses in darkness. And this goes on for whole weeks. No oil, no candles, total darkness. Only the bureaucrats, the lucky bastards, have had kerosene lamps. There is no oil, though the production of petroleum at Baku has increased. No electricity, though the Dnieprostroy is finished. It is terribly depressing. The same in the other cities. The people live stupidly in a bestial despair. The contrast between production and consumption is overwhelming. With more machines we live not better, but worse.

I have seen the Dnieprostroy. It is truly a splendid work of human intelligence and strength. Beautiful as a toy, clean, resplendent, magnificent. Of the four completed units, three are inactive; the factories for which they are supposed to furnish the power do not yet exist. That's planning for you. And if the electric plant is clean and well-kept, the workers' quarters are quite otherwise. The newspapers harp on the fact that a village formerly located there has grown to a city of 70,000 inhabitants. They describe the clubs and show pictures of the workers' dwellings. Is all this a lie? No, it's all true. But what they don't say is that only a small minority of the workers live under tolerable conditions. The others live in squalid barracks in darkness, filth, cold and undernourishment. Their faces are peaked; expressing not discontent but utter despair. It cannot last long. . . .

... Lice, on which Lenin once declared war, have returned in numbers. Filthy crowds fill the stations; men, women and children in heaps, waiting for God knows what trains. They are chased out, and they return without money or tickets. They board any train they can and stay on it until they are put off. They are silent and passive. Where are they going? Just in search of bread, potatoes, or work in the factories where the workers are less badly fed. . . . Bread is the great mover of these crowds. What can I say of the thefts? People steal everywhere, everywhere. . . .

The leaders demand optimism. "We have seen hard times before." All the motions they put forward are passed unanimously. Eight communists out of ten have plenty of doubts, but they vote just the same. In answer to any reproaches, they say: "What good would it do for me to go to rot in Siberia?"

The wife of a capitulator who had been arrested tells me that she said to the prosecutor: "Why do you torment him? He has given up all opposition long

ago and does his work as best he can. . . ." The G.P.U. agent's only answer was to advise her to get divorced. . . .

A few words on repressions from a letter written in February 1933:

Kirov speaking in Leningrad to the active members of the party, said: "We shall be pitiless, and not only against the communists who engage in counter-revolutionary activity [that is to say, Oppositionists], but also those lacking in firmness in the factory and the villages and who fail to carry out the plan. Four hundred members of the party have already been sent to the Solovki islands."

. . . Arrests in the right wing of the party are continuing. A large number of functionaries of the Commissariat of Agriculture have just been arrested, accused of sabotage. Several of these belonged to the government. Connor, the People's Vice-Commissar for Agriculture and Wolf and Kovarsky, members of the Council of the Commissariat, were, it appears, at the head of the conspiracy. They are accused of having had relations with the Ukrainian nationalists in Poland. It is possible that there were traitors in the Commissariat of Agriculture, but this affair seems to have been concocted out of loose ends. Connor, a native of Galicia, became a Bolshevik during the war, took part in the civil war and some years ago, I believe, sympathized with the Left Opposition. . . . No one believes these accusations. Everyone thinks the chief is preparing a trial of ostensible saboteurs of agriculture by way of setting an example. . . .

There was no trial. Connor, Kovarsky, Wolf, and thirty-two other functionaries and agronomists were executed without trial in Moscow in the first days of March 1933.

OUTLAWED

This brings us to the question of repression. The entire system has rested on repression since the day when the leaders began to be selected with the aid of the G.P.U. There is little to be said on the subject of freedom of speech and of thought. All the socialists of all shades of opinion, without any exception, are deported or in prison. All the anarchists and syndicalists likewise. All the communist Oppositionists. Official thought tolerates not the slightest shadow or suspicion of criticism. After 1930 mere suspects are persecuted. Old men long retired from all political life, but who may once have been anarchists, socialists, or communist Oppositionists, disappear one night, and many months later we hear that they have arrived at the Ust-Pechora concentration camp, or that they have been deported to the tundras of the Yenissei.

Those suspected of political heresy are especially numerous within the ranks of the party. An awkward word, reticence on some point,

a moment's hesitation (it may have occurred many years before, but some informer remembers it), even silence may suffice. The suspect disappears. The prisons are full of them. Four to five thousand Oppositionists were arrested between 1928 and 1930. The number of suspects is even higher. After 1934 and the assassination of Kirov by a young Leningrad communist, communists and other suspects were herded into captivity by tens and more probably hundreds of thousands. With this labor, excluded from the benefits of the Labor Code, canals are dug, strategic roads built. Several hundred thousands of prisoners worked on the Baltic-White Sea Canal. How many of them died in the process? The official writers do not tell us.

The Soviet Union has the vastest concentration camps in the world. Those of Kem-Solovietski (White Sea), Karaganda (Central Asia), the mouth of the Pechora and others, occupy entire districts. There are concentration camps everywhere, including forced labor camps, dungeons, lumber camps, mines. There are filthy holes and model camps—attractive reform colonies for the edification of foreign investigators and movie-goers. (What, indeed, is simpler than to reform the criminal? Give the highwayman and the pickpocket well-remunerated work, a good shelter and intelligent amusements, and nine times out of ten you will obtain the desired results, for the excellent reason that they never would have stolen if they had always been placed in satisfactory living conditions.) As for the politicals, they are not exhibited. Those who resist and die in hunger-strikes, defending their dignity—the one thing that is left to them—those men are never seen.

The reader desiring detailed information on this chapter of Soviet life will pardon me for referring him to my book *Fate of the Revolution*. Here I shall limit myself to quoting a few authentic documents offering glimpses of the realities.

The repression is based on provocation:

The Central Committee is growing increasingly more panicky and reacts by persecuting us. It is difficult to find words to describe the extent of the persecution. . . . Mass arrests. They arrest people for a word interpreted as signifying sympathy for the Opposition, for a few words spoken in the factory at the meetings for self-criticism. Hundreds of non-party workers have been accused of opposition and imprisoned in Butirky prison; many have been deported, and new ones keep arriving. The art of provocation was highly developed last year, but today it assumes gigantic proportions. Provocateurs are encountered in prison, in exile, everywhere. The special task of the provocateurs in exile is to demoralize the colonies of exiles by exhorting some to capitulate, by denouncing others to the authorities as recalcitrants. The recalcitrants will soon be sent to

different spots or locked up. . . . The exiles are constantly submitted to search, arrests, transfers; deprived of tobacco, and so on forever.

(Letter from Moscow, May 5, 1930.)

It is the same, of course, in the entire "sixth part of the world."

Kharkov, August 3, 1930. Here everything goes on as in the past: arrests, imprisonment, deportations for us, congresses where everything is voted unanimously for the bureaucrats. . . . Quite a number were just arrested. Bogdanov, of the machine shop, was elected by the workers as president of the shop committee despite the intervention of a party big shot. The G.P.U. stepped in with article 58 and settled that affair.

From a letter from Central Asia, August 1930:

Our god-fathers [the G.P.U.] are getting ready for the Sixteenth Party Congress: There is nothing but nocturnal visits, searching parties, arrests, transfers. Avoyan, who had been deported to Bokhara, has now been sent to the Verkhne-Uralsk isolator; Maria Joffe, on the other hand, has arrived in Bokhara; at Rubtsov five of our comrades out of ten were locked up; three exiles were arrested at Kril-Orda in the middle of July; six in Kazalinsk. Similar news arrives from Biisk, Kansk, Shimkent, Orenburg, Alma Ata, Omsk, Tomsk, Slavgorod. Provocation wherever you turn. No one has work. We have to get along with the 15 rubles allotted by the G.P.U., while the absolute minimum for living is 60 rubles. We are firm, however.

The exiles they want to kill are transferred unceasingly from one end of the backwoods to the other, deprived of work, harassed for years.

Just before the congress, a number of Oppositionists, considered too firm, were transferred into the filthiest holes. Nina Stern was transferred from Uralsk to Kara-Tube where she is in danger of literally starving and where there have been cases of plague. One of our people, arriving in Turi-Kul, found a whole colony of his comrades there. Several have just capitulated, for resistance had become physically impossible. We are like mice for the cats to play with. But that is no reason to let ourselves be impressed and to imagine that the cat is the strongest thing in the world. . . .

T. gave in after two years of exile. They got him, he said. "I am an invalid," he writes. "My nerves are broken, I have a stomach ulcer and scurvy [acquired in prison]. Those are the chief reasons for my capitulation, though in addition I am pessimistic." The workers here are depressed: the prices go up, food is lacking. The disappearance of silver money is significant. . . .

To give in, to capitulate is to renounce all thought, to sign a dictated form, declaring one's approval and admiration of the "line laid down by the brilliant leader." . . . It is to place oneself at the disposal of the authorities for the purpose of observing, propagandizing, and denouncing the others—the stronger comrades who are holding out. To capitulate and retain any dignity is not easy: one is considered doubly suspect. . . . One capitulator writes:



Trotsky with a group of Opposition leaders early in 1928 after their expulsion from the Party. *Standing, from left to right: Valentinov, Man-Nevelson, Rafail, Sokrat, Eltsin, Maliuta, Ter-Vaganyan. Seated: Ishchesko, I. N. Smirnov, Trotsky, I. T. Smilga, Alsky.*



Bela Kun, Alfred Rosmer, Leon Trotsky, M. V. Frunze, S. I. Gusev

I am permitted to work in the factory, but I make only 50 rubles a month. The Committee has twice refused me readmission into the party. The reason is distrust; they doubt my sincerity. My former Oppositionist friends avoid me like the plague. Party members look on me askance. If I make the slightest criticism, they say: "You're backsliding." If I say that something is well done, I am trying to "dissimulate and bore from within." I have decided to say nothing, but now I am accused of "finding fault by silence" and "declining my responsibilities." To tell the truth, I feel like a leper. . . .

True no doubt, but the fate of those who hold out is often worse.

Our exiles lack everything: they are literally exposed to cold and hunger. V. wrote me yesterday: "They want to starve us into submission, but we shall not capitulate."

We take up collections, but it is extremely dangerous. (November, 1932.)

Katya Kh. was in Chardyr with a one year old infant. In all her letters she implored the comrades not to let her little one die of hunger. When she had completed her three years' exile, she was sent to Central Asia with a convoy of criminals and given fifty kopeks a day for her subsistence. I must tell you that a pound of bread costs between two and three rubles. Elsewhere, the same picture: the situation among the exiles is frightful.

Many of them are sick. Solntsev is in prison with scurvy. He has completed his term, but they don't let him out. His wife suggested that he ask to be deported, but he absolutely refused.

Eleazar Solntsev, one of our most capable young militants, died of a hunger strike at Novosibirsk hospital in January, 1936.

Three comrades have been let out of prison after a hunger strike, but one of them died.

Mussia Magid was set free and deported in a convoy with common law prisoners to Minussinsk after having spent six months in bed in a prison cell. She is now in bed again. She is courageous, but she writes to her parents that she does not expect to see them again. Gayev has returned from Verkhne-Uralsk prison to Moscow: he has gone blind as a result of pernicious anemia. Vladimir Kossior is in Minussinsk. . . .

(Letter written November 1932.)*

Men *disappear* in the prisons.

Two hundred and fifty of our people are in the Verkhne-Uralsk isolator. After a protest on the part of the prisoners, Yanushevsky, considered to be a ring-leader, was sent to Moscow, shut up in the inner prison, and, the rumors say, condemned to ten years of concentration camp. As collective protests are not tolerated, this is what is done: one comrade raises a protest, and the others individually declare their agreement with him. That is what Yanushevsky did. Since then nothing has been heard of him, and many months have passed. The Schwalbach brothers, one of whom was seriously ill with tuberculosis, have likewise disappeared after a long stay in the inner prison of the Moscow G.P.U.

It is true that in the cities there is much more "disappearing," and for the same reasons. . . .

*Maria Magid and Vladimir Kossior are today still in exile.

Do not think that I have chosen exceptional statements or unusual occurrences. From among a heap of documents, I have taken more or less at random a few lines of those which seem to me most characteristic for their commonplaceness. Whoever is in the least acquainted with Russian life will back me up. The letters I have quoted are several years old, because *we have ceased to receive any letters*. The system has been perfected, nothing gets through any more; but the situation has grown much worse. To these statements we must therefore add a large coefficient of cruelty and ferocity. In the last few years the repressions have not ceased to increase in scope and in brutality.

On prison life:

One of our comrades used to say that we shall serve as manure to fertilize the earth in which after us new human harvests of the revolution will spring up. The state of mind has much improved. We hope for a change. We are all working to increase our knowledge, to learn languages, especially German. Endless discussions on cosmology, space, time, mechanics, Marxism, the Rightist peril. The censorship permits nothing of our intellectual life to leak out. Even the number of comrades who can communicate with one another in prison is extremely limited. We have gone through several hunger strikes: after the first, we obtained twelve letters instead of four per month. This strike was very long, and several of the comrades came out of it seriously ill. The second strike was a protest against brutality; in it we also refused all communication with the outside world. Our nerves are tense. We are almost at the end of our strength. There is no doubt that the socialists issued from the Tsar's prisons in better shape than we shall be in when we leave Stalin's isolators.

(Letter written June 1930.)

At the end of the summer of 1931 the brutalities in the Verkhne-Uralsk isolator culminated in the attempted assassination of an imprisoned comrade named Essayan, who was wounded by a bullet in the chest. Thirty Oppositionists went on an eighteen-day hunger strike. The authorities tried to feed them by force. Thirty came down with scurvy. A delegation of twelve Bolshevik-Leninist prisoners, invited to a conference by the authorities, was kidnapped and taken to an unknown destination.

In 1933 a vast hunger strike occurred in the prisons with a certain success, in protest against the automatic doubling of terms. The G.P.U. (today the Commissariat of Public Safety—only the name has changed) hands out penalties of three years hard labor without sentence or statement of cause, as an administrative measure. If, at the expiration of his term, the Oppositionist is not convinced of the excellence of the régime, he is given a two-year supplementary term.

After completing their five years, a few dozen old communists obtained the right to be freed *and exiled* by threatening to let themselves all die of hunger. . . . They would have carried out their threat.

Several months later, they were all arrested in exile and, as an administrative measure, condemned to five years of imprisonment. Such is the fate of my friends: Gregory Yakovin, Fedor Dingelstedt, Vassili Pankratov, Chanaan Pevzner, and many others. Socialist thought has had no more stoical heroes.

One more touch.

Within the G.P.U. as elsewhere, fear and confusion reign. No one trusts anyone else. At the least suspicion, often unjustified—for instance for having been polite to an arrested Oppositionist or for having been too “easy” in the course of a house search—men are dismissed. The least mistake leads to arrests. The least complaisance toward the Opposition is punished by death. I have just received confirmation of the fact which I had previously reported: I have learned from an absolutely reliable source that the warden of Tomsk prison, who had consented to delivering a letter to Sosnovsky, was shot.

I have said nothing of the suicides, the assassinations, the secret executions. There would be too much to say. I have abridged, but I can prove everything.

REMINISCENCES

I spent 85 days in a cell in the inner G.P.U. prison without reading or occupation of any sort, without news of my people. I spent 70 of those days in total solitude, without even taking the air in the grey courtyard reserved for the more tractable prisoners. Now they have shipped me 2000 kilometers away. A good comrade and I almost died of hunger; we met in the cellar of a prison in Samara.

He: Right communist, former secretary of such and such a district, took part in the civil war.

I: Left communist, former, etc. . . .

The sky was wonderful after my imprisonment.

I live in a nice tumbledown old house on the hill, with its back to the plain. The steppe extends infinitely as far as Kara-Kum, Altai, Kamchatka. The horizon is as beautiful as the sea. Across the way, the ruins of a poor suburb. Above me the sky is unforgettably pure. Around me the people are famished, alcoholic, malarial. Good people, all in all. Wretchedly poor. It is five minutes walk to the city with

its three movie houses. The place would be inhabitable, it would have its charm like any corner of the Russian soil, if not for the régime, the police supervision and all the rest of it.

This is a quiet sector of the exile. No persecution. Several comrades have work. I have none. I write, I write. I must create, work in order not to go mad, in order to fulfill my task here on earth; to be useful, to leave behind me a little emotion and thought. To work is to resist. For there is a soul in all work.

A friend has just arrived here from prison. (And prison is awaiting him, but does it not await us all?) "Do you know," he asked me, "that Shevtshenko* was deported right here to Orenburg about 1850 and forbidden to write? He used to go out into the steppe and scribble his poems. He hid them in the sole of his boots. . . . Where will you hide your books?"

And there's something in that. . . . The hardest is this sensation of slow suffocation. In eighteen months not a letter has come.

My comrades and the population hereabouts believe that we shall never be released. For we shall never give in. We shall never abandon our communist thought. We shall not worship the gravedigger of the revolution. We shall not approve the boundless misery of all those who toil, the rebirth of privilege, the stifling of every living word. So much the worse for us. They will not hesitate to shoot us if things go badly. God knows what means of getting rid of us they will think up. But we know they will find something. Already, without any special effort on their part, one of us is wasting away of bone tuberculosis, another is sent into a concentration camp, others disappear. . . .

Vassili Pankratov disappeared. He was a *man*. Well-balanced, strong, smiling, despite all he had been through. Three years of imprisonment. Two years additional for firmness of character. And it is true that no one was ever firmer. Before this, he went through the whole civil war. Served with the navy in Kronstadt; was in the uprising against the Provisional Government; fought in the Red Army. Former vice-president of the G.P.U. in Transcaucasia, Left communist. His wife had waited for him for five years. He had been released some months before and she had accompanied him in exile. Now they were going to have a child. Less than six months after his liberation and deportation, he was arrested without known reason, and disappeared. He was in prison in Verkhne-Uralsk for

*Shevtshenko, poet and painter, the national pride of the Ukraine. A very impressive monument has just been erected to him at Kiev.

five years. The child was born in our midst, fatherless. What means will they think up of assassinating Pankratov in prison? Will they reduce him to a fatal hunger strike? I wonder; for revolutionists of his stamp, men of conviction, incorruptible and loyal to the death, bear within them the living condemnation of the régime, and it is obvious that the régime cannot let them live. . . .

Chanaan Pevzner disappeared. The same convictions, the same cast of character. He too had been imprisoned, but only for four years (after two years exile) because of sickness. He had returned from a campaign in the Far East with ten bullets in his body and a disjointed arm; all its bones broken and hanging like a rag. He too went through life smiling. He was possessed of a merciless insight. He was the most persistent in saying: "The main thing is not to harbor any illusions on our fate." After the Kirov business, they arrested him as he was leaving the hospital after an attack of scarlet fever. . . . Is he alive and, if so, in what prison?

I am abridging the story, I repeat. I name only these two men, my comrades and brothers. I chanced to be a witness to their faith, their probity, their disappearance. I narrowly escaped the same fate. My strict duty is to accuse the men who persecuted them.

These revolutionists are in a curious situation now that Lenin's generation is being done away with. They had been too long in captivity (about eight years) for them to have been accused of the plot. It is well known that there is no possibility of extracting obliging confessions from them, and that they may, on no account, be permitted to speak at a public trial. . . . How will they be done away with?

As for confessions, I know by experience how they are dictated and manufactured. During my so-called "questioning," which was in reality nothing better than an inquisition, I was asked to confess, but I didn't know what I was intended to say. I was curious to know how they would go about informing me what they wanted me to confess. When they considered me ripe—that is to say, sufficiently demoralized by solitary confinement, idleness and threats—an examining magistrate very coldly informed me that I was facing a very long confinement in any case, and that I could obtain an attenuation of my sentence only by confirming the confessions of my sister-in-law, Anita Russakova, which he was going to read to me. . . .

Thereupon he began to read to me in a loud voice a curious document, not one word of which was true, containing the names and addresses of persons totally unknown to me. I immediately under-

stood that little Anita was lost: whether she had been made to sign this dime novel or whether it was attributed to her without her having signed it, she could never again be set free; and I knew that I myself was lost, for after they had thus compromised themselves in my presence they would naturally have to get rid of me. An address—unknown to me—which could have been that of a military man, made me think that they were going to accuse me of high treason and shoot me. In that case, I had nothing more to lose. I cut the pig short. "You are causing your own ruin," he said. "I don't care," I answered, "but that's enough. I won't have anything to do with your lies." I was saved, and Anita was released.

I demanded, without obtaining it, a meeting with her. The investigation was cut short; their forgery was forgotten. Passing through Moscow last April, on my way out of Russia, I hoped to see Anita once more. I learned that she had been arrested. Again? For what reason? This woman had never belonged to any political grouping. All those who know her are aware that her character is beyond reproach. She is timorous. No reason was given for the insane penalty of five years deportation to Vyatka; an administrative measure.

Nothing is ever published on this sort of affair. There is no one to defend us. No one to help us. We are simply strangled in the dark.

THE PERSECUTION OF WOMEN

I remember a young woman whom I met in Zinoviev's room in Petrograd in 1920. She was delicate, blonde, pretty. She had an air of aristocratic refinement that was conspicuous among the coarse faces of the time. She was the head of an information service. With her I often saw the Assyrian beard of her husband, Ambassador Joffe—Adolf Abramovich to his friends—an old revolutionist while still young, having behind him arrests, escapes, all sort of exploits. He had played a certain part in the German revolution of 1918. He had signed the peace treaties with Estonia and Poland. Lenin sent him to China and Japan; to China to win over Sun Yat-sen; to Japan to confirm the peace. I met him once in Vienna, where he politely swept out of his path the Balkan conspirators who were proposing to him all sorts of *coups d'état*. . . . Maria Mikhailovna had a son. . . . Sick and harassed by a covert persecution (for he had always belonged to the revolutionary Left of the party), Joffe blew out his brains on November 16, 1927, at his desk beneath a large portrait of

Lenin. He left a testament in the form of a letter addressed to Trotsky. In the next room, filled with comrades moving about among scattered toys, sat Maria Mikhailovna with compressed lips. . . .

Before killing himself, Joffe wrote:

More than 30 years ago, I adopted the philosophy that human life has meaning only in so far as it is put into the service of something infinite, which for us is humanity. . . .

. . . I have lived in accordance with this meaning of life: work and the good and humanity. Even in the years of imprisonment. . . .

No longer able to fight, forced by sickness to suicide:

My death is a protest against those who have led the party into a situation in which it can in no way react against shame and disgrace. . . .

Some months later, the widow of this great servant of the revolution, now working on children's literature in the state publishing house, attends a party meeting at which the names of all those she loves and whose ideas she shares are covered with filth. She takes the floor. Two days later she is arrested and deported to Alma Ata, then to Bokhara. After three years, she was once again deported for another three. She showed herself inflexibly faithful to her revolutionary principles and her memories. At the end of this second term she was imprisoned for attempting to organize a demonstration of solidarity for comrades who had fallen into the deepest misery—an act characterized as counter-revolutionary. Her lease to deportation was renewed for the third time. In the meanwhile her child had succumbed to its privations.

The day after the Zinoviev case, the news agencies reported the suicide of Maria Joffe. I refused to believe it, yet it is possible; not as an act of despair, but as a last act of resistance to the reaction. How shall we ever know what has become of Maria Joffe?

Another woman, Eva Broïdo, a social democrat (Menshevik), went to Russia illegally in 1927 for her party. She was denounced by an agent provocateur and imprisoned in Suzdal for three years. When she was released, if you can call it that, she was deported for five years to Tashkent. At the end of these five years, she was sent for five more years to Ulala on the Mongolian border, a hundred kilometers from the nearest railroad station. . . . Eva Broïdo is almost sixty years of age. She has been a militant socialist since 1890, and saw the inside of many prisons under the Tsar; in 1904 she took part

in the struggles of the exiles in Yakutsk, for which she received a number of years at hard labor. . . .

In many countries there are women's organizations, dedicated to socialism, peace or other generous ideals. . . . Is it possible that they are ignorant of the fate of Maria Joffe, Eva Broïdo, Irina Kakhovskaya, Maria Spiridonova, Maria Ivanova, Dora Zak, Alexandra Bronstein, Zeinl Mühsam*? And if these cases are known to them, what are we to think of their silence?

TERROR AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

In this tense atmosphere, in this vast country whose rulers attach so little value to human life, how can we be astonished at an isolated murder? Kirov, a member of the Politbureau and Stalin's representative in Leningrad, was assassinated on December 1, 1934 by a young communist, Leonid Nikolayev. The terrorist explained his act in written declarations which were *neither published nor read in any public trial*. Fourteen young communist comrades of his were shot after a secret trial. *One hundred and sixteen persons* having nothing whatever to do with this crime, *and who had been arrested previous to it*, were shot. The world looked on without apparent emotion. The intellectual "friends of the Soviet Union" approved or were silent, not suspecting that by their silence they were preparing themselves for a bitter awakening. Liberal academicians and *literati*, the defenders of culture were silent. How can they now feel justified in defending the life of an Edgar André or a Thälmann?

A clumsy attempt is made to implicate Trotsky in this act of individual terror. The G.P.U. chiefs in Leningrad are severely condemned for having known of the preparation of the crime and not prevented it. This constitutes an official admission of provocation. All of a sudden, Stalin has all his silenced opponents in the party implicated for moral complicity. Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bakayev, Fedorov, Yevdokimov are condemned to long terms of imprisonment with confiscation of their property, that is to say, of their personal archives (correspondence with Lenin and political documents; this was assuredly one of the aims of the trial). Their political associates are sent to concentration camps by the thousands. Men who had formerly been known to profess revolutionary opinions are deported

*Yes, the wife of Erich Mühsam, the libertarian poet assassinated by the Nazis in a German concentration camp, is in prison in the U.S.S.R.

in droves. The Trotskyists who had been exiled on their release from prison are again imprisoned. The purge of the population of Lenin-grad (by imprisonment and deportation) includes between 80,000 and 100,000 victims. And that is in 1935, a year of economic recovery. . . . If the bureaucracy were not aware of its unpopularity; if it did not have so bad a conscience before the people, the police régime would be relaxed in a year like this. But the bureaucracy is dominated by fear.

Faced with the destruction of at least half the cattle and of more than half the horses, Stalin understood and changed his line. First the *kolkhozes* were authorized to trade for their own account. Little by little, small peasant property, including a small piece of land, a cow, a horse, was restored within the *kolkhoz*. The *kolkhozes* were promised the right to grow rich. . . . Grain reappeared.

At the beginning of 1935 food cards were suppressed, bread was sold freely by the state at 50 kopeks for a pound of gray bread. Now wages, however low, have a real value, since they have an equivalent in merchandise. The worker earning a hundred rubles a month earns in reality 200 pounds of gray bread. He can live. Millions of workers earn no more than that. The average wage varies from 150 to 170 rubles depending on the locality, but the most common wage is, of course, far below the average. The country experiences a tremendous relief. It has risen from the depths. Things are at last on the upgrade. Faces are more cheerful.

The U.S.S.R. enters the League of Nations, whose imperialist hypocrisy and permanent bankruptcy it had hitherto denounced. Russia becomes a great military power, in aviation perhaps the first in the world. We learn that the five year plan has first and foremost been a re-armament plan. We learn with dismay that the Soviet State has been spending on tanks, five-motored bombers, autogiros, motorized artillery, marshals' stars and the creation of a military aristocracy all it has taken not from the prosperity, but from the penury of the masses. And this is madness, for its weakness will now be greater than its strength. The mightiest army in the world has behind it the most wretched and dissatisfied hinterland.

One thing leads to another. Here again fear is the chief explanation. During the years of famine and agrarian troubles, 1930-1935,

the Soviet Union was on the verge of ruin. The leaders sought by means of armaments to compensate for its inner weakness.

THE BRILLIANT AND BELOVED LEADER

The famine is over. War has been avoided. The Soviets are rewarded by the friendship of the French. The U.S.S.R. reinforces the League of Nations. "The crisis of world capitalism is easing," Stalin declares.

He speaks frequently, shows himself to impassioned crowds—carefully selected as you may well imagine—lunches with M. Laval and informs him of the end of communist opposition to militarism in France; lunches with Mr. Eden and sets his mind at rest as to agitation in India; has his picture taken with Romain Rolland, ascetic and thoughtful, meditating on an encomium of Yagoda, the man of firing squads and concentration camps.* . . .

Stalin proclaims the happiness of the people, distributes decorations, phonographs, watches, with both hands, and has his picture taken kissing little girls of all the old races of Asia. Father of the people. Poets, writers, orators, tractor mechanics, Turkoman shepherds, Mongol ploughmen, Georgian aviators, Uzbek schoolchildren have all run out of epithets for him. The widows of dead aviators thank him, the entire press is nothing but praises for the "beloved leader," "the wisest and greatest of all ages." He is "brilliant," "beloved as the first-born child," "radiant as the sun." And they print nothing else. Everything revolves around the new Emperor cult. And never will the pæan of praise attain a higher pitch of exaltation than the day after the leader has massacred his oldest comrades in struggle, the men who had worked with Lenin. The totalitarian press functions to perfection.

With his low forehead and coarse mustache, invariably clad in an inelegant uniform without decoration, he looks and talks like an ill-tempered non-commissioned officer. Joseph Vissarionovich Djughashvili, a Georgian, born in Tiflis in 1879, the son of a shoemaker; attended a seminary that turned out a good many revolutionists; socialist and Bolshevik since the party's beginnings, engaged in illegal activity in the Caucasus from 1898 to 1917, deported five times and

*The Soviet press published this piece. . . . Many readers of *Jean-Christophe* were astounded to read it. Was it worth living so long and fine a life only to arrive at that?

escaped four. The revolution found him in the far north at Turukhansk. Stalin means "made of steel," and that he is. Like a dagger. After the defeated revolution of 1905, he became a terrorist, directing brilliant expropriations and other acts of terrorism (since then he permitted to die in exile and without care his best friend of those days, Kote Tsintsadze, an Oppositionist). Obscure and devoted in 1917, he played a conspicuous part in the defense of Tsaritsyn—today Stalingrad—along with Voroshilov and Yegorov, today marshals. Lenin appreciated him sufficiently to mistrust him a good deal and fear him a little. "He lacks the most elementary honesty," he said. He attained to power by intrigue in the bureaus and congresses, first siding with Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, Tomsy and Bukharin against Trotsky; then with Rykov, Tomsy and Bukharin against Zinoviev and Kamenev; then with Voroshilov, Kalinin, Ordjonikidze against Rykov, Tomsy and Bukharin; and now sole master through the murder or exile of all the leaders of the revolution and the total destruction of the party which made possible the years from 1917 to 1923.

His intellectual production is painfully wanting. Trotsky said of him: "He is the greatest mediocrity in our party." He believes in his mission. Perhaps the only one to believe in it; he has shut himself up within the innermost spheres of hell. Though intrepid, he lives in fear. Crafty, he lives on suspicion. Today he ordains assassination, tomorrow apotheosis. What will it be the next day?

ASSASSINATION

On August 19, 1936 the sixteen defendants in the Zinoviev-Kamenev-Ivan Smirnov trial appeared before the supreme military tribunal; on the 24th they were condemned to death, and on the 25th executed. They had confessed (excepting Smirnov, who in the main was silent and Holtzmann who only made confessions that were obviously false in order to give the game away) what, in the interests of the party, they had agreed to confess at the leader's demand. They understood too late that they had been tricked.*

Nothing is ever known of executions in Russia. But it seems that this time emotion pierced the mystery, for the large newspapers—outside of Russia, of course—ran a story which, for a number of

*A detailed analysis of this trial will be found in *Fate of a Revolution*.

reasons, presents a striking air of probability. I do not hesitate to state that it is in all likelihood true. . . .

. . . Kamenev was permitted to speak with his family. He received his wife [Trotsky's sister], his niece and his daughter. His family was astonished to see "the mask of death" on his face. In a spent, weary voice, Kamenev said to them: "I shall probably go on a long voyage. I feel sick. The doctor took my pulse yesterday: it was between 58 and 60. If I die, do not think badly of those who judged me. They know what they are doing. . . ."

They had judged under orders; they too were serving the party. And he who had given the order, however criminal he might be, none the less symbolized the revolution. . . .

Kamenev was shot first. He did not resist, offered no complaint. He left his cell in silence and as if in a dream descended into the execution cellar. After the first revolver shot, fired apparently from behind, he let out an "ah!" of stupefaction and fell. He was still alive. Lieutenant Vasiukov, who was present, cried out in a hysterical voice: "Finish him," and gave the dying man a kick with his boot. A second bullet in the head finished Kamenev. . . .

Thus died the real leader of the Bolshevik fraction of the 1912 Duma, the first president of the Executive Committee of the Soviets in 1917, Lenin's sole heir and, in addition, one of the most learned writers of contemporary Russia.

Smirnov, who had refused to sign an application for pardon, was the only one to preserve his calm and courage until the end. When, on leaving his cell, he saw the escort, he understood. He asked for a sheet of paper and said: "We have deserved this for our unworthy attitude at the trial. I conducted myself shamefully at the trial. I want to die like a revolutionist." Smirnov went down after Kamenev. . . .

Thus died the "Lenin of Siberia."

Zinoviev was in solitary confinement on the first floor of the G.P.U. prison. After having been first to sign the petition for pardon, he went to sleep. Though it was warm, he was shivering. He had on flannel drawers and woolen socks. They awakened him at one in the morning. He sat up in a daze, his whole frame trembling.

"Zinoviev, get up. We have orders to transfer you to another place."

Pale as death, he remained seated, saying nothing.

"Dress yourself."

He lay down. One of the jailers began to pull on his boots. Zinoviev did not move, but the sweat poured from his face. Another jailer passed his arm under his back and raised him. Zinoviev groaned and tore the hair from his temples. He seemed to have gone mad.

"Let's go!"

Zinoviev continued to groan, dangling his head. One of the jailers threw water in his face. Then he came out of his stupor and stood up.

"Take your things."

He began stupidly to collect his things. Half a minute later he was led out of the cell. A group of eight guards was waiting at the door. At this moment, Zinoviev understood everything, his legs trembled, he almost fell. They held him up, he resisted a little, with sobs and cries. At the end of the corridor he had a real attack of hysteria. Hanging on the arms of the guards, he cried like a woman. Lieutenant Evangulov ordered the guards to open a cell, which was instantly done. Zinoviev was pushed in.

The lieutenant took him by the hair with his left hand, made him bow his head and, with his right hand, fired a bullet into his brain.

This story has passed through the distorting pen of a journalist, but I recognize Zinoviev in it, and I can surmise the truth. A sufferer from heart disease, he dressed rather warmly, even in summer. When upset, he often tore his hair and went "mmmmmm . . ." with a certain grimace. In its high notes, his voice became effeminate. Seeing that he was being assassinated, the agitator made a supreme effort and cried out to his executioners: "Think of what you are doing. You are executing the revolution, the party of Lenin." On pain of death, the officer could not let Zinoviev speak another instant. He gave proof of initiative. He may thus have gained . . . the Order of Lenin.

This was the death of Vladimir Ilyich's oldest collaborator, his companion in illegality in 1917, the president of the Petrograd Soviet during the civil war and the Red terror, the first president of the Communist International. . . .

His brother, Radomysslsky, a young anarchist, had been killed in Ukraine in 1920 by Voroshilov's soldiers.

The confessions—of terrorism, plotting, complicity with Trotsky, their former adversary—confuse only Occidentals ignorant of Russian affairs. They are cloaked in no mystery for anyone who has lived for any length of time in the atmosphere of the Bolshevik party. These confessions are in no respect different from the dictated capitulations to which in the course of the last ten years so many Oppositionists have been subjected, always in the name of the party. Such confessions are made out of utter devotion, and there is also an element of calculation about them. Smilga, an Oppositionist "capitulator," who has been in prison since 1933, once said: "We must retreat, surrender for the present, and when the masses awaken, we shall put ourselves at their head. . . ."

Zinoviev often said the same thing: we must remain within the party, even "flat on our belly in the mud," in order to be there on the day of the great awakening of the working masses, and not, by

acting outside the party, play into the hands of the counter-revolution. The only true thing in their confessions was their hatred of the leader, who must in the open be worshipped because to the world he was the incarnation of the party—the sacred party.

Their capital error was that their attachment to the past prevented them from seeing that this party is dead, and that no longer with it, but in spite of it and against it will the toiling masses one day awaken and renew the fight for socialism.

I have read a curious document on this trial: the report of Mr. Rosenmark, published in the "Notebooks of the League for the Rights of Man" (*Cahiers de la Ligue des Droits de l'Homme*). The League's reporter holds in substance that the forms of Soviet law were observed and that there is no objection to categorical confessions. . . . We must hope, for the honor of an association that has rendered much service to humanity and has so high a mission to fulfill, that it will, in addition to this, not fail to publish the opinion of better informed persons. Mr. Rosenmark fails to examine the sole true hypothesis—that of confessions inspired by political devotion; disregards the fact that the material falsity of a part of these confessions has been demonstrated and is further demonstrable; disregards the principal explanation of the trial, which lies in the selection of the defendants; alludes to a Soviet legal code which does not exist, or if it does exist, has in this affair more than in any other been trampled under foot.

Old socialist authorities, who are better informed, have formulated quite a different judgment. Friedrich Adler calls it a witch trial, and rightly reminds us that the witches who used to be burned at the stake commonly confessed their commerce with the devil. . . . He recalls that the falsity of the confessions forced on fourteen old Russian Socialists (Sukhanov, Groman, Ginzburg, Finn-Yenotaevsky, Sher, Ikov, etc.) in 1931 was irrefutably proved, and that Léon Blum had some strong words to say on the subject. . . .

Let us quote from Friedrich Adler:

In 1931 I had to make a thorough study of one of these trials, that of the "Menshevik Union Bureau," in all its details. From my knowledge of this trial comes my absolute certainty that the Moscow political public prosecutors systematically and deliberately extort fictitious confessions from the defendants. I will not express an opinion as to the other trials. Perhaps in these cases there were confessions that accorded with the facts. But as regards the Menshevik Trial there is no doubt whatever as to the fact of the false confessions.

At this trial, an alleged visit by our comrade Abramovitch to Russia was the central feature of the "proofs."

The defendants made full "confessions" with regard to the details of their meetings and conversations with Abramovitch in Russia in the summer of 1928, but for me it is absolutely certain that all these statements were made against their better knowledge.

We proved this in our pamphlet for every phase, and in the most dramatic manner of all by the photograph which shows Abramovitch with the delegates of the International Socialist Congress in Brussels at the very time when, according to the "confessions" he is supposed to have been in Russia.

The overlooking of this congress was one of the "errors of stage-management" from which the Moscow trials continually suffer in spite of the most careful preparation. In our pamphlet on the Moscow Trial of 1931 we came to the conclusion that the "verdict" which provided the climax of the judicial farce was a pure invention as a whole and in all its details. We definitely declared (p. 35)

"... that not one single point of essential political importance in the tissue of lies in the Moscow trial can be maintained."

I have related above how the G.P.U. attempted to incriminate me through false confessions. The examining magistrate who set this trap for me was the head of the G.P.U. Opposition Squad, Rutkovsky, a citizen whose conscience, if he had the slightest vestige of one, would be singularly burdened. . . . I might, in this connection, adduce a few more facts of my own experience, but it will doubtless be better to recall an incident that is known to almost everyone who has lived in Moscow since 1928. In course of the preparations for the trial of the provocateur Ramzin's "industrial party," the engineer Palchinsky—well known in Russian society, a former associate of Kerensky, one of the organizers of the Kropotkin museum in Moscow, a man of unbending character—was killed during the preliminary investigation. It was said that he had slapped an examining magistrate in the face.

One of the accused in a related affair (whom I do not name here because he may be still alive, though there has been talk of his suicide) was, after his conviction, visited by his wife.

"Why did you tell so many lies about yourself?" she asked him.

"It was necessary," he answered.

The social democrat Braunstein, the old socialists Bazarov and Cherevanin, pioneers in the Russian labor movement, categorically refused to play the part dictated by the G.P.U. and were imprisoned without trial. In approaching the more tractable defendants in the 1931 Menshevik trial, much use was made of the war danger. At a time when war was imminent, would they, as devoted socialists, refuse to sacrifice their conscience? Ikov, the only one of them who was really affiliated with the Menshevik party, was broken by the

arrest of his son who, the G.P.U. led him to believe, was doomed. . . . In Verkhne-Uralsk prison, the historian, Sukhanov, one of the victims of this frame-up, who had delivered all the confessions demanded of him, revealed to his fellow-prisoners the inside of the whole farce, out of rage at being imprisoned despite the services rendered and the tacit or formal promises he had received. He went on a series of long hunger strikes and was ultimately taken away to an unknown destination (1934). It is not known whether he is still alive.

Let us return to the recent trial. Nothing in it resists analysis. What are we to think of the confessions of Holtzmann who, with quiet dignity, refuses at the last moment to sign a petition for pardon, who employs his remaining words to express his contempt for the agents provocateurs seated beside him; but who nevertheless confesses to having had meetings with Leon Sedov, Trotsky's son, in Copenhagen, where it is easy to prove that Sedov never set foot, and more precisely in the Hotel Bristol in Copenhagen, which had been torn down several years before? Was this not his way of crying out to the world—at the price of his life: "The whole fabric is false."

By so doing, he unmasked Yagoda, the high commissar of the G.P.U. and the stage manager of the whole affair; and behind Yagoda, he unmasked the dictator of the low forehead.

As I have said, not one question of fact or of politics in this trial resists criticism; not one point would have resisted a two-sided debate. The whole business rests on the lies of defendants who have once again consented, out of attachment for the party, to sacrifice their consciences and their dignity; defendants who consider their lives guaranteed by precedent, Soviet law and the service they are rendering to the leader, their enemy (their enemy in the party, not before the world).

The one episode in which we conceivably have to do with petty officials of the Gestapo conferring a favor on a G.P.U. agent provocateur or a victim of agents provocateurs—Olberg—by enabling him to procure a Honduran passport, was, it can be proved, engineered from beginning to end by the Soviet authorities in Prague and elsewhere.

All in all, the method consists in selecting from among a large number of accused only those who are compliant, and placing them before judges who, in reality, are nothing more than executants appointed by the party to carry out the precise instructions of the party. The official documents show that the accused were in reality 53 in number: The cases of 1. Gaven, 2. Gertik, 3. Karev, 4. Kon-

stant, 5. Matrin, 6. P. Olberg, 7. Radin, 8. Safonova, 9. Favilovich, 10. Schmidt, 11. Esterman, 12. Kuzmichev are "reserved," says the official indictment. And to this day, five months after the execution of the sixteen, they are "reserved" in a total mystery. Why, if not because it is impossible to bring to open trial defendants who might become accusers and who must, therefore, be done away with in the dark? In addition, the indictment mentions the following, almost all of whom have been held in prison and in the most tragic obscurity:

1. The historian Anishev; 2. Arkus, a functionary in the Department of Finance; 3. Sharov, one of the founders of the party; 4. J. Shatskin, former leader of the Young Communist International; 5. Shliapnikov, old Bolshevik; 6. Shtykhold, one of the organizers of the Red Army; 7. the sister of Dreitser, who was shot; 8. Eismont, old Bolshevik, former member of the government, imprisoned since 1932; 9. Fedorov or Fedotov; 10. Friedland, well-known historian; 11. Friedmann; 12. Furtyshev; 13. Gayevsky, a fighter in the civil war; 14. Gruenstein, sentenced to hard labor under the Czar, one of the organizers of the Red Army; 15. Hertzberg, an old party member; 16. Yakovlev; 17. Yatsek; 18. Lelin; 19. Udin; 20. Kuklin, one of the founders of the party and of the Soviet power in Petrograd; 21. Kunt; 22. Lifshitz; 23. Medvediev, old Bolshevik of the workers' opposition; 24. Mukhin; 25. Okudjava, old Georgian revolutionary; 26. Uglanov, former secretary of the Central Committee; 27. Piatakov, former member of the Central Committee, member of the government; 28. Putna, military attaché in London; 29. Karl Radek; 30. Riutin, former secretary of the Moscow Committee; 31. Serebriakov, former secretary of the C.C.; 32. Sliepkov, former editor of *Pravda*; 33. Smilga, one of the leaders of the uprising of October 1917; 34. Sokolnikov, one of the leaders of the revolution; 35. Jan Sten, former leader of the "Stalinist Left"; 36. Tomsky, founder and leader of the Central of Russian Trade Unions, who committed suicide during the trial; 37. the historian Seidel; 38. and 39. Bukharin and Rykov, who were subsequently discharged for insufficient evidence; 40. and 41. Bogdan and Lominadze, both of whom have committed suicide.

Why have all these men not yet been brought to judgment? Will they ever be brought to trial (except to a star chamber trial)? One thing is certain: that despite the half darkness in which Russian trials are carried on; despite the mockery of the provisions for defense, and despite the totalitarian press, it would be impossible to try for these

hideous frame-ups a revolutionist determined to speak, because any debate on the subject would leave the régime dishonored.

Yagoda, the chief of the G.P.U., was demoted for having framed the Zinoviev trial too clumsily. Thousands of arrests took place shortly before and during the trial, especially in government circles. Countless plots were discovered in Ukraine, Caucasus, Central Asia. Most of the known militants of the first years of the revolution were compromised and arrested. The entire generation of October was compromised.

A new trial was officially announced for November. It did not take place; the concoction was not yet complete. There was only the bloody comedy of Novosibirsk. Stickling, a German, and eight Russians confessed that, under directives of the Gestapo and the Trotskyists (who were carefully kept in a mysterious background), they organized a catastrophe in the Kemerovo mine for the purpose of discrediting "our dear people's commissar, Ordjonikidze" and, in accordance with Trotsky's wishes, took measures toward establishing the advent of fascism in the U.S.S.R. This phantasy of a policeman's uncontrolled delirium served to justify the execution of six unfortunates, to prepare the ruin of several of the earliest revolutionists, and to provoke one more incident with Germany. *Poslednie Novosti*, the organ of the Russian émigrés in Paris, which will not be suspected of sympathy for the Trotskyists, said the following on the subject:

A witch may confess as much as is desired, that she flew through the air on a broomstick to a lovers' tryst with the devil and that she caused a hailstorm because he so commanded—we can only wonder how such confessions have been obtained. (November 25, 1936.)

Three men mentioned several times in the proceedings were the real target of the monstrous judicial farce of Novosibirsk: Piatakov, Drobnis, Muralov. They must be done away with. Piatakov played a leading part in the sovietization of the Ukraine immediately after the revolution. After his capitulation to Stalin, he was placed at the head of the State bank, and then as under-secretary of State, at the head of heavy industry. He was one of the most capable directors of Soviet heavy industry. Drobnis, a Ukrainian revolutionist, at various times a member of the government, likewise capitulated to Stalin. He seems to have confessed heaven knows what. Muralov, a great figure whom I have several times mentioned in these pages, had been in Siberia since 1928 and never capitulated. But in June 1928,

from his distant exile, Tara, on the Irtish, he wrote these words to Trotsky:

I capitulate? I shall die, but I shall never capitulate. They can draw and quarter me, but I shall not capitulate. Even if I remain alone, I shall not capitulate. Formally, we are non-party men; we shall loyally carry out any task with which we are entrusted, we shall use our meagre knowledge and our great revolutionary experience as best we can, and in passing we shall instruct the others, who are most frequently ignorant. But they shall not make liars out of us or drive us to passivity. They will do that no more than the Irtish will flow up hill from the Arctic Ocean to its source.

There is also a possibility of a trial of thirty: about twenty Germans—all *Gestapo* agents, who will of course have delivered the most complete confessions—and a few chosen communists, with whom a certain bargain will have been concluded—in the interests of the revolution, it is understood. M. Pierre Berland, *Temps* correspondent in Moscow, thinks it "most probable that this trial will not be public," and "probable that the accused will not be shot."* They will disappear none the less. There is talk of trying Radek; Putna, hitherto considered one of the best strategists of the Red Army; Primakov and Schmidt, military leaders and both heroes of the civil war (Dmitri Schmidt is the legendary leader of a corps of Red Cavalry formed by himself, a little Jewish worker, to fight against the pogromists); Arkus, director of the State Bank; Sokolnikov, Lenin's co-worker, former ambassador to London, considered one of the first minds among the leadership; Galina Serebriakova, famed writer; Serebriakov; Uglanov of the right opposition, former people's commissar of labor. This would be a provisional selection from among hundreds of political prisoners which the régime desires to be rid of.

To do away with Zinoviev, Kamenev, the upright Ivan Smirnov, was for Stalin to do away with the substitute team that might one day take over the power as a result of circumstances impossible to foresee; the men he feared, though they were all in prison. As for the others, permit me to quote here what I wrote on this subject for a syndicalist publication:

In connection with Radek, Piatakov and several other leading figures of Lenin's time, we are faced with a problem of exceedingly simple political psychology. Despite everything, these men preserve a certain credit amid the flatness of the surrounding country; their names have become history, and the masses could not hold it against them for not casting themselves heroically beneath the steamroller. Not only was the crime of August 25 (the execution

* *Le Temps*, November 11, 1936.

of the sixteen), a dreadful, an unspeakable surprise for the murdered men; in addition, it sent cold shivers down the most supple spines. All those enabled by a cowardly smugness to retain their illusions with regard to the leader, suddenly saw the light. Whatever the old Bolshevik generation may do or say, whatever lies the bureaucracy may persuade it to utter in the press or from the speaker's platform by invoking party fetishism, the welfare of the Republic, the cult of the leader—Stalin well knows that in its heart of hearts this generation cannot judge him favorably. What other purpose was served by the abominable articles signed by Preobrazhensky, Piatakov, Rakovsky, Krupskaya (the great revolutionists of yesterday, reduced to lick-spittles) except to establish between them and the leader a public bond of complicity?

But here again Stalin finds himself in an impasse. This forced complicity dishonors those who accept it, without really making them Stalin's accomplices: everyone can see that they are in reality his victims. And as victims, they retain the right to judge him in their hearts, they acquire the right to judge him some day before the people. The great Bolshevik party formed around Lenin was at bottom a large family. Several of the most conspicuous members of this family have just been done away with. Can the assassin permit the others to live? "Dead men tell no tales," say the professionals in such cases.*

Rakovsky was not implicated. Like Radek, like Piatakov, like all the former Oppositionists who have capitulated, he too—the last to surrender in 1934 after six years deportation in Barnaul—signed the following paper as ordered on the eve of the executions:

No pity for the Zinoviev-Trotskyist assassins of Kirov, for the organizers of plots against our beloved leader, Stalin, and the leaders of the party and the government; no pity for the Trotskyist agents of the *Gestapo*. They must be shot!**

His own situation is all the more precarious. If there is a single word of truth in the confessions of those who were shot, Rakovsky is just as guilty as they. If from 1932 to 1934 the Trotskyists were engaged in terrorist activity, known and sanctioned by Ivan Smirnov, in prison at the time—and this is the contention of the prosecution—what then is the responsibility of the former ambassador to France who was, at that time, the acknowledged leader of the Trotskyists?

No one outside of Russia has been deceived as to the true significance of this tragedy. Fascist papers in Italy saw in it the triumph of practical realism over revolutionary utopianism (*Il Messaggero*).

In Paris, *l'Ere Nouvelle* wrote on August 26th:

In reality the verdict handed down against Kamenev, Zinoviev and their accomplices proves that the Soviet Union intends to maintain the order without which it could not possibly pursue its task of organization. The Russian nation

* *La Révolution Proletarienne*, October 25, 1936.

** *Pravda*, August 21, 1936.

has accomplished important work in the economic field. Apparently it is not disposed to let this work be compromised by terrorism or even by the excessive desires of the extremists. Its prosperity, even more, its security, its very existence demand that things be so.

At the time of the Franco-Russian alliance and the peace policy of Nicholas II—the Hague conferences, if you recall—the press justified the hangings and deportations, which were to be sure far less numerous than at present, in exactly the same terms. The consequences are known. Is it then so hard to understand that such means cannot create a stable and defensible order, but that they most probably bear in them the seeds of frightful social convulsions to come?

No one, of course, exulted more than the counter-revolutionary Russian emigration. The *Golos Rossii* (monarchist) of September 1st said:

This is the first time that we are pleased with an execution among the millions of executions carried out by the Bolsheviks. . . . They will not stop at Zinoviev and his associates any more than the French Revolution stopped at Danton. . . .

And on August 29, the *Vozrozhdenye*, likewise monarchist, dedicates these timely verses to Stalin:

We thank thee, Stalin!
Sixteen scoundrels,
Sixteen butchers of the fatherland,
Have been gathered to their forefathers!

Today the sky looks blue,
Thou hast repaid us for the sorrows of so many years!

But why only sixteen?
Give us forty,
Give us hundreds,
Thousands,
Make a bridge across the Moscow river,
A bridge without towers or beams,
A bridge of Soviet carrion.
— And add thy carcass to the rest!

TWO DOCUMENTS

Two documents were published by the Opposition in 1928, abroad

and illegally in Moscow. In the ruling circles they had the effect of a bombshell, for they laid bare the divergences of views, the personal hatreds grafted on political disagreements, the unpopularity of the leader. Their perusal will help us to extricate ourselves from the gangster stories manufactured by the Stalinist police, to appreciate the true atmosphere of the inner party struggles, and to estimate the underlying causes of what is happening. The prophesy in them has been fulfilled almost to the letter. All the persons quoted in these prophetic documents have been, or are in the process of being murdered.

Zinoviev and Kamenev had just been readmitted to the party after a period of suspension. Zinoviev was still in exile at Voronezh. Kamenev was in Moscow. Both of them represented the defeated Left, despite their break with the inflexible Oppositionists who had been deported or imprisoned. Bukharin, the theoretician of the party's right wing and the exponent of a moderate policy toward the well-to-do peasants, went to see Kamenev by agreement with his comrades, Rykov, who was still chairman of the council of Commissars, and Tomsky, still chairman of the Central Council of Trade Unions. Of this conversation, Kamenev made a confidential resumé, which he sent to Zinoviev and a few of his closest friends, and which ultimately leaked out. The text is rather long, and I shall quote only the essential passages. The document is in a sort of telegraphic style:

BUKHARIN: . . . We hold that Stalin's line of conduct imperils the entire revolution. We may die with it. The differences of opinion between him and us are infinitely deeper than those which in the past separated us from you. . . . For several weeks I have ceased talking to Stalin. He is an intriguer without principles, who subordinates everything to the possession of power. He changes his theory for the purpose of eliminating this or that rival. In the septemvirate (there were seven members in the Politbureau) we exchanged the epithets of liar and bluffer. He retreated in order to be in a better position to strangle us. . . . I read a statement which I did not let out of my hands (he cannot be trusted with the most trifling document). His present task is to take from us Moscow and Leningrad and *Pravda*, to replace Uglanov, who is entirely with us, by Kaganovich. As for his policy, it is as follows:

1. Capitalism has developed either by milking the colonies, by loans, or by exploitation of the workers. We have no colonies, we obtain no loans, our basis is therefore: a tribute levied on the peasantry.

2. The more socialism grows, the more the resistance to it will increase. This is idiotic and shows total ignorance.

3. If a tribute must be levied on the peasants, and if their resistance increases, we need a firm leadership. Self-criticism must not touch the top leadership, only the agents who carry out their orders.

In actual fact, self-criticism is directed against Tomsky and Uglanov. The result: a police dictatorship. It is no longer a mere question of finding a scapegoat; in reality the fate of the revolution is in the balance. Everything may perish with this sort of theory.

In reply to Kamenev's question: "What are your forces?" Bukharin gives names, mentions Yagoda. . . . This mention is certainly not unrelated to Yagoda's disgrace eight years later. "Voroshilov and Kalinin," said Bukharin, "betrayed us at the last moment. I think Stalin holds them by some special bonds we know nothing of."

BUKHARIN: . . . If we do anything, they will strangle us by accusing us of provoking a split. If we do nothing, they will strangle us by means of petty manoeuvres and will pin on us the responsibility for the lack of wheat in October.

KAMENEV: . . . And what do they count on to procure the wheat?

BUKHARIN: . . . There precisely is the rub: they will simply repeat emergency measures as the difficulties grow. (Forced collections, that is.) And that is simply war communism, throat-cutting.

KAMENEV: . . . And you?

BUKHARIN: . . . Perhaps we need a manoeuvre on a larger scale to conciliate the middle peasant. We may persecute the kulak as much as we like, but we must be reconciled with the middle peasant. But under Stalin and the idiotic Molotov, who keeps trying to outdo me in Marxism (we call him "lead in the ass"), it's impossible to do anything.

. . . Let no one know of our interview. Don't call me on the phone, because they listen in. The G.P.U. shadows me, and you too. I want to be informed, but not through secretaries and intermediaries. Only Rykov and Tomsky know that I have spoken to you.

Kamenev notes for Zinoviev:

I gave him your letter. He said after reading it: "I am afraid of documents." He is afraid that a document might sink him. . . . He is extremely shaky. Sometimes his lips quiver with emotion. For the moment he gives the impression of a man at bay. (July 11, 6 o'clock.)

Supplementary notes (night of July 11):

1. In general the impression of a man at bay. This is what he says about the whole mess: "Sometimes," he says, "I say to Yefim [his secretary]: Our situation is desperate. If the country perishes, we perish. If the country survives, and Stalin changes his line in time, we perish anyway. What can we do? What can we do in the face of an adversary of this sort, a debased Genghis-Khan of the Central Committee?"

Bukharin says:

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4. If we begin the discussion, we shall be crushed for that. The Central Committee fears discussion.

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7. We cannot open the controversy, because then there would be a riot at

once. . . . We shall say: There is the man who has led the country to famine and death! And he: There stand the defenders of the rich peasants and the N.E.P.!

8. The party and the state have become confused. That is the misfortune.

9. All Stalin wants is to retain power. By giving in to us, he remained at the wheel. He will crush us later. What can we do?

10. Sokolnikov says: You must pursue a more active policy. Demand at least the removal of Molotov.

11. Stalin knows only one thought: vengeance. He stabs in the back. We must not forget his theory that vengeance is sweet.

12. Sergo [Ordjonikidze] is not loyal. He came and told us the worst things about Stalin, and betrayed us at the decisive moment.

And this conclusion:

Stalin's policy leads to civil war. He will have to drown uprisings in blood.

The worst of all this is that Bukharin should have seen things so clearly. The second document of the same type, dated Moscow, March 20, 1929, reports so many facts unintelligible to the average reader, that it cannot be quoted at length. I shall quote only two passages. Piatakov advised against the struggle against Stalin on the ground that it could lead to no favorable results.

Piatakov says that he seriously believes it impossible to take measures against Stalin: "Stalin is the only man who can still be obeyed. Bukharin and Rykov are mistaken when they think it is they who would take power after him. It is the Kaganoviches who would rule; I do not wish to obey any Kaganoviches, and I will not obey them."

KAMENEV: What then do you advise?

PIATAKOV: Well, I have been entrusted with the State Bank. I shall see to it that there is money in that bank.

At the end of December, Zinoviev and Kamenev defined their attitude in these terms: "We must cling to the helm. This can only be done by supporting Stalin. We must not hesitate to pay him the price he demands. . . ." A few days later, learning of the banishment of Trotsky, Bakayev proposed that they protest. Zinoviev went to see Krupskaya. Lenin's widow answered: "And who would listen to us?"

These documents take us behind the scenes of the new Directory. Nothing makes more painful reading than these accounts of the destruction of the revolutionary power. Personalities occupy little space in them. Since politics is made by men, men must be named; but it can be seen how far these men are removed from personal ambition. The Kaganoviches of whom Piatakov speaks with repug-

nance and contempt, these are the opportunists with neither scruples nor convictions, the late-comers of the revolution. Piatakov was satisfied to be nothing more than a conscientious bank director. He will not have to take orders from the Kaganoviches who, knowing his opinion of them, have now cast him in prison and are preparing to kill him.

It is true that Alexis Ivanovich Rykov, Lenin's successor as President of the Council of People's Commissars, and Bukharin, editor of *Izvestia*, were released for lack of evidence. But on three occasions, at three different trials (one of which in July 1935 remained absolutely secret), every effort was made to prepare Kamenev and Zinoviev for the executioner. Nothing prevents the case against Rykov (who has been demoted) and against Bukharin (who for the moment has been spared) from being reopened. The very dismissal of their case was strikingly improper. It would appear that in accusing themselves and Trotsky, the sixteen who were shot spoke true enough for them to be executed; but that in making the same accusations in the same terms against Bukharin and Rykov they were lying. Tomsky, the third leader of the Right, did not await the developments: he committed suicide. Such was the contempt in which his persecutors hold the working class that they never took the trouble to tell us whether Tomsky died innocent or guilty. The discharge of his associates would seem to clear him categorically; and there is a Soviet law exacting the punishment as criminals of those provoking suicide by moral or physical persecution. What prevents them from applying it in this case? Tomsky, a Right communist, was one of the most moderate Bolsheviks. Fifty-six years old at his death, he had led a splendid life. He was a former lithograph worker, a member of the Reval (Tallinn) Soviet in 1905. After eight or nine years of imprisonment, several deportations and escapes, many years of illegality, he was, toward the end of the Tsarist régime, deported for life. Lenin's Central Committee entrusted him with the direction of the Central of Russian Trade Unions, and he had struggled to the best of his ability to give the unions, within the state, a real function in defending the workers' interests.

Rykov and Bukharin were temporarily spared only to avoid killing off all Lenin's Politbureau at one blow.

In totalitarian states the dramas of the tops are mechanically repeated all along the social scale to the very bottom. The Grober case, disclosed by the *Pravda* of September 7, 1936, as an abuse, demonstrates the pertinence of the 1928 documents to the 1936

executions. In 1927 Grober, a young communist in Rostov-on-Don, pronounces in his party unit a few words which are at once regarded as indicating opposition. Rebuked, he gives in immediately and votes as a good conformist. For nine years he works diligently, taking good care not to express the least criticism or the least opinion. The "campaign of vigilance" is launched. The order goes out to unmask any ex-Trotskyists who were insincere in their recantations, the *Gestapo* agents, etc., etc. An informer recalls Grober's pitiful little speech of nine years before, and our poor devil is at once expelled from the party. His brother (19) and his sister (17), young communists and Stakhanovists—hence model workers—in the Mikoyan factory, are also expelled from the Young Communist League (and probably fired from the factory; Grober himself *must* be arrested). The factory paper states that "we have spewed forth the last vestiges of the counter-revolutionary Grober scum." Just imagine the moral—and material situation of the victims of this absurd persecution; they can no longer show themselves anywhere. . . . Three other young communists are expelled from the organization for not having "unmasked" the luckless Grober on time. One of his brothers, a member of the district youth committee, is expelled. . . . Two old party members, Polovitskaya and Halperin, who years ago had recommended Grober, are expelled. . . . Two others, Vodolaisky and Denisova, suffer the same fate for having been indulgent toward him in 1927. They are all automatically expelled from the union too. Deprived of work. Headed for the concentration camp. Fortunately for all of them, *Pravda* happened to notice this time that the apparatus was functioning in the void and that there was nothing, *absolutely nothing* at the bottom of the Grober case. . . .

But what if Grober had really said something in 1927?

THE APOTHEOSIS

The great throne room in the Kremlin, with its gilded columns, is crowded with delegates and guests. The obsequious diplomatic corps is present, accompanied by military attachés in gala uniform. Those of the fascist states like the rest. Delegates have come from the farthest corners of the Russian continent. There are Eskimos, Yakuts, Nentsis (who used to be called Samoyeds) in white fur trimmed with red and black; the peoples of Central Asia, Tadzhiks,

Turkomans, Uzbeks, Sarts, Kazaks are there in long striped robes; Georgians, Adjars and Abkhazes with engraved silver daggers at their belts; Mongols, Buriats, Oysats representing a corner of China. The scarlet silk bandanas of the working women are like poppies scattered in the crowd. Decorated aviators, official dramatists, distinguished mechanics, Alexei Stakhanov, Count Alexei Tolstoy—a crowd of more than two thousand delegates, all ears straining toward the speakers' platform. On the platform are marshals bedizened with golden stars and decorations, the Order of Lenin, the Order of the Red Flag, the Order of the Red Star of Central Asia; and the new parade uniforms, striped with gold, of the Commissars of the all-powerful "Commissariat of Public Safety."

The next day every newspaper in the sixth part of the world will rhapsodize as follows: "The 24th of November, O day never to be forgotten! The most beautiful day of our lives, the most beautiful day in the lives of a hundred peoples, the most beautiful in history." (Approximately textual.) Stalin appears.

There are no words to express the ovations, the hurrahs, the thunder, the storms, the tempests, the hurricanes of applause. The entire hall is on its feet, seized by a sacred frenzy. One calm observer noted that this went on for thirteen minutes and twenty-four seconds. There are Spanish anarchists in the hall. They too applaud the dictator, the most powerful state head in the world, who, along with everything else, has crushed anarchism beneath the walls of his prisons. They know that at this very hour Madrid is bleeding from all its veins. That on the Aragon front their brothers are anxiously counting their cartridges.

Workers' Catalonia, free Catalonia, this man can save you. They regard him with eyes aflame, some perhaps drunk with a sort of exaltation, some perhaps swallowing their rage. They would gladly applaud not thirteen minutes but thirteen hours, if only the militia could have ammunition.

He is a man of about fifty-five, heavily built, with much grey in his hair. He is dressed in a military tunic, with neither stripes nor decorations nor insignia, and military boots. No one here is more simply dressed, and his simplicity contrasts sharply with the regalia of the marshals and the high police chiefs who, turning toward him with unctuous smiles, likewise applaud him for thirteen minutes and twenty-four seconds.

He speaks for almost two hours on the new Constitution. He speaks with few gestures. He turns to the Spanish delegation and

says: "Communism will triumph throughout the world!" Applause! That is a good sign. Madrid will be saved, Barcelona will be saved. People of Spain, he said that. . . . But next day this exclamation is suppressed in the reports. A bad sign. Had he changed his mind? They are worried. Had they offended him?

He announces that nothing will change. One party, one word, one chief. Secret ballot as in Germany or Italy. He covers with heavy ridicule the benighted foreign critics of the Constitution. In the Soviet Union no one criticized it. No one. He regards one amendment as justified, and it is added to the basic law. The law guarantees personal property and inheritance. Every time he pauses, two thousand men stand and applaud. Applause after he has finished. The Nentsis, the Uzbeks, the Turkomans, the Eskimos, the Yakuts, the Tadjiks, the *kolkhozniki* who have come to this stupendous festival from the tundras and the steppes exult: they have seen the incomparable leader.

Delegations bring their presents to him on the platform. The finest is that of the mechanical engineers, the precision mechanics shut up in some concentration camp: it is a giant clock which, in ringing the hours, shows three sculptured figures: Lenin, Stalin, and Yagoda, the former G.P.U. chief. The symbolism is more profound than its builders imagined: the hour of Lenin, the hour of Stalin, the hour of Fouché. But this marvel of captives' art and servility has in the political sense lost track of the time: Yagoda is in disgrace. Stalin smiles: in that smile lies the hope of pardon.

For days the monster cast files before this platform, all repeating his praise, receiving ovations whenever they pronounce His name. They all recite verses in His praise borrowed from the poets of their country; they all describe His power: everything that has been accomplished has been His work.

What has been accomplished?

Marshal Blücher, commander of the special Far Eastern army, announces the opening of a strategic road through Eastern Siberia, constructed by prison labor.

Admiral Orlov says:

If we designate by 100 the strength of our naval forces on January 1, 1935, we can now state that up to the end of 1936 they were increased by 718 percent—seven hundred and eighteen percent—300 percent for submarines, 300 percent for small surface units, 75 percent for heavy coast artillery, 100 percent for anti-aircraft defense, 510 percent for hydro-aeroplanes. In accordance with

the requirements of the international situation, we shall build an impressive first class navy.

Khrypin, the vice commissar of aviation, reports (November 29) that the Soviet air army disposes of 7,000 planes, 2,000 being first class machines and 1,200 of these bombing planes. He says:

Japan and Germany have set themselves a joint goal of 18,000 planes. We shall have 100,000 if necessary; our industry makes this possible. In a short time, we shall have several hundred planes with a speed of more than 600 kilometers an hour. . . . Even today, we could in five trips pour more explosives on the enemy than were thrown on Allied territory during the entire world war. . . .

Power. Idanov, representative of the Leningrad Politbureau, serves this categorical warning on the small states of the Baltic:

We wish to live in peace with all our neighbors, but if these countries place themselves at the disposal of aggressors against us, our Red Army will soon find means to broaden our window on Europe. . . .

Voroshilov announces complete victory in case of war. Ovations. Long live our first marshal, the victorious, the invincible! Tempests of enthusiasm. Liubchenko proclaims:

Let no one harbor any doubts. If the German fascists dare to assail the Soviet Union, the army of the proletarian revolution led by our first marshal, comrade Voroshilov [*Thunderous applause, prolonged ovation. The hall is on its feet. Cries of "Hurrah, Voroshilov!" "Long live our People's Commissar, comrade Voroshilov!"*], will inflict on them such a defeat as history has never seen.

"Only a sign from you, marshal," cry the Cossacks of the Don and the Kuban at the session of November 26, "and we shall fly to the frontier and wipe out the enemy to the last man. We shall finish him on his own territory!" [*Prolonged applause. Hurrahs.*]*

Krylenko, one of the public prosecutors, adds an important though superfluous note, saying: "There can be no question of freedom of the press, for the class struggle continues." What is this hostile class that still resists? Who are its members? What unutterable vermin is still attacking this power of ours, casting a shadow of fear over this apotheosis? The Trotskyists, the agents of international fascism, the hirelings of Hitler, Göring, Himmler—we have proved it, the military courts have made it clear, and the proof is sixteen corpses somewhere beneath the ground of this city, and five more in Novosibirsk.

* *Izvestia*, November 27, 1936.

Tomorrow we shall prove it again and again by lining up more and more corpses! Khrustshev denounces the enemy at home, "who frequently hides beneath the worker's blouse"; but will none the less be exterminated without pity. Liubchenko continues:

For the Trotskyists and the nationalists, the direct agents of fascism, the people has only one unanimous verdict: physical destruction!

A hundred speakers take up the chorus. In all there are three ever-recurring refrains: We thank thee, oh leader! We are the powerful, the most powerful nation on earth! Death, death to these dogs, to the scum of humanity! Death, death! *Pravda* for the thousandth time summons the citizens of the socialist fatherland to vigilance in the name of humanity: "The socialist state of workers and peasants is the only humanitarian régime. And it is precisely because we are moved by a humanitarian sentiment embracing all mankind that our state, supported by the entire people, will continue to track down in every corner of the land, in their last hiding places, the venomous monsters of Trotskyism-Zinovievism-Fascism, and destroy them without pity. We shall purify the life-giving air of our socialist fatherland of their pestilential breath, and we shall purify it to the end."*

So be it! Hosannah! Glory to the most humanitarian leader of all time. The novelist, Alexei Tolstoi, writes that "humanity as a whole does not dare to dream of a constitution which will offer it as much happiness as Stalin's genius has conferred on the Russian people." A telegram is received from Geneva that the *Freiheit*, the organ of the C.P. in Switzerland, calls this Constitution "the greatest of all times and all peoples" (November 26).

Svenska Dagbladet of Stockholm writes that "all the countries of the earth may envy the U.S.S.R." The *Times* calls the Soviet Union "strong and prosperous." The *Daily Express* publishes a picture of the leader and quotes his inspired words: old England admires us. *L'Intransigeant* of Paris notes the unanimous faith of the delegates at the Congress in the leader of the New Russia. . . . "Long live the brilliant leader of our great country, the creator of the Constitution, the great Stalin!" Ovations. Hurrahs. And this happens every day. Thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred times in every issue of every paper.

* *Pravda*, December 5, 1936.

. . . Two million workers in White Russia sign a message in verse addressed to the beloved leader:

*Oh wise master, genius of geniuses!
Sun of the workers! Sun of the peasants, Sun of the world!
Power of rivers, glory and pride of labor!*

Pravda goes on like this for five crowded columns.
Peter Vetchora, the Ukrainian poet, exclaims:

*Stalin's greatness is a halo
Around the constellations of the firmament,
Around men and factories.**

The poet, Kabard:

*Stalin, thou golden sun, thy name
speaks the death of our enemies. . .*

The Georgian poet, Gaprindoshvili, sings His goodness:

*He bends over the children
As a wise gardener over his flowers. . .*

1,487,000 inhabitants of the Karabakh territory address him again in verse:

Oh wisest and best-beloved father . . .

The Turkoman fishermen write to him:

*As a lighthouse gives light to the fishermen
of the sea, thy very name fills us with strength
and ardor. . .*

Etcetera. Etcetera. Let your imagination do its best in this genre.
You will be far behind the truth. . .

For His is the glory, the power, the mission.

FEAR

He returns home after these triumphs. He is guarded by the most reliable and most guarded men, who in turn guard and spy on each

**Izvestia*, November 27, 1936.

other. All his movements are secret. He is content. The machine functions admirably. The ovations, the motions of approval, the votes, the decrees, the laws, the resolutions, the central committees of the thirty parties affiliated with the C.I. (we must not forget the Communist parties of Columbia and the Philippines), the messages covered with millions of signatures, the telegrams from abroad, the poems of the poets, the love of the peoples. He has only to make a sign to obtain the whole shooting match in the most flawless form. The limits of praise are surpassed. The love of the masses knows no bounds. The unanimity, the enthusiasm, the faith, the exaltation surpass themselves. The Soviet Union—or is it the Empire?—has one hundred and seventy million inhabitants, all completely unanimous—like cockroaches. The only trouble is that yesterday, or the day before, he ordered—and paid for—the whole display, including the article in the *Zurich Freiheit*. . . . So the ovations merely conceal a total silence. Not a voice is raised without his command. Not a gesture is made, not a telegram received. It is as if he were all alone in the world, worshipping himself. He is worried.

Nothing anywhere is done without orders. Would nothing be done if he omitted giving himself his orders? Can the machine not function by itself? Would nothing be done? And what if this limitless obedience were only the false exterior of an equal disobedience? All his orders, carried out to the letter, become so absurd that the day comes when he must issue counter-orders. He says: "Complete collectivization"; in three weeks his order is carried out, and the cattle is destroyed. He is constrained to cry out: "Voluntary collectivization!" At once the *kolkhozes* begin to empty. He must again cry out: "Enough!" He says that science cannot ignore Marxism; and treatises on obstetrics are studded with phrases borrowed from *Capital*. He must intervene: "It is useless to intrude Marxism into gynecology!" (textual). He orders new history text books. And when he gets them, he has to publicly disown them. He advises the party to search out the pasts of all communists in order to uncover concealed Trotskyism. By the thousands, the Grobers, their wives, brothers, cousins, their friends, their neighbors are persecuted. . . . Enough! Enough! He desires a proof of the affection of the masses. Two thousand signatures tell him that he is the Sun. Is it not barely possible that they are making fun of him?

What do all these obsequious, supple-spined creatures in their bureaus want? They want to live comfortably; what do they care about socialism? But then what? Who can be counted on? If tomor-

row the iron hand were no longer there to hold the helm, who would take it? Nothing but weak-kneed mediocrities round about. Voroshilov is still a sturdy fellow of the Old Guard, even if he didn't invent gunpowder. Ordjonikidze is more capable; he has read a good deal. But he is subject to attacks of conscience, though these are perhaps nothing more than nerves. The press receives a signal, and Ordjonikidze's fiftieth birthday is greeted with the epithets due an heir presumptive. There isn't much to choose between the two. And what of all these unknown lickspittles with the long, hungry teeth, insinuating, unscrupulous, without past or ideas, the men that he himself has called to power? Today he can count on them, since he has raised them up from nothing; and yet he is equally sure of being betrayed by them as soon as his hand weakens. . . . He is alone, alone. The last Bolshevik.

Is his life in danger? Whom can he trust? Are the men of his private escort sufficiently reliable? That they will never be. Several of them have already been shot, and the others know it. They are afraid. So far so good. But hatred is born of fear. They worship him. But what if a single one hated him? Distrust. Distrust. Has the Kremlin personnel been sufficiently investigated? A drunken worker said that. . . . Twenty-five floor-polishers in the government palaces are arrested (1935), all accused of terrorism. Syrtsov, a president of the Council of People's Commissars of the R.S.F.S.R.* appointed by Stalin himself, conspired against him. Bazhanov, one of his private secretaries, escaped to a foreign country. His wife committed suicide. The best army officers are in their hearts Trotskyists—for it is impossible that they should not be. Radek, at Stalin's dinner table, said. . . . Piatakov said when drunk. . . . As soon as the tongues are loosened a little, hatred is revealed. He is afraid.

He receives the most secret reports in sealed envelopes which he himself opens. Here the truth is naked. Has nothing changed? For years the same old things have been going on. In the Verkhne-Uralsk isolator manifestoes written by a Trotskyist group have been seized, in which it is said that Stalin by himself is nothing, that he can exist only through the support of the bureaucracy; that the upstarts of his régime form a new class of exploiters; that all the stages of treason have been passed. . . . In the Medved concentration camp the Trotskyists are on a hunger strike. In the cell of one of

*Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, the *Russian* part of the federation of republics composing the Soviet Union. (Tr.)



Trotsky addressing a troop of Red soldiers during the Civil War.

them a letter addressed to Stalin has been found: "Traitor of the low forehead, I hurl my corpse in your face. . . ." In Suzdal prison, the old Andrei Borisovich, who can only walk with the help of a cane, was discreetly offered his liberty, a sinecure, a tranquil end to his life, provided he recant. When he was asked what he desired of the Leader, he replied with an insulting snicker: "Let him resign, that is the only service he can still render the revolution." In Moscow, a market woman was arrested for saying that he was the people's misfortune. Students in Leningrad called him the Gravedigger. The workers in one factory nicknamed T.O.S.* cigarettes "Tomb of Stalin." "A tomb if you please," they said to the salesmen, "sixty kopeks, and it's not worth more."**

Is that all? Trotskyists have distributed pamphlets in Mao Tse-tung's army; Trotskyists have published a bulletin in Rio de Janeiro. The Fourth International takes up the slogans of the first three congresses of the C.I. Trotsky writes. . . .

Traitor, gravedigger, fratricide, Thermidorian, destroyer of the party: he is covered with disgrace. He is afraid. But one thing in him is even stronger than fear: and that is rancor.

THE OLD MAN — THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

• There is no other explanation for the mad proscriptions which are destroying the structure of the régime except hatred and fear. Fear for himself, for the system, for socialism. The system is not workable (and the secret ballot, a measure evincing mistrust of the petty bureaucrats, will not improve it much). Socialism has been compromised. And he himself is at the mercy of a centurion's madness.

The substitute team has been shot as a precaution. Only the Old Man remains.

• He is all the greater since not a drop of the blood that has been shed lies at his door. And he alone remains.

Exiled to Alma Ata; banished to Prinkipo; interned in Norway; the butt of all conceivable insults and the systematic revision of history; his name expunged from the dictionaries and removed from the museums; all his political associates in prison—perhaps massacred tomorrow in one way or another—the Old Man remains as he was in 1903 with Lenin, in 1905 as president of the first Soviet in the first revolution. He remains as he was in 1917, with Lenin at the head of

*Tractors of Stalingrad.

**All these stories are authentic.

the masses, in 1918 at the battle of Svajsk; in 1920 at the battle of Petrograd; during the entire civil war at the head of the Red Army which he formed; at the head of a true party uncompromising despite persecution; at the head of an international party with neither masses nor money, but preserving the tradition, preserving and renewing the doctrine—a party overflowing with devotion. The Old Man is only fifty-seven—not so old at that. Everyone thinks of him, since it is forbidden to think of him; and he has everything that the Leader has not: a revolutionary soul, a brilliant pen, and men willing to go through fire with him.

As long as the Old Man lives, there will be no security for the triumphant bureaucracy. One mind of the October revolution remains, and that is the mind of a true leader. At the first shock, the masses will turn towards him. In the third month of a war, when the difficulties begin, nothing will prevent the entire nation from turning to the “organizer of victory.” Everyone knows how trials are made, and what the crown prosecutor’s words are worth. A single gust of wind will dispel all these stagnant vapors.

All his life the Old Man has served the revolution with unflagging firmness and devotion. His very mistakes were made with so much honesty and passion that they do not diminish his stature. As early as 1920 he counseled the N.E.P.; in 1922 he was for industrialization; and ever since 1923 for the renovation of the party through inner party democracy and the struggle against the bureaucracy. In 1927 he foresaw the defeats of the Chinese revolution. In 1931 he stood for the united front of proletarian parties, which might have saved Germany from Nazism; he condemned the “economic adventure” of forced collectivization and the execution of the five year plan in four years; in 1930 he foresaw that Stalin would decimate Lenin’s party.

To permit his books in the Soviet Union would indeed suffice to make the position of the brilliant Leader untenable and reawaken the Bolshevism of the great years. Doubtless not a one enters. But where is the Chinese Wall that does not some day crumble in one spot or another?

The victorious reaction in the heart of the socialist revolution, based on a new privileged class, has brought about one more “turn” in the Third International: the conversion to bourgeois democracy. In the midst of a civil war in which the foundations of capitalist property are, by the very logic of events, continuously undermined, the Communist Party of Spain declares: “We are for the defense of

Republican order and the respect for private property." But President Azaña, by no means a communist, takes good care not to talk the same language; he signs decrees confiscating the property of the rebels and their accomplices. Changing its base, the Third International passes from class struggle to collaboration with the middle bourgeoisie; and at times this seems to be merely a manoeuvre in a vaster complex of acts tending to the preparation for war. . . . The Old Man, disposing of all the arsenal of revolutionary Marxism, opposes this Third International with the idea of a Fourth. The new International is still weak, still in the process of birth, and yet a ferment to be feared.

Let certain journalists call it a plot of the *Gestapo*, just as their colleagues used to call the Third International a Judeo-Masonic plot cooked up by the Germans.

They will not prevent it, in case of war or a sharpening of the class struggle, from becoming the germ or one of the germs of a new Bolshevism, in the greatest sense of the word.

In Russia most of all. Stalin's fear and hatred, mingled perhaps with a grain of remorse, are nothing more than prophetic.

And now everything is permissible against Trotsky. The only thing that startles us is the successful blows delivered at the right of asylum and at international law in general. In menacing tones the U.S.S.R. demands of Norway the internment and expulsion of the exile: and obtains its demand. Never did the government of the old Russian autocrats, harassed by authentic terrorists, who lived unmolested in Geneva, London, Paris, dare to dream of anything like this. . . . Trotsky's archives, deposited in the Institute for Social History in Paris, were stolen last November by adroit specialists, equipped with acetylene blow-torches, and having an automobile at their disposal. They carried out their orders to the letter, touching nothing else. Have no fear; they will never be caught. When Mexico consented to grant asylum to the man for whom "the planet is without a visa," the communist party of that country announced that it would provoke disturbances to prevent his landing. . . . When, in Paris, the International Bureau for the Right of Asylum is requested to express itself on the scandal of Trotsky's internment in Norway, it politely replies that it is interested solely in the victims of fascism. Does this Bureau not think that the socialists, the anarchists and the communists banished from the U.S.S.R., after having been persecuted there, are not entitled to the same rights as the refugees from

Germany and Italy? That is a strange point of view, the logic of the Stalinist "liberal."

AMBUSH IN SPAIN

The world today is a composite whole. And those who fail to see that harm done to the revolution—to the workers—of the U.S.S.R. causes suffering and danger to the workers elsewhere, must be exceedingly blind. Whether we like it or not, the social changes which today we are watching and participating in do not stop at borderlines, most of which are artificial or obsolete. Hardly had Stalin got rid of his possible rivals by executing the Sixteen, thus, as he thought, assuring the rightward development of bureaucratic communism, than the class war broke out in Spain and placed him in the most delicate situation.

First he kept his hands off. No complications! The success of the Spanish fascists, the menace to Madrid forced him to abandon his reserve. The victory of Franco in Spain would mean the encirclement of France, the ally of the U.S.S.R. The entire European balance of power would be shifted to the profit of Germany. That was his first reason for intervening.

And here is the second: To put to death the companions of Lenin, to decimate the old party and to stand idly by while the working class of Spain was being massacred, would have been to cast aside the mask, to offer the most serious food for Trotskyist criticism, and to compromise even his remaining semblance of revolutionary prestige; while to appear before the Russian people and the working class of the world as the savior of Spanish democracy, would compensate for plenty of misdeeds and politically consolidate his régime.

After two months of strict non-intervention, Stalin makes up his mind. Rosenberg arrives in Madrid, Antonov-Ovseyenko in Barcelona. Cargoes are landed at Cartagena and elsewhere. This is not a breach of the non-intervention pact, it must be noted. Never did the U.S.S.R. renounce the right of trading with the legal government. And indeed, Russia is eminently right not to permit itself to be swindled by the fascist states.

But is it only a question of defeating the rebel generals, as some people pretend to believe? Are we not rather on the threshold of a proletarian revolution? Are we simply going to save the republic that supported these generals, maintained their army, and prepared this

attempt at preventative counter-revolution? Or are we going to establish a different, totally different republic?

The question is not theoretical. Its solution depends on no individual, but is being solved by events. Already in Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona, it has been necessary to confiscate and collectivize the property of the fascist murderers. Actually, the entire production of Catalonia, the industrial heart of Iberia, is administered by the unions. The militia was formed by the workers' organizations. Anarchists participate in the power. Is the working class of Spain shedding its blood only in order to abdicate its power after winning the most costly victories?

The war is dragging out, the sufferings of the masses are increasing. Two sorts of measures will be necessary to the reconstruction: a directed economy and rationing. By whom is this economy to be directed, and for whose benefit? And what sort of rationing? Is a directed economy contemplated in which the workers, receiving the shortest rations, will work for the benefit of a minority of capitalists and landowners, who will have returned from Paris, Genoa, Rome and Lisbon after the bombardments are over? That would not be so easy to put over. Or is the new economy to be for the benefit of the collectivity, directed by those who have made the greatest sacrifices and accomplished the greatest feats of bravery? The word is socialism. The dilemma is: fascism or socialism. As for the intermediary position, the reactionaries have forfeited it; the working class, the peasants, the middle class do not need it.

I do not believe I am speaking like a doctrinaire. I am seeking only to unravel the meaning of events determined by mass forces. By attempting to go against the current, it will be possible only to provoke unnecessary struggles and sufferings; or the victory of fascism in one form or another.

The rôle of a great socialist power under these circumstances could be decisive. But what is the rôle of the Stalinist power?

The newspapers and the party press maintain a strange silence on certain points. Likewise the intellectuals: and without doubt for the same reason. But these matters are not strategic secrets, and they are known to the enemy. It is chiefly from the working class that they must be concealed.

There is in Spain an important communist opposition party, that is, a party hostile to the Stalinist conception of socialism, to the total-

itarian state, and the bureaucratic system: the *Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*, the P.O.U.M. for short. Its founders, Joaquin Maurin, Andres Nin, Gorkin, Andrade, have all been expelled from the Communist International. Maurin was shot by the rebels. This party has lost many of its best men in the fighting: Etchebehere, the leader of its first motorized column, who fell on the Madrid front; Jose Oliver, killed in Galicia; Germinal Vidal and Pedro Villarosa, in Aragon. Next to the C.N.T., it has lost more men than any other party.

In October the P.O.U.M. formed a youth group under the name of Communist Youth of Iberia. The Stalinist communists in Catalonia and in the Madrid youth movement call themselves—out of irony, no doubt, and for the purpose of confusion—socialists. In their press they denounce the foundation of the P.O.U.M. youth organization as a treasonous, pro-fascist manoeuvre. They talk of “making the traitors feel their iron hand” (*sic*). And more. With impunity, a gang of them loot the youth local in Madrid.

This is the first intrusion of Stalinist ethics into the revolutionary democracy of Spain.

When the Madrid defense *junta* was formed, the only committee which did not leave the capital was that of the P.O.U.M. Yet the P.O.U.M. has been excluded from the defense *junta*, although it represents thousands of fighters in the front line. The socialist, syndicalist and anarchist fighters inform the delegates from the Executive Committee of the P.O.U.M. that it was the twofold pressure of the Stalinist party and of the Soviet legation which brought about its exclusion, in opposition to the opinion of the great majority of the Spanish fighters.

La Batalla of Barcelona, the central organ of the P.O.U.M., reported on November 27 with admirable moderation this unheard of situation:

It is intolerable that in lending us a certain aid, they presume to impose on us certain political forms, to pronounce vetoes and actually direct Spanish politics.

Meanwhile, the Madrid organ of the P.O.U.M. had been suspended. We understand that Stalinist pressure achieved this first crime against freedom of opinion in the revolutionary democracy of Spain.

After *La Batalla* had revealed this brutal intrusion of Soviet diplo-

macy into the political life of the Spanish workers, the Soviet Consulate in Barcelona replied with a note to the press in which it denounced this paper as "sold to international fascism." This is the beginning of a campaign of calumny whose motives and journalistic delirium can be surmised. *Treball*, the organ of the P.S.U.C., the unified Socialist party of Catalonia affiliated to the Third International, denounces the P.O.U.M. militia as the "agents of Franco-Hitler-Mussolini," not without adding that they are Trotskyists, and consequently agents of the *Gestapo*, "as has been proved in the trials of Moscow and Novosibirsk. . . ." (Quoted literally.) Everything is inter-related. These infamies lead from one end of Europe to the other. It turns out that the old Russian revolutionists were shot in order to facilitate the strangling of the Spanish revolutionists.

It is useless here to report the countless petty incidents (the use of the radio, the censorship, the press) showing the use of the bureaus of the Catalanian Generalidad by a party unscrupulously pursuing its policy of crushing another proletarian party. After a number of intrigues, the abscess bursts. The P.S.U.C. provokes the resignation of the Council of the Generalidad, demanding the exclusion of the P.O.U.M. from the government and finally from the anti-fascist bloc (middle of December). Comorera of the P.S.U.C. denounces extremism in his interviews, and demands a strong government from which the "insulters of the U.S.S.R." will be excluded.

The P.O.U.M. has forty thousand members, of whom six thousand are in the militia. It will not be easy to crush it, especially in the face of the revolutionary loyalty of the C.N.T. and the F.A.I., which cannot fail to understand that their fate is likewise at stake. They have perhaps not forgotten that Hernandez, the communist deputy, declared in Madrid on August 8th that after the victory over Franco "we will settle our accounts with the anarchists."

No one will be astonished to learn that the Stalinist influence in Valencia is already stronger than that of the syndicalists, the anarchists, the left socialists and the P.O.U.M. For this there are good reasons, motorized reasons, and the result is quite natural. But the uses made of this influence are astounding. *Solidaridad Obrera*, the organ of the C.N.T., revealed a truly serious state of affairs: "If our militiamen," says an article of the second week in February in substance, "are unable to take the offensive in Aragon, the reason is that they lack the necessary equipment, while the conservative Catholic government in Bilbao is well equipped. This gives us food for thought. . . ."

I learned that on the same day mysterious influences had obtained the expulsion of the P.O.U.M. from the Aragon defense *junta*—though its columns have behind them the exploits of Monte Aragon and Estrecho Quinto!

At the bottom of all this lies a basic political conflict. Stalin does not want a fascist Spain, but no more does he want in Spain a workers' democracy which he is unable to control, and which would offer the world an example different from his. *La Batalla*, which is always extremely moderate in tone, wrote on December 15th: "... The P.S.U.C. is not content with demanding our expulsion, but is for the pure and simple nullification of all the revolutionary conquests of the working class. To that we shall never consent. ..." The Stalinists demand, in other words, a strong power against the working class.

From Lenin to Stalin the party has traveled a long road.

THE TRUTH IN THE SERVICE OF SOCIALISM

It is impossible to write all this with a light heart. But it is equally impossible to look on in silence. I like Charles Péguy for having written: "He who does not cry out the truth when he knows the truth becomes the accomplice of the liars and falsifiers." So many literary men have succeeded in keeping silence, gaily, with a supreme revolutionary elegance. They have found it possible to publish weeklies and monthlies and whole books without letting the truth glimmer through. That is a sign of great artistry. And it is a terrible danger.

Everything is at stake. Though the old world may not yet be crumbling—and on this discussion is possible—it is assuredly cracking in places. And at such a time, the clearest ideas that might guide us are falsified. The revolution seems to be turning against man, and particularly against the worker, assuming the implacable aspect of a totalitarian state, treacherous and blood-thirsty. Our greatest force, our greatest hope—international solidarity—is transformed into international intrigue, international persecution, vicious calumny in Moscow, Madrid, Mexico City. We have everything to defend, everything to save. And our foremost weapon is the truth. That weapon cannot be spared; the wound has bled too much. So much the worse for the lukewarm and the scoundrels.

The greater part of mankind, even among our adversaries, is today aware that the Russian Revolution was an event of incalculable importance, whose repercussions have barely begun to make themselves felt—an event which has changed something in the structure of the world. It is this confused sentiment which often makes them start back in anguish before the reaction they perceive in the heart of this same revolution. Yet the gigantic effort of the Russian masses from 1917 to the present time, the revolutionary will of Lenin's party, the extraordinary success of the Marxist thought that dominated and directed the course of history in the revolutionary days, have left behind them a society based upon the collective ownership of the means of production, a society in which man's very instincts are in process of transformation. An economy governed in accordance with a single plan has given proof of a resistance and a strength which seems without limit. The possibilities of socialism have been brilliantly confirmed.

After its victory in 1789-1793, the French bourgeoisie was to pass through several periods of reaction, several crises. Yet no one today questions the gains of 1789-1793. History has plenty of time. For history, the Russian revolution has only begun. The day will come when the workers of the Soviet Union will look back on the Stalinist nightmare with the curiosity mingled with disgust which certain dismal pages of the past inspire in us.

Or does anyone imagine that the bureaucracy will indefinitely maintain its strangle hold on a young people of 170,000,000 souls, which preserves in its memory the heroic legend of the great years—a people with a destiny to be achieved?

In the meanwhile we have neither the right to be silent nor to close our eyes. A sort of moral intervention becomes our duty. The Thermidorians of the Russian proletariat must be made to feel that we will not tell the pious lies that will permit them to elude their responsibilities before revolutionists and all men of good will. The time will soon come when they will deceive only those whom they pay. So much disapproval must be directed toward them that concern for their own safety will impose upon them a more human line of conduct at home, and greater honesty abroad. In the struggle between socialism and fascism, socialism will only conquer if it brings greater comfort and dignity to human life. It is this aspect which is most prejudiced by the bureaucratic reaction in the U.S.S.R. If we can

force this bureaucratic reaction one step backward, if we can prevent it from committing one single crime by showing it as it is, we shall be restoring to socialism and revolution a little of their true grandeur and consequently of their ability to conquer.

December, 1936.

A Check List of Important Books

VICTOR SERGE

The Fate of the Revolution: U.S.S.R. 1917-1937
(August) \$2.00

LEON TROTSKY

The Third International After Lenin	\$2.50
The Stalin School of Falsification	\$2.50
Lessons of October	Paper 50c — Cloth 75c
Whither France	Paper 50c — Cloth 75c
Germany: What Next?	35c
In Defense of the Soviet Union	10c
The Suppressed Testament of Lenin	10c
War and the Fourth International	10c

On The Moscow Trials

MAX SHACHTMAN

Behind the Moscow Trial, Paper 25c — Cloth \$1.00

FRIEDRICH ADLER

The Witchcraft Trial in Moscow, 10c

LEON TROTSKY

I Stake My Life! (Hippodrome Speech), 5c

WORLD VOICES ON THE MOSCOW TRIALS

A compilation of articles and editorials from the Liberal
and Labor press of the world. 15c

WHY DID THEY "CONFESS"?

A Study of the Radek-Piatakov Trial. 10c

JAMES BURNHAM

The Peoples Front: The New Betrayal, 15c

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