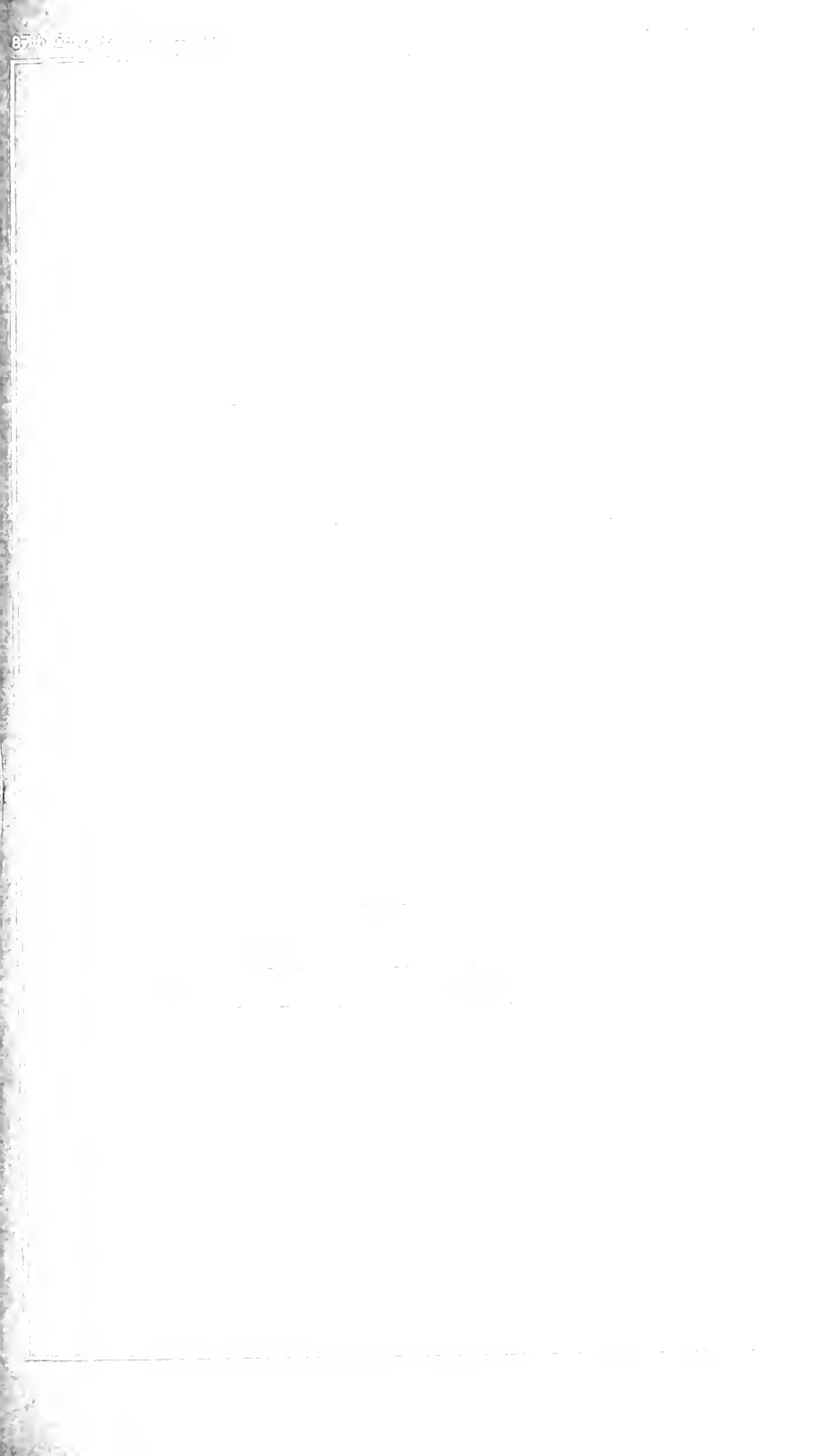


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FACTS ON COMMUNISM

VOLUME II
THE SOVIET UNION,
FROM LENIN TO KHRUSHCHEV

COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
EIGHTY-SIXTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION



DECEMBER 1960

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 1961

68491 O

COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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H. Con. Res. 51

Passed April 13, 1961

Eighty-seventh Congress of the United States of America

AT THE FIRST SESSION

*Begun and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday, the third day of
January, one thousand nine hundred and sixty-one*

Concurrent Resolution

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the publication entitled "Facts on Communism—Volume II, The Soviet Union, From Lenin to Khrushchev" prepared by the Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, Eighty-sixth Congress, second session, be printed as a House document; and that there be printed fifty thousand additional copies of said document of which fifteen thousand shall be for the use of said committee and thirty-five thousand copies to be prorated to the Members of the House of Representatives for a period of ninety days after which time the unused balances shall revert to the Committee on Un-American Activities.

SEC. 2. There shall be printed ten thousand three hundred additional copies of such document for the use of the Senate.

Attest:

RALPH R. ROBERTS,
Clerk of the House of Representatives.

Attest:

FELTON M. JOHNSTON,
Secretary of the Senate.

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PUBLIC LAW 601, 79TH CONGRESS

The legislation under which the House Committee on Un-American Activities operates is Public Law 601, 79th Congress [1946]; 60 Stat. 812, which provides:

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, * * **

PART 2—RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

RULE X

SEC. 121. STANDING COMMITTEES

* * * * *

17. Committee on Un-American Activities, to consist of nine Members.

RULE XI

POWERS AND DUTIES OF COMMITTEES

* * * * *

(q) (1) Committee on Un-American Activities.
(A) Un-American activities.
(2) The Committee on Un-American Activities, as a whole or by subcommittee, is authorized to make from time to time investigations of (i) the extent, character, and objects of un-American propaganda activities in the United States, (ii) the diffusion within the United States of subversive and un-American propaganda that is instigated from foreign countries or of a domestic origin and attacks the principle of the form of government as guaranteed by our Constitution, and (iii) all other questions in relation thereto that would aid Congress in any necessary remedial legislation.

The Committee on Un-American Activities shall report to the House (or to the Clerk of the House if the House is not in session) the results of any such investigation, together with such recommendations as it deems advisable.

For the purpose of any such investigation, the Committee on Un-American Activities, or any subcommittee thereof, is authorized to sit and act at such times and places within the United States, whether or not the House is sitting, has recessed, or has adjourned, to hold such hearings, to require the attendance of such witnesses and the production of such books, papers, and documents, and to take such testimony, as it deems necessary. Subpenas may be issued under the signature of the chairman of the committee or any subcommittee, or by any member designated by any such chairman, and may be served by any person designated by any such chairman or member.

RULE XII

LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT BY STANDING COMMITTEES

SEC. 136. To assist the Congress in appraising the administration of the laws and in developing such amendments or related legislation as it may deem necessary, each standing committee of the Senate and the House of Representatives shall exercise continuous watchfulness of the execution by the administrative agencies concerned of any laws, the subject matter of which is within the jurisdiction of such committee; and, for that purpose, shall study all pertinent reports and data submitted to the Congress by the agencies in the executive branch of the Government.

RULES ADOPTED BY THE 86TH CONGRESS

House Resolution 7, January 7, 1959

* * * * *

RULE X

STANDING COMMITTEES

1. There shall be elected by the House, at the commencement of each Congress,

* * * * *

(q) Committee on Un-American Activities, to consist of nine Members.

* * * * *

RULE XI

POWERS AND DUTIES OF COMMITTEES

* * * * *

18. Committee on Un-American Activities.

(a) Un-American activities.

(b) The Committee on Un-American Activities, as a whole or by subcommittee, is authorized to make from time to time investigations of (1) the extent, character, and objects of un-American propaganda activities in the United States, (2) the diffusion within the United States of subversive and un-American propaganda that is instigated from foreign countries or of a domestic origin and attacks the principle of the form of government as guaranteed by our Constitution, and (3) all other questions in relation thereto that would aid Congress in any necessary remedial legislation.

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* * * * *

26. To assist the House in appraising the administration of the laws and in developing such amendments or related legislation as it may deem necessary, each standing committee of the House shall exercise continuous watchfulness of the execution by the administrative agencies concerned of any laws, the subject matter of which is within the jurisdiction of such committee; and, for that purpose, shall study all pertinent reports and data submitted to the House by the agencies in the executive branch of the Government.

PREFACE

The Committee on Un-American Activities herewith presents the second volume in a series entitled *Facts on Communism*.

The series aims toward a comprehensive treatment of communism in both its theoretical and practical aspects, and is the result of collaboration between the Committee's research staff and eminent scholars who are specialists on various phases of communism. Succeeding volumes which are now in process will be published when completed.

In issuing Volume II, which focuses on the history of the Soviet Union from Lenin to Khrushchev, the Committee makes special acknowledgment to Dr. David J. Dallin, author and lecturer, for his leading role in the preparation of this massive compilation of material on the Communist regime in the Soviet Union.

FRANCIS E. WALTER, *Chairman*.

INTRODUCTION

In a comprehensive study of communism, the Soviet Union requires special attention in regard to its past and present, its doctrines and practices, its domestic and foreign affairs, for three major reasons:

Russia was the first country in the world to fall under Communist rule.

Second, since the time of the Bolshevik revolution, the Soviet Union has unquestionably been the directive base of the world Communist movement.

Third, for the preceding two reasons, the Soviet Union serves the adherents of communism—today, as during the past forty years—as a pilot state.

The present volume, accordingly, is devoted to the emergence and growth of bolshevism-communism in Tsarist Russia, its seizure of power there, the transformation of the old regime into the Soviet government, and the history of the Soviet Union during the past four decades. It deals, in the main, with Soviet domestic affairs, leaving the subject of Soviet international relations to a later volume.

Since there exists no stronger weapon against communism than the simple truth, this volume is a factual presentation of developments in Russia. Great stress is placed on original statements by the founders of communism as well as pertinent comments by scholars in the free world. All quotations have been carefully checked and their sources are given for those readers encouraged to pursue further study.

Prior to February 14, 1918, Russia used the old-style Julian calendar which was 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar used in the Western World. Volume II of *Facts on Communism* presents all events in Russia between 1900 and February 14, 1918 according to our own Western calendar. Many old-style Russian calendar dates denoting events in the crucial period leading up to the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, however, have become familiar to Western readers; for example, the Bolsheviks' "October" revolution of 1917 occurred in October (on the 25th), only according to the Russian calendar; the corresponding date on our own Western calendar was November 7, 1917. For that reason, this volume will frequently give the reader the corresponding old-style Russian calendar date in brackets when referring to pre-revolutionary and revolutionary events in Russia.

This volume is basically the work of Dr. David J. Dallin, whose broad knowledge of Soviet history particularly qualified him for the task of compiling and arranging the extensive quotations and for preparing the explanatory text.

Born in Russia and an eye witness to the Bolshevik revolution, Dr. Dallin was educated at the Universities of St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Heidelberg. He obtained a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Heidelberg. A resident of Germany and France in the 1920's and 1930's, he emigrated to the United States in 1940 and became a United States citizen.

In this country, Dr. Dallin has engaged extensively in lecturing and writing on the subject of Russian history and Soviet international relations. He is presently teaching a course in political science at the University of Pennsylvania.

Among his numerous books are: *The Changing World of Soviet Russia*; *Soviet Espionage*; *Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy 1939-1942*; *Russia and Postwar Europe*; *The Big Three—The United States, Britain and Russia*; *The Real Soviet Russia*; *Soviet Russia and The Far East*; *The Rise of Russia in Asia*; and *The New Soviet Empire*. His treatise, *Soviet Foreign Policy After Stalin*, will be published in January, 1961.

THE SOVIET UNION, FROM LENIN TO KHRUSHCHEV

Chapter I. The Bolshevik Party

1. The Predecessors of Bolshevism

There has never been in Russia, or perhaps anywhere else, a political party whose birth, growth, and maturity were so closely tied to the personal history of a single leader as in the case of the Bolshevik Party and its creator, Vladimir Lenin. For about two decades, from its inception to the start of the First World War, Lenin was not only the supreme, but the only enduring and authoritative, leader. Others came and went; some associated themselves with him for a time only to turn against him afterward, or they were very young men of small stature who made no impact on the philosophy, literature, or strategy of their movement. From the very start Lenin wielded almost unlimited power in his party. This was a phenomenon so unique and unprecedented that many observers have come to the conclusion that without Lenin there would have been no Communist regime in Russia.

We must know Lenin if we are to understand the Soviet Communist system. Lenin himself was an heir of Russia's long revolutionary tradition and, like all the others who played a prominent role in the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, he took over ideas and philosophies from a long line of predecessors of earlier generations.

Revolutionary movements in Russia aimed at the overthrow of the autocratic political system had been in existence for 90 years before they achieved their goal in 1917. Up to about the end of the 19th century the movements had been restricted to the circles of the "intelligentsia," among whom university students played a substantial role; rarely were other groups of the population attracted in large numbers. The revolutionary movement was clandestine and operated in the underground; it spread antigovernment propaganda by means of books, pamphlets, leaflets, and verbally. Some groups of the underground called for popular uprisings and the assassination of the Tsar and members of his government. The government retaliated by imprisoning, deporting, and sometimes executing the revolutionists.

The movement did not advance on a steady course; it had ups and downs, failures and disappointments. From low points it would flare up again, each time with new leaders, a new philosophy and a new program and strategy. The most important revolutionary trend during the

second half of the 19th century was represented by the Populist groups (*Narodniki*), which tried to arouse the peasantry against the political system and thus achieve a socialist transformation of Russia before other countries even entered on the path of socialism. A part of the Populists, disappointed in the lack of popular support of the movement, turned to the strategy of "individual terror," that is, attempts on the lives of the Tsar and his aides. The most notorious terroristic act of these Populists, who called themselves *Narodnaya Volya* (The People's Will), was the assassination of Tsar Alexander II on March 1, 1881. An attempt on the life of Tsar Alexander III, son of Alexander II, was prepared in 1887, but the group was arrested before it could carry out the plot. One of the group, Lenin's elder brother Alexander, was hanged on May 8, 1887.

Mention must be made of two predecessors of later bolshevism, groups of revolutionaries of the period around 1870, whose emergence and influence are proof that the tendency toward a terroristic Communist dictatorship was a product of Russia's political history. These two groups, the Nechaev and Tkachév groups, were not Marxist and they did not seek the support of the working class. They believed in well-knit organizations of revolutionists, strict discipline, and activities of a conspiratorial type. Their goal was the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a minority rule.

Sergei Nechaev, who was active around 1870, was the head of the small People's Retribution group, or Society of the Axe, whose slogan was "Everything for the revolution. The end justifies the means."

Sergei Nechaev, a teacher in a parish school in Petersburg, emerged unexpectedly during the February and March student disorders in 1869. . . .

* * * * *

. . . He was a man of great energy and could subjugate to his will not only people of his own age but older people as well. . . .

* * * * *

Each of the students he recruited was expected in turn to organize a circle . . . which was not let into the ultimate aims of the conspiracy; at the top there was supposedly a mysterious (actually fictitious) committee, of which Nechaev claimed to be the agent. To heighten the mysteriousness he told people, in confidence, that all Russia was covered with a network of secret societies. . . .

* * * * *

. . . the rules of the organization were very strict and detailed; the members were designated by numbers in order to hinder the uncovering of the conspiracy.¹

¹ A. Thun, *Istoriya Revolyutsionnykh Dvizhenii v Rossii* (The History of Revolutionary Movements in Russia) (St. Petersburg: Biblioteka dlya Vsekh (Library for Everybody), n.d.), pp. 106-108. Taken from the report of court proceedings of the trial of the Nechaev group of July 1871.

The Revolutionist [according to Nechaev's program] is a doomed man. He has no private interests, no affairs, sentiments, ties, property nor even a name of his own. His entire being is devoured by one purpose, one thought, one passion—the revolution. . . . Heart and soul, not merely by word but by deed, he has severed every link with the social order and with the entire civilized world; with the laws, good manners, conventions, and morality of that world. He is its merciless enemy and continues to inhabit it with only one purpose—to destroy it. . . . He despises public opinion. He hates and despises the social morality of his time, its motives and manifestations. Everything which promotes the success of the revolution is moral, everything which hinders it is immoral. . . . The nature of the true revolutionist excludes all romanticism, all tenderness, all ecstasy, all love.²

When a student member of the group, one Ivanov, turned unruly, Nechaev persuaded four other members to carry out an alleged order of the "committee" to get rid of the dangerous enemy. On November 21, 1869, Ivanov was killed in the cellar of the Petrov Academy. The society was soon apprehended, and 67 men were brought to trial. Nechaev himself escaped to Switzerland, where he lived illegally for several years until he was extradited to Russia as a common criminal. In Russia he was tried in 1872 and sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment.

The leader of the second revolutionary group was Peter Tkachev, a Russian émigré and outstanding political writer of the 1870's. Tkachev took up residence in Switzerland after spending over a year in prison.

Neither in the present nor in the future [he wrote] can the people, left to their own resources, bring into existence the social revolution. Only we revolutionists can accomplish this. . . . Social ideals are alien to the people; they belong to the social philosophy of the revolutionary minority.³

We should not deceive ourselves [said Tkachev] that the people, by its own might, can make a social revolution and organize its life on a better foundation. The people, of course, is necessary for a social revolution. *But only when the revolutionary minority assumes the leadership in this revolution.*

* * * * *

. . . Then, utilizing its authority, the minority introduces new progressive and Communist ideas into life. In its work of reformation, the revolutionary minority need not rely upon the active support of the people. The revolutionary role of the people ends the instant they have destroyed the institutions which oppressed them, the instant they have overthrown the tyrants and exploiters who ruled over them. . . .⁴

The first Russian Marxist group emerged among Russian émigrés in 1883. This was the "Liberation of Labor," whose outstanding leaders were Georgi Plekhanov and Paul Axelrod. For a long time, however,

² S. Nechaev and M. Bakunin, *Catechism of a Revolutionist*, as quoted in David Shub, *Lenin* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1948), p. 11.

³ Peter Tkachev, as quoted in Bertram D. Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution* (New York; The Dial Press, 1948), p. 156.

⁴ Tkachev, as quoted in Shub, *op. cit.*, pp. 54 and 14.

the group exerted little influence upon Russian intellectuals, and it was not until the early 1890's that it began to achieve its first successes in the revolutionary underground. Putting their hopes and expectations in the industrial workers, the Marxists had to oppose the old Populist philosophy. "The revolutionary movement [Plekhanov wrote] can triumph only as a revolutionary movement of the working class. There is not, nor can there be, any other way."

The Marxists were able to win numerous followers in Russia and, by the end of the 1890's, to constitute themselves a political party. A small conference held in Minsk in March 1898 (later called the First Party Congress) announced the formation of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP).⁵ One of the pioneers of Marxism inside Russia was a young man by the name of Vladimir Ulyanov, known to history as Lenin.

2. Vladimir Lenin and the Origins of Bolshevism

Vladimir Ulyanov was born on April 22, 1870, into the family of a school inspector in Simbirsk, on the Volga. The five children—three boys and two girls—received a good education. Vladimir, an able and industrious student, had been imbued with revolutionary ideas from early youth, as had his two brothers and two sisters. The execution of his brother Alexander in 1887 was a strong factor in the development of his extreme revolutionary inclinations. At the age of 17, within a few months after he had entered Kazan University, he was arrested and expelled because of his political activity. For the next few years he lived at home. In 1891 he was permitted to take the examinations in law at the St. Petersburg University; he passed the examinations and was thereafter admitted to the bar. Two years later he joined a pioneer Marxist ("Social-Democratic") circle in the capital. In April 1895 he went abroad for several months. In Switzerland and France he met a number of political émigrés, among them the two founders of Russian Marxism, Plekhanov and Axelrod. When he returned to Russia in the fall of the same year, the 25-year-old Lenin was a mature political leader of considerable stature.

The years that followed witnessed a large wave of strikes of Russian industrial workers; the strikes were unprecedented. Small socialist groups emerged—students' and workers' organizations for propaganda and Marxist education. Lenin was active in these circles until he was again arrested. He spent 14 months in prison and on his release was deported to Siberia and did not return to Europe until 1900, when a new

⁵ The Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party is also referred to in this work as the RSDRP, the initials of the Russian name of the party, Rossiiskaya Sotsial-Demokratičeskaya Rabochaya Partiya.

wave of the oppositionist and revolutionist movement was in progress. After a short period in Russia, Lenin left for Germany and Switzerland, where, with a few friends (Plekhanov, Axelrod, Martov, Potresov, Zasulich), he started the newspaper *Iskra* (The Spark) in December 1900. The paper was intended for illegal distribution in Russia and to serve to link the emerging underground groups there with the leading group abroad.

Lenin and the other Russian Marxist leaders took over from Marx the philosophy of the great "social revolution" which would put an end to the era of capitalism and inaugurate the epoch of socialism-communism. The main force in this revolution would be the industrial working class, and the leaders would be the Marxist party. The victory of the social revolution would establish a temporary "dictatorship of the proletariat"—another slogan taken over from Marx. Suppression of adversaries by every means, although never emphasized, was part of the new philosophy.

In its application to Russia, this theory was modified by its Russian adherents. Backward Russia, unlike the advanced nations, was suffering "not so much from capitalism as from its insufficient development"; Russia must first experience a capitalist phase, develop new industries, increase the size of its "proletariat" and go through the motions of a "bourgeois democracy" before the social revolution could come about. Russia was "to boil in the capitalist kettle." Lenin vehemently disputed the thesis of the Populists that the Russian peasantry could serve as the basis of a socialist transformation. His main work (actually his only serious economic work) entitled *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, written in 1896-99 attacked the Russian "utopian" socialists; it depicted a long course of economic growth under capitalist conditions, the formation of new classes, differentiation of the peasantry into various strata, etc.

In July 1903 a new convention (officially termed the Second Congress) of the RSDLP was held. It opened in Brussels, but was transferred to London when the Belgian police requested the delegates to leave. The conference, which lasted about a month, is generally viewed as marking the birth of bolshevism. Of the two factions which opposed one another at the Congress, the extreme leftist (Leninist) group, had a relative numerical though unstable advantage and was therefore called *Bolsheviki* (a word coined by Lenin from *Bolshinstvo*, meaning the majority). The other faction were the *Mensheviks* (minority). More or less in accord in their political philosophy and long-range aims, the two groups were violently opposed in regard to ways and means of action, that is, "tactics" and organizational issues.

In the political strategy of the emerging Bolshevik movement the central role was to be that of the "professional revolutionist"—the revolu-

tionist who devotes himself entirely to his political and party work. The party itself must be a strictly disciplined small union of adherents acting on orders from the supreme body, the party's Central Committee.

. . . the organisation must consist chiefly of persons engaged in revolutionary activity as a profession . . . in a country with an autocratic government, the more we *restrict* the membership of this organisation to persons who are engaged in revolutionary activities as a profession and who have been professionally trained in the art of combating the political police, the more difficult will it be to catch the organisation. . . .

* * * * *

. . . The most grievous sin we have committed in regard to organisation is that *by our primitiveness we have lowered the prestige of revolutionaries in Russia*. A man who is weak and vacillating on theoretical questions, who has a narrow outlook, who makes excuses for his own slackness on the ground that the masses are awakening spontaneously, who resembles a trade union secretary more than a people's tribune, who is unable to conceive of a broad and bold plan, who is incapable of inspiring even his opponents with respect for himself, and who is inexperienced and clumsy in his own professional art—the art of combating the political police—such a man is not a revolutionary but a wretched amateur! ⁶

And then Lenin proceeded to formulate a slogan which best expressed his belief in the power of an underground conspiracy to overturn the political system of a great country:

. . . "Give us an organisation of revolutionaries, and we shall overturn the whole of Russia!" ⁷

We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies, and are under their almost constant fire. We have combined voluntarily, precisely for the purpose of fighting the enemy, and not to retreat into the adjacent marsh, the inhabitants of which, from the very outset, have reproached us with having separated ourselves into an exclusive group and with having chosen the path of struggle instead of the path of conciliation. ⁸

Lenin's concepts of the role of the party in a sense forecast the party's assumption of dictatorial power after the revolution had been accomplished.

In its development up to the revolution of 1917, bolshevism followed Leninist theories and endowed the party leaders with dictatorial power. In 1904, long before the revolution, young Leon Trotsky, then a violent opponent of Lenin, had complained in a pamphlet, *Our Political Aims*, that in Lenin's scheme:

⁶ V. I. Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?" (1901–02), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. II, pp. 139, 141.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

. . . the party organization takes the place of the party, the Central Committee replaces the party organization and finally the "dictator" replaces the Central Committee.⁹

After the successful Bolshevik revolution in 1917, the party's Central Committee did indeed become the new government, while Lenin, the supreme leader of the party, took on the stature of a dictator.

To understand the Communist conception of the role of the party, we must draw—

. . . an analogy between the Bolshevik party and the officer corps of an army. The rank-and-file soldiers, comprising at times millions of men, are merely the material in the hands of the commanders. A few thousand officers, trained from youth and making it their career, constitute the nucleus of a modern army, which, when necessary, is transformed, through mobilization, into a vast force of many millions. When this army is again contracted to a minimum, a great part of the officer cadres may be maintained. The rebirth of the German army after Versailles became possible only because the army was given the right to maintain four thousand officers.

Such has always been the Bolshevik concept of a party: an officer corps which organizes its army; not a party according to the Western idea, which chooses its commanders. Soldiers do not choose their own generals.

The Bolshevik idea of a party is akin to the steel framework in modern architecture. The framework is erected first; then it is covered with bricks. Sometimes, even, the brickwork may be removed and a new building erected upon the old steel framework. To be sure, it is impossible to attain the objective without support from the masses, just as it is impossible to live in a structure consisting only of steel girders and rafters. But everything rests upon a framework. The party is the framework and the people are the necessary, but secondary, element.¹⁰

In this Bolshevik view of the relationship of party and people there was implied the development of bolshevism into a secluded order of "professional revolutionaries" guided by a single aim and recognizing no legal or ethical barriers to achieving the good of the party:

Fifty years ago . . . the Bolshevik party (at that time termed the Bolshevik faction) consisted of a few thousand men and women, devoted to their cause. The great majority were not workers—in all probability there were more members from the ranks of nonworker families than manual laborers. As the revolution developed, however, tens of thousands flowed into the various revolutionary parties, including that of the Bolsheviks. When the revolution had attained its high point—October–December, 1905—these parties, among them the Bolsheviks, had enrolled masses of people, with scores of organizations and countless sympathizers. Then,

⁹N. Trotsky [*Leon Trotsky*], *Nashi Politicheskie Zadachi, Takticheskie i Organizatsionnye Voprosy* (Our Political Aims, Tactical and Organizational Questions) (Geneva: published by the RSDLP, 1904), p. 54.

¹⁰David J. Dallin, *The Changing World of Soviet Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), pp. 226, 227.

with the end of 1906, came the reaction; the revolution was soon crushed, and the years from 1907 to 1917 marked the last stable period of the tsarist monarchy. The masses deserted the revolutionary parties, and the Bolshevik party was reduced, too. In March, 1917, the tide of popular support began to rise again, once more filling the readymade party mold with human material, and by October, 1917, the Bolshevik party was the strongest of all the Russian parties.

As Bolshevism conceives it, a party is not a popular mass, and a popular mass is not a party. A party is solid, constant, a backbone; the people are unstable, changing, flesh and muscle. A party has a clear theory, a revolutionary conception; the people are subject to moods and hesitations. The party leads, the people follow. A party is a minority directing the majority. A party must not be too big; when it numbers millions it loses its stability and spiritual quality. It is possible to find a few thousand, perhaps a few score thousand firm, unbending enthusiasts, but millions cannot sustain this enthusiasm. From this flow all the difficulties of the present period, when the Bolshevik party has become an organization of millions.¹¹

Later, Stalin accepted and emphasized this view of the party:

. . . The Party is not merely an organized detachment, but "*the highest of all forms of organization*" of the working class, and it is its mission to *guide* all the other organizations of the working class. As the highest form of organization, consisting of the finest members of the class, armed with an advanced theory, with knowledge of the laws of the class struggle and with the experience of the revolutionary movement, the Party has every opportunity of guiding—and is obliged to guide—all the other organizations of the working class.¹²

Like his predecessors in the 1870's, Lenin denied the ability of the working class to produce, out of its own midst, a theory and practice of socialism. Rather socialism was to be elaborated by intellectuals from among the "bourgeois intelligentsia," while "the masses" were expected to adopt, follow and obey.

. . . The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, *i.e.*, it may itself realise the necessity for combining in unions, for fighting against the employers and for striving to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc. The theory of Socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories that were elaborated by the educated representatives of the propertied classes, the intellectuals. . . the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. Similarly, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose quite independently of the spontaneous growth of the labour movement; it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of ideas among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia.¹³

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 227, 228.

¹² *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), p. 48.

¹³ Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?" (1901-02), *Selected Works*, vol. II, p. 53.

3. The End and the Means

By this time (1903-05) Lenin's personality and methods of work had been definitely established. One of his early collaborators, and later antagonist, Alexander Potresov, says about his former friend:

The aim justifies the means! In his personal life Lenin was a modest, unpretentious, virtuous family man, who daily quarreled good-naturedly—and not without humor—with his mother-in-law—she was the only person of his immediate circle who dared to rebuke him and assert her personality. In politics he was the strict follower of Machiavellian principles.

. . . Within the social democratic party as well as outside it . . . Lenin knew only two categories of people and events: his own and the strangers. His own people were those who were within the sphere of influence of his organization; the strangers were those who did not enter into this sphere and who thus—and because of this fact alone—were considered enemies. The intervening gamut of social and individual human relationships between these opposite poles—between the comrade-friend and the heretical enemy—did not exist. . . .

* * * * *

It was in these "Iskra" years that Lenin laid the theoretical foundation for the conception of the revolutionary movement and of the revolution, according to which the masses are only the obedient tool of a group of revolutionists, the conscious minority, the bearers of the truth. . . .¹⁴

Lenin possessed the traits and qualities of a dictator, says his former friend:

It must be said that no one was better fitted than Lenin to carry out the function of a sovereign head of a dictatorial group.

Because no one could better instill enthusiasm for his plans, so impress by his will, so captivate by his personality, than this man who at first glance seemed to be insignificant, somewhat coarse and without charm. . . .

Actually Lenin represented, especially in Russia, a rare combination of iron will, unbounded energy, and fanatical belief in the movement, the cause, and to a not lesser degree in himself. If the French King Louis XIV could say: "*L'état—c'est moi!*" Lenin . . . felt that the party was he, that he was the will of the movement concentrated in one person. And he acted accordingly. . . .

* * * * *

He knew how to surround himself with efficient, capable, vigorous people like himself who had an infinite belief in him and who obeyed him unquestioningly, but people who had no independent personalities, who were incapable of differing from Lenin's opinions or of holding views of their own.¹⁵

¹⁴ A. N. Potresov, *Posmertnyi Sbornik Proizvedenii* (Posthumous Collection of Works) (Paris: no pub., 1937), pp. 300-303.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 301, 302.

This intransigency toward his political adversaries was confirmed somewhat later by Lenin himself. When he was cited before a party tribunal on accusations of slander after he had used untruths in assailing his adversaries, the Mensheviks, he expounded his principles on how to fight a political adversary: the adversary must be represented to the public in the worst possible colors in order to arouse disgust and hatred. This principle set forth by Lenin is important because it became, and has remained, a standard method of the Soviet press and propaganda.

. . . The wording [of our press campaign against our political foe] is calculated to provoke in the reader hatred, disgust, contempt. . . . The phrasing must be calculated not to convince but to destroy the ranks [of the enemy]—not to correct the adversary's mistake, but to annihilate, to raze to the ground, his organization. This wording must really be of such a kind as to provoke the worst notions, the worst suspicions about the adversary; it must sow discord in the ranks of the proletariat and be the opposite of phrasing which would convince and correct. . . .

* * * * *

I am intentionally sowing discord in the ranks of that part of the Petersburg proletariat which followed the Mensheviks. . . . In regard to such political enemies I conducted at that time—and in case of a repetition or development of the split, *I will always carry out—a fight of extermination.* . . .

* * * * *

They say: fight but not with a poisoned weapon. No doubt this is a beautiful and effective expression, but. . . .¹⁶

From 1903 on, the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks lived separate lives, without, however, formally breaking their alliance. From time to time for about nine years they made efforts at collaboration, only to separate again after a violent fight. Lenin was never prepared to submit to a majority if it was not his majority; "coexistence" was possible on his terms only. Great political events developed in the years from 1903 to 1906, and on almost every issue bolshevism had its own policy, one strictly opposed to that of all other parties.

The war with Japan, which was started by the Russian government in 1904, proved, from the very beginning, an unpopular war. Losing battles as well as prestige both at home and abroad, the regime faced oppositionary trends and a growing revolutionary movement. "Peace at any price" became a slogan of both liberal groups and socialist parties.

¹⁶ Lenin, "Doklad V S"ezdu RSDRP po Povodu Peterburgskogo Raskola i Svyazannogo s nim Uchrezhdeniya Partiinogo Suda" (Report to the Fifth Congress of the RSDLP in Regard to the Petersburg Split and the Setting up in Connection with it of a Party Court), *Sochineniya* (Works) (4th ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Political Literature), 1941-58), vol. XII (1947), pp. 382, 383, 385. The Fifth Congress took place May 13-June 1, 1907.

Lenin, however, refused to adopt such a slogan. To him, the war, which was destroying the people's confidence in the regime, was beneficial:

. . . The cause of Russian freedom and the struggle of the Russian (and international) proletariat for socialism depend to a great extent on military defeats of the autocracy. This cause has gained a lot from the military rout which inspires fear in the European custodians of order. . . .

It was not the Russian people, but the Russian autocracy that started this colonial war which has developed into a war of the old and the new capitalist worlds. Not the Russian people but the autocracy has suffered an ignominious defeat. The Russian people has gained from the defeat of the autocracy. The capitulation of Port Arthur is the prologue to the capitulation of tsarism. The war is still far from ended, but each step in its continuation immensely enlarges the discontent and indignation of the Russian people, brings nearer the moment of a new great war, of a war of the people against autocracy, a war of the proletariat for freedom.¹⁷

Defeatism was an outstanding and constant element of Lenin's strategy; it was not restricted to issues of war and peace. To him, what was bad for the government was good for the revolution, even if it meant privation and death for the people. On another occasion Lenin had applied his defeatism to a situation caused by a great famine which broke out in the Volga region in 1892; the citizens were anxious to help the destitute. However,

Only Vladimir Ulyanov with his family and group that completely agreed with him in everything took another stand. . . . "the famine," he asserted, "is the direct consequence of a particular social order; so long as this order exists, such famines are inevitable; they can be abolished only by the abolition of this order of society.

"Being in this sense inevitable, famine today performs a progressive function. Destroying the peasant economy it forces peasants from the village into the city, thus forming the proletariat and speeding the industrialization of the nation. . . . Famine will cause the peasant to reflect on the fundamental facts of capitalist society, it will destroy his faith in the Tsar and Tsarism and consequently will in time facilitate the victory of the revolution. It is easy to understand the desire of the so-called 'society' to come to the assistance of the starving, to ameliorate their sufferings. This 'society' is itself flesh and blood of the bourgeois order. . . . The famine threatens to create serious disturbances and possibly the destruction of the entire order. Therefore the efforts of the well-to-do to mitigate the effect of the famine are quite natural. . . . Psychologically this talk of feeding the starving etc. is nothing but an expression of the usual sugary sentimentality so characteristic of our intelligentsia."¹⁸

¹⁷ Lenin, "Padenie Port Artura" (The Fall of Port Arthur) (January 14 [1], 1905), *Sochineniya*, vol. VIII (1947), pp. 37, 38.

¹⁸ V. Vodovozov, "Moe Znakomstvo s Leninyim" (My Acquaintance with Lenin), *Na Chuzhoi Storone* (In a Foreign Land), Prague, December, 1925, pp. 176-178.

4. The Great Rehearsal

In Russia, the revolutionary movement of 1905 is often called the "first revolution." Although the movement was soon thereafter defeated, it had nevertheless been a movement of unprecedented force: between October and December 1905 the government had been forced to make substantial concessions and introduce political reforms.

The year began with a procession, on January 22[9], of thousands (estimates went up to 140,000) of striking St. Petersburg workers to the Tsar's Winter Palace under the leadership of the priest, Georgi Gapon; the intention was to submit to the Tsar a petition expressing loyalty but demanding improvements and reforms. A military squad opened fire on the peaceful marchers, killing and wounding thousands.

A wave of economic and political strikes followed which soon engulfed the whole country. In some provinces the peasants joined in the general movement. In June the sailors on the battleship *Potemkin* mutinied (the war with Japan was still on). On October 30[17], in the midst of a general strike, the Tsar's government issued a Manifesto promising essential political reforms: civil liberties; protection of the inviolability of the individual; freedom of conscience, speech, assembly, and association. A far-reaching amnesty for political prisoners was announced and, as a matter of fact, all political prisoners were set free. The formation of a Duma, a kind of elected legislature, was promised.

The first "Soviets of Workers' Deputies" in Russia emerged spontaneously during those months. On the initiative of the socialist parties, mainly the Mensheviks, industrial workers in the city's factories proceeded to elect representatives to non-partisan bodies called Soviets. (At a later stage, in 1917, there also emerged "Soldiers'" and "Peasants'" Soviets.) The Soviet (council) was to serve as a leader in economic and political strikes. At that time there existed in Russia neither trade unions nor political associations able to cope with these tasks; the Soviet was to be the first mass organization in a country where associations and parties were prohibited. The chairman of the St. Petersburg Soviet was a non-party lawyer, Khrustalev-Nosar; the vice chairmen were Leon (Lev) Trotsky, a non-Bolshevik Social-Democrat, and Nikolai Avksentiev, a member of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. The Bolsheviks at first looked with suspicion upon this new "nonparty" formation.

Meantime Lenin's party had made great strides; local committees of the party had emerged in all important cities, and thousands of new members joined its organizations; hundreds of thousands of party leaflets were distributed. In May 1905 the "Third Congress" (at which only Bolshevik delegates were present) was convened in London. The theme of the congress was "the tactics of the Social-Democracy in a democratic revolution." Despite the fact, Lenin told the congress, that the current

movement must not be viewed as a socialist revolution, the working class must try to lead it and should act in alliance with the peasants' revolutionary parties. As for the emerging non-socialist liberal groups ("the liberal bourgeoisie"), they must be fought to the end. The fight against the "liberal bourgeoisie" became the main political thesis of bolshevism in 1905 (the strategy was repeated in 1917). The decisions of the congress, discussed by Lenin in "Two Tactics," called for: political strikes on a mass basis; an eight-hour working day to be introduced by the workers with or without agreement on the part of the employers; creation of peasants' committees; arming of the workers; a general armed uprising as the next stage; overthrow of the government and establishment of a revolutionary regime which would serve as the "dictatorship of workers and peasants."¹⁹

Lenin returned to Russia in November 1905, at the height of the fight in St. Petersburg. It was obvious—and was felt on the right as well as on the left—that, essentially, two forces were fighting each other—the government and the Soviet; if the old government should be defeated, power would be inherited by the Soviet. Now bolshevism changed its attitude toward the non-Bolshevik Soviet and enthusiastically accepted it as the nucleus of the future regime. Lenin's slogan, "All Power to the Soviets," which was to triumph 12 years later, was born at this moment in November 1905.

. . . the Soviet of Workers' Deputies should be considered the embryo of a *provisional revolutionary government*. I think that the Soviet has to proclaim itself, the sooner the better, the provisional revolutionary government of the whole of Russia or it must *create* a provisional revolutionary government. . . .

* * * * *

. . . The Soviet ought to proclaim itself a provisional revolutionary government or organize such a government; to this end new deputies must be added not only from among the workers but also, first, from among the sailors and soldiers who are everywhere striving for freedom, second, from among the revolutionary peasantry, third, from among the revolutionary bourgeois intellectuals. The Soviet must elect a strong core to act as a provisional revolutionary government and supplement it with representatives of all revolutionary parties and all revolutionary (but, of course, only revolutionary, not liberal) democrats.²⁰

The 7 weeks from November 8 to December 29 [October 26 to December 16], 1905, that the St. Petersburg Soviet was in existence marked the highest point of the revolutionary movement of that era.

¹⁹ Lenin, "The Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution" (June–July 1905), *Selected Works*, vol. III, pp. 39–133.

²⁰ Lenin, "Nashi Zadachi v Sovete Rabochikh Deputatov" (Our Tasks in the Soviet of Workers' Deputies) (November 2–4 [15–17], 1905), *Sochineniya*, vol. X (1947), pp. 5, 7.

The Soviet published an official organ, *Izvestia* (News) and a multitude of leaflets, including appeals to the army; it introduced an eight-hour working day in St. Petersburg industries, started to organize armed workers' brigades, and guided a number of workers' strikes. When its chairman, Khrustalev, was arrested on December 10, Trotsky the actual head of the Soviet, took over officially. But on December 29[16] Trotsky himself was arrested, along with the entire Soviet.

Strikes, uprisings, and mutinies continued; the elements of political freedom still prevailed, and rightists as well as leftists expected a new onslaught against the regime. Peasant uprisings occurred all over the country; in the army, which on the whole did not turn disloyal, disobedience grew and mutinies occurred. Soviets patterned on the St. Petersburg Soviet emerged in provincial cities.

The most significant of these revolutionary developments was the December uprising in Moscow which had been prepared and initiated by the Bolshevik organization (although the other leftist parties participated). The workers' strikes in Moscow turned into a real civil war, with barricades and grenades; loyal army units fought with rifle and artillery fire. By mid-January 1906 the wave of strikes receded, and a few days later the uprising was suppressed.

The Bolshevik conference convened in January 1906 and was attended by 41 delegates representing 26 organizations with a total membership of about 4,000; even considering the fact that not every Bolshevik unit could be represented, "The figure seems insignificant for a revolutionary party contemplating the overthrow of tsarism and the assumption of its place in the impending revolutionary government."²¹

The tiny size of the minority group was from the very beginning an important characteristic of a movement destined to assume power twelve years later.

The particular tactic of bolshevism during that period was the emphasis on armed fighting. An armed uprising as the necessary means to overthrowing the regime was the goal. The plan of preparation for the uprising was conceived in the most primitive technical sense: procuring of arms, manufacture of bombs, training of small groups in the use of guns and rifles, instruction in building of barricades. The underlying assumption was that "the people" were burning with revolutionary zeal; all they needed was tactical and organizational leadership.

In the preparation for the uprising [Lenin said in a letter] I would suggest to propagate immediately, as widely as possible, the formation of a *multitude*, of hundreds and thousands of *autonomous* fighting units, very small ones (of three persons) which would arm themselves with everything they can get hold of and prepare in every possible way.²²

²¹ Leon Trotsky, *Stalin* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1941), p. 69.

²² Lenin, "M. M. Essen" (Letter to M.M. Essen of October 2, 1905), *Sochineniya*, vol. XXXIV (1950), p. 312.

In a letter of October 16 [3], 1905, to the Military Organization of the St. Petersburg Committee of the Social-Democratic Party, Lenin wrote:

. . . If the Fighting Organization does not have at least two hundred to three hundred squads in Petersburg in one or two months, then it is a dead Fighting Organization. Then it must be buried. . . .

. . . Let the squads begin without delay to train for *immediate* operations. Some can undertake to assassinate a spy, blow up a police station, others can attack a bank to expropriate funds for an insurrection, a third—maneuvers or drawing up plans, etc. But it is imperative to start immediately to train: don't be afraid of these experimental attacks. They can, of course, degenerate into extremes, but this will be the trouble of the future.²³

At a meeting of workers in Tiflis on the day the Tsar's Manifesto was announced, Stalin said:

What do we need in order to really win? We need three things: first—arms, second—arms, third—arms and arms again!²⁴

These "military organisations," if one may so call them [Lenin wrote], must strive to rally the masses not through the medium of elected persons, but to rally the masses who directly participate in street fighting and the civil war. The nuclei of such organisations should be very small, voluntary units of tens, fives, perhaps even of threes. We must most emphatically proclaim that a battle is approaching in which it will be the duty of *every* honest citizen to be ready to sacrifice himself and fight against the oppressors of the people. Less formality, less red tape, more simplicity in organisation, which must be as mobile and as flexible as possible.

. . . A detachment that can shoot will be able to disarm a policeman, suddenly attack a patrol and thus procure arms. A detachment which cannot shoot, or which has no arms, will assist in building barricades, in reconnoitering, organising *liaisons*, setting ambushes for the enemy, burning down the houses where the enemy has taken up his position, occupying apartments to serve as bases for the insurgents—in a word, thousands of the most diverse functions can be performed by free associations of people who are determined to fight to the last gasp, who know the locality well, who are most closely in contact with the population.²⁵

From his previous writings Lenin was known as an opponent of "individual terror," that is, assassination of government leaders or members of the police. He now explained his turning toward terrorism: this is "mass action," he said, not deeds of individuals:

. . . We think that to compare them [the guerrilla actions of the "fighting squads"] with the terror of the old type is wrong. Terror was vengeance

²³ Lenin, "V Boevoi Komitet pri Sankt-Peterburgskom Komitete" (To the Fighting Committee of the St. Petersburg Committee (October 16, 1905), *Sochineniya*, vol. IX (1947), pp. 316, 317.

²⁴ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course*, p. 81.

²⁵ Lenin, "The Dissolution of the Duma and the Tasks of the Proletariat" (July 1906), *Selected Works*, vol. III, pp. 380, 381.

toward individuals. Terrorism was a conspiracy of intellectual groups. Terrorism was in no way connected with the frame of mind of the masses. Terrorism did not prepare militant leaders of the masses. Terrorism was a result—as well as a symptom and accompaniment—of a disbelief in an uprising, lack of conditions for an uprising. . . .

* * * * * * *

. . . We must encourage and not hold back the guerrilla activities of the fighting squads if we really want to prepare an uprising and not give only lip service to it, if we seriously consider the proletariat ready for an uprising.²⁶ Military technique has made new progress recently. The Japanese war produced the hand grenade. The small arms factories have placed automatic rifles on the market. . . . We can and must take advantage of improvements in technique, teach the workers' units to make bombs in large quantities, help them and our fighting units to obtain supplies of explosives, fuses and automatic rifles.²⁷

Beginning in the last months of 1905, "fighting squads" emerged in considerable numbers and, while mass movements subsided, a kind of guerrilla war continued.

5. Receding of the Tide (1906–12)

Elections to the first State Duma were to take place in February and March 1906. The leftist parties had to decide whether or not to participate in an election which, because of the nondemocratic features of the constitution, could not result in the emergence of a Western-type parliament. The Bolsheviks, still certain of the imminence of a popular uprising, decided to "boycott" the elections. On Lenin's initiative a conference of the St. Petersburg organization of the RSDLP (March 1906) adopted a resolution which said:

- (1) Renounce absolutely any participation in the State Duma.
- (2) Renounce absolutely any [participation in] elections to the State Duma at any stage.
- (3) Organize a propaganda drive to explain the real character of the Duma, to counteract any attempt at deceiving public opinion in Russia and Europe, and to demonstrate the inevitable disappointment of those peasants who expect positive results from the Duma.²⁸

²⁶ Lenin, "Sovremennoe Polozhenie Rossii i Taktika Rabochei Partii" (The Present Situation of Russia and the Tactics of the Workers' Party) (published February 7 [20], 1906), *Sochineniya*, vol. X (1947), pp. 99, 100.

²⁷ Lenin, "The Lessons of the Moscow Uprising" (September 1906), *Selected Works*, vol. III, pp. 352, 353.

²⁸ Lenin, "Rezolyutsiya Peterburgskoi Organizatsii RSDRP o Taktike Boikota" (Resolution of the Petersburg Organization of the RSDLP on Tactics of Boycott) (late February or early March 1906), *Sochineniya*, vol. X (1947), p. 114.

“Should We Boycott the State Duma?” was the title of a leaflet written by Lenin in January 1906 and distributed by the St. Petersburg Bolsheviks. It concluded:

Down with the Duma! Down with the new police deception! Citizens! Honour the memory of the fallen Moscow heroes with fresh preparations for an armed uprising! Long live the freely elected national constituent assembly!²⁹

Lenin’s opponents stressed the possibilities of speaking to the people in a countrywide election drive. The Bolshevik leadership, however, rejected this suggestion because it would only “detract attention from the main task,” which was preparation for an uprising. In the end, a small group (17) of Social-Democrats (Mensheviks), but not a single Bolshevik, were elected. The majority in the Duma was the liberal opposition (the Constitutional-Democrats). The Duma was too liberal to suit the Czar and it was dissolved on July 21[8], 1906; new elections were to be held, and the second Duma was to convene in seven months, on March 5 [February 20], 1907.

While they remained inside the Social-Democratic Party, Lenin’s Bolsheviks never ceased to carry out their own policy; as a minority they never submitted. This was particularly so during and after the congress of the Social-Democratic Party which gathered in Stockholm April 23–May 8 [April 10–25], 1906. Though taking part in a conclave with his enemies, the Mensheviks, Lenin did not intend to follow the decisions of the majority if it was not his majority. His follower and disciple, the future People’s Commissar Anatoli Lunacharski, asked Lenin on this occasion about his plans. Lenin said:

. . . “If we have a majority in the Central Committee and in the central organ we will demand the strictest discipline. . . .”

I asked Lenin: “But what if we will finally remain in the minority? Shall we be forced to agree to unification?”

Lenin smiled enigmatically and said: “It depends on the circumstances. In any case we will not allow unity to become a noose around our necks and we shall under no circumstances let the Mensheviks lead us by the chain.”³⁰

The 113 delegates to the congress represented a total of about 34,000 party members, of whom less than 14,000 were Bolsheviks. In the new Central Committee, elected to lead the party, they were a minority (three Bolsheviks among the ten members). Lenin, however,

²⁹ Lenin, “Should We Boycott the State Duma?” (January 1906), *Selected Works*, vol. III, p. 364.

³⁰ A. V. Lunacharski, *Vospominaniya o Lenine* (Reminiscences about Lenin (Moscow: Partiinoe Izdatelstvo (Party Publishing House), 1933), pp. 21, 22.

promptly organized his own small committee within the RSDLP to carry out the Bolshevik political course; ostensibly inside the "unified" party, this clandestine group did not care for the party's decisions and discipline.

"Preparation for the uprising" was then still the main aim of Lenin's group. It meant procuring arms and money and organizing "guerrilla actions."

The small guerrilla groups which sprang up in 1905 and 1906 were promptly embraced by Lenin's disciples. In the absence of a real revolution, they turned to killing and robbing for the sake of "the party"—the Bolsheviks. Unprecedented demoralization ensued.

... "The activists" were subordinated to the so-called "Military-Technical Bureau" created by the Central Committee to coordinate the activities of the Fighting and Military Organization; the Bureau was completely taken over by the Bolsheviks. Contrary to the interdiction of the [non-Bolshevik majority of the] Central Committee, the Bureau convoked an All-Russian Conference of the Military and Fighting organizations in order to create a constantly operating Center.³¹

... By the very nature of their activities members of the Bolshevik faction were obliged to observe strict secrecy not only toward the Tsarist police but also toward the party they formally belonged to. In those years characteristic traits of the Bolshevik organization developed which later came so glaringly to the fore: rigid unity and strictest discipline inside their own groups and complete lack of moral restraint toward all outsiders.³²

A secret committee of three, unknown even to other members of the Bolshevik faction, concentrated on financial problems; its members were Lenin, Leonid Krassin, and Aleksandr Bogdanov. Utter secrecy was necessary because procuring of funds for revolutionary activities was tied up with criminal affairs, namely armed robberies of trains, railway ticket offices, and banks. These robberies organized by the Bolsheviks were termed "expropriations" (in slang, "ex's").

... Among the unrestrained and politically immature elements there grew the trend to impose their will on disobedient history, to counteract the growing force of the counter-revolution by concentrated "revolutionary" action, to substitute for the lack of mass support the energy of a "revolutionary minority." The numerous fighting and guerrilla groups which emerged under these conditions directed their terroristic acts and armed robberies not so much against the middle-rank and petty state officials or police officers as against capitalists and factory management. (Of 367 terroristic acts committed in January and February 1906, 237, or 65 percent, were in the nature

³¹ L. Martov, *Istoriya Rossiiskoi Sotsial-Demokratii* (History of the Russian Social Democracy) (3rd ed.; Moscow: "Kniga" publishers, 1923), p. 187.

³² Th. Dan, *Die Sozialdemokratie Russlands nach dem Jahre 1908*, in J. Martov's *Geschichte der Russischen Sozialdemokratie* (Berlin: J. H. W. Dietz Nachfolger, 1926), pp. 233, 234.

of factory or agrarian terrorism.) These hold-ups called "expropriations" were at first motivated by the need to provide means for the party organizations, which no longer received financial support from workers and "sympathizers" among the bourgeoisie; later, however, these hold-ups turned more and more into ordinary robberies for the sole purpose of providing means of existence for the perpetrators of them; this created a terrible demoralization. It wiped out the boundary line between honest revolutionaries guided by idealistic motives and criminals eager for plunder.³³

Having recognized the failure of the "boycott" of elections, the Bolshevik group in 1907 decided to participate in the new elections and organize a Bolshevik faction in the new Duma. Because of the complexities of the election procedures it appeared sensible for the leftist parties to ally themselves with other political groups; Lenin rejected, however, any collaboration with the liberals (the "Kadets") and restricted his circle of allies to the "leftist bloc" (Social-Revolutionaries and "Trudoviks"). When the elections were over, of a total of 518 deputies, 65 belonged to the Social-Democrats (both factions), 141 to the other two leftist groups, and 99 to the "Kadets," popular name for members of the Constitutional-Democratic Party. The majority of the Duma being definitely opposed to the government, the Duma was dissolved on June 16[3]. A new election law was promulgated, without the sanction of the Duma, and the majority of the Social-Democratic deputies were arrested, tried, and deported.

While the Duma was still in session a new congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party convened in London (May 1907). It was the best attended of all the congresses of that era. The Bolsheviks had a certain numerical superiority and won a decisive position in the "joint" Central Committee. At this congress the younger generation of Bolsheviks started to assert itself: Grigori Zinoviev, Lev (Leo) Kamenev, Nikolai Bukharin, and Kliment Voroshilov were present as Lenin's lieutenants. Leon Trotsky, though present, was still opposed to Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

The Lenin group, although it held key positions in the new Central Committee, deemed it necessary in addition to continue the operations of a purely Bolshevik Center which would not be inhibited by the presence of non-Leninists and would be free to make decisions on delicate issues such as "expropriations," guerrillas, financial operations, etc.

. . . the victory of the Bolsheviks at the London Congress by no means led to their factional disarmament; on the contrary, the "*Bolshevik Center*," formally dissolved by the Congress, continued its clandestine existence and acted as the only real Central Committee of the Bolsheviks. The official Central Committee of the united party was in reality sabotaged by them. Financial means procured by them were not delivered to the treasury of the united party but to the clandestine Bolshevik Center; the decisions of the Central

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 229, 230.

Committee were ignored and only orders issued by the Bolshevik Center were followed.³⁴

In this way—

. . . enormous financial means were concentrated in the hands of the Bolshevik Center at a time when the party organization had lost the majority of its members and was fighting for bare existence. This made it possible for the Bolshevik Center to support party committees which were in sympathy with it, to starve out others, to maintain the group of professional revolutionists connected with them, to issue illegal publications, and to sustain the spirit of solidarity and severest discipline among its adherents.³⁵

6. Moral Decay and Disintegration

Unscrupulousness in money affairs started to prevail in the leading Bolshevik group of the time.

The following will serve as an illustration of the conditions then prevailing in the party: Whereas the budget of the Central Committee of the entire party amounted (in the first year after the London Congress) to less than 100 rubles a month, the Petersburg organization of the Bolsheviks received from the Bolshevik Center monthly support of 1,000 rubles, the Moscow organization 500 rubles, etc. The Bolshevik press now often admits that the Bolsheviks at that time, contrary to an official party decision, used to "expropriate" money for the purposes of their faction. The Bolshevik Sulimov, of the Urals, for instance, writes in his memoirs, published in the magazine *Proletarskaya Revolyutsia* (Proletarian Revolution), No. 7/42, about the use to which the stolen money was put in the Urals: "In the years 1906 and 1907, about 40,000 rubles was turned over to the regional party committee and about 60,000 rubles to the Central Committee (which means into the Bolshevik Center). With these funds the Ural Regional Committee published three newspapers: the Russian paper "Soldat" (Soldier) and "Proletarii" (Proletarian) and a paper in Tartar. Money was furthermore spent to finance the trip of the delegates to the London Congress, maintain a school of fight instructors in Kiev, and the bomb-throwing school in Lemberg (Lvov), as well as to secure free frontier passage for the smuggling of literature and escapees.³⁶

In these robbing operations for the benefit of bolshevism a number of future leaders took an active part. The most important "expropriation," the one that occurred in Tiflis on June 25, 1907, was organized, under Stalin's guidance, by a group of Caucasian Bolsheviks, among whom the most outstanding was Semen Ter-Petrosyan (nicknamed "Kamo"). The loot exceeded 300,000 rubles.

At ten forty-five in the morning of the 12th [25th] of June [1907], in the Erivan Square of Tiflis, an exceptionally daring armed attack took place on

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 233, 234.

a convoy of Cossacks that accompanied an equipage transporting a bag of money. The course of the operation was calculated with the precision of clockwork. Several bombs of exceptional strength were thrown in a set rotation. There were numerous revolver shots. The bag of money (341,000 rubles) vanished with the revolutionists. Not a single one of the fighters was caught by the police. Three members of the convoy were left dead on the spot; about fifty persons were wounded, most of them slightly. . . .

* * * * *

. . . The bombs came from [Leonid] Krassin's laboratory. A chemist by education, Leonid, when still a student, dreamed of bombs the size of a nut.⁸⁷

. . . Having successfully accomplished the Tiflis robbery . . . "Kamo" went to Finland, where the Bolshevik Center was located, and delivered part of the money to them; he stayed [in Finland] with Lenin. In September, "Kamo", under the name of Mirsky, was already abroad, where, on instructions of the Center, he and Wallakh-Litvinov [eventually People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs] acquired arms to be smuggled into Russia. In November he was arrested in Berlin; a large quantity of explosives was found in his possession. In prison "Kamo" feigned insanity, was examined, found insane, and extradited . . . to the Russian government. He was sent to a mental hospital in Tiflis, but he escaped, resumed his revolutionary activities, was arrested and sentenced to a term at hard labor. . . .

In the same year [1907] the Military-Technical Bureau of the Central Committee undertook to deliver to the Perm revolutionary guerrilla squad, better known as *Lbovskaya Druzhina*—Lbov Brigade, a shipment of arms at a price of six thousand rubles. The money was received in advance but the arms were never delivered. This characteristic example of the party's activities would hardly have become known to anyone not involved in the affair had not one of the Lbov people come out, while abroad in 1909, with a statement accusing the Bolsheviks of misappropriation of six thousand rubles received as advance payment for ordered arms. After an investigation the money had to be returned to the former Lbov people.⁸⁸

In another case, bank-note counterfeiting operations were planned and prepared. Watermarked paper, ordered by Krassin in Germany, had arrived, but the Prussian police discovered it and arrested several persons connected with the project. In still another case a Bolshevik of the Lenin group married a rich heiress, a Miss Shmidt, in order to get money "for the party."

. . . In the course of 1906 a wealthy student, one N. P. Shmidt, of social democratic leanings, then in prison, bequeathed a large fortune to the social democratic party, and shortly afterwards committed suicide. Since the party was at that date nominally united, the Bolsheviks were not solely

⁸⁷ Medvedeva (Kamo's widow), as quoted in Trotsky, *Stalin*, pp. 104, 105.

⁸⁸ A. I. Spiridovich, *Istoriya Bolshevizma v Rossii* (History of Bolshevism in Russia) (Paris: no pub., 1922), pp. 169, 170.

entitled to this inheritance. However, since the executrices of Shmidt were two young sisters it proved comparatively easy to exert pressure on them. Each was in due course wooed by a Bolshevik, the elder in marriage, the younger outside wedlock. When the husband of the elder sister broke with the Bolsheviks, and proved obstinate over handing over more than a portion of the estate, the lover of the younger eventually succeeded, by methods which (according to Martov, confirmed from Bolshevik memoirs) included threats of violence, in diverting the whole of the estate to the Bolshevik exchequer. The man who played the useful part of the lover was a newcomer in the Bolshevik Centre since the Fifth Congress, Victor Taratuta. He had also been since that date, 1907, a candidate member of the Central Committee. All these operations took some time. But in the course of 1908 part of this money became available to Lenin, and since his correspondence shows that by mid-1909 the Bolsheviks were once again in possession of ample funds it would appear that the whole of the Shmidt inheritance had by that time been realized. The total sum received by the Bolsheviks is stated by a Communist historian to have amounted to "about 280,000 roubles."³⁹

Moral degeneration, uninhibited because of Lenin's personal patronage of all these affairs, reached low depths.

The years 1907-12 were a period of rapid decline and disintegration. Arrests decimated the party's ranks. Agents-provocateurs, posing as the most extreme revolutionary zealots, penetrated all important party bodies. Thousands of sympathizers turned their backs on bolshevism and revolution in general. Most important, party leaders and theoreticians began to deviate from the strict party line. Among them were Anatoli Lunacharski, Aleksandr Bogdanov, Nikolai Rozhkov, and a number of others; Maxim Gorki became cooler, too. Since the end of 1907 Lenin had again been living abroad.

By 1909-10 almost all party groups and cells had been destroyed; actually, except for the small circles of émigrés, the party had ceased to exist.

The elections to the third Duma in 1907 marked another step in the disintegration of bolshevism. Lenin insisted—and in the end, as always, he had his way—on taking part in the elections as well as in the sessions of the "counter-revolutionary Duma." Most of the other leaders, on the contrary, wanted a boycott of the Duma. Some (the *Otzovisty*) demanded the "recall" (*otzvat*) of the elected deputies after the elections; others, the "ultimatists" (*Ultimatisty*), wanted the deputies to submit a revolutionary ultimatum to the Duma and to resign after its rejection by the majority. Bogdanov, Kamenev, and Lunacharski were the best-known leaders of "boycottism." Lenin was almost isolated; his main support from among the party leaders came from Grigori

³⁹ Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (New York: Random House, 1960), pp. 107, 108.

Zinoviev and a few younger Bolsheviks. To fight the ideological aberrations of his comrades, Lenin concentrated for a time on pure philosophy; in 1909 he wrote a critical essay, "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism."

The squabble among the remnants of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party abroad reached its last stage in 1912; a small Bolshevik conference, convened in Prague in January 1912, put an end to coexistence with the Mensheviks.⁴⁰ Of the 15 delegates who attended, 3 were police agents. But the Central Committee elected at the conference was, finally, a pure Bolshevik body. Among the members elected at the conference were Grigori Zinoviev and the police undercover agent, Roman Malinovski; on Lenin's suggestion, Stalin, still little known in Bolshevik ranks, was admitted ("co-opted") to the leading body after the conference ended.

The eight Bolshevik deputies in the State Duma constituted the only "legal" representation of the party in Russia but, their intellectual horizon being limited, the level of their political pronouncements was primitive. The few trade unions still existing, remnants of the revolutionary years, were another field of Bolshevik activity in Russia. Though organized mainly under Menshevik leadership, the unions were "utilized" to some extent by the Bolsheviks as a legal cover for political activity. The Bolshevik attitude toward the trade union movement tended to subordinate it to the party's committees; these tactics had been elaborated by Lenin in 1906-07. Lenin opposed the independence of the trade unions from the party; he advocated "as close as possible and lasting ties between the trade unions and the Social-Democratic [Bolshevik] party." "Closest rapprochement between trade unions and the party is the only correct principle," he said in 1907.⁴¹

7. Stalin's Emergence

A degree of political revival, after 5 years of recess, began in 1912, especially after the strike of gold miners in the Lena fields in Siberia. Local troops had opened fire on the striking workers, killing more than 200. As the news spread over the country, political strikes broke out for the first time since the revolutionary era. This new upsurge of the revolutionary movement, however, remained limited.

The Bolsheviks took part in the elections to the fourth Duma in 1912. Six of the deputies of the Duma (which was to last until the revolution of 1917) belonged to the Bolshevik faction. Among the Bolshevik

⁴⁰ From 1912, the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks had separate organizations, each claiming to be the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party.

⁴¹ Lenin, *Predislovie k Sborniku "Za Dvenadtsat Let"* (Preface to the Collection of Articles "For Twelve Years") (September 1907), *Sochineniya*, vol. XIII (1947), p. 92.

deputies, Roman Malinovski was the most active. An undercover agent of the police, he had entered the legislature with the approval of his police superiors. His fiery speeches against the government, often written or edited by Bolshevik leaders abroad, were made with the consent of the chiefs of police. A large number of revolutionaries of various groups, known to Malinovski, among them Stalin and Bukharin, were betrayed, arrested, and deported. When a new chief of police decided that an end must be put to this situation, Malinovski was ordered to quit the Duma. He resigned. Rumors about the agent-provocateur began to spread. Lenin refused to believe that one of his best men inside Russia was a traitor, and he protected Malinovski by his authority. It was not until 1917, when the police archives were opened by the new regime, that the truth came out. Malinovski was executed in 1918.

In the years 1912-13 a new leader was rising who was eventually to reach the summit of party power—Iosif (Joseph) Dzhugashvili (alias Stalin), who had belonged to the Bolshevik movement since its very beginnings but was little known beyond Social-Democratic circles in the Caucasus and did not become a member of the central party bodies until February 1912. Dzhugashvili, who was born in December 1879 in Gori, Georgia, was the son of a cobbler; his mother was the daughter of a former serf. He entered a parochial school in 1888 and a Greek-Orthodox seminary in 1894. This seminary, like other Russian colleges and universities, was a nursery of revolutionary activity and propaganda. Within a few years Dzhugashvili was a member of a Marxist group (his official biographers claim that as a boy of fifteen he had already belonged to a Marxist circle). His real activity dated from about 1901, with his collaboration in *Brdzola* (an illegal Georgian periodical) and his membership in the Tiflis Social-Democratic Committee. He was arrested in the fall of 1903 and exiled to Siberia, but he escaped a few months later and returned to the Caucasus in February 1904.

Stalin was not a great thinker, speaker, or writer, but he possessed a strong personality embodying traits suited to the emerging Bolshevik movement. A passionate hater of his enemies, he exercised neither restraint nor mercy. Heir to age-old Caucasian traditions of vendetta and disdain for human life, he conceived the revolution in the most violent and bloody contours. He was taken over completely by a passionate fight against all political moderation, and especially against the Mensheviks (his native Georgia was a Menshevik stronghold). To him any means were good if they led to the "lofty goal"; he took part, as an organizer, in the Tiflis robbery described above. The Caucasian Committee of the Social-Democratic Party expelled him because of his participation in this "expropriation."

In April 1908 Stalin was arrested, kept in prison for eight months, and then exiled. From then on, until 1913, there were intermittent episodes of arrests and "illegal work." From 1911 on he was active in St.

Petersburg; in February 1912 he became a member of the Central Committee. In early 1912 *Pravda* (Truth) emerged as a Bolshevik newspaper in the capital; Stalin and the young Vyacheslav Molotov were among its first editors. In November and December 1912 Stalin made visits to Lenin in Cracow, where, under Lenin's guidance, he wrote his "Marxism and the National Question."

In March 1913, betrayed by Malinovski, Stalin was arrested for the last time. This time he was deported to the village of Kureika, in the Arctic Circle, from which no escape was possible, and he spent the next few years as an exile; he did not return to St. Petersburg until after the upheaval in 1917.

The guiding role in the Bolshevik movement during these last prewar years was played by three Russian émigrés—Lenin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev. In 1909 Lenin moved from Geneva to Paris, where he lived with the Zinovievs. In 1912 he and Zinoviev moved to Cracow (Austrian Poland), to be near the Russian frontier: this made it easier to organize transportation of printed materials and crossings from Russia and back. Kamenev returned to Russia in 1913.

8. World War I and Lenin's Defeatism

It was not until the World War broke out, in August 1914, that bolshevism acquired its definitive traits. The break with the socialist parties of Europe and the Socialist International paralleled the generation of a new set of ideas about war, revolution, defense, and defeat which in the following decade became tenets of the Bolshevik-Communist movement.

Lenin and Zinoviev, having been expelled from Austria after the war started, moved to Switzerland. The political line of the Western socialist parties, which proclaimed, as their course in war, defense of their respective countries, and which voted appropriations for war in their parliaments, aroused passionate protests from Lenin and the Bolsheviks. Defeatism became the Bolshevik slogan. Each socialist party, Lenin said and wrote, must strive for the defeat of its country's armies. Defeat in war was the road to revolution. As far as Russia was concerned—

. . . by far the lesser evil would be the defeat of the Tsar's armies and the Tsar's monarchy, which oppresses Poland, the Ukraine, and a number of other people of Russia. . . .⁴²

Among the slogans formulated by Lenin at the beginning of the war were the following:

. . . struggle against the tsarist monarchy and the Great-Russian, Pan-Slavist chauvinism, and advocacy of a revolution in Russia as well as of

⁴² Lenin, "The Tasks of Revolutionary Democracy in the European War" (September 1914), *Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1927-45), vol. XVIII (1930), p. 63.

the liberation and self-determination of the nationalities oppressed by Russia, coupled with the immediate slogans of a democratic republic, the confiscation of the landowners' lands and an eight-hour work-day.⁴³

The crime of war, Lenin reiterated, is the inevitable product of capitalism at its highest and final stage, "imperialism." A nonbelligerent capitalism is impossible. To prevent wars, capitalism must be overthrown; the overthrow of capitalism is a social revolution. Pacifism, which implies the illusion of a peaceful capitalism, must be attacked; the foreign war must be transformed into a civil war—a revolution:

Turning the present imperialist war into civil war is the only correct proletarian slogan.⁴⁴

The first steps towards transforming the present imperialist war into civil war are: 1) absolute refusal to vote for war credits and resignation from bourgeois Cabinets; 2) complete rupture with the policy of "national peace" (*bloc nationale, Burgfrieden*); 3) creation of an illegal organisation wherever the governments and the bourgeoisie abolish constitutional liberties by introducing war emergency laws; 4) support of fraternisation among the soldiers of the belligerent nations in the trenches and in the theatre of war in general; 5) support of every kind of revolutionary proletarian mass action in general.

* * * * *

One of the forms of deception of the working class is pacifism and the abstract preaching of peace. Under capitalism, particularly in its imperialist stage, wars are inevitable. . . .

Propaganda of peace at the present time, if not accompanied by a call for revolutionary mass action, is only capable of spreading illusions, of demoralising the proletariat by imbuing it with belief in the humanitarianism of the bourgeoisie, and of making it a plaything in the hands of the secret diplomacy of the belligerent countries. In particular, the idea that a so-called democratic peace is possible without a series of revolutions is profoundly mistaken.⁴⁵

Propaganda of revolution must be carried to the armies: the troops must be urged to turn their arms against their own officers:

. . . The slogans of Social-Democracy must now be: First, an all-embracing propaganda of the Socialist revolution, to be extended also to the army and the area of military activities; emphasis to be placed on the necessity of turning the weapons, not against the brother wage-slaves of other countries, but against the reaction of bourgeois governments and parties in each country. . . .⁴⁶

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁴⁴ Lenin, "The War and the Russian Social-Democracy" (October 1914), *Collected Works*, vol. XVIII (1930), p. 82.

⁴⁵ Lenin, "Conference of the Sections of the R.S.D.L.P. Abroad" (March 1915), *Selected Works*, vol. V, pp. 134, 135.

⁴⁶ Lenin, "The Tasks of Revolutionary Social-Democracy in the European War" (September 1914), *Collected Works*, vol. XVIII (1930), p. 63.

. . . Life is *marching*, through the defeat of Russia, to a revolution in Russia, and through that revolution and in connection with it, to civil war in Europe. Life has taken this direction.⁴⁷

With violent passion the Lenin group turned against the "Social Patriots" ("Social Traitors," "Social Chauvinists")—the moderate socialists, and against their general "illusion" that under capitalism wars could be avoided, in particular civil wars:

. . . Socialists cannot, without ceasing to be Socialists, be opposed to all war.

* * * * *

. . . civil wars are also wars. Anyone who recognizes the class struggle cannot fail to recognize civil wars, which in every class society are the natural, and under certain conditions, inevitable continuation, development and intensification of the class struggle. All the great revolutions proved this. . . .

. . . the victory of Socialism in one country does not at one stroke eliminate all war in general. . . . Socialism. . . will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while the others will remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois for some time. . . .

Only after we have overthrown, finally vanquished, and expropriated the bourgeoisie of the whole world, and not only of one country, will wars become impossible. And from a scientific point of view it would be utterly wrong and utterly unrevolutionary for us to evade or gloss over the most important thing, namely, that the most difficult task, the one demanding the greatest amount of fighting in the transition to Socialism, is to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie. . . .

* * * * *

. . . Our slogan must be: The arming of the proletariat for the purpose of vanquishing, expropriating and disarming the bourgeoisie.⁴⁸

. . . False, senseless, and hypocritical are all the phrases about a war of defence or about the defence of the fatherland on the part of the great powers (read: the great beasts of prey) that are fighting for domination over the world, for markets and "spheres of influence," for the enslavement of peoples!⁴⁹

Lenin turned repeatedly against those who supported the cause of the Allies against Germany because Germany had started the war. This was of no importance, Lenin emphasized; and by refusing to consider this phase of the history of the war, he tended to disregard Germany's guilt:

. . . The question as to which group dealt the first military blow or first declared war is of no importance in determining the tactics of the Socialists.

⁴⁷ Lenin, "The Defeat of Russia and the Revolutionary Crisis" (October 1915), *Selected Works*, vol. V, p. 153.

⁴⁸ Lenin, "The War Program of the Proletarian Revolution" (1916), *The Essentials of Lenin* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1947), vol. I, pp. 741-744.

⁴⁹ Lenin, "Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International" (1915), *Collected Works*, vol. XVIII (1930), p. 387.

Phrases about the defence of the fatherland, resistance to enemy invasion, war of defence, etc., are, on both sides, nothing but a means for the wholesale deception of the people.⁶⁰

With Lev (Leo) Kamenev in Russia, the Lenin group was certain to be able to guide the Bolshevik Duma faction in the right direction. When the war broke out Lenin advised Kamenev to have the Duma faction make a defeatist declaration "in the name of the Russian proletariat." But the Bolshevik deputies, along with Kamenev himself, having been denounced by agents working from the inside of the party, were arrested at a conference near St. Petersburg on November 17[4], 1914. They were tried and sentenced to exile. At the trial Kamenev defended himself by repudiating Lenin's defeatism; Lenin attacked Kamenev in his *Sotsial-demokrat* (No. 40, March 29, 1915) :

It has proven, first, that this advance detachment of revolutionary Social-Democracy in Russia did not show sufficient firmness at the trial. . . . However, to attempt to show solidarity with the social-patriot, Mr. Yordansky, as did Comrade Rozenfeld [Kamenev.—Ed.], or to point out one's disagreement with the Central Committee, is an incorrect method; this is impermissible from the standpoint of revolutionary Social-Democracy.⁶¹

In the early years of the war, mainly on Bolshevik initiative, there emerged the embryo of the future Third International. In September 1915 a conference of leftist socialists convened in Zimmerwald, Switzerland; among the 38 participants were socialists from 11 countries. The Bolsheviks, under Lenin, formed a "leftist Zimmerwald" faction which, though in a minority, proved most active and aggressive. The Zimmerwald conference was followed by a conference in Kienthal (also in Switzerland) in April 1916, at which 12 delegates (out of a total of 43) belonged to the "extreme left" group. Lenin and his party took the most extreme position. Among Lenin's supporters, the Polish delegate, Karl Radek, an able writer and speaker, who was to achieve some prominence in the Soviet government in the following decade, played a substantial role.

⁶⁰ Lenin, "Conference of the Sections of the R.S.D.L.P. Abroad" (March 1915), *Selected Works*, vol. V, p. 132.

⁶¹ Lenin, "What Has the Trial of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Faction Proven?" (March 29, 1915), *Collected Works*, vol. XVIII (1930), p. 151.

Chapter II. The Revolution of 1917

(March to November)

1. All Power to the Soviets

The political upheaval in Russia which occurred between March 12 [February 27] and March 16 [3], 1917, came unexpectedly for all parties, including the Bolsheviks. Popular unrest, heightened by the Russian military defeats, the deterioration in the food situation, and the Rasputin scandals, culminated in disloyalty among groups in certain army units and, finally, in the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II and the formation of the Provisional Government. The government consisted of liberal groups, of which the "Kadets" were the most important; the socialist parties were represented by the moderate socialist Alexander Kerensky, who took over the Ministry of Justice.

The first Petrograd Soviet of Workers' Deputies was elected during the first days of the revolution. The provinces followed suit. Representatives of the garrisons were added to the Soviets soon afterward.

In these first Soviets of 1917 the Bolsheviks, who remained disoriented for some time, constituted a tiny, uninfluential minority. The important leaders—Lenin, Zinoviev, Bukharin—were abroad and did not return to Russia until a month later; others, like Kamenev and Stalin, were in Siberia. In Petrograd (the new name of the capital) the Bolsheviks were led by party officers of lower rank. Carried away by the general elation over the newly won freedom, almost none of them was violently opposed to the new regime. *Pravda*, which had reappeared, although it expressed opposition was in no way insurrectionist. On their way from Siberia, Kamenev and Stalin took part in a local popular meeting which sent a telegram to Grand Duke Mikhail (brother of the Tsar) congratulating him on having renounced the throne after the Tsar's abdication; the telegram was signed by Lev Kamenev, who was bitterly to regret this act a few years later.

"Defeatism"—the Bolshevik attitude toward "imperialist war"—was likewise unpopular; "Lenin's ideas," wrote Trotsky, "did not have a single champion."¹ In *Pravda*, Kamenev wrote that as long as the

¹ Leon Trotsky, *Stalin* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1941), p. 188.

German army remained loyal to the Kaiser, the Russian soldier should—
 . . . staunchly stand at his post, answering bullet for bullet and salvo for salvo.²

Pravda itself declared:

. . . All defeatism, or rather what the venal press stigmatized by that name under the aegis of tsarist censorship, died the moment the first revolutionary regiment appeared on the streets of Petrograd.³

Stalin, whose stand deviated widely from Lenin's, wrote:

. . . it is undeniable that the bare slogan, "Down with War!" is utterly inapplicable as a practical solution. . . .

The solution he suggested was:

. . . pressure on the Provisional Government with the demand that it immediately express its readiness to start peace negotiations. . . .⁴

At the first all-Russian conference of the Bolshevik party since the revolution, which convened before the émigré leaders had returned, Stalin suggested cautious tactics in order "not to accelerate the secession of the bourgeois strata." He also advocated collaboration with the Mensheviks of the Tseretelli (initially the leftist) trend. This attitude was due not to any real moderation of bolshevism, but to the widespread satisfaction with the victory of the upheaval. It did not, however, last very long.

Lenin was not able to return to Petrograd until April 16 [3]. Germany and the war fronts lay between Switzerland and Russia, and the road through France and England was barred because the Allied governments refused to let the Russian revolutionaries pass. During his last five weeks abroad, Lenin elaborated his theses on war and revolution, which were to become the guiding ideas of bolshevism in 1917 and the ideology of the Bolshevik upheaval in November [October].

The Russian revolution, Lenin said and reiterated, was a "bourgeois" revolution; in a backward country like Russia a socialist revolution was impossible. Lenin's notion of a "bourgeois-democratic revolution," guided by a revolutionary peasant party in alliance with a workers' party, did not imply the transformation of Russia's social set-up on socialist bases. It was likely, however, that the revolution in Russia would inaugurate a series of socialist revolutions in the West.

The great honour of beginning the series of revolutions caused with objective inevitability by the war has fallen to the Russian proletariat. But the idea that the Russian proletariat is the chosen revolutionary proletariat among the workers of the world is absolutely alien to us. We know full

² *Ibid.*, p. 187.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

well that the proletariat of Russia is less organised, less prepared, and less class-conscious than the proletariat of other countries. It is not its special qualities but rather the special coincidence of historical circumstances that has made the proletariat of Russia for a certain, perhaps very short time, the vanguard of the revolutionary proletariat of the whole world.

Russia is a peasant country, it is one of the most backward of European countries. Socialism cannot triumph there immediately. But the present character of the country in the face of a vast reserve of land retained by noblemen landowners may, to judge from the experience of 1905, give a tremendous sweep to the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia, and may make our revolution a prologue to the world Socialist revolution, a step forward in that direction.

* * * * * * *

The Russian proletariat single-handed cannot bring the Socialist revolution to a victorious conclusion. But it can give the Russian Revolution a mighty sweep such as would create most favourable conditions for a Socialist revolution, and would, in a sense, start it. It can help create more favourable circumstances for its most important, most trustworthy and most reliable collaborator, the European and the American Socialist proletariat, to join in the decisive battles.⁵

On this occasion Lenin stressed his hope and expectation of a revolution in Germany, which to him was the signal for a worldwide revolution.

The German proletariat is the most trustworthy, the most reliable ally of the Russian and the world proletarian revolution.⁶

Lenin's attitude toward arms and armaments (which later developed into a consistent opposition to effective disarmament) was expressed in the following words:

. . . For the only guarantee of liberty and of a complete destruction of tsarism is the arming of the proletariat, the strengthening, broadening, and developing of the rôle, and significance, and power of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. . . .

* * * * * * *

Help the arming of the workers, or, at least, do not interfere with it, and the liberty of Russia is invincible, the monarchy incapable of restoration, the republic secured.

* * * * * * *

"Our revolution is a bourgeois revolution," say we Marxists, "therefore the workers must open the eyes of the people to the deceptive practices of the bourgeois politicians, must teach the people not to believe in words, but

⁵ V. I. Lenin, "Farewell Letter to the Swiss Workers" (April 8 [March 26], 1917), *Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1927-45), vol. XX (1929), pp. 85-87.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

to depend wholly on their own strength, on their own organisation, on their own unity, and on their own arms.”⁷

Lenin was prepared violently to oppose the new government. He saw its shortcomings as its refusal or inability to turn over the land to the peasantry, set up a “real democracy,” convene a constitutional assembly, and, most important, renounce “imperialist aims” in the war (territorial gains and indemnities) and conclude peace. The Provisional Government must be replaced by the Soviets. From the “diarchy” (the government and the Soviets) which had existed in Russia since the fall of tsarism the correct path is toward a “Soviet government.” “All power to the Soviets!”

Our conditions for peace are as follows:

1. The Soviet of Workers’ Deputies, being a revolutionary government, declares forthwith that it does not regard itself bound by any treaties made by the Tsar or the bourgeoisie.

2. It publishes forthwith all these predatory treaties.

3. It openly proposes to all the belligerents the immediate cessation of military operations.

4. As a basis for peace it suggests the liberation of all the colonies and all the oppressed nations.

5. It declares that it has no confidence in all the bourgeois governments. It calls upon the workers of the world to overthrow their governments.

6. The war loans contracted by the bourgeoisie must be paid exclusively by the capitalists.

. . . The confiscation of the noblemen’s lands would be assured; this, however, would not yet be Socialism.⁸

Early in April, Lenin, Zinoviev, and a group of other Russian revolutionaries obtained German consent to cross the country on their way from Switzerland to neutral Scandinavia. (Swiss leftist friends had served as intermediaries in this venture.) They reached Petrograd from Stockholm.

When he arrived in Russia, on April 16 [3], 1917, Lenin had with him a prepared text of “theses” for his party. His “defeatist” program rejected collaboration with the Provisional Government and other parties; its most sensational feature—even to the Bolsheviks—was the idea of a Soviet state which was to replace the generally accepted pattern of a democratic republic. These “theses,” read to a Bolshevik audience on April 17 [4], have assumed great importance in the history of communism.

1. In our attitude toward the war not the smallest concession must be made to “revolutionary defensism,” for under the new government of

⁷ Lenin, “Letters From Afar” (First Letter, March 20 [7], 1917), *Collected Works*, vol. XX (1929), pp. 33, 34.

⁸ Lenin, “Report on the Tasks of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in the Russian Revolution” (March 1917), *Collected Works*, vol. XX (1929), pp. 80, 81.

Lvov and Co., owing to the capitalist nature of this government, the war on Russia's part remains a predatory imperialist war.

* * * * *

2. The peculiarity of the present situation in Russia is that it represents a *transition* from the first stage of the revolution, which, because of the inadequate organisation and insufficient class-consciousness of the proletariat, led to the assumption of power by the bourgeoisie—to its second stage which is to place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest strata of the peasantry.

* * * * *

3. No support to the Provisional Government; exposure of the utter falsity of all its promises, particularly those relating to the renunciation of annexations. Unmasking, instead of admitting, the illusion-breeding “demand” that *this* government, a government of capitalists, cease being imperialistic.

4. Recognition of the fact that in most of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies our party constitutes a minority. . . .⁹

Despite his awareness that the Bolsheviks constituted a minority group in the Soviets Lenin adhered to his program of “all power to the Soviets,” obviously expecting to assume a stronger position and then to be able to overthrow the democratic system.

5. Not a parliamentary republic—a return to it from the Soviet of Workers' Deputies would be a step backward—but a republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies, throughout the land, from top to bottom.

Abolition of the police, the army, the bureaucracy.

All officers to be elected and to be subject to recall at any time, their salaries not to exceed the average wage of a competent worker.

6. In the agrarian programme, the emphasis must be shifted to the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies.

Confiscation of all private lands.

Nationalisation of all lands in the country, and management of such lands by local Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies.

7. Immediate merger of all the banks in the country into one general national bank, over which the Soviet of Workers' Deputies should have control.

8. Not the “introduction” of Socialism as an immediate task, but the immediate placing of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies in control of social production and distribution of goods.¹⁰

Lenin did not advocate an uprising against the new government. He realized that, being a small minority even in the Soviets, his party would be easily crushed if it took up arms at once. At the Bolshevik party conference in May [April] 1917, Lenin took exception to the views of a

⁹ Lenin, “On the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution” (printed in *Pravda*, April 20 [7], 1917), *Collected Works*, vol. XX (1929), pp. 106, 107.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

few impatient "leftists" and advised against armed street demonstrations and use of arms against the other parties.¹¹

On Lenin's initiative, the conference adopted a resolution stating that:

. . . extreme caution and prudence must be displayed, a solid majority of the population and their conscious conviction in the practical preparedness of such measures must be assured. . . .¹²

Lenin suggested, and the conference adopted, a resolution against an unpopular separate peace with Germany. This resolution is of historical importance in view of the separate peace signed by Lenin less than a year later. On the other hand, the conference endorsed the Bolshevik attempts at encouraging "fraternization" among Russian and German soldiers at the front, despite the harmful effects of this on the army's morale:

The war cannot be ended by a refusal of the soldiers of only one side to continue the war, merely by a one-sided cessation of war activities by one of the belligerents.

Again and again the conference reiterates its protest against the base slander circulated by the capitalists against our party to the effect that we are in favor of a separate . . . peace with Germany. We consider the German capitalists to be robbers no less than the capitalists of Russia, England, France, etc., and Emperor Wilhelm II to be a crowned murderer no less than Nikolai II and the monarchs of England, Italy, Rumania, and all the rest. . . .

* * * * *

. . . our party will support the mass fraternization at the front of soldiers of all belligerents which has already started, aiming at the transformation of this spontaneous display of solidarity by the oppressed into a conscious and possibly more organized movement for the transition of full government power in all belligerent countries into the hands of the revolutionary proletariat.¹³

A special resolution on the involved agrarian question was adopted by the conference. The agrarian program was among the problems that had aroused major controversies in the Bolshevik ranks. Now the party, while in principle advocating nationalization of the land, in effect urged

¹¹ Lenin, "Report on the Political Situation," Delivered May 7 [April 24], 1917 to the Seventh All-Russian Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, *Collected Works*, vol. XX (1929), p. 278. This conference, frequently referred to as the "April" Conference, was held May 7–May 12 [April 24–29], 1917.

¹² "O Tekushchem Momente" ([Resolution] On the Present Situation), adopted at the Seventh All-Russian or "April" Conference of the RSDLP (b) in 1917, *KPSS v Rezolyutsiakh i Resheniyakh S'ezdov, Konferentsii i Plenumov TsK* (CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Plenums of the Central Committee) (7th ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Political Literature), 1953), part 1, p. 352.

¹³ "O Voine" ([Resolution] On the War), adopted at the Seventh All-Russian or "April" Conference of the RSDLP (b) in 1917, *KPSS v Rezolyutsiyakh i Resheniyakh* . . . , part 1, pp. 337, 338.

the peasants, without waiting for new laws and reforms, to take over the landlords' estates by sheer force:

(1) The party of the proletariat fights with all its forces for the immediate and total confiscation of all land owned by landowners in Russia (as well as ecclesiastical lands, lands belonging to the state and the court, etc.).

(2) The party categorically demands the immediate transfer of all land to the peasantry organized in Soviets of Peasants' Deputies or other municipal institutions elected in a real democratic way and completely independent of landlords and officials.

(3) The party of the proletariat demands nationalization of all land in the state; this means transfer of the right of property on all lands to the state. Nationalization transfers the right of disposition of the land to the local democratic institutions. . . .

* * * * *

(5) The party advises the peasants to take the land in an organized way, tolerating not the slightest damage to the property, and to take care of increasing production.¹⁴

2. Leon Trotsky in 1917

Early in May 1917 there arrived from the United States a man who was to side with Lenin, as leader No. 2 of bolshevism, during the era of revolution—Leon Trotsky-Bronstein.

The son of a well-to-do though uneducated Jewish farmer, Lev (Leon) Davidovich Bronstein was born in October 1879 in the small village of Yanovka in the southern Ukraine. Unlike Lenin, he had not had the advantage of early systematic education. In 1888 he was sent to live with friends of his family in Odessa, where he entered a high school, completing the course in 1896. He never studied at a university. At the early age of 17 he joined revolutionary groups in Nikolaiev, first the Populists and soon after, the Marxists.

In 1898 Lev Bronstein was arrested and after more than two years in prison was exiled to Ust-Kut, on the Lena River in Siberia. He began to contribute to a local newspaper and soon showed himself to be a gifted writer. In 1902 he fled from Siberia to Europe under a false passport in the name of Trotsky. Soon afterward he crossed to Austria, and then came to Lenin in London. A few lectures and articles written for *Iskra* (which was issued abroad by the leading group of Russian Marxists) revealed Trotsky's gifts as a speaker and writer; it was not long before he was admitted to the party's highest circles.

His close friendship with Lenin did not last long, however. Their paths parted in 1903, when Trotsky began to side with the Mensheviks. Trotsky returned to Russia in 1905 and was elected vice chairman of

¹⁴ "Po Agrarnomu Voprosu" ([Resolution] On the Agrarian Question), adopted at the Seventh All-Russian or "April" Conference of the RSDLP (b) in 1917, *KPSS v. Rezolyutsiyakh i Resheniyakh* . . . , part 1, p. 341.

the first St. Petersburg Soviet. Arrested and exiled, he again escaped from Siberia and lived as an émigré in Western Europe from 1906 to January 1917. Expelled from France, he emigrated to New York. Soon after his arrival in the United States the Russian upheaval occurred and he returned to St. Petersburg.

Trotsky vacillated between the various Social-Democratic factions; he was never, at least until 1917, a full-fledged Bolshevik; he had his own small following and occupied a position between the factions, advocating their reunification. Although a man of talents, he remained a lone leader almost all his life; he had few personal friends. A certain haughtiness was one of his traits; he often stressed his superiority and influence over others; he was reproached for being self-enamored and self-pre-occupied. At the height of the revolution he was by far the best of the Bolshevik orators.

In Petrograd, in 1917, Trotsky's small organization ("Mezhrainontsy"), under his influence, stretched out its hand to the Bolsheviks and began a close cooperation with them. On July 15 [2], 1917, Trotsky wrote in *Pravda*:

At present, I think there are no differences between the "United" [Trotskyites] and the Bolshevik organizations, either in principle or tactics.

This means there are no motives which would justify separate existence of their organizations.¹⁵

The "unification" between Lenin's Bolsheviks and the Trotsky group, announced at the Bolshevik congress in August 1917, was at the time a formality. There remained divergent views on issues which did not involve current tactics, and in the following years these differences were to become very important.

Trotsky was more international-minded than most of the Bolshevik leadership; to him the "imminent" world revolution was more of a reality than to them; the slogan of a "United States of Europe," which had been discarded by Lenin some time before, was still adhered to by Trotsky, who saw a union of a revamped United States of America with a "United States of Europe" into one world socialist commonwealth. Of course, Trotsky admitted, Marx's expectation of a social revolution in the West in the 19th century had not materialized; Marx's timing had proved to be wrong, but—

If Marx was premature in predicting the social revolution, this does not mean that our predictions, too, will be premature. After all the commotion of war, after fifty years of socialist cultural education, after all that people have gone through—what conditions could be more favorable for

¹⁵ Trotsky, "Nuzhno Nemedlenno Ob"edinyatsya na Dete, Otvet na Zaprosy" (It Is Necessary to Unite in Practice Immediately, Answer to Inquiries) (July 2 [15], 1917), *Sochineniya* (Works) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo (State Publishing House), n. d.), vol. III, part 1, p. 149.

a social revolution? And if the war, which has forced all peoples to shake off hypocrisy, falsehood and the tarnish of chauvinism, will not lead Europe toward the social revolution, this will mean that Europe is destined for economic stagnation, that it will perish as a civilized country and will serve only the curiosity of tourists; the center of revolutionary movements will switch to America or Japan. . . .¹⁶

The United States of Europe—without monarchy, standing armies and secret diplomacy—are therefore the most important component part of the proletarian program of peace. . . .

* * * * *

. . . we have all reason to hope that during this war there will develop in the whole of Europe a mighty revolutionary movement. It is obvious that it will be able to grow successfully and achieve victory only as an *all-European* movement. Remaining isolated within national boundaries, it would be doomed. Our social-patriots are pointing to the dangers to the Russian revolution presented by German militarism. This danger certainly exists, but it is not the only danger. British, French, Italian imperialism is a no less ominous enemy of the Russian revolution than the military machine of the Hohenzollerns. The salvation of the Russian revolution lies in extending it over the whole of Europe. . . .

* * * * *

It goes without saying that the United States of Europe will become only one of two axes of the *worldwide* organized economy. The other axis will be the United States of America

* * * * *

To perceive the perspectives of the social revolution within a national framework would mean to become a victim of the same national narrowness which represents the essence of social-patriotism. . . .¹⁷

The last sentence contained an implied condemnation of "Socialism in one country"—as well as the seeds of the future conflict with Stalinism.

3. Socialism and Dictatorship as Immediate Goals

This issue of socialism in Russia occurring without a prior revolution in the West haunted most of the Bolshevik leaders. At the beginning of 1917, Lenin, the Marxist and anti-Populist, was adhering to his old view that backward Russia was not ripe for a social and economic transformation on socialist bases. On these issues Lenin was not always consistent, often amending his strategy and even his theories in accord

¹⁶ Trotsky, "Rech na Obshchegorodskoi Konferentsii Ob"edinennoi S.-D. Po Dokladu t. Uritskogo ob Otnoshenii k Vremennomu Pravitelstvu 7 Maya 1917" (Speech at the All-City [Petrograd] Conference of the United Social-Democrats On the Report by Comrade Uritsky Regarding the Attitude Toward the Provisional Government) (May 7 [20], 1917), *Sochineniya*, vol. III, part 1, p. 48.

¹⁷ Trotsky, "Soedinennye Shtaty Evropy" (The United States of Europe), *Sochineniya*, vol. III, part 1, pp. 86, 88-90.

with the changing political situation; he frequently followed the temper of the revolutionary tide. At the start of the century he had viewed the forthcoming revolution as "bourgeois," in 1905 he accentuated its "bourgeois-democratic" (meaning peasant) essence, in March 1917 the revolution was to him still a violent social upheaval without, however, abolition of the system of private economy. In the following months, moving more and more to the left, he was still expecting to be prodded and guided by the West. Interaction of Russian and Western revolutions—Trotsky's "permanent revolution"—was actually (though not in so many words) accepted by Lenin as the prospect of his November upheaval.

In the early stage of the revolution Lenin wrote:

The proletariat of Russia, operating in one of the most backward countries in Europe, surrounded by a vast petty-peasant population, cannot make its aim the immediate realization of a Socialist transformation.¹⁸

Stalin, on the other hand, less a thinker and philosopher than a man of practice, pushed aside the hard questions concerning advanced and backward countries. He was the first among the Bolsheviks to proclaim that Russia might be the first to enter the path of socialism. In August 1917 he told the congress of the Bolshevik Party:

Some comrades say that since capitalism is poorly developed in our country, it would be utopian to raise the question of a socialist revolution. They would be right if there were no war, if there were no economic disruption, if the foundations of the capitalist organization of the national economy were not shaken. . . . It would be rank pedantry to demand that Russia should "wait" with socialist changes until Europe "begins." That country "begins" which has the greater opportunities. . . .¹⁹

. . . The possibility is not excluded that Russia will be the country that will lay the road to socialism. No country hitherto has enjoyed such freedom in time of war as Russia does, or has attempted to introduce workers' control of production. Moreover, the base of our revolution is broader than in Western Europe, where the proletariat stands utterly alone face to face with the bourgeoisie. . . . We must discard the antiquated idea that only Europe can show us the way. There is dogmatic Marxism and creative Marxism. I stand by the latter.²⁰

¹⁸ "O Tekushchem Momente" ([Resolution] On the Present Situation), adopted at the Seventh All-Russian or "April" Conference of the RSDLP (b) in 1917, *KPSS v Rezolyutsiyakh i Resheniyakh* . . . , part 1, p. 351.

¹⁹ J. V. Stalin, "Report on the Political Situation," Delivered July 30 [August 12], 1917 at the Sixth Congress of the RSDLP (Bolsheviks), *Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952-55), vol. III (1953), pp. 185, 186. The Sixth Congress was held August 8-16 [July 26-August 3], 1917.

²⁰ Stalin, "Reply to Preobrazhensky on Clause 9 of the Resolution 'On the Political Situation,'" Speech Delivered August 3 [16], 1917 at the Sixth Congress of the RSDLP (Bolsheviks), *Works*, vol. III (1953), pp. 199, 200.

Other problems of his movement were discussed by Lenin in a small book written in Finland in the summer of 1917, while he was in hiding after his arrest had been ordered by the Provisional Government. The book, "The State and Revolution," has attained a prominent place in the library of basic works on communism. The most important subjects dealt with were dictatorship, democracy, and the "withering away" of the state.

All states, including democracies, are organized violence, Lenin said; "dictatorship of the proletariat" is likewise organized violence.

. . . the dictatorship of a *single* class is necessary not only for class society in general, not only for the *proletariat* which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but for the entire *historical period* between capitalism and "classless society," communism. The forms of the bourgeois state are extremely varied, but in essence they are all the same: in one way or another, in the last analysis, all these states are inevitably the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. The transition from capitalism to communism will certainly create a great variety and abundance of political forms, but in essence there will inevitably be only one: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*.²¹

At this time Lenin did not pretend that dictatorship would be tantamount to political democracy; he honestly defined its eventual role as power based on armed force:

The doctrine of the class struggle, as applied by Marx to the question of the state and of the socialist revolution, leads inevitably to the recognition of the *political rule* of the proletariat, of its dictatorship, *i. e.*, of power shared with none and relying directly upon the armed force of the masses. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie can be achieved only by the proletariat becoming transformed into the *ruling class*, capable of crushing the inevitable and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie, and of organising *all* the toiling and exploited masses for the new economic order.

The proletariat needs state power, the centralised organisation of force, the organisation of violence, for the purpose of crushing the resistance of the exploiters and for the purpose of *leading* the great mass of the population—the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, the semi-proletarians—in the work of organising socialist economy.²²

Speaking of the state, Lenin had in mind the state machinery only—police, army, officialdom; the party of a proletarian revolution, he said, cannot take over and reform the existing state; it must break it up, destroy it completely, and replace it by a new one:

. . . Revolution means that the proletariat will *destroy* the "administrative apparatus" and the *whole* state machine, and substitute for it a new one consisting of the armed workers. . . .

²¹ Lenin, "The State and Revolution" (August–September 1917), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, p. 34.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

The point is not whether the "Ministries" will remain, or whether "commissions of specialists" or other kinds of institutions will be set up; this is quite unimportant. The point is whether the old state machine (connected by thousands of threads with the bourgeoisie and completely saturated with routine and inertia) shall remain, or be *destroyed* and superseded by a *new* one. Revolution must not mean that the new class will command, govern with the aid of the *old* state machine, but that this class will *smash* this machine and command, govern with the aid of a *new* machine.²³

To Lenin the state was an evil; but, in contrast to the anarchists, he insisted on its being conquered, taken over, and used by the victorious class (meaning the Communist Party) to establish the socialist type of society.

. . . Under socialism much of the "primitive" democracy will inevitably be revived, since, for the first time in the history of civilised society, the *mass* of the population will rise to *independent* participation, not only in voting and elections, *but also in the everyday administration of affairs*. Under socialism, *all* will take part in the work of government in turn and will soon become accustomed to no one governing.²⁴

We set ourselves the ultimate aim of abolishing the state *i.e.*, all organised and systematic violence, all use of violence against man in general. We do not expect the advent of an order of society in which the principle of the subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed. But in striving for socialism we are convinced that it will develop into communism and, hence, that the need for violence against people in general, the need for the *subjection* of one man to another, and of one section of the population to another, will vanish, since people will *become accustomed* to observing the elementary conditions of social life *without force* and *without subordination*.²⁵

Only at a later stage will the state begin to wither away:

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely broken, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (*i.e.*, when there is no difference between the members of society as regards their relation to the social means of production), *only then* does "the state . . . cease to exist," and it "*becomes possible to speak of freedom*." Only then will really complete democracy, democracy without any exceptions, be possible and be realised. And only then will democracy itself begin to *wither away* owing to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually *become accustomed* to observing the elementary rules of social life that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims; they will become accustomed to observing them without force, without com-

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 106, 107.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

pulsion, without subordination, without the *special apparatus* for compulsion which is called the state.

The expression "the state *withers away*" is very well chosen, for it indicates both the gradual and the spontaneous nature of the process. Only habit can, and undoubtedly will, have such an effect; for we see around us millions of times how readily people become accustomed to observing the necessary rules of social life if there is no exploitation, if there is nothing that causes indignation, that calls forth protest and revolt and has to be *suppressed*.²⁶

4. The Unstable Regime

In this initial period of the revolution the Bolsheviks were a minor, almost an insignificant, party. At the first All-Russian Congress of the Peasants' Soviets which convened in May, Lenin's group mustered fourteen delegates out of a total of 1115; the great majority belonged to the Socialist-Revolutionaries. The congress supported the Provisional Government, though not without reservations.

These were months of growing unrest and accelerated political crises. The situation at the front was deteriorating, economic conditions worsened. Bolshevism, on the rise, bitterly criticized the foreign policy of the government, in particular its adherence to the former secret agreements with Russia's allies about the annexation of certain German, Austrian, and Turkish territories to Russia; though the text of the agreements remained unknown, the war was viewed by the extreme left as "predatory" and "annexationist," and the antiwar propaganda was highly successful.

The first major crisis developed with the publication on May 3 [April 20] of Foreign Minister Milyukov's note to the Allies emphasizing Russia's determination to carry on the war and fulfill its obligations to the Allies. Soldiers, sailors, and workers marched in demonstrative protest under banners bearing such inscriptions as "Down with Milyukov," "Down with the Provisional Government," and "Down with the War." . . . Guchkov, the Minister of War, and Milyukov resigned from the cabinet. After protracted negotiations with the leaders of the Soviet in the course of which the Executive Committee first pronounced against participation in the cabinet and then reversed itself, Prince Lvov announced a new cabinet on May 18. . . .²⁷

While the moderate ministers quit, six socialists entered the cabinet, among them Viktor Chernov, the leader of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and Irakli Tseretelli, a Menshevik leader. Alexander Kerensky now served as Minister of War. Soon afterwards, on July 25, the moderate Prince Lvov was replaced as premier by Kerensky.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 81, 82.

²⁷ Merle Fainsod, *How Russia Is Ruled* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 66, 67.

In June the Bolsheviks achieved a majority in the powerful Petrograd Soviet, although they still remained in a minority in the provinces.

. . . At the first All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which met in Petrograd on June 16 [3], the Bolsheviks were still in a definite minority. Of the 777 delegates who declared their political affiliations, 285 were SR's, 248 Mensheviks, 105 Bolsheviks, and 32 Menshevik-Internationalists. . . .

. . . the Bolshevik Party continued to gather its forces and strengthen its organization.²⁸

The attempt of the government to resume the offensive on the Western front ended in a military debacle which promptly shattered its stability.

On July 16-17 [3-4] the Bolsheviks staged another demonstration—a step toward possible seizure of power—which ended in clashes and casualties. The government countered by ordering the arrest of a number of Bolshevik leaders, among them Lenin and Trotsky. For several weeks there was a growing wave of anti-Bolshevik sentiment which culminated in the attempt of General Lavr Kornilov to put down the Bolshevik movement and abolish the Soviets by military force. The attempt, to which non-Bolshevik parties offered opposition, failed, and resistance to the growing subversive forces petered out. Kornilov's movement was also followed by an outbreak of lawlessness and brutal excesses against army officers, who in many places were beaten up, shot, drowned. In a report on events that occurred in Viborg, for example, the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets stated:

. . . The picture of the lynching was dreadful. First three generals and a colonel, just arrested by the combined Executive Committee and the Army Corps Committee, were dragged from the guardhouse, thrown off the bridge, and shot in the water. Then the regiments took the law into their own hands. The troops brought out the commanders and some of the other officers, beat them, threw them into the river, and beat them again in the water. About eleven officers were killed in this manner. The exact number has not yet been established, since some of the officers fled. The murders went on till night.²⁹

In these last few months before the upheaval, the Bolshevik party, growing in numbers, employed the strategy of defeatism in its crassest form: whatever was bad for the government was approved by the Lenin-Trotsky movement. Disintegration in the army, though obviously in the interests of Germany, was fostered by the propaganda of fraternization and the peace slogans. Strikes, including strikes in war industries, were organized. Despite the Bolsheviks' own inclination toward strict centralism, national movements for separation from Russia, especially

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 68. (Note: The All-Russian Congress of Soviets was a conference of representatives from all the local Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Soviets.)

²⁹ As quoted in David Shub, *Lenin* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1948), p. 227.

in the Ukraine and Finland, were supported because such movements were weakening the government. On the latter question Lenin wrote:

Why should we, Great-Russians, who have been oppressing a greater number of nations than any other people, why should we repudiate the right of separation for Poland, the Ukraine, Finland? . . .

* * * * * * *

. . . If Finland, if Poland, if the Ukraine break away from Russia, it is nothing terrible. Wherein is it bad? One who says so, is a chauvinist. One must be insane to continue the policy of Tsar Nicholas. Norway has separated from Sweden. . . .³⁰

In his projected new program for his party (drafted in May 1917) Lenin advocated:

*9. The right of all nationalities which are now part of the Russian state freely to separate and to form independent states. The republic of the Russian people should draw to itself other peoples or nationalities not through violence, but through voluntary and mutual agreement to build a common state. The common aims and brotherly union of the workers of all countries are incompatible with either direct or indirect violence practiced upon other nationalities.*³¹

In newspaper articles and in a booklet entitled "The Political Parties in Russia and the Tasks of the Proletariat," Lenin put his policy in the form of questions and answers:

[Q:] . . . *Does the State need a police of the usual type and a standing Army?*

* * * * * * *

[A:] . . . Absolutely unnecessary. Immediately and unconditionally introduce universal arming of the people, merge them with the militia and the army. Capitalists must pay the workers for days of service in the militia.

* * * * * * *

[Q:] . . . *Must officers be elected by the soldiers?*

* * * * * * *

[A:] . . . Not only must they be elected, but every step of every officer and general must be subject to control by special soldiers' committees.

* * * * * * *

[Q:] . . . *Are arbitrary removals of superiors by the soldiers desirable?*

* * * * * * *

[A:] . . . They are in every respect useful and indispensable. The soldiers will obey only superiors of their own choice; they can respect no others.

* * * * * * *

³⁰ Lenin, "Speech on the National Question," delivered May 12 [April 30], 1917, at the Seventh All-Russian or "April" Conference of the RSDLP, *Collected Works*, vol. XX (1929), pp. 311, 313.

³¹ Lenin, "Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Program" (1917), *Collected Works*, vol. XX (1929), p. 338.

[Q:] . . . *In favor of or against annexations?*

* * * * *

[A:] . . . Against annexations. Any promise of a capitalist government to renounce annexations is sheer fraud.

* * * * *

[Q:] . . . *Shall the peasants at once take all the land of the landowners?*

* * * * *

[A:] . . . All the land must be taken at once. Order must be strictly maintained by the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

* * * * *

[Q:] . . . *Must fraternisation between soldiers of the warring countries, at the front, be encouraged?*

* * * * *

[A:] . . . Yes, it is good and indispensable. It is absolutely necessary in all warring countries to encourage all attempts at fraternisation between the soldiers of both warring groups.³²

5. Staging the Upheaval

During the summer and fall of 1917 the political situation continued to deteriorate. Food was scarce, discipline weakened, the government's authority decreased markedly; the army, torn between loyalty to the government and sympathy with the peace propaganda, was becoming unreliable both at the fronts and at home.

The July street demonstrations, which were made up in the main of industrial workers, had proved too weak to shatter the government's position. Since then, the sizable and well-armed local garrison of Petrograd was coming over more and more to the Bolshevik side; to them, the Bolshevik "peace policy" meant all the difference between fighting and waiting, between possible death and relatively quiet life in the capital. Every hint on the part of the government that the garrison might be shipped out of Petrograd aroused "revolutionary" sentiments which were strengthened by the Bolshevik slogans. Trotsky wrote later:

. . . The first Provisional Government . . . gave an obligation not to disarm and not to remove from Petrograd those military units which had taken part in the February [March] overturn.³³

A few regiments were sent to the front in July–August, but:

. . . On September 8th [21] the soldiers' section of the Soviet put forward a demand that the regiments transferred to the front in connection with the July events be returned to Petrograd. This while the members of the

³² Lenin, "Political Parties in Russia and the Tasks of the Proletariat" (July 1917), *Collected Works*, vol. XX (1929), pp. 161–167.

³³ Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, Max Eastman, tr. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1932), vol. III, p. 88.

Coalition were tearing their hair about how to get rid of the remaining regiments.

* * * * *

The soldiers approached the question more brusquely. - Take the offensive at the front now, in the middle of autumn? Reconcile themselves to a new winter campaign? No, they simply had no room in their heads for that idea. The patriotic press immediately opened fire on the garrison: the Petrograd regiments, grown fat in idleness, are betraying the front. The workers took the side of the soldiers. The Putilov men were the first to protest against the transfer of the regiments. . . .

* * * * *

Two years after the events described above, the author of this book [Trotsky] wrote in an article dedicated to the October revolution: "As soon as the order for the removal of the troops was communicated by Headquarters to the Executive Committee of the Petrograd soviet . . . it became clear that this question in its further development would have decisive political significance." The idea of an insurrection began to take form from that moment.³⁴

Since the failure of General Kornilov in his attempt to suppress the defeatists movements, the tide had turned and the chances of a successful Bolshevik upheaval improved. In one after another of the local Soviets, among them the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets, the Bolsheviks gained majorities; Trotsky was elected chairman of the powerful Petrograd Soviet. Sensing the favorable turn of events, Lenin began, in early September, to prod his Central Committee to make preparations for an uprising. Though in hiding and isolated, he exerted strong pressure and great influence upon his lieutenants in the capital. In the preparation for the uprising he displayed skill, energy, and unscrupulousness. In a letter to the Central Committee of his party Lenin wrote, from Finland, on September 25 [12], 1917:

Having obtained a majority in the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of both capitals, the Bolsheviks can, and must, take over the power of government.

They can do so because the active majority of the revolutionary elements of the people of both capitals is large enough to carry the masses, to overcome the resistance of the adversary, to smash him and to conquer power and retain it. For, by immediately proposing a democratic peace, by immediately giving the land to the peasants and by re-establishing the democratic institutions and liberties which have been mangled and shattered by Kerensky, the Bolsheviks will create a government which *nobody* will be able to overthrow.³⁵

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 90, 92.

³⁵ Lenin, "The Bolsheviks Must Assume Power," Letter to the Central Committee and to the Petrograd and Moscow Committees of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (September 1917), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the U.S.S.R., 1935), vol. VI, p. 215.

But who should organize the uprising? The Central and local committees of his party would be arrested before the uprising started. When Bolshevik doubters argued that there was no machinery for an uprising, Lenin answered:

There is no apparatus? There is an apparatus: the Soviets and the democratic organisations. The international situation just now, *on the eve* of the conclusion of a separate peace between the British and the Germans, is in *our favour*. If we propose peace to the nations now we shall win.

Power must be assumed in Moscow and in Petrograd at once (it does not matter which begins; even Moscow may begin); we shall win *absolutely and unquestionably*.⁸⁶

But what if Germany should refuse to sign an armistice and should continue its offensive? Whatever his real opinion of the situation, Lenin tried to convince his party that a Bolshevik Russia would be better able to fight Germany than a tsarist or Kerensky government:

. . . if our proposal for peace is rejected, if we do not secure even an armistice, then *we* shall become "defencists," we shall place ourselves *at the head of the war parties*, we shall be the "*war party*" *par excellence*, and we shall fight the war in a truly revolutionary manner. We shall take all the bread and shoes away from the capitalists. We shall leave them only crusts, we shall dress them in bast shoes. We shall send all the bread and shoes to the front.

And we shall save Petrograd.

The resources, both material and spiritual, for a truly revolutionary war in Russia are still immense; the chances are a hundred to one that the Germans will grant us at least an armistice. And to secure an armistice now would in itself mean beating the *whole world*.

* * * * *

. . . By immediately proposing a peace without annexations, by breaking immediately with the Allied imperialists and with all imperialists, either we shall immediately obtain an armistice, or the entire revolutionary proletariat will rally to the defence of the country, and a truly just, truly revolutionary war will then be waged by the revolutionary democracy under the leadership of the proletariat.⁸⁷

In taking a course toward an armed uprising and seizure of power, Lenin wanted his party to relinquish all normal activity in the regular state agencies, for example in the national conferences, assemblies, and the like which the weakening government was arranging in an attempt to find support for its policies. Against Lenin's advice, however, the Central Committee decided to participate in one of these conferences, the "Democratic Conference", which opened in Petrograd on September

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

⁸⁷ Lenin, "Marxism and Insurrection," Letter to the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (September 26-27 [13-14], 1917), *Selected Works* (1935 ed.), vol. VI, pp. 221-223.

27. Lenin, having advocated a "boycott", was infuriated. And he demanded that the Bolsheviks admit their mistake and boycott the Council of the Republic, a consultative body organized in October by the Provisional Government to function until elections could be held creating a Constituent Assembly:

We should have boycotted the Democratic Conference; we all made a mistake in not doing so. . . .

We must boycott the Pre-parliament [the Council of the Republic]. We must turn to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, to the trade unions, to the masses in general. We must call upon them to fight. It is *to them* we must issue the correct and definite slogan: Disperse Kerensky's Bonapartist gang and *his* spurious Pre-parliament, this Tseretelli-Bulygin Duma. . . .³⁸

6. Lenin's Offensive

The Bolshevik party was, however, divided by profound divergencies; the idea of seizing power by force was rejected by so many leaders that it is hard to say whether the majority was really on Lenin's side. Among the best-known leaders of that era only the new adept of bolshevism, Trotsky, and the less important Stalin sided with Lenin; top leaders like Zinoviev and Kamenev consistently fought Lenin's strategy and tactics, and among the second tier of leaders, Kalinin, Rykov, Milyutin, Lashevich, Frunze, Podvoiski, Nevski, Chudnovski, Tomski, Volodarski, and many others likewise opposed him.

. . . In public discussion the opponents of insurrection repeated the same arguments as those of Zinoviev and Kamenev. "But in private arguments," writes Kisselev [an old worker-Bolshevik], "the polemic took a more acute and candid form, and here they went so far as to say that 'Lenin is a crazy man; he is pushing the working-class to certain ruin. From this armed insurrection we will get nothing; they will shatter us, exterminate the party and the working class, and that will postpone the revolution for years and years, etc.'"³⁹

The months of September and October were filled with this internal struggle. Zinoviev and Kamenev wrote in an address to the party:

Before history, before the international proletariat, before the Russian revolution and the Russian working-class, we have no right to stake the whole future at the present moment upon the card of armed insurrection.⁴⁰

Kamenev, in a declaration to a non-Bolshevik Russian newspaper, stated:

. . . Not only Zinoviev and I, but also a number of practical comrades, think that to take the initiative in an armed insurrection at the present

³⁸ Lenin, "From a Publicist's Diary, The Mistakes of Our Party" (Entries of October 6, 7 [September 23, 24], 1917), *Selected Works* (1935 ed.), vol. VI, p. 238.

³⁹ Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. III, p. 152.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 153, 154.

moment, with the given correlation of social forces, independently of and several days before the Congress of Soviets, is an inadmissible step ruinous to the proletariat and the revolution. . . . To stake everything . . . on the card of insurrection in the coming days would be an act of despair. And our party is too strong, it has too great a future before it, to take such a step. . . .⁴¹

Those in his party who opposed Lenin referred to Marx and Marxism, pointed to the backwardness of Russia, stressed the numerical inferiority of the Bolshevik party and the small size of the working class. Lenin replied:

There is not the slightest doubt of a vacillation among the leaders of our Party, vacillation which may become *fatal*; for the struggle is developing, and, under certain conditions, at a certain moment, vacillation may be *fatal* to the cause. We must mobilise all our forces in the struggle before it is too late; we must insist that the party of the revolutionary proletariat conduct a correct line.

Not all is well among the "parliamentary" leaders of our Party; more attention must be paid to them, more vigilance must be exercised over them by the workers; the sphere of competence of parliamentary fractions must be more rigidly defined.

The mistake committed by our Party is obvious. The fighting party of the advanced class is not afraid of mistakes. The danger is when one persists in one's mistake, when false pride prevents recognition of one's mistake and its correction.⁴²

A few days later Lenin again took the offensive against the less extreme part of the leadership.

Doubt is out of the question. We are on the threshold of a world proletarian revolution. And since we, the Russian Bolsheviks, alone of all the proletarian internationalists of the world, enjoy a comparatively large measure of freedom, since we have a legal party and a score or so of papers, since we have the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of the capitals on our side, and since we have the support of a majority of the masses of the people in a time of revolution, to us indeed may the saying be applied: to whom much has been given, of him much shall be demanded.

* * * * * * *

What, then, is to be done? We must *aussprechen was ist*, state the facts, admit the truth that there is a tendency, or an opinion, in our Central Committee and among the leaders of our Party which favours *waiting* for the Congress of Soviets, and is *opposed* to the immediate seizure of power and an immediate insurrection. That tendency, or opinion, must be *overcome*.

Otherwise the Bolsheviks will cover themselves with *eternal shame* and *destroy themselves* as a party.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁴² Lenin, "From a Publicist's Diary, The Mistakes of Our Party" (October 7 [September 24], 1917), *Selected Works* (1935 ed.), vol. VI, p. 239.

For to miss such a moment and to "wait" for the Congress of Soviets would be *utter idiocy*, or *sheer treachery*.

It would be sheer treachery towards the German workers. Are we to wait until their revolution *begins*?⁴³

Lenin proceeded to use against his Bolshevik opponents a weapon that would have had little effect in any other party but which proved to be of decisive force in the unique political formation of the Bolshevik party. In an effort to subdue everybody, he handed in his resignation to the Central Committee.

In view of the fact that the Central Committee has even *left unanswered* the persistent demands I have been making for such a policy ever since the beginning of the Democratic Conference, in view of the fact that the central organ is *deleting* from my articles all references to such glaring errors on the part of the Bolsheviks as the shameful decision to participate in the Pre-parliament, the presentation of seats to the Mensheviks in the presidium of the Soviet, etc., etc.—I am compelled to regard this as a "subtle" hint of the unwillingness of the Central Committee even to consider this question, a subtle hint that I should keep my mouth shut, and as a proposal for me to retire.

I am compelled to *tender my resignation from the Central Committee*, which I hereby do, reserving for myself the freedom to agitate among the rank and file of the Party and at the Party Congress.⁴⁴

On October 14[1], Lenin wrote an article in which he tried to convince the vacillating comrades that the Bolshevik party, a microscopic quantity a few months before, would be able to retain state power in its hands. This was to serve as an answer to those critical and thinking minds among the Bolsheviks who had been educated in the belief that a "mass" party, a much larger socialist party, was needed if the social and economic system of the vast country was to be transformed.

Russia after the 1905 Revolution was ruled by 130,000 landlords. They ruled by the aid of unremitting violence perpetrated on 150,000,000 people, by subjecting them to endless humiliation, and by condemning the vast majority to inhuman toil and to semi-starvation.

And yet we are told that Russia cannot be governed by the 240,000 members of the Bolshevik Party, governing in the interests of the poor and against the rich. These 240,000 already have the support of not less than 1,000,000 votes of the adult population, for that is the proportion between the number of members of the Party and the number of votes cast for it, as established both by the experience of Europe and by the experience of Russia, as, for instance, in the August elections to the Petrograd Duma. And here we already have a "state apparatus" of *one million* persons, devoted to the

⁴³ Lenin, "The Crisis Has Matured" (October 12 [September 29], 1917), *Selected Works* (1935 ed.), vol. VI, pp. 225, 230.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

socialist state not for the sake of a fat sum every twentieth of the month, but for the sake of an ideal.

Moreover, we have a magic means of increasing our state apparatus *tenfold* at one stroke, such as no capitalist state possessed or could ever hope to possess. This magic means is to get the toilers, the poor, to share in the day-to-day work of governing the state.⁴⁵

"Delay is criminal," Lenin said the same day in a letter to his Central Committee. Some of his comrades wanted to wait until the Second Congress of Soviets, expected to convene about November 4 [October 20], and then in the name of the congress to start the seizure of power. Lenin, the shrewd strategist, having no faith in a large congress, preferred to have it face a *fait accompli*:

To "wait" under such conditions is a crime.

The Bolsheviks have no right to wait for the Congress of Soviets; they must *take power immediately*. Thus they will save both the world revolution (for otherwise there is the danger of an agreement between the imperialists of all countries who, after the shooting in Germany, will be more agreeable to each other and *will unite against us*) and the Russian revolution (else a wave of real anarchy may become stronger *than we are*): thus they will also save the lives of hundreds of thousands of people engaged in the war.

To hesitate is a crime. To wait for the Congress of Soviets means to play a childish game of formality, a shameful game of formality; it means to betray the revolution.⁴⁶

On October 21 [8], Lenin wrote:

Our three main forces—the navy, the workers and the army units—must be so combined as to occupy without fail and to hold *at the cost of any sacrifice*: (a) the telephone exchange; (b) the telegraph office; (c) the railway stations; (d) above all, the bridges.

The *most determined* elements (our "storm troops" and *young workers*, as well as the best of the sailors) must be formed into small detachments to occupy all the more important points and to *take part* everywhere in all decisive operations, for example:

To encircle and cut off Petrograd; to seize it by a combined attack of the navy, the workers, and the troops—a task which requires *art and triple audacity*.⁴⁷

Lenin's "resignation" was not taken in earnest by either himself or his colleagues. (He actually continued to be both a member and leader

⁴⁵ Lenin, "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?" (October 14 [1], 1917), *Selected Works* (1935 ed.), vol. VI, pp. 271, 272.

⁴⁶ Lenin, "Letter to the Central Committee, Moscow Committee, Petrograd Committee, and the Bolshevik Members of the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets" (October 1917), Lenin and Stalin, *The Russian Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1938), pp. 204, 205.

⁴⁷ Lenin, "Advice of an Onlooker" (October 21 [8], 1917), Lenin and Stalin, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 207, 208.

of the Central Committee.) Impatient and irritated, he appeared at the meeting of the Central Committee on October 23 [10]:

Twelve of the twenty-one members of the Central Committee were present. Lenin came in wig and spectacles without a beard. The session lasted about ten hours—deep into the night. . . . it was a question of seizing the power in the former empire of the tzars.⁴⁸

In his speech Lenin stressed the fact that a certain indifference toward the uprising had recently become apparent:

. . . this [indifference] is inadmissible, if we earnestly raise the slogan of seizure of power by the Soviets. It is, therefore, high time to turn attention to the technical side of the question. Much time has obviously been lost.

Nevertheless, the question is very urgent and the decisive moment is near.

The international situation is such that we must take the initiative.

* * * * *

To wait for the Constituent Assembly, which will obviously not be for us, is senseless, because it would make our task more complex.⁴⁹

He castigated Zinoviev and Kamenev in the sharpest terms because they had publicly (in a non-Bolshevik newspaper) disclosed the Bolshevik schemes. To him, Zinoviev and Kamenev were deserters.

I should consider it disgraceful on my part if I were to hesitate to condemn these former comrades because of my former close relations with them. I declare outright that I no longer consider either of them comrades and that I will fight with all my might, both in the Central Committee and at the Congress, to secure their expulsion from the Party.

* * * * *

Let Messrs. Zinoviev and Kamenev found their own party from the dozens of disoriented people, or from the candidates to the Constituent Assembly. The workers will not join such a party. . . .⁵⁰

Lenin was supported by Trotsky and Stalin. Stalin said:

Here are two lines . . . one is headed for the victory of the revolution and leans on Europe: the other does not believe in the revolution and counts only on being an opposition. The Petrograd Soviet has already taken its stand on the road to insurrection by refusing to sanction the removal of the armies.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. III, p. 146.

⁴⁹ Lenin, "Meeting of the Central Committee of the R.S.-D.L.P." (October 23 [10], 1917), Excerpts from the Minutes, Lenin and Stalin, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 214, 215.

⁵⁰ Lenin, "A Letter to the Members of the Bolshevik Party" (October 31 [18], 1917), *Selected Works* (1935 ed.), vol. VI, p. 326.

⁵¹ As quoted in Edward Hallett Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1950), vol. I, p. 96.

Lenin had a majority in this fateful meeting of the Central Committee, which actually ended with a decision in favor of the uprising.

The resolution, written hastily by Lenin with the gnawed end of a pencil on a sheet of paper from a child's note-book ruled in squares, was very unsymmetrical in architecture, but nevertheless gave firm support to the course towards insurrection. "The Central Committee recognizes that both the international situation of the Russian revolution (the insurrection in the German fleet, as the extreme manifestation of the growth throughout Europe of a world-wide socialist revolution, and also the threat of a peace between the imperialists with the aim of strangling the revolution in Russia)—and the military situation (the indubitable decision of the Russian bourgeoisie and Kerensky and Co. to surrender Petersburg to the Germans)—all this in connection with the peasant insurrection and the swing of popular confidence to our party (the election in Moscow), and finally the obvious preparation of a second Kornilov attack (the withdrawal of troops from Petersburg, the importation of Cossacks into Petersburg, the surrounding of Minsk with Cossacks, etc.)—all this places armed insurrection on the order of the day. Thus recognizing that the armed insurrection is inevitable and fully ripe, the Central Committee recommends to all organizations of the party that they be guided by this, and from this point of view consider and decide all practical questions. . . ." ⁵²

A remarkable thing here as characterizing both the moment and the author is the very order in which the conditions of the insurrection are enumerated. First comes the ripening of the world revolution; the insurrection in Russia is regarded only as the link in a general chain. That was Lenin's invariable starting-point, his major premise: he could not reason otherwise. ⁵³

At this same session of the Central Committee the first "Politburo" was elected. Among its seven members were not only Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin, but also the two "deviationists," Zinoviev and Kamenev.

7. The November Upheaval

With Lenin restricted in his activity because he still feared arrest, the main task of organizing the insurrection fell upon Trotsky. Between the 22d [9th] and 26th [13th] of October the "Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet" was elected and its election publicly announced; its task was the seizure of power. The Committee consisted of:

. . . the presidiums of the Soviet and of the soldiers' section, representatives of the fleet, of the regional committee of Finland, of the railroad unions, of the factory committees, the trade unions, the party military organizations, the Red Guard, etc. ⁵⁴

⁵² Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. III, pp. 148, 149.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 94.

With these large bodies as members, the Military Revolutionary Committee embraced people from various political groups. "In essence, however, the Committee, whose president was Trotsky, and its chief workers Podvoiski, Antonov-Ovsečenko, Lashevich, Sadovski, and Mekhonoshin, relied exclusively upon Bolsheviks."⁶⁵ Trotsky played the leading role. In the absence of Lenin and with Zinoviev and Kamenev vacillating, the sole organizer of the Soviet seizure of power was the devoted partisan of the worldwide "permanent revolution." His eventual antagonist and executioner, Stalin, wrote, on the first anniversary of the November upheaval:

All the work of practical organization of the uprising was carried out under the direct leadership of Trotsky, chairman of the Petrograd Soviet. It can be said with certainty that, as regards the garrison's rapid going-over to the Soviet and the skilful organization of the work of the Military Revolutionary Committee, the Party is above all and in the main indebted to Comrade Trotsky.⁶⁶

The headquarters of the Military Revolutionary Committee was the large old Smolny Institute (before the revolution it had been an educational institution for girls; in August 1917 it was taken over by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee—VTsIK⁶⁷—and the Petrograd Soviet as the site of their offices and meetings); in October–November all Soviet orders and instructions of a military and political character emanated from the Smolny. The well-guarded rooms of the Bolshevik faction of the Soviet were the actual center of the operations.

On November 3 [October 21] the Soldiers' Committee of the Petrograd garrison convened a meeting which set in motion the upheaval of November 7 [October 25]. Following Trotsky's address, the meeting decided that it would follow only the instructions of the Military Revolutionary Committee; thus the entire military force assigned to defend the government, and kept in the capital for that purpose, resolved to recognize the Bolshevik-controlled Soviet as its sole authority:

In *essence* the overturn took place at the moment when the Petersburg garrison, which was supposed to be the real support of the Provisional Government, recognized the *Soviet* as its supreme authority and the Military Revolutionary Committee as its immediate superior. . . .

* * * * *

The significance of this occurrence of October 21 [November 3] was not only not apparent to the man in the street and the outside observer; it was not even clear to the leaders of the upheaval. . . .

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 109, 110.

⁶⁶ Stalin, in *Pravda*, November 6, 1918.

⁶⁷ The VTsIK was the Central Executive Committee elected by the Congress of Soviets and assigned to act on its behalf until the next Congress. Subsequently in the Soviet constitutions (1918–36) the Central Executive Committee served as the supreme power in the Soviet land. Until 1924 it was the CEC of the All-Russian Federative Soviet Republic; from 1924 on it was the CEC of the USSR (All-Union Soviet Republic).

. . . neither Smolny, nor Zimmii [the Winter Palace, headquarters of the Provisional Government] could ever realize the full significance of the event. It was obscured by the historical position of the Soviet in the revolution.⁵⁸

On November 6 [October 24] the government, in an attempt to take the offensive against the expected insurrection, tried to close down certain Bolshevik press organs and suppress the Military Revolutionary Committee. It was much too late; the government was impotent. Trotsky's Committee easily went over to the counterattack, and the next day all power was in its hands. "A piece of official sealing-wax on the door of the Bolshevik editorial-rooms—as a military measure that is not much. But what a superb signal for battle!"⁵⁹

. . . The battle rapidly extended to bridges, railway stations, post offices, and other strategic points; all were occupied without a shot by the troops under Trotsky's command. The only real fight developed in the course of the assault of the insurgents upon the Winter Palace. . . .⁶⁰

Early on November 7 [October 25] the telephone, post, and telegraph offices, as well as the State Bank, were occupied, and the small military force still loyal to the regime was decimated and demoralized. The Military Revolutionary Committee announced the seizure of power even before it had been completed. It issued the following statement (written by Lenin):

The Provisional Government is deposed. All state authority has passed into the hands of the organs of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies—the Military Revolutionary Committee—standing at the head of the Petrograd proletariat and the garrison.

The cause for which the people has struggled: immediate offer of a democratic peace, abolition of the landlords' ownership of the land, labor control of industry, and creation of a Soviet form of government, are now all guaranteed.

Long live the revolution of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants!⁶¹

All attention was focused on the Winter Palace, where the government had its headquarters, and on the Smolny, where an All-Russian Congress of Soviets was to assemble and take over the state power. The Provisional Government, assembled in the Palace, was guarded by a small military force of disoriented and wavering Cadets, Cossacks, and other units. Trotsky's aides prepared an elaborate military operation to capture and, if necessary, destroy the Winter Palace. Naval units,

⁵⁸ Nikolai Sukhanov, *Zapiski o Revolyutsii* (Notes on the Revolution) (Berlin: Grzhebin, 1923), vol. VII, pp. 94, 96.

⁵⁹ Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. III, pp. 207, 208.

⁶⁰ I. Deutscher, *Stalin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 166.

⁶¹ Lenin, "K Grazhdanam Rossii" (To the Citizens of Russia) (October 25 [November 7], 1917), *Sochineniya* (Works) (4th ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Political Literature), 1941–58), vol. XXVI (1949), p. 207.

among them the cruiser *Aurora*, entered the Neva and pointed their guns at the Palace; the artillery of the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul was to join in the operation. There was no real resistance, however, to the onslaught: Kerensky himself departed unobserved to look for loyal military forces stationed in Gatchina (30 miles from Petrograd) or at the front; in his absence the members of his government recognized that resistance was futile. The *Aurora* fired only one shot.

A Bolshevik detachment with Antonov-Ovseenko at the head approached the room where the members of the Provisional Government were sitting:

Suddenly [Minister Malyantovich related later] a noise arose somewhere and began to grow, spread, and roll ever nearer. And in its multitude of sounds, fused into a single powerful wave, we immediately sensed something special, unlike the previous noises—something final and decisive. It suddenly became clear that the end was coming. . . . The noise rose, swelled, and rapidly swept toward us in a broad wave. . . . And poured into our hearts unbearable anxiety, like a gust of poisoned air. . . . It was clear: this is the onslaught, we are being taken by storm. . . .

* * * * *

The room was jammed with soldiers, sailors, Red Guards, some carrying several weapons—a rifle, two revolvers, a sword, two machine-gun ribbons.

When it was learned that Kerensky had fled, vile oaths were heard from the crowd. Some of the men shouted, inciting the rest to violence. . . .

* * * * *

Antonov raised his head and shouted sharply:

“Comrades, keep calm! All members of the Provisional Government are arrested. They will be imprisoned in the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. I’ll permit no violence. Conduct yourself calmly. Maintain order! Power is now in your hands. You must maintain order! . . .”⁶²

There was little bloodshed on this day in Petrograd. Kerensky, having approached General Krasnov as well as loyal “front commanders,” found no real military force to march on the capital. In Moscow, on the contrary, the struggle was long and severe; the Soviet victory, achieved only after a whole week of street fighting, had cost hundreds of lives.

The Second Congress of Soviets opened in the Smolny late that evening, when the victory of the insurrection was already apparent. To Lenin and Trotsky the congress represented the highest of triumphs. Of the 650 delegates, about 390 supported the Bolsheviks; the other two socialist parties—the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks—deeply split, offered no strong opposition. A sizable group of “Left

⁶² P. Malyantovich, “V Zimmem Dvortse 25–26–go Oktyabrya, 1917 goda” (In the Winter Palace October 25–26 [Nov. 7–8], 1917), as quoted in Shub, *op. cit.*, pp. 248, 250.

Socialist-Revolutionaries" had split from the party's main body; though opposing the Bolsheviks, they entered a path of collaboration and, as we shall see, later joined the Soviet government as a second party. Prominent among the leaders of this group were Maria Spiridonova, Boris Kamkov, Isaak Steinberg, and Mark Nathanson-Bobrov. The Mensheviks and the right Socialist-Revolutionaries left the Soviet congress, which from then on was entirely dominated by Lenin and his party.

After a long period of hiding, Lenin on this day reappeared in public. He addressed the congress and was greeted by an ovation. In a "Proclamation on the Assumption of Power," the congress said:

Supported by an overwhelming majority of the workers, soldiers, and peasants, and basing itself on the victorious insurrection of the workers and the garrison of Petrograd, the Congress hereby resolves to take governmental power into its own hands.

The Provisional Government is deposed and most of its members are under arrest.

* * * * *

The Kornilovists—Kerensky, Kaledin and others—are endeavoring to lead troops against Petrograd. Several regiments, deceived by Kerensky, have already joined the insurgents.

Soldiers! Resist Kerensky, who is a Kornilovist! Be on guard!

Railwaymen! Stop all echelons sent by Kerensky against Petrograd!

Soldiers, Workers, Employees! The fate of the Revolution and democratic peace is in your hands!

Long live the Revolution! ⁶⁸

A new government, nominated by Lenin and his group, was voted into office by the congress. To distinguish it from the old, it was, on Trotsky's suggestion, named "Council (i.e. Soviet) of People's Commissars." Lenin was appointed Chairman of the Council; Trotsky, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs; Stalin, President of the Commission on Nationalities; twelve others were appointed to the Sovnarkom (Russian abbreviation of Council of People's Commissars).

Following the upheaval, the powerful railwaymen's union came out with a demand for a coalition government which would embrace all socialist parties (in the main, Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks, and Bolsheviks); the same idea was propagated by a large number of Lenin's co-leaders, for example, Sokolnikov, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, Nogin, Milyutin. To Lenin and Trotsky a concession of this kind would be a "retreat," a compromise with the defeated forces. There was the threat, however, of a refusal of the railways to transport Bolshevik armed guards to Moscow, where they were needed to quell the considerable resistance. The Bolshevik leaders resorted to a maneuver intended to de-

⁶⁸ James Bunyan and H. H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1918* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934), pp. 121, 122.

ceive their friends and foes: in order to win time they agreed to negotiations. The negotiations, in which Kamenev played the leading role, proceeded. Then, when the opposition had been suppressed and Moscow was well in hand, Lenin broke off the negotiations. On November 14 [1] he told the Central Committee:

. . . There is now no point in negotiating with the Vikzhel [All-Russian Executive Committee of the Union of Railway Employees]. Troops must be dispatched to Moscow. . . .

. . . the negotiations were intended as a diplomatic screen for acts of war. . . .⁶⁴

A prolonged period of strife followed.

A multitude of state employees refused to continue working under the new regime; this development followed immediately upon the November revolution. Calling it "sabotage," and offering no concessions, Lenin announced:

. . . We say: we need a strong power, we must use coercion and compulsion, but we will direct it against a group of capitalists, against the class of the bourgeoisie. We on our part will always follow up with compulsive measures in answer to attempts—insane, hopeless attempts—to resist the Soviet power.⁶⁵

After a time the striking state employees had to give in and return to their jobs except for a few who left for the south to join the Cossack armies. Cossack armies under General Kaledin were being formed in the Don region. Embryos of the future White (anti-Bolshevik) Army, these formations were not yet strong enough to resist infiltration. Early in 1918 the Kaledin army was dispersed and its general committed suicide.

In the winter of 1917 the economic chaos reached unprecedented proportions and the political situation was growing tense. Many industrial units, abandoned by their owners and directors, had ceased operations; unemployment grew; food was scarce; railway service was irregular. The central Soviet government wielded little authority in the country. Local Soviets seized power and acted on their own; a number of small local "republics" emerged; the Ukraine was about to secede, and similar trends were growing in the Caucasus. Lenin blamed the "bourgeoisie" for the terrible *razrukha* (paralysis) and threatened to fight his internal foes to the end.

⁶⁴ Lenin, "Speeches at a Meeting of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks)" (November 14 [1], 1917), Extract from the Minutes, *Lenin Stalin 1917, Selected Writings and Speeches* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1938), p. 634.

⁶⁵ Lenin, "Rech na Pervom Vserossiiskom S'ezde Voennogo Flota 22 Noyabrya (5 Dekabrya) 1917 g." (Speech at the First All-Russian Congress of the Navy, November 22 [December 5], 1917), *Sochineniya*, vol. XXVI (1949), p. 307.

One of the first places where the Soviet government proceeded to abrogate freedom was the press. On November 8 [October 26] a number of liberal and democratic papers were closed down. A decree of November 9 [October 27] of the Sovnarkom (Council of People's Commissars) on "Freedom of the Press," while empowering the government to ban press organs which "are spreading discord by an obviously slanderous distortion of facts," or by "inciting to criminal acts," promised, however, to restore freedom of the press in time:

As soon as the new order has been consolidated all administrative measures in regard to the press will be discontinued; full freedom of the press will be established within the limits of responsibility before the court in accordance with the broadest and most progressive law.⁶⁶

Lenin planned to have the armistice negotiations with Germany conducted by the acting commander-in-chief of the army, Gen. Nikolai Dukhonin, whose headquarters was located in Mogilev. The patriotic army leader, however, refused to obey Lenin's orders. On November 22 [9], 1917, Lenin conversed with Dukhonin by telephone and, receiving an evasive answer, dismissed him:

In the name of the government of the Russian Republic and at the behest of the Council of People's Commissars, we are dismissing you from the post occupied by you for refusing to comply with the orders of the government and for conduct that entails untold hardship for the toiling masses of all countries and for the armies in particular. We order you, under penalty of the war laws, to carry on pending the arrival at the Headquarters of a new Supreme Commander or of a person empowered by the latter to take over affairs from you. Ensign Krylenko has been appointed the new Supreme Commander.⁶⁷

General Dukhonin was killed by a mob of soldiers. The armistice negotiations then proceeded.⁶⁸

Arrests of political opponents started soon after the seizure of power by Lenin's party. Without denying the facts, Lenin promised that his "terrorism" would be milder than the terrorism, for example, of the French revolution. Almost apologetically, he told the Petrograd Soviet, on November 17 [4], 1917:

. . . Yes, we do arrest, and today we arrested the director of the State Bank. We are being reproached for applying terror, but we don't do it as it

⁶⁶ *Istoriya Sovetskoi Konstitutsii (v Dokumentakh) 1917-1956* (History of the Soviet Constitution (in Documents) 1917-1956) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Yuridicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Juridical Literature), 1957), p. 52.

⁶⁷ Lenin, "Razgovor Pravitel'stva so Stavkoi po Pryamomu Provodu 9 (22) Noyabrya 1917 g." (Conversation of the Government with Army Headquarters by Direct Wire, November 9 [22], 1917), *Sochineniya*, vol. XXVI (1949), p. 278.

⁶⁸ See ch. III.

was done by the French revolutionists, who guillotined unarmed people; I hope we will not have to apply it, because force is on our side.⁶⁹

Later that month on December 11 [November 28], 1917, a special decree not only outlawed the liberal Kadet (Constitutional-Democratic) party, but prescribed the arrest of its leaders (the rightist parties had already submerged or disappeared).

MEMBERS of leading bodies of the Kadet Party, which is a Party consisting of enemies of the people, are liable to arrest and trial by revolutionary tribunals.

The Soviets in the various localities are enjoined to exercise special surveillance over the Kadet Party in view of its connection with the Kornilov-Kaledin civil war against the revolution.

This decree enters into effect from the moment of signature.⁷⁰

The only political party that Lenin was able to win over to his side was the party of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries. Defecting from the mother organization, the official Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries succumbed to the radicalizing trends of the time. With no experienced political leaders, this shortsighted party believed that it would help to improve the political course by joining Lenin's regime. It delegated four of its members to serve in the government. This experiment of a coalition with the Communists in a government, one of the first in a long line of similar experiments outside of Russia, proved entirely futile. The influence of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries on Soviet policy was insignificant. They tried to curtail the powers of the new political police, but failed; they unsuccessfully opposed the signing of a peace treaty with Germany. When the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was signed, they quit the government on March 15, 1918.

Contrary to Communist claims, the victory of the Bolsheviks in 1917 was not the result of a popular uprising, nor did the new regime enjoy the overwhelming support of workers and peasants; actually it was and remained a minority government. The strongest factor in its emergence was the support of the demoralized and tired army, in the first place of the garrisons of the large cities. On this point a number of Soviet writers are unanimous, and Trotsky himself acknowledged that this was so.

. . . A revolutionary situation cannot be preserved at will. If the Bolsheviks had not seized the power in October and November, in all probability they would not have seized it at all A part of the workers

⁶⁹ Lenin, "Rech na Zasedanii Petrogradskogo Soveta Rabochikh i Soldatskikh Deputatov Sovmestno s Frontovymi Predstaviteliyami 4 (17) Noyabrya 1917 g." (Speech at the Meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies Along With the Representatives of the Front, November 4 [17], 1917), *Sochineniya*, vol. XXVI (1949), p. 261.

⁷⁰ Lenin, "Decree for the Arrest of the Leaders of the Civil War Against the Revolution" (December 11 [November 28], 1917), Lenin and Stalin, *The Russian Revolution*, p. 276.

would have fallen into indifferentism, another part would have burned up their force in convulsive movements, in anarchistic flareups, in guerrilla skirmishes, in a Terror dictated by revenge and despair. The breathing-spell thus offered would have been used by the bourgeoisie to conclude a separate peace with the Hohenzollern, and stamp out the revolutionary organizations. Russia would again have been included in the circle of capitalist states as a semi-imperialist, semi-colonial country.⁷¹

"A good detachment of five hundred men," wrote Nikolai Sukhanov, "would have been entirely sufficient to liquidate Smolny and everyone there."

Boris Souvarine, a French Communist leader of Lenin's time, now an opponent of the Communists, said:

What the Bolsheviks now call the "proletarian revolution" of October 1917 was an armed coup against a defenseless government, led by a military committee on behalf of a minority party. Thereupon, this "revolution from above" was imposed on the peoples of the Empire, who unquestionably desired peace, and on the peasants, who unquestionably wanted the land, but neither of whom wanted either socialism or communism.⁷²

8. The Constituent Assembly and Its Dispersion

Both as a slogan and a program, the Constituent Assembly had been popular in Russia since 1905. The government that took over after the fall of the monarchy was viewed as, and called itself, Provisional, because it was expected to turn over all authority to a Constituent Assembly, the convening of which was one of the Provisional Government's primary duties. In the demand for a Constituent Assembly Lenin's party was no less insistent than other political groups. To organize elections, however, in a large country and in a time of war was a difficult task, and the Kerensky government had had to postpone them more than once. The Bolsheviks protested vehemently against the delay.

Lenin accused Kerensky's government of sabotaging the Assembly:

. . . Our Party alone, having assumed power, can secure the convocation of the Constituent Assembly: and, having assumed power, it will accuse the other parties of procrastination and will be able to substantiate its accusations.⁷³

In a similar vein, Trotsky, on October 20 [7], said: "the bourgeois classes have set themselves the goal of obstructing elections to the Con-

⁷¹ Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. III, pp. 154, 155.

⁷² Boris Souvarine, "'October': Myths and Realities," *The New Leader*, vol. XL, No. 44 (November 4, 1957), p. 17.

⁷³ Lenin, "The Bolsheviks Must Assume Power," A Letter to the Central Committee and to the Petrograd and Moscow Committees of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (September 25-27 [12-14], 1917), *Selected Works* (1935 ed.), vol. VI, p. 216.

stituent Assembly.” And on November 3 [October 26] *Pravda* wrote: “Comrades! By your blood you have assured the convention in time of the All-Russian Constituent Assembly, master of the Russian land.”⁷⁴

A number of the Soviet decrees of this era noted that definitive decisions on various problems would be made by the future Constituent Assembly.

Having assumed power, Lenin kept to the plan laid down by the Provisional Government, and the elections took place on November 25–27 [12–14], 1917; the voting procedures were fair and the balloting was conducted, on the whole, without disturbances.⁷⁵ A total of 41,686,876 votes were cast of which about 11,000,000 were for local parties or parties of national minorities (the Ukrainian parties obtained 4,957,000 votes). The votes for the Russian parties were, in round figures, as follows:

Democratic parties:

Socialist-Revolutionaries.....	15,848,000
Mensheviks.....	1,365,000
Smaller groups.....	505,000

Total..... 17,718,000

Liberals and Rightists:

Kadets.....	1,987,000
Cossacks.....	663,000

Total..... 2,650,000

Bolshevik Party..... 9,845,000

Lenin's party obtained 25 percent of the vote and continued a minority; the moderate socialists had almost double the vote of the Bolsheviks. In the large cities the ratio of Bolshevik votes, while better, did not represent a majority. The Bolsheviks achieved their greatest successes in certain of the front armies. In the Western Front Army, for example, the vote in round figures was:

Bolsheviks.....	653,000
Socialist-Revolutionaries.....	181,000
Kadets.....	17,000
Others.....	125,000

Total..... 976,000

⁷⁴ As quoted in M. V. Vishniak, *Vserossiiskoe Uchreditelnoe Sobranie* (All-Russian Constituent Assembly) (Paris: Izdatelstvo "Sovremennye Zapiski" (Contemporary Notes Publishing House), 1932), p. 87.

⁷⁵ The figures that follow are taken from Oliver Henry Radkey, *The Elections to the Russian Constituent Assembly of 1917* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 16, 36.

Where votes cast by local garrisons were counted separately, the results were similar. In Kozlov, for example, the army units cast 4,045 votes, 3,006 of them for the Bolsheviks.

In the end, of the 707 members elected to the Constituent Assembly, 370 (more than a majority) were of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party and 175 were Bolsheviks; the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, allies of the Bolsheviks, won 40 seats.

. . . Apparently the Bolsheviks, or at least some of their leaders, expected to come out ahead with the help of the Left SR's until they saw the handwriting on the wall as returns from the black-earth zone began pouring in during the second week of the balloting. They realized then that most of the SR deputies would adhere to the centrist or right-wing factions of that huge but disintegrated party; they were seized with alarm and, shrilly accusing the Commission of falsification and other abuses, decreed its arrest on November 23, only to release it a few days later without having substantiated the charges.⁷⁶

The Soviet government could not, however, simply forbid the Constituent Assembly; it had to convene it at least once. Lenin's tactic, which was approved by the party's leadership, was to submit to the Constituent Assembly a resolution approving the actions of the Soviet regime and acknowledging that all power must belong to the Soviets; if the resolution was rejected, the Constituent Assembly was to be dissolved.

The Constituent Assembly convened on January 18 [5], 1918. The Bolshevik faction submitted a "Draft Declaration of the Rights of the Toiling and Exploited People," the first paragraph of which read:

1. Russia is hereby declared a republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. All power centrally and locally belongs to the Soviets.

* * * * *

. . . the Constituent Assembly considers that its own duty must be limited to establishing a fundamental basis for the socialist reconstruction of society.⁷⁷

The January 18 [5] session of the Constituent Assembly was its first and last. The spokesmen of the two socialist parties were Viktor Chernov and Irakli Tseretelli; Lenin, through present, did not address the Assembly.

. . . After much debate the Constituent Assembly majority rejected the Bolshevik platform and voted to record their stand on the war, the agrarian problem, and Russia's form of government. Thereupon the Bolshevik deputies rose in a body and marched out.

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⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁷⁷ Lenin, "Draft Declaration of the Rights of the Toiling and Exploited People" (January 1918), Lenin and Stalin, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 298, 300.

Dawn was already breaking when the remaining deputies, representing the elected majority, started to read their decrees. . . . Chernov was reading the decree on land when a sailor seized him by the arm and said, "It's time to finish. We have an order from the People's Commissar."

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. . . The guards continued to shout: "Come on, time to finish. We'll turn off the lights." . . . When the chair finally recessed the meeting, it was morning.

* * * * *

Before noon, when the Assembly was slated to reconvene, the deputies found the entrance to the Tauride Palace barred by a detachment of troops with rifles, machine guns, and two fieldpieces. On the same day—January 19, 1918—a decree of the Sovnarkom abolished the Constituent Assembly.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Shub, *op. cit.*, pp. 287, 288.

Chapter III. The Program of the First Soviet Regime

1. Peace, Land, Equality

The numerous public announcements, decrees, and orders issued during the first few weeks of the new government contained a grandiose program for the political and economic transformation of Russia. They were also intended to appeal to leftist movements in the West; the outbreak of the world revolution (starting in Germany) was expected in a matter of weeks. The most important of the initial Soviet reforms are mentioned below; they are significant because they furnish a standard to measure the extent to which the actual course of the Soviet governments in subsequent decades deviated from the pledges and plans of its initial era.

Turning its attention first to the war situation, Lenin's government denied that it would conclude a separate peace with Germany. On the government's initiative, the Second Congress of Soviets adopted a "Decree on Peace," which contained an appeal to all the warring peoples to conclude "a just and democratic peace," and to begin by declaring an immediate 3-month armistice.

The workers' and peasants' government created by the revolution of November 6-7 [October 24-25] and backed by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies calls upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just and democratic peace.

By a just, or democratic, peace, for which the vast majority of the working and toiling classes of all belligerent countries, exhausted, tormented and racked by the war, are craving, a peace that has been most definitely and insistently demanded by the Russian workers and peasants ever since the overthrow of the tsarist monarchy—by such a peace the government means an immediate peace without annexations (*i.e.*, the seizure of foreign lands, or the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and indemnities.¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, Decree on Peace contained in "Report on the Peace Question," Delivered November 8 [October 26], 1917 at the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, *Selected Works* (Moscow: Co-Operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the U.S.S.R., 1935), vol. VI, p. 401. The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was held November 7 and 8 [October 25 and 26], 1917.

On the subject of annexation by force of foreign lands and independent nations, the decree (written by Lenin) contained the following statement:

In accordance with the sense of justice of the democracy in general, and of the toiling classes in particular, the government interprets the annexation, or seizure, of foreign lands as meaning the incorporation into a large and powerful state of a small or feeble nation without the definitely, clearly and voluntarily expressed consent and wish of that nation, irrespective of the time such forcible incorporation took place, irrespective of the degree of development or backwardness of the nation forcibly annexed to, or forcibly retained within, the frontiers of the given state, and finally, irrespective of whether the nation inhabits Europe or distant, overseas countries.²

Violently opposed to "secret diplomacy," the new government promised to make public and to void all "predatory" international treaties signed by Russia; by implication this meant, of course, that no secret treaties would be concluded in the future.

The government abolishes secret diplomacy and, for its part, expresses its firm determination to conduct all negotiations quite openly before the whole people. It will immediately proceed to the full publication of the secret treaties ratified or concluded by the government of landlords and capitalists during the period March [February] to November 7 [October 25], 1917.³

The "Decree on the Land" was promulgated at the same session. This decree shrewdly followed the outline of reforms that had been proposed by Lenin's main adversaries, the Socialist-Revolutionaries—a fact that Lenin openly acknowledged. In his effort to win the support of the peasantry and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, Lenin incorporated in his decree such ideas (rejected earlier by Russian Marxists) as equalitarian land tenure, "socialization" of the land, and abolition of private land property. The decree stated:

The question of the land in its full scope can be settled only by a National Constituent Assembly.

The most just settlement of the land question is as follows:

1) *The right of private property in land shall be abolished in perpetuity; land shall not be purchased, sold, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise alienated.*

All land, whether state, appanage, tsar's, monastic, church, factory, primogenitory, private, public, peasant, etc., shall be taken over without

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 402. Concerning subsequent developments in the war and in the peace negotiations, see ch. IX.

compensation and become the property of the whole people, to be used by those who cultivate it.

* * * * *

2) All mineral wealth, *e.g.*, ore, oil, coal, salt, etc., as well as forests and waters of state importance, shall be reserved for the exclusive use of the state. . . .

* * * * *

7) Land tenure shall be on an equality basis, *i.e.*, the land shall be distributed among the toilers in conformity with either the labour standard or the consumption standard, as local conditions shall warrant.

There shall be absolutely no restriction as to the forms of land tenure: household, farm, communal, or co-operative, as shall be determined in each individual village.⁴

In his speech before the congress Lenin said:

I hear voices stating that the decree itself and the Instructions were drawn up by the Socialist-Revolutionaries. Be it so. Does it matter who drew it up? As a democratic government, we cannot ignore the decision of the rank and file of the people, even though we may disagree with it. . . .⁵

A few days later, in an official statement, Lenin indicated the essence of his agrarian upheaval:

. . . all landed estates pass wholly and entirely into the hands of the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

The rural area Land Committees must immediately take all landed estates under their control, keeping a strict inventory. . . .

* * * * *

The Council of People's Commissars calls upon the peasants themselves to take the whole power in their localities into their own hands.⁶

The first steps toward organization of a "Socialist national economy" were the decrees⁷ of December 14 [1] concerning the creation of a Supreme Council of National Economy, and December 27 [14] concerning the "nationalization of banks":

1. The Supreme Council of National Economy is established [as an organ] attached to the Soviet of People's Commissars.

2. The work of the Supreme Council of National Economy is to organize the national economy and state finances. . . .

⁴ Lenin, "Report on the Land Question," Delivered November 8 [October 26], 1917 at the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, *Selected Works*, vol. VI, pp. 407, 408.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 409.

⁶ Lenin, "Reply to Peasants' Questions" (November 18 [5], 1917), *Lenin Stalin 1917, Selected Writings and Speeches* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1938), pp. 643, 644.

⁷ These decrees were issued by the Central Executive Committee, elected by the Congress of Soviets; see ch. II, p. 59, note 57.

3. The Supreme Council of National Economy has the right to confiscate, requisition, sequester, and consolidate various branches of industry, commerce, and other enterprises in the field of production, distribution, and state finance.⁸

The decree on banking read as follows:

1. Banking is hereby declared a state monopoly.
2. All existing private joint-stock banks and other banking houses are to become a part of the State Bank.
3. Assets and liabilities of establishments in the process of liquidation will be assumed by the State Bank.

* * * * *

6. The interests of small depositors will be fully protected.⁹

In addition to these two socializing measures, "Workers' Control"¹⁰ was introduced by the Council of People's Commissars on November 27 [14], 1917. It tended toward elimination of private enterprise.

1. In the interests of a systematic regulation of national economy, Workers' Control is introduced in all industrial, commercial, agricultural [and similar] enterprises which are hiring people to work for them in their shops or which are giving work to take home. This control is to extend over the production, storing, buying and selling of raw materials and finished products as well as over the finances of the enterprise.

2. The workers will exercise this control through their elected organizations, such as factory and shop committees, Soviets of elders, etc. The office employees and the technical personnel are also to have representation in these committees.

* * * * *

8. The rulings of the organs of Workers' Control are binding on the owners of enterprises and can be annulled only by decisions of the higher organs of Workers' Control.¹¹

On February 10 [January 28], 1918, the Central Executive Committee promulgated a decree annulling all state loans, both internal and external. The decree read in part:

1. All state loans made by the governments of the Russian landowners and bourgeoisie. . . . are hereby annulled (abolished) as from December 1917. . . .

* * * * *

3. All foreign loans without exception are unconditionally annulled.¹²

⁸ James Bunyan and H. H. Fisher, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1918* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934), p. 314.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

¹⁰ The word "control" in Russian implies less power than does the word in English; its meaning in Russian is approximately "check," "revision," "supervision."

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 308, 309.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 602.

Long before trade at home was taken over by the state, all foreign trade had been nationalized. The decree by the Council of People's Commissars on April 22, 1918 prescribed:

All foreign trade is to be nationalized. Contracts with foreign countries and foreign commercial houses for buying or selling of all kinds of products (raw, industrial, agricultural, etc.) are to be made in the name of the Russian Republic by specially authorized organs. Aside from these organs all export and import agreements are forbidden.¹³

The decree of April 27, 1918 abolishing the right of inheritance was a sweeping one:

Inheritance both by law and by testament is abolished. After the death of the owner the property which belongs to him (movable and immovable) becomes state property of the R[ussian] S[oviet] F[ederative] S[ocialist] R[epublic].¹⁴

The decree of November 11 [October 29], introducing the eight-hour working day, was one of the very first decisions of the Council of People's Commissars: "The working time . . . should not exceed 8 working hours a day and 48 hours a week"; however, "until the end of the war" operations, the new regulation of overtime may not be applied in war industries.¹⁵

Other decrees did away with personal titles and the division of the population into estates. The decree confirmed by the Central Executive Committee on November 23 [10], 1917 read:

1. All classes and class distinctions which have hitherto existed in Russia, class privileges and class limitations, class organizations and institutions, as well as all civil ranks are abolished.

2. All estates (noble, merchant, commoner, peasant, etc.), . . . are abolished and in their places the inhabitants of Russia are to have one common name to all—citizens of the Russian Republic.¹⁶

The new government was just as radical in regard to titles and privileges in the army. The very terms "general," "major," "captain," "officer," and others were forbidden. The decree of December 29 [16], 1917 by the Council of People's Commissars said:

Carrying out the desire of the revolutionary people for the speedy and determined abolition of all remnants of former inequality in the army, the Council of People's Commissars resolves:

(1) All ranks and titles in the army, starting with that of corporal and ending with that of general, are abolished. The Army of the Russian

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 617.

¹⁴ *Izvestia*, May 1, 1918. The decree was issued by the Central Executive Committee.

¹⁵ Bunyan and Fisher, *op. cit.*, pp. 304-308.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

Republic henceforth consists of free and equal citizens, bearing the honorable rank of soldier of the revolutionary army.

(2) All privileges connected with former ranks and titles, as well as all external distinctions, are abolished.

(3) All addressing by title is abolished.

(4) All orders and other insignia are abolished. . . .¹⁷

A proclamation dealing with the problem of Russia's nationalities was among the first public statements of the new regime. An end must be put, the Council of People's Commissars said in its declaration of November 15 [2], 1917, to the old policy.

An end must be made to this unworthy policy of falsehood and distrust, of cavil and provocation.¹⁸

From now on all nationalities, large and small, were to enjoy equality and freedom, including the privilege of secession from the Russian state. In view of the strong secessionist movements of the time, especially in the Ukraine and Finland, this pledge went far to satisfy the wishes of these nationalities:

. . . In compliance with the will of these [Soviet] Congresses, the Soviet of People's Commissars has resolved to adopt as the basis of its activity on the problem of nationalities in Russia the following principles:

1. Equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia.

2. The right to free self-determination of the peoples of Russia even to the point of separating and forming independent states.

3. Abolition of each and every privilege or limitation based on nationality or religion.

4. Free development of national minorities and ethnographic groups inhabiting Russian territory.¹⁹

The first decree on religion, promulgated by the Council of People's Commissars February 5, 1918, separated the church from the state but did not yet accord any privileges to antireligious or atheistic propaganda:

1. The church is separated from the state.

2. Within the territory of the Republic the passing of any local laws or regulations limiting or interfering with freedom of conscience or granting special rights or privileges to citizens because they belong to a certain faith is forbidden.

¹⁷ "Ob Upravnenii v Pravakh Vsekh Voennosluzhashchikh" (On the Equalization of Rights of All Military Personnel), *Istoriya Sovetskoi Konstitutsii (v Dokumentakh) 1917-1956* (History of the Soviet Constitution (in Documents) 1917-1956) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Yuridicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Juridical Literature), 1957), p. 90.

¹⁸ Bünyan and Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

¹⁹ "Deklaratsiya Prav Narodov Rossii" (Declaration of the Rights of the People of Russia), *Istoriya Sovetskoi Konstitutsii* . . . , p. 58. The Council of People's Commissars issued this decree on November 15 [2], 1917.

3. Every citizen has a right to adopt any religion or not to adopt any at all. Every legal restriction connected with the profession of certain faiths or with the non-profession of any faith is now abolished.

* * * * *

9. The school is separated from the church. The teaching of religion in state and public schools, as well as in private schools where general subjects are taught, is forbidden.²⁰

A new army, the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, was created. A new task for the traditionally antimilitarist Bolshevik movement, it was several months before Lenin's group learned the rules of effective military organization. The first orders following the November upheaval were propagandistic and unrealistic. The decree of December 29 [16], 1917 provided for election of commanders by the troops; the decree of January 28[15], 1918, was intended to create an army on a voluntary basis; applicants for enlistment in the army required "recommendations," and only "toiling" people (meaning no members of families of privileged classes) would be accepted.

Political asylum, which had been enjoyed by most of the Bolshevik leaders abroad, was provided for (Central Executive Committee decree of March 28, 1918); at this stage it was not stressed that only foreign Communists or pro-Communists would be able to take advantage of this privilege:

Any foreigner persecuted in his native country for crimes of a political or religious nature is entitled to asylum if he comes to Russia.

Extradition of such persons at the demand of the countries whose subjects they are may not be effected.²¹

In his first comments on the draft of a Soviet constitution Lenin wanted to incorporate the idea that the new state would grow in the future and expand to embrace other "Socialist nations":

8. As a socialist soviet system is established in other countries, the R.S.F.S.R. joins with them in an integrated Union of socialist Federations of soviet republics.²²

These were the declaratory acts of the new government, intended at this moment as propaganda rather than actual policy. "Our government," Lenin said, "may not last long, but these decrees will be part of history."²³

²⁰ Bunyan and Fisher, *op. cit.*, pp. 590, 591.

²¹ "O Prave Ubezshishcha" (On the Right of Asylum), *Istoriya Sovetskoi Konstitutsii* . . . , p. 58.

²² "Popravki k Proektu Konstitutsii RSFSR [Ranee 28 Iyunya 1918 goda]" (Corrections to the Draft of the Constitution of the RSFSR [Before June 28, 1918]), *Istoriya Sovetskoi Konstitutsii* . . . , p. 132.

²³ Simon Liberman, *Building Lenin's Russia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), p. 8.

. . . even if the Russian Soviet Government is crushed by world imperialism tomorrow, as a result of an agreement between German and Anglo-French imperialism, for example—even in this worst possible case, Bolshevik tactics will still have brought enormous benefit to Socialism, and will have assisted the growth of the invincible world revolution.²⁴

The system of government established in November 1917 has become known as the "Soviet system." The first Soviet Constitution of July 10, 1918 embodied the ideas of a "Soviet democracy," which is different from both the old Russian autocracy and Western democracy. Its basis was the local Soviet, elected by the "toilers" (workers, peasants and intellectuals); regional conferences of local Soviets elected the governments of their areas; All-Russian Soviet congresses, according to the constitution, wielded supreme power and elected the Central Executive Committees. The latter appointed the Soviet governments. Since over 90 per cent of the population was entitled to vote in the election of local Soviets, and since the program of the Soviet government emphasized abolition of the privileges of the rich in favor of the poor, the Soviet leadership claimed for this system superiority over every other system of government; it was "the most democratic" in the world, even if the political freedoms which were viewed abroad as an element of democracy were practically abolished.

The Soviet state assumed at first the name "Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic," often abbreviated into RSFSR. In this name, Federation referred, according to the constitution, to various supposedly self-governing areas inhabited by non-Russian national minorities. (The Soviet government claimed to be the only authority for all of the territory of pre-revolutionary Russia but in early 1918 its control over much of the territory was limited by German occupation, local independence movements and the like. In 1924 the RSFSR became part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, along with the newly reacquired areas in the Caucasus in the South and West.)

This formal structure did not reveal the actual system of government, however. Along with the structure of Soviets there existed and grew the structure of the Bolshevik (Communist) party. The party also possessed its units ("cells") in cities and towns; its "committees" actually dominated the Soviets and wielded power in their areas; its provincial conferences elected "committees" which controlled all Soviet agencies in their areas. The congresses of the Bolshevik party elected a Central Committee, which appointed its Political Bureau ("Politburo"). The Politburo actually wielded unlimited power over the country, also appointing and dismissing ministers ("peoples' commissars"); its power,

²⁴ Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" (November 10, 1918), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VII, p. 184.

unlimited by law, was tantamount to an unlimited dictatorship. The group ruling in the Politburo, strong enough to perpetuate itself, consisted first of Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Grigori Zinoviev, Lev Kamenev and Nikolai Bukharin.

2. Dictatorship and the Principles of Morality

“Transition to Socialism,” the aim of the new government was, according to Lenin, possible only in dictatorial forms; Lenin gave a correct definition of dictatorship as a ruling power which is above the law, which defies law, and which can have recourse to any means.

. . . The scientific concept “dictatorship” means nothing more nor less than unrestricted power, absolutely unimpeded by laws or regulations and resting directly upon force. *This is the meaning of the concept “dictatorship” and nothing else.*²⁵

The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is power won and maintained by the violence of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, power that is unrestricted by any laws.²⁶

But Communist dictatorship, identified with Soviet dictatorship, was at the same time, according to this theory, the highest form of democracy because it served the interests of the poor, who constitute the majority in every nation:

What is the difference between socialists and anarchists? Anarchists don't recognize authority, whereas socialists, including Bolsheviks, are in favor of authority for the transition period from our present status to socialism, toward which we are striving.

We bolsheviks are for a stern rule; but for a rule which would be the rule of the workers and peasants.²⁷

Lenin, the undisputed leader, could, unlike his successors, state openly that the dictatorship in Russia was his personal dictatorship; he did not try to emphasize “collective leadership” because, in his eyes, his personal rule was democracy. More than once did he stress this paradoxical view:

The irrefutable experience of history has shown that in the history of revolutionary movements the dictatorship of individual persons was very

²⁵ Lenin, “A Contribution to the History of the Question of Dictatorship” (October 20, 1920), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. VII, p. 254.

²⁶ Lenin, “The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky” (November 10, 1918), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. VII, p. 123.

²⁷ Lenin, “Zaklyuchitelnoe Slovo 18 Noyabrya (1 Dekabrya) na Chrezvychainom, Vserossiiskom S'ezde Sovetov Krestyanskikh Deputatov” (Concluding Speech at the Extraordinary All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, November 18 (December 1) [1917]), *Sochineniya* (Works) (4th ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Political Literature), 1941–58), vol. XXVI (1949), p. 294.

often the vehicle, the channel of the dictatorship of the revolutionary classes.²⁸

. . . that Soviet socialist democracy is not contradictory to individual management and dictatorship in any way; that the will of a class may sometimes be carried out by a dictator, who at times may do more alone and who is frequently more necessary.²⁹

The relationship between ultimate political aims, meaning the establishment of communism, and the means used to achieve them were frankly stated. Communist morality, contrary to the ethics of other political systems, subordinated means to ends and approved the use of any means if they promote Communist objectives:

. . . When people talk to us about morality we say: For the Communist, morality consists entirely of compact united discipline and conscious mass struggle against the exploiters. We do not believe in eternal morality, and we expose all the fables about morality.

* * * * *

. . . At the basis of Communist morality lies the struggle for the consolidation and consummation of communism. That also is the basis of Communist training, education and tuition.³⁰

We say that our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. Our morality is deduced from the class struggle of the proletariat.³¹

Advising Communists abroad (to penetrate trade unions), Lenin frankly stated his strategic principles:

. . . It is necessary . . . to resort to all sorts of stratagems, manoeuvres and illegal methods, to evasion and subterfuges in order to penetrate the trade unions, to remain in them, and to carry on Communist work in them at all costs.³²

Guided by their own special concept of morality, Communists viewed an act as evil if committed by its enemies, and the same act as good if carried out by itself. In foreign affairs, for example, the view was accepted that a treaty is only a formality and may be violated by the Soviet government if such a violation is advantageous:

. . . In war you must never tie your hands with the considerations of formality. It is ridiculous not to know the history of war, not to know

²⁸ Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" (March-April 1918), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. VII, p. 341.

²⁹ Lenin, "Economic Development," Speech Delivered March 31, 1920 at the Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.) vol. VIII, p. 222.

³⁰ Lenin, "The Tasks of the Youth League," Speech Delivered October 2, 1920 at the Third All-Russian Congress of the Russian Young Communist League, *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. IX, pp. 478, 479.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 475.

³² Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism, An Infantile Disorder" (April 27, 1920), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. X, p. 95.

that a treaty is a means of gaining strength. . . . the history of war shows as clearly as clear can be that the signing of a treaty after defeat is a means of gaining strength.³³

Secret treaties concluded by the pre-Soviet governments of Russia were made public by Trotsky in his capacity of People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs; every Soviet leader condemned "secret diplomacy" conducted "behind the backs of the people" and promised that never, under Soviet conditions, would secret diplomacy be revived.

. . . The Soviet Government in a revolutionary manner has torn the veil of mystery from foreign politics. . . . in the present era . . . it is a question of life and death for tens of millions of people.³⁴

The Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party (1918)³⁵ gave the Central Committee authority to break treaties not only with Germany but with any "bourgeois" government. In a secret resolution, it said:

. . . the Congress emphasizes that special authority is given the Central Committee at any time to annul all peace treaties with imperialist and bourgeois states as well as to declare war on them.³⁶

In the summer of 1918, however, the first Soviet-German secret negotiations started, and secret agreements were concluded;³⁷ subsequently secret diplomacy was abundantly used.

Proceeding from the same principles, Communists did not condemn wars in general; in particular, it was said, wars are good when they are waged in the interests of the Communist movement:

. . . If war is waged by the exploiting class with the object of strengthening its class rule, such a war is a criminal war, and "defencism" in such a war is a base betrayal of socialism. If war is waged by the proletariat after it has conquered the bourgeoisie in its own country, and is waged with the object of strengthening and extending socialism, such a war is legitimate and "holy."³⁸

³³ Lenin, "Speech in Reply to the Debate on the Report on War and Peace," Delivered March 8, 1918 at the Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. VII, p. 309.

³⁴ Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" (November 10, 1918), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. VII, pp. 133, 134.

³⁵ This Bolshevik Congress, held in March 1918, renamed the party—Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik), usually abbreviated into RCP(B).

³⁶ Lenin, "Dopolnenie k Rezolyutsii o Voine i Mire" (Addition to the Resolution on War and Peace), Introduced at the Seventh Congress of the All-Russian Communist Party, March 6–8, 1918, *Sochineniya*, vol. XXVII (1950), p. 99.

³⁷ See David J. Dallin, *Russia and Postwar Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), pp. 68, 69.

³⁸ Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Childishness and Petty-Bourgeois Mentality" (May 3–5, 1918), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. VII, p. 357.

It does not matter who the aggressor is: if a war is initiated by a Communist government it signifies progress and must be assisted. Therefore, the division of wars into aggressive and defensive ones must be rejected; the only correct division is between "revolutionary" wars, which are good, and "reactionary" wars, which are evil:

. . . The character of the war (whether reactionary or revolutionary) is not determined by who the aggressor was, or whose territory the "enemy" has occupied; it is *determined by the class* that is waging the war, and the politics of which this war is a continuation.³⁹

The role of the Red Army as a means of socialist transformation became evident in the Soviet-Polish war of 1920. On Lenin's initiative, and against the advice of Trotsky and others, the Red Army, having first repelled the Polish forces, crossed into Poland and marched on Warsaw; a revolutionary committee of five Polish-Russian Communists was set up in Bialystok as a nucleus of the future Polish government.

. . . in Lenin's eyes Warsaw and, for that matter, all Poland, held a secondary place. The center of his interest was Germany. If Warsaw fell, Soviet troops would have reached the German border; a German Soviet Government would have been formed and kept in readiness, and Communist and semi-Communist forces inside Germany would have been able, in view of the widespread dissatisfaction with the terms of the Versailles Treaty—so it was reasoned in Moscow—to overthrow the weak government in power.⁴⁰

Lenin announced that the basis of the Versailles Treaty had become shaky. He was looking forward to a Soviet-German military coalition with its own invincible Soviet-German Red Army. Said Zinoviev:

The future development of the world revolution will proceed at the same pace as the march of our Red Army. The Russian proletarian revolution has become the mightiest sovereign state in the world. *Menacing the aristocratic white Warsaw, we by that very action tear to scraps the treaty of Versailles.*⁴¹

In the end the Soviet campaign failed. The Red Army was thrown back from Warsaw and retreated into Soviet territory and the attempt at expanding the Soviet system by military means ended. It was not the last experiment of this kind, however; it was to be repeated the next year in Mongolia with a better success, and then, between 1939 and 1948 in Eastern and Central Europe.

³⁹ Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" (November 10, 1918), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. VII, p. 177.

⁴⁰ David J. Dallin, *Russia and Postwar Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), p. 54.

⁴¹ *Petrograd Pravda*, August 13, 1920, p. 2.

3. The First Stages of the Social Upheaval

Civil war,⁴² which broke out in Russia in the summer of 1918, was accompanied and aggravated by a number of economic upheavals of which the most important was Lenin's offensive against the peasantry. This action became known as the drive of the Committees of the Poor against the well-to-do elements of the peasantry. At the root of this policy lay Lenin's mistrust, even fear, of the peasants as embodying the greatest support of private economy and of capitalism in a Soviet land.

. . . unfortunately, very, very much of small production still remains in the world, and small production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously and on a mass scale.⁴³

Socialism means the abolition of classes.

In order to abolish classes one must, firstly, overthrow the landlords and capitalists. That part of our task has been accomplished, but it is only a part, and moreover, *not the most difficult* part. In order to abolish classes one must, secondly, abolish the difference between workingman and peasant, *one must make them all workers*. This cannot be done all at once.

In order to solve the second and most difficult part of the problem, the proletariat, after having defeated the bourgeoisie, must unswervingly conduct its policy towards the peasantry along the following fundamental lines: the proletariat must separate, demarcate the peasant toiler from the peasant owner, the peasant worker from the peasant huckster, the peasant who labours from the peasant who profiteers. In this demarcation lies the *whole essence* of socialism.⁴⁴

Lenin tried to discover a duality—pro-Communist and anti-Communist—in the peasant:

The peasant as a toiler gravitates towards socialism, and prefers the dictatorship of the workers [meaning Communist regime] to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The peasant as a seller of grain gravitates towards the bourgeoisie, to free trade, i.e., back to the "habitual" old "primordial" capitalism.⁴⁵

By decree of June 11, 1918, Committees of the Poor were created all over the country; among their official tasks was the "distribution of food" and "confiscation" of food "surpluses" from the local "kulaks and rich." The idea was to carry the Soviet revolution into the villages and set up a "dictatorship of the poor peasants," who were assumed to sympathize with the Communists. Actually, of course,

⁴² See ch. IV.

⁴³ Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism, An Infantile Disorder" (May 12, 1920), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. X, p. 60.

⁴⁴ Lenin, "Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (October 30, 1919), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. VIII, pp. 8, 9.

⁴⁵ Lenin, "Privet Vengerskim Rabochim" (Greetings to the Hungarian Workers) (May 27, 1919), *Sochineniya*, vol. XXIX (1950), p. 359.

. . . Little distinction was made among different social strata of the peasantry in carrying out the requisition policy. The response of the peasants to this type of forced confiscation was what might be expected. Peasants reduced their plantings to meet only their own consumption needs, did their utmost to conceal their reserves from the requisitioning authorities, and occasionally responded to seizures by violent attacks on the food collectors. The catastrophic decline in production caused severe food shortages in the cities as well as in many rural areas. Grumbling mounted as food became increasingly scarce, and the Bolsheviks stood in danger of completely alienating the countryside. The Kronstadt revolt in March 1921 and the peasant rising in Tambov and other provinces in the winter of 1920-21 marked the height of the crisis.⁴⁶

Another economic measure of the same kind was the wholesale nationalization of all large industrial, trade, and banking units. The measure was contained in the decree of June 28, 1918, which gave a long list of enterprises taken over by the state. Carried out without preparation, it led immediately to a mass defection of owners, engineers, and part of the workers in defiance of the threat contained in the decree:

The entire employee, technical and working personnel of the enterprises, without exception, as well as the directors, members of the board of management and responsible administrators, are declared to be in the service of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic and are to receive supplies according to the scales which prevailed before the nationalization of the enterprises, from the income and turnover capital of the enterprise.

In case members of the technical and administrative personnel of the nationalized enterprises leave their posts they are liable to prosecution before the court of the revolutionary tribunal in accordance with the stringency of the law.⁴⁷

Industrial production dropped rapidly. By 1919 the Russian economy was almost completely paralyzed.

4. No Coexistence Possible

World events of that time did not justify the expectations or confirm the predictions of the Soviet leadership in regard to revolutionary developments outside of Russia. Lenin and his group, however, were reluctant to revise their views. In the first 3 years of the Soviet era Lenin repeatedly stated that the civil war in Russia marked the beginning of a worldwide social revolution; that Russia's new setup, representing an attempt to socialize one backward country, was doomed unless other nations joined Russia. Russia would cede her leading place to another

⁴⁶ Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 444.

⁴⁷ "Dekret Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov" (Decree of the Soviet People's Commissars) (June 28, 1918), *Istoriya Sovetskoi Konstitutsii* . . . , p. 138.

nation (Lenin had in view Germany) once the revolution expanded to the West. Peaceful coexistence of capitalism and socialism was not possible.

. . . As long as capitalism and Socialism exist, we cannot live in peace: in the end, one or the other will triumph—a funeral dirge will be sung either over the Soviet Republic or over world capitalism.⁴⁸

. . . International imperialism, with its mighty capital, its highly organised military technique, which is a real force, a real fortress of international capital, could not under any circumstances, on any condition, live side by side with the Soviet Republic. . . . Here lies the greatest difficulty of the Russian revolution, its great historical problem, *viz.*, the necessity of solving international problems, the necessity of calling forth an international revolution, of traversing the path from our strictly national revolution to the world revolution.⁴⁹

. . . there is no *other* alternative: *either* the Soviet government triumphs in every advanced country in the world, *or* the most reactionary imperialism triumphs, the most savage imperialism, which is throttling the small and feeble nationalities and reinstating reaction all over the world—Anglo-American imperialism, which has perfectly mastered the art of using the form of a democratic republic.

One or the other.

There is no middle course.⁵⁰

. . . Of course, the final victory of socialism in a single country is impossible.⁵¹

. . . We are living not merely in a state, but in *a system of states*, and the existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with imperialist states for a long time is unthinkable. One or the other must triumph in the end. And before that end supervenes, a series of frightful collisions between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states will be inevitable.⁵²

The “frightful collisions”—civil wars and foreign wars in which Russia would be involved—made a strong Red Army imperative:

. . . That means that if the ruling class, the proletariat, wants to hold sway, it must prove its capacity to do so by its military organisation also. . . .⁵³

⁴⁸ Lenin, “Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Nuclei Secretaries of the Moscow Organisation of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)” (November 26, 1920), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. VIII, p. 297.

⁴⁹ Lenin, “War and Peace,” Report Delivered March 7, 1918 at the Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. VII, p. 288.

⁵⁰ Lenin, “Valuable Admissions by Pitirim Sorokin” (November 21, 1918), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. VIII, pp. 148, 149.

⁵¹ Lenin, “The Activities of the Council of People’s Commissars,” Report Delivered January 24 [11], 1918 at the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets, *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. VII, p. 280.

⁵² Lenin, “Report of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) at the Eighth Party Congress” (March 18, 1919), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. VIII, p. 33.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Lenin rejected the "illusion" that Russia could, in the long run, serve as the leader of the socialist world.

. . . We are very far from having completed even the transitional period from capitalism to socialism. We have never consoled ourselves with the hope that we could finish it without the aid of the international proletariat. We never had any illusions on that score, and we know how difficult is the road that leads from capitalism to socialism. . . .⁵⁴

When the war between Germany and the Allies ended, political upheavals occurred in Germany and Austria, but not in the West; and the upheavals resulted only in the overthrow of the monarchy, not of the social system (except in Hungary and Bavaria, where Soviet Republics actually existed for a short time in 1919). Despite the slow pace of its development, however, Lenin still expected the early outbreak of a world social revolution:

. . . the rate, the tempo of development of the revolution in the capitalist countries is far slower than with us. It was obvious that when the people secured peace, the revolutionary movement would inevitably slow down. Therefore, without prophesying as to the future, we cannot now rely on this tempo becoming more rapid.⁵⁵

Communists everywhere were convinced that a revolution in the West was imminent. Elated, proud, and enthusiastic, the Soviet leadership predicted, in 1919, a great Communist upheaval in the West within a year:

. . . The movement advances at such dizzy speed that it may be said with confidence: Within a year we will already begin to forget that there was a struggle for communism in Europe, because within a year all Europe will be Communist.⁵⁶

The notion that a Communist-ruled Russia could exist side by side with the "capitalist nations" was still alien to the Soviet leadership. As late as 1921, Lenin still maintained:

. . . There is no military invasion at present; but we are isolated. . . . Until the final issue [capitalism or socialism] is decided, the state of awful war will continue.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Lenin, "The Activities of the Council of People's Commissars," Report Delivered January 24 [11], 1918 at the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets, *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. VII, p. 275.

⁵⁵ Lenin, "Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Nuclei Secretaries of the Moscow Organisation of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)" (November 26, 1920), *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. VIII, pp. 282, 283.

⁵⁶ Grigori Zinoviev, "Pod Znamya III Internatsionala" (Under the Banner of the Third International), in *Dvadsat Pyat Let R.K.P. (b) 1898-1923* (Twenty-five Years of the Russian Communist Party, 1898-1923) (Moscow: Gosizdat (State Publishing House), 1923), p. 286.

⁵⁷ Lenin, "The Tactics of the R.C.P. (B.)," Report Delivered July 5, 1921 at the Third Congress of the Communist International, *Selected Works* (1943 ed.), vol. IX, p. 242.

The Soviet leaders contemptuously rejected the principle of “noninterference” in the affairs of other nations; it was announced that the duty of the Soviet government (and not only of the Communist party) was to fight capitalism abroad. The draft of the new program of the party (1918) stressed the task of the Soviet dictatorship “to carry the revolution to the more advanced as well as, in general, to all countries.”⁵⁸

Impossibility of peaceful coexistence with the capitalist world was also expressed in a resolution of the Congress of Soviets:

. . . The Congress expresses its unshakable confidence that the Soviet government . . . will also in future do everything in its power to assist the international Socialist movement to secure and accelerate the development leading humanity to deliverance from the yoke of capitalism and hired slavery, to building a Socialist society, and to a durable, just peace among the peoples.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Sedmoi S'ezd Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii, Stenograficheskii Otchet* (Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party, Stenographic Report) (March 6–8, 1918) (Moscow: Gosizdat (State Publishing House), 1923), p. 204.

⁵⁹ “O Ratifikatsii Brestskogo Mirnogo Dogovora” ([Resolution] On the Ratification of the Brest Peace Treaty), Adopted March 15, 1918 by the Fourth Extraordinary All-Russian Congress of Soviets, *Istoriya Sovetskoi Konstitutsii* . . . , p. 116.

Chapter IV. The Civil War

1. The Years of Terror

By signing the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty the Soviet leadership expected to gain temporary relief—a “breathing spell,” in Lenin’s words. Actually there was no relief, and the situation continued to deteriorate rapidly.

In the summer of 1918, as the war in the West continued and the Germans were still occupying large Russian areas, the civil war broke out and soon assumed gigantic proportions. It lasted for over 2 years.

. . . After the repressions of the risings of [General] Kaledin on the Don, and of Dutov in the Urals, the mobile “Cossack Vendée” was consistently in revolt. In the north the Finnish counter-revolution, supported by German troops, threatened Petrograd. Presently, English and French forces were to occupy Archangel, and the Murmansk coast. On the middle Volga detachments of Czechoslovak prisoners of war on their way home raised armed revolt. On the lower Volga, Krasnov’s Cossacks were approaching Tsaritsyn. In the Kuban the first volunteers of Denikin’s future army were assembling to the south of the Caspian; Whites with some English officers from Persia threatened the Baku Commune, then in the hands of the Reds. On the Roumanian frontier Bessarabia was invaded. In the Far East the Japanese were landing at Vladivostok. . . .

In rural Russia groups of “partisans” of all colours were operating. . . . In the starving towns industrial production fell almost to zero, commerce was dying. . . .¹

The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries

. . . devised a plan for an armed uprising coupled with terrorist acts against German diplomatic representatives in Russia. On July 6, 1918, [Yakov] Blumkin, a Left Socialist Revolutionary, who was armed with credentials of the Cheka, assassinated Count Mirbach, the German Ambassador in Moscow.

With the support of several squads of soldiers and a rebel Cheka detachment, the Left Socialist Revolutionaries arrested Dzerzhinsky and seized a number of public buildings, including the Moscow Telegraph Office. Telegrams were at once dispatched throughout the country, summoning the people to revolt.²

¹ Boris Souvarine, *Stalin* (New York: Alliance Book Corp., Longmans, Green and Co., 1939), pp. 219, 220.

² David Shub, *Lenin* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1948), p. 316. For a description of the Cheka, which was headed by Dzerzhinski, see sec. 4 of this chapter.

The revolt was suppressed by harsh measures. Expecting a belligerent reaction on the part of Germany to the assassination of the German ambassador, Lenin instructed Stalin, in Tsaritsyn, to act "ruthlessly"; Stalin answered: "You may rest assured, our hand will not flinch."³ About the same time (early in July), another revolt, this one led by the (Right) Socialist-Revolutionaries, broke out in Yaroslavl. The revolt was put down and the insurgents were summarily executed.

Anti-Soviet committees sprang up in various places. In Moscow, a Right Center, a National Center, and a more liberal League for the Regeneration of Russia emerged; their aim was to prepare for an overthrow of the regime. An attempt on Lenin's life was made by Dora Kaplan, a Socialist-Revolutionary, on August 30, 1918; Lenin was wounded, but he recovered. On the same day the head of the Petrograd Cheka, Moisei Uritski, was assassinated. A large area from the Volga to Siberia fell to a Committee of the Constituent Assembly.

A "Czechoslovak Legion," which had been organized in Russia in the first years of the war, and which embraced Czech and Slovak soldiers of the Austrian-Hungarian army taken prisoners by Russia, was permitted to leave the country inasmuch as almost all of them were pro-Allied, anti-German and were prepared to fight on the Western front. The Legion tried to get to Vladivostok, from which they could be shipped to Europe.

Trotsky, the Commissar of War, ordered the legion disarmed. On May 26, when an attempt was made to carry out this order, the Czechs, then in the Volga region, rebelled and arrested the local Soviet officials.

* * * * *

On June 8, workers and soldiers allied with the Socialist Revolutionary Party joined the Czechs. And a Committee of "Members of the All-Russian Constituent Assembly" was formed which began to organize a volunteer People's Army. Cossacks from the Urals joined forces with the Czechs and the People's Army.⁴

After the March revolution the Tsar and his family were at first confined to residence in Tsarskoe Selo; in July 1917 they were transferred to Tobolsk in western Siberia where they were lodged in a former governor's house. The situation changed, however, soon after the Soviet upheaval, and in April 1918 the family, along with its servants, was removed to Ekaterinburg (now Sverdlovsk) in the Urals, where they were placed in a house in the center of the city. The family received rough treatment from its Red guards.⁵

³ J. V. Stalin, "Letter to V. I. Lenin" (July 7, 1918), *Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952-55), vol. IV (1953), p. 120.

⁴ Shub, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

⁵ William Henry Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution 1917-1921* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1957), vol. II, p. 89.

In Moscow the plan of a public trial of the Tsar was being discussed; such a trial would certainly have ended in the execution of the former monarch.

The unforeseen course of the civil war, however, led to a simpler, more expeditious and more ruthless decision: to exterminate the entire family. No court could well have passed capital sentences on young children; but they could easily be disposed of in a secret and more or less unofficial killing. Early in July Ekaterinburg was threatened from two sides by the advancing Czechs and the Russian anti-Bolshevik forces who were fighting on their side. . . .

The decision to kill all the members of the family, together with the Tsar's personal physician, Botkin, and three servants, was taken at a meeting of the Ural Territorial Soviet on July 12. The military authorities reported that Ekaterinburg could not hold out more than three days.⁶

Officially, the central government was not asked for orders by the Ekaterinburg Soviet; allegedly, it was the local Soviet which reached the decision. There can be no doubt, however, that at least Lenin and Trotsky, informed well in advance, had given their consent or their orders.

About midnight on the night of July 16, a member of the local Soviet, Yakov Yurovski, ordered the members of the Tsar's family to go to the cellar. After an hour the family and all servants were assembled in the cellar.

The Tsar stood in the middle of the room, at his side the Tsarevitch sat in a chair; on his right stood Doctor Botkin. The Tsarina and her daughters stood behind them near the wall; the three servants stood in corners of the room. Yurovsky told the Tsar (there is no clear record of the precise words which he used) that he was to be put to death. The Tsar did not understand and began to say "What?" whereupon Yurovsky shot him down with his revolver. This was the signal for the general massacre. The other executioners, seven Letts and two agents from the Cheka, emptied their revolvers into the bodies of the victims. The Tsar fell first, followed by his son. The room was filled with shrieks and groans; blood poured in streams on the floor. The chambermaid, Demidova, tried to protect herself with a pillow, and delayed her death for a short time. The slaughter was soon ended; Yurovsky fired two additional bullets into the body of the Tsarevitch, who was still groaning and the Letts thrust bayonets into any of the victims who still showed signs of life.⁷

On July 19, the Moscow press carried a short official report of the execution. However, it falsely stated that "the wife and son of Nicholas Romanov were sent to a safe place."

. . . Apparently the extermination of the former Czarina, the Czarevich, and his four sisters, was too unsavory for the public. Moreover, no code

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

of laws, even summary revolutionary justice, could admit the "execution" of the former Czar's physician, cook, chambermaid, and waiter.

The night following the death of the former Czar seven other members of the Romanov family were executed in a town in the Urals. Earlier, Grand Duke Mikhail had been shot in Perm. ⁸

After the surrender of Germany in November 1918 the civil war in Russia, which was being fought since the end of 1917, took on even greater proportions. Communist detachments tried to occupy the Baltic countries; in the Ukraine several governments fought for supremacy.

"Volunteer Armies" were organized in the south, mainly in the Don region, and in the east, beyond the Volga. General Mikhail Alekseev, who had served as the actual head of the General Staff during the World War, had been organizing anti-Bolshevik forces since November 1917. Leadership of the White armies was taken over by General Anton Denikin, commander-in-chief of the south-western front in the war with Germany. Also outstanding among the anti-Bolshevik military leaders was General Petr Krasnov, organizer of the Cossack troops along with General Aleksei Kaledin. In the east, the White armies stood under Aleksandr Kolchak, Admiral of the Russian Navy before and during the revolution. In 1918-19 Kolchak headed the anti-Soviet government in Siberia; he was proclaimed "Supreme Ruler" of Russia and he received support from the Allies.

In the course of the civil war Soviet troops

. . . penetrated into the Urals, after having dislodged the Committee of the Constituent Assembly from Samara and the Directory of the Social Revolutionaries from Ufa, but they had to retreat before [Admiral] Kolchak's White Army under the orders of the Omsk dictatorship protected by the Allies.⁹

In the course of 1919 the civil war was to be intensified

. . . with the concentric advance of the armies of Kolchak and Denikin on Moscow, and the march of [General] Yudenich on Petrograd. The Soviet Republic, cut off from its natural resources, was for a moment reduced, in the current expression, almost to the grand duchy of Moscow.¹⁰

The situation of the Whites, however, was, in a way, worse than that of the Moscow government. Divided into political groups which ferociously fought one another, without supplies and sufficient food, with only feeble help from the Allies, they were doomed. The turn of the tide came in the second half of 1919. Kolchak was the first to be repulsed.

⁸ Shub, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

⁹ Souvarine, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

2. The Red Army

After a rapid demobilization of the old army, the new Red Army was organized by Trotsky in the spring and summer of 1918. Universal conscription was introduced, but special measures had to be taken to obtain commanders for the army and insure their loyalty to the one-party regime.

Simultaneously with the introduction of compulsory military training for the workers and poorer peasants the practice of electing officers was abolished. The Bolshevik military authorities now began to talk about the harmful and disruptive influence of army committees very much as Kornilov, Denikin and the old officers had spoken in 1917; and strict obedience to the orders of the officers gradually became embedded in the discipline of the Red Army.¹¹

The reintroduction of compulsory military service helped to create an army of large dimensions. In August 1918 it

. . . numbered 331,000; this figure increased to 550,000 on September 5 and to 800,000 by the end of the year. . . . "We decided to have an army of a million men in the spring. Now we need an army of three million. We can have it and we will have it" [declared Lenin on October 4, 1918.]

Lenin's desired figure of 3,000,000 was reached on January 1, 1920; and during 1920 the Army continued to grow until it amounted to about five and a half million.¹²

Discipline in the new army was weak and loyalty doubtful. Desertions reached huge proportions despite the severe punishment meted out to deserters.

According to official Soviet figures there were 2,846,000 deserters during the years 1919 and 1920. Of these 1,543,000 appeared "voluntarily" in response to proclamations promising them immunity if they joined the ranks before specified dates, while about a million were caught in raids which were regularly organized in towns and on the railroads. . . .

. . . During the last seven months of 1919, 4,112 deserters were sentenced to death, but only 612 were actually executed, according to official figures. During the same period 55,000 deserters were sent to punishment units, where they were subjected to a very severe disciplinary regime.¹³

It was questionable, however, whether the officers of the old army, if ordered into the new military force, would be loyal to the Soviet government. A number of party leaders wanted the Red Army to be led by Communists or "proletarians"; Lenin and Trotsky disagreed with this view:

Trotsky insisted that without the old officers no regular army worthy of the name could be formed. . . .

¹¹ Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 28.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

However, Trotzky insured the loyalty of the majority of the former officers by an adroit mixture of cajolery and terrorism. He did not resort to the coarse abuse of the officers with which some of the cruder Petrograd Communists, such as Zinoviev, Volodarsky and Lashevitch, endeavored to reconcile the proletariat to the necessity of employing them.¹⁴

"Between June 12, 1918, and August 15, 1920, 48,409 former officers were taken into the Red Army."¹⁵

A number of former officers who refused to join the Red Army, or who deserted after joining, were shot. The families of the deserters were often arrested. Many former officers who refused to support the Communists succeeded in escaping to the South, however, where a White Army was being organized.

A very important rôle in the Red Army was played by the political commissars, who were supposed simultaneously to watch out for the political loyalty of the officers, to take charge of Party work in the units and to carry on political propaganda and educational work among the peasant recruits. The commissar was not supposed to interfere with the operative orders of the commander; but he was empowered to take drastic action if he suspected treason. As the civil war went on, an elaborate Communist Party organization was built up in the Army; so-called political departments were formed on every front and in every army. . . .¹⁶

3. The Communist International

The years 1919-20 witnessed the founding of the Communist International. Heir of the "Left Zimmerwald" faction,¹⁷ the new International had a base in a large country (Russia) and abundant help from its government. On the other hand, that government then placed all hope for its survival as a government on the success of the revolution abroad.

. . . The work of preparing the new international was done, quite naively at that time, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Chicherin [People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs] launched a wireless appeal for an international conference.¹⁸

The first congress, convened in March 1919, included, in addition to the Russian participants, representatives of small left socialist groups from a number of other countries.

. . . Most of the thirty-five delegates and fifteen guests had been hand-picked by the Russian Central Committee from so-called "Communist par-

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 33.

¹⁷ See chapter I.

¹⁸ F. Borkenau, *The Communist International* (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1938), p. 162.

ties" in those smaller "nations" which had formerly comprised the Russian Empire, such as Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Finland; or they were war prisoners or foreign radicals who happened to be in Russia at this time. . . . England [was represented] by a Russian *émigré* named Feinberg on Chicherin's staff; Hungary by a war prisoner who later escaped with a large sum of money.¹⁹

Grigori Zinoviev, Lenin's right-hand man, was elected President of the Communist International. In this capacity he exercised great influence, over a period of about five years, upon Communist movements in both the East and the West.

. . . He [Lenin] knew that he had in Zinoviev a reliable and docile tool and he never doubted for a moment his own ability to control that tool to the advantage of the Revolution. Zinoviev was an interpreter and executor of the will of others, and his personal shrewdness, ambiguity, and dishonesty made it possible for him to discharge these duties more effectively than could a more scrupulous man.²⁰

. . . A brilliant speaker and debater, he [Zinoviev] had the gift of dealing with various sorts of people, but an innate duplicity and love of double-dealing and intrigue very soon disgusted the most enthusiastic. He was notoriously anything but courageous, but, as is so often the case with excitable types, was capable of the wildest overrating of chances and unable to admit failure.²¹

Angelica Balabanoff, at the time a member of the supreme body of the Comintern (Communist International), described the machinery of the new organization as follows:

I was most disturbed at this time [1919] and during the coming year to find how many of our agents and representatives were individuals long discredited in the labour movement abroad. They were chosen because they had nothing in common with the labour movement and could, therefore, obey the most contradictory and outrageous orders quite mechanically and with no sense of responsibility. Adventurers, opportunists, even former Red-baiters, all were grist to Zinoviev's mill. They departed on secret missions, supplied with enormous sums—and as emissaries of Moscow to the revolutionary workers abroad, they moved in the reflected glory of the October Revolution.²²

The regular work of the Comintern was carried out by a small group of Russian leaders:

Simovjev [Zinoviev], Bukharin, and Radek formed the real day-to-day leadership of the Comintern. Occasionally Trotsky, while burdened with immense labours, lent a hand, especially in matters concerning France.²³

¹⁹ Angelica Balabanoff, *My Life as a Rebel* (New York and London: Harper & Bros., 1938), p. 213.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

²¹ Borkenau, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

²² Balabanoff, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

²³ Borkenau, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

The "second" congress, held in the summer of 1920, was actually the first large and effective congress of the Communist International; it was this congress that adopted Lenin's strict "21 demands" for membership in the new International and embraced his philosophy of bourgeois and proletarian democracy, "dictatorship of the proletariat," social revolution, and all his other tenets.

The parties affiliated to the Communist International must be built on the principle of democratic *centralism*. In the present epoch of acute civil war the Communist Party will be able to perform its duty only if it is organised in the most centralised manner, only if iron discipline bordering on military discipline prevails in it, and if its party centre is a powerful organ of authority, enjoying wide powers and the general confidence of the members of the Party.²⁴

The main idea of the Communist International, in contrast to the "weak," "impotent" Socialist International, was that the Communist International should be a strictly centralized "army" obeying orders and waging its wars with all the means at its disposal. Lenin told the Second Congress of the Communist International:

Everywhere we have a proletarian army, although sometimes badly organised, needing reorganisation; and if our international comrades now help us to organise a united army, no shortcomings will hinder us in the pursuit of our cause. And this cause is the world proletarian revolution, the cause of creating a worldwide Soviet Republic.²⁵

As to the importance of the achievements of the congress, Lenin said:

The congress created a solidarity and discipline of Communist Parties the world over such as has never existed before, and which will enable the vanguard of the workers' revolution to march forward to its great goal, the overthrow of the yoke of capital, with seven-league strides.²⁶

The new International instructed its parties not to place great hopes in democratically elected parliaments; and especially in view of an expected imminent outbreak of uprisings and revolutions, a network of underground cells should be organized everywhere, especially in the army and among the police:

Communism rejects parliamentarism as the form of the future; it rejects it as a form of the class dictatorship of the proletariat; it rejects the possibility of winning over the parliaments permanently; its fixed aim is to

²⁴ V. I. Lenin, "The Conditions of Affiliation to the Communist International" (July 1920), *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. X, p. 204.

²⁵ Lenin, "The International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International," Report Delivered July 19, 1920 at the Second Congress of the Communist International, *Selected Works*, vol. X, p. 199.

²⁶ Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International" (August-September 1920), *Selected Works*, vol. X, p. 160.

destroy parliamentarism. *Therefore there can be a question only of utilizing bourgeois state institutions with the object of destroying them.* ²⁷

it is necessary, immediately, for all legal Communist Parties to form illegal organisations for the purpose of systematically carrying on illegal work, and of fully preparing for the moment when the bourgeoisie resorts to persecution. Illegal work is particularly necessary in the army, the navy and police. ²⁸

No equality of national groups ever existed in the Communist International, contrary to all pretenses and claims. From its very beginnings the Comintern, dominated and controlled by the Russian leadership, rapidly developed into a tool of Soviet foreign policy.

the leadership of the International was entirely in the hands of the Russians, Radek being regarded as a Bolshevik and being a member of the Russian party. The Russians sincerely believed that they were working for world revolution and regarded their own revolution as part of it. But the choice of the men they delegated for this task proved that, unknown to themselves, they were Russian nationalists who regarded—already!—the other parties as auxiliaries in their cause.

. . . Trotsky, in the gazette of his armoured train, wrote an article in which he claimed to see the Red Army, after defeating the Whites, conquer Europe and attack America.²⁹

One of the first acts of the new International was to call a "Congress of the Peoples of the East" in Baku in September 1920. Although the emphasis at this congress was on antiwesternism rather than on a "proletarian" revolution, the leaders were Comintern figures: Zinoviev, Radek, Bela Kun. About 2,000 easterners were present, including 235 Turks, 192 Persians, 157 Armenians, and a few Chinese.

. . . Zinoviev brought a long speech to a passionate oratorical climax with the following outburst:

"The real revolution will blaze up only when the 800,000,000 people who live in Asia unite with us, when the African continent unites, when we see that hundreds of millions of people are in movement. Now we must kindle a real holy war against the British and French capitalists. . . We must say that the hour has struck when the workers of the whole world are able to arouse tens and hundreds of millions of peasants, to create a Red Army in the East, to arm and organize uprisings in the rear of the British, to poison the existence of every impudent British officer who lords it over Turkey, Persia, India, China."

At this moment the audience, mostly clad in colorful oriental costumes, sprang up. Swords, sabres, and revolvers were flourished in the air, while

²⁷ *Vtoroi Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala, Stenograficheskii Otchet* (Second Congress of the Communist International, Stenographic Report) (July-August 1920) (Moscow: Partizdat (Party Publishing House), 1934), pp. 587, 588.

²⁸ Lenin, "Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International" (July 4, 1920), *Selected Works*, vol. X, p. 173.

²⁹ Borkenau, *op. cit.*, pp. 164, 165.

the vow of a *jehad*, or holy war, was pronounced. Radek endeavored to conjure up the spirit of Tamerlane and Genghiz Khan. After saying that the East, under capitalist oppression, created a philosophy of patience, he added:

"We appeal, comrades, to the spirit of struggle which once animated the peoples of the East when they marched against Europe under the leadership of their great conquerors. And when the capitalists of Europe say that there is the menace of a new wave of barbarism, a new wave of Huns, we reply: Long live the Red East, which, together with the workers of Europe, will create a new culture under the banner of communism."³⁰

Although the immediate results were limited, the congress showed the direction and trend of the Comintern's drive in the Orient.

4. The Cheka

The new government, which represented rule by a small minority, could not assert itself and establish order without recourse to violence and oppression. A new police system was set up, the so-called Cheka (later Vecheka), which, after several reorganizations and changes of name, and having come to be a constant element of the Soviet government, still exists today under the title "Committee for State Security."

At the session of the Central Executive Committee on December 14, 1917, only a few weeks after the November upheaval, Leon Trotsky warned the opponents of the dictatorship that

. . . in not more than a month's time terror will assume very violent forms, after the example of the great French Revolution. The guillotine and not merely the jail will be ready for our enemies.³¹

On January 24 [11], 1918, Lenin told the Congress of Soviets that

. . . When violence is exercised by the toilers, by the masses of the exploited against the exploiters—then we are for it.³²

December 1917 marked the beginnings of the new secret police in Russia which rapidly grew to assume great powers:

. . . The Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-revolution and Sabotage (usually known from its Russian initials as the Cheka) was established by a decision of the Council of People's Commissars on December 20, 1917 . . . six weeks after the October [November] Revolution. To head the Commission the Council named Feliks Dzerzhinski, a veteran

³⁰ Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 392, 393.

³¹ As quoted in James Bunyan, *Intervention, Civil War and Communism in Russia, April-December, 1918* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1936), p. 227.

³² Lenin, "The Activities of the Council of People's Commissars," Report Delivered January 24 [11], 1918 to the Third All-Russian Congress of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, *Selected Works*, vol. VII, p. 269. The Third All-Russian Congress of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies took place in Petrograd on January 23-31 [10-18], 1918.

Bolshevik who had taken an active part in the uprising as a member of the Military Revolutionary Committee. Even before the establishment of the Cheka, Dzerzhinski had been named head of a section of the Military Revolutionary Committee to deal with cases of counterrevolution.

No formal legislation establishing the Cheka was published during its existence. It was not, in fact, until 1924 that a document was published which has sometimes been regarded as a founding decree. This document defined the functions of the Cheka as follows:

“(1) To hunt out and liquidate all counterrevolutionary [and] sabotage attempts and actions throughout Russia, no matter what their origin; (2) to hand over all saboteurs and counterrevolutionaries to the Revolutionary Tribunal and prepare measures for combating them. . . .”³³

The secret police at this initial phase was assigned to make only “preliminary investigation,” and it could not mete out punishment, according to the founding decree:

. . . (3) the commission is to carry out preliminary investigation only, to the extent necessary for suppression.³⁴

Somewhat later the jurisdiction of the Cheka was widened, yet

. . . Penalties to be imposed by the Cheka in the fulfillment of its tasks were “confiscation, deprivation of ration cards, publication of lists of enemies of the people, etc.”

The actual functions and powers of the Cheka became clear only in the course of time, by practice rather than by statute. The most important function did not find expression in the draft decree, although it may have been clear to Lenin and Dzerzhinski: the Cheka’s main task was to act as the investigative and punitive arm of the dictatorship, answerable only to the top leadership of the Party and government. Experience was to demonstrate that whatever actions the Cheka considered necessary to defend the dictatorship, including arrest, imprisonment and execution, would be approved by the Party leadership, notwithstanding any formal or legal limitations on its power.

During the first half-year of its existence the Cheka established a centralized administrative network, headed by the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission (known from its Russian initials as the VCheka, VChK or Vecheka). At first located in Petrograd, the VCheka moved to Moscow in March 1918, following the transfer there of the Soviet Government. A strong and nearly autonomous Cheka remained in Petrograd, however, directed by M. S. Uritski. It soon acquired particular notoriety for the severity of its repressive measures.³⁵

In all provinces, on the initiative of the local Bolshevik leadership, and certainly on instructions from Petrograd and Moscow, provincial and

³³ Simon Wolin and Robert M. Slusser, eds., *The Soviet Secret Police* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957), pp. 3, 4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

city Chekas emerged which arrogated to themselves the same powers as those held by the Cheka in the capital.

Despite the absence of any legislation authorizing it to make arrests, the Cheka soon assumed this power. . . .

The Cheka soon added to its powers the right to carry out summary executions, although it was clear to leading Cheka officials that such actions had no justification in law. In February 1918 the VCheka announced that it saw "no other way to combat counterrevolutionaries, spies, speculators, burglars, hooligans, saboteurs and other parasites than their merciless annihilation at the scene of the crime," and warned that its organs would carry out summary executions of all such persons. A companion proclamation called on the local soviets to shoot "enemy agents, counter-revolutionary agitators, speculators, organizers of uprisings" and other opponents of the Soviet dictatorship, and to organize local Chekas.³⁶

The initial, in a way a preparatory, stage in the history of the Cheka ended after 6 or 7 months, in the summer 1918. The start of the civil war meant a huge increase in terrorism and a widening of the Cheka's jurisdiction.

The change from sporadic acts of terrorism and violence to a deliberate and openly acknowledged policy of mass terrorism took place in the summer of 1918. The immediate cause of the change was a series of actions directed against the Bolshevik regime, beginning in June with the assassination of [M. M.] Volodarski, a Bolshevik leader, and continuing during July and August with uprisings in Moscow, Yaroslavl' and elsewhere. After an abortive uprising in Penza in August, Lenin telegraphed instructions to "put into effect a merciless mass terror against the kulaks, priests and White Guards" and to put suspects into concentration camps outside the city. A month later the chairman of the Penza soviet reported that 152 Whites had been executed in reprisal for one Communist, and promised that "in the future firmer measures will be taken in regard to the Whites."

On August 30, 1918, Lenin was wounded in Moscow by a young woman and [Moisei] Uritski, chief of the Petrograd Cheka, was assassinated. Gripped with fear, the Soviet government unleashed a policy of mass terror which continued with varying degrees of intensity throughout the Civil War. On August 31, the day after the attempt on Lenin's life, the VCheka warned that "representatives of the bourgeoisie must begin to feel the heavy hand of the working class"; on September 2 the VTsIK (All-Russian Central Executive Committee) adopted a resolution threatening "mass red terror" against the "bourgeoisie and its agents"; on the 3rd it was announced that five hundred persons had been shot in Petrograd in reprisal for the murder of Uritski; on the 4th the Commissar of Internal Affairs issued a proclamation calling for the taking of hostages from the bourgeoisie and the unwavering application of "mass terror"; and on the 5th the Commissariat of Justice issued a decree "On The Red Terror" in which the Cheka was empowered to put "class enemies" into concentration camps and execute

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 5.

"all those involved in White Guard organizations, conspiracies and insurrections."⁸⁷

The method of suppressing the political opposition by "mass terror," introduced by Lenin in 1918, became a standard system of the Soviet government and subsequently was widely used by Stalin. The execution of hundreds of avowedly innocent persons without trial was "to teach a lesson" and stop the anti-Bolsheviks from committing terroristic acts.

Authentic reports on the Cheka's part in carrying out the Red Terror during the early autumn of 1918 are contained in its *Ezhenedel'nik* [Weekly], six numbers of which were issued during September and October. Each issue contains reports on arbitrary arrests and executions and the mass murder of hostages, persons admittedly innocent of any crime but marked by the Bolsheviks for extermination because of their social origin. These actions were approved by the VCheka and the Party leaders, as was the use of torture for the extraction of information and confessions.

The Cheka's methods and the character of its personnel soon made it the object of criticism, not only among opponents of the Soviet regime but in the government and Party as well. That work in the Cheka attracted criminals, sadists and degenerates was openly admitted by the Cheka itself. Its *Weekly* candidly noted that "reports are coming in from all sides that not only unworthy but outright criminal individuals are trying to penetrate the . . . Chekas." A high-ranking Chekist, Martin Latsis, later complained that "work in the Cheka, conducted in an atmosphere of physical coercion, attracts corrupt and outright criminal elements which, profiting from their position as Cheka agents, blackmail and extort, filling their own pockets. . . . However honest a man is, however crystal-clear his heart, work in the Cheka, which is carried on with almost unlimited rights and under conditions greatly affecting the nervous system, begins to tell. Few escape the effect of the conditions under which they work."⁸⁸

Lenin always approved the Cheka's activities, if only because he himself was its creator; he prodded and incited the head of the Cheka, Feliks Dzerzhinski, to severity and mercilessness.

Replying to criticisms of the Cheka directed against just these features of its work, Lenin told a conference of Cheka representatives in November 1918 that notwithstanding the presence of "strange elements" in its ranks, the Cheka was "putting into practice the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in this respect its role is invaluable, there is no other path to the freeing of the masses than the suppression of the exploiters by force. The Cheka is engaged in this, and in this consists its service to the proletariat."⁸⁹

In almost all cases—and there were plenty of them—of a conflict between a state agency and the Cheka the latter won out.

More serious, because they raised fundamental questions of the structure and function of the government and because they were made by prominent

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 6.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Party leaders, were criticisms of the Cheka's unbridled claims to autonomy. Typical of such claims was a VCheka order of September 20, 1918, which declared, "In its activities the VCheka is absolutely autonomous, carrying out searches, arrests and executions, and reporting ex post facto to the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee." Claims of this kind inevitably brought the Cheka into conflict with other agencies of the Soviet government, particularly the Commissariat of Justice, which naturally claimed a leading role in determining who should be arrested and under what conditions. During the early period of Soviet rule the Commissariat of Justice was headed not by a Bolshevik but by a Left Socialist Revolutionary, [Isaac] Steinberg. As was to be expected, Steinberg's repeated protests against the Cheka's arbitrary arrests and executions were rejected or ridiculed by Lenin. The protests continued, however, under Steinberg's Bolshevik successors, reaching a climax at a conference of jurists in November 1918.⁴⁰

The few Bolsheviks appointed by the Central Committee of Lenin's party to head the Cheka were so sure of themselves and felt so superior to other leaders and agencies that they dared to defy any attempt to check their activities or curtail their powers.

In an effort to settle the dispute and define the place of the Cheka in the Soviet system the Council of People's Commissars issued a decree on November 2, 1918, prescribing that representatives of the Commissariats of Justice and Internal Affairs should be members of the collegium (central board) of the Cheka. This attempt ended in failure, however, for the representatives of the Commissariat of Justice soon walked out in protest against the treatment they received in the Cheka, with the result that there was a permanent rupture of "diplomatic relations" between the two bodies.⁴¹

However, not every non-Communist party of the great country could be entirely and definitely suppressed within the short period of a year or even two of the Soviet regime. Opposition did sometimes emerge in the Soviets; across the frontiers of the civil war information penetrated to the population of Soviet Russia. As if making a concession Lenin's government pretended to be turning to legality.

The campaign of criticism of the Cheka grew in intensity during late 1918 and early 1919, leading to the promulgation on February 17, 1919, of a decree which transferred to the Revolutionary Tribunals the right to impose sentences in cases initiated by the Cheka. Unlike the trials conducted by the Cheka, the sessions of the tribunals were to take place in public and in the presence of the accused. The curbs which the decree appeared to place on the Cheka were of slight avail, however, for the Cheka retained the approval of the Party leadership for its exercise of full freedom of action in all cases which it considered to involve a threat to the Soviet regime. The real position of affairs was made clear a few weeks before the February 17

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

decree in an open letter from the Central Committee of the Party, "To the Communist Workers of All the Chekas," in which critics of the Cheka in the Party were reminded that the organs of the Cheka were "established, exist and work only as direct agencies of the Party, under its directives and under its control."⁴²

Actually the new legality was a pretense: there were no legal codes, either prerevolutionary or newly introduced, to serve the courts, the tribunals or the Cheka. Rather, under the guise of "in the interests of the revolution" they were free to indict, sentence and mete out any punishment:

The law of February 17 was not permitted in any case to curb the Cheka in its task of defending the dictatorship. This fact was graphically demonstrated by a law passed in October 1919, establishing a 3-man Special Revolutionary Tribunal under the VCheka to deal with major cases of speculation and economic malfeasance. The tribunal was to be guided "exclusively by the interests of the revolution" and was specifically exempted from "any judicial forms whatsoever." Its decisions were not subject to appeal.

In January 1920, in a propaganda move designed mainly to influence foreign public opinion, the VCheka sponsored a decree abolishing the death penalty, but the decree made no essential difference in its methods and powers.⁴³

By that time the Cheka, initially presented as an "extraordinary," rather temporary institution, had stabilized, becoming, contrary to all promise, one of the pillars of the Soviet system.

Under Dzerzhinski's energetic direction the Cheka rapidly extended its controls into the most diverse fields. No significant aspect of Soviet economy and administration escaped its scrutiny, or was safe from its extralegal methods of repression. It was particularly active in the fields of transportation and industry. By 1921 it had assumed responsibility for guarding the Soviet frontier. It built up its own armed force. In the regular army it established its "Special Sections"—secret representatives to spy and hunt out potential disloyalty or disaffection, a practice which initiated the traditional hatred of the secret police by the army.

A task of major importance assumed by the Cheka during the Civil War was the detection and frustration of anti-Soviet plots. During this period the Cheka initiated a practice which later became characteristic, the fabrication or inflation of plots by provocation.

It was during the Civil War period also that the foundations were laid of an extensive and powerful espionage and subversion network abroad, manned not only by Communists and Communist sympathizers, but by professional spies, adventurers and persons over whom the Cheka exerted a hold.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 8.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Wherever the Soviet power spread—to the Ukraine, the Transcaucasus and elsewhere—the Cheka was one of the first governmental organs to be established. Strictly subordinated to the central VCheka in Moscow, the Chekas of the outlying republics played an essential role in establishing and maintaining Soviet power there.⁴⁴

It is impossible to indicate the number of victims of the Cheka during the early period, 1917–21. Reporting on the first 19 months (January 1918 to July 1919) of the Cheka's operations, Martin Latsis, one of its then ranking leaders, gave the following data: 344 uprisings were suppressed in which 3,057 persons were killed; 412 "counter-revolutionary" organizations were uncovered; 8,389 persons were executed; 9,496 persons were sent to concentration camps; 34,334 were imprisoned. The total number of arrests was 86,893.⁴⁵

However,

. . . The figures of Cheka shootings and imprisonings given by Latsis are obviously far too small. He did not even bother to add them up correctly, and they are contradicted by other official figures. The figures produced by the Whites are even more obviously far too large. According to Denikin [*The White Army*, London, 1930, p. 292], "the Special Judiciary Commission of Inquiry into the Bolshevik atrocities" reckoned the number of victims of the Bolshevist terror in 1918–19 at 1,700,000. "But," admitted Denikin, "their actual number is known to God alone." . . . The savagery increased as the civil war went on, and the Cheka was its chief agent on the Bolshevik side. Latsis already in August had announced that there were no laws in civil war except one, according to which enemy wounded should be shot and no prisoners should be taken. Countless victims fell to the special Cheka troops ("Vokhr" or "Vnus") which carried out punitive expeditions and raids throughout the war, and also assisted in suppressing the Kronstadt rebellion, and, later, the Antonov peasant rising in Tambov. . . .

According to all accounts the Tribunals had a far smaller share than the Cheka in the terror, yet the available evidence (which is probably more reliable than that concerning the Cheka) concerning their activity is impressive. Even after the end of the Civil War, during the first half of 1921, the Tribunals are stated [N. K. Yustitsii, *Otchet IX-omu Vserossiiskomu S'ezdu Sovetov*—Report to the Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets—1921, p. 23] to have been passing death sentences at the rate of over 100 a month, and prison sentences at the rate of nearly 1,600 a month. Nearly 150,000 arrests were made by the organs of the Commissariat of Justice (i.e. by the Tribunals and the People's Courts) in the first half of 1919. The prisons of the Commissariat in February 1919 held 22,000 persons, 16,794 of whom still had their cases under investigation. Nearly

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 9.

⁴⁵ M. [Martin] Ya. Latsis (Sudrabs), *Dva Goda Borby na Vnutrennem Fronte* (Two Years of Fighting on the Internal Front) (Moscow: Gosizdat (State Publishing House), 1920), pp. 75–76.

half of these cases were being investigated by the Cheka, and the rest by the Tribunals or People's Courts. [*Sovetskaya Yustitsiya* (Soviet Justice)—edited by Dimitri Kursky, 1919, p. 22.]⁴⁶

Among the Cheka's methods of investigation, a widely used one was torture of arrested persons; the Cheka leaders considered this a necessity in many cases. When the British diplomat R. Bruce Lockhart, who was suspected of counter-revolutionary activities, was arrested in the fall of 1918 and then released, a group of Bolsheviks and Cheka leaders from Nolinsk submitted a joint protest which appeared in the official Cheka *Weekly*.

"The Cheka has still not got away from petty-bourgeois ideology, the cursed inheritance of the pre-revolutionary past. Tell us, why didn't you subject Lockhart to the most refined tortures, in order to get information and addresses, of which such a bird must have had very many? Tell us why you permitted him to leave the building of the Cheka 'in great confusion,' instead of subjecting him to tortures, the very description of which would have filled counter-revolutionaries with cold horror?

"Enough of being soft; give up this unworthy play at 'diplomacy' and 'representation.'

"A dangerous scoundrel has been caught. Get out of him what you can and send him to the other world."

The reply, for which the central organization of the Cheka is responsible, is even more significant than the outburst of a remote country Cheka, which was apparently well versed in the practise of "refined tortures." It read: "Not at all objecting in substance to this letter, we only want to point out to the comrades who sent it and reproached us with mildness that the 'sending to the other world' of 'base intriguers' representing 'foreign peoples' is not at all in our interest."⁴⁷

5. Lenin and Terrorism

There is no doubt that the real ideologist and initiator of terrorism was Lenin himself. His notion of a popular revolution, which followed very much the pattern of France in 1793, implied a wide use, only on a greatly enlarged scale, of all means of terrorism. He not only created the Cheka, but constantly and publicly rationalized the use of extreme violence, and instigated and prodded the Cheka leadership to greater activity.

To Lenin, the role of the Communist party, being the same as the dictatorship of the working class, meant

. . . power based directly upon force and unrestricted by any laws.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ E. J. Scott, "The Cheka," *Soviet Affairs, Number One*, St. Antony's Papers, No. 1 (London: Chatto & Windus Ltd., 1956), pp. 11, 12.

⁴⁷ Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 71.

⁴⁸ Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" (November 10, 1918), *Selected Works*, vol. VII, p. 123.

In previous revolutions, Lenin said, violent suppression of the overthrown powers was insufficient; the Russian revolution would go deeper and continue the process of violence for a longer time.

. . . The misfortune of previous revolutions has been that the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses, which sustained them in their state of tension and gave them the strength ruthlessly to suppress the elements of disintegration, did not last long.⁴⁹

Lenin emphasized the high esteem in which he held the Cheka when he appeared at a meeting of Cheka personnel on the first anniversary of the November revolution. He praised highly the work of that agency.

. . . The important thing for us is that the Extraordinary Commissions are directly exercising the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in that respect their services are inestimable. There is no way of liberating the masses except by forcibly suppressing the exploiters. That is what the Extraordinary Commissions are doing, and therein lies their service to the proletariat.⁵⁰

Lenin systematically advised and instructed his comrades, subordinates and even foreign Communists (the Hungarian) to resort to executions on a larger scale. In Petrograd, for example, the Communist leadership hesitated to apply "mass terror" as retaliation for the assassination of M. M. Volodarski. On June 26, 1918 Lenin wrote the following letter to Petrograd:

Also to Lashevich and other members of the TsK [Central Committee]. Comrade Zinoviev! Only today we heard in the Central Committee that the workers of Petrograd wanted to react to the murder of Volodarsky by mass terror and that you (not you personally but the members of the Central Committee living in Petrograd and the members of the Petrograd Committee) restrained them.

I protest categorically!

We are compromising ourselves: even in the resolutions of the Soviets we threaten to apply mass terror, but when a situation really arises, we *put brakes* on revolutionary mass initiative that is *entirely* justified.

This is im-poss-ible!

The terrorists will consider us milksops. The situation is warlike. We must encourage the energy and the mass character of terror against the counter-revolutionists, particularly in Petrograd, whose example is *decisive*.

Regards! *Lenin*.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" (March-April 1918), *Selected Works*, vol. VII, p. 338.

⁵⁰ Lenin, "Speech at a Meeting and Concert for the Staff of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission" (November 7, 1918), *Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1927-45), vol. XXIII (1945), p. 289.

⁵¹ Lenin, "To G. Zinoviev" (June 20, 1918), *Sochineniya* (Works) (4th ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing

On August 9, 1918, Lenin instructed the Soviet of Nizhni-Novgorod (now Gorki) as follows:

It is obvious that a white-guardist uprising is being prepared in Nizhni. You must make an intense effort, appoint a troika [a team of three] of dictators, *immediately* proclaim mass terror, *shoot and deport hundreds* of prostitutes who intoxicate soldiers, former officers, etc.

. . . You must act fast: mass perquisitions. Shooting for keeping of arms. Mass deportations of mensheviks and unreliaibles. Change the guard at the warehouses, appoint reliable ones. Yours *Lenin*.⁵²

In Hungary, a Communist regime under Bela Kun was set up in 1919. In an article entitled "Greetings to the Hungarian Workers" (*Pravda*, May 29, 1919), Lenin advised the Communist government of Budapest:

. . . Be firm. If there is vacillation among the socialists who joined you yesterday in their attitude to the dictatorship of the proletariat, or among the petty bourgeoisie, put down the vacillation mercilessly. Shooting—that is the rightful fate of a coward in war.⁵³

Lenin criticized those of his comrades who invoked the laws abolishing the death penalty to justify their reluctance to indulge in executions; he spoke sarcastically of men who

. . . become hysterical and shout: I will leave the Soviets and invoke the decrees abolishing the death penalty. But he is a bad revolutionary who hesitates before the sanctity of the law in a critical situation. In a time of transition laws have a temporary significance.⁵⁴

A pattern of "revolutionary tactics"—which was the model for Stalin's future Katyn affair—was established by Lenin when he advised E. M. Sklyanski, ranking leader of the Red Army, to organize an assassination of "kulaks [wealthy peasants], priests and landlords," and to place the blame for it on an imaginary peasant guerrilla force. In a "Note to Comrade Sklyanski," written in August 1920, Lenin said:

An excellent idea. Carry it out *together* with Dzerzhinski. Under the guise of "greens" [peasant guerrillas] (we will later put the blame on them)

House for Political Literature), 1941–58), vol. XXXV (1951), p. 275. This letter was not made public until 1931. Lenin referred, as he usually did, to "workers" allegedly demanding "mass terror"; no "workers' letters" making such demands have been published and it appears more than doubtful that any existed.

⁵² Lenin, "V Nizhegorodskii Sovdep" (To the Nizhni-Novgorod Soviet) (August 9, 1918), *Sochineniya*, vol. XXXV (1951), p. 286.

⁵³ Lenin, "Privet Vengerskim Rabochim" (Greetings to the Hungarian Workers) (May 27, 1919), *Sochineniya*, vol. XXIX (1950), pp. 360, 361.

⁵⁴ Lenin, "Doklad Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov Pyatomu Vserossiiskomu S'ezdu Sovetov" (Report of the Council of People's Commissars to the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets) (July 5, 1919), *Sochineniya*, vol. XXVII (1950), p. 478.

we will advance 10–20 versts and summarily hang the kulaks, priests, landlords. The premium: 100,000 rubles for each one hanged.⁵⁵

Even after the end of the civil war, when anti-Soviet uprisings had almost ceased, Lenin continued to insist on the necessity of terrorism. In a letter to Dmitri Kurski, People's Commissar of Justice, dated May 17, 1922, he said:

. . . I am sending you the draft of an additional paragraph of the Criminal Code. It is a first draft which needs, of course, polishing and rehashing. The main idea, I hope, is clear, in spite of the deficiencies of this first draft: it is openly to proclaim the basis and politically truthful (and not only in a narrow juridical sense) principle which explains the *essence* and *justification* of terror, its necessity, its limits.

The court must not eliminate terror; to promise this would be self-deception or fraud; it must explain and legalize it in principle, clearly, without falsity and without embellishment. It must be formulated most broadly, since only a revolutionary sense of justice and the revolutionary conscience will create conditions for its application on a more or less wide scope.

With Communist greetings.

Lenin.

First version:

Propaganda and agitation or participation in an organization or help to organizations which act (propaganda and agitation) in the direction of assisting that part of the international bourgeoisie which does not recognize the equality of the Communist system of property which will replace capitalism and strives to overthrow it by force, by intervention, blockade, or espionage, by financing of the press, or by similar means is punishable by the supreme penalty, with the alternative, in case of attenuating circumstances, of deprivation of liberty or deportation abroad.⁵⁶

Lenin's closest collaborators shared his views. Though not always prepared to go to the lengths Lenin was prepared to go, they publicly approved and defended the Cheka. Trotsky, for instance, wrote:

. . . Terror is helpless—and then only “in the long run”—if it is employed by reaction against a historically rising class. But terror can be very efficient against a reactionary class which does not want to leave the scene of operations. *Intimidation* is a powerful weapon of policy, both internationally and internally.

* * * * *

. . . The terror of Tsarism was directed against the proletariat. The gendarmerie of Tsarism throttled the workers who were fighting for the

⁵⁵ In Lenin's handwriting, August 1920, Trotsky's archives at the Houghton Library, Cambridge, Mass., No. 565.

⁵⁶ Lenin, “Pismo D. I. Kurskomu” (Letter to D. I. Kursky) (May 17, 1922, first published in 1924), *Sochineniya*, vol. XXXIII (1951), pp. 321, 322.

Socialist order. Our Extraordinary Commissions shoot landlords, capitalists, and generals who are striving to restore the capitalist order.⁵⁷

Nikolai Bukharin, one of the most prominent Communist leaders, eulogized the Cheka and its first head, Feliks Dzerzhinski:

Many enemies were destroyed by Dzerzhinski, the iron warrior of our party.⁵⁸

And Zinoviev:

. . . The beauty and the glory of our party are the Red Army and the Cheka.⁵⁹

We have new ethics. Our *humaneness is absolute* because at its foundation lie the glorious ideals of abolition of every kind of coercion and oppression. *We are permitted to do everything* because *we are the first in the world* to lift the sword not for the sake of enslavement and suppression, but in the name of universal liberty and liberation from slavery.⁶⁰

Martin Latsis, mentioned above, not only accepted the Leninist philosophy of terrorism but developed it further for the use of his agency:

The Extraordinary Commission is not an investigating commission and not a court.

And not a tribunal.

It is—a fighting organ operating at the internal front of the civil war, acting as an investigation commission, a court, a tribunal and an armed force.

It does not judge the enemy, it strikes. It does not forgive, it rather reduces to ashes everyone who stands with his arms on the other side of the barricade and cannot be of any use to us. . . .

* * * * *

From the very beginning we must display extreme severity, implacability, straightforwardness; our every word is law; if crime is followed by deserved punishment, there will be far fewer victims on both sides.

* * * * *

The VCheka at present is headed by a chairman and a board of twelve persons. The established tradition is that only a member of the Central Committee of the ruling party (R.K.P.) [Russian Communist Party] can serve as chairman of the VCheka; only old party comrades are appointed as members of the board. . . .⁶¹

⁵⁷ Leon Trotsky, *Dictatorship vs. Democracy* [A Reply to Karl Kautsky's book, *Terrorism and Communism*] (New York: Workers Party of America, 1922), pp. 58, 59.

⁵⁸ *Pravda*, December 18, 1927, p. 1.

⁵⁹ *Che-Ka, Materialy po Deyatelnosti Chrezvychainykh Komissii* (Cheka, Materials on the Activities of the Extraordinary Commissions) (Berlin: Published by the Central Bureau of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, 1922), p. 15.

⁶⁰ *Krasnyi Mech* (Red Sword), No. 1, August 1919, as quoted in *ibid.*

⁶¹ Latsis (Sudrabs), *Chrezvychainye Komissii po Borbe s Kontrrevolyutsiei* (Extraordinary Commissions to Fight Counter-Revolution) (Moscow: Gosizdat (State Publishing House), 1921), pp. 8, 9, 27.

Do not ask for incriminating evidence, [wrote the same Latsis] to prove that the prisoner opposed the Soviets either by deed or by word. Your first question is to ask him what class he belongs to, what are his origin, education and profession.

These questions must decide the fate of the prisoner.

This is the meaning and essence of the red terror.⁶²

6. Secession and Reannexation of National Areas

During the years of the civil war, so-called separatist movements became quite strong among the non-Russian nationalities of the former empire, and almost all of the significant "national minorities" worked toward independent statehood. The trend toward independence was almost universal among certain national minorities who, in their territories, constituted the great majority.

To the Soviet government these developments, which went to the very roots of bolshevism, presented a grave problem. In contrast to the policy of the tsarist as well as the Kerensky governments, the program of Lenin's party emphasized the "sovereign right" of every minority, large or small, to self-government, and the right to secede from the Russian state. In 1917, when powerful secessionist movements in the Ukraine and Finland had met with stern opposition on the part of the Provisional government, the Bolsheviks, still an opposition party, had vigorously supported the secessionists.

The "right of the nationalities to self-determination" had from the beginning been an important point in the program of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party. Lenin had accepted this point and had defended and interpreted it more than once. In articles written in 1914, Lenin had defined the "right of self-determination":

. . . The formation of *national states*, under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied, is therefore the tendency of every national movement. The deepest economic factors urge towards this goal, and for the whole of Western Europe, nay, for the entire civilised world, the *typical*, normal state for the capitalist period is, therefore, the national state. . . . it would be incorrect to understand the right to self-determination to mean anything but the right to separate state existence.⁶³

The "self-determination" of nations, in Lenin's view, was attainable even in the framework of a "capitalist democracy." Lenin accepted it for his party's program, too. In 1916 he wrote:

The right of nations to self-determination means only the right to independence in a political sense, the right to free, political secession from the

⁶² *Krasnyi Terror* (Red Terror), October 1, 1918, as quoted in *Che-Ka, Materialy po Deyatelnosti Chrezvychainykh Komissii*, pp. 15, 16.

⁶³ Lenin, "On the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (February 1914), *Selected Works*, vol. IV, p. 251.

oppressing nation. Concretely, this political, democratic demand implies complete freedom to carry on agitation in favour of secession, and freedom to settle the question of secession by means of a referendum of the nation that desires to secede.

* * * * *

. . . The proletariat cannot but fight against the forcible retention of the oppressed nations within the boundaries of a given state, and this is exactly what the struggle for the right of self-determination means. The proletariat must demand the right of political secession for the colonies and for the nations that "its own" nation oppresses.⁶⁴

Writing in October 1917, on the eve of his assumption of power, Lenin not only confirmed this basic attitude of his party, but stressed "the right to secede" as the most important component of the nationality program:

. . . Instead of the term self-determination, which has caused many misunderstandings, I use a quite precise notion: "the right of free secession." After the experience of the half-year revolution of 1917 it can hardly be disputed that the party of the revolutionary proletariat of Russia, the party that uses the Great Russian language, must recognize the right of secession. On seizing power we would certainly immediately recognize this right for Finland, the Ukraine and Armenia, and for every nation oppressed by tsarism (and the Great Russian) nationality.⁶⁵

Lenin added that of course his party would like the non-Russian nationalities to remain within the reformed multinational state, but only if they did so of their own free will and not under duress:

. . . We want *free* union and therefore we are obliged to recognize the right of secession (without the right of secession the union cannot be called free). We are all the more obliged to recognize freedom of secession because tsarism and the Great Russian bourgeoisie, by their oppression, left the neighboring nations with plenty of mistrust toward and anger against the Great Russians in general; this mistrust must be dispelled by *deeds*, not by words. . . .

. . . We desire that the republic of the Russian people (I would even say the Great Russian people—this is more correct) should *attract* other nations, but how? Not by violence, but exclusively by voluntary agreement.⁶⁶

. . . We demand the freedom of self-determination, *i.e.*, independence, *i.e.*, the freedom of secession for the oppressed nations, not because we dream of economic disintegration, or because we cherish the ideal of small states, but, on the contrary, because we are in favour of large states and

⁶⁴ Lenin, "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (March 1916), *Selected Works*, vol. V, pp. 270-272.

⁶⁵ Lenin, "K Peresmotru Partiinoi Programmy" (Toward the Revision of the Party Program) (October 6-8 [19-21], 1917), *Sochineniya*, vol. XXVI (1949), p. 148.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

of the closer unity and even fusion of nations, but on a truly democratic, truly international basis, which is *inconceivable* without the freedom of secession.⁶⁷

Stalin's definition was as follows:

Social-Democracy in all countries therefore proclaims the right of nations to self-determination.

The right of self-determination means that only the nation itself has the right to determine its destiny, that no one has the right *forcibly* to interfere in the life of the nation, to *destroy* its schools and other institutions, to *violate* its habits and customs, to *repress* its language, or *curtail* its rights.

* * * * *

The right of self-determination means that a nation may arrange its life in the way it wishes. It has the right to arrange its life on the basis of autonomy. It has the right to enter into federal relations with other nations. It has the right to complete secession. Nations are sovereign, and all nations have equal rights.⁶⁸

Subsequently (in 1919), the "self-determination" plank (which could be interpreted in various ways) was eliminated from the Bolshevik program; but the right of secession remained and was constantly stressed.

The "right of secession" was incorporated in the first as well as all subsequent Soviet constitutions. The constitutional declaration of December 1922 stated: "Each republic is guaranteed the right of free secession." The Soviet constitution of 1924 stated: "Each of the Union Republics has the right freely to secede from the Union."

On the other hand, bolshevism since its very beginnings had constituted a powerful trend toward a "big state," a multinational formation on the pattern of all great empires. Its program of worldwide revolution, its dynamism, its fighting spirit, and its actual contempt for small states proved to be the strongest impulse in its activity. "Big state" was the term used by bolshevism to avoid the term "empire."

The proletarian party strives to create as large a state as possible, for that is to the advantage of the toilers; it strives to bring about *closer ties* between nations and the *further fusion* of nations; but it desires to achieve this aim not by force, but by a free, fraternal union of the workers and the toiling masses of all nations.⁶⁹

. . . We want as large a state as possible, we must have the closest union with as many nations as possible living in the neighborhood of the Great Russians; we desire it in the interests of democracy and socialism, in the interests of attracting to the struggle of the proletariat the greatest possible

⁶⁷ Lenin, "The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (November 1915), *Selected Works*, vol. V, p. 289.

⁶⁸ Stalin, "Marxism and the National Question" (January 1913), *Works*, vol. II (1953), p. 321.

⁶⁹ Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution" (April 23 [10], 1917), *Selected Works* (Moscow: Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the U.S.S.R., 1935), vol. VI, p. 61.

numbers of toilers of other nations. We want a *revolutionary-proletarian* unity, *unification*, not division.⁷⁰

Of the two contradictory trends—one toward liberation of nationalities and the other toward the multinational “big state”—the second proved to be the stronger. Reannexation of national states which had become independent was carried out by force of arms. In not a single case was a nationality asked to confirm by free ballot its willingness to enter the new Soviet state.

The fate of the new national states varied: Some succeeded, for about two decades, in maintaining their independence; others lost it after a year or two and were incorporated into the Soviet state. The first group—Finland, the three Baltic states, and the Polish-Belorussian area—embraced new national formations at the western borders of Russia, where they could get help from abroad; Bessarabia, too, remained detached from Russia.

Finland's painful separation was the first case of the granting of independence by the Soviet government. On December 6, 1917, a few weeks after the November revolution, the Finnish parliament proclaimed Finland's separation from Russia and on December 31 the Soviet government confirmed the separation. At the same time, however, Russian “Red Guards” were dispatched to Finland to join with Finnish leftist groups in setting up another regime in Helsinki and on January 28, 1918, a pro-Bolshevik government was established there. In the ensuing civil war Finland obtained German military help, defeated the insurrection and succeeded in maintaining her independence.

Similar efforts were made by the Soviet government to reannex Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which had likewise separated themselves from Russia. More than one pro-Bolshevik insurrectionist movement, aided by Russia, appeared about to succeed. In the end, however, Britain and France helped to defeat the Russian forces and Lenin's regime recognized the independence of the three nations in 1920. The peace treaties signed by Moscow with each of the Baltic states contained a paragraph which appeared paradoxical in view of the Soviet efforts to reconquer and subdue the small nations. The peace treaty with Estonia, for instance (the treaties with Latvia and Lithuania contained the same provisions, differently phrased), read:

. . . On the basis of the right of all peoples freely to decide their own destinies, and even to separate themselves completely from the state of which they form part, a right proclaimed by the Federal Socialist Republic of Soviet Russia, Russia unreservedly recognizes the independence and autonomy of the State of Estonia, and renounces voluntarily and for ever

⁷⁰ Lenin, “K Peresmotru Partiinoi Programmy” (Toward the Revision of the Party Program) (October 6–8 [19–21], 1917), *Sochineniya*, vol. XXVI (1949), pp. 148, 149.

all rights of sovereignty formerly held by Russia over the Estonian people and territory by virtue of the former legal situation, and by virtue of international treaties, which, in respect of such rights, shall henceforth lose their force.

No obligation towards Russia devolves upon the Estonian people and territory from the fact that Estonia was formerly part of Russia.⁷¹

In 1918 a Belorussian Soviet Republic was created which remained entirely dependent on Moscow until the Soviet-Polish war of 1920, when the western part of the republic was incorporated into Poland.

A strong movement toward national independence had begun to develop in the Ukraine in the summer of 1917, when a *Rada*—a body of delegates with popular support—emerged as the supreme authority in Kiev. In December of that year a Bolshevik counter-government was set up in Kharkov. In 1918 the Germans, on the basis of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, abolished both regimes and set up a pro-German government which did not survive Germany's defeat in World War I. Then:

. . . A Ukrainian Soviet Republic was proclaimed December 18, 1918, when the German occupation regime was in an advanced state of disintegration; all power was supposedly vested in the "Ukrainian workers and the Ukrainian peasants."

Kharkiv [Kharkov] was designated as the capital of this Ukrainian Soviet Republic. There was a special Council of Commissars, the Soviet term for Ministers for the government of the Ukraine; for a time there was a separate Ukrainian Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. . . .

The leading figures in the first years of Soviet rule in the Ukraine were Christian Rakovsky, a cosmopolitan Rumanian revolutionary who acted as Prime Minister, Gregory Petrovsky, a simple peasant, who was President, and Mykola Skrypnyk, who was Commissar for Internal Affairs.⁷²

In the ensuing internal fights, the Ukrainian independence forces, which had no real assistance from the outside, succumbed to the Red Army and at the end of 1920 the Ukraine was annexed to Soviet Russia. The technique of the annexation—the pattern for future similar operations—was the December 20, 1920 "treaty of alliance" signed by Lenin on the one hand and his own loyal party member, the Rumanian Christian Rakovsky, in the name of the Ukraine, on the other.

The Government of R.S.F.S.R. on the one part, and the Government of the Uk.S.S.R., on the other part, on the basis of the proclamation by the great proletarian revolution that all peoples have the right to self-determination; and recognizing the independence and sovereignty of each of the Contracting Parties; and realizing the necessity to rally their forces

⁷¹ Leonard Shapiro, ed., *Soviet Treaty Series, A Collection of Bilateral Treaties, Agreements and Conventions, etc., Concluded Between the Soviet Union and Foreign Powers* (Washington, D.C.: The Georgetown University Press, 1950), vol. I, p. 34.

⁷² Chamberlin, *The Ukraine, A Submerged Nation* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1944), p. 53.

for the sake of defense and likewise in the interests of their economic development; have decided to conclude the present Workers'-Peasants' Treaty of Alliance. . . .

* * * * *

I. R.S.F.S.R. and Uk.S.S.R. enter into a military and economic alliance.

* * * * *

III. For a better realization of the aim indicated in Point 1, both Governments proclaim the following Commissariats as unified: 1. Military and Maritime Affairs; 2. Supreme Council of People's Economy; 3. Foreign Trade; 4. Finances; 5. Labor; 6. Means of Communications; and 7. Posts and Telegraphs.⁷³

National secession movements likewise developed in Russian central Asia. The reconquest of this area by Bolshevik forces, which met no strong adversary, was extended to annex even the formerly semiautonomous Khiva and Bokhara. The first Soviet annexations of new territory occurred in those parts of the world which were the most remote.

With their [contingents of the Red Army] aid, the independent principality of Khiva was dissolved and replaced by the Soviet Republic of Khorezm which soon signed a treaty yielding military and political control to the RSFSR. Meanwhile, the Bolshevik forces also invaded Bokhara, drove out the emir, proclaimed a Soviet Bokhara, and transferred effective power to an embryonic and none too reliable Bokharan Communist Party led by Faizulla Khodjayev. Soviet Bokhara followed the example of Soviet Khorezm and subordinated its military and economic policy to that of the RSFSR by a treaty of alliance signed on March 4, 1921, which nominally guaranteed the complete "independence" of the new republic.⁷⁴

Another new acquisition was Outer Mongolia, which was overrun in 1921; this area was rebuilt to become the first Soviet satellite, and its name was changed to Mongolian People's Republic. Situated in the desert part of Asia, between Russia and a weak China, Outer Mongolia could be acquired only because of her remoteness from the West.

Fierce fighting accompanied the movements for national independence in the Caucasus, where the three main nationalities of the area—Georgians, Armenians, and Azerbaidjanians—proclaimed their separation and proceeded to build their own national states. For a short time German, and later British and Turkish, forces were stationed in the Caucasus; but they gradually withdrew. Then came the attack from the Soviet side.

. . . The first casualty was Azerbaidjan. In the spring of 1920, a Communist rising in Baku challenged the power of the Azerbaidjan government.

⁷³ Shapiro, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

⁷⁴ Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 302.

The Military Revolutionary Committee in charge of the rising addressed an urgent appeal to Lenin: "Being unable to repulse the attacks of the united bands of the internal and foreign counterrevolution by our own forces, the Military Revolutionary Committee offers the government of the Russian Soviet Republic a fraternal alliance for the common struggle against world imperialism. We request . . . aid." Aid was quickly forthcoming. The Red Army overran Azerbaidjan and established the Azerbaidjan Socialist Soviet Republic.

Armenia came next. In late November of 1920 another Communist rising was contrived on the border between Azerbaidjan and Armenia, and again the Military Revolutionary Committee in charge invoked the aid of the "heroic" Red Army. On December 2, 1920, the new Armenian Soviet Republic was recognized by Moscow; it was badly shaken by a revolt in mid-February 1921, in the course of which the anti-Bolshevik rebels seized Erivan and a number of principal towns, but the Red Army again came to the rescue and saved the new Soviet regime.⁷⁵

The events in neighboring Georgia were even more instructive, because a number of treaties (embodying the slogan "peaceful coexistence") had been signed with Moscow. In the elections to the Russian Constituent Assembly, the Bolshevik party in Georgia had obtained 24,500 votes out of a total of 892,000 (about 3 percent). In 1918 Georgia constituted herself an independent nation with a democratic political system, a free press, and free elections. In 1920 the Moscow government recognized Georgia's independence, and on May 7 of that year a treaty was signed by the two nations which started as follows:

R.S.F.S.R. on the one hand, and the Democratic Republic of Georgia on the other, moved by a common desire to establish a firm and peaceful coexistence for the good of the peoples inhabiting their lands, have decided to conclude toward this end a special Treaty. . . .⁷⁶

In this treaty Georgia's right of secession from Russia was elevated to the status of a holy principle, "first proclaimed" by Soviet Russia:

I. On the basis that all peoples have the right to free self-determination, even so far as a complete secession from the state of which they form a part—first proclaimed by R.S.F.S.R.—Russia unequivocally recognizes the independence and autonomy of the Georgian state and freely gives up all the sovereign rights which belonged to Russia as regards the Georgian people and land.

II. On the basis of the principles proclaimed in Article I of the present Treaty, Russia shall undertake to abstain from any interference in the internal affairs of Georgia.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 300, 301.

⁷⁶ Shapiro, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

The Georgian government also signed a secret supplement—obviously a precondition for the concluding of the peace treaty—which made Communist activities easy:

I. Georgia undertakes to recognize the right of free existence and activity of all Communist organizations throughout her territory, and in particular the right of free assemblies and free press (including press production).

In any case there shall be no judicial or administrative repression against private persons as a result of public propaganda and agitation in behalf of the Communist program or from the activity of persons and organizations working on a Communist basis.⁷⁸

In May 1920 Georgia signed a treaty with neighboring Azerbaidjan, which had already been reannexed to Soviet Russia. In the same year foreign troops which had been occupying certain areas began to withdraw. On January 27, 1921, the great powers gave de jure recognition to Georgia.

Two weeks later the Red Army started its invasion. A Communist "Revolutionary Committee" issued a proclamation to the "workers, peasants, and all toilers of Georgia" in which it announced that it was seizing state power in Georgia. The small Communist groups of Georgia, which were not strong enough to overthrow the government, were aided by Red Army troops. On February 25, 1921, the Soviet army entered and occupied Tiflis, the capital. Sovietization of Georgia followed the suppression of the political parties; in December 1922, after a few transitional stages, Georgia was incorporated into the Soviet Union and the general economic, political, and police system was extended to cover the territory.

A strong popular uprising in Georgia which started in August 1924 was suppressed with exceptional severity and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of insurrectionists were executed.⁷⁹

This, then, was the area of Soviet Russia in the ensuing relatively peaceful era, from 1921 to 1939. Having lost extensive areas in the West, Soviet Russia was still able to keep a number of subjugated nations under her rule and even to extend her realm in the East, at the borders of China and at China's expense.

The traditional Bolshevik theory of "national independence" and "right of secession" was not abrogated, however. Made ineffective inside Russia, it was to have a strong appeal for the nations of the East against the West and was to help in the disintegration of the other empires. Stalin was frank about this hypocritical course:

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁷⁹ D. Charachidzé, *H. Berbusse, Les Soviets et la Géorgie*, Préface de Karl Kautsky (Paris: Editions Pascal, n.d.).

. . . We are *for* the secession of India, Arabia, Egypt, Morocco and the other colonies from the Entente, because secession in this case would mean the liberation of those oppressed countries from imperialism, a weakening of the positions of imperialism and a strengthening of the positions of the revolution. We are *against* the secession of the border regions from Russia, because secession in that case would mean imperialist bondage for the border regions, a weakening of the revolutionary might of Russia and a strengthening of the positions of imperialism.⁸⁰

. . . At the present time, however, when the liberation movement is flaring up in the colonies, that is for us a revolutionary slogan. Since the Soviet states are united voluntarily in a federation, the nations constituting the R.S.F.S.R. voluntarily refrain from exercising the right to secede. But as regards the colonies that are in the clutches of Britain, France, America and Japan, as regards such subject countries as Arabia, Mesopotamia, Turkey and Hindustan, *i.e.*, countries which are colonies or semi-colonies, the right of nations to secede is a revolutionary slogan, and to abandon it would mean playing into the hands of the imperialists.⁸¹

The annexation of the non-Russian areas and their subjection to control by agents of Moscow aroused a new wave of Russian nationalistic sentiment so strong that Lenin deemed it necessary to try to stop it. His statements made in this effort and his conflicts over it with some of his closest collaborators, Stalin among them, are referred to below.

7. The Civil War Ends

The civil war and the foreign military intervention came to an end in the fall of 1920. Admiral Kolchak's forces in the east collapsed in the latter part of 1919; General Denikin's armies in the south disintegrated early in 1920; at the end of 1920 Denikin's successor, General Petr Wrangel, had to evacuate his forces, along with thousands of civilians, by sea. On the Petrograd front Trotsky repulsed the Yudenich offensive.

The intervention of the Allies in the Russian civil war which had started in 1918, likewise came to a close (except in the Far East) in 1920. Britain withdrew her forces from Siberia and the north before the end of 1919; she had earlier quit Russian central Asia. The Americans, too, withdrew from Vladivostok, and the French withdrew from the south. The Japanese stayed on in the Russian Far East for 2 more years, and the independent new nations of the Caucasus, with some protection from Britain and the United States, remained independent for a short time, until the Red Army marched in. On the whole, the Allied intervention in Russia had not been successful; it did not achieve its aim of subverting

⁸⁰ Stalin, "Author's Preface," To a Collection of Articles on the National Question (October 1920), *Works*, vol. IV (1953), pp. 385, 386.

⁸¹ Stalin, "Report on the Immediate Tasks of the Party in the National Question," Delivered March 10, 1918 at the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P. (B.), *Works*, vol. V (1953), p. 43.

the Soviet government. But it had another phase, namely, to prevent a Soviet offensive against Poland, Germany, and Hungary and to assure the independence of the Baltic States, and in this phase it was effective.

. . . A breathing space of inestimable importance was afforded to the whole line of newly liberated countries which stood along the western borders of Russia. . . . Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and above all Poland, were able during 1919 to establish the structure of civilized States and to organize the strength of patriotic armies.⁶²

. . . It was lack of strength, not lack of will, that prevented them [the Bolsheviks] from supporting Bela Kun in Hungary and apostles of social revolution in other countries as energetically as Great Britain supported Kolchak and Denikin.

* * * * *

. . . When Kolchak made his thrust toward the Volga in the spring of 1919 he unconsciously sealed the doom of the Soviet Republics which had been set up in the Baltic States. When Denikin's Cossack cavalry pierced the Red lines in May and June, 1919, they put an end to revolutionary dreams of moving westward into Bessarabia, with a view to linking up with Soviet Hungary. The issue of the battle before Warsaw in August, 1920, might have been different if the large forces which were concentrated against Wrangel had been available on the Polish front.

So, while intervention did not overthrow the Soviet Government, it did, in all probability, push the frontier of Bolshevism considerably farther to the East.⁶³

The period of the civil war had coincided, as has been indicated, with the experiment of a lightning-like and integral communization of Russia in the economic sphere. Having brought about a terrible catastrophe, starvation, and misery, the leadership, viewing the state of affairs at the end of 1920, was convinced of the necessity to retreat and make concessions to private economy. The preceding period of sweeping experiments was now officially termed "War Communism," to indicate that detrimental effects were due not to communism as such but to the "aggression" on the part of the enemies in the civil war and the intervention of the "imperialists."

⁶² Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis, The Aftermath* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), vol. V, p. 276.

⁶³ Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution 1917-1921*, vol. II, pp. 171, 172.

Chapter V. The NEP Era

1. The Peasant Movements

The turn from "War Communism" to the "New Economic Policy" (NEP) early in 1921 was motivated by four factors: First, the peasant uprisings all over the country; second, the mutiny in Kronstadt; third, the threatening famine; and fourth, the growing disorder in the ranks of the ruling Communist party.

The peasant movements in these initial phases of the Soviet regime, after the political parties had been suppressed, were disorganized, lacking in leadership, and without a definite political program, but, arising as they did out of starvation, humiliation and despair, they were violent and extensive. They took the form of a multitude of local guerrilla wars against local Soviet officials and detachments dispatched to requisition grain, meat, and dairy products for the cities and the army.

The largest and most typical of these uprisings was that which occurred in the Tambov province under the leadership of Antonov.

. . . Antonov had spent many years in exile for some act of violence which he committed during the 1905 Revolution. Set at liberty after the downfall of the Tsar, he returned to his native Tambov Province, where he called himself a Socialist Revolutionary and became head of the police in the town of Kirsanov, a post which he continued to hold for some time after the Bolshevik Revolution.

. . . by the autumn of 1919 Antonov was already head of a terrorist band, recruited largely from deserters from the Red Army and from peasants who resisted requisitions. In the beginning he confined himself to small activities, such as assassinations of particularly unpopular local Soviet officials and raids on state farms. His movement gained in strength during 1920; it is estimated that his bands killed about 200 food collectors in Kirsanov County alone up to October.

A widespread uprising broke out in the southeast corner of Tambov County in August 1920; and from this time until the spring of 1921 the whole Province, along with some districts of the neighboring Saratov and Penza Provinces, was the scene of fierce partisan warfare. A Chekist who took part in the operations against Antonov estimates that at the height of his movement, between January and April, 1921, about 20,000 insurgents had taken up arms.¹

¹ William Henry Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution 1917-1921* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1957), vol. II, p. 437.

Cheka forces, fresh from the civil war, were sent to suppress the uprising and were extremely cruel toward the population. The government was aware of the inhuman Cheka methods of operation, but stern measures to frighten the peasantry seemed the only way to maintain the authority of the Soviet regime.

"In some villages," a Soviet description of the Antonov movement tells us, "the families of the bandits began to leave their homes. . . . Then the plenipotentiary commission decided to demolish or burn the homes of bandits whose families were in hiding, to treat those who concealed bandits' families as harborers of bandits, to shoot the oldest in such families."²

Antonov's movement reached its climax early in 1921, by which time Antonov had reduced the Soviet administration in many districts to impotence. It was not until Lenin's retreat to a "New Economic Policy," which meant that requisitions would stop, that the uprising began to abate; they finally ceased in the fall of 1921.

. . . Antonov himself escaped capture for some time longer. But, like most peasant leaders, he could not stay away permanently from his native region. The Chekists reckoned with this; and on June 24, 1922, they surrounded a house in the village Nizhni Shibrain, in Borisoglebsk County, where Antonov and his brother had taken refuge. This house was set on fire and the Antonovs were shot down as they fled from it.³

In other parts of the country similar, though less extensive, movements were taking place about the same time. Unorganized, lacking experienced leaders, disunited, the local revolts and mutinies were not of immediate danger to the Moscow government; however, in their entirety they appeared ominous as an obvious proof of a profound dissatisfaction and indignation of the great majority of the population.

After prompting Lenin to make significant concessions, the peasant movements gradually abated in the subsequent era.

2. Petrograd and Kronstadt

In the latter part of February 1921 serious unrest, which grew into spontaneous strikes, developed among the workers of Petrograd. Beginning on February 22, meetings took place in industrial plants all over the city. On February 24 strikes broke out at the Trubochnyi, Laferm, Patronnyi, and Baltiiskii plants. The Trubochnyi plant took the lead in the political movement against Soviet power.⁴

Though nonparty and nonpolitical, the sentiment behind the movement—the first large popular movement since 1918, at least in the

² *Ibid.*, p. 439.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Pravda o Kronshadtse* (The Truth About Kronstadt) (Prague: Volya Rossii (Russia's Will), 1921), p. 6.

former capital—was obviously anti-Communist. The unrest soon spread to the fortress of Kronstadt, with its thousands of troops; the role played by the Kronstadt sailors in the revolution—Trotsky had called them the “pride and glory of the Revolution”—was fresh in the memory of the people and their loyalty was beyond doubt. Now, 3 years later, however, they turned against the Communist regime.

The Kronstadt uprising, which started in late February 1921 and lasted until March 17, was a distinctly leftist but at the same time anti-Communist movement. At a meeting attended by 16,000 persons on March 1, a resolution was adopted which announced the demands of the insurrectionists:

1. Seeing that the present Soviets do not express the wishes of the workers and peasants, to organize immediately re-elections to the Soviets with secret vote, and with care to organize free electoral propaganda for all workers and peasants.

2. To grant liberty of speech and of press to the workers and peasants, to the anarchists and the left socialist parties.

3. To secure freedom of assembly, freedom of labor unions and of peasant organizations.

* * * * *

5. To liberate all political prisoners of Socialist parties, as well as all workers, peasants, soldiers and sailors imprisoned in connection with the labor and peasant movements.

* * * * *

8. To abolish immediately all “zagraditelnye otryady” [special armed detachments assigned to check the bundles and luggage of the passengers on trains].

* * * * *

10. To abolish the communist fighting detachments in all branches of the army, as well as the communist guards kept on duty in mills and factories. . . .

11. To give the peasants full freedom of action in regard to the whole land and also the right to keep cattle on condition that the peasants manage with their own means; that is, without employing hired labor.

* * * * *

15. To permit free artisan production which does not employ hired labor.⁵

Only three persons voted against the resolution, and these three were arrested. The next day another mass meeting took place at which a Provisional Revolutionary Committee was elected, the leader of which was Petrichenko, a senior clerk from one of the ships. The committee established itself on the cruiser *Petropavlovsk*.

⁵ “Rezolyutsiya Obshchego Sobraniya Komand 1-i i 2-i Brigad Lineinykh Korablei Stoyavshegosya 1 Marta 1921 goda” (Resolution of the General Meeting of the Crews of the First and Second Brigades of Line-of-Battleships Which Took Place on March 1, 1921), *Pravda o Kronshadtse*, pp. 9, 10.

By March 3 the Revolutionary Committee began to publish a daily paper, *Izvestia*, which gave news of the rising:

The peaceful character of the Kronstadt movement is beyond doubt. Kronstadt has raised demands in the spirit of the Soviet constitution.

In the fortress itself, and without a single shot, power has passed into the hands of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee by the unanimous decision of the sailors, Red army men, workers and Soviet employees.⁶

The Revolutionary Committee refused to take the offensive against Soviet forces:

All proposals of the military specialists to take the offensive, to open military operations, to use the opportunity created by the initial confusion of the bolsheviks, the Provisional Revolutionary Committee answered with flat rejection.

*"The basis of our insurrection was that we did not want to shed blood. Why shed blood, if everybody understands anyway that our cause is just. Despite the Bolsheviks' deceptions it will be realized now that Kronstadt is revolting for the people and against the Communists."*⁷

A number of hostages from among the families of the insurgent sailors were taken in Petrograd. The government announced that:

*If even one hair falls from the head of the detained comrades [in Kronstadt] . . . the named hostages will pay for it with their heads.*⁸

Government airplanes dropped leaflets on Kronstadt informing the rebelling sailors that hostages had been taken; in its reply, the Kronstadt radio termed this act shameful and cowardly, and refused to retaliate.

There were mass defections from the Communist party. The consciences of the defectors made it impossible for them to "remain in the Party of the executioner Trotsky."⁹ Exaggerating the political unrest in Petrograd and underestimating the ruthlessness of the regime, the Kronstadt rebels hoped for an early victory. Under the heading "What Are We Fighting For," the Kronstadt *Izvestia* wrote on March 8:

With the October Revolution the working class had hoped to achieve its emancipation. But there resulted an even greater enslavement of human personality.

The power of the police and the gendarme monarchy fell into the hands of usurpers—the Communists—who, instead of giving the people liberty, have instilled in them only the constant fear of the Tcheka, which by its horrors surpasses even the gendarme régime of Tsarism.¹⁰

⁶ *Pravda o Kronshadtse*, p. 13.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁹ As quoted in Alexander Berkman, *The Kronstadt Rebellion* (Berlin: Der Syndikalist, 1922), p. 21.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

Meantime, having gathered military forces, the Soviet government was preparing a military offensive against Kronstadt. Trotsky, the leader of the operations, sent an ultimatum to Kronstadt on March 5:

The Workers' and Peasants' Government has decreed that Kronstadt and the rebellious ships must immediately submit to the authority of the Soviet Republic. Therefore I command all who have raised their hand against the Socialist fatherland to lay down their arms at once. The obdurate are to be disarmed and turned over to the Soviet authorities. The arrested Commissars and other representatives of the Government are to be liberated at once. Only those surrendering unconditionally may count on the mercy of the Soviet Republic.¹¹

On March 7, the Soviet artillery went into action against Kronstadt. The first attack was followed by an attempt to take the fortress by storm, but this attack was unsuccessful. Hundreds of Red Army men perished on the ice surrounding the island fortress. Next day the Kronstadt *Izvestia* said:

Many of you perished that night on the icy vastness of the Gulf of Finland. And when day broke and the storm quieted down, only pitiful remnants of you, worn and hungry, hardly able to move, came to us clad in your white shrouds.

Early in the morning there were already about a thousand of you and later in the day a countless number. Dearly you have paid with your blood for this adventure, and after your failure Trotsky rushed back to Petrograd to drive new martyrs to slaughter—for cheaply he gets our workers' and peasants' blood!¹²

During the next 8 days the Soviet offensive continued relentlessly:

Almost nightly the Bolsheviki continued their attacks. All through March 10 Communist artillery fired incessantly from the southern and northern coasts. On the night of the 12-13 the Communists attacked from the south, again resorting to the white shrouds and sacrificing many hundreds of the *kursanti* [military students]. . . .

On March 16 the Bolsheviki made a concentrated attack from three sides at once—from north, south and east. . . .

On the morning of March 17 a number of forts had been taken. Through the weakest spot of Kronstadt—the Petrograd Gates—the Bolsheviki broke into the city, and then there began most brutal slaughter.¹³

The Kronstadt uprising was suppressed. The Soviet press stopped reporting the tragic events as the Cheka went into action:

For several weeks the Petrograd jails were filled with hundreds of Kronstadt prisoners. Every night small groups of them were taken out by order of the Tcheka and disappeared—to be seen among the living no

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 36. (Note: "White shrouds" refer to white garments which are used for camouflage purposes in military operations in a northern country.)

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 37, 38.

more. Among the last to be shot was Perepelkin, member of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Kronstadt.

The prisons and concentration camps in the frozen district of Archangel and the dungeons of far Turkestan are slowly doing to death the Kronstadt men who rose against Bolshevik bureaucracy and proclaimed in March, 1921, the slogan of the Revolution of October, 1917: "All Power to the Soviets!"¹⁴

3. Mushrooming of Factions

In the ranks of the Communist party, including the supreme leadership, discord was growing. A number of Communist factions emerged, but suppression of Communist groups by terroristic methods was out of the question in this early period of the Soviet regime. At the root of the discord and confusion was the widespread disappointment in the "Socialist system" and "workers' state" as they appeared now in reality. The main target of criticism was what the oppositionists called "bureaucratism"—a term which comprises more than it does in English; in the Russian sense it meant the resurrection of a huge state machinery, egotistical and comparatively secure during a time of general debacle, and deaf to the people's needs and worries; it meant the emergence of a new, relatively well-to-do class, after "landlords and capitalists" had been abolished. The inefficiency of the new management was another source of discontent. More freedom to propagate their views—but only in the framework of the Communist party and not for other political trends—was demanded by the leaders of the factions. Each faction had its own program of reform, most of them consisting of petty demands which could not rally the people. Many Communists arrived at the conclusion that trade unions, as purely workers' organizations, must be given a greater role in order to reduce the power of the "bureaucracy." One Communist faction, the Democratic Centralists, which emerged in 1919, achieved some importance in 1920–21. Speaking at the party congress in 1920, its leader, T. V. Sapronov:

. . . described the Leninist Central Committee as a "small handful of party oligarchs." Other members of the opposition complained that the Central Committee "was banning those who hold deviant views." [I.A.] Yakovlev was even more specific. "The Ukraine," he charged, "is being transformed into a place of exile. Those comrades who for any reason are not agreeable to Moscow are exiled there." [P.C.] Yurenev accused the Central Committee of "playing with men" and spoke of the dispatching of oppositionists to far places as a "system of exile." . . . The disciplining of oppositionists took the relatively mild form of transfer of work assignments from the center to the periphery, and even such actions were not openly acknowledged.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁵ Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 132, 133.

Among the anti-Leninist Communist factions one of the most important was the Workers' Opposition. The very fact that a group in opposition to Lenin's "workers' party" called itself Workers' Opposition was significant.

. . . The program of the Workers' Opposition called for trade-union administration of industry, democratic management of the Party, and reliance on the industrial proletariat to direct state affairs. The movement was aimed largely against the tendency of the Party leadership to arrogate all important decision-making to itself. In pressing for more autonomy and more workers' control, the Workers' Opposition registered a growing disillusionment with the failure to realize the utopian, egalitarian slogans under which the Party had marched to power. Under the leadership of Madam [Alexandra] Kollontai and Alexander Shlyapnikov, a former metal-worker and the first People's Commissar for Labor, the Workers' Opposition gathered considerable rank-and-file support, particularly in the trade unions, but it found itself greatly handicapped in its bid for power by its failure to attract any of the first-rank leaders of the Party.¹⁶

Trotsky became the proponent of a program of "statification" of trade unions, meaning the granting to them of a leading role in state-owned industry. The program attracted great attention because it represented the first instance of disagreement since 1916 between the two men considered to be the supreme leaders of bolshevism. Among the members of the Central Committee, Nikolai Bukharin was the only one who supported Trotsky. Lenin, the proponent of unlimited party rule, could not agree to an increased role for trade unions which might limit the party's (and his) powers. In this controversy between Lenin and Trotsky, Lenin was the winner.

Another issue of importance which divided the Communist ranks was the new army, in particular the part played in it by old "tsarist officers." Many party members found it hard to endure the commands of the "reactionaries."

More serious was the challenge offered by the so-called Military Opposition led by V. Smirnov, also a former Left Communist. The Military Opposition was sharply critical of the policy of employing former Tsarist officers as military specialists in the Red Army and of organizing the army on a basis of professional military discipline; it called, instead, for primary reliance on partisan detachments. In a test vote at the Party Congress [1919] Smirnov's resolution mobilized 95 votes to 174 for the majority. Again, no effort was made to invoke Party discipline against the opposition.¹⁷

These factional fights inside the party Lenin saw as symptoms of a basically untenable situation. "The party is in a fever," he said; funda-

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

mental changes were necessary if Communists were to maintain power. Lenin's remedy was the series of reforms known as the New Economic Policy.

4. Lenin's State Capitalism

The New Economic Policy consisted, in the main, of four reforms: First, the introduction of a land tax and the granting to peasants of permission for free trade within certain limits; second, the permitting of small-scale private industry; third, the granting of "concessions" to foreign industrial and mining firms; and fourth, permitting of small-scale trade in the cities.

Admitting that the economic reforms meant a retreat from the achieved level of integrated state economy and signified a substantial concession to capitalism, Lenin told his party that the retreat was necessitated by the slowed-up pace of the world revolution. He and his party had been mistaken, he said, and the notion that capitalist and socialist nations cannot exist at the same time was an error.

. . . Before the revolution, and even after it, we thought: Either revolution breaks out in the other countries, in the capitalistically more developed countries, immediately, or at least very quickly, or we must perish. . . .

In actual fact, however, events did not proceed along as straight a line as we expected. In the other big capitalistically more developed countries the revolution has not broken out to this day. . . .

. . . It becomes clear from the very first glance that after the conclusion of peace, bad as it was, it proved impossible to call forth revolution in other capitalist countries, although we know that the signs of revolution were very considerable and numerous, much more considerable and numerous than we thought at the time.¹⁸

The new thesis was the theory of "coexistence," which was to replace the preceding thesis of the impossibility of coexistence, and which has prevailed to this day as an alleged principle of Soviet foreign policy. Cautiously and timidly, Lenin limited the era of coexistence to a short span of time:

. . . the socialist republic can exist—of course, not for a long time—in a capitalist surrounding.¹⁹

Lenin inferred that what Russia needed was the legalization of some phases of capitalism: small trade, small industry, and "state capitalism";

¹⁸ V. I. Lenin, "The Tactics of the R.C.P. (B)," Report Delivered July 5, 1921 at the Third Congress of the Communist International, *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. IX, p. 227.

¹⁹ Lenin, "Tezisy Doklada o Taktike RKP na III Kongresse Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala, Pervonachalniyi Proekt" (Theses of the Report on the Tactics of the Russian Communist Party at the Third Congress of the Communist International, Initial Text) (June 13, 1921), *Sochineniya* (Works) (4th ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Political Literature), 1941-58), vol. XXXII (1951), p. 429.

state capitalism to Lenin meant big industry in capitalist hands under supervision of Soviet authorities.

. . . for our Russian Republic, we must take advantage of this brief respite in order to adapt our tactics to the zig-zag line of history.²⁰

. . . we went too far along the road of nationalising trade and industry, of stopping local turnover. Was this a mistake? Undoubtedly.

In this connection we did much that was simply wrong, and it would be a great crime not to see and realise that we did not keep within proper limits, that we did not know how to keep within proper limits. . . . We can permit a fair amount of free local turnover without destroying, but on the contrary strengthening, the political power of the proletariat.²¹

The first of the new measures was the abolition of requisitioning of food products and the introduction instead of a tax in kind. Whereas the state formerly requisitioned all produce except that required for the peasants' personal needs, peasants hereafter would pay a fixed tax (paid in produce). The remainder of his product he could use himself or he could sell it to the state or on the private market. The most important paragraphs of the pertinent decree read:

1. . . . requisitioning, as a means of state collection of foods supplies, raw material and fodder, is to be replaced by a tax in kind.

2. This tax must be less than what the peasant has given up to this time through requisitions. . . .

* * * * *

8. All the reserves of food, raw material and fodder which remain with the peasants after the tax has been paid are at their full disposition and may be used by them for improving and strengthening their holdings, for increasing personal consumption and for exchange for products of factory and hand industry and of agriculture.

Exchange is permitted within the limits of local economic turnover, both through cooperative organizations and through markets.²²

"Exchange" meant selling on a free market; the term was used in order to avoid too frequent use of the provocative term "private trade." The admission of free small-scale trade in food products for the peasants in their own provinces was the most important of Lenin's retreats.

Small trade was permitted in the cities, too, though only on a limited scale; small industry was also permitted.

. . . Let small industry expand to some extent, let state capitalism expand—the Soviet power need not fear that; it must look things straight in

²⁰ Lenin, "The Tactics of the R.C.P. (B)," Report Delivered July 5, 1921 at the Third Congress of the Communist International, *Selected Works*, vol. IX, p. 228.

²¹ Lenin, "The Tax in Kind," Report Delivered March 15, 1921 at the Tenth Congress of the RCP (B), *Selected Works*, vol. IX, p. 113.

²² *Prauda*, March 23, 1921, p. 3.

the face and call things by their proper names; but it must control this, determine its limits.²³

. . . The NEP industrial policy put initial emphasis on the development of small industries, whether in the form of private enterprise or in the form of industrial cooperatives, in the hope that they would most readily increase the flow of consumer goods. New enterprises were promised freedom from nationalization. Small enterprises which had been nationalized were leased to their former owners or industrial *artels* (producers' cooperatives) for fixed terms with the provision that rentals were to be paid in the form of a definite proportion of the output of the enterprise.²⁴

The least effective and the most controversial among the NEP measures were the "concessions" to foreign capitalists. To revive Russian industry Lenin wanted to attract foreign capital, as other backward countries were doing, by offering prospects of successful and secure investment in Soviet industry; Lenin hoped that the industrial possibilities of the vast country would lure European and American capital. Lenin's party had often denounced abuses by concessionaires, for instance in the Middle East, Latin America, and China; to quiet these doubts, Lenin declared that where supreme power belonged to a Communist party, abuse would be impossible.

. . . What are concessions from the point of view of economic relationships? They are state capitalism. The Soviet government concludes an agreement with a capitalist. According to that agreement the latter is provided with a certain quantity of articles: raw materials, mines, hunting and fishing territories, minerals, or, as was the case in one of the last proposals for a concession, even a special factory (the proposal to grant the Swedish ball-bearing plant as a concession). The Socialist state grants the capitalist means of production that belong to it: factories, materials, mines; the capitalist works in the capacity of an agent, as a leaseholder of Socialist means of production, obtains profit on his capital and delivers to the Socialist state part of his output.

Why do we need this? Because we immediately receive an increased quantity of products, and this we need because we ourselves are unable to manufacture them. . . .

. . . That is why we do not in the least close our eyes to the fact that, to a certain extent, free trade means the development of capitalism, and we say: This capitalism will be under the control, under the surveillance of the state.²⁵

The first decree on concessions appeared on November 23, 1920, even before the other provisions of the NEP were promulgated. Within the

²³ Lenin, "Speech on the Food Tax," Delivered April 9, 1921 at a Meeting of Secretaries and Responsible Representatives of Nuclei of the RCP (B) of Moscow City and the Moscow Gubernia, *Selected Works*, vol. IX, p. 162.

²⁴ Fainsod, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

²⁵ Lenin, "Speech on the Food Tax," Delivered April 9, 1921 at a Meeting of Secretaries and Responsible Representatives of Nuclei of the RCP (B) of Moscow City and the Moscow Gubernia, *Selected Works*, vol. IX, pp. 161, 162.

party, opposition to concessions to foreign capitalists was considerable. Lenin himself referred to some of the numerous protests that had reached him. His comrades, he said, were saying:

We expelled our own capitalists and now they want to call in the foreign capitalists.²⁶

After 4 months of negotiations, Lenin admitted that not a single concession had been granted.

. . . It must be said that actually . . . we have not succeeded in placing a single concession. There is a dispute among us about whether we should try to place concessions at all costs. . . .

. . . On February 1 of this year [1921], the Council of the People's Commissars adopted another decision on the question of concessions. The first point of this decision reads: "To approve in principle the granting of oil concessions in Grozny, Baku and other functioning oilfields, and to start negotiations, which shall be expedited."

This question did not pass off without a certain amount of controversy. Some comrades thought that the granting of concessions in Grozny and Baku was wrong and was likely to rouse opposition among the workers. The majority of the C. C. [Central Committee], and I personally adopted the point of view that probably there was no real cause for these complaints.²⁷

Only 14 concessions were granted in the years 1921-22. The number subsequently increased somewhat.

. . . In 1921/22 14 concession agreements were signed, in 1922/23-32, in 1923/24-34, in 1924/25-29, in 1925/26-26, in 1926/27-8, in 1927/28-4. Later almost no concession agreements were signed.²⁸

On the whole the concessions policy was ineffective and was abrogated at the end of the NEP era.

The New Economic Policy signified a substantial retreat, but in the economic field only. No political retreat was envisaged; the Soviet government made it clear that no attempts to liberalize the system or to organize an opposition would be tolerated. A 90 percent private and capitalist economy under a 100 percent Communist government—a combination contrary to all precepts of Marxism—appeared absurd to many a Russian Communist. But Lenin was not willing to cede or share state power; there were to be no reforms except economic reforms.

The doubts which arose everywhere about this strange combination of communism and capitalism paralyzed the beneficial effects of the NEP.

²⁶ Lenin, "The Political Activities of the Central Committee," Report Delivered March 8, 1921 at the Tenth Congress of the RCP (B), *Selected Works*, vol. IX, p. 95.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

²⁸ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Large Soviet Encyclopedia) (1st ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennyi Institut Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya (State Institute Soviet Encyclopedia)), vol. XXXIV (1937), p. 182.

Foreign investors, as we have seen, were mistrustful; retail traders were ready at any moment to liquidate their small businesses and flee. In an attempt to counteract this lack of confidence, caution, and reluctance, Lenin publicly emphasized that the NEP would last for a long time:

. . . we have unanimously stated that we are carrying out this [new economic] policy in earnest and for a long time, but, of course, as has been correctly observed, not forever. It has become necessary because of our poverty, our ruin, and the terrible weakening of our big industry.²⁹

Lenin's words were hardly convincing in view of the general course his government was taking. The terroristic climate, the general uncertainty and fear, and the expectation of new twists and turns paralyzed the will of those whose support Lenin wanted to gain for the task of reviving the Russian economy. Everybody, inside the country and abroad, was doubtful.

The doubters proved to be right. Within a year a new wave of "anticapitalism" swept the Communist party, and now Lenin had to announce that the new course had reached its limits.

. . . "Enough! No more concessions!" If Messieurs the capitalists think that they can procrastinate, and that the longer they procrastinate the more concessions they will get, then we must say: "Enough! Tomorrow you will get nothing." . . . *The retreat has come to an end*, and in consequence of that the nature of our work has changed.³⁰

A week after the above announcement, Lenin, explaining the new turn in his policies, pointed to the discord in the ranks of international communism caused by the Russian "retreat."

A retreat is a difficult matter, especially for revolutionaries who are accustomed to advance, especially when they have been accustomed to advance with enormous success for several years, especially if they are surrounded by revolutionaries in other countries who are yearning for the time when they can start the offensive. Seeing that we were retreating, several of them, in a disgraceful and childish manner, shed tears, as was the case at the last Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.³¹

²⁹ Lenin, "O Vnutrennei i Vneshnei Politike Respubliki, Otchet VTsIK i SNK IX Vserossiiskomu S'ezdu Sovetov 23 Dekabrya 1921 g." (On the Internal and Foreign Policies of the Republic, Report of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars to the Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets, December 23, 1921), *Sochineniya*, vol. XXXIII (1951), p. 135.

³⁰ Lenin, "The International and Internal Position of the Soviet Republic," Report Delivered March 6, 1922 at a Meeting of the Communist Fraction of the All-Russian Congress of the Metal Workers' Union, *Selected Works*, vol. IX, p. 316.

³¹ Lenin, "Political Report of the Central Committee to the Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P. (B.)" (March 27, 1922), *Selected Works*, vol. IX, p. 341.

While putting brakes on the NEP, Lenin did not, however, revert to wholesale requisitioning of grain and other products, nor to the abolition of free trade for peasants. These elements of the economic system remained in force.

The economic system which, despite a multitude of changes and constant revamping, prevailed during the NEP period (1921–28) embraced: an industry controlled by and run by government agencies; a state monopoly of foreign trade, and what there remained of wholesale trade in the country; a certain amount of small private trade, which was, however, plagued by exorbitant taxation; an agriculture based on small private economy but obliged to pay taxes in kind; an extremely low standard of living for the peasantry and the workers.

5. The Famine

The famine that struck large areas, particularly on the Volga and in the Ukraine, in 1921–23 was caused only to a small degree by drought and other natural phenomena. In the main it was the consequence of the political developments of the preceding few years—the ruthless requisitioning of food, seed, and cattle; the creation of the Committees of the Poor; and in general the drive against the peasantry conducted under the slogan of fighting the kulaks. It was a man-made famine.

By the summer of 1921 the disaster had reached such proportions, and the prospects for the future appeared so bleak, that the government was forced to deviate from the accepted methods of propaganda and admit the facts. On August 2, 1921, Lenin signed an “Appeal to the International Proletariat” in which he asked for help:

Several provinces of Russia have been stricken by famine—a famine that seems to be only a little less severe than the disaster of 1891.³²

Even at a moment like this Lenin could not bring himself to ask the Western nations for help; well aware of who was really in a position to give aid, he shamefacedly appealed only to “workers and small farmers” in other nations:

Help is needed. The Soviet Republic of workers and peasants expects this help to come from the toilers, the industrial workers and small farmers.³³

An International Workers’ Relief Committee was set up to maintain the pretense. Figures published later by the Soviet government proved that the contribution of this relief committee was only a small one.

As the famine assumed huge proportions, the government proceeded to publish factual reports and records gathered by its agencies. Photos

³² Lenin, “Obrashchenie k Mezhdunarodnomu Proletariatu” (Appeal to the International Proletariat) (August 2, 1921), *Sochineniya*, vol. XXXII (1951), p. 477.

³³ *Ibid.*

of actual scenes from the famine-stricken areas were published, with such captions as:

The black coffin is collecting corpses of children who died of starvation.

A boy from the village of Karemukhi, Buzuluk County, Samara Gubernia,³⁴ dying of starvation.

Remains of corpses taken from corpse-eaters, Buzuluk County, Samara Gubernia.³⁵

The balance sheet of the disaster, compiled after the famine ended, was as follows:

. . . the population of the stricken Volga region and those in the Crimea amounts to about 25 million, and in five famine-stricken gubernias of the Ukraine, 9 million. Out of them about 23 million, i.e., about 70 per cent, were starving.³⁶

. . . out of a total population of 31,922,000 in the famine-stricken regions, the number of starving was:

In January 1922: 15,162,300.

In April 1922: 20,113,800.

In July 1922: 22,558,500.³⁷

In one of the famine districts of the Samara Gubernia:

According to the latest census, taken in 1920–21 (in the new boundaries of the [Samara] gubernia, excluding a part of the Bugulminsk and Novouzensk counties), the entire population amounted to 2,806,000, of whom about 350,000 lived in the cities. . . .

* * * * *

. . . In August, 859,000, i.e., about half of the population of the villages were starving; and in January almost the entire [village] population of 1,910,000 is starving.³⁸

Thousands of children were left helpless after the deaths of their parents; in general children were the worst sufferers among the population.

. . . In the famine-stricken regions of the Volga and Crimea there were about 2,500,000 derelicts [bezprizornis] . . .³⁹.

³⁴ A *gubernia* was a large administrative territorial unit in Russia, which existed until the second half of the 1920's.

³⁵ *Kniga o Golode* (Book on the Famine) (Samara: Samara Division of the State Publishing House, 1922), illustrations following pp. 114, 120, 126.

³⁶ *Na Borbu s Posledstviyami Goloda, Rukovodstvo k Provedeniyu Agitkampanii Posledgol v Klubnykh Uchrezhdeniyakh Goroda i Derevni* (On the Fight With the After Effects of the Famine, Guidance for the Conduct of a Propaganda Campaign on the After Effects of the Famine in City and Country Meetings) (Moscow: Glavpolitprosvet (Central Board of Political Education) Publishing House, 1923), p. 4.

³⁷ *Itogi Posledgol* (Balance Sheet on the After Effects of the Famine) (Moscow: Published by the Liquidation Committee of the Central Committee to Help the Hungry, 1923), p. 15.

³⁸ *Kniga o Golode*, pp. 15, 16.

³⁹ *Na Borbu s Posledstviyami Goloda* . . ., p. 6.

Some of the children were shipped in a "systematic" way from children's homes to regions which were better off; others stayed in the overcrowded and infested children's homes of the province. The bulk of them, however, left by their parents to the mercy of fate, were indeed derelicts. The horror of the children's homes—the freezing cold, the starvation, the filth, the lice, and the illness—was terrible; and the measures taken to fight these conditions were useless. It is obvious why children's corpses by the dozens were daily carried away from the children's homes.⁴⁰

Those who could move fled the famine-stricken areas; refugees numbered in the hundreds of thousands:

At the end of summer 1921 a real panic developed. Drought, fires, cholera—all this aroused the population of the region as if an order had been given: look for safety, those who can! The wave of migrants, traveling by cart roads, waterways, and railroads, spread widely. All who could travel were on the move. They used any available means of transportation.

Trains were overcrowded, waterways overloaded; on all cart roads of the province, day and night, the creaking of vehicles and the sounds from nomad tents covered with oxhides were heard; camels roared, cows moored, sheep bleated, and children cried and moaned.

Households Were Sold for Trifles

The migrants were giving up their entire belongings for a trifle; they boarded up their *izbas* [huts] or sold them. In the fall of 1921 a well-equipped peasant farm could be bought for two or three poods [a pood is approximately 36 American pounds] of flour. Speculators and other obscure "business men" who appeared in the villages took advantage of the situation.⁴¹

. . . On the Volga, in the Crimea and in five gubernias of the Ukraine the number of livestock declined in 1922 to 3,982,400 head compared to 6,395,400 in 1921.⁴²

The weakened population fell easy prey to cholera and typhus, and epidemics raged in the famine-stricken areas.

Cholera, always present in the Samara gubernia, this year caused considerable devastation. The cities suffered the most from the cholera.⁴³

Numerous incidents of cannibalism were reported in official Soviet documents.

Human Corpses Are Being Eaten

Cases of eating of human corpses are becoming more frequent. . . .

. . . Citizen Shishkanov stole during the night into a barn, chose the corpse of an eight-year-old girl, cut off her legs, arms and head, and started

⁴⁰ *Kniga o Golode*, p. 115.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Na Borbu s Posledstviyami Goloda* . . . , p. 5.

⁴³ *Kniga o Golode*, p. 115.

to leave, but was detained. His explanation was that he was taking the baby corpse to use it as food.

In general it has been established that corpses are eaten by:

- (a) relatives of the family of the deceased, including mothers and fathers;
- (b) outsiders; in these cases corpses are stolen.

In the vicinity of the Buzuluk store, 12 cases of eating of human corpses were registered.

In the village of Andreevka, Buzuluk County, frequent cases have been noted of stealing of corpses from warehouses where they were temporarily stored while awaiting burial by *subbotniks*⁴⁴ in a common grave. The corpses are stolen to be used as food.⁴⁵

The following is a report of what happened on December 10, 1921 in the village of Blagodarovka, Buzuluk County:

. . . on the 9th of December a boy, Egor Vasilievich Pershikov, died; on the same day his mother, Avdotiya Pershikova, also passed away. On the morning of December 10 somebody informed [the authorities] that the boy was being hacked to pieces and would be cooked. Pelageya Satishcheva was the one who really wanted to cook the corpse. She said she was doing it because of hunger, that the boy had died of hunger, and that the boy was 11 years old.

When she started to hack the body to pieces, a little girl, Fedosya Kazyalina, ran to the neighbors and told them the story. The neighbor, Pelageya Sinelnikova, went to report this to the Soviet, where the Chairman of the *Volost* Executive Committee was present. . . . It was established that an arm had indeed been chopped off, the belly cut open and the entrails removed, and that Pelageya Satishcheva had stated: "We will eat the boy, later we will cook the woman. . . ."

The Blagodarovsky Village Soviet hereby confirms the record, affixing its signatures and seal. The Chairman of the Soviet—Levkin.⁴⁶

Of the foreign organizations active in relief efforts, the American Relief Administration (ARA) was the most important. Headed by Herbert Hoover, it furnished more aid than all the other relief organizations put together; the total value of American relief to Russia was about \$60 million.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *Subbotniks* were so-called labor enthusiasts who worked on their rest days.

⁴⁵ *Kniga o Golode*, p. 121.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 122.

⁴⁷ While visiting the United States in 1959 the Soviet First Deputy Premier Frol Kozlov asserted that the Soviet Union had paid for American help during the famine of 1921-22. His statements were wrong. Actually, "About one-fifth of the total dollar costs, running to some sixty-two million dollars, were covered by the Soviet Government itself which released some twelve million dollars from its gold reserve for this purpose. Of the remainder, about one-half was put up by the American Government. The rest came from private donations in the United States. In addition, the Soviet Government expended an estimated fourteen million dollars on behalf of the program in local currency." (George Kennan in the *New York Times Magazine*, July 19, 1959, p. 23.)

The American Joint Distribution Committee and the relief committee headed by the Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen were also important in the relief efforts. Soviet President ⁴⁸ Mikhail Kalinin, in his report on famine aid from abroad, indicated that ARA had contributed 85 percent of the total relief:

	<i>Food</i> [In Russian poods*]
ARA.....	28, 763, 770
Nansen.....	4, 709, 000
International Workers Committee.....	689, 100
Trade Unions.....	243, 200
French Red Cross.....	217, 200
Others.....	487, 833
Total.....	34, 421, 003

*Pood—a Russian weight equivalent to approximately 36 American pounds.

The population receiving foreign assistance numbered 12,120,189; the following organizations supported:

	<i>Persons</i>
ARA.....	10, 387, 688
Nansen.....	1, 496, 250
International Workers Committee.....	91, 209
Trade Unions.....	45, 094
Others.....	⁴⁹ 99, 945

In general, of course, the disaster did not divert the government from its course. A group of well-known Russian liberals organized a 63-member Committee for Aid to the Hungry. After 1 month and 6 days the committee was disbanded by the police. Better no action than action by non-Communists, the government felt. As usual the committee was accused of subversion:

. . . The Committee . . . carried on a wide underground activity directed toward the seizure of power "at the moment of the inevitable fall of the Bolsheviks as a result of the famine."⁵⁰

⁴⁸ "President" is a term popularly applied by writers outside the Soviet Union to the titular head of the Soviet state. The head of state under the Soviet set-up, however, was the chairman of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets until 1936, and the chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet since that time.

⁴⁹ *Itogi Posledgol*, p. 16. These tables of figures contain a number of discrepancies. For example, the column of figures under the heading "Food" actually totals 35,100,103 rather than 34,421,003 as stated in the official Soviet publication. Figures listed under the heading "Persons" total 12,120,186 rather than 12,120,189.

⁵⁰ *Itogi Borby s Golodom v 1921-22 gg., Sbornik Statei i Otchetov* (Balance Sheet on the Fight of the Famine in 1921-22, Collection of Articles and Reports) (Moscow: Published by the Central Committee to Help the Hungry, 1922), p. 12.

The secret police made a public report on its own contribution which read in part:

The V-Cheka [All-Russian Extraordinary Committee] has issued a number of instructions concerning the tasks of its agencies and directives for the activities of [the] local commissions [the Chekas] to fight the famine. . . .
 . . . the local commissions must work in two directions:
 first, to intensify vigilance in regard to counter-revolutionary elements. . . .⁵¹

Another item in the activities of the police was the confiscation of church valuables—gold, silver, and other jewelry—allegedly in order to create a fund for the purchase of food abroad. Citizens all over the country resisted the confiscation of church valuables and the drive was accompanied by violence, arrests, and deaths. When the results of the confiscation from the churches were published, the total amount realized appeared strangely small—1,344,824 gold rubles.⁵²

The situation began to improve in 1922, but the famine was not over until the end of 1923.⁵³

6. The Police System

The transition from civil war to the New Economic Policy meant less direct fighting, fewer uprisings and consequently a reduction in the number of arrests and executions. These quantitative changes did not, however, mean that the political system had changed in essence. As before, no political opposition was tolerated and no freedom of press, assembly or religion was inaugurated. There was to be no doubt that the dictatorship of the Communist party was as strong as it had been, and statements to this effect were made publicly.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁵³ The help given by the "capitalists" at this, one of the most terrible moments in Russian history, was not only officially overlooked, but was used to serve anti-American propaganda. In a textbook published in 1946 under the editorship of the ranking Soviet historian Anna Pankratova, it was said:

"The Soviet government mobilized all means to help the starving. All over the country voluntary donations were collected under the slogan: 'Ten well-off must provide for one hungry.'

"The capitalist world tried to make use of these new difficulties. Diversionists and spies set fires and arranged explosions in Soviet enterprises. The A.R.A., the American Organization to Help the Starving, was used for this hostile undermining work." (*Istoriya S.S.S.R. Uchebnik dlya X Klassa Srednei Shkoly* (History of the USSR, Textbook for the Tenth Grade of High School) (Moscow: Gos. Uchebno-Pedagog. Izd-vo Ministerstva Prosveshcheniya RSFSR (State Educational Pedagogical Publishing House of the Ministry of Education of the RSFSR), 1946), Part III, p. 293.)

. . . These people [the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries] are helping mutinies, are helping the White Guards. The place for Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, open or disguised as non-party men, is in prison. . . . We are surrounded by the world bourgeoisie, who are watching every moment of vacillation in order to bring back "their own folk," to restore the landlords and the bourgeoisie. We will keep the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, whether open or disguised as "non-party," in prison.⁵⁴

Lenin spoke only of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries because the other parties, the Kadets and the rightists, had been outlawed years before; what he meant was absolute suppression of all non-Communist political groupings. The principle was a strict one, and it remained in force during the whole NEP era. In July 1926, for instance, the Central Committee of the Communist party adopted a resolution which said:

. . . The Communist party and the Soviet government must as determinedly and mercilessly as before suppress all sallies of the petty bourgeois political groups whose policy, as before, means return to capitalism; it tends toward turning the country back to bourgeois rule. . . .⁵⁵

In two notes addressed in May 1922 to Dmitri I. Kurski, head of the Soviet department of justice, in connection with the projected preparation of a criminal code, Lenin was quite outspoken. On May 15, 1922, he wrote:

Comrade Kursky!

In my opinion it is necessary to extend the application of shooting (which could be substituted by exile abroad) . . . to all phases covering the activities of Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc.; to find a formula that would place these activities *in connection with the international bourgeoisie* and her struggle against us (by bribery of the press and agents, war preparations, etc.) . . .⁵⁶

The Cheka, however, which had become a symbol of terrorism, illegality and death, had to be abolished, if only in name; it was out of place in the era of "free trade" and "concessions" to foreign capitalists.

⁵⁴ Lenin, "The Food Tax, The Significance of the New Policy and its Conditions" (April 21, 1921), *Selected Works*, vol. IX, pp. 198, 199.

⁵⁵ "Ob Itogakh Perevyborov Sovetov" ([Resolution] On the Results of the Reelections of Soviets), Adopted at the United Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik), July 14-23, 1926, *KPSS v Rezolyutsiakh i Resheniyakh S'ezdov, Konferentsii i Plenumov TsK* (CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Plenums of the Central Committee) (7th ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Political Literature), 1953), Part II, p. 152.

⁵⁶ This note was omitted from Lenin's collected works. It was published in *Bolshevik*, Moscow, January 15, 1937, p. 63 as a vindication of Stalin's purges and executions. It is still missing from the last (fourth) edition of Lenin's works, published between 1941 and 1958.

It was replaced by the State Political Administration (*Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie*—GPU),⁵⁷ but it continued under its chief, Feliks Dzerzhinski. On February 6, 1922, the Soviet government published a decree which read in part:

1. The All-Russian Extraordinary Committee [V-Cheka] and its local agencies are to be abolished.

* * * * *

6. At the direct disposal of the Main Political Administration are special troops the numbers of which are determined by decision of the Council of labor and defense . . .⁵⁸

Actually, and contrary to the so-called liberalization, the Collegium of the GPU and its Judicial Board maintained, in all political cases, all of the rights and functions of a court: they could try and sentence a defendant to any form of punishment, including execution. Trials were usually held with the defendant absent and no appeal was possible.

The death penalty, abolished in January 1920 and reinstated in May of the same year, was widely applied by the GPU. No reliable records of death sentences of the NEP era have been published; existing reports are probably inaccurate.

The facts as to the number of persons executed for political and economic crimes throughout the Soviet Union are impossible to get officially. The nearest approach to an official statement was that made in conversation with members of the American Labor Delegation in 1927, by Menjinski, the head of the G.P.U. for the whole Union. He told them that about 1,500 persons were shot by the G.P.U. in the five years from 1922 to 1927, either on its own order or that of the courts. . . .

* * * * *

How far the figure given by Menjinski can be relied upon as accurate, nobody is in a position to say. . . . I venture to guess that the figure does not include executions of Socialists in Georgia after the 1924 uprising—some hundreds of which were publicly announced and many more known.⁵⁹

A system of Soviet courts and criminal codes was introduced during the early NEP period.

Since 1922 there have been courts in the Soviet Union. However, by the position of the judges, court organization and procedure the Soviet courts are more akin to administrative agencies than to independent judicial bodies.

⁵⁷ In 1924 the GPU became the OGPU when the word *Ob"edinennoe*—United was added to its name.

⁵⁸ "Dekret Vserossiiskogo Tsentralnogo Iсполnitelnogo Komiteta" (Decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee) (February 6, 1922). *Istoriya Sovetskoi Konstitutsii (v Dokumentakh), 1917–1956* (History of the Soviet Constitution (in Documents) 1917–1956) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Yuridicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Juridical Literature), 1957), pp. 333, 334.

⁵⁹ Roger N. Baldwin, *Liberty Under the Soviets* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1928), pp. 211, 212.

Moreover, heavy penalties are imposed not only by courts but also by the Ministry of the Interior in an outright administrative action. . . . Although independence is promised to judges by the constitution, the conditions under which they hold their office do not guarantee such independence.

A Soviet judge does not enjoy tenure for life on good behavior. He is "elected," being nominated by the Communist Party in the lower courts for three years, and in higher courts for five years, and may be prematurely recalled. Such recall is not like impeachment in American law; it is simply dismissal from office by a vote of an electoral body imposed by the Communist Party.⁶⁰

A number of concentration camps continued to exist. One of the largest, situated on the Solovetski Islands in the far north, served to keep prisoners of various political trends far from Russia's mainland.

The expectation and "scientific prediction" of the Communist leadership that criminality would cease with the abolition of capitalism proved wrong. Although the wars had ended and the NEP had been inaugurated

. . . the number of murders, thefts, burglaries, briberies, and embezzlements was growing rapidly and far exceeded prerevolutionary levels.

Criminality had reached an all-time high. In 1926 there were 162 criminal cases per 10,000 population, i.e., roughly 2,365,000 cases. In 1927 the number of cases in which defendants were found guilty reached a million. Besides, about 1,600,000 persons were subjected to fines of a disciplinary (administrative) nature. The enormous rise in the number of new cases coming before the courts was the more alarming since, in Russia, criminality had always, even under the old regime, rightly been considered a revealing barometer of the moral and social state of the nation.⁶¹

The population in the congested prisons was growing rapidly under the new conditions:

January, 1924: 87,800
 January, 1925: 148,000
 January, 1926: 155,000
 January, 1927: 198,000

To these numbers, thousands of inmates of the concentration camps and special prisons of the GPU must be added.⁶²

A.A. Gertzenon, a high Soviet justice official, wrote:

The number of prisoners in the years 1922 to 1926 has risen at an annual rate of 15 to 20 per cent and has doubled in the course of these five years.

⁶⁰ Vladimir Gsovski, Report Delivered June 13, 1955 at the Second Plenary Session of the International Congress of Jurists, *Report of the International Congress of Jurists* (The Hague: International Commission of Jurists, 1956), p. 34.

⁶¹ David J. Dallin and Boris I. Nicolaevsky, *Forced Labor in Soviet Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), pp. 158, 159.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 160.

. . . For every person leaving a place of confinement upon completion of his sentence, three others arrived.⁶³

The first in the long series of the "Moscow trials" took place in 1922. This was the trial of the leadership of the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The Socialist-Revolutionary Party, which in November 1917 polled the largest number of votes of all political groups in Russia, had taken part in the civil war and been defeated. Subsequently, in 1920-21, it changed its tactics, but under the systematic repression it had almost entirely disintegrated. The trial of 1922, an aftermath of the Bolshevik victory, was an act of revenge in which the obedient and disciplined "masses" were expected to show their turning away from the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.

Of the 32 defendants tried, 22 were actually members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, among them such widely known figures as Abram Gots, Mikhail Vedenyapin, Evgeni Timofeev, Dmitri Donskoi, and Evgeniya Ratner. The other 10, who had defected from the party, were government witnesses, two of them agents-provocateurs against the first named group. It was charged that the defendants had: (1) defended by arms the provisional government (the defendants admitted this); (2) defended by arms the Constituent Assembly (the defendants admitted this, too); (3) led an armed fight against the Soviet power (the defendants admitted this as an historical fact; in 1919, however, the Soviet government had declared an amnesty for these offenses and, for a time, had even legalized the Socialist-Revolutionary Party).

The fourth accusation was that the Socialist-Revolutionaries had taken part in the attempt on Lenin's life and in the assassination of V. Volodarski. In support of this accusation, there was not a single proof except statements of the agents-provocateurs.⁶⁴

The impending trial of the Socialist-Revolutionary leaders was discussed at a conference of the then existing two Socialist and one Communist Internationals in Berlin in April 1922. Soviet delegates Nikolai Bukharin and Karl Radek agreed to sign a commitment that no death sentences would be imposed at the Moscow trial:

The Conference [of the Executive Committees of the three Internationals in Berlin] takes notice of the statement of the representatives of the Communist International that at the trial against 47 [32] Socialist-Revolutionaries all persons desired by the defendants as counsel for the defense will be ad-

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Vladimir Voitinski, "Sud nad Sotsialistami Revolyutsionerami v Moskove" (Trial of the Socialist-Revolutionaries in Moscow), in *Dvenadtsat Smertnikov* (Twelve Condemned to Death) (Berlin: Published by the Delegation Abroad of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, 1922), p. 61.

mitted; that, as mentioned in the Soviet press before the Conference opened, there will be no death sentences at this trial.⁶⁵

. . . Finally Vandervelde, Wauters, Kurt Rosenfeld and Theodor Liebknecht (the first two were representatives of the Belgian Labor Party, the latter two were representatives of the Independent Socialist Party of Germany) left for Russia [to act as defense attorneys], relying on the Berlin agreement.⁶⁶

The trial turned into a tragic farce. Wherever the attorneys went

. . . rabble crowds organized by the authorities, Chekist rogues, together with all kinds of assigned Communists attacked the train of the defenders under the guise of the "Russian proletariat" and demanded that they account for the counter-revolutionary act of defending the Socialist Revolutionaries.⁶⁷

When the trial started, the courthouse was surrounded by organized crowds who shouted and demanded "death to the Socialist-Revolutionaries." The mobs were permitted to enter the hall and make speeches; the president of the court, Lenin's lieutenant, Georgi Pyatakov, did nothing to defend the rights of the defendants. (Fifteen years later the same Pyatakov, similarly accused and "exposed" by Vyshinsky, "confessed" and was sentenced to death and executed.) Since no real defense was possible:

On June 19 Vandervelde, Liebknecht, Rosenfeld and Wauters left Moscow (*they had had to go on a hunger strike to get permission from the Bolshevik to leave.*)⁶⁸

The sentencing of the defendants was a problem for the Politburo. It was impossible openly to renege on the commitment made in Berlin that no death sentences would be imposed; on the other hand, "retreat" before the "social traitors" would have been tantamount to a defeat. Trotsky proposed a compromise: To impose the death sentence but not carry it out immediately.⁶⁹ The compromise was accepted; the decision was that the defendants be held as permanent hostages, to be shot if they engaged in any overt act against the Soviet leaders. This was, in fact, a death sentence held in abeyance. On August 7, the Tribunal pronounced its verdict: 12 of the defendants to be shot, 10 to be imprisoned for from 2 to 10 years; the others, the traitors, were freed.⁷⁰

. . . The condemned Socialist-Revolutionary leaders thus remained in prison [or exile] for many years, until they were executed by Stalin.⁷¹

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36. On April 11 Lenin came out with an article, "We Paid Too High a Price," protesting against the promise made by Bukharin and Radek.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁶⁹ Leon Trotsky, *My Life* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), p. 475.

⁷⁰ Voitinski, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

⁷¹ David Shub, *Lenin* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1948), p. 377.

A phenomenon of this first of the great Moscow trials was the fact that the defendants did not "confess," nor did they repudiate or revile their party. Facing the court with dignity, pride, and courage, they told the judges:

. . . "If death is in store for us," said Gots, "we will die without fear; if we stay alive, we will fight you after our liberation as relentlessly as we did before."⁷²

"The state prosecutors Lunacharski and Krylenko,"—said Timofeev— ". . . found it necessary, in order to facilitate their task, to propose that we repent and repudiate our past activities. In answer to this proposal I am authorized by all the defendants of the first group categorically to tell the Tribunal and the state prosecutors: *it is out of the question that we should repent or give up; you will never hear from these benches anything of the kind.*"⁷³

"From the moment we fell into your hands we were sure that you would sentence us to death. But from this bench you will never hear a request for pardon."⁷⁴

In accordance with the orders of the Politburo the Socialist-Revolutionaries were sentenced to death and the sentence was not carried out. However, most of them perished subsequently in the Stalin era.

7. Lenin's Death and the Stalin-Trotsky Fight

Lenin suffered his first stroke on May 26, 1922. He recovered and was able to resume work, though only on a limited scale. In December 1922 he again became ill. Although he lived for another 13 months, until January 21, 1924, his party and the Soviet government had actually run without his leadership since the end of 1922.

Among the political actions of Lenin's last years were the first harsh steps toward suppression of factions and "deviationists." At the same Tenth Party Congress which proclaimed the NEP, a number of rigid decisions were taken, on Lenin's initiative, to put an end to the discussions and fights which had shaken the party in the last years.⁷⁵ The following resolution was adopted:

6. The Congress orders the immediate dissolution of all groups, without exception, that have been formed on the basis of one platform or another, and charges all organizations strictly to see to it that no factional actions take place. Non-compliance with this decision of the Congress will result in unconditional and immediate expulsion from the party.

7. In order to effect strict discipline within the party and in all Soviet work and to secure the greatest unity in removing all factionalism, the

⁷² Voitinski, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, opp. p. 78.

⁷⁵ See p. 123.

Congress authorizes the Central Committee to apply all party penalties, including expulsion, in cases of breach of discipline or of reviving or engaging in factionalism; and in regard to members of the Central Committee to reduce them to the status of candidates and, as an extreme measure, to expel them from the party.⁷⁶

In this early period of expulsions, purges, and stern party rule, however, certain safeguards of the rights of accused persons were maintained:

. . . A necessary condition for the application of such an extreme measure (to members of the Central Committee, alternate members of the Central Committee and members of the Control Commission) is the convocation of the plenum of the Central Committee, to which all alternate members of the Central Committee and all members of the Control Commission shall be invited. If such a general assembly of the most responsible leaders of the party, by a two-thirds majority, deems it necessary to reduce a member of the Central Committee to the status of an alternate member, or to expel him from the party, this measure must be put into effect immediately.⁷⁷

Party discipline was becoming more rigid, but factions and groupings found means of engaging in political activity. While some dissidents were removed from their posts (arrests among party members were rare), others appeared at party or Comintern congresses to protest and enunciate their programs. At the Eleventh Party Congress in 1922, for instance, V. Kossior could complain, without being expelled from the party—

The administrative system of our Party has remained as authoritarian and to a certain degree militaristic as it was in the war period. If anyone had the courage or deemed it necessary to criticize or point out a certain deficiency which exists in the area of Soviet and Party work, he was immediately counted among the opposition, the appropriate places learned of it, and the comrade in question was relieved of this office. . . .⁷⁸

. . . Madam Kollontai accused the Party leadership of suppressing thought and of inadequate attention to the welfare of the workers.⁷⁹

The privileged position of members of the Communist party was maintained under Lenin. Party penalties involved transfer to another job or another city or an assignment abroad; arrests of party members did not begin until after Lenin became ill.

. . . Despite violent threats and tirades, the most drastic penalty which he [Lenin] imposed on dissenters was expulsion from the Party, and even

⁷⁶ "O Edinstve Partii" (On Party Unity), Resolutions and Decisions of the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, March 8-16, 1921, *KPSS v Rezolyutsiakh i Resheniyakh* . . . , part I, p. 529.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 529, 530.

⁷⁸ E. Jaroslowski, *Aus der Geschichte der Kommunistischen Partei der Sowjetunion (Bolschewiki)*, as quoted in Fainsod, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁷⁹ Fainsod, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

this penalty was rarely utilized against Party members of any prominence who had rendered distinguished services in the past. If on occasion Lenin seemed to equate dissent with treason, he still shrank from drawing the practical consequences, at least so far as intra-Party struggles were concerned.⁸⁰

It was at this time that the system of periodic party "purges" was introduced. The purges were aimed at two groups of party members: first, the "careerists," "self-seekers," and criminals who flooded the party; second, the former political opponents, former liberals and socialists in whose new orientation the leaders of the party had no confidence. In the purge of 1921 about 25 percent of the then membership of over 700,000 were expelled.⁸¹

An important innovation which attracted little attention at the time was the establishment of the post of General Secretary of the party's Central Committee, and the selection, on Lenin's suggestion, of Joseph Stalin to fill it. No one foresaw the consequences of this appointment, which occurred on April 2, 1922. The most important of the tasks of the secretariat were to streamline the party organization, paralyze internal opposition, and see to it that only loyal men were appointed to political, and even nonpolitical, jobs. These tasks and the jurisdiction of the secretariat were the source of the power which soon overwhelmed that of the Central Committee itself. From that point on, the ascendancy of Stalin, a man hitherto known only in party circles, proceeded rapidly.

. . . Stalin understood that in a highly centralized state controlled by the party the General Secretary would be a key man after Lenin's death. Meanwhile the position enabled Stalin to work assiduously and in the dark gathering a band of henchmen who would be loyal to him because he appointed them and could dismiss them.⁸²

The undesirable traits ascribed to Stalin by his adversaries have later been confirmed by official Soviet spokesmen. According to Trotsky, Nikolai Krestinski, a leading Bolshevik, said that Stalin was a "bad man with yellow eyes." Nikolai Bukharin noticed Stalin's "implacable jealousy of anyone who knows more or does things better than he." "This cook," Lenin said of him, "will make only peppery dishes." "Stalin," said Trotsky, "is the outstanding mediocrity of the party."⁸³

In general Stalin did not enjoy great prestige among or devotion from his party comrades.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁸¹ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), pp. 258, 259.

⁸² Louis Fischer, *The Life and Death of Stalin* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1952), p. 12.

⁸³ Trotsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 449, 450, 467, 512.

When Lenin fell ill, 2 months after Stalin's appointment to the new post, a group of three Bolshevik leaders emerged as a collective successor to the leader: Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Stalin. In the beginning, the most influential among the triumvirate was not Stalin but Zinoviev.

. . . The only conceivable succession to Lenin, temporarily ill or definitely removed, was a Directory of the top Party leaders, members and alternates of the Politburo and the Central Committee. . . .

But actually a variant of this took place. The succession passed to a triumvirate, of which Zinoviev was the leader, Kamenev his alternate and Stalin the junior partner. Zinoviev thus became, for better or for worse, Lenin's successor by virtue of his plurality inside the Politburo. . . .⁸⁴

To many Communists in Russia, Trotsky appeared the logical successor to Lenin; but this did not accord with personal relationships within the party.

. . . Of the seven members of the Politburo, Lenin was ill; Trotsky was alone in his opinion that he was the natural successor to Lenin, a widespread opinion outside the Party machine that made him the most feared and hated fellow-member inside the Politburo and among the Party wheel-horses. . . .⁸⁵

Neither Zinoviev nor Kamenev had the qualifications needed in a single supreme leader:

. . . In theoretical and political respects, both Zinoviev and Kamenev were probably superior to Stalin. But they both lacked that little thing called character.⁸⁶

There ensued a struggle between the two ambitious and capable men, Stalin and Trotsky. The feud between them, which had started years before and which now assumed bitter forms, filled the history of the Communist party for the next 5 years. Personal animosity took on ideological attire; divergencies on important political issues emerged; "Trotskyism" and "Stalinism" developed into two opposing Communist philosophies and strategies.

Sensing the growing danger of a possible split, Lenin wrote from his sickbed, in December 1922, a letter of advice (usually referred to since as his "Testament") to the party leaders in which he made some suggestions for securing the stability of the party:

'. . . the fundamental factor . . . is such members of the Central Committee as Stalin and Trotsky. The relation between them constitutes, in my opinion, a big half of the danger of that split. . . .

Comrade Stalin, having become General Secretary, has concentrated an enormous power in his hands; and I am not sure that he always knows how

⁸⁴ Trotsky, *Stalin* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1941), p. 356.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Trotsky, *My Life*, p. 520.

to use that power with sufficient caution. On the other hand, Comrade Trotsky, as was proved by his struggle against the Central Committee in connection with the question of the People's Commissariat of Ways and Communications, is distinguished not only by his exceptional abilities—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 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; if our party does not take measures to prevent it, a split might arise unexpectedly.⁸⁷

In his letter Lenin mentioned, in addition to Trotsky and Stalin, four other outstanding leaders—Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Pyatakov. A few days later (January 4, 1923) he added a special postscript on Stalin:

. . . Stalin is too rude, and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us Communists, becomes insupportable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore, I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint to it 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 preventing a split and 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.⁸⁸

In light of recent revelations, Trotsky's later statement that Stalin, angered by Lenin's attitude, had proposed giving poison to his teacher, may well be true. In February 1923, Stalin told the Politburo that Lenin had asked him for poison.

I see before me [Trotsky recalled] the pale and silent Kamenev, who sincerely loved Lenin, and Zinoviev, bewildered, as always at difficult moments. Had they known about Lenin's request even before the session? Or had Stalin sprung this as a surprise on his allies in the triumvirate as well as on me?

"Naturally, we cannot even consider carrying out this request!" I exclaimed. "Guétier [Lenin's physician] has not lost hope. Lenin can still recover."

"I told him all that," Stalin replied, not without a touch of annoyance. "But he wouldn't listen to reason. The Old Man is suffering. He says he wants to have the poison at hand . . . he'll use it only when he is convinced that his condition is hopeless."

"Anyway, it's out of the question," I insisted—this time, I think, with Zinoviev's support. "He might succumb to a passing mood and take the irrevocable step."

"The Old Man is suffering," Stalin repeated, staring vaguely past us and, as before, saying nothing one way or the other. A line of thought

⁸⁷ *The New Leader*, vol. XXXIX, No. 29, sec. 2 (July 16, 1956), pp. S66, S67.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. S67.

parallel to the conversation but not quite in consonance with it must have been running through his mind.⁸⁹

Trotsky thought it possible that Stalin had not invented Lenin's request, but there

. . . naturally arises the question: how and why did Lenin, who at the time was extremely suspicious of Stalin, turn to him with such a request, which on the face of it, presupposed the highest degree of personal confidence? A mere month before he made this request of Stalin, Lenin had written his pitiless postscript to the Testament. Several days after making this request, he broke off all personal relations with him. Stalin himself could not fail to ask himself the question: why did Lenin turn to him of all people? The answer is simple: Lenin saw in Stalin the only man who would grant his tragic request, since he was directly interested in doing so.⁹⁰

Among the specific issues which became a source of antagonism between Stalin and Lenin during the last months of Lenin's life was the nationality policy. The misunderstandings and disputes started in connection with the issue of Georgia as a member state of the prospective Soviet Union. The prevailing trend among the Georgian Communists was toward a Soviet Georgia independent of the Russian Soviet state; Stalin, himself a Georgian, but now a strong power in the government of a great country, strove for a "big state" in which Georgia would enjoy only a degree of "autonomy." The term "autonomization" veiled the drive for centralization under Russian leadership. In other national areas, especially in the Ukraine, trends toward independence were strong among Communists.

In his fight against the Georgian Communist majority Stalin was insulting and rude; the conduct of his two lieutenants, Feliks Dzerzhinski and Grigori Ordzhonikidze ("Sergo"), provoked indignation and protests. From his sickbed Lenin, who had earlier encouraged and supported a rapid and forcible extension of the Soviet state, came out with significant statements directed at Stalin and his group, whom he accused of reviving the methods of old Russian autocracy in regard to national minorities:

. . . what we call ours is an apparatus that is still thoroughly alien to us, representing a bourgeois Tsarist mechanism which we have had no chance to conquer during the past five years, in the absence of help from [a revolution in] other countries, and in view of the overriding pressure of the "business" of war and the struggle against famine.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Trotsky, *Stalin*, p. 377.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ "Lenin's Article on the National Question" (first printed, in incomplete form, in *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik*, Berlin, December 1923), in Bertram D. Wolfe, *Khrushchev and Stalin's Ghost* (London: Atlantic Press, 1957), pp. 271, 272.

Stalin's projected constitution of the Soviet Union contained, of course, provision for the right of Soviet Union members "to withdraw from the Union." On this point, Lenin said:

. . . it is quite obvious that the "freedom to withdraw from the Union," with which we justify ourselves, will prove to be nothing but a scrap of paper, incapable of defending the minorities in Russia from the incursions of that hundred percent Russian, the Great-Russian, the chauvinist, in reality, the scoundrel and despoiler which the typical Russian bureaucrat is. There can be no doubt that the insignificant percentage of Soviet and sovietized workers will drown in this Great-Russian sea of chauvinist riff-raff like a fly in milk.⁹²

In an article prepared for the press, Lenin attacked Stalin:

I think that a fatal role was played here by Stalin's haste and administrative impulsiveness, and also by his spiteful attitude towards the much talked of "social nationalism." Spitefulness in general plays the worst possible role in politics.

I am afraid that Com. Dzerzhinsky also, when he went to the Caucasus to investigate the case of the "crimes" of these "social nationalists," distinguished himself there only by his one-hundred percent Russian attitude (it is common knowledge that the Russified non-Russian always likes to exaggerate when it comes to 100% Russian attitudes).⁹³

The relations between a great nation and national minorities must be based, wrote the dying leader, on new principles, different from the system which had prevailed before the revolution. Internationalism, Lenin said

. . . must consist not merely in a formal assertion of equality among nations but in such inequality by which the oppressing great nation compensates for that inequality which actually exists in life. . . .

A Georgian who adopts a scornful attitude towards this side of the matter, who scornfully accuses others of "social nationalism" (when he is himself not only a real and authentic "social nationalist," but also a brutal Great-Russian Derzhimorda),⁹⁴ that Georgian actually violates the interests of proletarian class solidarity. For nothing so hinders the development and consolidation of proletarian class solidarity as much as national injustice.⁹⁵

In another move against the General Secretary, Lenin asked Trotsky to take over the defense of the Georgians against Stalin:

Dear Com. Trotsky.

I ask you urgently to undertake the defense of the Georgia case in the C. C. of the party. This case is at present "being shot at" by Stalin and Dzerzhinsky and I cannot count on their objectivity. Quite the contrary.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 272.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ A character in Gogol's *Inspector General*, whose very name is a symbol of a narrow and domineering police mentality.

⁹⁵ "Lenin's Article on the National Question," in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, pp. 273, 274.

If you should agree to undertake the defense of that case, I would be at ease.⁹⁶

Lenin's suggestion for the removal of Stalin came too late, however; Stalin was already firmly entrenched in the Secretariat.

With the public and even party members uninformed about the Lenin-Stalin controversy, the General Secretary could assume the role of the most loyal of Lenin's disciples; he maintained this claim for the rest of his life. At Lenin's funeral he took an oath of eternal loyalty and devotion to Lenin's policies:

Departing from us, Comrade Lenin enjoined us to hold high and guard the purity of the great title of member of the Party. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we shall fulfil your behest with honour!

* * * * *

Departing from us, Comrade Lenin enjoined us to guard the unity of our Party as the apple of our eye. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that this behest, too, we shall fulfil with honour!

* * * * *

Departing from us, Comrade Lenin enjoined us to guard and strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we shall spare no effort to fulfil this behest, too, with honour!

* * * * *

Departing from us, Comrade Lenin enjoined us to strengthen with all our might the alliance of the workers and peasants. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that this behest, too, we shall fulfil with honour!

* * * * *

Departing from us, Comrade Lenin enjoined us to strengthen and extend the Union of Republics. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that this behest, too, we shall fulfil with honour!

* * * * *

Departing from us, Comrade Lenin enjoined us to remain faithful to the principles of the Communist International. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we shall not spare our lives to strengthen and extend the Union of the Working People of the whole world—the Communist International!⁹⁷

Even before Lenin's death the elimination of Trotsky, who in the general view was the likely successor to the post of the supreme leader, had become the main preoccupation of Lenin's three lieutenants, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin. When Lenin died, Trotsky, ill himself, was on his way to a resort in the Caucasus. The triumvirate in Moscow advised him not to return to the capital:

. . . "The funeral takes place on Saturday. You will not be able to return in time. The Politbureau thinks that because of the state of your

⁹⁶ Lenin, Letter of March 5, 1923 to Leon Trotsky, in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, pp. 276, 277.

⁹⁷ J. V. Stalin, "On the Death of Lenin," Speech Delivered January 26, 1924 at the Second All-Union Congress of Soviets, *Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952-55), vol. VI (1953), pp. 47-53.

health you must proceed to Sukhum." The funeral actually took place on Sunday, January 27. Trotsky could have been there. He has stated that Stalin kept him away deliberately. Stalin wanted to weaken the association in the people's minds between Lenin and Trotsky.⁹⁸

While Trotsky was continuing his medical treatment, the Moscow leadership was consolidating its power. Stalin saw to it that no friends or supporters of Trotsky advanced to prominent position in the party or government.

. . . it was a real conspiracy [Trotsky wrote]. A secret political bureau of seven was formed; it comprised all the members of the official Politbureau except me, and included also Kuybyshev, the present chairman of the Supreme Economic Council. All questions were decided in advance at that secret centre, where the members were bound by mutual vows. They undertook not to engage in polemics against one another and at the same time to seek opportunities to attack me. There were similar centres in the local organizations, and they were connected with the Moscow "seven" by strict discipline. For communication, special codes were used. This was a well-organized illegal group within the party, directed originally against one man. Responsible workers in the party and state were systematically selected by the single criterion: Against Trotsky. . . .

. . . From the end of 1923, the same work was carried on in all the parties of the Communist International; certain leaders were dethroned and others appointed in their stead solely on the basis of their attitude toward Trotsky.⁹⁹

Zinoviev and Kamenev at first supported Stalin in the anti-Trotsky drive. Soon, however, they became apprehensive about Stalin's growing power and gradually moved toward opposition. Stalin

. . . took the initiative in breaking up the triumvirate: he refused to consult his partners or to concert with them his moves before the sessions of the Politbureau. To all intents and purposes he was the indisputable master of the party, even though Kamenev was still entrenched in the organization of Moscow, while Zinoviev still led the Bolsheviks in Leningrad.¹⁰⁰

The two antagonists held different views of the ideological divergencies between them. Trotsky, leader of the "Lefts," more extreme in some respects than the rest of the leaders, felt that the ruling group had lost its revolutionary fervor and developed into mediocre "bureaucrats"; they hated him, he believed, for his adherence to old ideals, to world revolution, to equality.

. . . the ideas of the first period of the revolution were imperceptibly losing their influence in the consciousness of the party stratum that held the direct power over the country.

⁹⁸ Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁹⁹ Trotsky, *My Life*, pp. 500, 501.

¹⁰⁰ I. Deutscher, *Stalin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 297.

In the country itself, processes were shaping themselves that one may sum up under the general name of reaction. . . .

* * * * *
 . . . The visiting at each other's homes, the assiduous attendance of the ballet, the drinking-parties at which people who were absent were pulled to pieces, had no attraction for me. The new ruling group felt that I did not fit in with this way of living, and they did not even try to win me over. It was for this very reason that many group conversations would stop the moment I appeared, and those engaged in them would cut them short with a certain shamefacedness and a slight bitterness toward me.¹⁰¹

In Trotsky's view, the Stalinist group had become narrow-minded nationalists, concerned only with the fate of their own state. To Trotsky, Stalin's course in the Comintern was nonrevolutionary; Stalin's instructions suggesting collaboration with the Kuomintang in China in the middle 1920's were to Trotsky an act of treason; Stalin's scheme for building socialism in Russia was, to Trotsky, a ridiculous effort to erect "socialism in one country"; the pace of "industrialization" under Stalin was too slow; Stalin's rule in the party was contrary to the principles of inner-party democracy.

. . . He blamed Stalin for the "absolutist bureaucracy" in power in Russia, for the development of an "unbridled oligarchy." He protested against the privileges enjoyed by the "higher-ups" and Stakhanovites. He perceived in the social structure of Soviet Russia a "monstrous perversion of the principles of the November revolution."¹⁰²

Stalin's counterattack against Trotsky's vigorous criticism was likewise strong. Stalin adhered, of course, to the program of the world revolution.

. . . To overthrow the bourgeoisie the efforts of one country are sufficient; this is proved by the history of our revolution. For the final victory of Socialism, for the organization of Socialist production, the efforts of one country, particularly of a peasant country like Russia, are insufficient; for that, the efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries are required.¹⁰³

The theory of "socialism in one country," Stalin maintained, emanated from Marx and Lenin, and Soviet Russia had no alternative but to follow this road. The kind of "party democracy" that Trotsky advocated was contrary to the decisions of the party congresses. Trotsky, the army leader, was a potential "Bonaparte." Trotsky had

¹⁰¹ Trotsky, *My Life*, pp. 502, 504.

¹⁰² David J. Dallin, *The Changing World of Soviet Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), p. 213.

¹⁰³ Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1940), p. 153.

. . . set himself up in opposition to the C.C. [Central Committee] and imagines himself to be a superman standing above the C.C., above its laws, above its decisions. . . .¹⁰⁴

In his fight against Trotsky, Stalin joined with a group of Politburo members who constituted the emerging "right opposition," a faction which insisted on concessions to private peasant economy;¹⁰⁵ the group consisted of Nikolai Bukharin, Mikhail Tomski, and Aleksei Rykov. Stalin's highhanded methods, however, alienated his former partners, Zinoviev and Kamenev. Despite interdictions, organized factions continued to exist. Inner-party "discussions" and excited meetings took place; polemics were aired in newspapers and pamphlets. The fight reached a climax in 1926-27.

In January 1925, Trotsky was removed from his post as People's Commissar for War. In October 1926 he was expelled from the Politburo, at the same time that Zinoviev was removed from the presidency of the Communist International.

At the party's Fourteenth Congress in December 1925:

. . . The resolution to approve Stalin's report on behalf of the Central Committee [was] carried by an overwhelming majority of 559 to 65. The Stalinist apparatus demonstrated itself in complete control of the proceedings.

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By the beginning of 1926, the Stalinist machine was so solidly entrenched in all the key positions in the Party apparatus as to be virtually impervious to attack. . . . The opposition could muster a brilliant coterie of generals, but they were generals whose forces were scattered, disorganized, and improvised, and they confronted an enemy who securely controlled both the local organizations and leading organs of the Party.¹⁰⁶

Two former adversaries, the Trotsky group and the Zinoviev-Kamenev faction, joined forces in 1926 to oppose Stalin's leadership. Despite its sporadic vigorous attacks on the "apparatus," however, it did not gain force. The political end of this opposition came in November 1927.

. . . On 7 November 1927, during the official celebration of the tenth anniversary of the October revolution, Trotsky and Zinoviev led their followers in separate processions through the streets of Moscow and Leningrad. Though the processions were of peaceful character and the banners and slogans carried by the demonstrators were directed against the ruling group only by implication, the incident brought the struggle to a head. Trotsky

¹⁰⁴ Stalin, "Report on Immediate Tasks in Party Affairs," Delivered January 17, 1924 at the Thirteenth Conference of the RCP (B), *Works*, vol. VI (1953), p. 14.

¹⁰⁵ For further discussion of the program and activities of the "right opposition," see pp. 152-155.

¹⁰⁶ Fainsod, *op. cit.*, pp. 164, 165.

and Zinoviev were immediately expelled from the party. . . . On 18 December the congress expelled seventy-five leading members of the opposition, in addition to many others already expelled or imprisoned.

A day later the opposition split. Its Trotskyist section refused to yield to the demands of the congress. Trotsky was deported to Alma Ata, Rakovsky to Astrakhan. Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their followers, however, issued a statement in which they renounced their views. The opposition was defeated by this defection no less than by Stalin's reprisals.¹⁰⁷

Trotsky stayed in Turkestan until February 1929, when he was exiled abroad. He lived successively in Turkey, France, Norway, and Mexico. He was assassinated in Mexico by an agent of the Soviet secret police in August 1940.

8. The End of Opposition; Stalin as Autocrat

No sooner had the "Leftist" groups (Trotsky's and Zinoviev's) been suppressed and their leaders exiled than a new rift occurred in the apparently solid majority of the party's leadership. A fight developed between the "Rights" (Bukharin, Rykov, Tomski) and Stalin's faction. Within a comparatively short time—less than 2 years—the "Rights" were defeated, dispersed, and removed from leadership.

The essence of the "Rightist" program consisted in demands for continuation of the NEP, further concessions to the peasantry, no compulsory collectivization, and consequently, a slower pace of industrialization. The program was opposed to "liquidation of the kulaks"¹⁰⁸ except on a gradual and voluntary basis; "enrich yourselves" was a slogan of Bukharin's addressed to the individual farmers. The "Rights" protested the terroristic acts of the government against the peasantry. They maintained that "the state," as embodied, in the first place, in the police and army, must "wither away" (in accordance with the teachings of the founders of the Communist movement) and a gradual liberalization of the political system ensue. Some members of the "Rightist" group advocated the admission of a second political party to activity.

Stalin, on the other hand, was for rapid industrialization and collectivization of farming, goals which could be attained only by application of tremendous pressure; terrorism was an inevitable part of this policy. Despite his hatred of Trotskyism, Stalin maintained that "Right deviation [is] the chief danger in the Party at the present time."¹⁰⁹ Stalin denounced the right faction as pursuing a "liberal bourgeois policy."

In the fight between the factions, Stalin proved to be far shrewder, more ruthless, and the better master of intrigue; his opponents lacked

¹⁰⁷ Deutscher, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

¹⁰⁸ For further discussion of the drive against the so-called "kulaks," see ch. VI, p. 159.

¹⁰⁹ Stalin, "Political Report of the Central Committee to the Sixteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. (B.)" (June 27, 1930), *Works*, vol. XII (1955), p. 364.

the stamina for the life-and-death struggle with their formidable adversary. Personal relations within the Politburo were disrupted; tension mounted. In their despair, the "Rights" tried to make contact with the recently removed "Leftist" group of Kamenev and Zinoviev, which in itself was a crime in the eyes of the Stalinists.

On July 11, 1928, Bukharin and Kamenev had a secret interview arranged by Sokolnikov. . . .

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. . . [Bukharin] gave the impression of being "at bay"; his lips "trembled with emotion"; he was terrified of carrying on him anything "in writing." Why? "Do not let anyone know of our meeting. Do not telephone; it is overheard. The GPU is following and watching you also."¹¹⁰

In his conversation with Kamenev, Bukharin described the essence of Stalin's program and its shortcomings. Stalin, Bukharin said, proceeded on the following theory:

. . . "Capitalism has developed through its colonies, through loans, and by exploiting the workers. We have no colonies and no loans, so our basis must be tribute paid by the peasants." . . . According to Stalin, [Bukharin said] "the more socialism grows, the stronger will grow the resistance" (which Bukharin describes as "idiotic illiteracy") and as a result "a firm leadership is necessary." . . . "This [Bukharin declared] results in a police regime."

* * * * *

. . . [Bukharin charged that] "He [Stalin] is eaten up with the vain desire to become a well known theoretician. He feels that it is the only thing he lacks."

. . . Stalin knows only vengeance . . . the dagger in the back. We must remember *his theory of sweet revenge*." (One summer night in 1923, opening his heart to Dzerzhinsky and Kamenev, Stalin is supposed to have said, "To choose one's victim, to prepare one's plans minutely, to slake an implacable vengeance and then to go to bed. . . . There is nothing sweeter in the world.")¹¹¹

To inform Zinoviev of his conversation with Bukharin, Kamenev made a written record of it, a copy of which fell into Stalin's hands. This aggravated the situation in the extreme, and the fate of the "Rights" was sealed.

Events now unwound toward a familiar denouement. In a speech before a joint session of the Politburo and the presidium of the Central Control Commission at the end of January 1929, Stalin announced the "discovery" of a factional right-wing group led by Bukharin, Tomsky, and Rykov. Bukharin, he pointed out, had engaged in negotiations with Kamenev to establish a bloc with the former Left Opposition. Bukharin's article, "Notes of an Economist," was a veiled attack on the Politburo line. Stalin warned

¹¹⁰ Boris Souvarine, *Stalin* (New York: Alliance Book Corporation, Longmans, Green & Co., 1939), pp. 482, 483.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 483, 485.

that factionalism would not be tolerated. At the April plenum of the Central Committee and the Control Commission, Stalin launched a full-scale offensive against Bukharin and his colleagues. . . .

* * * * *

Stalin then pronounced the verdict of the plenum: to condemn the views of Bukharin and his group and to remove Bukharin and Tomsky from their official posts with a warning that they would be expelled from the Politburo in the event of any future insubordination. Measures would also be taken, Stalin promised, to prevent any member or candidate member of the Politburo or any Party journals from giving expression to any views departing from the Party line. On April 23, 1929, Bukharin was removed from the leadership of the Comintern. On June 2, Tomsky lost his position as head of the trade unions. On November 17, the plenum of the Central Committee approved the expulsion of Bukharin from the Politburo. . . .

* * * * *

. . . At the Sixteenth Party Congress (June 26 to July 13, 1930), Tomsky was dropped from the Politburo. Toward the end of December, Rykov was also removed from that body, as well as from his position as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. The rout of the Right Opposition was complete.¹¹²

Like the other anti-Stalinist factions after their defeat, the "Rights" not only capitulated but publicly acknowledged that Stalin was right and they were wrong. They promised, and appealed to their followers all over the country, "to fight against all deviations including the Right deviation." Their unworthy manner of submission did not soften the ire of the new autocrat of Russia, nor did it save their lives.¹¹³ This self-humiliation of the anti-Stalinist groups was one of the most tragic phases of the Soviet period in Russian history.

Following the rout of the oppositions, many of the dissident and now repentant Communists previously exiled to Siberia or Central Asia were permitted to return and take jobs in governmental agencies. They did not, however, try to become politically active again.

. . . For all the horror with which his [Stalin's] methods filled them, they felt that they were all, Stalinists and anti-Stalinists, in the same boat. Self-debasement was the ransom they paid to its captain. Their recantations were therefore neither wholly sincere nor wholly insincere. On returning from the places of their exile they cultivated their old political friendships and contacts, but carefully refrained from any political action against Stalin. Almost till the middle of the thirties nearly all of them kept in touch with the members of the new Politbureau. Some of the penitents, Bukharin, Rykov, Piatakov, Radek, and others, were either Stalin's personal advisers or members of the Government. If they had wanted to

¹¹² Fainsod, *op. cit.*, pp. 146, 147.

¹¹³ See Chap. VII, sec. 2.

assassinate either Stalin or his close associates they had innumerable opportunities to do so.¹¹⁴

The self-degradation was crowned by the attitude of the defeated leaders at the Seventeenth Congress of the Communist party, which was held in January 1934. The formerly famous leaders—Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Rykov—one after another took the floor to praise the wisdom of the party's leadership and condemn their own past. Stalin told the congress:

The present congress is taking place under the flag of the complete victory of Leninism, under the flag of the liquidation of the remnants of the anti-Leninist groups. . . .

* * * * *

The majority of the adherents to these anti-revolutionary groups had to admit that the line of the Party was correct and they have capitulated to the Party.

At the Fifteenth Party Congress it was still necessary to prove that the Party line was correct and to wage a struggle against certain anti-Leninist groups; and at the Sixteenth Party Congress we had to deal the final blow to the last adherents of these groups. At this congress, however, there is nothing to prove and, it seems, no one to fight. Everyone sees that the line of the Party has triumphed.¹¹⁵

Having vanquished all his opponents, Stalin held in his hands, not only the reins of the state machinery, but of the economy of the nation as well. As a totalitarian dictator he wielded greater power than did his contemporaries Hitler and Mussolini. In the early 1930's, he reached the summit of his power. Few Russian autocrats before him had been as independent in their decisions and as ruthless in their actions.

Amoral, vengeful, suspicious, contemptuous of human life, conceited and egotistical, Stalin triumphed mainly because in his personal traits of character he embodied the main elements of communism—belligerency, lack of humaneness, a taste for oppressing, and belief in a police state. None of his coleaders embodied in their personalities these features of communism as perfectly as did Stalin.

After his victory over the oppositions, Stalin no longer cared to observe party statutes or listen to the opinions of the party's so-called leading bodies.

While he still reckoned with the opinion of the collective before the Seventeenth Congress, after the complete political liquidation of the Trotskyites, Zinovievites and Bukharinites, when as a result of that fight and socialist victories the party achieved unity, Stalin ceased to an ever greater degree

¹¹⁴ Deutscher, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

¹¹⁵ Stalin, "Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress on the Work of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.)" (January 26, 1934), *Works*, vol. XIII (1955), pp. 353, 354.

to consider the members of the party's Central Committee and even the members of the Political Bureau. Stalin thought that now he could decide all things alone and all he needed were people to fill the stage; he treated all others in such a way that they could only listen to and praise him.¹¹⁶

In violation of the statutes, Stalin failed to convene a party congress for 5 years (1934–39), and then again for 13 years (1939–52). The Central Committee was often in the dark about important decisions of the General Secretary.

Feeling the silent discontent around him, however, and aware of the greater intellectual stature of some of the Communist leaders, Stalin became a

. . . very distrustful man, morbidly suspicious. . . . He could look at a man and say: "Why are your eyes so shifty today? . . . and why do you avoid looking directly into my eyes?"

The sickly suspicion created in him a general distrust even toward eminent party workers whom he had known for years. Everywhere and in everything he saw "enemies," "two-facers" and "spies."

Possessing unlimited power, he indulged in great willfulness and choked a person morally and physically.¹¹⁷

A servile attitude toward Stalin became obligatory and universal. Stalin had to be acknowledged as the genius in politics, sociology, Marxism, even military affairs, science and linguistics. He was deified; he could commit no error. Thus, his repulsive personal traits became a fateful source of huge political blunders and a scourge for the people. Stalin's heirs, in order to minimize and excuse their own despicable role in the history of the Stalin era, later gave to this obligatory kow-towing the mild name of "cult of personality."

Stalin's closest collaborators of the time—Nikita Khrushchev, Anastas Mikoyan, Nikolai Bulganin, Vyacheslav Molotov, Lazar Kaganovich and others—helped to create this image of a demi-god in the Kremlin.

Khrushchev sometimes tried to outdo all others.

Long live the greatest genius of humanity, our teacher and leader, victoriously guiding us toward Communism, our beloved Stalin.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Nikita S. Khrushchev, "Secret Report," Delivered February 24, 25, 1956 at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, printed in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, pp. 126, 128.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

¹¹⁸ Khrushchev, Speech Delivered March 13, 1939 at the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, *XVIII S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (b) 10–21 Marta 1939, Stenograficheskiy Otchet* (Eighteenth Congress of the All-Union Communist Party, March 10–21, 1939, Stenographic Report) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Political Literature), 1939), p. 174.

Ten years later Khrushchev said:

Comrade Stalin, the genius, the leader and teacher of our party, has defended and developed Lenin's theory of victory of socialism in one country. . . .

The greatest service rendered by Comrade Stalin is that in his relentless struggle against the enemies of the people,—the mensheviks, socialist-revolutionaries, trotskyites, zinovievites, bukharinites, bourgeois nationalists he defended the purity of Lenin's teachings and the iron bound unity in the ranks of our party.¹¹⁹

Anastas Mikoyan said:

Like Lenin Comrade Stalin is a leader of a higher type. He is a mountain eagle, without fear in the fight, who boldly leads the bolshevik party on unexplored roads toward the total victory of Communism.¹²⁰

In the same vein he spoke later, a few months before Stalin's end. Stalin has

. . . educated and organized us, he led us through all obstacles and ordeals and he will safely lead us to the full triumph of Communism. Praise to the genius Stalin, the great architect of Communism.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Khrushchev, in *Bolshevik*, Moscow, No. 24, December 1949, p. 80.

¹²⁰ Anastas Mikoyan, Speech Delivered March 13, 1939 at the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, *XVIII S'ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* . . . , p. 221.

¹²¹ Mikoyan, Speech Delivered at the Nineteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, *Pravda*, October 12, 1952, p. 5.

Chapter VI. The New Economic Upheaval

1. Collectivization of Farming

Up to 1929 the attitude of the Soviet government toward private peasant economy was that of acquiescence and toleration coupled with the hope of its eventual transformation into the general Soviet type of state economy. But a country in which private peasant economy predominates cannot, according to Communist theory, be termed socialist; moreover, restoration of industrial capitalism remains a constant danger under such conditions.

. . . As long as we live in a small-peasant country, there is a surer economic basis for capitalism in Russia than for communism . . . we have not torn up the roots of capitalism and have not undermined the foundation, the basis of the internal enemy. The latter depends on small-scale production, and there is only one way of undermining it, namely, to place the economy of the country, including agriculture, on a new technical basis, the technical basis of modern large-scale production.¹

Lenin realized that abolition of a class of peasants, numbering millions, was an operation much more difficult than the destruction of a relatively small class of landlords and capitalists; a second revolution was needed if the task was to be accomplished.

Socialism means the abolition of classes.

In order to abolish classes one must, firstly, overthrow the landlords and capitalists. That part of our task has been accomplished, but it is only a part, and moreover, *not the most difficult part*. In order to abolish classes one must, secondly, abolish the difference between workingman and peasant, *one must make them all workers*. This cannot be done all at once. This task is incomparably more difficult and will of necessity be a protracted one. This task cannot be accomplished by overthrowing a class. It can be solved only by the organizational reconstruction of the whole social economy, by a transition from individual, disunited, petty commodity production to a large-scale social enterprise.²

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Work of the Council of People's Commissars," Report Delivered December 22, 1920 at the Eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets, *Selected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1943), vol. VIII, p. 276.

² Lenin, "Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (October 30, 1919), *Selected Works*, vol. VIII, p. 8.

Despite the compulsion and terror applied against the peasantry (before the introduction of the NEP), Lenin still envisaged the transformation of agriculture as a protracted operation:

. . . This transition must of necessity be extremely protracted. This transition may only be delayed and complicated by hasty and incautious administrative legislation. The transition can be accelerated only by affording such assistance to the peasant as will enable him to improve his whole technique of agriculture immeasurably, to reform it radically.³

The NEP, introduced in 1921, had signified a truce in the Soviet war on the peasantry. Until 1928–29, Stalin, allied with the “rightist” faction, had adhered to the half-hearted toleration of individual farming, admitting that “so long as this danger [individual farming] exists there can be no serious talk of the victory of Socialist construction in our country.”⁴

The year 1929 was the year of the great upheaval. The Communist urge toward a rapid establishment of socialism in Russia, and Stalin’s personal ambition to become the architect of the first socialist system in the world, prompted the government to embark upon a program of universal collectivization of farming. The program was to be pushed by all possible means, including police action and terror, and was completed by 1932.

The drive was presented as an offensive against the “kulaks”—the kulaks having originally been wealthy peasants who exploited their hired labor. A campaign was launched to “liquidate the kulaks as a class”—the kulaks being the last of the capitalist groups existing in Russia. Collectivization was officially depicted as a voluntary movement of a great majority of the peasantry toward collective farming, in which the peasants would have to fight resistance on the part of the kulaks. Actually the entire peasant population was opposed to collectivization. All active opponents of the program were considered “kulaks” (or “subservient to kulaks”) and were severely repressed.

. . . we have passed from the policy of *restricting* the exploiting tendencies of the kulaks to the policy of *eliminating* the kulaks as a class. It means that we have carried out, and are continuing to carry out, one of the decisive turns in our whole policy. . . .

* * * * *

. . . To launch an offensive against the kulaks means that we must smash the kulaks, eliminate them as a class. . . . To launch an offensive

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 9.

⁴ J. V. Stalin, “Grain Procurements and the Prospects for the Development of Agriculture” (January 1928), *Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952–55), vol. XI (1954), p. 8.

against the kulaks means that we must prepare for it and then strike at the kulaks, strike so hard as to prevent them from rising to their feet again.⁵

. . . On February 1, 1930, the Central Executive Committee [of the Congress of Soviets] and the Council of People's Commissars gave the regional and provincial executive committees the right to apply "all necessary measures to fight the kulaks, including confiscation of the entire property of the kulaks and their eviction from the regions and provinces," and to transfer the confiscated property to the "indivisible funds" of the kolkhozes [collective farms] as a contribution by the poor peasants and farm-laborers joining the kolkhozes.⁶

The kulaks were to be divided into three groups:

. . . The first and most dangerous group, described as "the counter-revolutionary kulak aktiv," was to be arrested by the OGPU. . . . The second category consisted of "certain (separate) elements of the kulak aktiv," especially from among the richest peasants and "quasi-landowners," who were to be deported to "far-off" parts of the Soviet Union. The remaining kulaks were to be removed from areas scheduled for "total collectivization," but were not to be deported from the okrug [administrative units]. For such kulaks the raion [county] executive committees were to provide special land parcels carved out of "eroded" areas, "swamp-lands in woods," and other soil "in need of improvement."

Families of Group I and II kulaks were to be deported from the okrug on the approval of the okrug troika [the highest local police authority]. Property of Group I households was to be confiscated immediately and handed over to neighboring collective farms either in existence or in process of organization.⁷

In November 1929 the Central Committee of the Communist Party decided to dispatch 25,000 reliable workers to carry out the collectivization; actually, 60,000 were sent, of whom about 79 percent were members of the Communist party or the Communist Youth League [Komsomol].⁸ They were to do their job in cooperation with and with the assistance of the local police.

Many of these workers did not know the peasant economy and none of them knew the economic structure of a big agricultural enterprise. They

⁵ Stalin, "Concerning Questions of Agrarian Policy In the U.S.S.R.," Speech Delivered December 27, 1929 at a Conference of Marxist Students of Agrarian Questions, *Works*, vol. XII (1955), pp. 173, 174.

⁶ S. N. Prokopovich, *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR* (National Economy of the USSR) (New York: Chekhov Publishing House, 1952), vol. I, p. 189.

⁷ Merle Fainsod, *Smolensk Under Soviet Rule* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 242, 243. These orders which, so far as they concerned the Smolensk Oblast have been revealed in some detail, obviously following the general instructions of Stalin's government.

⁸ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Large Soviet Encyclopedia) (2nd ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Nauchnoe Izdatelstvo "Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya" (State Scientific Publishing House "The Large Soviet Encyclopedia")), vol. XIII (1952), p. 407.

were in no way prepared for the work that was entrusted to them by the communist party. Some of them described openly in their statements [reports] made to the party organs the absurd situation in which they found themselves.⁹

Actually the kulaks included not only “exploiters of labor” but often the intelligent, industrious, and thinking elements of the peasantry. One of Stalin’s purposes in pursuing the campaign for collectivization was to eliminate political opposition in the village.

To break any future resistance, it was important to eliminate those peasants who were about to lose most and were also most fit for leadership. An additional consideration in favor of liquidating these groups was the desire to use their property as a bait for the poorer peasants. . . .

In theory, only the kulaki and well-to-do were subject to liquidation as a class, but in practice—even in legislative practice—everyone unwilling to join was declared a kulak. . . .

* * * * *

. . . The VIth Congress of the Soviets in March 1931, having declared that “by that policy [collectivization] we have conquered hunger,” continued: “The poor and average individual peasant who helps the kulak to combat the kolkhoz undermines the collectivization movement . . . he is in fact an ally of the kulak,” and finally, “The poor and average peasant has only one way . . . joining the kolkhozy.”¹⁰

This was a violent, bloody social revolution; though it did not affect the nation’s political system, the upheaval it caused in social conditions was more profound than the upheaval of 1917.

Within a short time rural Russia became pandemonium. The overwhelming majority of the peasantry confronted the Government with desperate opposition. Collectivization degenerated into a military operation, a cruel civil war. Rebellious villages were surrounded by machine-guns and forced to surrender. Masses of *kulaks* were deported to remote unpopulated lands in Siberia. Their houses, barns, and farm implements were turned over to the collective farms—Stalin himself put the value of their property so transferred at over 400 million roubles. The bulk of the peasants decided to bring in as little as possible of their property to the collective farms which they imagined to be state-owned factories, in which they themselves would become mere factory hands.¹¹

An exact balance sheet of the repressions resorted to during the drive has never been published. Thousands were shot, hundreds of thousands arrested, and the “kulaks” exiled wholesale to the far north and east.

. . . As a direct consequence of this destruction, half the total head of livestock was lost within a space of four years; probably not less than five

⁹ Prokopovich, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 187, 188.

¹⁰ Naum Jasny, *The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1949), pp. 307–309.

¹¹ I. Deutscher, *Stalin* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), pp. 324, 325.

million peasants, including families, were deported to Siberia and the Far North, and of these it is estimated that 25 per cent perished. Also, very largely as a result of neglect of the land, growth of weeds, late sowing, etc., comparatively dry summers in 1931 and 1932 resulted in such poor harvests that millions, variously estimated at four to ten, of persons died of direct starvation or diseases induced by starvation.¹²

. . . They [the authorities] treat a brutal murderer, as a rule, with more consideration than a small farmer who didn't want to turn his domestic animals and house and garden into a common pool with his neighbors to make a collective farm.¹³

Peasant households, which had increased from 24.5 million in mid-1928 to 25.8 million in mid-1929, numbered only 20.1 million in mid-1935. The kulaki must have made up a considerable proportion of the vanished households.¹⁴

Laptev, a highly official writer, said that "about 30 million hectares of land [equivalent to about 74 million acres], taken from the liquidated kulaki and, according to approximate computations, means of production valued at about one billion rubles, expropriated from the kulaki, became the property of the kolkhozy."¹⁵

In addition to private land, now combined into big kolkhoz fields, horses and cattle, too, were to be collectivized. (Eventually, each member of the collective was permitted one cow and a tiny plot of land.) The reaction of the peasants, not anticipated by the authorities, was logical: They slaughtered their cattle rather than give it to the anonymous Communist collective. In a report made in January 1934, Stalin admitted these facts.

The following table shows the number of head of cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs in Russia for each year from 1929 to 1933:

[In millions]

Year	Large cattle	Sheep and goats	Pigs
1929.....	68.1	147.2	20.9
1930.....	52.5	108.8	13.6
1931.....	47.9	77.7	14.4
1932.....	40.7	52.1	11.6
1933.....	38.6	50.6	12.2

¹² Leonard E. Hubbard, *The Economics of Soviet Agriculture* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1939), p. 117.

¹³ John D. Littlepage and Demaree Bess, *In Search of Soviet Gold* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1938), p. 135.

¹⁴ Jasny, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

The number of horses (the main draft power in Russian agriculture of the time) fell from 34 million in 1929 to 16.6 million in 1933.¹⁶

. . . While most of the peasants joining the kolkhozy did not have horses, the horses taken from the kulaki were dying from lack of food and care. Since there were only a few tractors, the total supply of draft power was greatly inadequate¹⁷

The peasants had no means of effective resistance, and quantitatively the collectivization was a complete success. The following table shows the fate of some 25 million individual peasant farms which existed in the Soviet Union before the collectivization campaign which began in 1928:

[In Thousands]

	Number of individual farms merged into collectives	Number of farms remaining independent
1928.....	416.7	24,573.0
1932.....	14,918.7	9,428.0
1936.....	18,448.4	1,936.6
1938.....	18,847.6	181,309.9

The establishment of the kolkhoz system in the course of three or four years and the transformation of Russian peasants into members of collectives constituted the most radical upheaval known in history. . . . There were, however, instances of resistance to an extent and in forms of which neither Russia nor the outside world had any adequate conception. The Soviet press, of course, did not report them, and the cities heard only fragmentary reports of riots, of their suppression, of mass exile. As a matter of fact, there were a great many uprisings embracing whole regions, revolts, ruthlessly suppressed by GPU troops. Tanks were let loose upon the peasants, whole villages burned to the ground and even bombed by government planes. The execution of captured rebels was resorted to with the object of intimidating and terrorizing the population, and was therefore of a mass character. . . . The instructions from Moscow demanded the complete "liquidation of the kulaks as a class." These, with their families, numbered, in 1928, according to official statistics, 5,859,000 human beings. Some day we may learn how many of them were exiled. . . .¹⁹

¹⁶ Stalin, "Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress on the Work of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. (B.)" (January 26, 1934), *Works*, vol. XIII (1955), p. 328.

¹⁷ Jasny, *op. cit.*, p. 541.

¹⁸ Prokopovich, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

¹⁹ David J. Dallin, *The Changing World of Soviet Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), p. 109.

Some 250,000 collectives emerged²⁰ to replace about 25 million individual farms. The new situation made it easier for the state and the Communist party to control agriculture and husbandry, although Communist cells existed in only a minority of the kolkhozes. The MTS's (machine-tractor stations established by the state in the various districts to serve the collective farms) and the "political departments" of the MTS's (a party apparatus) became the masters and acted as collectors of various levies; they often served also as the instrument for influencing and directing the kolkhoz economy in accordance with the overall economic plans.

The kolkhoz system served the state as a pump for the extraction of food and raw materials for the needs of the cities, the army, and industry. The tiny plots of land and the single cow still permitted to be owned individually therefore acquired great significance for the kolkhoz peasants.

With the kolkhoz system established, Stalin proclaimed the Soviet Union a socialist state. The new constitution (the so-called Stalin Constitution) of 1936 provided, in articles 4 and 5:

ARTICLE 4.

The economic foundation of the U.S.S.R. is the socialist system of economy and the socialist ownership of the instruments and means of production, firmly established as a result of the liquidation of the capitalist system of economy, the abolition of private ownership of the instruments and means of production, and the elimination of the exploitation of man by man.

ARTICLE 5.

Socialist property in the U.S.S.R. exists either in the form of state property (belonging to the whole people) or in the form of cooperative and collective-farm property (property of collective farms, property of cooperative societies).²¹

2. The Famine of 1933

A great famine, affecting the whole of Russia's south, was the inevitable consequence of the enforced collectivization of peasant farms and the "liquidation of the kulaks." Sown areas had diminished substantially. Official statistics, which admitted a decrease of only 5 percent, were obviously slanted.²² While the government continued to extract huge quantities of food for the cities and the army, cattle were being slaughtered en masse.

²⁰ No exact statistics were published at the time.

²¹ *Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, As Amended by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on February 25, 1947 on the recommendation of the Drafting Commission* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1947), pp. 12, 13.

²² William Henry Chamberlin, *Russia's Iron Age* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1934), p. 75.

. . . When supplies are short, livestock are sacrificed before men, although the peasants are very reluctant to part with their last cow and especially their last horse. Although the livestock herds had been considerably reduced before the summer of 1931, an additional 15 percent of the cattle, 33 percent of the sheep, 19 percent of the hogs, and one-fourth of the horses disappeared during the crop year 1931-32. Most of the emergency slaughter occurred before the beginning of 1932, thus releasing more grain for food use in 1932.²³

Out of its greatly enlarged procurements the government saw fit to export considerably more grain in 1932 than in 1927-28. It also used more grain in distilling.²⁴

. . . In 1932, climatic conditions were better; but the peasants, discouraged and in many cases already suffering from undernourishment, showed little interest in reaping the crops which, as they felt, would be taken away from them anyway. The stage was set for a climatic catastrophe.²⁵

Russia still remembered the famine of 1921-22; ²⁶ the new famine was as severe, if not more so.

The first phase of the famine, which embraces more particularly the first seven months of 1933, was undoubtedly a human tragedy of far greater magnitude even than the famine of the years 1921-22.²⁷

. . . Under such slogans as the pursuit of "saboteurs," "counterrevolutionists," "enemies of the State" and so on, stronger pressure was exercised to extract from the peasants the grain they still possessed.²⁸

There was, however, a substantial difference between the course taken by the government in the famine of 1921-22 and that taken in 1933. First, viewing the catastrophe as a component part of the collectivization, Stalin correctly expected it to break the remaining resistance on the part of the peasantry; in a way, the famine served as an instrument of his policies. In its war on the kulaks,

. . . The government had in reserve and was prepared to employ the last and sharpest weapon in the armory of class warfare: organized famine.

* * * * *

Two noteworthy features of the famine were that far more men died than women and far more *edinolichniki* (individual peasants) than members of collective farms. If in many districts 10 percent of the collective farmers died, the percentage of mortality among the individual peasants was sometimes as high as 25. Of course not all who died passed through the typical stages of death from outright hunger, abnormal swelling under the eyes and of the stomach, followed in the last stages by swollen legs and cracking

²³ Jasny, *op. cit.*, p. 555.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 556.

²⁵ Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

²⁶ See page 130.

²⁷ Ewald Ammende, *Human Life in Russia* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1936), p. 54.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

bones. The majority died of slight colds which they could not withstand in their weakened condition; of typhus, the familiar accompaniment of famine; of "exhaustion," to use the familiar euphemistic word in the death reports.²⁹

The second deviation from the pattern of 1922 was the nonrecourse to relief from abroad for the starving population. We have seen how much food was sent from abroad in 1922; in 1933, when antagonism toward Germany and Japan had greatly increased Western sympathy toward Russia, help to an even greater degree would have been possible, and millions of lives could have been saved. But a request by Stalin for food would have destroyed his boastful claim of miraculous achievements in the socialized economy. He preferred to sacrifice millions of lives rather than Soviet prestige.

This was also the reason why the Soviet press, in contrast to its attitude in 1922, did not mention the famine, and why foreign correspondents were not permitted to visit the starving provinces.

. . . Unfortunately the subject of the disaster of 1932-33 was and still is taboo in the Soviet Union. Even the population statistics of those years were withheld or distorted to conceal the heavy loss of life. Foreign correspondents were strictly forbidden to visit hunger-stricken areas. In the absence of reasonably dependable surveys, one is forced to rely on testimony of later visitors and on inexact computations from very incomplete population data. It would appear on the basis of that evidence that in the years centered around 1932-33 at least 5.5 million people died in excess of normal mortality. A large part of the excess deaths occurred in the rural areas in the disastrous winter of 1932-33.³⁰

According to Otto Schiller, . . . who was Germany's agricultural attaché in Russia for many years and also visited several starvation areas, "The whole area south of the forest-steppe zone of European Russia, stretching to the autonomous republics, parts of Kazakhstan and Central Asia, was involved in the starvation." Schiller said, furthermore, "The figure of 5 to 10 million victim deaths mentioned by another writer is unlikely to be excessive."³¹

Mikhail Kalinin, the president of the Soviet Union, was the only one to even hint, publicly, that famine conditions existed, but he did so in a somewhat peculiar way:

"The collective farmers this year have passed through a good school. For some this school was quite ruthless." In this cryptic understatement President Kalinin summed up the situation in Ukraina and the North Caucasus, from the Soviet standpoint. The unnumbered new graves in the richest Soviet agricultural regions mark the passing of those who did not survive the ordeal, who were victims of this "ruthless school."³²

²⁹ Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 82, 87.

³⁰ Jasny, *op. cit.*, p. 553.

³¹ *Ibid.*, note 27.

³² Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

The government even continued to export food during the famine year.

. . . It would have been possible to save the starving people with the cereals the government has shipped abroad.³³

The famine struck hardest in the richest parts of Russia, in the first place the Ukraine, and especially the Don areas, where the peasantry was relatively well-to-do; there the "dekulakization" was carried out in the most brutal manner.

There is an acute shortage of food in the whole country, but the following regions are experiencing dire need:

Regions	Population [in millions]	Territory [thousands of square kilometers]
Ukraine.	31. 6	451. 8
Northern Caucasus.	9. 3	293. 6
Lower Volga.	5. 8	334. 0
Middle Volga.	7. 5	236. 0
General black soil region.	11. 7	191. 9

An area of 1,507,300 sq. kilometers, with a population of 65.9 mil. is in the grip of famine. This exceeds in area and population the disaster of 1920-21.³⁴

The famine was so severe that the government's efforts to conceal it from foreign eyes or minimize it could not succeed. From private letters, unauthorized travelers, and post-factum studies, the main facts about the catastrophe became known.

. . . Horrible things are happening, [a former commander of the Red Army wrote from the Northern Caucasus to a relative in France on May 16, 1933.] Entire villages are being completely depopulated by famine. One such is U. Bodies of the dead lie for days in the houses because there is no one to remove them. They are buried coffinless in a common grave. In dark corners of back streets one finds bodies partly devoured by dogs. Dogs and cats are used for human food. Horse meat is considered a delicacy, and is sold openly.

Human flesh has also been eaten. There have been cases where mothers killed their children. These are not tales. There was such a case in Uss. A woman killed the blind Bissatcha in order to eat him; Mara surely knows

³³ A. Markoff, *Famine in Russia* (New York: Committee for the Relief of Famine in Russia, 1934), p. 6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

this man. Starving people grab food and money from one another at the markets. One has to hold his purchases with both hands. The authorities are inactive. They intervene only to confiscate flour and bread which is sold illicitly.³⁵

The above-mentioned Dr. Schiller, German agricultural attaché in Moscow, wrote:

. . . Villages have been depopulated. Politically the cossacks have been exterminated. Cases of cannibalism were frequent. The inhabitants of Temichbek have fallen in numbers from 15,000 to 7,000. In many places the population has declined 15 per cent. The villages of Kamennobrodskaiia, Lagovskaia and Sredne-Egorlytskaia are completely depopulated. In some villages from 20 to 30 persons die daily.³⁶

Migration from the rural districts to the cities in search of food became a mass phenomenon. Arriving in the city, however, the hungry and weakened peasants died in the streets.

In the countryside, where the misery was still greater and often passed the bounds of imagination, thousands of starving men, women and children thronged into the towns in defiance of the authorities, like migrating peoples. They left their homes to their fate; their one aim was to seek refuge in the city. Once arrived, the majority collapsed from sheer weakness. . . .³⁷

. . . As time went on the number of starving persons lying in the streets and squares of Kharkov, Kiev, Rostov and other cities increased. Most of them were peasants who had summoned up the little strength left to them in order to reach the town. In the streets and the courtyards scenes were often witnessed which are hardly credible by European standards. While at first passers-by would take some notice of these appalling pictures of misery, this soon changed, and it was particularly shocking to see people carelessly passing the corpses of those who had died of starvation. The number of corpses was so great that they could only be removed once a day. Often no distinction was made between the corpses and those not yet quite dead; all were loaded on the lorries, to be flung indiscriminately into a common grave.

This burial work was done by convicts from the local prison. From morning until evening they were busy digging the graves. Fifteen bodies were usually buried in one grave, and the number of graves is so great that these famine cemeteries often recall a stretch of sandhills.³⁸

The children suffered the most. Some had lost their parents; others, brought by their parents into the cities, were left there in the hope they would arouse pity for the starving.

. . . It was beyond my comprehension [said an eyewitness]. I would not at first believe my own eyes. Some of the children dragged themselves to

³⁵ As quoted in *ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁶ As quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 5, 6.

³⁷ Ammende, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

their feet for the last time and gathered their remaining forces to look for something eatable in the streets. But they were so weak that they fell down and remained lying where they fell. The poor children were the strongest impression of any journey. At Kharkov I saw a boy wasted to a skeleton lying in the middle of the street. A second boy was sitting near a heap of garbage picking egg-shells out of it. They were looking for eatable remnants of food or fruit. They perished like wild beasts. . . . When the famine began to haunt the villages parents used to take their children into the towns, where they left them in the hope that someone would have pity on them. . . . Their lot was better in the towns than in the country villages, because child murder in the towns is obviously more difficult than in the country.³⁹

The famine situation began to improve in 1933.

3. Industrialization and Rearmament

The end of foreign and civil war and the retreat from war communism since 1921 helped to ease, though slowly, the worst effects of the economic catastrophe. Then after a 5-year period of rehabilitation, Soviet agriculture and industry were approaching the prewar level, and in the second half of the 1920's a main problem of the regime were the issues involved in the further development of the Soviet economy.

The Soviet government embarked on a policy of rapid industrialization of the country; detailed plans for economic growth were elaborated in the late 1920's, usually for 5-year periods. A 5-year plan contained the projected rise of industrial and agricultural production in specific figures for every year.

As far as Soviet industry was concerned, two great issues, political rather than purely economic, had to be resolved. The first was the scope and pace of industrial development. Poor in capital even before the revolution, having suffered great destruction since 1914, and with no prospects of foreign loans, Soviet industrial growth was possible only at the expense of the standard of living of the people, and in a country where three-fourths of the population were peasants, industrialization could proceed only at the expense of the wellbeing of the poverty-stricken peasantry.

Given the situation in which the Soviet regime found itself in the twenties, the only important source from which an industrialization fund could be accumulated was the peasantry. Long-term foreign loans, the historical instrument of industrial development in backward countries, were not available. The concessions policy of the Soviet regime met almost complete frustration. The only remaining alternative was aptly described by V. M. Smirnov and E. A. Preobrazhensky as "primitive socialist accumulation,"

³⁹ As quoted in *ibid.*, p. 63.

the diversion of the output of the peasantry and the private sector of the economy to finance investment in socialized heavy industry.⁴⁰

While one faction of the ruling party, the Trotskyites, were strongly in favor of accelerating the pace of industrialization despite the hardship this would place on the peasantry, the majority of the party's leading bodies, that is, the Stalin-Bukharin coalition, at first rejected such a program as a threat to the stability of the Soviet system. In 1928-29, however, when Stalin broke with the right opposition (Bukharin, Tomski, Rykov), and the Trotskyites had already been crushed, he embraced the latter's industrial program in its most extreme form. The pace of industrialization was greatly accelerated, and the goal of completing "the first 5-year plan in 4 years" was proclaimed. The scope of industrial construction was greatly enlarged.

The burden of industrial expansion was becoming almost insupportable and strong resentment developed in the party. Stalin, however, did not retreat.

It is sometimes asked [he said] whether it is not possible to slow down the tempo somewhat, to put a check on the movement. No, comrades, it is not possible! The tempo must not be reduced! On the contrary, we must increase it as much as is within our powers and possibilities. This is dictated to us by our obligations to the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R. This is dictated to us by our obligations to the working class of the whole world.

To slacken the tempo would mean falling behind. And those who fall behind get beaten. But we do not want to be beaten. No, we refuse to be beaten! One feature of the history of old Russia was the continual beatings she suffered because of her backwardness. She was beaten by the Mongol khans. She was beaten by the Turkish beys. She was beaten by the Swedish feudal lords. She was beaten by the Polish and Lithuanian gentry. She was beaten by the British and French capitalists. She was beaten by the Japanese barons. All beat her—because of her backwardness, because of her military backwardness, cultural backwardness, political backwardness, industrial backwardness, agricultural backwardness. They beat her because to do so was profitable and could be done with impunity.⁴¹

This digression into past history did not present the facts quite accurately. Although she suffered defeats in some of her numerous wars, Russia had emerged victorious from the great majority of her armed conflicts; had this not been so she would not, in the course of a few centuries, have expanded from a small principality into a world empire. In his search for an argument in favor of rapid industrialization, Stalin

⁴⁰ Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 100.

⁴¹ Stalin, "The Tasks of Business Executives," Speech Delivered February 4, 1931 at the First All-Union Conference of Leading Personnel of Socialist Industry, *Works*, vol. XIII (1955), pp. 40, 41.

was cleverly appealing to the nation's longing for security. His programmatic speech continued:

In the past we had no fatherland, nor could we have had one. But now that we have overthrown capitalism and power is in our hands, in the hands of the people, we have a fatherland, and we will uphold its independence. Do you want our socialist fatherland to be beaten and to lose its independence? If you do not want this, you must put an end to its backwardness in the shortest possible time and develop a genuine Bolshevik tempo in building up its socialist economy. There is no other way. That is why Lenin said on the eve of the October Revolution: "Either perish, or overtake and outstrip the advanced capitalist countries."

We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or we shall go under.⁴³

The second political issue of the era of industrialization was the goal and direction of the industrialization: which industries should have priority and which could be relegated to second or third place. If the well-being of the people were the primary objective, then textiles, the leather industry and housing should have priority; but if war industries and the prerequisites for rearmament were to be pushed, then so-called heavy industry must have priority. In a fight with the "right opposition," Stalin argued for the latter course.

Some comrades think that industrialisation implies the development of any kind of industry. . . . Not every kind of industrial development is industrialisation. The centre of industrialisation, the basis for it, is the development of heavy industry (fuel, metal, etc.), the development, in the last analysis, of the production of the means of production, the development of our own machine-building industry. Industrialisation has the task not only of increasing the share of manufacturing industry in our national economy as a whole; it has also the task, within the development, of ensuring economic independence for our country, surrounded as it is by capitalist states, of safeguarding it from being converted into an appendage of world capitalism.⁴³

Stalin developed the theory of two types of industrialization. There exist, he said, a "capitalist" and a "Socialist" industrialization. To Stalin, every case of industrialization without natural or artificial expansion of heavy industry was a capitalist type of industrialization.

Take India. India, as everyone knows, is a colony. Has India an industry? It undoubtedly has. Is it developing? Yes, it is. But the kind of industry developing there is not one which produces instruments and means of production. India imports its instruments of production from

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁴⁴ Stalin, "The Economic Situation of the Soviet Union and the Policy of the Party," Report Delivered April 13, 1926 to the Active of the Leningrad Party Organization on the Work of the Plenum of the CC., CPSU (B), *Works*, vol. VIII (1954), pp. 127, 128.

Britain. Because of this (although, of course, not only because of this), India's industry is completely subordinated to British industry. That is a specific method of imperialism—to develop industry in the colonies in such a way as to keep it tethered to the metropolitan country, to imperialism.

. . . It follows from this that industrialisation is to be understood above all as the development of heavy industry in our country, and especially of our own machine-building industry, which is the principal nerve of industry in general.⁴⁴

“Heavy industry” became a cover for war industry; in particular, Soviet “machine-building” embraced the production of arms. Except for some confusing figures about machine-building combined with production of tanks, military trucks, etc., no statistical or other details of Soviet “machine-building” have been published.

. . . In the five-year plans of production of means of production there is also included the war industry, production of means of mass destruction and of annihilation of people.⁴⁵

In its five-year plans, Stalin's government took the “heavy industry” road.

. . . For the period from January 1, 1929 to July 1, 1941, capital investment in the industry amounted to 199.5 billion rubles, of which 169.5 billion rubles, i.e., 85 percent, were invested in heavy industry.⁴⁶

In the end, having achieved little by way of improvement in the population's standard of living, Stalin had to justify his course to his party:

It is true that the output of goods for mass consumption was less than the amount required, and this creates certain difficulties. But, then, we must realise and take into account where such a policy of relegating the task of industrialisation to the background would have led us. Of course, out of the 1,500 million rubles in foreign currency that we spent during this period on equipment for our heavy industries, we could have set aside a half for importing cotton, hides, wool, rubber, etc. Then we would now have more cotton fabrics, shoes and clothing. But we would not have a tractor industry or an automobile industry; we would not have anything like a big iron and steel industry; we would not have metal for the manufacture of machinery—and we would remain unarmed while encircled by capitalist countries armed with modern technique.

* * * * *

. . . The Party, as it were, spurred the country on and hastened its progress.

* * * * *

Finally, the Party had to put an end, in the shortest possible space of time, to the weakness of the country in the sphere of defence. The conditions prevailing at the time, the growth of armaments in the capitalist

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 128, 129.

⁴⁵ Prokopovich, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 349.

⁴⁶ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, vol. XLIII (1956), p. 562.

countries, the collapse of the idea of disarmament, the hatred of the international bourgeoisie for the U.S.S.R.—all this impelled the Party to accelerate the work of strengthening the defence capacity of the country, the basis of her independence.⁴⁷

Calling for painful sacrifices on the altar of industrialization, the Soviet government pointed to the acuteness of the war danger, although actually peace reigned at the time and no government was menacing the Soviet Union. But Stalin needed a war scare. Since the late 1920's he and the Soviet press had not only exaggerated the anti-Soviet trends in the West and East, but even pretended to know the dates of planned military invasions of Russia:

The apprehensions of the masses are regularly kept alive by suggestive reports of impending aggression from without. On one occasion I made a collection of newspaper headlines on this subject, and within a short time had collected the following typical samples (at that time the supposed threat was believed to be in the West, rather than in the East):—

“Programme of the Rumanian King: Enslavement of the Country and War with the Soviet Union.”

“Stages of Military Preparations against the Soviet Union.”

“Rehearsal of the Attack on the Soviet Union.”

“Conspiracy against the Soviet Union under the Flag of Union of Europe.”

“The Imperialists Are Anxious to Seize the Soviet Oil; They Prepare a Blow at the Oil Wells of Baku; Suspicious Journeys of British Agents.”

“To Turn the Armed Attack on the Soviet Union into Revolutionary Struggle for the Soviet Union.”

The effect of the newspaper articles which are heralded by such headlines is, of course, intensified by the absolute uniformity of political opinion which is imposed on the Soviet press. No suggestion that the war menace is exaggerated, to say nothing of any pacifist propaganda, would be printed.

* * * * *

Up to 1931, Soviet apprehensions of armed attack were primarily directed to the West, with France and England alternately playing the rôle of hypothetical aggressor. At no time does there seem to have been any serious foundation for these continually expressed suspicions. . . .

* * * * *

During the winter of 1933–1934 the most prominent Soviet leaders used extremely strong and unqualified language in accusing Japan of offensive designs against the Soviet Far East.⁴⁸

The year 1928 marked the start of the era of the 5-year plans. The system of elaborating 5-year plans has been maintained, with some

⁴⁷ Stalin, “The Results of the First Five-Year Plan,” Report Delivered January 7, 1933 at the Joint Plenum of the CC and CCC, CPSU(B), *Works*, vol. XIII (1955), pp. 184–187.

⁴⁸ Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 192–194, 196.

modifications, up to the present. Like all other major Soviet acts they were, in their essentials, discussed and prepared by various bodies of the Communist party and then enacted into law by the government:

The 1st Plan was prepared by the Gosplan [State Planning Commission] in 1928 and, after prolonged discussions, was approved by the Vth Congress of the Soviets in April 1929. . . .

The expansion of industry proceeded with such rapidity that it became possible to fulfill the goals for the output of heavy industry and for the transportation of goods in less than five years. Although many items such as construction and light industry were far behind the goals, and some others, especially agriculture and consumption levels were complete failures, the 1st Five-Year Period was proclaimed successfully accomplished in four years, and the last three months of that year were made into a special period. . . .

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The 2d Plan, covering the five calendar years 1933-37, was approved by the XVIIth Party Congress in January 1934 and by the government on November 17, 1934. . . .

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The 3d Plan, for 1938-42, was approved in the spring of 1939. War broke out in Europe a few months later. Still, the first year and a half of the 3d Plan Period were fully normal.⁴⁹

Among the consequences of the industrialization, two were outstanding. The first was a resolute and final rejection of the egalitarian illusions of the revolutionary era. For rapid increase of production, a far-reaching inequality proved to be necessary. Stalin scornfully dubbed the time-honored trend toward equality "*uravnilovka*" (from *ravnyi*, equal). In particular he decried the trend to equalize wages of manual workers of various qualifications as well as employees ("white collar" workers, professionals, etc.); for the sake of industrial progress, he insisted on stratification.

. . . In a number of factories wage scales are drawn up in such a way as to practically wipe out the difference between skilled and unskilled labour, between heavy and light work. The consequence of wage equalisation is that the unskilled worker lacks the incentive to become a skilled worker and is thus deprived of the prospect of advancement; as a result he feels himself a "visitor" in the factory, working only temporarily so as to "earn a little money" and then go off to "try his luck" in some other place. The consequence of wage equalisation is that the skilled worker is obliged to go from factory to factory until he finds one where his skill is properly appreciated.

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In order to put an end to this evil we must abolish wage equalisation and discard the old wage scales. . . . we must draw up wage scales that will

⁴⁹ Jasny, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-41.

take into account the difference between skilled and unskilled labour, between heavy and light work. . . . But the equalitarians among our business executives and trade-union officials do not agree with this and believe that under our Soviet system this difference has already disappeared.⁵⁰

Thus one of the mightiest psychological and emotional elements of the Bolshevik movement was done away with.

The second outstanding consequence of Soviet industrialization was the rapid growth of the class of state employees to an upper level and dominant force in Russian society.

The unprecedented expansion of employees in the government service is rooted in the insolubility of the basic problem—the impossibility of controlling from a single center the administration of the whole economic, political, cultural and scientific, material and intellectual, urban and rural life of a great country. The more the functions of the state expand, the more difficult becomes their performance. When they become all-embracing, the Soviet state makes gigantic efforts to cope with them. The growing pressure finds expression in the recruiting of new cadres of employees and directors. The greater the burden upon the state, the more numerous the bottlenecks and the more frequently does it seek extraneous remedies.⁵¹

Contrary, therefore, to the government's intentions, the ranks of Soviet bureaucracy were swelling more rapidly than was the labor force in general:

. . . there was a big leap forward during the first Five-Year Plan, when the total number of government employees increased from 4,000,000 to 8,000,000. The plan had modestly envisaged that the "number of government employees will increase by 6 to 10 per cent during the five-year period"; in reality, the increase was unprecedented. The second Five-Year Plan provided for a reduction of 600,000 in the number of government employees. Instead of the prescribed decrease, there was a marked increase.⁵²

4. Police and Terrorism

After the death of Feliks Dzerzhinski in 1926, his aide, Vyacheslav Menzhinski, a colorless personality and a sick man, completely loyal to Stalin since the latter's accession to power, became head of the OGPU. Menzhinski did not leave a profound mark on the Soviet police system. His aide and eventual successor, Genrikh Yagoda, became the actual chief of the Soviet police.

⁵⁰ Stalin, "New Conditions—New Tasks in Economic Construction," Speech Delivered June 23, 1931, *Works*, vol. XIII (1955), pp. 58, 59.

⁵¹ Dallin, *op. cit.*, pp. 62, 63.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 61.

A former pharmacist and a not very able man, Yagoda worked in close contact with Stalin and was the latter's right hand in the carrying out of repressions and persecutions.⁵³

. . . Unlike Menzhinsky, who is courteous, well-educated, and cultured, Yagoda is rough and brutal, and not much to look at, with his greyish yellow complexion, watery eyes and pigeon breast. During the War he fought at the front, fell into the hands of the insurgents, and was flogged within an inch of his life. It was only after many months of careful nursing that the doctors succeeded in putting him on his feet again. But no experience of this kind could possibly make him more odious than he was before. Intrigues in the Political Bureau, envy of his successful colleagues, a lively hatred of everybody and everything, and sadistic orgies with Young Communist girls occupy his whole time.⁵⁴

. . . The system of confessions to crimes that had never been committed is Yagoda's handiwork, if not his brainchild. In 1933 Stalin rewarded Yagoda with the Order of Lenin, in 1935 elevated him to the rank of General Commissar of State Defense, that is, Marshal of the Political Police, only two days after the talented Tukhachevsky was elevated to the rank of Marshal of the Red Army. In Yagoda's person a nonentity was elevated, known as such to all and held in contempt by all. The old revolutionists must have exchanged looks of indignation. Even in the submissive Politburo an attempt was made to oppose this.⁵⁵

Of the 12 years of the OGPU's existence (1922-34), the first half, which coincided with the NEP period, was relatively quiet compared with the preceding civil war and subsequent "Socialist offensive" era. Between 1922 and 1928

The operations of the OGPU . . . reflected the dominant preoccupations of the Party leadership. Particular attention was devoted to checking on church activities, persons of unfavorable social origins, and former members of opposition parties. As the struggle of the Trotsky opposition mounted in intensity, the OGPU concerned itself increasingly with nonconformity and deviation within the Party itself. Its field of supervision included the foreign embassies and foreign visitors. Through its Economic Administration, it sought to restrain malpractices and sabotage in industry; its Special Section penetrated the armed forces and kept a watchful eye on their morale, loyalty, and efficiency. Its Foreign Section conducted espionage abroad, observed the activities of Russian *émigré* colonies, and reported on personnel in all Soviet foreign missions. Its specially assigned troops were charged with guarding rail and water trans-

⁵³ It appears that for a short time in 1928 Yagoda had had some contact with the "right opposition"; this was only an accidental deviation, but years later, when Stalin decided to get rid of Yagoda, he recalled this crime of an earlier period.

⁵⁴ Essad-Bey, *OGPU, The Plot Against the World* (New York: The Viking Press, 1933), pp. 169, 170.

⁵⁵ Leon Trotsky, *Stalin* (New York and London: Harper & Bros., 1941), p. 378.

port, policing the borders of the Soviet Union, and suppressing any counterrevolutionary risings which might take place.⁵⁶

The year 1928 marked the end of the NEP and the start of the 5-year plans, which were followed by the collectivization of farming. Pressures mounted as industrialization was pushed with extreme intensity.

With the abandonment of the NEP and the decision to proceed with a program of rapid industrialization and agricultural collectivization, the OGPU began to play a much more prominent role. Its energies were concentrated on three targets: the Nepmen or private traders, who had been permitted to flourish under the NEP; the old intelligentsia, who were made the scapegoats for early failures and difficulties in the industrialization drive; and the kulaks, who offered active or passive opposition to the collectivization program.⁵⁷

In their drive against dissidents of various kinds, non-Communist as well as Communist, Stalin and the OGPU embarked on the series of judicial "trials," which continued, with interruptions, for a decade from 1928 to 1938. In the beginning it was members of the old Russian "intelligentsia" who were the main target, Communists not yet appearing among the defendants. "Wrecking," a newly invented criminal offense, was the accusation leveled against old engineers, professors, and agronomists; the standard crime was intentional sabotage and obstructing of Soviet economic development on instructions of Russian emigré capitalists and non-Russian Western "bourgeoisie." "Wrecking" was defined in paragraph 58(7) of the Soviet Criminal Code:

The undermining of state industry, transport, trade, currency, or system of credit, or of the co-operative system, with counterrevolutionary intent, by utilizing the state institutions or enterprises concerned or by working against the normal activities, or the utilization of state institutions or enterprises, or opposition to their activities, in the interests of the former owners or of interested capitalistic organizations, entails the measure of social defense prescribed in article 58 (2) of the present code.⁵⁸

The trials were intended to prove to the Soviet people that the economic shortages, industrial chaos and privation were due not to the course taken by the government but to conspiracies of capitalist organizations. Among the defendants there were usually some actual, though inactive, opponents of the regime; a number of frightened nonpoliticals; and a few OGPU agents-provocateurs assigned to testify against and expose their co-defendants. The accusations were frequently absurd, but the prosecution always won its case.

⁵⁶ Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled*, pp. 361, 362.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

⁵⁸ *Ugolovnyi Kodeks RSFSR, Ofitsialnyi Tekst s Izmeneniyami na 1 Marta 1957* (Criminal Code of the RSFSR, Official Text with Changes as of March 1, 1957) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Yuridicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Juridical Literature), 1957), p. 30.

The first of the trials was that of the Shakhty engineers, held in April–June 1928. Among the defendants were 50 Russian and three German engineers and technicians. The accusation against them was as follows:

. . . Starting in 1925, this counter-revolutionary organization acted under the immediate direction of the so-called Paris center, which embraced members of different organizations, in particular the “Society of former mine owners of the South of Russia,” “Society of the Creditors of old Russia,” etc. . . . They inundated mines, damaged mechanisms, caused explosions and obstructions, set fires, etc. To provoke discontent among the workers, they damaged ventilation systems and impaired working and living conditions of the miners. Wrecking activities were also extended to leading central organs of the coal industry.⁵⁹

Of the defendants, 10 “confessed” to wrecking activities; 11 were sentenced to death, of whom 5 were executed and 6 were reprieved; 38 were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

In November–December 1930 occurred the trial of the “Industrial Party,”⁶⁰ in which five of the eight defendants were sentenced to death, the sentences later being commuted to 10 years in prison.

This spectacular trial was brilliantly staged to make a proletarian holiday—the courtroom filled with loud-speakers and flashlights, the papers full of resolutions from all sorts of bodies, from the members of the Moscow bar to Young Pioneer school children, all demanding the shooting of the prisoners, even the Young Communist son of one of the defendants duly demanded the death of his father. But the reality of the scene was impaired when the head of the alleged Industrial Party, Professor Ramzin, included in his confession some items which were obviously and even absurdly untrue.⁶¹

Absurdities in the indictments, to which the defendants, in their own interest, pleaded guilty, became a standard feature of the hastily concocted affairs.

. . . For the man who was mentioned as the destined Premier of the counter-revolutionary government which the self-confessed plotters were proposing to set up was one P. P. Ryabushinsky, a well-known pre-war Russian industrialist. And P. P. Ryabushinsky—very thoughtlessly, from the standpoint of the organizers of the trial—had died in Paris several years before the trial was held. A “conspiracy” of which the prospective chief was a dead man would seem to be a more suitable subject for a comic paper than for a serious trial, especially as another of the “proposed Ministers,” Vishnegradsky, was also no longer among the living. There were other amusing discrepancies in the testimony, as when Ramzin told of a

⁵⁹ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, vol. XLVII (1957), p. 559.

⁶⁰ The various non-Communist parties mentioned on these pages refer to existing or alleged underground groups in Soviet Russia,

⁶¹ Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 162, 163.

"meeting" in London with Colonel Lawrence at a time when it was conclusively evident that Lawrence had been stationed, as an aviator, on the northwest frontier of India, or when he spoke of meeting a certain "Sir Philip," whose last name he did not know—because, he said, in England lords are always called by the first name with the prefix "Sir."⁶²

The trial of the "14 Mensheviks" took place in March 1931. Although only one was at the time of the trial a member of the Menshevik party, the defendants

. . . admitted to having prepared armed uprisings and invoked foreign military intervention against the Soviet government. . . . The highlight of the framed trial was the alleged "trip of Raphael Abramovich to Moscow in the summer of 1928." The prosecutor maintained that Abramovich, a party leader living in Germany, had made a trip to Russia in order to induce undecided members of the underground to organize armed uprisings against the Soviet power. In their testimony before the court the defendants "confessed" that Abramovich had been in Moscow at the time indicated by the prosecution and had taken part in discussions. It happened, however, that at the precise time that the Socialist leader had been "conferring" with his friends in Moscow, an International Socialist Congress was in session in Brussels, Belgium, and in addition to records and press reports which belied the accusations of the Moscow prosecutor, a photograph taken and published during the conference showed that Abramovich had been present at the parley in Belgium. Neither the judges nor the Soviet press, of course, mentioned this falsification.

Of the defendants, seven were sentenced to ten years in prison, four to eight years, and three to five years.⁶³

Another political group placed on trial about the same time was the Party of the Toiling Peasantry. This trial was secret.

In the majority of cases the OGPU did not stage a public trial, and itself sentenced the defendants. In one case, a group of employees of the food industry was arrested and tried in camera; 48 food specialists were shot.

The case of the "Academics" occupied public attention from 1929 to 1931. This involved more than 150 scientists and professors, who were scattered through various prisons, the case being concluded, without a public trial, only in the summer of 1931. Many were executed and others sentenced to various terms of exile.⁶⁴

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 163, 164.

⁶³ Dallin, "Crime and Punishment under the Soviet Regime," in *Handbook on World Communism*, J. M. Bochenski and G. Niemeyer, eds. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, to be published in 1960).

⁶⁴ Dallin, *The Changing World of Soviet Russia*, p. 47.

At the end of 1931

. . . Stalin again thundered public threats against wreckers and saboteurs, including those "professors who in their wrecking go to the length of infecting cattle in collectives and on Soviet farms with plague germs and the Siberian anthrax, spreading meningitis among horses, and so on." . . . "Theft and plunder in plants, warehouses, and commercial enterprises—these are the main activities of these people," he charged.⁶⁵

In January 1933

. . . another show trial was staged, this time directed against six British Metro-Vickers engineers, ten Russian technicians, and a woman secretary who had been associated with them. All were charged with sabotage of power stations and the usual accompaniment of conspiracy and espionage.⁶⁶

The collectivization drive imposed a huge and extraordinary task on the OGPU, which now reverted to the "mass terror" of a decade before:

During the drive which began in 1928 to force the peasants to join the collective farms, the OGPU troops were widely used to quell local rebellions and round up dissident peasants. They formed the main punitive instrument of the Party and government in enforcing the collectivization drive, a policy which, as Stalin later admitted to Churchill, claimed ten million victims.⁶⁷

The drive toward collectivization was interrupted by a period of modest relaxation in the spring of 1930, but it was soon resumed with augmented fury. Not only the central OGPU but its small local agencies as well made use of the wide powers entrusted to them. The peak of the drive was reached with the enactment of a new law, on August 7, 1932, which introduced the death penalty, along with long terms in prison (or labor camps), for "plundering" of kolkhoz property. If a peasant slaughtered his cattle instead of turning it over to the collective, he was guilty of "plundering"; if a hungry peasant child collected a few spikes in the kolkhoz fields, he was guilty of "plundering."

The number of "special troops" of the OGPU trained and armed to fight popular movements in cities and villages grew to about 300,000; new regulations were issued to regiment the population of the cities, especially the industrial workers. In December 1932 the government

. . . proceeded to introduce obligatory passports: now no one could move about in Russia without one. In every job, the management had to mark the dates of service in the passport. Thus increasing control over the workers was becoming possible. Another decree issued in 1932 ordered that workers dismissed for repeated failure to report to work were to be evicted from their apartments.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁶⁶ Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled*, p. 364.

⁶⁷ Simon Wolin and Robert M. Slusser, eds., *The Soviet Secret Police* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957), p. 13.

⁶⁸ David J. Dallin and Boris I. Nicolaevsky, *Forced Labor in Soviet Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), p. 195.

Despite the fact that by that time terrorism had somewhat abated, a measure of extraordinary severity against Soviet defectors fleeing abroad was signed on June 8, 1934, under which members of the defectors' families were made hostages.

1⁸ In the case of escape or flight abroad of a *member of the armed forces* adult members of that person's family are to be punished by deprivation of liberty for a period of from five to ten years with confiscation of their entire property, if they had assisted in any way the planned or committed act of treason, or at least had knowledge of it and did not inform the authorities.

The other adult members of the family of the traitor, who had been living with him or were supported by him at the moment when the crime was committed, are to be deprived of their right to vote and are to be exiled for five years to remote districts of Siberia.

1⁴ Failure by a member of the armed forces to inform the authorities concerning the prepared or perpetrated act of treason is punishable by deprivation of liberty for ten years.⁶⁹

There was, however, an additional, secret, clause in this decree which prescribed that:

. . . if an officer of the NKVD fled the country or failed to return from a mission abroad, his closest relatives were liable to imprisonment for ten years, and in those cases when the officer had disclosed state secrets, they were liable to the death penalty.⁷⁰

A series of secret instructions and a secret periodical (*Bulletin*) were issued during these years to control the press and the publication of books. The proscriptions were drastic and comprehensive. For instance:

. . . In order "to prevent foreigners from drawing an analogy between Osoaviakhim [the para-military Society for the Promotion of Defense and Aero-Chemical Development] and the Red Army, . . . all references to Osoaviakhim as a fully armed and rigidly trained organization are forbidden." Stress was to be placed on its "voluntary character," expressing the "voluntary" surge of people to "deepen their military and military-political knowledge. . . ."

* * * * *

The *perechen* [a list of forbidden items] in the economic field was equally drastic. For the year 1934 no quantitative data on crop-yields in any locality were to be published unless such data first appeared in *Pravda* or *Izvestia*. All numerical data pertaining to grain deliveries and purchases for the U.S.S.R. as a whole as well as localities were ordered withheld. The prohibition extended to percentage as well as absolute figures, except that raions [counties] were permitted to report percentage increases in grain deliveries computed on a 1933 base. . . . Specific news on rail-

⁶⁹ *Izvestia*, June 9, 1934, p. 2.

⁷⁰ Alexander Orlov, *The Secret History of Stalin's Crimes* (New York: Random House, 1953), p. 228.

road construction in certain areas and on the hiring of labor for these projects was also interdicted. . . .

. . . Detailed data on court cases, crimes, and convictions were to be withheld, and description of the activities of the OGPU deleted. Special care was to be exercised to stop the publication of "distorted" pictures of Stalin and Lenin. Censors were to guard against exaggerating the incidence of kulak terror, arson, the murder of Soviet officials, election disorders, or other phenomena calculated to emphasize "internal instability" in the U.S.S.R. or the activities of anti-Soviet elements.⁷¹

The terrorism diminished in 1933, as the main goals of the collectivization drive were approaching realization and the famine was reaching its apogee. A secret instruction, signed by Stalin and Molotov on May 8, 1933, which ordered a slowing down of the "offensive," at the same time contained a confirmation of the terrible cruelty of the campaign when it was at its height:

The Central Committee and the Sovnarkom are informed that disorderly mass arrests in the countryside are still a part of the practice of our officials. Such arrests were made by . . . all who desire to, and who, strictly speaking, have no right to make arrests. It is not surprising that in such a saturnalia of arrests, organs which do have the right to arrest, including the organs of the OGPU and especially the militia, lose all feeling of moderation and often perpetrate arrests without any basis, acting according to the rule: "First arrest, and then investigate."⁷²

A circular issued in Moscow on May 25, 1933 said:

. . . Information coming in to the Central Control Commission from the localities still shows that mass arrests continue, that there is legal repression on an extraordinary scale, which has led everywhere to intolerable overloading of the places of imprisonment, to inordinate burdening of all organs of investigation, the courts, and the procuracy. . . .⁷³

. . . Under the terms of the [Stalin-Molotov] order, the 800,000 prisoners who were at that time confined in places of detention, aside from camps and colonies, were to be reduced to 400,000 within a two-month period, and a quota of 400,000 was established as the maximum number of persons who could be kept in prisons. . . . The decree envisaged the mass transfer of some categories of prisoners to forced labor camps, the mass transfer of other categories, including kulaks sentenced to a term of three to five years, to so-called labor settlements; and the release of the remaining prisoners under bail or other forms of supervision.⁷⁴

Soon afterward, certain categories of kulaks were released from the camps. Since early in 1934 rumors had spread that the dreadful OGPU would be abolished altogether. Actually, by decree of July 10, 1934,

⁷¹ Fainsod, *Smolensk Under Soviet Rule*, pp. 364-366.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 185, 186.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

the OGPU was replaced by the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, better known by its abbreviation NKVD (*Narodnyi Kommissariat Vnutrennikh Del*). Genrikh Yagoda, head of the OGPU, became chief of the NKVD; other leading officers of the police agency also retained their posts.

. . . it seems reasonable to assume that the Commissariat for Internal Affairs, in methods and personnel, will be very similar to the Gay-Pay-Oo just as the latter organization, when it was created in 1922, took over to a large extent the working apparatus of its predecessor, the Cheka, or Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution.⁷⁵

It was expected, however, that the NKVD would assume a more liberal course of action than its predecessor. In particular, it did not have the right to pass summary death sentences.

. . . The Commissariat for Internal Affairs retains the right to inflict the penalty of exile at hard labor up to a term of five years without trial before a public court. It also retains the management of the numerous large forced-labor camps which have grown up in Russia during the last few years.⁷⁶

The hopes and expectations that the NKVD would be more lenient and liberal than the dreadful OGPU did not, however, materialize.

Along with the rise of the Stalinist wave of terror there proceeded the preparation of the constitution in 1935 and 1936 (by a special Commission in which the repentant oppositionists Bukharin and Radek collaborated with Stalin). Stalin's rapprochement with the West against the Nazi menace and his temporary "anti-Fascist" course prompted him to don democratic clothes, but for Russian internal affairs this new constitution brought no new developments of significance.

The new constitution, the so-called Stalin Constitution, was adopted in December 1936. Stalin pretended that the new "Fundamental Law" was an important departure from previous enactments in furtherance of a real democracy in a socialist state.

The new constitution provided for direct general elections to the Soviet parliament (Supreme Soviet) and conferred on the Supreme Soviet the privileges of appointing the government, controlling it and interrogating its ministers. It insured Soviet citizens:

(a) Freedom of speech; (b) freedom of the press; (c) freedom of assembly, including the holding of mass meetings; (d) freedom of street processions and demonstrations. [Article 125]

. . . the right to unite in public organizations: trade unions, cooperative societies, youth organizations, sport and defense organizations, cultural, technical and scientific societies. . . . [Article 126]

⁷⁵ Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

Citizens of the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed inviolability of the person. No person may be placed under arrest except by decision of a court or with the sanction of a prosecutor. [Article 127]

The inviolability of the homes of citizens and privacy of correspondence are protected by law. [Article 128]⁷⁷

Article 124 insured "freedom of conscience"; however, only anti-religious "propaganda" was permitted: "Freedom of religious worship and freedom of antireligious propaganda is recognized for all citizens."

Two articles contained a somewhat hidden curb on non-Communist political activity: Article 126 mentioned only the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as the admitted political organization:

. . . the most active and politically-conscious citizens in the ranks of the working class and other sections of the working people unite in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), which is the vanguard of the working people in their struggle to strengthen and develop the socialist system and is the leading core of all organizations of the working people, both public and state.⁷⁸

Article 141 gave a monopoly to the Communist party in nominating candidates for election to the soviets:

The right to nominate candidates is secured to public organizations and societies of the working people: Communist Party organizations, trade unions, cooperatives, youth organizations and cultural societies.⁷⁹

Soviet propagandists claimed the new constitution was a great democratic achievement. Its adoption was followed by thousands of arrests, executions, and framed trials.

5. Forced Labor

It was during this period (1929-34) that the system of so-called Corrective Labor Camps was established and developed. Succeeding the relatively small group of concentration camps of the preceding era,⁸⁰ the network expanded rapidly. From a punitive measure, forced labor developed into an important instrument of national economy.

. . . a measure was adopted which has remained in force ever since: persons sentenced to more than three years must serve their terms in corrective labor camps. This decree, dated April 7, 1930, in its first paragraph specified two groups that were to be sent to these camps:

1. "Persons sentenced by a court to deprivation of liberty for not less than three years," and

⁷⁷ *Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, pp. 96, 97.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁸⁰ See comparative statistics on p. 185.

2. "Persons sentenced by special decision of the OGPU."⁸¹

Hundreds of thousands, probably millions, of persons were shipped to the newly opened camps in various parts of the country. One of the first forced labor projects was the construction of a long canal connecting the Baltic and White seas.

. . . For the first time, a project of this magnitude was entrusted not to an economic agency but to the GPU, and in particular to Henrikh Yagoda. At that time Yagoda was still "Deputy Chairman of the OGPU," but he was actually already in charge of the agency. Stalin had gained faith in the abilities of Yagoda and in the effectiveness of forced labor in 1929-30, when the GPU had demonstrated its efficiency in the lumber economy of the north.⁸²

Other projects followed in rapid sequence—around Moscow, near Leningrad, in Siberia, in Central Asia, and finally in the vicinity of almost every large Russian city. In 1928 there had been six labor camps with about 30,000 inmates; in 1930 the number of inmates was 662,000; in 1931 the number had grown to nearly 2 million; in subsequent years estimates varied from 5 to 10 million. By the end of the 1930's, 125 camps, large and small, were known to exist.⁸³

The treatment of camp inmates was bad, especially in the beginning, during the time of general privation and famine. The death rate was extremely high and the living and working conditions of those who survived were often unbearable.

. . . At least two punitive camps (for special punishment of prisoners from other camps) are known to exist in the Far East: one on the Kolyma River, the other on the lower Yenisei near the estuary on the Arctic Ocean. The mortality rate there is reported to exceed 30 per cent per year. No correspondence of the prisoners with their relatives and friends is permitted.

. . . The Stalinogorsk Women's Camp is known for extremely severe living conditions, harsh punishment, and bad food. The women work in the iron and coal mines of the Tula region.

* * * * *

. . . In certain camps of the Pechora Camp Cluster, corporal punishment, officially abolished in 1917-18, has been reintroduced.

. . . The Krasnoyarsk Camps, with about 10,000 prisoners, are conspicuous for their lack of medical facilities and hospitals.⁸⁴

As for the numbers of prisoners, the late Professor Sergei Prokopych, a noted and cautious economist, stated:

. . . However much we may want to reduce the possible estimates (for purposes of comforting ourselves and in order to reduce the shameful blot

⁸¹ Dallin and Nicolaevsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 206, 207.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-72.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 73.

on the new Russia), be it only five or seven million, one thing remains clear beyond any doubt: in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics we have a class of slaves of *many millions*, whose living and working conditions are infinitely worse than those of the American Negroes in the Southern states. It is horrible to realize that for them, the Russian slaves, the life of the American Negroes represents the ideal of well-being.⁸⁵

To administer the labor camps, the OGPU established a special department, the GULAG (*Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerei*—Chief Administration of Camps); the GULAG developed into a huge network. However,

. . . Observing more discretion than the Commissariat of Justice and the other agencies, the GPU has never made public any data or reports concerning its economic activities and the personnel it employs. Gleb Boki, who administered the camps of the GPU in the late 'twenties, was succeeded by M. D. Berman as the Chief of the GULAG, and Semion Firin became Deputy Chief.⁸⁶

The Soviet system of forced labor, one of numerous forms of slavery known in history, had several advantages: First, no capital investment was needed for the primitive jobs carried out by the forced laborers; second, the strictest discipline could be imposed on the personnel; third, the cost of labor was low. On the other side, however, it shared with other slave labor systems the negative features of low productivity and waste of human life.

An unusual disproportion exists in Russia between the number of males and females. Even before the latest war there were about 8 million more women than men in Russia. . . . The number of boys and girls born is almost equal. The reason for the disproportion in peacetime is the great mortality among adult males; and the existence of forced labor is one of the most important causes of this unnaturally great mortality of men in Russia, since women constitute no more than 10 to 15 per cent of the population of the camps. . . .

* * * * * * *

Besides being unproductive and wasteful of human material, the forced labor system has become a great cause of moral and political degradation. Deceit, theft, corruption are the natural and inevitable results of the internal conditions prevailing in the camps, and no human being could survive there if he tried to go the straight and honest way all the time. The so-called "corrective" labor camps have necessarily become corruptive labor camps. There is no spot in the world where morals have sunk so low as in the institutions of modern slavery. The effects of this alarming degradation are felt far beyond the walls of the concentration camps.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ *Novoe Russkoe Slovo* (New Russian Word), New York, September 14, 1946.

⁸⁶ Dallin and Nicolaevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 104, 106.

Chapter VII. Trials and Purges

1. Assassination of Kirov

Stalin's uninhibited dictatorship dated from about 1930. If there remained at that time a shadow of dissent among the leaders, this was kept a secret within the party's Central Committee and the Politburo, and was limited mainly to the issue of whether leading members of the Communist party could be persecuted and executed in the same manner as other citizens of the Soviet Union. Lenin had strongly advised against such fratricidal acts.

In 1932, however, when a group of surviving "right oppositionists" dared to formulate, secretly, a sharply worded anti-Stalinist "platform," Stalin, when he learned of it, demanded the death penalty for at least some of them. The Politburo rejected this demand, and the culprits were instead sent to prison and into exile. Stalin never forgot this defeat, and he waited for an appropriate moment to resume his offensive.

December 1, 1934, was the date that marked the end of the short-lived era of political relaxation and the start of an unprecedented avalanche of terrorism. On that day Sergei Kirov, member of the Politburo and a rising star in the Communist party, was killed in Leningrad by a young Communist, Leonid Nikolaev. Although perpetrated by Nikolaev out of purely personal motives, the act was immediately inflated into a great political event. On the evening of the same day, December 1, a decree was issued providing that:

I. Investigative agencies are directed to speed up the cases of those accused of the preparation or execution of acts of terror.

II. Judicial organs are directed not to hold up the execution of death sentences pertaining to crimes of this category in order to consider the possibility of pardon, because the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee U.S.S.R. does not consider as possible the receiving of petitions of this sort.

III. The organs of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs are directed to execute the death sentence against criminals of the above-mentioned category immediately after the passage of sentences.¹

Pardons and appeals were thus no longer permitted.

¹ As quoted in Nikita S. Khrushchev, "Secret Report," Delivered February 24, 25, 1956 at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, printed in Bertram G. Wolfe, *Khrushchev and Stalin's Ghost* (London: Atlantic Press, 1957), p. 128.

The members of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets, in whose name the decree was promulgated, were not consulted concerning it; on Stalin's instructions it was signed by the Secretary of the Presidium. Two days later it was reported to the Politburo, the members of which, timid and frightened, did not dare to oppose it.

Attributing the assassination of Kirov to emigré "whites," the NKVD executed 104 "terrorists" selected at random, and deported to concentration camps many thousands of innocent people arrested in the provinces. Nikolaev and 13 others were executed on December 27, after a secret trial. On January 22, 1935, 12 leading NKVD officials in Leningrad were tried on the charge that "having received information about the preparations for the attempt on S. M. Kirov . . . they failed to take the necessary measures to prevent the assassination." The sentences imposed were extremely mild. Two years later, however, the most important of the 12 defendants at this trial were executed. The charge that Stalin must have played an active role in the assassination of his friend Kirov was first made by Trotsky, who claimed that the NKVD undoubtedly knew of Nikolaev's plans and reported them to Stalin well in advance.²

The truth of this charge was confirmed later by two NKVD defectors, Walter Krivitsky and Alexander Orlov, and, in 1956, Khrushchev gave some details of the plot:

A month and a half before the killing, Nikolayev was arrested on the grounds of suspicious behavior but he was released and not even searched. It is an unusually suspicious circumstance that when the Chekist [member of the secret police] assigned to protect Kirov was being brought for an interrogation, on 2 December 1934, he was killed in a car "accident" in which no other occupants of the car were harmed.

After the murder of Kirov, top functionaries of the Leningrad NKVD were given very light sentences, but in 1937 they were shot. We can assume that they were shot in order to cover the traces of the organizers of Kirov's killing.³

The official, but false, version of Kirov's assassination, given by Stalin, was as follows:

The investigation established that in 1933 and 1934 an underground counter-revolutionary terrorist group had been formed in Leningrad consisting of former members of the Zinoviev opposition and headed by a so-called "Leningrad Centre." The purpose of this group was to murder

² Leon Trotsky, "Vse Stanovitsya Postepenno na Svoe Mesto, Pismo k Amerikanskim Druzyam" (Everything is Gradually Taking Its Proper Place, Letter to American Friends), *Bulletin of the Opposition (Bolsheviks-Leninists)*, printed in Paris, No. 42, February 1935, p. 11.

³ Khrushchev, "Secret Report," printed in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

leaders of the Communist Party. S. M. Kirov was chosen as the first victim. The testimony of the members of this counter-revolutionary group showed that they were connected with representatives of foreign capitalist states and were receiving funds from them.

* * * * *

Soon afterwards the existence of an underground counter-revolutionary organization called the "Moscow Centre" was discovered. The preliminary investigation and the trial revealed the villainous part played by Zinoviev, Kamenev, Yevdokimov and other leaders of this organization in cultivating the terrorist mentality among their followers, and in plotting the murder of members of the Party Central Committee and of the Soviet Government.⁴

On the basis of this version, accepted by the members of the Politburo and propagated by the Soviet press, a secret trial against the Zinoviev-Kamenev group was staged in January 1935. The defendants were accused of having organized an underground counter-revolutionary group in Moscow and Leningrad. The Military Collegium of the Supreme Court in its sentence stated that the defendants "have known about terroristic trends in the Leningrad group and themselves inflamed these trends." Four of the defendants were sentenced to prison terms of 10 years, 5 to 8 years, 7 to 6 years, and 3 to 5 years.⁵

In a letter to party organizations, the Central Committee gave the gist of Stalin's philosophy of terrorism: the more definitely our enemies are defeated, it said, the more they will fight back. Until the end of Stalin's days this absurd theory was accepted and never questioned by the Communist parties of the world:

. . . We must put an end to the opportunist complacency engendered by the enormous assumption that as we grow stronger the enemy will become tamer and more inoffensive. This assumption is an utter fallacy. It is a recrudescence of the Right deviation, which assured all and sundry that our enemies would little by little creep into Socialism and in the end become real Socialists. The Bolsheviks have no business to rest on their laurels; they have no business to sleep at their posts. What we need is not complacency, but vigilance, real Bolshevik revolutionary vigilance. It should be remembered that the more hopeless the position of the enemies, the more eagerly will they clutch at "extreme measures" as the only recourse of the doomed in their struggle against the Soviet power. We must remember this and be vigilant.⁶

⁴ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course* (New York: International Publishers, 1939), p. 326.

⁵ *Obvinitelnye Materialy po Delu Podpolnoi Kontrrevolyutsionnoi Gruppy Zinovievtsev* (Accusation Materials in the Case of the Underground Counter-Revolutionary Group of Zinovievites) (Moscow: Partizdat ZK VKP (b) (Party Publishing House of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party, Bolsheviks), 1935), p. 42.

⁶ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course*, p. 327.

2. The Great Purge

On May 13, 1935, the Central Committee ordered a general screening of the party ranks ("renewal of membership cards"), which was tantamount to a general purge of the Communist party. The purge operation actually lasted for almost 4 years and resulted in thousands of arrests, trials, and executions of party members as well as non-Communists.

The bloody holocaust started with the appointment by the Politburo of a special "Commission" to watch over the NKVD as well as over the purge operation. The most active among the members of the "Commission" was a new confidant of Stalin, Nikolai Yezhov, whose meteoric career as the watchdog for Stalin over the NKVD now started. Under no condition was the NKVD to transgress the limitations of a tool in the hands of the party, personified in Stalin.

Yezhov's elevation to power was hardly due to his personality. A slight, thin man, with no abilities or ambitions, he was remarkable only for his devotion to Stalin; even in that era of universal adulation and adoration, Stalin could hardly have found a more blindly obedient servant prepared to go to such lengths in crime on orders of The Leader.

Yezhov's earlier record was that of a mediocre "party worker." Born in Leningrad in 1892, he had joined the Bolsheviks in 1917, taken part in the civil war and, in 1922, after a short period in the War Commissariat, had become a party official. At the Seventeenth Party Congress in 1934, he was elected to the Central Committee.

. . . In these investigations a certain Yezhov, an ex-workman, particularly distinguished himself. . . . His creed was quite simple: Stalin was the greatest genius in all human history, and the Russian people were a marvel—but anyone who came between Stalin and the people was entirely worthless and must be shot.

He was filled with an almost morbid hatred of the intelligentsia, and he had his reason for this. Poor Yezhov, who now became a gigantic incubus, a blood-thirsty figure looming over all Russia, had one weak spot—his wife. . . . To his misfortune the lady was something of a literary snob, moving in all the literary circles of Moscow; here it was that she found her lovers. These circles were closely associated with the intellectuals in the party, and to Yezhov both sets were equally odious. The man was in torment, and as time went on he became an embittered enemy of all educated people. In his view they were capable of any wickedness and any treachery, filled with infinite cunning.⁷

In the course of the purge, members of the party were invited to "reveal" and "expose" their comrades; a flood of denunciations, often

⁷ Nikolaus Basseches, *Stalin* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1932), pp. 274, 275.

from persons seeking to save their own necks, inundated the party committees as well as the NKVD.

The zeal with which young people and subordinates strove to "unmask" and accuse their seniors was particularly noteworthy. Students "unmasked" their professors, humble party members denounced those in official positions, junior officials accused those above them. . . .

* * * * *

The usual first consequence of a denunciation was the loss of one's job. A whole army of unemployed so-called "Leftists," "Rightists," "nationalists," "Trotskyites," and "decadents" now appeared engaged in a hopeless pilgrimage from office to office, seeking to appeal and to obtain justice, to rehabilitate themselves and get back to their jobs. Most of them were qualified, or fairly well qualified people. But nearly all their former friends now turned their backs on them and could not or would not help them. For to speak up on behalf of any such person was in itself a highly incriminating action.⁸

The spy network, which had been growing since the early Soviet years, assumed unprecedented proportions: Thousands of so-called seksots (*sekretnyi sotrudnik*, meaning secret collaborators) were recruited from and planted in the Soviet government and economy. The seksots

. . . were to be found throughout the population. It was as good as certain that the messengers, chauffeurs, secretaries, and translators of everybody who occupied any sort of leading position in the political or economic administration, the Army, or the NKVD, were seksots. They had to report on their superiors and their superiors' families at regular intervals. The opinions, the private life, the social contacts of every person of any importance in the Soviet Union were constantly spied and reported on from several quarters at the same time, and the reports were checked with one another. . . .

To make people become seksots the NKVD would appeal to their Soviet consciences and represent the work as harmless, but in most cases the inducement would be the promise of alleviation of the fate of an arrested member of the prospective seksot's family. If this failed, intimidation and threats would be employed.

Many complied with the NKVD request without further ado, but some did so only after long hesitation; and nearly all started with the idea that the work could do no harm so long as they kept strictly to the truth and reported nothing disadvantageous about the people concerned. But they soon found out that incriminating material, and only incriminating material, was required, whether or not there was anything incriminating to report.⁹

⁸ F. Beck and W. Godin, *Russian Purge and the Extraction of Confession* (New York: The Viking Press, 1951), pp. 24, 25.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 164, 165.

Young women and wives of officials were in a special category of secret informants; they represented

. . . the only form in which practically undisguised prostitution existed in the Soviet Union. Nearly every foreigner who has ever stayed in a Moscow hotel has had strange adventures with NKVD girls. He might find himself connected to a wrong number on the telephone and talking to a girl who claimed to be an old acquaintance. If the foreigner fell into the trap, the young lady would try to bring the conversation around to dangerous topics; often an attempt would be made to compromise him socially.

This phenomenon was all the more remarkable in that not only did open prostitution no longer exist in the Soviet Union, but it was regarded with the deepest abhorrence and considered utterly incompatible with human dignity.¹⁰

In September 1936 Stalin decided to part with his henchman Yagoda, who had spent 16 years in the secret police, and to replace him with Yezhov. On September 25, Stalin and Andrei Zhdanov, from the resort where they were staying, sent a telegram to the other members of the Politburo:

We deem it absolutely necessary and urgent that Comrade Yezhov be nominated to the post of People's Commissar for Internal Affairs. Yagoda has definitely proved himself to be incapable of unmasking the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc. The OGPU [secret police] is four years behind in this matter. This is noted by all party workers and by the majority of the representatives of the NKVD.¹¹

The servile Politburo acted accordingly. Yagoda was given another post. He was later arrested, tried, and executed. A few months later (February-March 1937), a plenary session of the Central Committee likewise endorsed Stalin's course of unlimited terrorism. Yezhov became its living symbol and his 26 months in office went down in history as the era of "Yezhovshchina."

Yezhov's first act was to purge the NKVD itself. About 200 officers were dismissed and replaced by Yezhov's obedient subordinates, and numbers of officials were arrested and punished with extreme severity.

A partial list of Yezhov's victims includes almost all the eighty members of the Soviet Council of War created in 1934; the majority of the members of Stalin's own Central Committee and his Control Commission; most of the members of the Executive Committee of the Soviets, of the Council of People's Commissars, of the Council of Labor and Defense, of the leaders of the Communist International; all the chiefs and deputy chiefs of the OGPU; a host of ambassadors and other diplomats; the heads of all the

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 166, 167.

¹¹ As quoted in Khrushchev, "Secret Report," printed in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 130. The OGPU had been dissolved two years prior to the sending of this telegram; the term here refers to its successor agency—GUGBEZ, a section of the NKVD. See p. 310, note 106.

regional and autonomous republics of the Soviet Union; 35,000 members of the officers' corps; almost the entire staff of *Pravda* and *Izvestia*; a great number of writers, musicians, and theater directors; and finally a majority of the leaders of the Young Communist League, the cream of the generation from whom the greatest loyalty to Stalin was expected.¹²

The universal aim of the arrests, interrogations and trials was to extract "confessions" from the arrested persons. To the primitive minds of the new legal personnel, including the heads of the police and Stalin himself, a confession was irrefutable proof of guilt. Thus, every person arrested had to be made to confess and plead guilty; for the arrested person it was usually better to confess than to deny his guilt. Fictitious confessions and so-called legends of self-accusation became standard.

Everyone was required to denounce at least one other person who had "recruited" him, i.e., had persuaded him to engage in counter-revolutionary activity and had directed him. Everyone was also required to denounce as many other people as possible whom he had himself recruited and induced to commit political crimes, or who had worked with him in the same counter-revolutionary organization. Again and again during the hour- and often day-long interrogations the prisoner was asked, "Who recruited you?" and "Whom did you recruit?"¹³

The tasks of the rechecked and "purged" NKVD, and in particular its corps of interrogating officials, were greatly increased; their working hours were unlimited; interrogations often lasted through the night. Among their responsibilities also was that of executing "sentenced" prisoners. Many NKVD men suffered breakdowns; some became mentally ill.

In the office of every prosecuting investigator the most important article of furniture is his couch. For the character of his work is such that it often keeps him going at consecutive stretches of twenty to forty hours. He is himself almost as much a captive as the prisoners. His duties know no limits. They may extend from grilling prisoners to shooting them.

For it is one of the peculiarities of the Soviet judicial process that despite the tremendous numbers of executions, there are no regular executioners. Sometimes the men who go down cellar to carry out the death decrees of the collegium of the OGPU are officers and sentries of the building. Sometimes they are the investigators and prosecutors themselves. For an analogy to this, one must try to imagine a New York District Attorney obtaining a first degree murder conviction and rushing up to Sing Sing to throw the switch in the death chamber.¹⁴

¹² W. G. Krivitsky, *In Stalin's Secret Service* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1939), p. 177.

¹³ Beck and Godin, *op. cit.*, pp. 45, 46.

¹⁴ Krivitsky, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

Khrushchev later admitted that in the years of the purge

. . . the only proof of guilt used, against all norms of current legal science, was the "confession" of the accused himself; and, as subsequent investigation proved, "confessions" were secured through physical pressure against the accused.¹⁵

Confessions were extracted by threats, by torture and by promises, rarely kept, of leniency or freedom. On the other hand, attempts by accused persons to retract previously made confessions were obstructed by all possible means. Torturing of prisoners, forbidden under Soviet law, was not only introduced in 1937 by a special instruction, but was made obligatory; referring to it, Stalin said later in a secret telegram:

. . . It is known that all bourgeois intelligence services use methods of physical influence against representatives of the socialist proletariat and that they use them in their most scandalous forms.

The question arises as to why the socialist intelligence service should be more humanitarian against the mad agents of the bourgeoisie, against the deadly enemies of the working class and kolkhoz workers. The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) considers that physical pressure should still be used obligatorily, as an exception applicable to known and obstinate enemies of the people, as a method both justifiable and appropriate.¹⁶

Prisons became overcrowded; camps were filling up with hundreds of thousands of newcomers. Estimates of the numbers of arrested and deported went into the millions.

. . . Calculations of this kind were often made by prisoners, usually with the help of State attorneys and NKVD officials confined in the same cell. These showed that the number arrested during the Yezhov period must have been from five to ten per cent of the entire population. Assuming the population of the Soviet Union to have been about 150,000,000, this points to a total of at least 7,000,000 to 14,000,000 prisoners and people living in detention under the NKVD. The figure includes victims of former purges, including kulaks not released up to 1938. . . . The proportion also varied in different classes and occupation groups. The proportion of arrests among the intelligentsia, railway workers, and Red Army officers was substantially above the average.¹⁷

Actual trials were held only in rare cases and, when held, were staged for propaganda purposes. Sentences were pronounced in camera, the defendants being given only a short statement concerning the term of imprisonment. Death sentences were submitted to Stalin for approval.

¹⁵ Khrushchev, "Secret Report," printed in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

¹⁶ As quoted in Khrushchev, "Secret Report," printed in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 160. Stalin's reference to torture resorted to by "all bourgeois intelligence services" could apply only to Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, not to other nations of the West.

¹⁷ Beck and Godin, *op. cit.*, pp. 70, 71.

The vicious practice was condoned of having the NKVD prepare lists of persons whose cases were under the jurisdiction of the Military Collegium [of the Supreme Court] and whose sentences were prepared in advance. Yezhov would send these lists to Stalin personally for his approval of the proposed punishment. In 1937-1938, 383 such lists containing the names of many thousands of party, Soviet, Komsomol, Army and economic workers were sent to Stalin. He approved these lists.¹⁸

Several of the show trials of those years were held in provincial cities, but the most important were the four great "Moscow trials," held between August 1936 and March 1938, which ended in the physical destruction of most of the surviving old Bolsheviks and Soviet leaders of the initial post-Lenin era. The standard accusations were espionage for a foreign power, "diversion" and sabotage, conspiracy against the Soviet regime, and attempts on the lives of Soviet leaders. The prosecutor in the Moscow trials was Andrei Vyshinsky, a former Menshevik, servile toward Stalin and intensely disliked by Communists. Well aware of the falsity of the accusations, he demanded the death sentence in every case.

The chiefs of the NKVD didn't dignify Vyshinsky with their confidence and treated him with the same humiliating condescension with which Stalin's influential bureaucrats treat non-party men. And even then, when they were instructing Vyshinsky how cautious he should be with the weak points of their judicial forgeries, they never openly used the word "falsification," but instead employed hypocritical phraseology for their explanations.

Vyshinsky had ground to hate his haughty bosses. He knew that *he* would have to cover up at the trial their clumsy concocted forgeries and outdo himself in eloquence in order to lend at least some plausibility to their idiotic fabrications.¹⁹

During the first stage in this series of trials a new Zinoviev-Kamenev trial was staged in August 1936, this time in public. The 16 defendants were

. . . accused of treason, of espionage, of terrorist intrigues, of intelligence with the enemy, of collusion with the fascists, of monstrous, unintelligible and impossible crimes. They confessed everything; they accused instead of defending themselves; they denounced each other and ardently vindicated Stalin.²⁰

All 16 of the defendants were condemned to death and executed.

Exactly six days after Stalin had executed Zinoviev, Kamenev and all other defendants of the first trial, he ordered Yagoda and Yezhov to

¹⁸ Khrushchev, "Secret Report," printed in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

¹⁹ Alexander Orlov, *The Secret History of Stalin's Crimes* (New York: Random House, 1953), p. 328.

²⁰ Boris Souvarine, *Stalin* (New York: Alliance Book Corp., Longmans, Green & Co., 1939), p. 626.

select five thousand of the more active members of the former opposition, who were being kept in concentration camps and in exile, and have them executed in secret.²¹

During the trial Mikhail Tomski, another old companion of Lenin and head of the Soviet trade unions, committed suicide.

The trial of the "Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Center" took place in January 1937. The defendants, Georgi Pyatakov, Karl Radek, Grigori Sokolnikov and 14 others, were accused of treason, espionage, diversion, wrecking activities, and preparation of terroristic acts.

. . . Once more were served up the delirious ravings about Trotskyism, fascism, terrorism, treason, espionage, backed up with charges of industrial sabotage and incredible intrigues aiming to provoke a war and the dismemberment of the U.S.S.R. Still there was no proof, no plausible presumption even, no tangible evidence, no witness for the defence, and no possible defence. Those accused of this new witchcraft admitted, as if with pleasure, the worst villainies and the least probable crimes. Their foreheads in the dust, they did not even spare their praises of the most genial Stalin.²²

Thirteen of the defendants were sentenced to death, three to 10 years' imprisonment and one to 8 years' imprisonment.

In the flood of suicides that accompanied the purge, a number of prominent Soviet leaders and writers took their lives, probably to avoid trial, prison, and execution.

. . . Two weeks after the execution of Pyatakov, Assistant Commissar for Industry, but the real head of his department, his immediate superior, Ordjonikidze, nominal Commissar, suddenly died. . . .

. . . On the last day of May, Ian Gamarnik, Assistant Commissar for War, and Director of the Political Department of the Army, committed suicide.²³

A secret trial of the highest ranking Red Army leaders followed.

. . . In June reverberated the thunderbolt which decapitated the General Staff and struck terror into the country: under the unheard-of charge of espionage, under the ridiculous pretext of having "violated their military oath, betrayed their country, betrayed the peoples of the U.S.S.R., betrayed the Red Army," Marshal Tukhachevsky, Generals Yakir, Kork, Uborevich, Eideman, Feldman, Primakov and Putna, all well-known "heroes of the Civil War," all several times decorated with the order of the Red Flag, all classed as adversaries of Trotsky and partisans of Stalin, were tried *in camera*, condemned to death without witnesses or defence, and executed within forty-eight hours.²⁴

²¹ Orlov, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

²² Souvarine, *op. cit.*, p. 627.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 628, 629.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 629.

In March 1938, the leaders of the Rightist Opposition were put on trial; despite the fact that the Trotskyites had already been tried and sentenced earlier, the new proceedings were called, for purely propaganda reasons, the trial of the "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites." The most important among the 21 defendants were Nikolai Bukharin, Aleksei Rykov, Nikolai Krestinski, and Genrikh Yagoda.

. . . To the monstrosities of the other trials was added the novelty of "medical assassination." Yagoda, bringing pressure to bear on the doctors of the Kremlin, and having at his disposal a very special pharmaceutical laboratory, was alleged to have shortened the life of Menzhinsky, his predecessor, of Kuibyshev, of Gorky and of Gorky's son, Peshkov. With that crescendo which is indispensable to these repellent machinations in order to avoid the monotony which would make them inefficacious, the managers went so far as to accuse Bukharin of having attempted to assassinate Lenin in 1918, and to accuse Trotsky of having been in intimate contact with the [British] Intelligence Service since 1926 and with German spies since 1921, the other accused being more or less accomplices.²⁵

All but three of the defendants were sentenced to death and executed.

By the middle of 1938 most of the "first party secretaries" of the Soviet provinces and the majority of the membership of the Central Committee, along with

Many thousands of honest and innocent Communists have died as a result of this monstrous fabrication of such "cases," as a result of the fact that all kinds of slanderous "confessions" were accepted, and as a result of the practice of forcing accusations against oneself and others. In the same manner were fabricated the "cases" against eminent party and state workers—Kossior, Chubar, Postyshev, Kosaryev, and others.²⁶

The organs of state machinery suffered badly from the purges; had they continued for another year, unprecedented chaos would have engulfed the country. Stalin had to put an end to the wave of terror and ease the pressure. In July 1938, Lavrenti Beria was appointed deputy to Yezhov; in December of the same year he took over the NKVD. Yezhov, removed to another post, soon disappeared; he was probably executed.

Lavrenti Beria, like Stalin a Georgian, and an official of the secret police since 1921, rose in the early 1930's to become secretary of the Georgian Communist Party. While still in this post he published a history of the Bolshevik movement in the Caucasus; the book, which contained many inaccuracies, was in its tone extremely servile to Stalin. When Stalin decided to get rid of Yezhov, he turned to his admirer and experienced secret police leader, Beria. Now

. . . Arrests grew fewer and fewer, and the incubus of fear that lay over the people gradually grew less. The government must have realized that

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 633.

²⁶ Khrushchev, "Secret Report," printed in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

further progress down the same path would lead to complete catastrophe. . . . The people were convinced that a new era had begun. Prisoners were released by the thousands, and many were restored to their old positions or even promoted. The percentage of those released is difficult to estimate. Among the educated class of prisoners, about which we are most competent to form an opinion, it may have been anywhere from ten to fifty per cent, including the majority of those who had not yet been sentenced.²⁷

During the years of the great purge special measures were taken by the NKVD in regard to its departments and personnel abroad. On the one hand, officers working outside of Russia were recalled, to be purged and frequently executed for alleged ties with foreign intelligence services. On the other hand, the NKVD built up its "Mobile Groups" for operations on foreign soil.

During the summer of 1937 about forty officers were recalled from abroad on various pretexts. Of that number only five refused to walk into Yezhov's trap and preferred to remain abroad. Among those who refused to return to the Soviet Union were: Ignace Reiss, an underground Resident of the NKVD, Walter Krivitsky, the Resident of the NKVD in Holland, and two secret agents who were known in the NKVD under the pseudonyms of Paul and Bruno.

* * * * *

When Stalin received the report about the "betrayal" of Reiss, he ordered Yezhov to dispatch men abroad with instructions to wipe out Reiss and his wife and child. . . .

Immediately a "Mobile Group" from the Administration of Special Tasks left Moscow for Switzerland, where Reiss was hiding. . . .

* * * * *

About two months after the liquidation of Reiss, another operative of the NKVD refused to return to Moscow. He was the NKVD Resident in Holland, Walter Krivitsky, who until 1935 worked at the Intelligence Administration of the Red Army. He abandoned his post in The Hague and arrived in Paris with his wife and their little boy.

Yezhov immediately dispatched to Paris special agents from the "Mobile Group" with orders to murder Krivitsky and his family. Krivitsky's days were numbered, and he would not have lived till the end of the month if the French Government had not provided him with a police bodyguard and made a strong representation to the Kremlin.²⁸

The Foreign Department of the NKVD had had its agencies abroad since the early 1920's; the tasks of this department consisted mainly of espionage, kidnaping, etc. Now, "punitive operations" on foreign soil became more important.

²⁷ Beck and Godin, *op. cit.*, pp. 38, 39.

²⁸ Orlov, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-227.

The secret department which organizes such operations outside the Soviet Union was at that time headed by Colonel Serebriansky; a quiet stooping man with a brilliant planning brain. Later it was directed by Sudoplatov. . . . Khokhlov has reported that the direction of Trotsky's assassination, and the training of Mornard [agent of the NKVD who killed Trotsky in August 1940], was actually carried out by Serebriansky's deputy, Eittington, whom I remember seeing at N.K.V.D. Headquarters in Moscow." ²⁹

The "Mobile Group" carried out a number of assassinations abroad. The most important of them, however, occurred after the end of the great purge: the "liquidation" of Leon Trotsky in Mexico in August 1940.

²⁹ Vladimir and Evdokia Petrov, *Empire of Fear* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1956); p. 222.

Chapter VIII. The Era of the Soviet-German Pact

1. The New Soviet Areas

Events in the field of international relations since August 1939, which are discussed elsewhere in a companion volume, had their effect on Russia's internal affairs as well. The Soviet-German pact of August 23, 1939, allegedly signed to enable Russia to stand away from wars, was followed, 3 weeks later, by a Soviet military campaign in eastern Poland; military occupation of the Baltic states; a 3-months' war with Finland; and, in the middle of 1940, a military occupation of Bessarabia and Bukovina.

These operations were carried out with the consent of Germany. The "anti-Fascist" slogans which had filled the Soviet press and Soviet propaganda in preceding years were discarded.

. . . News about internal conditions in Germany disappeared from the pages of Soviet newspapers and the Nazi neighbor was no longer an object of criticism. Reporting assiduously the tragic economic conditions in the belligerent and even neutral countries, Russian newspapers maintained a strict silence on Germany. Occasionally Soviet magazines gave facts about the activities of Communist parties in other countries, but almost nothing about the German Communist party. Favorite slogans such as "war-mongers" were aimed solely against Germany's enemies.¹

The turn from "anti-fascism" to friendship with the "main Fascist government" remained a puzzle for the Soviet population, since no plausible and frank explanation could be offered and certainly the secret agreements which actually provided for Soviet invasion of the neighboring countries could not be divulged.

. . . Even in the ranks of the Soviet Communist party there was much confusion. Few of its members were aware that the Kremlin had laid its plans for a large-scale military and diplomatic campaign. Collaboration with Germany was generally discounted. . . . It was against these mute inquiries that Molotov thundered when he denounced with scorn those "people who refuse to see farther than their noses and who let themselves be taken prisoner by mere anti-Fascist propaganda."²

¹ David J. Dallin, *Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy 1939-1942* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), p. 68.

² *Ibid.*

The Soviet economy was mobilized for war. The workday in industry was lengthened; severe disciplinary measures—against absence from work, for instance—were introduced. Reorganization of the military forces was accelerated. A new law providing for general military service, which was adopted on September 1, 1939, read in article 3:

All male citizens of the U.S.S.R., without distinction of race, nationality, religion, education, social origin and status are obliged to serve in the armed forces of the U.S.S.R.⁸

This regulation marked a substantial departure from the principles of the initial Communist era, when "class origin" was to determine whether a person should bear arms. At the same time, terms of service were substantially increased.

The Soviet prisons and "corrective labor camps," which had lost quantities of inmates since the fall of Yezhov, were partly filled up again by deportees from newly occupied areas. In eastern Poland, the Baltic states, and Bessarabia, the NKVD, arriving in the wake of the Red Army, inaugurated a comprehensive purge, the purpose of which was to eliminate from public life in the new areas those classes and political groups which were nonexistent in Russia. (The only exception, in this realignment of classes, were the "kulaks," whose time was to come—and indeed did—years later.) NKVD instructions for Lithuania, for example, provided for the elimination of the following:

- (1) Members of Russian pre-revolutionary political parties: Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks, Trotskyites, Anarchists;
- (2) Members of Lithuanian contemporary political parties: Nationalists, Valdemarasites (pro-German), Peasants, Christian Democrats, University Students—members of Student Organizations, Shaulisists [members of a military organization for civilians];
- (3) Members of the State Police, Gendarmerie, and Prison-Wardens;
- (4) Officers of the former Tsarist Army, and other anti-Bolshevik Armies of 1918–1920;
- (5) Officers and Military Judges of the Polish and Lithuanian Armies;
- (6) Volunteers to all non-Bolshevik Armies;
- (7) Persons removed from the Communist Party;
- (8) Refugees, political Emigrés, re-Emigrés, and Smugglers;
- (9) Citizens of Foreign States, representatives of Foreign Firms, etc.;
- (10) Persons who had travelled abroad; who were in contact with representatives of foreign powers; who were Esperantists and Philatelists;
- (11) Officials of Lithuanian Ministries;
- (12) The Red Cross staff and Refugees from Poland;
- (13) Persons active in local religious Organizations; Clergymen and Secretaries, and "active members of religious communities";

⁸ *Istoriya Sovetskoi Konstitutsii (v Dokumentakh) 1917–56* (History of the Soviet Constitution (in Documents) 1917–56) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Yuridicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Juridical Literature), 1957), p. 805.

(14) Aristocrats, Landowners, wealthy Merchants, Bankers, Industrialists, Hotel and Restaurant Proprietors.⁴

The operations were guided from Moscow. On June 4, 1941, Ivan Serov (later head of the Committee for State Security), in his then capacity of Deputy Commissar of State Security, gave instructions to the local agencies:

The operation should be commenced at daybreak. Upon entering the home of the person to be banished, the senior member of the operative group should gather the entire family of the deportee into one room, taking all necessary precautionary measures against any possible excesses.

* * * * *

The conveyance of the deportees from the villages to the gathering place at the railway station should by all means be done in daylight; moreover, efforts should be made that the gathering of each family should take not more than two hours.

In all cases throughout the operations firm and decisive action should be taken, without the slightest pomposity, noise and panic.

* * * * *

In view of the fact that a large number of deportees must be arrested and placed in special camps and their families settled at special points in distant regions, it is necessary to execute the operation of deporting both the members of his family as well as the deportee simultaneously, without informing them of the separation confronting them.⁵

. . . About 25 per cent of the deported were sentenced by the NKVD to labor camps, while the rest went to special migrants' settlements.⁶

No exact figures on the size of the operation have been revealed. As far as Poland was concerned, one source estimated

. . . the number of persons deported as a result of sentences and as "ordinary" deportees at 880,000; that of persons recruited for labor in the USSR at 20,000; and that of prisoners of war captured in 1939 at 180,000; i.e., a total of 1,080,000. Other Polish sources estimate the total of deportees from Polish provinces somewhat higher, at 1,470,000, of whom the special migrants accounted for 990,000, prisoners in labor camps for 250,000, and Polish prisoners of war for 230,000.⁷

The operation in the Baltic states, carried out somewhat later, had not been entirely completed when Germany attacked Russia in June 1941.

⁴ Elma Dangerfield, *Beyond the Urals* (London: British League for European Freedom, n.d.), p. 89. The original lists of groups to be eliminated, revealed by the *Lithuanian Bulletin*, New York, in 1946-49, contain scores of categories of suspects, counter-revolutionists, etc.

⁵ As quoted in *Lithuanian Bulletin*, New York, vol. IV, No. 1, January 1946, pp. 25, 29, 31.

⁶ David J. Dallin and Boris I. Nicolaevsky, *Forced Labor in Soviet Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), p. 263.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 263, 264.

It is a matter of public record that during one night alone, June 14, 1941, more than 30,000 Lithuanians were seized in a manhunt of titanic proportions and deported to the Russian wasteland. The same night, scores of thousands were seized and deported from Latvia and Estonia. According to an estimate based on evidence gathered by the Lithuanian Red Cross, Lithuania during the first Soviet occupation suffered a total manpower loss of 65,000 persons, most of whom were deported. Several hundred met death outright, among them 16 R.C. [Roman Catholic] priests. The manpower losses of other Baltic States reach approximately 62,000 for Latvia, and 61,000 for Estonia.

The number of executed in Latvia and Estonia is approximately 1,500 for Latvia (mostly army officers), and 1,800 for Estonia. The number of deported from Estonia reaches 55,000, including many members of Estonian armed forces.⁸

Among the prisoners of war taken during the Polish operation and among those arrested in the Baltic states were thousands of officers of the national armies. In Stalin's view, these officers, who embodied the idea of national independence, represented a special menace to the new powers and had to be liquidated summarily. Army officers constituted the majority of those executed in Latvia (total 1,500) and Estonia (total 1,800). The executions of Polish officers, when disclosed many years later, created an international uproar known as the Katyn affair.

During its invasion of western Poland, the Red Army rounded up 250,000 prisoners of war. The officers captured were placed in three camps in Russia.

. . . Between November, 1939, and the spring of 1940, the Kozielsk camp held 4,500 officers and cadet officers; Starobielsk held 3,920 officers and cadet officers; and Ostashkov held approximately 6,500 officers, military police, frontier guards, and policemen.⁹

Of the total of about 15,000 prisoners in these camps, only 400 survived. The bodies of those murdered in the Katyn forest were discovered in 1943.

Without exception all the victims whose bodies were found in the Katyn graves were shot through the back of the head, an almost official Russian form of liquidation. About two hundred fifty of the bodies had their hands tied behind their backs. The heads of others had been covered with their overcoats before the shootings. The ropes were Russian made. The men were killed by German revolvers, manufactured by Gustav Genschow and Company between 1922 and 1931. The guns were of a type exported to Russia and to the Baltic States.¹⁰

⁸ *Lithuanian Bulletin*, New York, vol. IV, No. 1, January 1946, p. 17.

⁹ Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, *The Rape of Poland* (New York: Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1948), p. 33.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 35.

The report of an investigation conducted in 1952 by a Select Committee of the United States House of Representatives stated:

This committee unanimously finds, beyond any question of reasonable doubt, that the Soviet NKVD (Peoples' Commissariat of Internal Affairs) committed the mass murders of the Polish officers and intellectual leaders in the Katyn Forest near Smolensk, Russia.¹¹

Facts revealed after the war proved that

The executions were led by six Russian officers of the NKVD at Minsk: Lew Rybak, Chaim Fineberg, Abraham Bonsovich, Boris Kutsov, Ivan Siekanov and Osip Lisak. In charge of the whole operation was a NKVD leader from Moscow by name of Burianov. . . . In each and every case the victims were shot in the neck while standing on the edge of the mass-graves into which they then were being pushed. In most cases one shot had been sufficient, but some corpses showed skull injuries from two or even three shots. The prisoners' hands had been tied behind their backs, and stab wounds on many of the corpses by the typical Russian bayonets indicate that while being brought to their death, many of the victims had tried to offer resistance. Many had fractured jaws and other skull injuries from blows by pistol butts.¹²

As a result of military and semimilitary operations along her western frontiers in 1939-40, Russia's territory and population were substantially increased. Between March and August 1940, the Supreme Soviet added 5 new republics to the 11 which, according to the constitution of 1936, were then union members. This aggrandizement of the Soviet state was the first since the end of the civil war in 1920. The new territories and their populations were as follows: From Poland

. . . The U.S.S.R. received in all 76,500 square miles, with a population of 12,800,000. Of these more than 7,000,000 were Ukrainians, 3,000,000 White Russians, more than a million Poles, and about a million Jews.¹³

The three Baltic republics

. . . embraced a territory of 61,185 square miles, with a total population of 5,900,000—2,800,000 in Lithuania, 1,950,000 in Latvia, and 1,120,000 in Estonia.¹⁴

Bessarabia had a territory of 17,146 square miles and a population of 3,200,000. Along with Bessarabia, the Soviet Union acquired northern Bukovina, a territory of about 2,300 square miles and a population of 500,000, from Rumania. Northern Bukovina was the first case of

¹¹ House Select Committee To Conduct an Investigation and Study of the Facts, Evidence, and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre, *Interim Report* (H. Rept. 2430), 82d Cong. 2d sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952), p. 28.

¹² *Dagens Nyheter*, Stockholm, February 13, 1948, as quoted in *The New Leader*, vol. XXXII, No. 38, Special Sec. (September 17, 1949), p. S-4.

¹³ Dallin, *Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy 1939-1942*, p. 75.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

incorporation into the Soviet Union of a country that had never belonged to Russia.

A total of about 23 million in population was added to the 170 million of the Soviet Union, an increase of 13.5 percent. The realignment of the new territories to bring the western areas into the political and economic system prevailing in the rest of the Soviet Union was pushed with force. As one of the first political operations, elections were held everywhere in the new areas in accordance with the usual pattern of voting in totalitarian countries; the Communist parties, small and weak only a few months before, came out as the recognized leaders of the people.

	Total of ballots cast	Percent of ballots cast in relation to eligible votes	Total of votes cast for the "Union of Toiling People"	Percentage of all votes cast
Lithuania	1, 386, 569	95. 5	1, 375, 349	92. 2
Latvia	1, 179, 649	94. 7	1, 151, 730	97. 6
Estonia	591, 030	81. 6	548, 631	¹⁶ 92. 9

The elections in eastern Poland, which at this stage was divided between the Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belorussia, yielded a similar result.

. . . In Western Ukraine 4,434,000, or 92.9 per cent of the eligible voters participated in the elections. The official candidates approved by Moscow ran on a single ticket as the "candidates of social organizations" and received 90.9 per cent of the total vote cast. Thus 9 per cent of the voters opposed the official candidates—a proportion which is not negligible under the conditions. The picture is similar in White Russia, where 2,672,000—96.7 per cent of the voters—participated in the elections. The official candidates received 90.7 per cent of the total vote cast, with 9 per cent voting against them.¹⁶

In Moldavia the result was even better.

. . . 99.62 per cent of the voters took part in the elections; over 99 per cent voted for the candidates of the bloc of Communist and non-party men.¹⁷

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 257. The "Union of Toiling People" was a puppet of the Communist parties.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

¹⁷ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Large Soviet Encyclopedia) (2nd ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Nauchnoe Izdatelstvo "Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya" (State Scientific Publishing House "The Large Soviet Encyclopedia")), vol. XXVIII (1954), p. 91.

How erroneous these pro-Soviet statistics were soon became clear. When German armies invaded the newly acquired western areas of the Soviet Union, they found far more sympathy and help than they would had the political orientation of the people been what the Soviet government pretended it was.

2. The Military Forces

After 18 years of peace along Russia's frontiers, the Red Army's hour struck anew in 1939. In the almost two decades which had passed since the Soviet-Polish war, it had undergone considerable change and the last vestiges of visionary Communist experimentation gave way to a prosaic, realistic approach. The general view of the army as a tool for the transformation of the world on a Communist basis was maintained, however, and even accentuated.

Stalin's "Three Distinctive Features of the Red Army," formulated in 1928, were still taught and memorized as the quintessence of Soviet ideology in respect to its armed forces. The first two "features" stressed the army's position inside Russia.

The first fundamental distinctive feature of our Red Army is that it is the army of the liberated workers and peasants, it is the army of the October revolution, the army of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

* * * * * * *

A second distinctive feature of our Red Army is that it is an army of brotherhood among the nations of our country, an army of the liberation of the oppressed nations of our country, an army of defence of the liberty and independence of the nations of our country.¹⁸

The third "distinctive feature" hinted at the ties between the international Communist movement and the Red Army.

Finally, the third distinctive feature of the Red Army is that the spirit of internationalism is trained and fostered in our army. . . . And precisely because our army is trained in the spirit of internationalism, trained to understand that the interests of the workers of all countries are one, precisely for this reason our army is an army of the world revolution, of the workers of all countries.¹⁹

Future Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevski was even more explicit: "Imperialist wars," he wrote, will be turned into "civil wars," while the

¹⁸ J. V. Stalin, "Three Distinctive Features of the Red Army," Speech Delivered February 25, 1928 at a Plenum of the Moscow Soviet Held in Honor of the Tenth Anniversary of the Red Army, *Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952-55), vol. XI (1945), pp. 25, 27.

¹⁹ Stalin, in *Prauda*, February 28, 1928, p. 3. The words "of the world revolution" in the last sentence were quietly eliminated in later editions of this speech, as Stalin started to emphasize the national essence of his army. Needless to say, this was a tactical maneuver.

Red Army will serve as a weapon of "international solidarity of the proletariat."

The political work conducted by the All-Russian Communist Party in the Red Army makes it a powerful tool of international solidarity of the proletariat. . . . As the war of the imperialists against the Soviet Union develops, it will change from an imperialist into a civil war. . . .

. . . The parliamentary system, coupled with a sharp class struggle, will have to face a unified and single Communist Party which embodies the dictatorship of the proletariat.²⁰

Most definite was the programmatic statement of Lev Mekhlis, chief of the political administration of the Red Army, made before the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party in March 1939 (a statement that could not have been made without the prior approval of Stalin) :

. . . If the edge of the second imperialist war should be turned against the first socialist state in the world, we must carry military hostilities into the enemy's territory, perform our international duty and increase the number of Soviet republics. . . .²¹

This program, announced a few months before the start of the war with Germany, described the aims of the Soviet government in the era of conflict to come.

The role of the Red Army as fosterer of the socialist revolution was part of the general view of the forthcoming "inevitable" military conflict that would be waged against the Soviet Union. Convinced that the great majority of the workers of the Western countries sympathized with and supported Soviet Russia and her policy, Russian Communists expected that an attempt on the part of a Western Power, Germany for instance, to attack Russia would provoke an uprising against the government of that power, which would be followed by the establishment of a Communist or pro-Communist regime. Communist power would be achieved in the West, it was thought, not so much by Soviet arms as by popular revolutions. The war

. . . is sure to unleash revolution and jeopardise the very existence of capitalism in a number of countries, as happened in the course of the first imperialist war.²²

²⁰ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Large Soviet Encyclopedia) (1st ed.; Moscow: Aktsionernoe Obshchestvo "Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya" (The Soviet Encyclopedia Joint-Stock Co.)), vol. XII (1928), p. 597. See M. Tukhachevski's article on war.

²¹ K. Voroshilov, L. Mekhlis, S. Budyonny, G. Stern, *The Red Army Today*, Speeches Delivered at the Eighteenth Congress of the CPSU (B), March 10-21, 1939 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1939), p. 42.

²² Stalin, "Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress on the Work of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.)" (January 26, 1934), *Works*, vol. XIII (1955), p. 300.

Of all possible wars, Stalin said, the most dangerous "for the bourgeoisie" would be a war against the Soviet Union. Such a war

. . . would be the most dangerous war, not only because the peoples of the U.S.S.R. would fight to the death to preserve the gains of the revolution; it would be the most dangerous war for the bourgeoisie for the added reason that it would be waged not only at the fronts, but also in the enemy's rear. The bourgeoisie need have no doubt that the numerous friends of the working class of the U.S.S.R. in Europe and Asia will endeavour to strike a blow in the rear at their oppressors who have launched a criminal war against the fatherland of the working class of all countries. And let not Messieurs the bourgeoisie blame us if some of the governments near and dear to them, which today rule happily "by the grace of God," are missing on the morrow after such a war. . . .

. . . It can hardly be doubted that a second war against the U.S.S.R. will lead to the complete defeat of the aggressors, to revolution in a number of countries in Europe and in Asia, and to the destruction of the bourgeois-landlord governments in those countries.

* * * * *

But while the bourgeoisie chooses the path of war, the working class in the capitalist countries, brought to despair by four years of crisis and unemployment, is beginning to take the path of revolution.²³

The threat of a social revolution as the outcome of war, which was to convince "capitalist regimes" that they should not attack Russia, was coupled with another threat—the military prowess of the Soviet Union. In this respect exaggeration verged on an immoderate boasting that was hardly appropriate in the face of Germany's known superiority in every area of war preparation. The Soviet line of propaganda was two-fold:

First, no enemy would be permitted to invade Soviet soil; no sooner would the enemy attack than his forces would be thrown back and the devastating war would be fought on his own soil.

More than once [said Kliment Voroshilov] have I stated and want here to say again . . . that if the enemy should attack the Soviet Union, Soviet Byelorussia or any other part of the Union, we not only won't let the enemy into the bounds of our fatherland, but will beat him on the territory whence he came. . . .

. . . all toilers must educate themselves in such a sense, must organize the defence of our fatherland so that when the enemy appears, he must be beaten on his territory without fail.²⁴

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 303, 304.

²⁴ K. E. Voroshilov, "S.S.S.R.—Oplot Mira vo Vsem Mire" (The USSR—Bulwark of Peace in the Whole World), Speech Delivered September 16, 1936 at a meeting in Kiev, in Voroshilov, *Statii i Rechii* (Articles and Speeches) (Moscow: Partizdat (Party Publishing House), 1936), p. 656.

On another occasion, Voroshilov, at that time People's Commissar for Defense, said:

. . . At present, when our strength is ten-fold, we don't even ask the question whether we will defeat the enemy or not. We certainly will. . . . The question is a different one: what price, what effort, what sacrifice will the victory demand? *I personally think—and so does Comrade Stalin, so does Comrade Ordzhonikidze, the whole of the Central Committee and the government—that we must vanquish the enemy, if he dares to attack us, with little blood-letting, with a minimum of expenditure in means and the least possible loss of life of our glorious fighters.*²⁵

Second, the Soviet regime tried to convince the nation, as well as the other powers, that its arms and military preparation in general were superior to those of any other country. Since about 1936–37 this pretense had been built up into a consistent propaganda line. Reporting to the Supreme Soviet on the progress made by Soviet military forces during the decade 1930 to 1939, Voroshilov boasted:

Comparing the ten-year progress of the fighting techniques of the Red Army and the Red Navy, we get the following picture:

As to tanks—we had in 1930, 100 per cent; now—I am embarrassed to give the figures, therefore I won't give the percentage, but will say how many times we have increased—we have forty-three times as many tanks. . . .

As to airplanes—in 1930, 100 per cent; now, 656 per cent, i.e., a 6.5-fold increase.

As to heavy, medium and light artillery—in 1930, 100 per cent; now, 692 per cent, or nearly seven times more.

As to small-caliber anti-tank and tank-artillery, against 100 per cent in 1930, we have now seventy times more.

Submachine guns and machine guns—instead of 100 per cent in 1930 we have now 539 per cent, or almost a 5.5-fold increase.

Mechanical horsepower in relation to number of soldiers amounted to 3.07 in 1930. At present it is . . . fully 13 per soldier.

The tonnage of the Red Navy has increased from 100 per cent in 1930 to 130 per cent at present, i.e., we have now 230 per cent.²⁶

²⁵ Voroshilov, "Za Moshchnoe Stakhanovskoe Dvizhenie v Strane i Krasnoi Armii" (For a Powerful Stakhanov Movement in the Country and Red Army), Speech Delivered November 17, 1935 at the All-Union Conference of Workers and Working-Women Stakhanovites, in *Statii i Rechi*, p. 641.

²⁶ *Doklad Voroshilova na Vneochednoi Chetvertoi Sessii Verkhovnogo Soveta . . . 31 Avgusta 1939 goda, O Proekte Zakona o Vseobschchei Voinskoj Obyazannosti* (Report by Voroshilov to the Extraordinary Fourth Session of the Supreme Soviet, August 31, 1939, On the Project of a Law on General Conscription) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Political Literature), 1939), pp. 6, 7.

Addressing the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party in March 1939, Voroshilov compared the equipment of the Soviet Union with that of the two foremost military machines of the time, the German and the French, and arrived at the conclusion that the Soviet Union was stronger:

The aggregate artillery salvo of a French rifle corps (consisting of three divisions) is 6,373 kilograms; that of a German rifle corps of the same composition—6,078 kilograms. The aggregate artillery salvo of a Red Army rifle corps is 7,136 kilograms. . . .

Consequently, the artillery salvo of our rifle corps is heavier than that of a German or French corps.

Further, the weight of shells that can be fired per minute by the rifle corps mentioned is: French—51,462 kilograms, and German—48,769 kilograms. Our rifle corps can deliver 66,605 kilograms of metal per minute. . . .

In addition to artillery, a corps is equipped with rifles, machine guns, mortars, grenade-guns, and the like, which increases the total weight of metal that can be hurled by a corps per minute.

If we add together the weight of shells, mines, rifle grenades and bullets that can be delivered per minute, we get the following figures:

French corps.....	60,981 kilograms
German corps.....	59,509 "
Our corps.....	" 78,932 "

If the situation were as Voroshilov described it, then he was entitled to make his far-reaching pledge—a pledge that was put to the test 2 years later:

A pledge that the enemy will be crushed and destroyed at short order is the political and moral unity of the Red Army with the entire Soviet people. . . .

* * * * *

A pledge is the fact that our Workers' and Peasants' Red Army is a first-class army, better than any other army, an army that is technically equipped and splendidly trained.²⁸

We shall see later²⁹ how grossly misleading these exaggerated statements were and how harmful was the delusion—or pretense—of military superiority over all potential enemies.

3. On the Eve of the War

The gradual relinquishing of initial illusions and fantasies about a "new" military system to be created in the Soviet Union narrowed the gaps between the Red Army on the one hand and the earlier Russian

²⁸ Voroshilov, Mekhlis, Budyonny, Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

³⁰ See pp. 218–220, 244–246.

types of armies and those of other military powers on the other. Not all the gaps, however, were closed and important differences still existed when the new era of war began in 1939.

Abolished and almost forgotten were the Bolshevik "red guards," voluntary detachments of troops organized by Lenin's party prior to and during the Bolshevik seizure of power. The childish notion of a "proletarian army" which had inspired the Bolshevik leadership for many years was likewise found deficient. There had been in circulation

... odd theories about the special "proletarian military science" which was held to be infinitely superior to its bourgeois counterparts; about revolutionary armies whose artillery fire of a small weight of metal was more destructive than the heavier artillery fire of its bourgeois opponents; about the new form of relations between officers and soldiers. Many Soviet enthusiasts were infected by these naivetés before they learned to be practical and realistic.³⁰

As "industrialization" progressed, it was found more reasonable to base the military system on guns, planes, and destroyers rather than on "proletarian spirit"; the Red Army turned to regular training with new weapons. Military reconnaissance abroad in the field of pertinent inventions was fostered. Lenin's dream and promise of building up a territorial system of a small armed force like that of Switzerland had gradually given way to the old pattern of a large, regular, centralized army.

The territorial system, as the basis of our army, began to conflict with the defensive requirements of the state. . . .

* * * * *

As a consequence, it was found necessary to abolish the territorial system as the structural basis of our army and to adopt the cadre system exclusively. Today our whole army is uniformly built on the cadre principle. . . .³¹

Equality of soldiers and officers, another remnant of the revolutionary era, had become a pretense in the new army, and between 1935 and 1940 even the pretense was discarded. Military ranks, which had earlier been abolished,³² were reinstated:

... For the first time military ranks for all commanders of the military forces were introduced in the U.S.S.R. by the decision of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. of September 22, 1935. By the same decision the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union was introduced; this rank is personally awarded by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. for outstanding services in leadership of the army. The ranks of general and admiral for the highest command of the Soviet Army and Navy were introduced by the

³⁰ Dallin, *Russia and Postwar Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), p. 22.

³¹ Voroshilov, Mekhlis, Budyonny and Stern, *op. cit.*, pp. 14, 15.

³² See p. 74.

decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. on May 7, 1940.³³

A new system of orderlies for military personnel was introduced. Privileges of officers³⁴ were emphasized. To maintain and increase army discipline, a number of measures were initiated and punishment for offenses was made more severe. Differentiation of social status as between privates and officers, as it had existed before the revolution, was again developing rapidly.

In two critical fields, however, the Soviet army retained important vestiges of its Communist past and present. Because the Soviet government had never had full confidence in the loyalty of the hundreds of thousands of peasants conscripted into the army, and especially of its officers' corps, it surrounded this military force with a system of tight control and checking; the aim was to subordinate the army, under all circumstances, to the leadership of the Communist party, to prevent any move toward independence in even purely military matters.

The army was surrounded, penetrated and controlled by two networks, one connected with the Central Committee of the Communist party and the other with the NKVD, the secret police.

In order to ensure the loyalty of the Soviet armed forces the Party leadership has developed a complex but highly integrated system of controls which penetrates every aspect of army life. The system is composed of two parallel hierarchies which operate independently of the military command. One, which may be called political, consists of the political workers and the network of Party and Komsomol organizations in the Red Army. It performs the function of infusing the army with Party spirit and positive indoctrination and agitation. The other, which may be described as punitive, consists of security organs of the MVD,³⁵ whose duties are to root out disaffection and disloyalty in the army.³⁶

The Central Committee of the party had a special department, the so-called PUR (Political Administration of the Red Army), which had existed since the civil war days. Its agents in the military units were the "commissars" (or "military commissars") assigned to keep an eye on the morale of the officers and men as well as take care of political propaganda and the enlightenment of the military units.

The system of commissars was always a source of irritation and conflict in the Red Army. Interference with and spying on commanders by

³³ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, (2d ed.), vol. XVI (1952), p. 538.

³⁴ The term "officer," however, was not officially reintroduced until 1943.

³⁵ The NKVD was renamed MVD in 1946. However, descriptions of the secret police activities of the MVD on these pages apply to the period before and after the war. For a detailed account of the various reorganizations of the Soviet secret police apparatus, see ch. XI, p. 310, note 106.

³⁶ Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 408, 409.

incompetent persons endowed only with the confidence of the party aroused resentment and had a bad effect on army morale. It lowered the prestige of the commanding personnel and destroyed the initiative essential to the proper prosecution of military operations. For these reasons, in 1924 the system of commissars was substantially curtailed and in many cases commissars were abolished altogether. The principle of "single command" (officer alone) partly won out over "collegiate control" (officer plus commissar). During the Great Purge, however, when the conflict between party and army became aggravated, the authority of the commissars was restored. A decree of August 15, 1937, approved a system of military commissars which made commissars coequal with commanding army personnel in both military and political matters.

The activity of the commissars, unlike that of commissars in the initial Soviet years, was directed against an officer corps which was in large part Communist.

. . . By 1931, 51 per cent of all Red Army officers were Communists. By 1934, the proportion of Party members had risen to 68.3 per cent. In the higher strata of the officer corps, Party saturation was even more impressive. By 1928, 53.6 per cent of all regimental commanders, 71.9 per cent of all divisional commanders, and 100 per cent of all corps commanders were Party members.⁸⁷

These high-ranking Communists were subjected to continuous screening and denunciation.

The growth in numbers of the political personnel was very rapid. In the period from 1934 to 1939 it had increased from about 15,000 to 34,000, or by 126 per cent. During the Civil War, in November 1918 there were only 6,389 political workers in the army.⁸⁸

The second Soviet lever for ensuring the loyalty and obedience of the army was the ramified network of police agencies inside the military units.

. . . The MVD [police] organization in the armed forces parallels the military and political hierarchy and maintains its own independent chain of command. All military installations and military formations down through the battalion have their attached Special Sections, which are officered by MVD personnel especially chosen to keep an eagle eye open for the slightest sign of disaffection in the armed forces. As elsewhere in Soviet society, the MVD officialdom operates through a system of informers who are strategically placed in each military unit. Denunciations are encouraged, and incoming and outgoing mail of army personnel is periodically examined. MVD control is applied to the officer corps as well as to the rank-and-file, to Party as well as non-Party personnel. Dossiers are maintained on all members of the armed forces, and personal-history files

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 401.

⁸⁸ D. Fedotoff White, *The Growth of the Red Army* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 399.

are thoroughly checked for any evidence of past anti-Soviet activity. Promotions depend on clearance from the special sections.³⁹

The activity of these "Special Sections" of the secret police in military units (known as OO's—*Osobye Otdely*—though they went through changes of name and were subject to constant reshuffling) was a source of antagonism between army and government. The army, despite the proud position outwardly accorded it, in fact was a target of spying and purges.

The GB has always had the right to "screen" all other Soviet agencies, recruit informers from among their personnel, and plant its own men in them whenever it deemed this necessary. When it suspects disloyalty it makes arrests and metes out punishment. The Army has been no exception, and its units are permeated with GB informers. . . . The Army does not have equal rights with the GB; it cannot penetrate GB units or watch them, nor can it arrest, try, or punish. It has always been subjected to terrorism without having the right to take countermeasures. Clandestine military agents daily risking their lives in underground work abroad live under the relentless, harassing vigil of the rival agency.⁴⁰

The NKVD was itself a huge military machine; in particular it had command over a special and privileged army designated for "internal security" operations. It, too, was an antagonist of the regular army.

As a result of the conflicts, tensions and purges, the commanding elements of the Soviet army were decimated, the level of military knowledge and ability was lowered and the combat force of the military machine was substantially reduced.

. . . According to "Pravda" of July 3, 1938, it often happens that junior lieutenants are in command of companies; frequently junior lieutenants who have just finished military school occupy posts as chiefs of staff of battalions. . . . In June [1938] Voroshilov issued an order accelerating the promotion to the rank of junior lieutenants of 10,000 students of military schools who were not to have graduated until October.

The order was motivated by the need to have those junior officers take over command in the fall maneuvers. . . .

. . . Last summer the higher military schools in Kiev and Kharkov had to close temporarily because up to 80 per cent of their teacher personnel had been arrested. Only a few specialists of the Tsarist army remained. A part of those appointed to replace the arrested were found absolutely unqualified. . . .

The reinstatement of commissars further aggravated the atmosphere of distrust and mutual fear. . . . The Soviet press mentions cases which

³⁹ Fainsod, *op. cit.*, p. 413.

⁴⁰ Dallin, *Soviet Espionage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), pp. 5, 6. (Note: The GB is used here as a general descriptive term for the secret police apparatus. GB is an abbreviation of the Russian words *gosudarstvennaya bezopasnost*, meaning state security.)

prove that the commissars, by their ignorance in military matters, often impede the normal course of military service.⁴¹

The Soviet government and press, however, vigorously denied that the combat force of the Red Army had suffered from the purge. Not until 1956 was this officially acknowledged:

Very grievous consequences, especially in reference to the beginning of the war followed Stalin's annihilation of many military commanders and political workers during 1937-1941 because of his suspiciousness and through slanderous accusations. During these years repressions were instituted against certain parts of military cadres beginning literally at the company and battalion commander level and extending to the higher military centers; during this time the cadre of leaders who had gained military experience in Spain and in the Far East was almost completely liquidated.

* * * * *

. . . we had before the war excellent military cadres which were unquestionably loyal to the party and to the Fatherland. Suffice it to say that those of them who managed to survive despite severe tortures to which they were subjected in the prisons, have from the first war days shown themselves real patriots and heroically fought for the glory of the Fatherland; I have here in mind such comrades as Rokossovsky (who, as you know, had been jailed), Gorbатов, Maretskov (who is a delegate at the present Congress), Podlas (he was an excellent commander who perished at the front), and many, many others. However, many such commanders perished in camps and jails and the Army saw them no more.⁴²

The first test of its combat force came when the Soviet army attacked Finland in November 1939. Despite the improved technique and greater size of its forces, the Red Army's showing was a poor one.⁴³

No sooner had the war with Finland ended than a revision of the military set-up was inaugurated; a number of military reforms were carried out and the commissars were again abolished.

Experience during the Finnish War, stated Marshal Semen Timoshenko, teaches us that our method of training Red Army men and commanders was altogether wrong. Our Red Army is equipped with a first-class technique; our people are loyal to their country to the very end. But we shall be able to win battles with a minimum sacrifice of blood only when we learn to master our technique.⁴⁴

Therefore

. . . With the replacement of Voroshilov as People's Commissar of Defense by Marshal Timoshenko, the army reverted to unity of command.

⁴¹ Erich Wollenberg, "Krasnaya Armiya Posle 'Chistki'" (The Red Army After "The Purge"), *Russkie Zapiski* (Russian Annals), Paris, January 1939, pp. 179-181.

⁴² Nikita S. Khrushchev, "Secret Report," Delivered February 24, 25, 1956 at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, printed in Bertram G. Wolfe, *Khrushchev and Stalin's Ghost* (London: Atlantic Press, 1957), pp. 174, 176.

⁴³ See also ch. IX.

⁴⁴ *Prawda*, October 15, 1940, p. 1.

The decree of August 12, 1940, abolished the political commissars and replaced them with Assistant Commanders for Political Affairs (*zampolits*), whose sphere of action was limited largely to political propaganda and education.⁴⁵

It was a half-hearted reform; there was inconsistency in the government's attitude toward its army.

. . . The Party leadership was not ready to interpret unity of command as meaning that the Party abandoned its supervision of the armed forces. Although military initiative and leadership were stimulated by the abrogation of the requirement that orders of the commander required the commissar's countersignature, the political workers still functioned as the Party's eyes and ears in the army. The officer corps remained conscious of their presence and of the authority which they represented.⁴⁶

The setbacks suffered by the Soviet army during the first phase of the war with Germany were partly due to this system.

In the 5 years preceding the outbreak of the war the Red Army had grown in size to become numerically one of the largest armies in the world, if not the largest. In 1934 its size was increased from 562,000 to 940,000. In 1935 it reached 1,300,000; in addition there were about 150,000 men in the NKVD troops and 100,000 in the frontier guards. By 1939 the number of rifle divisions had grown to 290 and the strength of a division had been increased from 13,000 to 18,000 men. Terms of military service were extended, as we have seen.⁴⁷

In 1939, before the outbreak of the German-Polish war, the Red Army had a strength of over 5 million men. On September 7 of that year an order was issued for mobilization in the Ukraine, Belorussia and four other military districts.⁴⁸

Apart from the Red Army, there was growing the little publicized *Osoaviakhim* (Society for the Defense of the Soviet Union and for the Development of its Aviation and Chemical Industries), a mass organization for civil defense and military training on the basis of new military-technical achievements. Ostensibly a voluntary society, it was actually a subsidiary of the Red Army.

. . . By October 1, 1927, it embraced 2,950,000 persons. Two years later it had almost doubled reaching 5,100,000 members. In 1931 there were 11,000,000. . . .⁴⁹

Every *Komsomolets* (member of the Communist Youth League) had to join the *Osoaviakhim*. In 1939, on the eve of the war, over 12,000,000 members were enrolled.

⁴⁵ Fainsod, *op. cit.*, p. 407.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ See p. 201.

⁴⁸ White, *op. cit.*, p. 359. Also: Dallin, *Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy 1939-1942*, p. 67.

⁴⁹ White, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

These high numerical levels were maintained throughout the period of Soviet-German friendship. The army's technical equipment, however, contrary to the boastful statements of its leadership, was poor. Soviet Premier Khrushchev later admitted that—

Soviet science and technology produced excellent models of tanks and artillery pieces before the war. But mass production of all this was not organized, and, as a matter of fact, we started to modernize our military equipment only on the eve of the war.

As a result, at the time of the enemy's invasion of the Soviet land, we did not have sufficient quantities either of old machinery which was no longer used for armament production or of new machinery which we had planned to introduce into armament production.

The situation with anti-aircraft artillery was especially bad; we did not organize the production of antitank ammunition. . . .

. . . At the outbreak of the war we did not even have sufficient numbers of rifles to arm the mobilized manpower.⁵⁰

Due to Stalin's policy "not to provoke" the Germans, fortification of Soviet borders was likewise inadequate. General Kirponos, chief of the Kiev military district, had—

. . . proposed that a strong defense be organized, that 300,000 people be evacuated from the border areas and that several strong points be organized there: antitank ditches, trenches for the soldiers, etc.

Moscow answered this proposition with the assertion that this would be a provocation, that no preparatory defensive work should be undertaken at the borders, that the Germans were not to be given any pretext for the initiation of military action against us. Thus, our borders were insufficiently prepared to repel the enemy.⁵¹

Even after numerous warnings from Soviet sources abroad as well as from foreign government quarters—in particular London and Washington—about the imminence of a German invasion of Russia, Stalin refused to take the necessary measures:

Despite these particularly grave warnings, the necessary steps were not taken to prepare the country properly for defense and to prevent it from being caught unawares.

As you see, everything was ignored: warnings of certain Army commanders, declarations of deserters from the enemy army, and even the open hostility of the enemy.⁵²

⁵⁰ Khrushchev, "Secret Report," printed in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 168, 174.

Chapter IX. The War Years

1. The Commander in Chief

The war came unexpectedly to the Soviet Union, both for the people and the government. The army was unprepared, arms were inadequate in quality and quantity, morale was low, the best military brains of the country had been destroyed, no provision had been made for the needs of the civilian population: there were no food reserves, no shelters, no emergency housing. Pronouncements about the "transfer of the war to the enemy's territory" proved to be empty bragging.¹

To Stalin, the news that a shooting war had actually started came as such a blow that at first he refused to believe it. To the short-sighted leader, the war meant the failure of his foreign policy of cooperation with Germany. The future looked bleak.

When the fascist armies had actually invaded Soviet territory and military operation had begun, Moscow issued the order that the German fire was not to be returned. Why? It was because Stalin, despite evident facts, thought that the war had not yet started, that this was only a provocative action on the part of several undisciplined sections of the German Army, and that our reaction might serve as a reason for the Germans to begin the war.²

The German armies, which had invaded Russia on June 22, 1941, advanced rapidly; resistance was ineffective. Stalin was disoriented; he lost faith and hope.

. . . Stalin thought that this was the end. In one of his speeches in those days he said: "All that which Lenin created we have lost forever."³

Stalin did not even try to direct military operations. Aware of the weakness of his military forces and with no expectation as yet of massive shipments of arms from the West, he was pessimistic in the extreme. In despair, he left it to Molotov to face the nation, while he remained silent.

. . . Stalin for a long time actually did not direct the military operations and ceased to do anything whatever. He returned to active leadership

¹ This volume deals mainly with Soviet internal affairs. Issues of foreign policy will be discussed in Volume III of *Facts on Communism*.

² Nikita S. Khrushchev, "Secret Report," Delivered February 24 and 25, 1956 at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, printed in Bertram G. Wolfe, *Khrushchev and Stalin's Ghost* (London: Atlantic Press, 1957), p. 172.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

only when some members of the Political Bureau visited him and told him that it was necessary to take certain steps immediately in order to improve the situation at the front.⁴

It was not until 11 days after the start of the war that Stalin made his first public speech. His opening words were unprecedentedly humble: "Brothers and Sisters!" He tried to convince the nation that "the best divisions of the enemy and the best units of his air force have been routed and have found their graves on the battle fields." He felt it necessary to defend his 1939 pact with Hitler, but the defense was unconvincing. He threatened those who spread panicky rumors and appealed to the populations of the areas that had to be ceded to the enemy to remove or destroy all reserves and all goods, cattle, railway cars, etc. (the policy of the "scorched earth," as it was termed abroad), and to organize guerrilla groups in the enemy's rear. Finally, he hailed the new alliance with the nations of the West and referred to Churchill's pledge of help and a declaration of the United States Government unfreezing Soviet funds in the United States to permit Soviet purchases in this country.

Now Stalin resumed active leadership. He became chairman of the new State Committee of Defense; later he took the title of marshal, and finally generalissimo, in order to stress the superiority of his rank over that of Soviet marshals and generals. As a commander in chief, however, Stalin proved totally inadequate.

. . . Even after the war began, the nervousness and hysteria which Stalin demonstrated, interfering with actual military operations, caused our Army serious damage.

Stalin was very far from an understanding of the real situation which was developing at the front. This was natural because, during the whole Patriotic War, he never visited any section of the front or any liberated city except for one short ride on the Mozhaisk highway during a stabilized situation at the front. . . . Stalin was interfering with operations and issuing orders which did not take into consideration the real situation at a given section of the front and which could not help but result in huge personnel losses.

* * * * *

. . . Stalin planned operations on a globe.

. . . he used to take the globe and trace the front line on it.⁵

Stalin became the curse of Russia in the Second World War. Numerous military defeats could have been avoided, the German advance could have been stopped at an earlier stage and millions of lives could have been saved had it not been for Stalin's guidance of the war. Without the help from the West, total defeat would have been certain. Stalin and

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 178, 180.

the Soviet regime were saved primarily by Britain and the United States, acting in the interests of their own nations.

It was due to Stalin's poor military leadership that—

. . . The Germans surrounded our Army concentrations and consequently we lost hundreds of thousands of our soldiers. This is Stalin's "military genius"; that is what it cost us.

* * * * *

The tactics on which Stalin insisted without knowing the essence of the conduct of battle operations cost us much blood until we succeeded in stopping the opponent and going over to the offensive.⁶

2. Home Policy

The Soviet police agencies, whose plans for action in the event of war must have been made long in advance, increased their activity.

Two hours after the first German air raids on Russia, on the night of June 22, 1941, the government ordered many arrests, which were carried out in accordance with previously prepared lists. Among those seized were many suspect Communists who had been permitted to remain at liberty and many nonpartisans who it was thought might become dangerous.⁷

Where it was not possible to evacuate prisoners in Soviet jails and camps before the arrival of the Germans, the prisoners were ordered summarily liquidated; trains evacuating prisoners were set on fire by Soviet police if they were in danger of falling into the hands of the enemy. The Defense Commissariat issued an instruction on August 28, 1941, to the effect that prisoners sentenced under paragraph 58 of the criminal code (relating to political offenses) were to be liquidated if they could not be evacuated.

There was a ruthless purge of all prisoners. Those whose cases were still being investigated were sent away, if there was time, to camps in remote regions. But prisoners in towns close to the German advance were executed without further inquiry, lest they should be captured and go over to the service of the enemy. Punishment battalions were formed, in which political prisoners and criminals were told that they could expiate their crimes by death or glory; these battalions were sent wherever the fighting was hottest.⁸

In the cities, all embryos of possible opposition were ordered eradicated; a special order prescribed execution on the spot of persons spreading defeatist rumors. Another order was given "to shoot on the spot,

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁷ David J. Dallin, *The Changing World of Soviet Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), p. 192.

⁸ Vladimir and Evdokia Petrov, *Empire of Fear* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1956), p. 98.

without investigation and trial, anyone heard in anti-government talk on the streets of Moscow. . . ."⁹

Among other deeds of the NKVD during this initial period of the war was the execution of two Polish-Jewish leaders, Henryk Erlich and Victor Alter. Erlich served on the Warsaw City Council and edited a Polish-Jewish newspaper; he and Alter, a writer, were also leaders of the General Jewish Workers Union in Poland. Although Socialist-oriented rather than Communist, Erlich and Alter had been advocating that Poland and the West collaborate with the Soviet Union in foreign affairs in view of the Nazi danger. They were, nevertheless,

. . . arrested by the Soviet authorities late September, 1939, a few days after the Red Army entered Eastern Poland—Erlich at the railway station of Brzesc (Brest-Litovsk), Alter at Kowel.¹⁰

The arrests were made by the Soviet police in the course of a mass operation in the newly-won territory of Poland.¹¹ Alter and Erlich were shipped to prisons in Russia. After the German attack on Russia, Erlich and Alter were sentenced to death on the absurd charges of

. . . acts of terror against the U.S.S.R., support for the preparations of an armed rising against the U.S.S.R., collaboration with the fascists, etc.¹²

The death sentence was commuted to 10 years, but the sentence was suspended and the two men were set free in September 1941.

Erlich and Alter were then approached, on behalf of the Soviet government, with the suggestion to form an "All-World Jewish Anti-Hitlerite Committee"; they consented and Erlich became the committee's chairman. He was scheduled to go to the United States as a representative of the committee.

. . . As a result of the conversation with Beria [in the course of the preparations for the setting up of the committee], Alter and Erlich sent a letter to Stalin containing the draft of the programme and the mode of procedure of the Committee.¹³

In the middle of October 1941, when the German army was approaching Moscow, Erlich and Alter were evacuated to Kuibyshev. On December 3 they were again arrested. Nothing was heard of them until early 1943 when a number of prominent Americans, among them William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, Philip

⁹ K. Krypton, *Osada Leningrada* (The Siege of Leningrad) (New York: Chekhov Publishing House, 1952), p. 173.

¹⁰ *The Case of Henryk Erlich and Victor Alter* (London: Liberty Publications, 1943), p. 9. This pamphlet was published for the General Jewish Workers' Union "Bund" of Poland.

¹¹ See ch. VIII.

¹² *The Case of Henryk Erlich and Victor Alter*, p. 12.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Murray, president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, Albert Einstein, David Dubinsky, and others, sent an inquiry to Molotov concerning the whereabouts of Erlich and Alter. Maxim Litvinov, the then Soviet Ambassador in Washington, informed them, on Molotov's behalf, that the two leaders had

. . . resumed their hostile activities including appeals to the Soviet troops to stop bloodshed and immediately to conclude peace with Germany.

For this they were rearrested and, in December [1941]¹⁴. . . sentenced once more to capital punishment by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court. This sentence has been carried out in regard to both of them.¹⁵

The new accusation against Erlich and Alter was obviously a false one. The real reason for their arrest and execution was Stalin's fear of their political independence and their possible opposition to his policies in the future. The draft of a manifesto of the All-World Committee, prepared by Erlich and Alter and sent to Stalin, predicted victory for the allied coalition because of

"British and American bombs."

"American and British industry."

"the great continent of the USSR."

"the inexhaustible resources of men in the USSR."¹⁶

Nothing was said about Stalin's guidance of the war, socialism, or Soviet world leadership. Reference to Soviet-socialist superiority over other nations—a thesis that Stalin was to proclaim as the source of his victories—was conspicuous by its absence. Defying his allies and the public opinion of the world, Stalin demonstrated his resolve to continue on the path of terroristic dictatorship.

The farther the German armies advanced, the fewer the resources that remained for the Soviet defense. The Ukraine had served both as an industrial and an agricultural base; the western provinces had been important industrial sites. There had been a huge loss of manpower, since 40 percent of the population of the Soviet Union lived in the German-occupied territories. In the territory occupied up to November 1941, 63 percent of the prewar output of coal, 68 percent of the pig iron, 58 percent of the steel, and 60 percent of the aluminum had been produced; also 38 percent of the grain, 84 percent of the sugar, 38 percent of the cattle, and 60 percent of the hogs.¹⁷

Soon after the start of the war, the Soviet government inaugurated a large-scale eastward evacuation of Soviet industries, especially the war

¹⁴ The quoted booklet gives the date of the sentence as December 1942; this is an obvious misprint.

¹⁵ *The Case of Henryk Erlich and Victor Alter*, p. 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁷ N. Voznesenski, *Voennaya Ekonomika SSSR v Otechestvennoi Voiny* (The War Economy of the USSR in the Period of the Patriotic War) (Moscow: OGIZ (State United Publishing Houses), 1940), p. 42.

industries. As one Soviet leader has described it, the operation was huge and successful.

The first six months (second half of 1941) of the Patriotic War is characterized by the huge transfer of the productive forces of the U.S.S.R. to the east under the guidance of Stalin's State Committee for Defense. Millions of people moved, hundreds of enterprises were shifted, tens of thousands of machine tools, rolling mills, presses, beetles, turbines and motors. In about three months in 1941 over 1,360 large enterprises, mainly military ones, were evacuated to the eastern regions of the U.S.S.R. Of these, 455 were moved to the Urals, 210 to Western Siberia, and 250 to Middle Asia and Kazakhstan.¹⁸

The evacuation of industry carried out in the early chaotic months of the war, at a time when armies were also being moved, was hardly as successful as it was officially proclaimed to be. The obvious purpose of exaggerating the scope of the evacuation was to minimize the importance of the military supplies coming from the West and to present the victory over Germany as a purely Soviet achievement.¹⁹

The highly official *Large Soviet Encyclopedia* as late as 1952 likewise disregarded foreign aid in its description of the Soviet economy during the war:

. . . Thousands of kolkhozes and sovkhozes [state farms] were transferred to more distant regions. Millions of head of cattle were driven. For the evacuation of the equipment, about 1,500,000 railroad cars were used. Measures were taken to augment the output of coal, oil, and ore in the eastern regions of the country, to increase the production of electrical energy and ferrous and non-ferrous metals; new defense plants were built. In the U.S.S.R. a well-organized and fast-growing war economy was organized—the material basis for the supply of the military forces. . . .

* * * * *

The Soviet army, relying on the support of the entire people, regularly received in increasing quantities, armaments, ammunition, food, and equipment.²⁰

Actually the United States lend-lease shipments to Russia, from the start of the war to September 30, 1946, amounted to \$11,200,000,000.²¹

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁹ In his book on the Soviet war economy, Nikolai Voznesenski, member of the Politburo and a right-hand man to Stalin (he was executed in 1950), omits specific mention of the United States lend-lease operation and asserts only (p. 74) that foreign supplies amounted to 4 percent of the total, a palpably false statement.

²⁰ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Large Soviet Encyclopedia) (2d ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Nauchnoe Izdatelstvo "Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya" (State Scientific Publishing House "The Large Soviet Encyclopedia")), vol. VII (1951), pp. 165, 179.

²¹ President Harry S. Truman, *23d Report to Congress on Lend-Lease Operations for the Period Ended Sept. 30, 1946*, filed Dec. 27, 1946, Department of State Publication 2707 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), p. 27.

3. The Siege of Leningrad

The German armies advanced along a broad front extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea. They reached Leningrad in October 1941 and Moscow in November. While they succeeded in laying siege to Leningrad, they were forced to retreat by the battle at the gates of Moscow. The offensive was resumed, however, in the spring of 1942 and within a few months German armies had reached the Caucasus and the Volga. The battle of Stalingrad, which took place in the winter of 1942-43, about 18 months after the start of the war, and after abundant supplies from the West had reached Russia, was the turning point of the war. The Germans were thrown back and, in the next 2 years, during which they sustained enormous losses, retreated into Germany.

Having approached the city of Leningrad, the German armies did not try to take it; Hitler's plan was rather to starve the city and then destroy it by artillery fire. The German goal was to destroy all vestiges of Russia's former greatness. The first part of the German program was largely attained in the winter of 1941-42, when supplies of food and fuel to this city of 3 million population were almost completely cut off by the German siege.

With the approach of cold weather industrial enterprises came to a standstill. There were practically no transportation facilities in the city; bath-houses were closed; during the 1941-42 winter seven or eight bath-houses were occasionally heated. Food was scarce. In the majority of houses window panes were smashed by the blasts, the windows were boarded up with planks and plywood, inside the apartments it was dark and cold. . . .

* * * * *

. . . Over 100,000 people from the Baltic states, Pskov, Luga, Petrozavodsk, the Karelian isthmus and the workers' settlements took refuge in Leningrad. . . .

. . . In July-August [1941] not more than 400,000 were evacuated into the interior, although two or three times that number should have been. . . .

. . . In the end 2,544,000 civilians lived in the blockaded city, among them about 400,000 children. In addition, in the suburban regions (within the blockade ring) there remained 343,000.²²

Therefore the food rations had to be cut severely. The first reduction was put into effect on September 2, 1941:

. . . From this day on workers were getting 600, employees 400, dependents and children 300 grams [1 ounce=28.3 grams] of bread daily. . . .²³

²² D. V. Pavlov, *Leningrad v Blokade, 1941 god* (Leningrad Under the Blockade, 1941) (Moscow: Voennoe Izdatelstvo Ministerstva Oborony SSSR (War Publishing House of the Defense Ministry of the USSR), 1958), pp. 36, 41, 42.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

Ten days later

. . . Workers started to receive 500, employees and children 300, and dependents 250 grams of bread.²⁴

On November 13 new rations were introduced:

. . . workers were allotted 300 grams of bread daily, employees, dependents, and children up to 12 years, 150 grams. . . .²⁵

A week later

. . . workers started to get 250 grams of bread daily, employees, dependents and children, 125, the military of the first line, 500 and of the rear lines 300 grams of bread.²⁶

December was the worst month of the blockade

. . . Very little bread was distributed, almost no fats were allotted to the adult population and it was not substituted by anything else. Other food items were distributed in miniscule quantities.²⁷

Within 3 months the inevitable starvation and famine set in.

The mass deaths started at the end of November. The outward signs in the life of the city were the appearance in the streets of sleds of all kinds, but mostly children's Finnish sleds, loaded with corpses. As a rule, two sleds were bound together in order to provide sufficient length. . . . The corpses were wrapped in sheets, blankets, mats, and rags. Every day more and more of these sleds were seen: during one period (the end of December and beginning of January) such sleds moved in unbroken lines through the main streets. Leningrad was covered with snow in those days. Nobody removed it.²⁸

There were privileged groups in the city who enjoyed priority in the distribution of food. These were the top leaders of the party and police and military units. The rest of the population appeared doomed.

. . . People [in Leningrad] did everything they could to avert death, but death came. . . . There was only one thing left: to die quietly in their frozen dwellings. . . . The well-fed units of the NKVD were on the alert, and arrests of suspects did not cease, not even at times when there were 30,000 deaths a day.²⁹

The starving population resorted to desperate measures:

. . . In November, all cats were consumed. Standing on a ration-card line, I unintentionally overheard a conversation between some students. They felt that cat's meat was pleasant, it reminded them of rabbit meat, but one thing was painful, namely, to kill the cat: it defends itself

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²⁸ Krypton, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

desperately; if not carefully planned, the killing of a cat can result in one's being badly scratched. Later I did not hear any such talk—there were no more cats to be killed. In December, rats, mice, and street birds were being eaten.⁸⁰

In late December 1941 and January of 1942

. . . At the cemeteries and in the areas around them corpses were piled up; nobody had the strength to bury them. The grave-diggers, lured by promises of bread, started digging the graves, but often died in the process: they had miscalculated their strength. . . .

. . . In the streets women with hardly enough strength to move were seen carrying corpses. Some never reached the cemetery; they died on the way.⁸¹

In the subsequent months ways were found of bringing some food into the city. Some inhabitants had been evacuated and, as a result of the deaths and the evacuations, the population had been substantially reduced. During 1942 and 1943 the daily ration of the civilian population of Leningrad was 125 grams (4½ ounces) of bread; in the Soviet army stationed in and around the city the ration was 250 grams.

The siege continued until January 1944, when the Germans started to withdraw. How many died during the siege remains a well-guarded secret.

. . . Though official Soviet figures are lacking, it can be deduced from unofficial estimates of evacuees and survivors that the total number of deaths in Leningrad during this period was somewhere between 530,000 and 1,000,000.⁸²

Other estimates and studies, however, arrive at higher figures. Professor K. Krypton, who spent the worst period of the blockade in Leningrad, states, on the basis of reports on food rationing, that "about 2,000,000 men died in the first year of the siege."⁸³

After the war the Leningrad Party Committee established a "Defense Museum" to commemorate the blockade era and gather pertinent material.

At present the city has opened an exhibition "The Heroic Defense of Leningrad," unprecedented in its historical-military and psychological importance. The most moving part of the exhibition is the section "The Hunger Blockade of Leningrad," containing exhibits and statistics which draw a picture of the life of the people of Leningrad during their most tragic period. . . .⁸⁴

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁸² Leon Gouré, *Soviet Administrative Controls During the Siege of Leningrad* (Santa Monica: The Rand Corp., 1958), RM-2075, pp. 19, 20.

⁸³ Krypton, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

⁸⁴ Konstantin Fedin, "Svidanie s Leningradom," *Zapiski 1944* (Rendezvous with Leningrad, Notes 1944), in *Novyi Mir* (New World), Moscow, No. 4-5, 1944, p. 45.

Although the fervent patriotism and self-sacrifice of the population were presented, Stalin's alleged personal achievements in the Leningrad episode were not and could not be emphasized, whereas the deeds of some local Communist leaders were stressed.

. . . the museum was created at the time when the cult of personality was at its apex, when many heroic deeds of the people of Leningrad were undeservedly attributed to single individuals. It would not have been difficult to correct the errors generated by the cult of personality even then, in 1949, and to preserve the museum, but sad as it is, it was decided otherwise. . . .³⁵

and the museum was closed.

In 1957 a new "Museum of the History of Leningrad" was opened which, to some degree, rehabilitates its predecessor, victim of the "cult of personality."

4. Defeatist Trends

Living conditions, which deteriorated in all the warring countries, became especially hard in Russia because, first, the Germans occupied a large agricultural area; second, the Soviet army had a priority on all kinds of goods; and, third, millions of peasants had been drafted. With an army to be fed and clothed, the civilian population suffered badly.

There is no doubt that most city dwellers in Russia are going hungry on the rations they are getting. When ordinary people manage to buy a few grams of bread, they often cannot resist the temptation to gnaw it long before they get home—in street cars, trolley buses, along the sidewalks and at the opera. . . . Even Government officials cannot control themselves at the sight of food. At receptions they dive into the foods as if they had not eaten for days. . . .

. . . Doctors . . . maintain that most adult civilians have lost about 15 lb. in the past year.³⁶

It was only natural that the black market, with its high prices and unhealthy competition, should flourish and expand everywhere:

Though barter is punishable by death, thousands of Russians have resorted to it as one way of getting a few things they need, and the Government has closed its eyes to most of the deals. A pound of bread is worth a pair of half soles, while a bottle of Vodka can be exchanged for a peck of potatoes.³⁷

The Red Army was better supplied, especially after shipments of food, clothing and shoes began to arrive from abroad. By the end of 1942

The Red Army man is as well equipped as any soldier in the world. His uniform is made of pure wool and his heavy leather boots would last a

³⁵ Pavlov, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

³⁶ Walter Graebner, "Moscow Today," *Life*, vol. XIV, No. 2 (January 11, 1943), p. 84.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

civilian a lifetime. In winter every man is given greenish felt *valenki* to replace his boots, quilted pants and vest, a heavy woolen overcoat and plenty of warm blankets.³⁸

These privileges accorded the army were accepted matter-of-factly by the population as necessary. The general attitude of the people during the first period of the war, however, was skeptical, negative, often hostile. Lack of faith in the government's ability to resist the Germans, and general dissatisfaction, often resulted in desertion, surrender and defeatism. In the first year of the war the Germans took entire armies as prisoners. The number of Russian prisoners of war ran into the millions. The Soviet government fought desertion by both stern punishment and propaganda:

. . . He who forgets his duty is betraying his company, his unit, his neighbors; he is betraying his Mother Country. There can be no mercy for those who break discipline. It cannot be tolerated that individual panic-mongers should determine the situation at the battlefield. Cowards who forget their duty should be sent to the most dangerous sectors to expiate in blood their guilt before their Fatherland.³⁹

It had been an old Soviet principle never to surrender to the enemy, and die rather than be captured. This principle was now revived (it later served as the basis of accusations against Soviet soldiers taken prisoner by the Germans and as an argument justifying the Soviet regime's neglect of them).

Should the odds in favor of the enemy be too great, then our units and detachments will accomplish the noble act, the aim of every battle—to kill ten to twenty enemy soldiers and officers for every one of our soldiers.⁴⁰

A defeatist trend of substantial proportions developed among large sections of the Soviet population once they were out of the reach of the authorities and the police. It was strongest in the German-occupied areas and in the prisoner of war camps under German administration. In many cities, especially in the earlier stage of the war, entering German units were welcomed by the local population and thousands of Soviet citizens declared themselves ready to collaborate with the enemy. In fact, several semimilitary units were formed by the German command out of the civilian population for "special functions," for instance, to fight Soviet guerrillas. In the prisoner-of-war camps, the German authorities looked for and found numbers of Soviet officers, many of them Communists, prepared to challenge the Soviet regime and fight it

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

³⁹ "Distiplina i Stoikost—Vazhneishie Usloviya Pobedy nad Vragom" (Discipline and Staunchness—The Most Important Stipulations for Victory Over the Enemy), *Bolshhevik*, Moscow, No. 16, August 1942, p. 8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7. The Criminal Code Paragraph 193 (22) says that surrender not justified by the military circumstances is punishable by the supreme penalty.

in war as allies of Germany. The most important among these were the group that comprised the so-called Vlasov movement.

Andrei Andreevich Vlasov was a well-known Soviet general. He was a professional officer of peasant background, a Communist Party member from 1930 on, who in 1938 was assigned as military adviser to Chiang Kai-shek. Vlasov began his war-time service in the Ukraine, then commanded the 20th Army in the winter battle for Moscow, became famous as one of its defenders, and after his promotion to lieutenant-general was shifted in early 1942 to the Volkhov Front, where he assumed command of the Second Assault Army. It was after the decimation of this army that Vlasov, having hidden out for weeks, was captured by the Germans on July 12, 1942.⁴¹

In September 1942, Vlasov, in agreement with the German authorities, issued his first appeal from a prisoner-of-war camp. His message, dated September 10, 1942, laid

. . . the blame for "the immeasurable suffering of our people in this war" squarely upon the "Stalin clique," listing among its particular crimes the ruination of the land through the kolkhoz system, the destruction of millions of honest people, the murder of the best cadres of the Red Army, and the involvement of the country in an unnecessary and senseless war for foreign interests.⁴²

In a subsequent "Open Letter," Vlasov also attacked Stalin's alliance with Anglo-American capitalists.

. . . Neither Stalin nor Bolshevism fights for Russia.

. . . The interests of the Russian people are linked to those of the German people. . . . In alliance and in coopération with Germany it must create a new happy homeland in the circle of equal and free peoples of Europe. . . . In this struggle for our better future I enter openly and honestly upon the road of alliance with Germany.⁴³

The "Smolensk Manifesto" signed by Vlasov in December 1942 outlined a political and economic program which, among other demands, included:

1. Abolition of forced labor and guarantee to the worker of a real right to labor leading to material welfare;

2. Abolition of collective farms and planned transfer of land into private peasant property;

* * * * *

7. Termination of the reign of terror and violence; introduction of actual freedom of religion, conscience, speech, assembly, and press; guarantee of the inviolability of person and personal residence;

⁴¹ Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941-1945* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1957), pp. 553, 554.

⁴² George Fischer, *Soviet Opposition to Stalin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 32, 33.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 36.

8. Guarantee of freedom for subject nationalities;
9. The liberation of the political prisoners of Bolshevism . . .⁴⁴

The manifesto appealed also to the Red Army to join Vlasov's (still nonexistent) "Russian Army of Liberation," and "fight shoulder to shoulder with the Germans."

Vlasov traveled in German-occupied Russian areas and won wide acclaim. In April 1943 a large conference in Brest-Litovsk adopted a pro-Vlasov resolution and approved his "Liberation Movement." Special "schools" for the political retraining of Soviet officers were set up by the German command.

A "Committee for Liberation of the Peoples of Russia" (KONR—*Komitet Osvobozhdeniya Narodov Rossii*) was formed at a conference in German-occupied Prague in November 1944.

Of the thirty-seven identified full members of the KONR, the following categorization may be made: thirteen former members of the Red Army . . . nine Soviet professors and docents; seven old-émigré leaders; and eight others, including one peasant and two workers.

. . . On the basis of very incomplete analysis—based partially on the names themselves, partially on the testimony of surviving members—thirteen, or just above one-third of the original identified membership, were non-Russian by nationality.⁴⁵

In the "Prague Manifesto," Vlasov reiterated his program. Now military units were permitted to emerge and arm, but in actual fact only one division was formed. At this late hour, however, the significance of this armed division was nil. The Soviet population and Soviet prisoners of war had become completely disillusioned by their experience of Nazi rule; fighting as allies of Germany no longer made any sense. The KONR division made an effort to join the Czech uprising against the German occupation, but with the Red Army advancing rapidly, the KONR division was destroyed. Vlasov and a number of his coleaders were arrested by Soviet authorities. They were tried and hanged in Moscow in July 1946.

5. Stalin's Concessions

A number of political changes were made by the Soviet government during the war, mainly as a concession to the army and the population, but partially also as a concession to public opinion in the West. Some of these changes proved to be lasting, others were only maneuvers and stratagems. None aimed at a liberalization of the political system.

Among the more important concessions was the establishment of tolerable relations with the Russian branch of the Greek Orthodox Church.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

To counteract the anti-Soviet propaganda of the Greek Orthodox Church dignitaries in the German-occupied areas and to appear in the role of defender of Russian traditions, the Soviet government stopped persecution of the clergy during the war. Antireligious propaganda and the activities of the League of the Godless were curbed, at least temporarily.⁴⁶

. . . Three months after the outbreak of the war the publication of antireligious journals was discontinued, officially, because of paper shortage. Antireligious museums were closed. Heavy taxes on the churches were substantially reduced. . . .

* * * * *

On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the October Revolution, Acting Patriarch Sergius "cordially congratulated Stalin, the God-given leader of the military and cultural forces of the nation." The next year, congratulations came on the part of Metropolitan Nicholas of Kiev. In the meantime, Stalin used different opportunities to express his gratitude to priests for their outstanding help to the Red Army.⁴⁷

On September 4, 1943, Stalin received three high church dignitaries.

. . . With curious and characteristic cynicism he [Stalin] arranged a conference in the Kremlin, to which he invited the robed and bearded patriarchs and all the important dignitaries of the Russian Orthodox Church. At the conference there was also a certain Karpov. Now Karpov was a permanent career officer of the N.K.V.D. who, over a long period, had made an assiduous and exhaustive study of Russian Orthodox ceremonies, ordinances, and theological teaching, and was able to converse earnestly and learnedly with the church dignitaries on their own ground. At this conference Stalin suggested that the character and erudition of Karpov made him an ideal man to represent the Church on the Soviet Council of Ministers. His suggestion was applauded and Karpov was appointed.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ The leading church in pre-Bolshevik Russia was the Russian branch of the Greek Orthodox Church (also called Russian Orthodox), headed by a patriarch. Shortly after the November revolution, the Communist regime, as part of an effort to wipe out the very idea of religion in the new Soviet state, embarked on a campaign of religious persecution aimed at destroying the Russian Orthodox and all other churches.

This campaign, which was relaxed in severity at various periods when the Soviet government found it expedient in order to cope with other domestic problems, included the jailing of church dignitaries, closing of churches, and the promotion of antireligious education and propaganda (handled through such instruments of the government as the League of the Godless). Even before the actual outbreak of war with Germany in 1941, the Soviet government had mitigated its persecution of the churches by ending arrests of the clergy for political crimes, by allowing a few churches to open, and by toning down antireligious propaganda.

⁴⁷ Nicholas S. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1946), pp. 230, 231.

⁴⁸ Petrov, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

At the reception, Metropolitan Sergi (Sergius) obtained Stalin's agreement to the election of a patriarch by a Council of Orthodox Bishops. The council elected Metropolitan Sergi "Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia."⁴⁹

. . . Before separating, the Council addressed a message to the Soviet government expressing the Church's gratitude for the government's friendly attitude, and another message to all the Church members once more severely condemning all those who would support Hitler and his armies.⁵⁰

Subsequently the church supported the government in important aspects of its foreign affairs program: The demand for a "second front," opposition to the Vatican, and other matters. The help of the clergy with regard to countries in which the Greek Orthodox Church was strong, such as Rumania, Greece, Serbia, and some Middle Eastern areas, made it politic to maintain the new status of the church even after the war. Antireligious propaganda, however, was resumed by the successor of the League of the Godless, the new Society for Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge, which was established in 1947.

Along with the concessions to the Russian branch of the Greek Orthodox Church, emphasis on slavism became a new tactic, not only as a concession to the national-minded sections of the population, but also for reasons of foreign policy. It was thought that for non-Communist Slav elements in the West (Poles, Czechs, Serbs, Bulgarians, and others) blood ties to Russia would serve as one more reason for the extension of Russia's influence on the prospective satellites; for this reason the new pro-Slav trends were not abolished at the end of the war. "Slav meetings" were held in Moscow during the war, and the magazine *Slaviane* (Slavs), which first appeared in 1942, continued to be published after the war.

Russian nationalism was likewise emphasized, along with the normal non-Communist brand of patriotism. The war was pictured not only as a fight against "fascism" but as a new phase of the historical struggle between Russians and Germans. In one of his first wartime speeches, Stalin appealed to the memory of old Russian heroes and military leaders:

. . . Let the manly images of our great ancestors—Alexander Nevsky, Dimitri Danskoi, Kuzma Minin, Dimitri Pozharsky, Alexander Suvorov, Mikhail Kutuzov—inspire you in this war!⁵¹

⁴⁹ The Communist regime, in its campaign against the churches, had forbidden the Russian Orthodox Church to elect a new Patriarch after the death of Patriarch Tikhon in 1925. Metropolitan Sergi (Sergius) of Moscow was "Acting Patriarch" of Russia until this concession by Stalin.

⁵⁰ Timasheff, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

⁵¹ J. V. Stalin, Speech Delivered November 7, 1941 at the Red Army parade, printed in *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Patriotic War, Documents and Materials*, Andrew Rothstein, tr. (London: Hutchins & Co., Ltd., 1946), vol. I, p. 34.

Three months later Stalin again stressed the defensive and purely nationalist war:

. . . Our aim is clear and honorable. We want to free our Soviet land from the German-fascist scoundrels. We want to free our brother Ukrainians, Moldavians, White Russians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Karelians from the disgrace and humiliation to which they have been subjected by the German-fascist scoundrels.⁵²

The press, too, emphasized the revival of Russian nationalism:

National consciousness is in the air of our time. The cosmopolitanism of the nineteenth century is a thing of the past, the dreamers who were patriots of time and space have died out. Love for one's own village has been resurrected. . . . We love Russia not because other lands are less admirable, but because Russia is our country. . . . We are proud of our people, and there is no purer sentiment in the world.⁵³

A new national anthem, to coexist with the old "International," was officially introduced throughout the USSR in March 1944. (The "International" was to be used only at party meetings.) The term "Russia" instead of USSR appeared for the first time in the new anthem: "Great Russia has cemented forever the inviolable union of free republics. . . . We will lead the fatherland to glory."⁵⁴

Another wartime reform, at first glance a spectacular one, were the amendments to the Soviet constitution which were adopted in February 1944. Greatly enlarging the jurisdiction of the individual Soviet Union republics, the amendments provided for the organization of military forces in each of the national units, and for separate foreign offices. Molotov told the Supreme Soviet on February 1, 1944:

This transformation signifies the great expansion of activities of the Union Republics which has become possible as a result of their political, economic and cultural growth, or, in other words, as a result of their national development. One cannot fail to see in this a new, important step in the practical solution of the national problem in the multi-national Soviet State, one cannot fail to see in this a new victory for our Lenin-Stalin national policy.⁵⁵

The amendments to the constitution read as follows:

ARTICLE 18a

Each Union Republic has the right to enter into direct relations with foreign states and to conclude agreements and exchange diplomatic and consular representatives with them.

⁵² Stalin, "Order to Armed Forces and Home Front," *Pravda*, May 1, 1942, p. 1.

⁵³ *Izvestia*, various issues quoted in Timasheff, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

⁵⁴ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, vol. XI (1952), pp. 384, 385.

⁵⁵ *Pravda*, February 2, 1944.

ARTICLE 18b

Each Union Republic has its own Republican military formations.⁶⁶

Stalin's actual aim in this case was to acquire more than one vote in the projected United Nations. Since the British dominions were to be entitled to one vote each, Stalin tried to depict the Soviet's 16 Union Republics as sovereign states; the first attribute of sovereignty is an armed force and a foreign office. In this way the Soviet government obtained the agreement of its allies to the admission of the Ukraine and Belorussia to the United Nations as separate units; in all other respects the reforms stipulated in the constitution were a fiction.

The "broadening" of activity which Molotov saluted in 1944 failed to develop. The Ukraine and Belorussia are represented in the United Nations where they provide two additional votes for the USSR, but none of the sixteen republics has been permitted to exchange diplomatic representatives with foreign states or enter into agreements with them. A British proposal to establish diplomatic relations with the Ukraine, which was made in August 1947, met a frigid rebuff. In retrospect, it seems clear that the 1944 amendments represented an effort to equip the union republics with the external appurtenances of statehood in the hope that all sixteen could gain admission into the United Nations as separate entities. When this hope was defeated, the amendments lost most of their meaning, though they remain on the books as a vestigial reminder of a diplomatic maneuver.⁶⁷

Another concession was the dissolution of the Communist International after 24 years of existence. The Comintern, instrument of a worldwide Moscow-guided revolution, was an eyesore to the democratic allies; on the other hand, Stalin's hope and conviction that, under the guidance of the Comintern, popular uprisings would break out in any country that dared to wage war on the Soviet Union, had been deceived. In the spring of 1943, when the German armies were beginning to retreat and foreign emigré Communist leaders in Moscow were preparing to return to their own countries to take over control of Soviet-satellite governments, the open subordination of these leaders to the Comintern in Moscow was only too obvious. In May 1943, on Soviet initiative, the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Comintern proposed to the member parties:

The Communist International, as the directing center of the international working class movement, is to be dissolved, thus freeing the sections of the Communist International from their obligations arising from the statutes and resolutions of the Congresses of the Communist International.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ *Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, As amended by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on February 25, 1947 on the recommendation of the Drafting Commission (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1947), p. 10.

⁶⁷ Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 322.

⁶⁸ *New York Times*, May 23, 1943, p. 30.

The "proposal" was accepted by all the Communist parties.

But Stalin never really intended to dissolve this useful organization. For a time it continued unofficially to exist, and remained highly active.⁶⁹ One of its Spanish leaders, who had spent the war years in Russia, described it after the "dissolution":

. . . There was no doubt whatsoever that the dissolution was nothing but a formality.

. . . Dimitrov [Secretary General of the Communist International] no longer has his office in the building situated to the right of the Agricultural Exposition where the Comintern was housed before its dissolution; he has it now on the third floor of one of the buildings of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. The other secretaries likewise have their offices in different places. The offices of Dolores Ibarruri, [Mathias] Rakosi and Ana Pauker are on the Place of the Soviet, in front of the building of the Moscow Soviet, in a small house with a garden and a fountain. . . .⁶⁰

The office of the huge organization continued to work uninterruptedly; whatever changes were made were in the nature of technicalities, to give the appearance of dissolution.

The rest of us, members of the editorial boards of the clandestine broadcasting, no longer have to submit to the censorship of Togliatti, but to that of Friedrich, who turns over our copy to Togliatti, who turns it over to Dimitrov. Everything is just as it used to be.

The heads of the foreign parties' delegations, as the ex-secretaries, continue to consult Dimitrov, either meeting him personally or getting instructions from him through Stepanov. Everything is just as it used to be.

The cadre's section keeps its offices and its files, which grow with every change in the direction of the parties. Everything is just as it used to be.

The foreign press correspondents of the Comintern continue to send information periodically on everything that is going on in the world to the Section of Information and Propaganda of the "dissolved" Comintern. Everything is just as it used to be.

The secret apparatus of the "dissolved" Comintern keeps its offices on the main floor of the former Comintern building. And it continues to receive the secret reports of the parties, one copy of which is sent to Dimitrov and another copy to the Foreign Section of the Russian Communist Party, headed by Zhdanov. It continues to send out Dimitrov's instructions to different Communist parties abroad, to organize trips of persons summoned to the Soviet Union or to arrange their departure.

Everything is just as it used to be.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Eventually the main functions of the Comintern, particularly liaison with foreign Communist parties and supply of funds, were taken over by the Foreign Department of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist party.

⁶⁰ Enrique Castro Delgado, *J'ai perdu la foi à Moscou* (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), p. 227.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 227, 228.

A young but ranking German officer of the Comintern in Moscow, Wolfgang Leonhard, reported that in July 1943, when he returned to Moscow from the East, the Hotel Lux, residence of the Comintern leadership, was filled:

Most of the occupants of the hotel worked in what was called "Institute No. 205," a sort of successor organisation to the Comintern, which was established in a gigantic group of modern buildings hermetically sealed from the outside world at Rostokino, in the neighborhood of the agricultural exhibition. It was the same building in which the Comintern had had its headquarters from 1940 to 1941.⁶²

A time of great activity for the supposedly dissolved Comintern came during the last phase of the war, when the Red Army began to cross the borders into neighboring countries. The Communist leaders of the respective neighboring countries, emigrés in Moscow during the war, followed the Red Army as "advisers" of the "Political Departments." They were armed with instructions and plans of operation.⁶³

In the Red Army, a number of reforms tended to revive the prerevolutionary type of military organization as a concession to the feelings of the majority of the commanders.

. . . Guards regiments and guards divisions—their very names recalled Tsarist days—were created. Orders of Suvorov and Kutuzov were instituted. Cossack formations, once despised as symbols of Tsarist oppression, were brought back to life and to the old glamour. Finally, on the eve of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the revolution, epaulettes were re-introduced as part of the officer's uniform, the epaulettes that had in one of the first Bolshevik decrees been banned as marks of a reactionary caste system in the army. Saluting was made obligatory and strictly enforced. Exclusive officers' clubs and strictly separate messes for junior and senior officers were opened.⁶⁴

The system of "commissars" assigned to watch and report on Red Army officers⁶⁵ had been reintroduced in July 1941, at the start of the war. "No officer or general was now able to issue an order, not even a battle order, unless it was approved by the military commissar. The decree was a vote of no confidence in the new officers."⁶⁶

Though intensely disliked by the officers' corps, the commissars appeared necessary in view of the military catastrophe and the numerous desertions and surrenders to the enemy. In 1942, as the situation im-

⁶² Wolfgang Leonhard, *Child of the Revolution* (London: Collins, 1957), p. 242.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, chs. VI, VII.

⁶⁴ I. Deutscher, *Stalin* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 488.

⁶⁵ See pp. 212, 213.

⁶⁶ D. Dallin, *Russia and Postwar Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), p. 31.

proved, and as a concession to officers and generals, the Soviet government decided to partially abolish the system of commissar supervision:

. . . on October 9, 1942, a decree abolishing military commissars was signed by Kalinin. "The commissar," the decree stated, "might have become an obstacle in the way of improved leadership and have placed the commanders in embarrassing positions." The official commentaries said that the commissars had performed great services during the period of retreat, but that now, on the eve of an offensive, they were no longer needed. The principle of single command was thus restored. . . .

* * * * *

The reform of October 9, 1942, which abolished the institution of military commissars, was not as radical, however, as may have appeared at first glance. . . .

* * * * *

Clause 3 of the decree of October 9 read as follows: "to introduce in the Red Army deputy commanders in charge of political work," who were now to wear military uniforms and receive military rank.

The order issued by Stalin simultaneously with the decree, on October 9, 1942, prescribed not only that "commissars be relieved of the posts they occupy" but also "that they be appointed as deputies in charge of political work to their respective military commanders." These deputies, although in military uniform, had, in the main, to do the same kind of work as formerly. "They have to concentrate all their attention," wrote *Pravda*, "on the political work among the troops. . . ." ⁶⁷

In general, with the exception of Stalin, Commander in Chief of the Red Army, Russian military leaders were given

. . . extremely little personal publicity in the Soviet press or on the Soviet radio, in striking contrast to the publicity showered upon military leaders of other countries such as Generals MacArthur, Montgomery, von Keitel, or Rommel.⁶⁸

Such is the structure of the Red Army as it has been shaped by the progress of the war. Soldiers are kept under the incessant and watchful control of the party cells which, though they embrace but a small percentage of the rank and file, are extremely active at the same time and are themselves under the strict control of superior party organs. The middle officer stratum is kept under the constant observation of the reorganized military commissars, the Deputy Commanders in Charge of Political Work. Finally, the generals work under the surveillance of resident representatives of Moscow, the new generals from the Central Committee. In this fashion the vast Russian Army lives and fights, held firmly in check by the elaborate party machine.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 44.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 47.

6. The NKVD in Wartime

In turn, the NKVD agencies in the army (the OO's—*Osobye Otdely*, meaning Special Sections) were checking on the loyalty of officers and men. In wartime they were renamed Smersh (*Smert Shpionam*—Death to Spies), and were greatly enlarged; they operated along with the numerous newly-established military tribunals. The Smersh agencies, dreaded for their ruthlessness, recruited informers in each army unit. All oppositionist remarks or acts, which were viewed as products of the influence of the enemy, brought severe punishment, often death. When the Soviet army crossed over into the West, Smersh, in accordance with instructions, carried out the purge of the local populations. The head of Smersh during the war was Viktor Abakumov (later head of the MGB, and executed by the post-Stalin government in December 1954).⁷⁰

During the war the N.K.V.D. kept a strict watch over all the armed forces through the organization known as "Smersh". . . . its real task was not the apprehension and punishment of foreign spies; it was the detection of the slightest sign of disaffection, or even the expression of discontent, among the Soviet soldiers, sailors and airmen. . . .

Every battalion, regiment and company of the Red Army had a Smersh representative attached to it, as did all parallel units in the Navy and Air Force. His position was quite open but he had to recruit and organize a number of secret agents to spy and report on the rest of the unit: the average number was ten to every hundred men. The Smersh representative had conspiratorial meetings with his agents as though he were running a spy network on foreign soil. . . . Smersh agents furnished detailed reports on their comrades, noting any defeatist talk, complaints about conditions, or criticism of the authorities. These reports went through Smersh channels, circumventing the Commanding Officer and staff of the unit. No wonder that the professional soldiers detested Smersh—though they had to pay lip service to the need for this relentless vigilance.⁷¹

Among the most significant mass operations of the NKVD inside Russia during the war was the deportation of entire "disloyal" nationalities from their areas and the abolition of their autonomous units.⁷² Collective guilt of a nation for disloyalty of some of its members lay at the basis of this policy; because of this attitude even "Communists and Komsomols without any exception"⁷³ were deported.

⁷⁰ N. Sinevirski, *SMERSH, God v Stane Vraga* (SMERSH, A Year in the Enemy's Camp) (Germany: published by *Grani* (Borders), November 1948). (Note: the MGB is discussed on p. 310 of this volume of Facts on Communism.)

⁷¹ Petrov, *op. cit.*, pp. 98, 99.

⁷² By "autonomous units," we refer to Autonomous Republics (ASSR—Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics) and autonomous national areas located within some of the 15 large Union Republics of the USSR. Inhabited by non-Russian nationalities, these sub-Republics and areas were autonomous in name only.

⁷³ Khrushchev, "Secret Report," printed in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

The operation started with the Germans of the Volga German Republic.

. . . The Soviet Government, charging that the Volga Germans were disloyal, decreed that they were to be deported to the Provinces of Novosibirsk and Omsk and to the Altai Region. At the same time the Volga German A.S.S.R. [Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic] was abolished and divided between the Soviet Russian Provinces of Stalingrad and Saratov. Of the approximately 480,000 Volga Germans the Soviets deported about 200,000. . . .⁷⁴

A similar fate befell small nationalities of the North Caucasus, which had for a short time been under German occupation.

. . . Early in 1944 the Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, and Karachay were rounded up and deported to remote areas in Siberia. According to the census of 1939, the Chechens numbered 407,600, the Ingush 92,074, the Balkars 42,660, and the Karachay 75,737. The Soviets also abolished the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous S.S.R. and the autonomous province of the Karachay. Also liquidated as a community were the Kalmucks, and their A.S.S.R. was absorbed by the Province of Astrakhan.⁷⁵

The Crimean ASSR was abolished in 1945, after the Tatars of the area had been deported.

. . . Accurate figures on the number deported are not, apparently, easily accessible. However, an indication of the number can be ascertained by the fact that, according to the 1939 census, the population of the Crimean A.S.S.R. was 1,127,000. During the period from 1926 to 1936 the Tartar portion of the total population had fallen from 26.2 to 23.1 percent. . . . By the end of 1944 all Tartar designations of localities had been abolished and replaced by Soviet appellations.⁷⁶

The task of deporting the populations was assigned to Col. Gen. Ivan Serov (later, for a time chairman of the KGB).⁷⁷ The operation was carried out in a brutal and cruel way:

The freight trains with cattle cars stood motionless on the rails. Motor-trucks kept bringing people. Guards kept driving the sobbing crowd on. The Red guards had very severe rules. A few steps to one side was con-

⁷⁴ Senate Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary, *The Soviet Empire: Prison House of Nations and Races, A Study in Genocide, Discrimination, and Abuse of Power* (S. Doc. 122, August 18, 1958), Prepared by the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress, 85th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1958), p. 21.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23. From these figures it would appear that the number of Tartars in the Crimea amounted to about 300,000. On the other hand, a report in the *New York Times* (May 5, p. 16) estimated the number of Crimean Tartars at 200,000.

⁷⁷ Simon Wolin and Robert M. Slusser, eds., *The Soviet Secret Police* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957), p. 325. (Note: the KGB is discussed on p. 310 of this volume of *Facts on Communism*.)

sidered an attempt to escape, and in such cases the guards would usually shoot without warning. No one can say exactly how many such fatal steps were taken. All that is known is that the victims numbered many thousands. . . .

The heads of the trains accepted the crowds like cattle, without any lists of names, by counting the number of "heads," and then driving people into cars indiscriminately. A mother would be sent to one place; her children to another. A husband to one train; his wife to another. More insults, humiliation and cruelty were inflicted. Women were beaten just like the men.⁷⁸

The deportations affected mainly small nationalities, but not because of their exceptional disloyalty. The Ukrainians, for instance,

. . . avoided meeting this fate only because there were too many of them and there was no place to which to deport them.⁷⁹

The fate of the deported in their new places of residence was tragic and many of them died. Those who survived were partly rehabilitated after Stalin's death (in 1955-57); not all the deported, however, were permitted to return to their former abodes.

During the last year of the war, when the Red Army was reoccupying Soviet territories, a severe and sweeping purge of disloyal elements—collaborators, Soviet citizens freed from German prisoner-of-war camps, and others—was carried out.

. . . On the basis of various evidence and denunciations, the MVD deported considerable groups of men and women to camps in the north and east, the proceedings and sentences never being mentioned in the press. This action was taken in accordance with a decree of April 1943 reintroducing "penal servitude" for collaboration with the enemy.⁸⁰

The mass purge also served the purpose of replenishing the "labor camps," which had lost much of their manpower through the recruiting of inmates into the army and because of the high death rate in the camps. Another source of manpower for the camps was Soviet prisoners of war returning from captivity abroad and German, Japanese, and other prisoners of war interned in Russian camps.

7. Defense and Offense

In the several addresses each year that Stalin made to the nation during the war he emphasized his demand for a "second front" in the west of Europe, meaning an Allied invasion of the Continent from the Atlantic

⁷⁸ Colonel G. A. Tokaev; as quoted in Vassan-Ghiray Djabagai, "Soviet Nationality Policy and Genocide," *Caucasian Review*, published by the Institute for the Study of the USSR, Munich, vol. I, 1955, p. 79.

⁷⁹ Khrushchev, "Secret Report," printed in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

⁸⁰ David J. Dallin and Boris I. Nicolaevsky, *Forced Labor in Soviet Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), p. 297.

side. "The absence of a second front in Europe," he said on November 7, 1941, "greatly relieves the German army," which was a fact. Until 1944, however, the Western Allies, who were fighting Japan, Italy and Germany on many other fronts all over the world, could not gather the force necessary for such an invasion and this was interpreted as "reluctance" on the part of the Allies and as help to the Nazis.

It is true that

. . . the absence of the "second front" during 1941-44 was another reason why many millions of soldiers and civilians had to die on the fields of Russia. The absence of the second front was, however, the result of the Soviet policy of collaboration with Germany between 1939 and 1941. At the time of Hitler's attack, the Soviet government had maneuvered itself into an impossible political situation. The "first front" in France had succumbed as a consequence of this policy. Because of the foreign policy Russia had pursued, Germany was able for a period of eighteen months to advance in Russia and ravage her lands. By political means the Soviet government was destroying what its armies would have been able to defend in warfare.⁸¹

After the German attack, however, Stalin reproached his allies for postponing their invasion:

. . . history shows that Germany always won her wars if she fought on one front, and, on the contrary, lost the war when she was obliged to fight on two fronts. . . . The Fascist bosses are making desperate attempts to introduce discord into the camp of the anti-Hitler coalition, and thereby to prolong the war. Hitlerite diplomats careen from one neutral country to another, striving to establish contacts with pro-Hitlerite elements, hinting at the possibility of a separate peace, sometimes with our State, sometimes with our Allies.⁸²

Stalin denied any nonhumane aims or aims of conquest in regard to Germany herself; on the contrary, he stretched out a hand to the German people, as distinct from their government:

It is not our aim to destroy all organized military force in Germany, for every literate person will understand that this is not only impossible in regard to Germany, as it is in regard to Russia, but it is also inexpedient from the point of view of the victor. But Hitler's army can and must be destroyed.⁸³

⁸¹ D. Dallin, *The Changing World of Soviet Russia*, p. 35.

⁸² Stalin, "Order of the Day on Red Army Anniversary" (February 23, 1944), printed in *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Patriotic War, Documents and Materials*, Andrew Rothstein, tr. (London: Hutchins & Co., Ltd., 1947), vol. II, p. 20.

⁸³ Stalin, "Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution," Report Delivered November 6, 1942 as Chairman of the State Committee for Defense before the Moscow Soviet Working People's Deputies, jointly with Party and Jubilee organizations of Moscow City, printed in *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Patriotic War, Documents and Materials*, vol. I, p. 49.

. . . it would be ludicrous to identify Hitler's clique with the German people, with the German State. The experience of history indicates that Hitlers come and go, but the German people and the German State remain.⁸⁴

Since the spring of 1943 the advance of the Red Army had been making the defeat of Germany likely; by mid-1944 a final rout appeared certain. With the advance of the Soviet forces, the self-assurance of the Soviet leadership grew and its attitude toward the Western Allies was becoming independent, sometimes challenging. Emphasis on the Communist party as the real factor in defeating the Nazi Reich was becoming stronger. The philosophy that was taking shape held that the anti-German coalition was winning the war only because one of its main elements, the Soviet Union, was a socialist nation ruled by a Communist party and led by Stalin. The new Soviet ambition was tied up with a conception of a postwar Europe in which Russia would play the predominant role.

The conduct of the Red Army in newly-occupied countries beyond Russia's frontiers signified an ominous deterioration in Red Army morale. The attitude of the supreme leaders toward this deterioration was ambiguous. In Hungary, Austria, Yugoslavia, and, in the first place, Germany, the advancing units of the Red Army drank, looted and raped on a large scale. Their conduct left indelible impressions affecting the postwar attitudes of Russia's neighbor populations towards the Soviet Union. In Yugoslavia

. . . Wherever the units of the Red Army passed, the people complained about their behavior. Many women were assaulted, many were raped, there were cases of murder and robbery. At first we tried to explain these things to the people as isolated instances, but the number of crimes steadily grew. . . . Reports were received by our authorities that Red Army officers and men have committed 1,219 violations on Yugoslav territory, 329 attempted violations, 111 violations with murder, 248 violations and attempts at murder and 1,204 robberies with violence.⁸⁵

In April 1945, when Milovan Djilas, Tito's closest aide, talked to Stalin about the behavior of the Russian soldiers, the Soviet leader pretended never to have heard about it before.

⁸⁴ Stalin, "Order of the Day to the Red Army" (February 23, 1942), printed in *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Patriotic War, Documents and Materials*, vol. I, p. 37.

⁸⁵ Vladimir Dedijer, *Tito* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1953), p. 263.

. . . surprised by this account, Stalin said to Djilas: "Why did you not write to me about all this? I did not know it. I consider the dispute now settled."⁸⁶

In the first meetings of German Communists in Berlin after the liberation an attempt was made to discuss the horrible fate suffered by so many German women and their families. A local Communist leader asked Walter Ulbricht, leader of the German Communist party:

. . . A question has been put to us by some doctors—men with an anti-Fascist background—about what course they ought to take with women who have been raped and come to them for abortions. I've promised the doctors a reply. We need a clear definition of the proper attitude to this question of abortion in such cases, from our own point of view."

He was immediately supported by another voice: "The question's very urgent. It's being talked about everywhere. . . . In my view, abortion ought to be permitted officially in such cases."

Voices of assent could be heard from all over the room, but Ulbricht interrupted the discussion by saying sharply: "There can be no question of it! I regard the discussion as closed."⁸⁷

To Ulbricht and the other proclaimers of Russian moral leadership the situation was embarrassing; to the rank and file German Communists it was intolerable.

. . . For the first time in my life, I saw something happen which up till then I had regarded as practically impossible; there were open cries of protest against a senior Party official.

"You can't do that! We must discuss it!"

"We have a moral obligation to defend our attitude on the question."

"We must give working-class women the right of abortion."

"We can't just go on avoiding every unpleasant question."

Ulbricht stood facing them with an angry frown. One speaker followed another. Before long it was no longer a question of simply permitting abortion. What was demanded was more fundamental: it was that a clear and public attitude should be taken towards the excesses of the Soviet Army. There must be no more evasion of the subject. . . . Finally, when the excitement had somewhat subsided, it was Ulbricht's turn to speak.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 264. Three years later, when the conflict between Moscow and Belgrade was developing, Stalin accused his former disciple of having slandered the Soviet army. Dediđer relates (p. 264):

"We imagined that the dispute was settled in this way [the Stalin conversation with Djilas in 1945]. But in 1948, when the conflict began openly, one of the first things with which Stalin charged us was ingratitude toward the Red Army and with having insulted the memory of fallen Red Army fighters, accusing them of things they never did. But the best witnesses, who were right in this case, were the people in those parts of our country the Red Army had passed through in 1944 and 1945."

⁸⁷ Leonhard, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

"I repeat," he said sharply, "I regard the discussion on this subject as closed. It is quite impossible for us to adopt the attitude that abortions are permissible if the pregnancy results from these incidents."⁸⁵

The Soviet officer Sabik-Vogulov ("son of peasants and myself a worker"), who had moved with the Red Army all the way from Stalin-grad to Berlin, published a pamphlet in which he described the events of that time:

Unrestrained debauch engulfed the Russian occupation army. Disturbed by the unprecedented increase in venereal diseases, the Army command issued every month from three to five orders devoted to this question.

And there really was reason for alarm.

Two huge army hospitals were overcrowded with people sick with venereal diseases, to such an extent that not less than half of the patients had to be placed in private apartments. The patients walked around, rode in their own cars, went where they wanted, drank, and infected thousands of healthy German women.

Many of the sick, despairing of recovery, apparently decided to live fast, and turned to banditry . . . and excessive drinking. . . .

* * * * *

. . . Nearly every day there were orders announced providing for punishment by the military tribunal. Either officers or soldiers were punished for raping German women; or a lieutenant was punished for stopping a German car while he was walking on the highway, shooting the driver, and then trying to escape. . . .

The debauchees were no longer content with German women and girls; child prostitution started to grow.⁸⁶

It will take at least a few decades before the traces of these memories are deleted from the minds of Russia's neighbors.

8. The Balance Sheet

For Russia the war in Europe ended early in May, and in the Far East in September 1945. The balance sheet drawn after the war showed huge Russian losses, losses far in excess of those of any of the other belligerent countries, including Germany.

About 25,000,000 persons were made homeless. The invaders totally or partly destroyed 1,710 towns, more than 70,000 villages and 6,000,000 buildings. Forty thousand hospitals and medical institutions, 84,000 schools and 43,000 public libraries were destroyed or looted.

Farm losses included 7,000,000 horses, 17,000,000 cattle, 20,000,000 pigs and 27,000,000 sheep and goats.

Industrial losses included more than 31,000 industrial enterprises destroyed and nearly 40,000 electric motors and 175,000 lathes destroyed or

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 311, 312.

⁸⁶ Sabik-Vogulov, *V pobezhdennoi Germanii* (In Conquered Germany) (Germany: no. pub., February 1947), pp. 35, 35.

removed. Russia's great power stations on the Dniepr in the Donbas region and in Leningrad, Kharkov, Krasnodar, Kiev, Voronezh, the Crimea and White Russia were destroyed and valuable equipment removed from them to Germany.

Coal mines with a capacity of 100,000,000 tons a year and oil wells with a capacity of 5,000,000 tons annually were destroyed. The itemized bill includes factories that produced tractors, railroad equipment, motor cars and paper.

Railway losses were especially severe—65,000 kilometers [40,365 miles] of track, 13,000 bridges, 15,800 locomotives and 428,000 cars.⁹⁰

The direct loss to the economy and private citizens was estimated by the official State Commission at 679 billion rubles.

As for human losses, the Soviet government has never indicated the number.

. . . Stalin, in his reply to Churchill's Fulton, Mo., speech, mentioned that "the Soviet Union sustained irreparable losses of about seven million men," but his figure included only "direct losses in battle, under German occupation, and from forced labor in Germany." His total, in accordance with Soviet tradition, fails to take account of deaths among Soviet prisoners of war as well as deaths from starvation during the siege of Leningrad and the great number of those listed as "missing" in official reports. . . .

The available data make possible the approximate estimates. . . [of losses]: military 6,000,000–8,000,000, military and civilian 12,000,000–16,000,000.⁹¹

The late Professor Evgeni Kulisher, an authority on population problems, estimated Russia's human losses at

. . . from 10,000,000 to 12,000,000. This tremendous loss includes millions killed on the battle fields, millions of Jews and non-Jews tormented to death by the Germans, and a considerable number of children and adults who perished because of the harsh wartime living conditions. The number of war victims of the USSR is as large as the total of all of the other countries of Europe.⁹²

The census conducted in the Soviet Union in 1959 revealed the approximate size of the war losses. Although not all of the figures have been made public, the most striking revelation was

. . . how severely the male population was decimated during World War II. The loss was originally assessed at three million, but later seven million came to be generally accepted in the West. The census indicates that a loss

⁹⁰ *New York Times*, September 14, 1945, p. 15. The information given in this quote was taken from Soviet sources.

⁹¹ D. Dallin, *The Changing World of Soviet Russia*, pp. 32, 33.

⁹² Evgeni Kulisher, "Naselenie i Veennye Poteri SSSR" (Population and War Losses of the USSR), *Novoe Russkoe Slovo* (New Russian Word), New York, December 25, 1947, p. 2.

of 15 to 20 million males from all causes, is closer to the actual tragic fact. . . .

Projecting prewar population growth rates, it appears that the USSR would now have 30 to 40 million more people, were it not for the grievously heavy war losses and the lower birth rate during the war years.⁹³

About one fifth of the adult population perished during the war.

. . . *We come to the frightful conclusion that during the war more than 22 per cent of the population over fourteen years old (at the beginning of the war) perished.* But this is not all. Among those who were lost during the war men represented the great majority and while over one fifth of the total population over 14 years perished during the war, *the loss of men over 14 years must have amounted to a third, maybe even more.* . . .

* * * * *

. . . *the proportion of men to women within the adult population at the end of the war reached an unheard of level—probably 100 men to not less than 150 women.* Not less than a quarter of a century must pass—without war!—before this proportion would again approach the pre-war status.⁹⁴

⁹³ *Population Bulletin*, published by the Population Reference Bureau, Inc., Washington, D.C., vol. XV, No. 4, July 1954, p. 1.

⁹⁴ S. Schwarz, "Chto my uznali iz itogov perepisi naseleniya?" (What Did We Learn From the Census?), *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik* (The Socialist Courier), New York, June 1959, pp. 108, 109.

Chapter X. The Postwar Era and Stalin's Death

1. The Main Trends

The victory in war solidified and magnified the trend toward Russian nationalism, a trend propagated and supported by the government. The principle of equality of all Soviet nations, previously announced as sacred and incorporated in the Soviet constitution, was now openly put aside and the Russians, now proclaimed as superior to the other peoples of the Union, were hailed as the real victor in the war. At a reception of Soviet marshals and generals in the Kremlin on May 24, 1945, celebrating the armistice, Generalissimo Stalin raised his glass "to the health of our Soviet people and, first of all, of the Russian people." (Here the record notes "stormy, prolonged applause; shouts of 'Hurrah!'")

I drink in the first place to the health of the Russian people, because it is the most outstanding nation of all nations forming the Soviet Union.

I raise a toast to the health of the Russian people because it has won in this war universal recognition as the leading force in the Soviet Union among all the peoples of our country.

. . . it possesses a clear mind, staunch character, and patience.

. . . A different people could have said to the Government: You have failed to justify our expectations; go away—we shall install another government which will conclude peace with Germany and secure for us a quiet life. The Russian people, however, did not take this path because it trusted the correctness of the policy of its Government and it made sacrifices to insure the rout of Germany. And this confidence of the Russian people in the Soviet Government proved to be that decisive force which insured a historic victory over the enemy of humanity—over fascism.

Thanks to the Russian people for this confidence.¹

Stalin spoke in the same vein after the armistice in the Far East. An avowed defeatist in 1904–05, when Japan emerged the victor in the Far Eastern war, Stalin now referred to Russia's failure of that time in a patriotic way: He was full of happiness about the reconquest of what Tsarist Russia had lost. In his address over the Moscow radio on September 2, 1945, he said:

. . . the defeat of the Russian troops in 1904, in the period of the Russo-Japanese War, left grave memories in the minds of our people. It

¹ *Information Bulletin*, published by the Embassy of the USSR in the USA, Washington, D.C., vol. V, No. 55 (June 5, 1945), p. 3.

fell as a dark stain on our country. Our people trusted and awaited the day when Japan would be routed and the stain wiped out.

For 40 years we, men of the older generation, have waited for this generation, waited for this day. And now this day has come.

Today Japan has acknowledged her defeat and signed the act of unconditional surrender.²

This was still the glow of pride in the aftermath of a victory in war. The embryos of opposition, however, which had not yet assumed dangerous size, could grow quickly in the new climate. The ascendancy of the army leaders, if not stopped, could obscure and subvert the "dictatorship of the proletariat," that is, the omnipotence of the Communist party and its supreme leader.

. . . Towards the end of the war the officers' corps represented the germ of such an organization. . . . [It] was morally on top of the nation. It had a leader to look up to in Marshal Zhukov, the defender of Moscow and the conqueror of Berlin, whose popularity was second only to Stalin's. It may have been by one shade more genuine, because it had owed less to official publicity. This is not to say that Stalin's personal position was in any danger or that Zhukov could have assumed the role of his rival. . . . Stalin was only too anxious, just as he had been in the thirties, to suppress once more, though in much milder fashion, the potentiality of an alternative government, or rather of a successor to his government whom he himself had not designated.³

Among the first acts of the Soviet government after the war, therefore, was the degradation of the military and the raising of the rank and prestige of the army's mortal rivals, the leaders of the Soviet police organization. Lavrenti Beria was elevated to the rank of marshal and his closest collaborators to the rank of generals. Most of the venerated army leaders gradually disappeared from the public eye. This was especially the case with Marshal Georgi Zhukov, whose

. . . role in the defence of Stalingrad and even Moscow was gradually blurred in the official accounts of the war, until, on the third anniversary of the battle of Berlin, *Pravda* managed to commemorate the event without mentioning Zhukov even once. . . .

. . . From everywhere, the household deities of Mother Russia, only recently re-installed with so much unction, were quietly removed to the lumber rooms, if not cast out altogether. It was no longer good patriotic style to evoke the names of Kutuzov, Suvorov, Minin, and Pozharsky. It was no longer fashionable to glorify the great Tsars, Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great, whom historians and writers had just treated with more reverence than discretion as Stalin's spiritual forbears.⁴

² *Information Bulletin*, published by the Embassy of the USSR in the USA, Washington, D.C., vol. V, No. 91 (September 6, 1945), p. 2.

³ I. Deutscher, *Stalin* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 561.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 562.

Russian nationalism, in no way discarded, was coupled now with communism in Stalinist garb. Russia has won the war, the new philosophy held, because its economy is socialist, its policies are Communist and its leader is Stalin. Stalin began to expand this theory almost immediately after the end of the war. Belittling or totally disregarding the role of his Western allies, Stalin attributed the victory to Russia alone; and the Russian victory was tantamount to a victory of the Soviet system:

. . . victory means, in the first place, that our Soviet social system has won, that the Soviet social system successfully withstood the trial in the flames of war and proved its perfect viability.

* * * * *

. . . The war has shown that the Soviet social system is a truly popular system, which has grown from the people and enjoys its powerful support, that the Soviet social system is a perfectly viable and stable form of organisation of society.

The point is that the Soviet social system has proved to be more viable and stable than a non-Soviet social system, that the Soviet social system is a better form of organisation of society than any non-Soviet social system.⁵

Stalin attributed the satisfactory supply of arms in the last years of the war solely to Soviet industrialization and the supply of food to the existence of collective farms:

What was the policy which enabled the Communist Party to secure these material possibilities in the country within such a short time?

In the first place, it was the Soviet policy of industrialisation of the country. . . .

Secondly, it was the policy of collectivisation of agriculture.

In order to put an end to the backwardness of our agriculture and give the country more marketable grain, more cotton, etc., it was necessary to pass from small peasant farming to large-scale farming, because only a large farm is able to use new machinery, to take advantage of all the achievements of agronomic science and to yield more marketable produce.

* * * * *

. . . It is to the Party's credit that it did not adapt itself to the backward elements, was not afraid of swimming against the stream and always preserved its position of the leading force.⁶

A new extensive purge, carried out all over the country, affected not so much the Communist party as the personnel of the administrative and economic agencies. Deviations from the rigid control system that had prevailed before the war were eliminated and their perpetrators were removed and severely punished.

⁵ J. V. Stalin, "Speech Delivered in the Evening of February 9, 1946, in the Grand Opera House, Moscow, at a Meeting of the Electors of the Stalin District of Moscow," *Speeches by J. V. Stalin and V. M. Molotov Delivered at Election Meetings in Moscow in February 1946* (London: Soviet News, 1946), pp. 6, 7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

In September 1946 the government issued a decree against "pillage" of kolkhoz lands which had occurred during the war (meaning the enlarging of private agricultural property) and other kinds of "abuses." The decree signified restoration of the earlier system in effect in the kolkhozes.

The Bolshevik, the political organ of the central committee of the Communist party, urges party workers on collective farms and in villages to combat survivals of private ownership among farmers, especially in areas occupied by the Germans during the war, where hostile propaganda against the Soviet state structure and collective farming was carried out by the enemy.

The magazine's editorial, with its emphasis on increased "political leadership" in rural areas and the necessity for "mobilizing" farmers for the five-year plan, may be viewed as yet another approach to the all-important campaign of preparing the Russian people, from the standpoint of political ideology and industrial agricultural efficiency, for the completion of that plan. The Bolshevik said that it "must not be forgotten that, despite the increased political consciousness of collective farmers, there are backward elements among them in whose consciousness survivals of private ownership are still strong."⁷

The government took stern measures against private ("black market") trade, which had assumed substantial proportions. Industrial managers who supplied goods to illegal trade or in any other way deviated from the strict system of regimentation were punished. On June 26, 1946 the Moscow correspondent of the *New York Times* reported as follows:

Widespread dismissals and fining of factory directors, engineers and accountants as a result of the discovery of evidence that industrial-production figures had been faked, bonuses had been distributed illegally and factory funds had been misappropriated was announced by the Ministry of State Control in all [Soviet] newspapers this morning.

The Ministry also charged that officials had been converting state property to their own use and shipping goods that were unfinished or below standard to customers. According to the announcement, purges . . . have been distributed in . . . widely separated areas. . . .

Industrial officials have been removed from their jobs and fined and in many cases they will be tried in court. . . .⁸

The purge among captains of industry and trade continued for several years. Their situation was desperate, almost tragic. The raw materials supplied to them by other governmental agencies were often of a rather low quality whereas the industrial plans had to be fulfilled; the result was a poor quality of the products. The government tried to fight the deterioration in the quality of food and consumer goods by severe re-

⁷ *New York Times*, August 28, 1946, p. 2.

⁸ *New York Times*, June 27, 1946, p. 1.

pressions against the managers and engineers who were accused of deliberate falsification and spoiling of products. A number of frame trials took place, involving administrators and technicians in various factories and mines:

1. In Saratov, director D. K. Ovchinski, as well as P. V. Kireev and V. I. Podshivalov were sentenced, respectively, to 7 and 5 years' "deprivation of liberty" (meaning deportation to a concentration camp.)

2. In Leningrad, director V. B. Garibyan and chief engineer V. A. Glinchikov were sentenced to 5 years' "deprivation of liberty."

3. In Moscow, director V. I. Tarachkov was sentenced to 5 years.

4. In Dnepropetrovsk, technical director G. K. Adartyan and the head of the O.T.K. (Technical Control Division), A. V. Kozlov, were sentenced respectively, to 5 and 7 years.

5. P. E. Anisimov, the manager of mine No. 4 of the Katykovski region of the Stalin Oblast, was sentenced to 5 years.

6. N. Ya. Chudakov, chief engineer of the Makeev Mining Combine, and P. A. Radchenko, head of the Technical Control Division, were each sentenced to 5 years.

7. In Erevan, A. T. Avakyan, chief engineer of the First Sewing Shop, and A. G. Manukyan, head of the Technical Control Division, were each sentenced to 5 years' "deprivation of liberty."⁹

In the areas which had been under German occupation, the purge was total:

The personnel of the local administrations also underwent thorough screenings and experienced great and systematic purges, especially in areas the Germans had occupied during the war. In the Ukraine, for example, over 70 per cent of the presidents of local Soviets were purged in 1945-47 and more than 40 percent of the party secretaries.¹⁰

Among the extensive police operations of the immediate postwar era was the repatriation from the West (mainly from Germany) and segregation of hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens—prisoners of war, laborers forcibly recruited for agricultural or industrial work in Germany, refugees from the Soviet Union and others. With respect to the many who, for various reasons, refused to return, the Soviet government insisted on forcible repatriation and, in general, had its way.

The mass repatriation of Soviet citizens—deportation might be a better word—began at the end of May 1945 and continued for over a year. The outside world was oblivious to the tragedy and terror which characterized it; indeed, its lessons have hardly been learned even today. But those Americans and British who were forced to act as accomplices of the MVD in one of its most inhuman operations will never forget what they saw.

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⁹ All of these cases were taken from *Pravda*, December 16, 1948.

¹⁰ David J. Dallin, *The New Soviet Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), p. 199.

. . . The MVD set up a number of transit camps in Eastern Germany, where a preliminary screening of the returnees was conducted; a second, more thorough check-up was held later inside the Soviet Union.

The MVD inquisition was based on a mass of reports received from fellow-prisoners, especially Communists, on the repatriates' political behavior while in Germany. In a great many cases, prisoners of war were immediately haled before courts-martial, while civilians were tried by special MVD commissions. These were the alleged "traitor leaders," particularly men who had served in German uniforms. Their fate was sealed, and there was no point in shipping them further east.

The MVD's instructions in these cases, judging from a multitude of reports, were clear and unmistakable. Men and women accused of having been "war criminals" (according to the Soviet definition of the term) were lined up before the MVD officers of the screening camps, abused in the most violent language, stripped of their insignia and decorations, and then, in a matter of a few days, interrogated and condemned to death. The sentences were carried out at once.¹¹

The others were shipped to Russia, and, if they had been denounced or suspected, were interrogated and then sent to corrective labor camps. Members of the Vlasov and similar groups were tried and sentenced to terms of up to 25 years.

Those who succeeded in their effort to remain abroad inhabited the "displaced persons" camps in Germany and Austria for a number of years, gradually finding jobs or ways of emigrating to the West. A "hard core" of ill or invalided still remain in a few places.

The forced repatriation and the large contingents of Russians who remained in the West served as an indication of the attitude of Soviet citizens toward their government.

2. The Communist Party After the War

The Communist party continued to grow in numbers; it was easy to gain admission to the party and millions of former soldiers and members of the Communist Youth League joined its ranks. In the spring of 1941, just before the German invasion, the party reported a membership of approximately 3 million; in 1945, at the end of the war, membership was reported as 5,700,000; at the time of Stalin's death in 1953 it was 7 million.

All party and government power remained, as before, in Stalin's hands and the organs of "collective leadership," such as the party's Central Committee and the Politburo, were practically impotent. The Central Committee was being more and more neglected by its General Secretary; meetings, when they took place (at intervals of several years),

¹¹ Dallin, "The Repatriation Crime of World War II," *The New Leader*, vol. XXXV, No. 16 (April 21, 1952), pp. 4, 5.

served only to say "yes" to Stalin's proposals. Even the small Politburo appeared too large to Stalin; to eliminate it, he created small "commissions of the Politburo" to act on behalf of the Central Committee:

The importance of the Central Committee's Political Bureau was reduced and its work disorganized by the creation within the Political Bureau of various commissions—the so-called "quintets," "sextets," "septets" and "novenaries." Here is, for instance, a resolution of the Political Bureau of 3 October 1946:

"Stalin's Proposal:

"1. The Political Bureau Commission for Foreign Affairs ('Sextet') is to concern itself in the future, in addition to foreign affairs, also with matters of internal construction and domestic policy.

"2. The Sextet is to add to its roster the Chairman of the State Commission of Economic Planning of the U.S.S.R., Comrade Voznesensky, and is to be known as a Septet.

"Signed: Secretary of the Central Committee, J. Stalin."¹²

The "card-player" commissions also served to eliminate those members of the Politburo whom the suspicious Stalin distrusted. One of them was Kliment Voroshilov, who became president of the USSR after Stalin's death:

. . . For several years he was actually deprived of the right of participation in Political Bureau sessions. Stalin forbade him to attend the Political Bureau sessions and to receive documents. When the Political Bureau was in session and Comrade Voroshilov heard about it, he telephoned each time and asked whether he would be allowed to attend. Sometimes Stalin permitted it, but always showed his dissatisfaction.

Because of his extreme suspicion, Stalin toyed also with the absurd and ridiculous suspicion that Voroshilov was an English agent.

. . . A special tapping device was installed in his home to listen to what was said there.¹³

As the years went by, the peculiar behavior of the aging leader was making the situation more and more intolerable. Stalin's *mania grandiosa*, meeting with no resistance, grew beyond all limits; it was aided by the servile attitude of his lieutenants and his press and radio. No public speech, on whatever subject, could be made that did not mention the "genius" Stalin; no important newspaper article could omit quotations from the infallible Stalin.

And was it without Stalin's knowledge that many of the largest enterprises and towns were named after him? Was it without his knowledge that Stalin monuments were erected in the whole country—these "memo-

¹² Nikita S. Khrushchev, "Secret Report," Delivered February 24, 25, 1956 at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, printed in Bertram G. Wolfe, *Khrushchev and Stalin's Ghost* (London: Atlantic Press, 1957), pp. 240, 242.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 242, 244.

rials to the living"? It is a fact that Stalin himself had signed on 2 July 1951 a resolution of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers concerning the erection on the Volga-Don Canal of an impressive monument to Stalin; on 4 September of the same year he issued an order making 33 tons of copper available for the construction of this impressive monument.

Anyone who has visited the Stalingrad area must have seen the huge statue which is being built there, and that on a site which hardly any people frequent. Huge sums were spent to build it at a time when people of this area had lived since the war in huts. Consider, yourself, was Stalin right when he wrote in his biography that ". . . he did not allow in himself . . . even a shadow of conceit, pride, or self-adoration"?

At the same time Stalin gave proofs of his lack of respect for Lenin's memory. It is not a coincidence that, despite the decision taken over 30 years ago to build a Palace of Soviets as a monument to Vladimir Ilyich, the Palace was not built, its construction was always postponed and the project allowed to lapse.¹⁴

Khrushchev also stated in his report to the Twentieth Congress:

. . . Stalin became even more capricious, irritable and brutal; in particular his suspicion grew. His persecution mania reached unbelievable dimensions. Many workers were becoming enemies before his very eyes. After the war, Stalin separated himself from the collective even more. Everything was decided by him alone without any consideration for anyone or anything.¹⁵

Two other ranking Russian Communist leaders, Vyacheslav Molotov and Anastas Mikoyan, found themselves in the category of suspected men; they suffered treatment similar to that accorded Voroshilov. In a talk before the Central Committee after the Nineteenth Party Congress (convened to "elect" the obedient Central Committee), Stalin—

. . . characterized Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov and Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan and suggested that these old workers of our party were guilty of some baseless charges. It is not excluded that, had Stalin remained at the helm for another several months, Comrades Molotov and Mikoyan would probably have not delivered any speeches at this [the Twentieth] Congress.¹⁶

More tragic was the fate of the young and able Nikolai Voznesenski, who had been included in the highest "sextet" on Stalin's suggestion in October 1946. Voznesenski proved his loyalty and talents in a book on Soviet economy in which he omitted reference to American aid to the Soviet Union during the war and greatly exaggerated the pace of Soviet rehabilitation under Stalin. But having permitted himself to disagree with the leader in a discussion on some economic issues, he provoked

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

Stalin's ire and suspicion. His removal, arrest and execution were carried out on Stalin's orders and without consultation with the other members of the Politburo, who faced an accomplished fact when they learned of the arrest and execution of their colleague.

The sad fate of Political Bureau member, Comrade Voznesensky, who fell victim to Stalin's repressions, is known to all. It is a characteristic thing that the decision to remove him from the Political Bureau was never discussed but was reached in a devious fashion. In the same way came the decision concerning the removal of Kuznetsov and Rodionov from their posts.¹⁷

The Voznesenski case was part of the mysterious "Leningrad Affair" (1949-50) which involved several other ranking leaders who were also put to death.

Facts prove that the "Leningrad Affair" is also the result of willfulness which Stalin exercised against party cadres.

Had a normal situation existed in the party's Central Committee and in the Central Committee Political Bureau, affairs of this nature would have been examined there in accordance with party practice, and all pertinent facts assessed; as a result, such an affair as well as others would not have happened.¹⁸

The "Leningrad Affair" apparently had a devastating effect on the Politburo. Not one among its members could now feel secure; what had happened to Voznesenski could as well become the fate of each of them, including even Malenkov and Beria, the most docile and shrewd of the supreme leader's lieutenants. The fear was so overwhelming that not one dared to face the despotic ruler and mount a protest. At least not for another few years.

3. International Communism

The return to prewar standards and tactics had an effect also on the international Communist movement. Although the main functions of the Comintern, in particular liaison with Communist parties abroad, supply of funds, etc., were, since the announced dissolution in 1943, actually being performed in Moscow by a department of the Central Committee of the Communist party, the absence of an international organization operating in the open was felt. The resurrection of such a body in one form or another had been envisaged since the last weeks of the war:

Tito himself, in 1945, had submitted this idea to Stalin, who had welcomed it with open arms. . . .

The matter was also discussed in June, 1946. . . .

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 192, 194.

During this visit Tito had several talks with Stalin, who on one occasion asked Tito whether he still thought that a new International, but informative in character, should be founded. Tito agreed, and then Stalin suggested, "It would be best if you Yugoslavs took the initiative."¹⁹

The new international organization was founded in September 1947 at a conference in Sklarska Poremba (Poland) at which the Communist parties of the following countries participated: the Soviet Union; all the European satellites; Yugoslavia; and, from the West, France and Italy. To avoid any resemblance to the Comintern, only nine European Communist parties were invited to take part; nor were parties from Asia or America included. The Soviet Union was represented by two ranking members of the Politburo, Andrei Zhdanov, Stalin's right hand, and Georgi Malenkov. Stalin's "two camps" idea was embodied in a manifesto issued by the conference:

. . . there arose two camps—the camp of imperialism and anti-democratic forces, whose chief aim is an establishment of a world-wide American imperialists' hegemony and the crushing of democracy; and an anti-imperialistic democratic camp whose chief aim is the elimination of imperialism, the strengthening of democracy and the liquidation of the remnants of fascism.

* * * * *

. . . The Truman-Marshall plan is only a farce, a European branch of the general world plan of political expansion being realized by the United States of America in all parts of the world. The plan of the economic and political subjugation of Europe through American imperialism is complemented by plans for the economic and political subjugation of China, Indonesia and South America. The aggressors of yesterday—the capitalist tycoons of Germany and Japan—are being prepared by the United States of America for a new role—as tools of the imperialistic policy in Europe and Asia of the United States of America.

* * * * *

A separate place in this arsenal is reserved for the treasonable policy of the Rightist Socialists.²⁰

Only Communist parties could save Europe from subjugation by American capitalism:

. . . They must grasp in their hands the banner of national independence and sovereignty in their own countries.²¹

Therefore, the Communist parties must show more revolutionary zeal and courage. A hidden reprimand to French and Italian Communists for their reluctance and hesitation was contained in the following paragraphs:

¹⁹ Vladimir Dedijer, *Tito* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1953), p. 291.

²⁰ *New York Times*, October 6, 1947, p. 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*

The main danger for the working class at this moment lies in the underestimation of its own strength and overestimation of the force of the imperialist camp.

In the same way as the appeasement policy of Munich led to Hitler's aggression, today concessions to the United States of America and the imperialist camp may cause its instigators to grow even more shameless and aggressive.²²

The new international organization assumed the modest-sounding name Information Bureau (Cominform). Its headquarters were to be in Belgrade. It was Stalin's intention to use Cominform pressure to coerce Tito's rebellious party. In 1948, strictly following Stalin's orders, the Cominform condemned the Yugoslavs, and in 1949 it expelled them. After the expulsion of the Yugoslavs, the headquarters were moved to Bucharest.

4. Realignment in Literature, Art, and Science

An end had to be put to all non-Stalinist ideological trends that had started to mushroom in the Soviet Union during the war. Nor was Stalinism itself precisely what it had been before. A forceful campaign was started in 1946 to brainwash Russian intellectual circles and their leaders.²³

Andrei Zhdanov, frequently viewed in those years as Stalin's heir-apparent, became the main force in this ideological war on deviation. In August 1946 the Central Committee of the Communist party published a resolution attacking two literary magazines, *Zvezda* (Star) and *Leningrad*, for their editorial policy; the two magazines were the scapegoat for other Soviet writers and literary publications. An attack was launched on the talented and popular Russian satirist, Mikhail Zoshchenko:

. . . Zoshchenko presents the Soviet order and the Soviet people in the form of an ugly caricature, slanderously depicting Soviet people as primitive, uncouth, stupid, and narrow-minded in tastes and morals. His maliciously hooliganistic portrayal of our society is accompanied by anti-Soviet attacks.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ A skit in the form of extracts from the diary of a Soviet critic had appeared in the Moscow publication *Novyi Mir* (New World) in 1946. The skit, written by Alexander Raskin, contained the following "ten commandments" of a Soviet critic:

"1. Do not be the first to speak out! 2. Do not be the second! 3. Be the third! 4. Confess the mistakes of your fellow-critics! 5. Quote! 6. Avoid appraisals! A cheap appraisal may cost you dear. 7. It is better to overblame than to underpraise. 8. If you have been smitten on your right cheek, protect the left." (As quoted in Gleb Struve, *Soviet Russian Literature, 1917-50* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), p. 341, note.)

The placing of the pages of *Zvezda* at the disposal of such vulgarians and dregs of literature is the more inadmissible because the editors of the journal know well the physiognomy of Zoshchenko and his unworthy behavior during the war. . . .²⁴

The same magazine was taken to task for publication of nonpolitical poems by one of the best of contemporary Russian poets, Anna Akhmatova.

. . . Akhmatova is a typical representative of a form of poetry that is empty, devoid of ideas, and alien to our people. Her poems are imbued with the spirit of pessimism and decadence, and express the tastes of the old drawing-room poetry, of bourgeois-aristocratic estheticism and decadence of "art for art's sake."²⁵

Zhdanov subsequently castigated Zoshchenko and Akhmatova in public speeches:

. . . [Zhdanov] denounced Zoshchenko as a "vulgarian" who was "accustomed to mocking at Soviet life, Soviet conditions, and Soviet people. . . ."

From Zoshchenko, Zhdanov passed on to Akhmatova, whom he characterized as an out-and-out individualist, a representative of the "reactionary literary morass," a "cross between a nun and a whore."²⁶

The Central Committee restored the old principle that literature must serve the party's purposes; no other trend could be tolerated and anyone who resisted this course would be purged:

. . . They [*Zvezda* and *Leningrad*] have forgotten that our journals are a mighty instrument of the soviet state in the cause of the education of the Soviet people, and Soviet youth in particular. They must therefore be guided by the vital foundation of the Soviet order—its politics. . . .

The power of Soviet literature, the most advanced literature in the world, consists in the fact that it is a literature which has not and cannot have interests other than the interests of the people, the interests of the state. The task of Soviet literature is to aid the state to educate the youth correctly and to meet their demands, to rear a new generation vigorous, believing in their cause, fearing no obstacles and ready to overcome all obstacles.²⁷

This resolution was the beginning of a comprehensive drive that soon extended to other fields of art and to science.

. . . the Central Committee of the Communist party followed up the resolution on *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* by two others: one was entitled "On

²⁴ Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of August 14, 1946, on the magazines *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, printed in *Bolshevik*, Moscow, No. 15, August 1946, p. 11.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Struve, *op. cit.*, pp. 329, 331.

²⁷ Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of August 14, 1946, on the magazines *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, printed in *Bolshevik*, Moscow, No. 15, August 1946, p. 12.

the Repertoire of Dramatic Theaters and Measures for Its Improvement" and the other "On the Motion Picture 'Big Life.'"

The resolution on the theaters signaled the unsatisfactory condition of the Soviet theaters, whose main weakness was the almost complete absence of plays by Soviet authors on contemporary themes.²⁸

The Soviet population, it was admitted, did not like the Communist streamlined propaganda plays, preferring foreign and pre-revolutionary Russian drama. The chief weakness of the situation, it was said:

. . . is the fact that plays by Soviet authors on contemporary themes have actually been forced out of the repertoire of the great dramatic theatres of the country. In the Moscow Art Theatre only three out of twenty current productions are devoted to questions of contemporary Soviet life, in the Little Theatre only three out of twenty, in the Theatre in the Name of the Moscow Soviet only two out of nine, in the Theatre in the Name of Vakhtangov only two out of ten, in the Kamerny Theatre only three out of eleven, in the Leningrad Theatre in the Name of Pushkin only two out of ten, in the Kiev Drama Theatre in the Name of Franko only three out of eleven, in the Kharkov Theatre in the Name of Shevchenko only two out of eleven, and in the Sverdlovsk Dramatic Theatre only five performances out of seventeen relate to contemporary Soviet issues. . . .

. . . The publishing house *Iskusstvo*, in accordance with instructions from the Committee on Artistic Affairs, has published a volume of one-act plays by contemporary English and American dramatists. These plays are a model of base, vulgar, foreign drama, openly preaching bourgeois views and morals.²⁹

At the same time, a reorganization of censorship was ordered, but only to strengthen it and make it more efficient.

6. The Central Committee of the Party notes that a serious obstacle to the improvement of Soviet drama is the large number of instances where different individuals are permitted to correct and select plays for publication, and for presentation in the theatre. The reading of plays is put in the hands of workers of local administrations on artistic affairs, of republican committees on artistic affairs, of the Chief Committee of the Repertoire, of the Chief Theatrical Administration of the Committee on Artistic Affairs, of the Artistic Soviet of the Committee, of leaders of the theatres, of workers in editorial offices and publishing houses. This situation breeds harmful procrastination and irresponsibility and hampers the swift advancement of plays to the stages of the theatres.³⁰

The turn of Soviet composers came somewhat later. To discuss the new opera, *Great Friendship*, by V. Muradeli,

²⁸ Struve, *op. cit.*, pp. 334, 335.

²⁹ Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of August 26, 1946, *Bolshevik*, Moscow, No. 16, August 1946, pp. 45, 46.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 49.

. . . A conference took place in mid-January 1948, at the Central Committee of the Communist Party. . . The most prominent Soviet composers and specialists in music participated in this conference. . .

* * * * *

The composers D. D. Shostakovich, V. Ya. Shebalin, V. I. Muradeli, A. D. Khachaturyan, whose compositions were characterized by the conference as formalistic and alien to the people, also took the floor at the conference. However, their statements proved unsatisfactory because they did not contain an analysis of the errors committed. . .⁸¹

Soviet painters and their association were likewise taken to task:

. . . However much the formalists disguise and adapt themselves, however much they try to present themselves as genuine defenders of graphic art, they remain, as before, alien to progressive Soviet art, the art of Socialist realism. . . .

It must be admitted that many of our artist-painters are not yet accustomed to listen to severe and consistent criticism by their colleagues and try as far as possible to avoid it. This refers also to the Organizational Committee of the Artists' Union. . . .

. . . A decisive struggle should be conducted against pseudo-scientific, idealistic theories in the domain of esthetics. The achievements in this field by the Academy of Arts are still lagging behind the creative practice, behind the urgent tasks before our arts. . . .⁸²

Nor was the circus forgotten. In 1949 it was denounced by the official *Soviet Art* for its "bourgeois cosmopolitanism" and "formalism."

Zoshchenko and Akhmatova were expelled from the Association of Soviet Writers, some others were removed from their posts and a witch hunt was unleashed in the course of which Soviet workers in the arts covered themselves with humiliation and false indignation. For example, Valentin Kataev, a widely-read writer, told the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR:

. . . Iosif Vissarionovich [Stalin] has called the writers the engineers of the human soul. This wise and perceptive characterization by Stalin has indeed opened a new world for us. It at once became a fighting slogan, a program for our entire literary and social activity. . . .

. . . An unhealthy, hostile frame of mind is permeating our solid literary milieu. There have appeared decadent, apolitical works, full of nauseating, bourgeois, over-esthetic pessimism. And sometimes there are even hooligan thrusts against the Soviet people. This was bound to provoke sharp rebuff from wide circles of our public.⁸³

In the sciences, regimentation and compulsory streamlining extended to biology, physiology, botany, and other fields. Philosophy was also an area calling for official attacks and reprimands. By the end of the

⁸¹ *Pravda*, March 24, 1948, p. 2.

⁸² *Pravda*, January 7, 1951, p. 1.

⁸³ *Pravda*, June 27, 1947.

1940's, all kinds of ideological deviations had been summarily done away with.

The postwar phase of the realignment of the arts and sciences was coupled with a new nationalist slogan (and in this it differed from the prewar standards) which was directed against the West: The claim of general superiority over the West, including the right "to teach them morals." This time, too, it was Zhdanov who was the herald of the message:

. . . Some of our writers have come to look upon themselves not as masters but as pupils of the bourgeois-philistine writers, adopting the tone of servility and admiration toward philistine foreign literature. Does this servility become us, Soviet patriots, us, who have built up the Soviet order, which is a hundred times better than any bourgeois order? Does this servility before the narrow bourgeois-philistine literature of the West become our progressive Soviet literature which is the most revolutionary literature in the world? ³⁴

Behind the campaign against "servility" and "kow-towing" before the West stood Stalin and his government. Every leader was obliged to support it. On the 30th anniversary of the November revolution, Molotov said:

Not everybody has freed himself from servility and slavishness toward the West, toward capitalist culture. Not without reason were the ruling classes of old Russia frequently spiritually to a great degree dependent on the more capitalistically developed countries of Europe. This permitted the cultivating among some circles of the old intelligentsia of a slavish sense of lesser value and spiritual dependence on the capitalist nations of Europe. Without getting rid of these infamous survivals, one cannot be a real Soviet citizen. ³⁵

The drive against the "decadent West" was aimed mainly against American, British, and French literature.

. . . Jean-Paul Sartre and Henry Miller took the place of Joyce and Proust as the incarnation of all that was evil in modern European culture. But whereas in the thirties there were at least some more or less serious studies of Joyce and Proust in Soviet magazines, sheer abuse was now the only recognized method of polemic. Sartre and Henry Miller and their followers were described as "spiritual lechers," William Faulkner as "flesh of the flesh of a decaying society." John Steinbeck's works were "putrid, lurid, and antihuman." Eugene O'Neill was "a degenerate." And no language was strong enough when it came to former Communists or former Communist sympathizers. Arthur Koestler was described by Ivan Anisimov as "a literary agent provocateur" whose writings "stank." George Orwell was called "a charlatan," a "suspicious individual," a former police agent and yellow-press correspondent who passed in England for a writer because

³⁴ Andrei Zhdanov, Speech, August 1946, as quoted in Struve, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

³⁵ *Pravda*, November 7, 1947, p. 3.

there was "a great demand for refuse there." André Gide and André Malraux were also denounced as "renegades" and "American agents."⁵⁶

The claim of Russian superiority which, among other tendencies, inspired the new anti-Western trends in foreign policies also produced hasty research into the history of Russian science and the claim that a multitude of great inventions and discoveries made in the course of human civilization and heretofore attributed to Western brains, had actually been made by Russians and stolen by the West. The Russian inventions included the steam engine, the airplane, the electric bulb, and a long list of others. The Large Soviet Encyclopedia, in a special volume issued in 1948, said:

In the 18th century a self-taught man, Kulibin, constructed bridges with remarkable mechanical qualities; the mechanic Polzunov invented the steam-engine; in the 19th century a member of the [Russian] Academy, Yakobi, created galvanoplastics and built the first motor boats; engineer Yablochkov was the inventor of arc-lamps, and Lodygin of the incandescent electric lamp; Popov invented and was the first to use the radio receiver; N. E. Zhukovski was the greatest creator of the theory of air flights.⁵⁷

5. Economic Trends at the End of Stalin's Era

The first postwar era, 1945-53, was marked by substantial rehabilitation of the Soviet economy. The economic course was subordinated, however, to the goals of Soviet foreign policy; the program for maintenance of a large military force and improvement of arms determined the pace and direction of the economic rehabilitation. The pace was fast in the branches of so-called "heavy industry," slower in the production of consumer goods, and very slow in agriculture and animal husbandry.

The latter branches of the Soviet economy went through a period of catastrophic depression in 1946, when to all the consequences of a 4-year war there were added unfavorable climatic conditions. In addition, the government reverted to strict maintenance of the collective farm system. The situation in that year was one of near famine; it would have been worse had it not been for Western aid provided through UNRRA.

. . . The full magnitude of the 1946 catastrophe has been hidden from all outside the U.S.S.R., but a small group of the most careful Russian specialists have penetrated the percentage jungles of Soviet statistics and emerged with the figures the Kremlin has sought to keep secret. Suffice it to say that in 1946 the U.S.S.R. produced only half the grain and

⁵⁶ Struve, *op. cit.*, pp. 347, 348.

⁵⁷ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, Soyuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik* (Special ed.; Large Soviet Encyclopedia. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (Moscow: OGIZ (State United Publishing Houses), 1948), p. 1255.

vegetable oil seeds it secured in 1940 and only about one-third the sugar beets of that last pre-war year. But last year's population to be fed in the U.S.S.R. was at least equal to that of 1940 and may have been several million higher.

If large-scale famine and starvation have been averted in the U.S.S.R. this crop year, it has been only because of United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration food supplies and because the Soviet government had drained its remaining food stocks and forced the utmost economy of consumption. In such usually rich producing areas as the Ukraine, Kursk and Saratov, the Soviet press has revealed, mass starvation was averted only by large-scale government shipments of food and feed. Throughout the cities of the U.S.S.R. rations were slashed and hundreds of thousands were shifted from high to low food categories in the effort to save every morsel. Even livestock felt the impact of this catastrophe, the feed shortage forcing such large-scale slaughter that none of the government's planned livestock increases was achieved and the U.S.S.R.'s already low hog population was reduced 20 per cent.³⁸

Nevertheless, as had been the case in the famine of the early 1930's (see p. 167), the Soviet government found it necessary, in order to enhance its prestige in the now growing Soviet empire, to export abroad a certain amount of grain. It shipped grain—and propogandized the fact—not only to its new satellites but also to France, where the Communist party was part of the government and where Stalin expected an early seizure of total power by the Communists. On May 18, 1946,

The Soviet commentator Peter Orlov, speaking in English, declared that Russia had provided more than 1,000,000 tons of grain to Finland, Poland, Rumania and France.

* * * * *

"These nations," he said, "can see that after playing the leading role in the defeat of fascism the Soviet Union marches today in the vanguard of the struggle for the peaceful cooperation of nations."

Mr. Orlov contended that Poland's grain needs had not been met by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration but that Russia had lent Poland 200,000 tons of seed grain for this year's crops since Poland had been able to provide only 50,000 tons for sowing.

* * * * *

Russia, he said, averted a threat of famine in Rumania by lending her 20,000 carloads of wheat in addition to 300,000 tons of wheat and corn and by postponing Rumanian reparations grain deliveries to Russia.

The commentator noted that Soviet grain had begun to arrive in France under the April 6 agreement to provide 500,000 tons and that "this timely assistance" came when the French were menaced by a sharp cut in the bread ration.³⁹

³⁸ *New York Herald Tribune*, June 17, 1947, p. 18.

³⁹ *New York Times*, May 19, 1946, p. 35.

The extent of the general rehabilitation of the economy, education and social conditions was shown in precise statistics published by the Soviet government. According to objective and scholarly analyses made abroad, however, the Soviet figures depicting the economic and cultural growth were greatly exaggerated. Some of the deliberate falsifications perpetrated under Stalin were corrected later under Khrushchev, but not all.

According to the Soviet sources, the numbers of workers and employees in the national economy of the USSR amounted to:

1928.....	10, 800, 000
1932.....	22, 800, 000
1937.....	27, 000, 000
1940.....	31, 500, 000
1953.....	⁴⁰ 44, 800, 000

The index of workers and employees in the Soviet Union (using 1913 as 100) was:

1940.....	274
1954.....	⁴¹ 415

The above figures included workers, officials, employees, technicians, teachers and others. In order to conceal the huge size of the bureaucratic apparatus under Stalin, Soviet sources did not specify the numbers for the various components of the total labor force.

On the same basis (that is, 1913=100), there was an unprecedented growth in national income:

1913.....	100
1940.....	611
1953.....	1, 367

and in total industrial production:

1913.....	100
1940.....	852
1953.....	⁴² 2, 143

As for the standard of living of the people, the Soviet government claimed fabulous achievements:

⁴⁰ *Politicheskaya Ekonomiya, Uchebnik* (Political Economy, Textbook) (1st ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Political Literature), 1954), p. 430.

⁴¹ *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR, Statisticheskii Sbornik* (National Economy of the USSR, Statistical Abstract) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Statisticheskoe (State Statistical Publishing House), 1956), p. 28.

⁴² *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR v 1958 Godu, Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik* (National Economy of the USSR in 1958, Statistical Yearbook) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Statisticheskoe (State Statistical Publishing House), 1959), pp. 95, 52, 53.

The real per capita income of the working people of the USSR, if calculated on the basis of an unchanging level of prices, increased, from 1913 to 1940, over three times for workers (if liquidation of unemployment is taken into consideration); and for peasants about three and a half times; in 1952 the income of workers and employees rose, compared with 1940, by 68 per cent, and the income of the peasants, about 72 per cent. In 1953 the total income of workers, employees and peasants rose 13 per cent over 1952.⁴³

Greatly exaggerated claims of improved living conditions under Stalin are being maintained even at present. The official statistical abstract for 1958 claims that real wages have increased (in 1958 compared to 1913) 3.7 times, and real income of peasants ("working peasants") has risen in the same 45 years 4.5 times.⁴⁴ A Soviet textbook also claims that the living standard of the peasantry had improved spectacularly:

The income in money and in kind of the toiling peasants from their collectives and individual farming increased in 1956, after deduction of taxes and collections . . . four times compared with the income of toiling peasants in 1913, and 5.4 times if payments and services by the Soviet state are taken into consideration.⁴⁵

The progress in Soviet agriculture was described by official sources as follows:

Between 1926/27 and 1952/53 the amounts of marketed agricultural products increased: grain, from 10,300,000 to 40,400,000 tons; potatoes, from 3,000,000 to 12,500,000 tons; meat (live weight), from 2,400,000 to 5,000,000 tons; milk, from 4,300,000 to 13,200,000 tons.⁴⁶

Georgi Malenkov, reporting to the Nineteenth Congress of the Communist party (1952), indicated that the highly successful grain harvest of that year had yielded 8 billion poods. Six years later he was accused of having lied:

It must be openly stated that by 1953 the situation in our agriculture was very difficult. . . . This was the result of serious shortcomings in the management of the kolkhozes and sovkhoses, as well as some distortions in the Leninist policy of kolkhoz building. . . . In those years [1948 to 1953] the gross harvest and storage of grain did not increase. . . .

* * * * *

Malenkov's statement [in 1952 before the Nineteenth party congress] that the yield of grain had amounted to 8,000,000,000 poods was nothing else but eyewash, a deception of the party and the people, an attempt to hide the great failures in agriculture, the control of which was entrusted to Malenkov.⁴⁷

⁴³ *Politicheskaya Ekonomiya, Uchebnik* (1st ed., 1954), p. 408.

⁴⁴ *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR v 1958 Godu, Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik*, pp. 98, 99.

⁴⁵ *Politicheskaya Ekonomiya, Uchebnik* (Political Economy, Textbook) (3rd ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Political Literature), 1958), p. 575.

⁴⁶ *Politicheskaya Ekonomiya, Uchebnik* (1st ed., 1954), p. 479.

⁴⁷ *Pravda*, December 15, 1958.

Actually, Khrushchev further stated, the kolkhozes and sovkhoses collected in 1952 not 8 billion but 5.6 billion poods of grain, and stored only 2.1 billion poods. Animal husbandry was particularly hard hit; for a number of years the production of milk stayed at the same level; production of meat was even lower than in the prewar years.

Comparing the living conditions of the Soviet peasants in the 1950's with those of the "toiling peasants" of 1913 was a statistical trick. On any scholarly and objective basis it would not be possible to separate the "toiling" (probably the poorest) groups of 1913 from the entire body of the Russian peasants.

Actually, the Soviet peasants lost much of their savings after the end of the war as a result of the "monetary reform." Over a number of years the peasants had accumulated certain amounts of cash received for sales and deliveries made to governmental agencies. Under the "monetary reform" their money was exchangeable at the rate of 10 old rubles to one of the new currency. Those who had kept their money in savings banks (in large majority city officials and employees) received more favorable treatment.

At the end of 1947 the Soviet Union carried out what is known as a monetary reform. The terms of this reform were as follows: First, all currency was called in as of December 15, 1947. . . . Second, the bank accounts of Government enterprises were not affected, and withdrawals from them could be made in the new currency without any complications, at a 1 to 1 rate. Third, personal savings accounts up to 3,000 rubles in value were converted at the rate of 1 to 1; amounts between 3,000 and 10,000 were converted at the rate of 3 to 2. . . . Fourth, cash held by individuals was converted at the rate of 10 to 1. Fifth, a refunding of the outstanding national debt took place, in which old bonds were exchanged for new at the ratio of 5 to 1.⁴⁸

(When the Moscow correspondent of the *New York Times* wired his newspaper that the currency reforms had "wiped out considerable savings and hoarded profits,"⁴⁹ this statement was deleted by the censor.) The government continued to ask for "voluntary" loans from the working population which were actually compulsory.

Five postwar state loans for the restoration and development of the national economy (1946-50) helped to fulfill successfully the fourth (first postwar) Five Year Plan of the U.S.S.R. . . . Each of these 30,000,000,000-ruble loans was considerably oversubscribed within a few days. In the postwar years the amounts realized from loans added 164,000,000,000

⁴⁸ House Select Committee on Foreign Aid, *The Soviet Union in 1947*, Supplement to Preliminary Report Twenty, April 22, 1948 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), pp. 9, 10.

⁴⁹ C. L. Sulzberger, *The Big Thaw* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1956), p. 92.

rubles to the state budget of the U.S.S.R. The number of state loan subscribers exceeded 70,000,000 in 1952.⁵⁰

These loans were later actually repudiated.

Corrected figures on animal husbandry, announced after Stalin's death, proved that in one of the main areas—raising of cows—the pre-revolutionary level had not been reached:

	[In millions]	
	<i>Cows</i>	<i>Pigs</i>
1916 -----	28. 8	23. 0
1940 -----	22. 8	22. 5
1950 -----	24. 6	22. 2
1953 -----	24. 3	⁵¹ 28. 5

At the 19th party congress in October 1952, Malenkov in his report on the activities of the Central Committee, spoke with extreme optimism about the state of Soviet husbandry. . . . In the period July 1945 to July 1952 the total number of head of cattle increased many millions (Malenkov cited many figures). The new Five-Year Plan provides for "further increase of husbandry". . . .⁵²

Actually the number of head of cattle per thousand inhabitants amounted to:

	1916	1953
Livestock, total -----	414	270
Cows -----	204	116
Sheep and goats -----	684	523
Pigs -----	163	136
Horses -----	271	⁵³ 73

In certain other respects, however, the Soviet Union had really made substantial progress.

The number of working and teaching specialists was given as follows:

	<i>In scientific institution:</i>	<i>In universities</i>
1914 -----	4, 200	6, 000
1940 -----	26, 400	61, 400
1955 -----	96, 500	⁵⁴ 119, 100

⁵⁰ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Large Soviet Encyclopedia) (2d ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Nauchnoe Izdatelstvo "Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya" (State Scientific Publishing House "The Large Soviet Encyclopedia")), vol. XVI (1952), p. 333.

⁵¹ *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR v 1958 Godu, Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik*, pp. 445, 446.

⁵² *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik* (The Socialist Courier), New York, No. 10-11, October-November 1953, p. 183.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR v 1958 Godu, Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik*, p. 843.

Figures on specialists in all branches of economy ("with higher and middle education") were given as follows:

1913	190,000
1941	2,400,000
1955	⁶⁵ 5,133,000

The number of students in institutions of higher education (universities, technical schools, etc.) was:

1914	127,400
1940	811,700
1954	⁶⁶ 1,562,000

The number of beds provided in hospitals was reported as follows:

1913	207,600
1940	790,900
1950	1,010,700

and the number of physicians:

1913	23,000
1940	141,000
1950	⁶⁷ 247,000

The proportion of female manpower in the total Soviet economy was reported as follows:

	Percent
1929	27
1940	38
1950	⁶⁸ 47

This huge increase in women's work, an indication of hard living conditions, was officially interpreted as a boon:

. . . The woman occupied a more and more conspicuous place in the economic and cultural life. 280,000 women are working in enterprises as engineers, technicians and supervisors. Over 100,000 women manage kolkhoz brigades and animal farms. Among specialists with higher education, women represent 44 per cent.

No state has done as much for the woman as has the Soviet. In capitalist countries the woman is shackled by chains of slavery. She has no political rights and as to social conditions, she is oppressed even more than man, since she is paid less for the same work.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 673.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 831.

⁶⁷ *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR v 1958 Godu, Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik*, pp. 879, 888, 889.

⁶⁸ *Pravda*, January 31, 1950.

⁶⁹ *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR v 1958 Godu, Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik*, pp. 806, 807.

Figures on pupils and students in all educational institutions were given as follows:

1914.....	9, 943, 000
1940.....	38, 056, 000
1953.....	⁶⁰ 36, 394, 000

In general, Soviet statistics, in which there has been some improvement in recent years, are viewed as incomplete or unreliable:

The idea that errors in Soviet statistics are not deliberate implies that the Moscow central statistical office is staffed by infants. The people working there are better statisticians than most of those analysing Soviet statistics in the West. They know better than most Western analysts the weak spots in their statistics, the great extent of falsifications, the immense contradictions between them. Most Soviet statisticians would be only too happy to release honest statistics, but they operate on orders and have no choice.⁶¹

. . . most of the statistics relating to aggregate quantities, such as the indices for national income and industrial production, are incorrect. Although such data may not cover a large number of categories, they are precisely the figures to which a statesman, scholar or journalist would in the first place turn.

Falsification reaches astronomical dimensions in statistics of real wages and real incomes. The great achievements of the U.S.S.R. in industrialisation were obtained by imposing immense sacrifices on the population.⁶²

The aim of these distortions is to conceal the great poverty of the people under Soviet conditions:

. . . Soviet statistics are made to demonstrate immense increases in real wages and real incomes of the peasants. For example, the fantastic claim was officially made that in one year only (1948) real wages more than doubled, although such an increase is physically impossible; the actual growth is unlikely to have exceeded 15 percent.⁶³

Since the statistics were intended to prove the superiority of the Soviet system of economy over that of the West, the standard conclusion from the falsified data was:

. . . In the postwar period the socialist economy of the USSR systematically develops on the basis of an uninterrupted increase of production, but the capitalist countries, and first of all the United States, in these years experienced a crisis in 1948-49. Starting with the second half of 1953 a new slump and a rise in unemployment developed in the United States industry.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 843.

⁶¹ Naum Jasny, "Interpreting Soviet Statistics," *Soviet Survey, A Quarterly Review of Cultural Trends*, published by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, Paris, No. 26, October-December 1958, p. 11.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Politicheskaya Ekonomiya, Uchebnik* (1st ed., 1954), p. 425.

This statement was the thesis of widely-used Soviet textbooks and of propaganda in the press:

The income of the Soviet people is rising continuously. In 1949 the income of the average worker and employee rose 24 per cent over the prewar year 1940.

Quite different is the situation of the toilers in the capitalist countries. They have there now not less than 40,000,000 unemployed and partly employed. Under the conditions of the rising crisis the bourgeoisie is reducing the standard of living of the toilers. Real wages are falling steadily.⁶⁵

This comparison of the happy Soviet people with the poverty-stricken Westerners was a favorite line:

The reduction of retail prices of goods of mass consumption in the period 1947-1954 . . . meant a gain to the population of several hundred billions of rubles. In the same years, because of rising prices, the cost of living in the capitalist countries went up, according to official information: in the USA 21 per cent, and in England 40 per cent. Compared to the prewar years the cost of living in the USA increased 189 percent, i.e., nearly three times, and in England 125 per cent.⁶⁶

In a book devoted to a systematic analysis of official Soviet statistics,⁶⁷ Naum Jasny reveals such a large number of "omissions," "arbitrariness in selecting data," "ambiguities," and "false data" that the statistics appear altogether unreliable.

According to official figures, military expenditures constituted about 20 percent of the total Soviet budget. In each of the years listed they amounted to:

	<i>In billion rubles</i>
1946-----	73.6
1950-----	82.8
1951-----	93.9
1953-----	⁶⁸ 107.8

But other budget items, too, included large appropriations for military purposes. Preparedness for war remained a major factor in the Soviet economy. ". . . we make no secret," wrote *Red Star*,⁶⁹ of the fact that Soviet economy "can be in a short time transferred to a war basis."

Atomic weapons, first developed in Russia in 1949, were being perfected and manufactured; later, hydrogen weapons were added. Pos-

⁶⁵ *Prauda*, January 31, 1950.

⁶⁶ *Politicheskaya Ekonomiya, Uchebnik* (1st ed., 1954), p. 460.

⁶⁷ Jasny, *The Soviet 1956 Statistical Handbook: A Commentary* (East Lansing: The Michigan State University Press, 1957).

⁶⁸ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (2d ed.), vol. L (1957), p. 368; and *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR v 1958 Godu, Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik*, p. 900.

⁶⁹ As quoted in *New York Times*, January 18, 1953, p. 19.

session of atomic and hydrogen weapons by the Soviet Union was due, to a considerable degree, to the successes of secret Soviet intelligence operations abroad, especially in Britain, Canada, and the United States. Communist agents of the Soviet espionage service played a prominent role in this respect; without their help it would have taken Russia at least several years longer to produce the first atomic weapons.

. . . If Russia had had to grope through the initial atomic darkness and repeat for herself the experiments of other nations, she would have needed a decade or more to achieve the level the United States attained in 1947-48. In addition to the scientific output of her own laboratories, Russian research had the help of another kind of laboratory, that situated at 19 Znamenski Street in Moscow—the GRU [*Glavnoe Razvedyvatelnoe Upravlenie*—Main Intelligence Department of the General Staff of the Red Army]. An unprecedented enforced collaboration of science and espionage that continued throughout the war marked Soviet progress in the atomic field. The Soviet A-bomb has been the product of the combined efforts of Russian scientists and British, Canadian, German, Hungarian, Italian, and American Communists. To the detriment of their own countries, the communist parties of the West have in this way more than repaid the Soviet Union for the political and financial assistance they had received from her for over two decades.⁷⁰

6. Stalin's Last Year

In 1952 Stalin decided, after a lapse of 13 years, to convene a party congress; his goal was to replace the leading group of old Communists by persons more devoted to him and more obedient.

Before the congress opened Stalin wrote his "Economic Problems of Socialism," in which he confirmed his and his party's adherence to all the old, patently obsolete tenets of bolshevism: the "inevitable" coming war between the "imperialists"; the program of the total abolition of collective farms in favor of a state economy; the abolition of money and markets; etc.

Some comrades affirm that, in consequence of the development of international conditions after the second world war, wars among capitalist countries have ceased to be inevitable. . . .

* * * * *

The question is, what guarantee is there that Germany and Japan will not again rise to their feet, that they will not try to wrest themselves from American bondage and to live their own independent lives? I think there are no such guarantees.

But it follows from this that the inevitability of wars among the capitalist countries remains.

It is said that Lenin's thesis that imperialism inevitably gives birth to wars should be considered obsolete since powerful peoples' forces have

⁷⁰ Dallin, *Soviet Espionage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 473.

now grown up which are taking a stand in defense of peace, against a new world war. This is not correct. . . .

In order to eliminate the inevitability of wars, imperialism must be destroyed.⁷¹

On collective farms, he wrote:

It is essential . . . to raise collective farm property to the level of property of the public as a whole, through gradual changes carried out in a manner profitable to the collective farms and consequently to the whole of society, and to replace commodity turnover with a system of exchange of goods—likewise by gradual changes so that the central authority [the government] or some other social-economic central agency might control the entire output of socialist production in the interests of society.⁷²

Total communism will be achieved, Stalin said, when the last vestiges of the old monetary system are abolished. This thesis was taken as a sacred tenet:

Unlike the situation under socialism, where two forms of common, socialist property—the state and the cooperative kolkhoz—exist, where production and marketing of goods continue, under communism complete prevalence of Communist ownership of the means of production will be established. . . . under Communism . . . there will be no production or circulation of marketable merchandise, and consequently no money.⁷³

By the publication of this “master work” on the eve of the congress, Stalin reduced the latter to a mere clique:

This Stalin achieved by issuing a few days before the delegates met in Moscow a new “master work,” a kind of Stalin gloss on Karl Marx’s *Das Kapital*. It completely stole the thunder of the Congress, as it was obviously intended to do. After this all the Congress had to do was to make speeches praising Stalin’s genius and quoting extensively from his new Economic Theses. He succeeded in reducing the speeches of Malenkov and Khrushchev to the customary level of Party hackwork.

It was an unusual display of contempt, even for Stalin. . . .⁷⁴

The Nineteenth Communist Party Congress took place in October 1952. For the first time, Stalin was replaced as leading reporter by a secretary of the Central Committee, Georgi Malenkov.

Before the Congress, there had existed a twelve-member Politburo of Party leaders. It at least had the virtue of being a compact and recognized body of leaders. Now in place of this well-known group there was substituted an amorphous Presidium with twenty-five full members and eleven

⁷¹ Stalin, “Economic Problems of Socialism,” *Pravda*, October 4, 1952.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Politicheskaya Ekonomiya, Uchebnik* (1st ed., 1954), p. 556.

⁷⁴ Harrison E. Salisbury, *American in Russia* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1955), p. 145.

alternates, so big a body that it obviously could play no role in government. But an excellent screen behind which to confuse the leadership picture.

Stalin played the same trick with the Party Secretariat, which had always been a tight little group and which was, in fact, the device which he himself had utilized for his climb to power. In recent years, in so far as Stalin ever let any strings out of his fingers, the Secretariat had been run on a day-to-day basis by Malenkov.⁷⁵

Stalin appeared at the closing session of the congress, and in a short speech urged the Russian and foreign Communist parties to increase their revolutionary zeal:

. . . After our party assumed power in 1917 and after the party took effective measures to liquidate capitalist and landlord oppression, representatives of the fraternal parties, in their admiration for the courage and achievements of our party, gave it the title of "shock brigade" of the world revolutionary and workers' movement. They were thereby expressing the hope that the successes of the "shock brigade" would ease the situation of peoples languishing under the yoke of capitalism. . . .

Of course, it was very hard to fill this honored role while the "shock brigade" was the one and only one and as long as it had to fill this vanguard role almost single-handed. But that was in the past. Now things are quite different. Now, when new "shock brigades" have appeared in the person of countries of people's democracy from China and Korea to Czechoslovakia and Hungary—now it has become easier for our party to fight, yes, and the work goes more merrily.⁷⁶

Then Stalin proceeded to criticize "capitalism" and "capitalist democracy" in the old way, as if nothing had happened in the last hundred years and the West were today a Fascist domain:

. . . The so-called "freedoms of the individual" no longer exist [in the West]—the rights of the individual are now accorded only to those who possess capital, while all other citizens are considered human raw material, fit only for exploitation. . . . The banner of bourgeois democratic freedoms has been cast overboard. I think that it is up to you, the representatives of the communist and democratic parties, to lift this banner and to carry it forward if you wish to gather the majority of the people around you. There is nobody else to lift it. . . .⁷⁷

The 5 months between the Nineteenth Congress and Stalin's death witnessed the first phase of a new purge which would certainly have attained large proportions and destroyed thousands of suspected but innocent persons if Stalin had remained alive. In many respects the new purge was patterned on the memorable operation of the late 1930's; in particular, false "confessions" had already been introduced as a step toward condemnation and execution.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

⁷⁶ *Pravda*, October 15, 1952.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

It was . . . apparent that the motivating factor in this was a new and horrible dementia in Stalin's mind, a return of the plot psychosis which had caused him to ravage Russia during the years of the thirties.

What was brewing within the secret walls of the Kremlin, clearly, was a new massacre of the Streltzi—a blood purge of the men standing closest to Stalin, similar to that of Peter the Great or to the demoniac slaughter in which Ivan the Terrible struck off the heads of the boyars of Novgorod and of thousands of men who had been his firmest supporters.⁷⁸

The main novelty of the new purge was the fact that it was coupled with an anti-Semitic drive of tremendous scope.

Stalin's anti-Semitic orientation had been strengthened when postwar developments proved the sympathy of many Soviet Jews with the pro-Western culture and way of life; the scope of this sentiment had become manifest when the first envoy of the new State of Israel arrived in Moscow.

. . . Her [Golda Meir's] arrival in the Metropole Hotel had touched off unprecedented manifestations. Hundreds if not thousands of Jews, not only from Moscow but from other Russian cities, came to the Metropole to pay their respects. Many came, actually, to inquire about emigrating to Israel. Some days there were long queues of people outside the temporary Israeli offices, in a Metropole Hotel suite.⁷⁹

The desire of thousands of Soviet Jews to emigrate from "Socialist" Russia to a "capitalist" country contradicted the claim of freedom for nationalities in the Soviet Union and of the satisfaction of Soviet citizens with the prevailing system. As a measure of repression

. . . Jewish professors were quietly being dropped from their university posts. Many Jewish writers, including a number who long since had adopted Russian names, found that editors no longer desired their contributions, and critical articles appeared in the press, attacking persons who hid their true identity under pen names and giving lists of such Jewish writers.⁸⁰

We now know that a group of Yiddish writers, including Feffer and Markish, was tried *in camera* in the summer of 1952. . . . on trial with them [were]—Lena Stern, member of the Soviet Academy of Science and Stalin Prize recipient for her research in biochemistry, and Solomon A. Lozovsky, former Deputy Foreign Minister and former chief of the Soviet Information Bureau (known to foreign correspondents in Kuibyshev during the war as the Kremlin's voice).

* * * * *

. . . On August 12, 1952, all defendants but Lena Stern, were executed. . . .

⁷⁸ Salisbury, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Ilya Ehrenburg, it is rumored, was the finger man in the case.⁸¹

In mid-January 1953 the Soviet government announced the discovery of a plot of physicians against the leaders of the Communist party; almost all of the physicians involved were Jews.

The case of the "doctors' plot" was concocted on Stalin's orders in the winter of 1952-53 by the then Minister of State Security, S. D. Ignatiev, and his deputy, Ryumin. Several dozen of the leading doctors in Moscow were arrested [the number officially mentioned was 16], headed by the top specialists of the Kremlin hospital who treated Stalin and all the Soviet chieftains. They were officially charged with using improper medical techniques in order to murder their patients. Specifically, they were accused of having poisoned Andrei A. Zhdanov and Alexander S. Shcherbakov and of attempting to poison Marshals Konev, Vasilevsky, Govorov and others.

The first official announcement of the case appeared on January 13, 1953 in *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. Two of the arrested doctors, Professor M. B. Kogan and Professor Y. G. Etinger, died under torture. The stage was being set for a major trial, with the doctors and their accomplices accused of being agents of foreign intelligence (chiefly American). At the same time, the former leaders of the MGB were accused of insufficient vigilance. This was directed first and foremost at Beria himself.⁸²

Meantime one blow after another struck a multitude of Jews all over the country.

. . . Madame Molotov (a Jewess) had disappeared . . . banished to Siberia. . . . Arrests in Moscow University . . . Arrests in the Academy of Science . . . More Jews dismissed . . . Protectors of Jews arrested . . . Arrests in the Central Committee . . . The Jewish jazz band leader, Utiesov, arrested . . . Mekhlis, the Jewish security administrator who had been ill for several years, died. Kaganovich (a Jew) headed the funeral procession.⁸³

Jews, however, were merely "stage effects for a new and greater Georgian Othello":

. . . It was plain as could be that this wildfire would not halt with Beriia and the Jews. They were stage effects for a new and greater Georgian *Othello*. Every day the sickness was spreading. Each fresh batch of provincial newspapers that was brought into my office reported new scandals, new exposures, new arrests. At first the victims, almost invariably, were Jews, usually in trade organizations but also in professional posts. Doctors, lawyers, writers and actors were involved. Any Jew was a fair target.

The heaviest run of cases was in the Ukraine—that old seedbed of anti-Semitism. It was also Khrushchev's territory. First came the exposure

⁸¹ Judd L. Teller, *The Kremlin, the Jews, and the Middle East* (New York and London: Thomas Yoseloff, 1957), pp. 78-80.

⁸² *The New Leader*, vol. XXXIX, No. 29 (July 16, 1956), sec. II, p. S49, note.

⁸³ Salisbury, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

and arrests of the Jews. Then the drumfire was laid down against the Party organizations which had permitted the "corruption." The target quickly broadened out. Khrushchev was involved because his Party chiefs were being attacked. Beriya was involved because of the security angle. Mikoyan was involved deeper and deeper because of the alleged scandals in the trade organizations. And Malenkov was dragged in because in one city after another his Party lieutenants were implicated.

But implicated most deeply and most dangerously of all was that dry and pedantic little man who had survived so much before, Viacheslav Molotov.⁸⁴

At the height of the new purge Stalin fell ill. He died on March 5, 1953. His death was officially ascribed to a brain hemorrhage; the illness and death bulletins were signed by a number of doctors and ministers. Although there appeared to be nothing unnatural in the death of a 73-year-old man, the news spread rapidly that Stalin had been killed by his closest collaborators. Of the various versions, the most plausible is the following (because it comes from the Soviet Ambassador to Warsaw, Panteleimon Ponomarenko, himself a ranking member of the Central Committee):

. . . Stalin summoned the members of the Communist party's Presidium to the Kremlin late in February 1953, shortly after the revelation of the "doctors' plot" against top Soviet leaders.

At this conference . . . he announced his plan to send all Russian Jews to Birobidzhan, in the Jewish autonomous area nearly 3,800 miles east of Moscow. Stalin explained that he was taking the action because of the "Zionist and imperialist" plot against the Soviet Union and himself.

. . .

* * * * *

. . . a heavy silence fell until Lazar M. Kaganovich, the "only Jewish member," hesitantly asked if the measure included every single Jew in the country.

Stalin replied that a "certain selection" would be made, after which Mr. Kaganovich said no more. . . .

Vyacheslav M. Molotov . . . suggested in a "trembling" voice that the measure would have a "deplorable" effect on world opinion. . . .

. . . as Stalin was about to reprimand Mr. Molotov, Marshal Voroshilov rose, threw his Communist party card on the table and cried:

"If such a step is taken, I would be ashamed to remain a member of our party, which will be completely dishonored!"

An enraged Stalin . . . then . . . shouted into Marshal Voroshilov's face:

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

"Comrade Kliment! It is I who will decide when you no longer have the right to keep your membership card!"

Then, with the meeting in an uproar, Stalin fell to the floor.⁶⁵

He did not regain consciousness, and died a few days later.

Stalin's death marked the end of an era in the history of Russia as well as in international relations.

⁶⁵ *France-Soir*, June 7, 1957, as quoted in *New York Times*, June 8, 1957, p. 8.

Chapter XI. The Post-Stalin Era

1. The Malenkov Regime

With the death of Stalin came a modicum of political relaxation, especially for the ranking strata of the Communist party. The Damocles sword that had hung over their heads so long was no more. The autocratic rule had to give way to another type of government which was, however, still an orthodox Communist one. Power, which had belonged to one man, aided by a "sextet" or "septet," was now to be vested in the Central Committee of the Communist party, a body of 125 members and 110 alternates, a total of 235 men and women.

The Central Committee was once more important and its decisions effective. This was viewed as a return to Leninist traditions. Members of the Central Committee were now free to utter their opinions and to vote in accord with their orientation; discussion and disputes, though strictly limited to this group, became possible.

Alongside this blotting out of the name of Stalin there was conducted a new glorification of Lenin, who had been allowed by Stalin to sink to a rather secondary position in the iconostasy. And it was repeatedly insisted that "collective leadership" and *colleagialnost* or "colleaguality" was the guiding principle of the Communist Party.¹

. . . So by the middle of 1953 theoretical works and treatises had shifted over to Lenin rather than Stalin as their principal source of quotation. And *Pravda* even advanced the heterodoxical thought that it was possible to write articles without citing a quotation from the founding fathers in each paragraph.²

At first it appeared natural and logical, at least to the party's rank and file, that the Malenkov-Molotov-Beria trio, who for a long time had been viewed as the outstanding leaders after Stalin, would assume the most important posts. In fact, Malenkov, for a long time a secretary of the Central Committee and the best-informed man on current affairs, was made premier; Molotov replaced the despised Vyshinsky in the Foreign Office; and Beria again concentrated in his hands the police ministries. Molotov, however, proved to be not sufficiently dynamic and for several months the most important roles were played by Malenkov and Beria.

¹ Harrison E. Salisbury, *American in Russia* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1955), p. 233.

² *Ibid.*, p. 234.

Under the Malenkov-Beria regime (March-June, 1953) the relaxation extended to many fields of Soviet policy. Measured by Western standards this was modest, but by Soviet standards it appeared the inauguration of a new era. The arrested doctors were released and vindicated; a partial amnesty was proclaimed; the nationality policy took a more liberal course in regard to the minorities. . . . the term "collective leadership," indicating a change from the personal dictatorship of a severe and suspicious leader, sounded appealing.³

Only in the early days after his death was homage paid to the dead leader. Soon a new trend, unannounced, came to the fore. This was the beginning of the process of de-Stalinization which extended over a period of several years and marked a new chapter in the history of the world Communist movement.

This banishing of the name of Stalin occurred within two weeks of the coming to power of his successors. Beginning about March 23, 1953, Stalin's name, which I had often counted as many as 150 or 160 times on *Pravda's* front page began to disappear and by April 1 I was able to write a dispatch (which the censorship killed) saying that Stalin was no longer being quoted or mentioned in Soviet publications.

There were, of course, exceptions to that rule and it took a little time for word to get around. After all, the Soviet is a big place and the habit of speaking of the Stalin Era, the Stalin Constitution, or the Great Construction Projects of the Stalin Era is hard to break.

But within a reasonable period the Russian editors all got in line.

This was probably the first and most dramatic means by which the new group sought to disassociate themselves from the old regime.⁴

One of the great worries of the new regime was the economic situation; to improve it appeared imperative, if only to strengthen the position of the new group of men at the helm of the vast country.

. . . as the first and most impressive earnest of the Government's promise of plenty the old trading rows had been cleaned out, refurbished, stocked with the greatest agglomeration of consumer goods which had been seen in Moscow since the Revolution and reopened under the aegis of Minister of Trade Anastas Mikoyan as the State Department Store, or GUM, as it was familiarly known in Moscow from its Russian initials.⁵

The old formula of priority of "heavy industry" and "means of production" over consumer goods had to be discarded, at least for a time; purchase of food abroad, prohibited under Stalin, became necessary.

. . . Four billion rubles (\$1 billion) of food and consumers' goods were to be bought abroad, one-third of it from outside the "people's democracies." Industries controlled by the defense and aviation ministries were ordered to produce a quantity of metal bedsteads, refrigerators, and bicycles.

³ David J. Dallin, *The Changing World of Soviet Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), p. 324.

⁴ Salisbury, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

"The Soviet people are entitled," Malenkov stated in August, 1953, "to demand from us, and in the first place from the industries of mass consumption, goods of high quality."⁶

In general, an economic détente was considered the most important task.

The spirit of détente found expression in a new program, approved by the party's leading bodies in the summer of 1953, a few months after Stalin's death, and announced by Malenkov on August 8: all attention was to be focused on His Majesty the consumer. There was to be less heavy industry and less armament, more light industry and more food; taxes levied on the peasants were to be cut. "Two or three years," said Malenkov, "are required to fulfill the program of a considerably improved standard of living." "Two or three years" became a slogan that was repeated almost daily in the schools, in articles, and over the radio, a slogan to which Malenkov's career was closely tied.

For the kolkhoz peasants Malenkov promised concessions to their "bourgeois instincts."⁷

In the political arena, the amnesty for common criminals, announced in March, was actually extended to embrace numbers of Communist and non-Communist political prisoners. Among those released, amnestied and rehabilitated, army leaders constituted an important element.

Over the years of Stalin's mass murder and blunders, many pressures were built up for the rehabilitation of his victims. Of these, pressure from the Soviet army undoubtedly was, and remains, the greatest. Russian armed forces lost many millions of dead, wounded, and prisoners in the Second World War, and Hitler penetrated further into Russian territory than any invader in Russian history.⁸

Marshal Georgi Zhukov was one of the best-known Russian army leaders to return to Moscow after Stalin's death:

. . . Zhukov's popularity with the masses in Russia was genuine and considerable. There is no doubt that it was this popularity and Zhukov's great influence with the top leaders of the Army which caused Stalin to banish him to the hinterland.

The fact that he immediately emerged into the public spotlight within twenty-four hours of Stalin's death indicates not only the depth of his hold on the Army leadership and the stability which his association with the new Government would suggest to the public.⁹

The political climate softened. Far from democratic, the new trends were markedly less severe, less oppressive, and less terroristic.

Ilya Ehrenburg, the highly official, praised, and decorated Soviet writer, significantly called his new novel *The Thaw* [*Ottepel*, published in Moscow

⁶ Dailin, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 325, 326.

⁸ Louis Fischer, *Russia Revisited* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1957), p. 83.

⁹ Salisbury, *op. cit.*, p. 134. The last sentence, although incomplete, is exactly as it appears in the original text.

in 1954]—spring has not arrived but is approaching. One of Ehrenburg's characters was general manager Ivan Zhuravlev, an efficient man of the Stalin era bent on 100 percent fulfillment of industrial plans but unconcerned about the poor living conditions of his workers. At the end of the story Zhuravlev is removed from his post. Another character in the novel is Vera Sherer, a physician who had been persecuted during the anti-doctor campaign but was now happily vindicated. (At the height of that campaign a group of workers, Ehrenburg relates, sent her a pot of flowers.) "In my youth," recalls another character, "I read an article by Gorki in which he said we must have our own, Soviet, humanism. The term has somehow disappeared, but the task remains. . . . It is time to fulfill the task. . . ."

"These are the last of the winter days. On one side of the street there is still frost, and on the other heavy drops are falling from the icicles."¹⁰

As a component part of the "thaw," the powers of the police were substantially curtailed. Scores of its leaders were removed and imprisoned; some were tried and executed. The first incident in this line of development was the arrest of Beria and a group of other police leaders in the summer of 1953. According to an official Soviet version, Beria had been exposed as an agent of the "imperialists." In December 1953 it was announced that Lavrenti Beria, Vsevolod Merkulov, Vladimir Dekanozov, and three other ranking police leaders had been sentenced by a military court to death and immediately executed.¹¹

. . . Police Chief Beria's rapid aggrandizement of power immediately after the passing of Stalin convinced all his comrades how urgent this wing-clipping process was. The Soviet army, which hated the secret police for honeycombing it with spies and outranking it in political influence, gladly lent a hand in the arrest of Beria on June 26, 1953, and in the downgrading of his police system that brought relief at all levels.¹²

Another version of Beria's death was given in May 1956 by Khrushchev to a visiting French senator: Beria had refused, Khrushchev said, to follow the instructions of the Presidium and was striving to build up his own power. After a 4-hour session of the Presidium in the Kremlin, Beria admitted his plot. He left the room together with the others, and in an adjoining circular hall, Anastas Mikoyan fired a bullet from behind and killed him.¹³

The purge of the Soviet police continued over the next 2 years. In July 1954, the GB (State Security) officer M. D. Ryumin, after a trial

¹⁰ Dallin, *op. cit.*, pp. 326, 327.

¹¹ *Pravda*, December 24, 1953.

¹² Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

¹³ *Sotsialisticheskii Vesnik* (The Socialist Courier), New York, No. 7-8, July-August 1956, p. 146.

before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court, was sentenced to death and executed.¹⁴ In December of the same year, six GB leaders, among them Viktor Abakumov and A. G. Leonov, were tried in Leningrad by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court; four, including Abakumov and Leonov, were sentenced to death and executed; two received long corrective camp terms.¹⁵ In November 1955, six GB leaders and two prosecutors of the Georgian Soviet Republic were tried by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court in Tiflis. Six were sentenced to death and executed; two received prison terms.¹⁶

Before Beria's fall a new grouping of leaders in the framework of the Central Committee had been taking place; the fight in the committee was to engender bitterness, hatred, and passion, and lead to the elimination of the best-known old leaders from the ruling bodies of the party and the government.

One group, at first the stronger, headed by Malenkov, counted among its members Molotov and Kaganovich; in a way they were the "conservatives," the cautious and hesitating elements, not prepared to deviate too far from tradition in internal and foreign affairs. To the other group, which was headed by the rising Khrushchev, belonged Mikoyan and Bulganin; more aggressive, they were inclined to make substantial changes in politics and economics and carry out the "de-Stalinization" in a more vigorous way.

Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev was born April 17, 1894, in Kalinovka, a little village in Kursk Province on the borders of the Ukraine. The son of a miner, he received little or no elementary education, and was sent to work as an apprentice pipe-fitter in the coal mines of the Donbass.

. . . He entered the Bolshevik Party in 1918 at the age of 24 and participated, without distinction, in the Ukraine.¹⁷

Of the line of supreme leaders of the Soviet Union, Khrushchev was the first worker to become head of the party and the government. His predecessors—Lenin and Stalin—as well as the outstanding leaders (and his adversaries) in the post-Stalin Presidium—Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich—were intellectuals of middle-class or "bourgeois" origin.

. . . Around 1922 he was admitted to one of the newly formed *Rabfaks* (schools established to prepare uneducated adult workers for subsequent higher training). . . .

¹⁴ *Pravda*, July 23, 1954.

¹⁵ *Pravda*, December 24, 1954.

¹⁶ Official radio broadcast, Tiflis, November 22, 1955, *New York Times*, November 23, 1955, pp. 1, 4; November 25, 1955, p. 5.

¹⁷ *Soviet Affairs, Notes*, published by the State Department, Washington, D.C., No. 167, February 18, 1955, p. 1.

From the Ukrainian Party organization Khrushchev was transferred in 1929 to study in Moscow. Here he attended the Industrial Academy of Heavy Industry, one of the newly established institutes for training industrial technicians.¹⁸

Khrushchev's party assignments alternated between Moscow and the Ukraine.

. . . In 1931 Khrushchev began his assignments in the capital with two minor secretarial posts. His success was immediate. The following year he advanced to the position of second man in the city Party organization, then headed by Lazar Kaganovich. A scant two years later, in 1934, Khrushchev occupied the posts of First Secretary of the City and Second Secretary of the *Oblast* [Moscow province] Party Committees.

. . . Concurrent with Party assignments, he was designated in 1935 to serve on the Presidium of the USSR Central Executive Committee, a forerunner of the present Supreme Soviet.¹⁹

As far as is known, Khrushchev never belonged to, nor even sympathized with, any of the dissident groups—Trotskyites, rightists, or others; he was 100 percent loyal to Stalin and it goes without saying that he believed in suppression of all Communist opposition.

As a result of the extensive purges in the mid-1930's, Khrushchev reached the topmost Party ranks. He was accepted by Stalin in January 1938 as candidate member of the Politburo in place of the purged veteran Party boss Stanislav Kossior. Simultaneously he was sent to Kiev to assume the latter's duties as First Secretary of the Ukrainian Party organization. A year later Khrushchev gained full membership in the Politburo and was ranked among the first 10 Soviet leaders. In the Ukraine he not only assumed entire direction of the Communist Party on the republic level, but also took personal control of the Kiev Party organizations.

. . . During the war Khrushchev remained in the Ukraine and contiguous areas helping to organize and direct the military and partisan efforts against the Germans. In 1942-43 he was at the front in Stalingrad and later at Voronezh. He returned to the capital city of Kiev with advancing Russian troops in late 1943 and resumed his political duties. In February 1944 he assumed the chairmanship of the [Ukrainian] Council of People's Commissars, thereby bringing under his direct control the entire state as well as Party apparatus. For the next three years Khrushchev exercised a virtual one-man dictatorship in the Ukraine, subject only to the control of Stalin in Moscow.

. . . By March 1947 Khrushchev's fortunes began to change, ostensibly as a result of Ukrainian agricultural difficulties. In that month, Stalin sent Kaganovich down from Moscow to take over Khrushchev's job as Party First Secretary of the Ukraine. Khrushchev continued to hold the

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 2.

post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers, but was seen in public less frequently than had been his custom. . . .

Khrushchev remained in the Ukraine until December 1949. . . .²⁰

. . . on December 18, 1949, Khrushchev himself went to Moscow, where at the age of 55 he was appointed one of the secretaries of the All-Union Central Committee to replace Georgi Popov. He also resumed his old duties as first party secretary of the Moscow region, while L. G. Melnikov took over his position in the Ukraine. The other members of the secretariat at this time were Stalin, Malenkov, Andreyev, Alexei Kuznetsov and Suslov. Of these only Suslov remains on the secretariat today.²¹

Khrushchev concentrated on issues of collective farming, husbandry, sovkhozes, etc. Some of his ideas were approved, others rejected, by Stalin. It was Khrushchev who set off the opening gun in the drive for collective farm mergers.

. . . in an election speech on March 7 [1950] Khrushchev advocated both the merging of collective farms into larger units, a policy which was not entirely new, but which was now to be carried on in a widespread campaign, and in connection with this the transfer of the peasants into agricultural cities, *agroroda*, at a pace so rapid that old dwellings would be moved to central locations rather than waiting for new dwellings to be erected. It was the latter policy which got Khrushchev into trouble.²²

The "agro-cities" were ultimately rejected; they were criticized by Malenkov (in Stalin's time), who had jurisdiction over rural affairs. Khrushchev had publicly to bow and "admit" his error. The Malenkov-Khrushchev feud, it appears, dates from those years.

On the other hand,

One of the paramount objectives of the merger campaign—left unstated by Khrushchev—was the regime's desire to tighten its control over the collective-farm structure. The merger of small collective farms resulted in a substantial increase in the number of kolkhozes with primary Party organizations and an intensification of Party influence. The reduction in the number of collective farm chairmen meant that those who were retained were likely to be the most politically reliable, as well as technically proficient. . . .

. . . By the end of the year [1950], Minister of Agriculture I. A. Benediktov reported that the number of kolkhozes had been reduced from 252,000 to 123,000. In October 1952 Malenkov indicated that only 97,000 were left.²³

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²¹ *Nikita S. Khrushchev* (Biographical Sketch), Report No. 1695, United States Information Agency, New York, September 18, 1953, pp. 4, 5.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 457.

2. The Advance of Nikita Khrushchev

In the early 1950's, Khrushchev, although a member of the Politburo, did not occupy a place comparable to that of Stalin's lieutenants. His rise to power did not occur immediately after the death of the dictator. From March (the month of Stalin's death) to September 1953 he served as one of the "secretaries" of the Central Committee, although his influence, already considerable, was probably a paramount factor in the ouster of Beria. With his elevation to the rank of "First Secretary" in September 1953, Khrushchev assumed leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

In Lenin's time and in Stalin's, leadership of the Communist party was tantamount to rule over the government and the country. But Khrushchev at the time he became First Secretary was not yet strong enough to overshadow his rivals, among whom the strongest was Georgi Malenkov. Consequently the era was one of "collective leadership," that is, rule by a group of Stalin's heirs. (More than a year was to pass before Khrushchev assumed undisputed power over the government and the country.)

In the role of First Secretary, Khrushchev made himself felt by frequent speeches, which were reported in full in the press, and by engaging in discussion of all subjects bearing on both internal and foreign affairs. Little known before, his role in war, and especially in the battle of Stalingrad, was now abundantly stressed and became a standard part of his biography; it was also made another stepping-stone to supreme power. At first he concentrated on economic affairs, but about a year after his elevation he turned to international politics. By that time (mid-1954) he had begun to attract attention abroad. The world looked at

. . . the thickset, round-headed, unconventional, bear-like and energetic first secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union with his hardly mastered fierceness. . . .²⁴

and felt that the personal traits and attitudes of the First Secretary would soon be exerting great influence on world affairs.

. . . Direct and down-to-earth, cheerfully direct or brutally direct, according to the exigencies of the occasion as appraised by him, this one-time shepherd-boy and coal-miner got his education in a night-school. . . . Immensely confident—perhaps over-confident—brash and contemptuous in his approach to delicate problems, ebulliently vital, he is the man who rushes in when the more circumspect think twice. . . . It is all a bewildering mixture of clown and bully, blunt self-made tycoon and ingratiating flatterer, cold calculation and irrepressible vitality. You can make what you

²⁴ Klaus Mehnert, *Asien, Moskau und Wir* (3d ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1957), p. 174.

like of it when the man is in motion. But when he is completely relaxed you are aware of enormous natural authority and power. He sits, and his chair is the seat of power. He withdraws himself naturally and absolutely, creating by some magic a physical gulf between himself and those around him.²⁵

Among his coleaders, Khrushchev did not enjoy the position of an undisputed leader, a person superior in political strategy and shrewdness; they looked at him with condescension—a fact that eventually was to be a factor in his fights with his internal opponents.

His [Khrushchev's] is an aggressive, forceful and extrovert personality. He spoke a great deal and preached at us more forthrightly than the others. . . .

. . . Although he is the most forceful, he did not impress us as the ablest leader. He lacks subtlety, and on one or two occasions seemed unable to follow the argument.

His colleagues listened to his speeches with an amused tolerance, far removed from the deference due to the inheritor of Stalin's mantle.²⁶

Khrushchev's views on world affairs, while orthodox-Leninist, are somewhat oversimplified and primitive. Capitalists, the evil, are being fought by Communists, the good; Communists will inevitably win out. The "imperialists" dislike the Soviet Union because she is a "Socialist country," but are afraid of her power, etc.

. . . You are against communism and socialism, and we are against capitalism. We are building and developing our economy on socialist principles. You want your economy built on capitalist principles. . . . You believe that capitalism is immutable, that the future lies with the capitalist system. We, on our part, believe that communism is invincible and that the future lies with the communist system. These are two antithetical points of view. . . .

. . . Who could say what course developments would take in other countries, in the United States, for example? There is a powerful working class in America, and sooner or later it would raise its voice.²⁷

Likewise primitive is Khrushchev's notion of the political system in democratic countries.

. . . "they say that they have a free press . . . That is, the capitalists have freedom of the press. They say that the workers are allowed to have a free press according to their constitutions. They can have a few newspapers, magazines, radio stations, later television stations—only they have not got the money for it."

Radio, telegraph and similar agencies "are in the hands of the monopolies." . . . press and radio were used to "exploit the people."

²⁵ Edward Crankshaw, *Russia Without Stalin* (New York: The Viking Press, 1956), pp. 177, 178.

²⁶ Aneurin Bevan, "Kremlin Personalities," *London Tribune*, October 1, 1954, p. 2.

²⁷ Khrushchev, Interview with William Randolph Hearst, Jr., J. Kingsbury Smith and Frank Conniff, *Pravda*, February 11, 1955.

"They shear them like sheep."²⁸

Khrushchev's antagonism toward "capitalism" and capitalist leaders implies also antagonism toward the Social-Democrats and the British Labor Party. Khrushchev bluntly demonstrated his attitude at a dinner meeting with leaders of the British Labor Party in London in April 1956. Labor Party leader Hugh Gaitskell suggested to Khrushchev the freeing of socialists from Soviet prisons.

. . . Khrushchev told Gaitskell in the most offensive terms that he would have to look elsewhere to find agents who would protect "the enemies of the working class."

Khrushchev did not attempt to hide his contempt both for Britain and for the Labor party.²⁹

Khrushchev has more than once expressed his contempt for democratic institutions such as parliaments, free elections, and a free press.

. . . Khrushchev has little respect for Congress, and I gathered from the sneer in his voice that he also has very little respect for representative legislative organs in general.³⁰

At a reception at the British Embassy in Moscow, Khrushchev illustrated his attitude toward parliaments by an anecdote. A Russian, while riding in a taxicab, had an accident

. . . which sent him sprawling in the street. His head cracked against the curb, and his brains fell out on the road. He thought nothing of it, left his brains on the gutter, and marched off. An old lady ran after him and said: "Sir, you lost your brains." "That's all right," he answered, "I am a member of the Duma" [the pre-revolutionary Russian Parliament].³¹

Aggressive and often outspoken, Khrushchev, despite his ostensible adherence to the principle of "peaceful coexistence," sometimes surprises the West and its governmental leaders and diplomats by his bellicose attitude. "We will bury you," he told a group of foreign diplomats.³²

On June 15, 1954, Khrushchev, in one of his first ventures into the international field, delivered an extremely aggressive speech at the Prague Party Congress:

We always knew that to live with the enemy one must be strong. We have done everything possible. We created atomic energy in our country; we created the atom bomb; we outstripped the capitalist class and created the hydrogen bomb before them. . . . We know the bourgeois politicians

²⁸ *New York Times*, July 18, 1956, p. 5.

²⁹ Denis Healey, M.P., "Labor Unmasks Khrushchev," *The New Leader*, vol. XXXIX, No. 19 (May 7, 1956), p. 3. The sentences quoted have been inverted from the order in which they appear in the original.

³⁰ Marvin L. Kalb, *Eastern Exposure* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1958), p. 76.

³¹ As quoted in *ibid.*, p. 76.

³² *New York Times*, November 20, 1956, p. 15.

are chattering idly. . . . They think they can intimidate us. But nothing can frighten us because if they know what a bomb means, so do we.³³

Khrushchev could not be classed as either a "rightist" or a "leftist" Communist; ³⁴ he combined political traits of both. The curb on the powers of the police, the relaxation of terrorism and the rehabilitation of a large number (though not all) of Stalin's victims were combined with strict adherence to the collective farms system and even a program for abolishing the remnants of individual farming (private plots, the privately-owned cow, etc.).

In foreign affairs, "coexistence," in Khrushchev's conception, was combined with vigorous efforts to strengthen the "Socialist camp." In economic affairs he opposed Malenkov's trend toward a rapid rise in the standard of living, which was the reverse side of a peaceful foreign policy. Khrushchev insisted rather on accelerating the development of "heavy industry" which, as we have seen, ³⁵ was tantamount to increased development of war industries at the expense of living standards.

Improvement of living standards "in two or three years" was a formula often heard in 1953-54; it was a promise on the part of the government. The promise might have been fulfilled if a bold course of concessions to the peasantry had been coupled with an expansion of nonmilitary industries and large imports of consumer goods from abroad. However,

Malenkov's pledge to show results in "two or three years" could not be fulfilled, least of all in the field of food and agriculture. His concessions to the peasantry were timid ones (timidity has always been the curse of "rightist" Communism). . . .

Yet "rightist" Malenkov and his group were not prepared for great leaps forward. Afraid of criticism, charges of "rightism" and breaking with Communist tradition, they made only minimum concessions, which proved to be ineffectual. The reputation of the leadership suffered; the national economy did not improve. By the end of the first of Malenkov's "two or three" years his star had begun to dim. At the same time the more orthodox Nikita Khrushchev was embarking on a grand-scale counter-offensive.³⁶

The obvious inability of the government to fulfill the promise of improvement in "two or three years" helped Khrushchev, with his aggressively anti-Western attitudes, to defeat Malenkov and replace the latter's "consumer goods" program with the old program of "first place to heavy industry." The decisive fight behind the scenes continued into the second half of 1954.

. . . on September 25, 1954, Khrushchev, in a conversation with *Professor Bernal*, particularly emphasized the importance of heavy industry.

³³ *New York Times*, June 25, 1954, p. 5.

³⁴ About "rightist" and "leftist" communism, see ch. V, sec. 7, and ch. VI, secs. 1-3.

³⁵ See pp. 171, 172.

³⁶ Dallin, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

He stated that in the development of the Soviet economy "heavy industry will in future also be granted priority."³⁷

On December 28, 1954, obviously after the issue had been discussed in the Presidium, *Pravda* stated that "the consistent growth of heavy industry remains our main goal."

Khrushchev, attacking Malenkov's program at the January 25, 1955, session of the Central Committee, said that to him the program was a "regurgitation of the right deviation, regurgitation of views hostile to Leninism, views which Rykov, Bukharin, and their like once preached."³⁸ He then proceeded to develop his industrial-militaristic conceptions:

The chief task to the solution of which the party is lending all its efforts has been and remains strengthening the might of the Soviet state, and consequently rapidly developing heavy industry, which constitutes the firm foundation of the entire national economy and of the indestructible defense capacity of the country, the source of constant growth in the people's wealth. . . .

. . . A struggle must be waged against those who consider that we can be satisfied with the level of development of heavy industry so far achieved and can concentrate our main energies on the task of developing the light and food industries. It must be understood that propagation of such anti-Leninist views is particularly nonpermissible in present circumstances, when our party is directing all efforts of the Soviet people to the solution of the great tasks of communist construction, when the imperialist states are carrying on feverish preparations for war.³⁹

These, Khrushchev's theses, were adopted by the Central Committee; Premier Georgi Malenkov, actually in a subordinate position since the spring of 1954, resigned officially on February 8, 1955. In an extraordinarily self-humiliating statement in the form of a letter addressed to the President of the Supreme Soviet, Malenkov said:

Please inform the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of my request to be released from the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R.

My request is due to the necessity to strengthen the leadership of the Council of Ministers and the expediency of having a comrade who possesses better experience in state work in the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. I clearly see that my inadequate experience in local work and in the direct supervision of particular branches of the national economy has had a detrimental effect upon the fulfillment of the complicated and important duties of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers. . . .

³⁷ Boris Meissner, *Sowjetrusland zwischen Revolution und Restauration* (Köln: Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft, 1956), p. 103.

³⁸ Khrushchev, Report Delivered January 25, 1955 at the Plenary Session of the Party Central Committee, *Izvestia*, February 3, 1955, p. 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

. . . I see particularly clearly my fault and responsibility for the unsatisfactory state of affairs in agriculture because for a number of years I had been entrusted with the duty of controlling and guiding the work of the central agricultural bodies and of the local party and government organizations in the sphere of agriculture. On the initiation and under the leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party [meaning Khrushchev], a general program has been worked out to overcome the lag in agriculture and to achieve its rapid development.⁴⁰

To salvage what could be salvaged of his high rank, Malenkov reversed his stand and pledged loyalty to the government:

In requesting to be released from the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers, I want to assure the Supreme Soviet that in the new field placed in my charge I shall, under the . . . leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Soviet government, fulfill most conscientiously those responsibilities with which I shall be entrusted.⁴¹

Malenkov was replaced by Nikolai Bulganin, who pledged himself to comply with the directives of the Communist party, which meant, already at that early moment, of Nikita Khrushchev.

3. The New Agrarian Policy

Long before Khrushchev achieved total power, his influence was becoming decisive in agriculture, a field of national economy with which he was more familiar than with any other branch. His general course in agriculture was toward greater "socialization," meaning abolition of the remnants of private economy; though carried out gradually and not without some zig-zagging, the new course implied even abolition of kolkhozes (cooperatives) in favor of sovkhozes (state farms).

To make sure of success, pressure was put on the village population to discourage them from spending an undue amount of their time and effort on their private plots. These had always been a bone of contention for Party doctrinaires, who considered them expendable rudiments of capitalism.⁴²

A statement published on behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist party and the government read as follows:

. . . It is essential that collective farmers' personal garden plots be of subsidiary importance until the communal sector has been sufficiently developed to satisfy fully both the collective farms' public needs and the collective farmers' personal requirements. . . . It is therefore essential that

⁴⁰ *Pravda*, February 9, 1955.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Soviet Survey, A Quarterly Review of Cultural Trends*, published by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, Paris, No. 26, October-December 1958, p. 24.

. . . his garden plot and the income received from it should be of truly subsidiary nature, chiefly satisfying his needs for fresh vegetables, fruits and berries. . . .⁴³

Khrushchev presented his program of abolishing the peasants' private plots as a measure dictated not by Communist ideology but rather by the interests of the peasants themselves.

. . . Collective farmers who own large private plots are forced to invest a great deal of time and labor in the cultivation of their land. If the collective farm sets up a good communal vegetable garden and mechanizes vegetable gardening, much less labor will be needed for growing vegetables and potatoes than is required on the private plots. Potatoes and vegetables will be cheaper, and it will be to the farmers' advantage to obtain them from the collective farm rather than expend their own labor in raising the produce on their personal plots. Once they are convinced of the advantages of obtaining vegetables and potatoes from the collective farm gardens, the collective farmers will relinquish their private gardens of their own free will.⁴⁴

As the conviction grew in Khrushchev's circles that the Soviet socialist economy could and must rise from its poor level to the stage of Communist perfection within 7 to 10 years, the war on the private peasants' plots developed at a faster tempo.

. . . The size of the plot has been reduced from 1¼ acres before the war to less than ¾ acre per family now. Simultaneously the private rearing of livestock has been handicapped by the increase in the minimum number of labour-days that have to be worked—by men, women, and children—in the collectives. The 1956 decree on the Agricultural Artel [association for common work] left no doubt that in important respects the regulations of the Model Collective Farm Statute of 1935 "ran counter to the tasks of the organisational-economic strengthening of the collective farms" and that in future "private plot husbandry must be of a subsidiary nature." (*Pravda*, March 10, 1956).⁴⁵

Abolition of private husbandry in favor of collectives was becoming a new slogan. The peasants were advised—and sometimes compelled—to sell their cows to the kolkhoz. Khrushchev maintained that the program would be voluntary and would serve the interests of the peasants themselves. An extremist Communist measure, and a proof of the predominance of orthodox ideology over the real interests of the population, the abolition of the "private cow" was hypocritically explained as a service to the women kolkhoznik:

Women work during the day in the fields, come home tired, have to feed their children, and rush to milk the cow; they have to get up early in the

⁴³ *Pravda*, March 10, 1956.

⁴⁴ *Pravda*, December 16, 1958, p. 5.

⁴⁵ *Soviet Survey, A Quarterly Review of Cultural Trends*, published by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, Paris, No. 26, October–December 1958, p. 24.

morning, feed the cow, wash, etc. This means much trouble for the women. Maybe the woman likes the cow so much that she is willing to go to all this trouble? But she doesn't need the cow, she needs the milk. If she gets milk from the kolkhoz and saves herself labor, why does she need the cow? So I told my fellow countrymen in Kalinovka: hasn't the time arrived to sell the cow to the kolkhoz, but on the condition that the kolkhoz provide milk for all its members.⁴⁶

The enlargement of kolkhozes, another point in Khrushchev's program, was tantamount to the restriction of the role of the individual peasant in the community in favor of a large, sometimes huge, unit. The enlargement of kolkhozes carried out after the war is illustrated by the following figures:

	1940	1950	1953	1955
Number of kolkhozes (in thousands).....	236.9	123.7	93.3	87.5
Peasant families in one kolkhoz (average).....	81	165	220	229
Average size of a kolkhoz (in hectares).....	492	967	1,407	⁴⁷ 1,699

By March 1958 the number of kolkhozes was reduced to 78,000.⁴⁸

The most spectacular of Khrushchev's reforms was the opening up and cultivation of huge areas of "virgin" and idle land, mainly in Kazakhstan, Central Asia. Because of climatic conditions and recurrent droughts, private peasant economy was not possible in those areas; now the risks were assumed by the state and the new lands cultivated in the framework of sovkhoses.

. . . Suddenly, and quite unexpectedly (since Malenkov had announced that the grain situation was well in hand), the government came out with a decree calling for the immediate ploughing up and sowing down to grain of 32 million acres of waste and virgin land in Kazakhstan and southern Siberia—an area rather more than the total acreage under crops in England, Wales, and Scotland. Before the scheme had got fully into its stride the acreage was increased to a total which was more than half the cultivated area of Germany, France, Italy, and Spain combined. And it was done. By the autumn of 1955 that vast acreage had been ploughed up, to be harvested by the autumn of 1956. The first harvest, on a limited acreage

⁴⁶ *Pravda*, January 25, 1958, p. 3.

⁴⁷ *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR, Statisticheskii Sbornik* (National Economy of the USSR, Statistical Abstract) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Statisticheskoe (State Statistical Publishing House), 1956), pp. 128, 129.

⁴⁸ *Pravda*, March 1, 1958, p. 2.

in 1954, was successful—and compensated for crop failures in the Ukraine.⁴⁹

"*Tselina*" (accent on the a, from *tseli*—whole, unhurt)—is the Russian word for the new land. For the people now working on this *Tselina* the Russians invented the word *Tselinnik*.⁵⁰

The huge operation was carried out in the shortest possible time and many mistakes were made, which Khrushchev admitted. Otherwise, and officially, the campaign was proclaimed a success.

By decision of the February-March Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU (1954). . . the goal was set: to add not less than thirteen million hectares of virgin and idle land to the grain-sowing areas in 1954–55. To carry out the program, a series of measures were projected: organization of new MTS's [Machine Tractor Stations] and sovkhoses, supplying them with modern machines, dispatching skilled technicians, creation of normal living and cultural conditions, organizing planned migration. . . . A total of about 19 million hectares of virgin and idle lands were cultivated in 1954. . . . In two years (1954–1955) 33,005 thousand hectares of virgin and idle lands were ploughed. . . .

* * * * *

By November 7, 1956, 35.5 million hectares of virgin and idle land were virtually ploughed.⁵¹

To organize the manpower necessary for work on the new virgin lands, Khrushchev turned to the Young Communist League with its millions of members. The league was instructed to recruit the necessary hundreds of thousands of workers. Quotas were set for local Komsomols of required workers and "cadres" (organizers and technicians); the operation was similar to recruitment into the army. Contrary to Soviet claims, the operation was in no way a voluntary, patriotic one. It was hard on the young men and women selected to migrate to a barren land with almost no housing accommodations, not to speak of other comforts.

. . . At the call of the Communist party over 350,000 persons migrated to work on the virgin and idle lands. Among them were many skilled specialists from industrial enterprises in the cities, from the MTS's and the sovkhoses of different regions of the entire country.⁵²

. . . I saw these *Tselinniks* at work and in their homes. To my question, what brought you to the *Tselina*, they all gave the stereotyped answer: "We followed the appeal of the Party and the Komsomol"; they tried to sound heroic. It is impossible to learn what they really thought,

⁴⁹ Crankshaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 166, 167.

⁵⁰ Mehnert, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

⁵¹ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Large Soviet Encyclopedia) (2nd ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Nauchnoe Izdatelstvo "Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya" (State Scientific Publishing House "The Large Soviet Encyclopedia"), vol. XLVI (1957), pp. 487, 488.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 488.

and I can't really tell to what extent they were idealistic *Tselina*-volunteers. But according to the latest Soviet literature there are also many other motives in the decision to become a *Tselinnik*.⁵³

Khrushchev's effort to recruit manpower through the Youth League was his substitute for Stalin's methods of forced labor of inmates of concentration camps, but the new methods were still a kind of compulsion, although of a less severe character. The persons recruited by the Komsomol were rarely in a position to refuse.

When Khrushchev sent down the orders to convert this virgin land into wheat fields, there was a frenzy of activity. The Komsomol (the Young Communist League) moved into action and established many farms, one of them being the Komsomolsky farm at Barnaul. The director of the farm, L. J. Pyjikov, told me that all of the men and women who came there did so voluntarily. That may well be. But when I reached Moscow, I learned that labor was in effect often drafted for these new farms. For example, when the appeal was made to one government agency in Moscow for farm laborers, only thirty volunteered their services. The quota, however, was sixty. So thirty others were assigned by that agency to farm work. (I got my story from one of the latter groups).⁵⁴

The actual conduct of this operation passes all imagining. A quarter of a million "volunteers" were picked up by their roots and pitch-forked into the empty steppe. . . . During all the first winter there was nowhere to live. "Pre-fabs" and tents were ordered in vast quantities, but they failed to arrive—or else the walls for a hundred pre-fabs would be sent to one location, and the roofs to another location two hundred miles away. The volunteers got through that winter somehow, living mainly in the traditional Russian dugouts—sunken pits with an earth roof over wood or iron, and a bit of stovepipe for a chimney. . . .

* * * * *

. . . Only Khrushchev knows how many people died, or suffered irreparable injury to health, in those first two winters when there was nowhere to live.⁵⁵

Life on the *Tselinas* was hard:

But already these new settlements are succumbing to the disease of all Soviet industrial towns. The hard core of volunteers can be relied on; but the draftees, and the demobilized service-men, are causing problems. . . . There is nothing to do after work but drink. Theatres are lacking, cinemas are lacking, clubs are lacking, even Party pep-talkers are lacking (it takes a devoted agitator to leave his family and settle down in the desert wastes of Kazakhstan). And so the young men drink and gamble and generally carry on as anyone but Mr. Khrushchev would expect them to carry on in such conditions.⁵⁶

⁵³ Mehnert, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

⁵⁴ William O. Douglas, *Russian Journey* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1956), pp. 94, 95.

⁵⁵ Crankshaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 167, 168.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

In the spring of 1954 I followed closely the reports of the press about the transplanting of hundreds of thousands of people from European Russia to southern Siberia. From the point of view of recruiting of manpower and transport of the masses as well as the machines necessary for their work, the operation of that year could be compared to a large-scale war operation, something like the Normandy invasion by the Allies ten years ago. . . .

Of the *Tselinniks* of the first groups, over 10 per cent returned home the first year; 60 were mobilized into the army, but new arrivals replaced these. At the time of my visit [to a sovkhos in the spring of 1956] the sovkhos had a manpower force of 760. Of these, 150 were occupied with construction.⁵⁷

As a result of the *Tselina* operation and of Khrushchev's tendency toward integrated state economy, the number and size of sovkhoses continued to grow rapidly. Their development during the period from 1940 to 1955 may be seen in the following figures:

	1940	1953	1955
Acreage under crops of sovkhoses and other state enterprises (in thousands of hectares)	13, 259	18, 236	29, 371
Number of persons employed in state agricultural enterprises (in thousands)	1, 760	2, 552	2, 054
Persons employed at MTS's (in thousands)	537	1, 167	3, 120
Total persons employed (in thousands)	2, 297	3, 719	⁵⁸ 5, 174

By 1957 the state economy was further advancing, gradually supplanting both private and kolkhoz agriculture and husbandry:

. . . In them [the sovkhoses] is concentrated over a quarter of the entire acreage under crops of the whole country and almost 30 per cent of all kinds of grain sowing. In 1957 the sovkhoses delivered to the state 21 per cent of the entire supply of meat, 32 per cent of pork, 21 per cent of milk, 27 per cent of wool and 21 per cent of eggs.⁵⁹

A personal preference of Khrushchev (many have considered it a whim) began to influence Soviet agriculture after his elevation: the

⁵⁷ Mehnert, *op. cit.*, pp. 182, 185.

⁵⁸ *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR, Statisticheskii Sbornik*, pp. 134, 135, 138.

⁵⁹ *Ezhegodnik Bolshoi Sovetskoi Entsiklopedii 1958* (Yearbook of the Large Soviet Encyclopedia 1958) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Nauchnoe Izdatelstvo "Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya" (State Scientific Publishing House "The Large Soviet Encyclopedia"), 1958), p. 53.

cultivation of corn. According to official data, the acreage planted in corn amounted to:

	[In million hectares] ⁶⁰
1913-----	2.2
1940-----	3.6
1950-----	4.8
1953-----	3.5
1956-----	9.3
1957-----	5.8

The substantial decrease of areas under corn in 1957 proved that Khrushchev's directives were in this case neither expert nor wise. The corn issue is still in question.

Gradual abolition of the MTS's (machine-tractor stations serving the collective farms of their district) was another reform in the Soviet system of agriculture under Khrushchev. Having served, since its initiation in the late 1920's, as a means of Communist party control over the kolkhozes and their members, the network of MTS's appeared, in the 1950's, unnecessary; other methods had by that time become more effective. Independent political movements of the peasantry were no longer possible under the overriding power of the police, and the numbers of Communists appointed to leading posts in the collective farms had increased to such an extent that they could be entrusted with the political tasks heretofore performed by the MTS's.

At present the MTS's have ceased to play the political role assigned to them during the first stage of kolkhoz building. . . .

* * * * *

. . . The number of Communists in the kolkhozes increased by over 230,000 in the years 1954-58. With the transfer of a huge army of mechanics and specialists from the MTS's to the kolkhozes, the kolkhoz party organizations will become even stronger and their influence on all phases of kolkhoz life will increase. . . .⁶¹

The Party has sent several thousand Communists—Party and Soviet workers, engineers from industrial enterprises, agronomists, zootechnicians⁶² and other specialists—to occupy leading posts in the kolkhozes. At the beginning of 1957 over 90 per cent of kolkhoz chairmen were Communists.⁶³

While more than 20 per cent of the collective farms had no Party organizations before the Central Committee's September plenary session, almost all the collective and state farms now have full-fledged and vigorous Party organizations. The average collective-farm Party organization now has 20 Communists, or almost twice as many as five years ago. The total number of Communists in the collective-farm Party organizations is more than

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁶¹ *Pravda*, March 1, 1958.

⁶² Zootechnicians is a Soviet term which means the science of breeding, feeding and correct utilization of cattle.

⁶³ *Pravda*, February 28, 1958.

1,350,000. This is a large and active force, with whose help the assigned tasks can be successfully accomplished.⁶⁴

The transfer of machinery to the kolkhozes was in particular made possible because, in the course of the "aggrandizement" drive, the average size of a kolkhoz had increased considerably. "The number of regular workers of the MTS's amounted to over 2,000,000 in 1957."⁶⁵ It would appear that the transfer of MTS shops and machinery to the kolkhozes would strengthen and consolidate the collective farm system. But Khrushchev insisted that, in the final analysis, this reform would be only a step toward their transformation into a "higher type" of national property, the sovkhos system.

. . . with the rise in kolkhoz wealth, kolkhoz property will advance to reach the level of national property. The sooner we develop the productive forces of socialist agriculture, the sooner the moment will arrive when there will be practically no difference between national and kolkhoz property.⁶⁶

4. Competition With the United States

In the spring of 1957, Khrushchev came out with the slogan of catching up with the United States in production of meat, butter, and milk. This was more than a mere economic program; its acceptance by the Central Committee was achieved in the face of the resistance of the Malenkov-Molotov group. Khrushchev's opponents maintained that it was unrealistic to try to achieve such a level of production in the near future; they were obviously refusing to challenge the United States at its strongest point—its economy. They were skeptical as to whether all-out, bitter competition was opportune or promising. Khrushchev, however, won out. In one report, he said:

. . . The successes achieved in agriculture and the good prospects for its development permit us to set and accomplish a task which is of great importance for the state: to catch up in the next few years with the United States of America in butter and milk, per capita.

. . . In 1956 the per capita production of these products [in kilograms] was as follows:

	U.S.S.R.	U.S.A.
Meat	32.3	102.3
Milk	245.0	343.0
Butter	2.8	3.8

⁶⁴ *Pravda*, December 16, 1958, p. 7.

⁶⁵ *Pravda*, March 1, 1958, p. 1.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

. . . [In 1957] we will already have as much butter or even a little more than the U.S.A. had last year [1956]. This means that we will have a total amount of butter that is equal to or greater than the amount produced in the U.S.A. But because our population is bigger than that of the U.S.A. we will have to make an effort. In per capita production of milk we cannot only catch up with the U.S.A. but even surpass it as early as 1958.⁶⁷

. . . As far as meat is concerned, things are difficult, more difficult, true enough. Therefore, as far as the production of meat is concerned, we hope to catch up with the United States, say, in 1960 or 1961.⁶⁸

American experts, Khrushchev reiterated, are skeptical as to the possibility of the Soviet Union's reaching this goal. Some Soviet economists, he said (mentioning no names), share the view of the Americans:

Your specialists who say that that is impossible have allies among the ranks of our economists, too, because some of our economists have been telling me that their task will only be solved in 1975. But we laugh at these prophets among our people as well as among your people.⁶⁹

Increasing the scope of his program, Khrushchev soon arrived at the plan—of the feasibility of which he had no doubt—of catching up with the United States in all other branches of economy within 15 years. The following colloquy is from an interview with the American journalist, Henry Shapiro:

H. Shapiro: In your speech at the recent Supreme Soviet session you said that the Soviet Union will overtake and outstrip the United States in production in the next fifteen years. You then furnished figures on output of the principal branch—heavy industry. Does this also apply to the material living standards of the Soviet people?

N. S. Khrushchev: Yes, unquestionably.

H. Shapiro: Does this mean that in fifteen years the Soviet Union will have the same standard as the United States?

N. S. Khrushchev: In production of foodstuffs, it will be much sooner. What is a living standard, what constitutes it? The satisfaction of man's material and spiritual requirements. Let us consider first the satisfaction of man's food needs. The Soviet people's requirements of bread and vegetables have been fully met now. Everything is being done to ensure complete satisfaction of the Soviet people's needs of butter, meat and milk within the next few years.

We have already achieved a considerable rise in the living standards of the Soviet people. But we are aware that the Soviet Union's per capita production is lower than that of the United States.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ *Pravda*, May 24, 1957, p. 1.

⁶⁸ Khrushchev, CBS television interview, *New York Times*, June 3, 1957, p. 6.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Pravda*, November 19, 1957, p. 2.

A few months later, Khrushchev foresaw a rapid outstripping of the United States:

Now everyone sees that our economy is advancing, our labor productivity is increasing, and per capita output is growing. The time will soon come, American gentlemen, when you yourselves will become convinced of the superiority of the Soviet system. (*Applause*). We will secure a higher per capita output of consumer goods than that in the leading capitalist countries. We are now summing up and can say that it will not be long before we will scale the highest barrier in the capitalist countries and surpass the level of production achieved by the United States of America. What will you gentlemen be able to say then? (*Applause*).

The imperialists are trying to frighten the working people with communism. But when we reach the highest level of production and material wellbeing of the working folk, people who visit us from the capitalist countries will say: so this is communism, so this is Soviet rule. How could we have been so naive as not to realize this before? This is exactly what the working people need. (*Applause*).⁷¹

Khrushchev was right when he referred to skepticism in the West regarding his sensational programs.

In the spring of 1957 Khrushchev launched a super-great campaign for reaching, by 1960, the United States level in per capita output of meat (the American level for milk had been promised for 1958). For meat this implied a 3.5-fold rise in output from the 1956 level. Scholars who cautiously gave warning that the target was unattainable were ridiculed in the crudest possible manner. Collective farms all over the country were forced to accept programmes for a development of their livestock herds that would raise the meat output by the required amount in the three years remaining.

The average American does not just eat close on 200 lbs. of meat per year. He also has a good house or apartment, consumes plenty of other foodstuffs, and is adequately provided with clothes. The citizen of the "socialist" state had every reason to expect something comparable on the basis of Khrushchev's meat target. This campaign made sense only in connection with a great improvement in living standards generally.⁷²

A careful analysis of official figures on the Five- and Seven-Year Plans, control figures, etc. proved how fantastic Khrushchev's promises were.

. . . Steel output increased by 9.4 per cent in 1955, by 7.3 per cent in 1956, and by 4.9 per cent in 1957. The insufficient expansion of steel output adversely affected the output of machinery, which accounts for close on 40 per cent of total Soviet industrial output. The underfulfillment of targets for machinery unfavorably affected the operation of other in-

⁷¹ *Pravda*, April 11, 1958, p. 2.

⁷² Naum Jasny, "Soviet Economy: Target for Tomorrow," *Soviet Survey, A Quarterly Review of Cultural Trends*, published by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, Paris, No. 26, January-March 1959, p. 58.

dustries and other sectors of the economy. This is a really startling phenomenon—a dictatorship of unheard of severity apparently unable to control the operations of its own ministries, located right there in Moscow.⁷³

5. Soviet Industry and Finance

Though devoting great efforts to the field of agriculture, Khrushchev did not relinquish the principle of priority for “heavy industry.” Heavy industry was developed at a faster pace than any other branch of the economy; Moscow claimed at least quantitative superiority in this field over all other countries of Europe, including England. A most spectacular achievement and a mighty propaganda weapon was the first Sputnik, the first artificial satellite, launched on October 4, 1957; other Soviet satellites followed.

The ability of the Soviet Union to launch the series of Sputniks—a combination of scientific research and industrial achievements—was variously interpreted in the East and West. Soviet propaganda proclaimed the launching of the Sputnik as an indication of the superiority of the Communists’ system over capitalism, and used it as an appeal to the nations of Asia and Africa to join, in one form or another, the “peace front,” or the Soviet bloc, and turn their backs on the United States.

The West, while acknowledging the Soviet achievement, denied that Russian science and economy had reached a higher level than that of the West. True,

. . . the Soviet Union has overtaken the great countries of Western Europe in output of pig-iron, and petroleum, in production of steel and in some other fields, and continues to move forward. . . .

But there is another side to this picture of the Soviet economy. . . . that the standard of living of the overwhelming majority of the Russian people is far below that of Western Europe, not to speak of the United States; that Soviet progress in this respect has been far too slow if the Russian aim is to catch up with and compete with the West.

Thus we get the contradictory picture of great progress in certain areas of production and a serious lag in popular consumption: sputniks, but no thermometers; atomic energy, but no steam; magnificent subways and impassable dirt roads. As a Moscow joke has it: a naked man in a silk hat.⁷⁴

The term “advanced country” should not be used, as it often is, carelessly.

What, then, is the real meaning of the term “advanced country?” We normally define an advanced country as one in which there is a high degree

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁷⁴ Dallin, “Russia: Advanced Nation?”, *The Sign*, published by the Passionist Fathers, Union City, N.J., vol. XXXVIII, No. 5, December 1958, pp. 19, 20.

of scientific, technological, and economic achievement and a high standard of living for the masses of the population. In the Soviet Union we see a nation in which these elements have been divorced from one another. We see a country which has successfully developed science, technology, and economy insofar as they affect the nation's military strength, but which has relegated to second place the factor of the well-being of the people.

Fifty years ago, measured by the yardstick of the standard of living of the general population, the six greatest nations of the modern world ranked as follows: the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia. The same order would still be valid today (perhaps with the addition of Japan between Italy and Russia); the Soviet Union still occupies last place, a fact never seriously disputed by Moscow.⁷⁵

Sometimes Khrushchev himself acknowledged the backwardness of present-day Russia, without, however, drawing all the logical inferences from the facts; for instance:

You probably have seen many times how men and women chip ice from the sidewalks with scrapers. This is unproductive labor. When you see such a picture, you simply feel embarrassed. So much has been done in our country to mechanize complex production processes, so many machines have been made that ease work, and the first artificial earth satellites have been developed, yet we have not got around to replacing the scraper and shovel with a machine. . . . What is it that we lack? I think the main thing is that we give too little attention to such questions, considering them trifles. But is this a trifle?⁷⁶

In the spring of 1957 the Soviet government carried out another reform in the organization of Soviet industry. The highly centralized system of ministries in Moscow was replaced by a large number of local agencies in economic districts, which now had a higher degree of autonomy than before. The decision to enter upon this path was taken against the opposition of the old leaders, Malenkov, Molotov and Kaganovich.

. . . out of the fifteen areas of the Gosplan there finally emerged a hundred and five, of which seventy were in the Russian Federative Republic, eleven in the Ukraine, nine in Kazakhstan, four in Uzbekistan and one in each of the other Union Republics.⁷⁷

The rationale of this reform was to save the expenses which were an inevitable part of the bureaucratic system that prevailed.

In such a form of organization substantial shortcomings in planning and management were inevitable, the most serious being long distances. Frequently transports even went in a wrong direction. All this allegedly led to additional expenses of 2,000,000,000 rubles a year.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷⁶ Khrushchev, Campaign Speech at Voters' Rally, *Pravda*, March 15, 1958, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Jasný, "Chruschtschow und die Sowjetwirtschaft", *Osteuropa*, Stuttgart, No. 10, October 1957, p. 715.

But it is absolutely wrong to blame all these shortcomings of the former planning system on excessive centralization. The most absurd projects were initiated and partially carried out.⁷⁸

The real intent of the reform was to achieve strict centralization of Soviet economy under the Central Committee of the Communist party and its head, Nikita Khrushchev. Soviet leaders of industry and trade, having striven for a modicum of independence, were now, as Khrushchev's power was rising, to be put under the direct control of local Communist party units instead of the huge ministries.

It is becoming more and more obvious that the intent behind the reorganization of industry and the building trades was to subordinate these branches directly to the party apparatus. According to information which cannot yet be verified, in many cases the second party secretary and other officials of the provincial party organizations were appointed as chairmen of the [new] Councils of the People's Economy. An improvement in the management of industry and building could hardly be expected from an apparatus organized in this way.⁷⁹

It is still too early to evaluate the results of this reorganization of Soviet industry.

A painful financial operation was carried out in 1957 when the government practically wiped out citizens' savings in the amount of 260 billion rubles. Since 1947, when a monetary reform had devalued savings, the government continued yearly to collect large sums through domestic loans; subscription, ostensibly free, was actually obligatory in the amount of 1 month's salary every year, tantamount to an 8 percent reduction in salaries. The payment of interest on these loans (usually 3 percent) was an ever growing burden on the treasury. The total number of subscribers to the loans exceeded 70 million citizens in 1952.⁸⁰

At present [Khrushchev said in April 1957] we must pay back every year large sums on the loans in lottery winnings and redemptions. In this year we will have to pay back about 16 billion rubles; in the next year this will come to 18 billion rubles and in 1967 to 25 billion rubles, or almost as much as the revenue from the loans in the present year. The result is a vicious circle, the state puts in one pocket the money it receives from loans, and pays out of the other pocket the same amount in winnings on the loans. What can we do?⁸¹

The government decided to put an end to both compulsory loans, payments and repayments. Khrushchev

. . . announced that the Soviet Government was defaulting on 260 billion rubles (\$260 million) borrowed from the people. This was the amount

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 714.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 716.

⁸⁰ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, vol. XVI (1952), p. 333.

⁸¹ *Pravda*, April 10, 1957, p. 2.

of money Russians had spent to purchase government bonds, on the promise that their money would be returned in twenty years. Khrushchev said, in effect, that the government could not afford to redeem the bonds now and would postpone payments for twenty to twenty-five years. Russians knew this meant forever.⁸²

This amounted to bankruptcy of the state, but the operation had to be clothed in a highly democratic garb: it was allegedly the Soviet people, not the government, who initiated and insisted on the default.

. . . The people were told to stage a marionette ritual of *asking* the government to renege on its payments to them. . . .

* * * * *

. . . Several days previously Khrushchev had spoken at a factory in Gorki where, at his suggestion, the workers had voted a resolution in favor of renouncing any claim on their loans to the government.

Now Khrushchev told the agricultural conference:

“If you agree and support us you will perhaps adopt a corresponding call (resolution). We would then publish your call; and in your call it should be stated, however, that the initiative springs from the workers.”⁸³

On April 13, 1957, the government’s suggestion was announced

. . . to discontinue floating of loans, except of the 3 per cent freely circulating loan, and to defer for twenty to twenty-five years payment on previously launched loans, which were circulated among the population by subscription.⁸⁴

6. Social Conditions

A new stratification of Soviet society into upper and lower classes has been in process since the end of the war, and especially since Stalin’s death. All efforts of the government to conceal this fact and to resolve the appalling “class contradictions” by readjustment of wages have proved futile. A new aristocracy has emerged whose contempt for the working people is greater even than that of the aristocracy toward the people before the revolution. The disdain of the wives and children of administrators, technicians, and the new intelligentsia for the masses

. . . is even more self-conscious and acute than that of the children of the really great, because they are closer to the masses. Their parents are determined that, come what may, the advantages they have won shall be handed on to their children. These youngsters sooner or later have to work. Their parents have not accumulated fortunes. But they can afford to choose their work. And their parents can afford to keep them in idleness until they choose—until, that is, a suitable opportunity arises.⁸⁵

⁸² Irving R. Levine, *Main Street U.S.S.R.* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1959), p. 268.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 268, 269.

⁸⁴ *Pravda*, April 13, 1957.

⁸⁵ Crankshaw, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

The way of life of the new aristocracy is parasitic to a high degree; it is a way of life that was supposed to have been abolished in the "land of toilers":

. . . They have all the money they can want and all the opportunities the Soviet Union offers for spending it. That is to say, they spend most of their lives in one another's villas in the Moscow countryside or on the Black Sea, according to season. They wear Western clothes, and they get their entertainment from private cinemas and imported gramophone records. Their life is a round of parties—and they are bored! There is only one thing they want to do, and that is to travel abroad. They are seen rarely if at all in public. They regard the government, even when their husbands belong to it, as a sort of joke in rather poor taste. They regard the masses, not unkindly, as cattle. They will attend gala performances at the Bolshoi Theatre (closed performances, that is), and an occasional Kremlin reception. Their shopping is done for them by servants.⁸⁶

The following figures are revealing of the social transformation and the new stratification: Of the total members of the Supreme Soviet in 1937, 42 percent had come from the working class; in 1954 only 23.6 percent had come from that class. In 1937 the percentage of members of the Supreme Soviet who had been of the peasant class was 29.5; in 1954, it was 16.3. On the other hand, the so-called intellectuals, that is, the sons and daughters of nonworkers and nonpeasants, constituted, respectively, 28.5 percent and 60.1 percent.⁸⁷

Of this new elite, those who had belonged to the higher echelons of the party and government and survived Stalin's purges constitute a significant part:

. . . They [the survivors of Stalin's purges] still form an élite of individuals, and not a class; but their children are intermarrying; and there we have the makings of a perfectly distinguishable class. *Their* children, now in the nursery, will, if life goes on as it promises, know nothing at all of life as it is lived in Soviet Russia by the masses, will start with immense advantages and comparative luxury behind them, assuming high positions or a leisured existence as their right. I am speaking now of the uppermost drawer. For example, the two daughters of Marshal Zhukov have married the sons of Marshal Voroshilov and Marshal Vassilevsky. I could name plenty of other examples. The result is the birth of a new aristocracy.

* * * * *

. . . in casual conversation with members of the new Soviet intelligentsia, one hears charming, highly-educated youngsters speaking of the masses, of the proletariat to whom the country is supposed to belong, with a callousness and a brutality which has not been met with in the countries of Western Europe for many decades. It is the new respectability.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁸⁷ *Osteuropa*, Stuttgart, No. 3, June 1954, p. 215.

⁸⁸ Crankshaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 90, 93.

This is the rule, not the exception. A young Russian girl, reports Marvin Kalb,

. . . told me that she had been dating a general's son, but his father and her mother had put an end to this affair. When I asked her what the objections were, she told me that it is a rare thing for a general's son to marry *out of his class*. For this reason, the general opposed the relationship. Her mother objected, because she wished to save her daughter heart-ache. "Your father is a truck driver," her mother had cautioned. "A general's son will not marry you."⁸⁹

A feeling develops among those in the upper circles of the Soviet intelligentsia that they are not part of the people. "The people," to them, are those who do physical labor and who are poor—peasants and workers.

. . . My Russian friend spoke of the people as though he were not a part of the people. He was in fact a teacher, and he considered himself a member of the Russian intelligentsia. The people (*narod*) were the masses, the intellectuals stood above the masses, their political and ideological vanguard. It is true that the peculiar place of the intellectual in Russian society, which he carved for himself throughout the nineteenth century, has been carried over into the Soviet period. I have heard students and teachers refer to the "inert Russian masses," and I have heard peasants refer to their Communist masters with the same reverence, born of subservience, which the peasants once reserved for the landowning masters.⁹⁰

In a way, the Soviet "hipsters," called *stilyagi* in Russia ("Teddy boys" in Britain), are another product of the class stratification; in their unusual garb, haircuts, manicures, language, and manners there is also a great deal of protest against the dullness and uniformity of Soviet life and imitation of America.

The *stilyagi* form only a part of disoriented youth, but it is the most spectacular part, and so far authority has been able to do nothing about them, although they parade themselves publicly with all their flaunting eccentricities: the long draped jackets in loud checks of yellow or green, the painted "American" tie, patch pockets, padded shoulders, turned-back cuffs, peg-top trousers, and—pride of the whole outfit—yellow or light tan shoes, with thick crepe soles, worn a size too big so that they turn up the toe. Their haircuts are works of art, and they favour side-whiskers. They are not attractive, and they spend their evenings in bars and billiard saloons, or dancing where dancing may be had. You can see them any night in any Soviet hotel that has a dance-band; but they prefer dancing to hoarded records of American jazz. And with them are the girl *stilyagi*, "whose dresses are stretched over their figures to the point of indecency. They wear slit skirts. Their lips are painted with bright colours. In the summer they

⁸⁹ Kalb, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

wear 'Roman' sandals. They do their hair in the style of 'fashionable' foreign cinema actresses" (*Soviet Culture*, January 18, 1955).⁹¹

Under Stalin the *stilyagi* would have been severely dealt with; hundreds of youth would have been deported to corrective labor. Now only a press campaign is being waged against them. Although the *stilyagi* trend abounds in obvious anti-Soviet and pro-American components, no punitive measures have been taken (as yet) against it.

. . . They [*the stilyagi*] like calling towns and streets by their pre-revolutionary names: Petrograd for Leningrad, Tsaritsyn for Stalingrad, neither of which are at all well thought of. They call Gorki Street in Moscow "Broadway." "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen!" they call out on meeting their friends, even if there is only one lady and gentleman present. There is no nonsense about "Comrade"; "Hello, Mister!" is preferred. Kopeks are cents; roubles are dollars. . . .

. . . They find hair dressers to satisfy their peculiar and exacting needs, and tailors to make up bizarre materials into their remarkable outfits. The barbers and the tailors are not proceeded against.⁹²

It would be wrong to assume that the *stilyagi* constitute a prevailing trend among Russian youth. What is significant about the phenomenon is that it is only in this paradoxical form that a protest against the government appears possible.

. . . The part of the youth that is not satisfied with the regime embraces a much bigger circle than that of the *stilyagi*.⁹³

Among industrial workers, hard living conditions, coupled with the easing of the police system, have produced the phenomenon of strikes, which are viewed in Russia as a symptom of growing unrest and a sharp political tool. The strike of October 1956 at the Kaganovich plant in Moscow developed into a contest between the workers and the Communist organization.

. . . It all started in the forging workshop of the plant, where 459 men, underpaid for the last four or five weeks, arrived at work on October 23, checked in, and sat down. They did not work. Local plant managers raved and ranted, threatened and shouted, but the men did not budge. They wanted to be heard. On October 24, they continued simply to sit and not work. A party leader, who has been unidentified, came to the plant to talk to the rebellious workers. He told them to return to work immediately. The workers insisted on being heard. The party leader succumbed. . . . A man arose and related that he had been released from a corrective-labor camp only six months ago and that for the past three months the manager of the workshop had held back on wages, had given but 200 or 300 roubles a month to his men and squandered the rest of the

⁹¹ Crankshaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 96, 97.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁹³ David Burg, "Oppositionelle Stimmungen in der Akademischen Jugend der Sowjetunion," *Osteuropa*, Stuttgart, No. 9, September 1957, p. 626.

money on himself. The labor spokesman demanded that this manager be released from his job. He warned that until such time as this happens, the workers will not go back to work. . . . The party leader said he would consider the situation. He was about to leave, when this same man arose again and repeated his warning that the workers would not go back to work until this manager was removed. Within hours, he was. The following day, the workers checked in, as they had done on the two previous historic days, and went to work. The manager was replaced, and for the next two weeks, the workers received double and triple pay in compensation.⁹⁴

It is safe to assume that at least one former inmate of a Soviet concentration camp attained the prestige and rank of a leader of independent labor.

Poor living conditions are also the cause of strikes among students.

. . . Within the past two or three weeks [November 1956], students at Moscow University who lived in a dormitory near the Sokolniki Park in Moscow, went on a kind of hunger strike. They were objecting to the low quality of food. They wanted to eat and live better. They refused to eat in the dormitory lunchroom. Chinese students, who lived in the same dormitory, continued to eat in this lunchroom. Some of the Russian student strikers strongly suggested that the Chinese stop eating there. They refused. The next day, they stopped. The previous evening, they had been severely beaten by a group of striking students.⁹⁵

Corruption and bribery, products of economic regimentation and their sister, the illegal free market, flourish.

. . . In the state store, you take it or leave it.

Not so on the private markets. They are lively, interesting, and exciting. The price is whatever the seller can get; and if the buyer is a foreigner, the asking price is always higher. Bargaining and haggling go on from stall to stall. Russia's private markets are private enterprise in its simplest, most basic form.⁹⁶

In central Asia, for example:

In early morning the stalls are filled and competition is stiff. Prices level off. By noon some stalls are closed, and if the supply is not so great, prices rise. By late afternoon, some produce has wilted; and vendors of such perishable commodities as milk do not want to cart them back to the farms that night. So prices fall. Here on the private markets of Soviet Russia one gets not only color and romance; he also sees the actual operations of the law of supply and demand, more dramatic than any textbook can show it.⁹⁷

The Soviet press is filled with accounts of the trial and conviction of "profiteers" or "speculators" who bought goods from a state store and

⁹⁴ Kalb, *op. cit.*, pp. 263, 264.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

⁹⁶ Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

took them to another city to sell at a higher price. Thus, one man was recently convicted for attempting to resell 336 zippers and 36 tablecloths; another for reselling 200 silk scarves at a 400 per cent mark-up; another for trafficking in yeast. The cases are almost legion. For the opportunities are numerous and the temptations great.⁹⁸

Another "remnant of capitalism," drunkenness, has become a permanent element of Soviet life and the Soviet government has been making strenuous efforts to eradicate it, but so far the efforts have been in vain. On July 4, 1958, Khrushchev told a public meeting:

The domination of bourgeois ideology and morality was liquidated in the Soviet Union. However, we have not yet done away with the survivals of the past. One of these harmful survivals of the past is the abuse of alcohol by some people. Whereas in the old society one of the reasons for this phenomenon was oppression by the exploiters and the absence of possibilities for organizing cultural relaxation for the toiling, we now have different social and economic conditions. Under the Soviet power the material well-being and cultural level of the people has improved immeasurably. Hard drinking is now first of all a result of bad education. There are also cases of drunkenness and unworthy behavior among a part of our youth. There are young people who think that by using alcohol they display a kind of heroism; our youth despises such "heroes." Drinking is not a display of heroism, but a display of weakness and lack of will power.⁹⁹

Three months later Khrushchev announced stern measures against drunkenness.

We will institute strict order in the streets. If a drunkard insults passersby and acts like a hooligan, if this is a first offense he will be taken to a special place where hooligans are set straight, sobered up and fined according to the offense. If it is a case of more flagrant hooliganism, the agencies of public order will apply sterner measures. One cannot allow individuals to disgrace the socialist state and our society by their unworthy acts. One must know how to behave.¹⁰⁰

These efforts and their prospects of success will be better understood if viewed against the background of the four-decade history of a "fight against drunkenness" initiated under Lenin and Trotsky. Khrushchev now describes the harmful effects of excessive drinking in almost the same terms as did Soviet leaders of previous decades, indicating that the situation has not improved in the meantime.

The party and the government have been leading a persistent fight against drunkenness because it harms the interests of our society, undermines the health of the toilers, negatively affects family life, leads to commission of crimes and causes considerable damage to production.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁹⁹ *Pravda*, July 5, 1958, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ *Pravda*, October 21, 1958, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ *Pravda*, July 5, 1958, p. 3.

7. The Thaw and Its Limits

A less oppressive policy in Soviet internal affairs, particularly in the police system, was inaugurated after Stalin's death. Since it was a reaction to Stalin's terrorism and cruelty, to the purge Stalin had been carrying out during the last few months before his death, and to the abject poverty of the people, the changes were at first a matter of self-preservation for Stalin's heirs rather than a well-considered new political program.

. . . In the first months after Stalin's death, the new regime initiated a series of measures which appeared to portend an easing of living standards for Soviet citizens, a "liberalization" of the dictatorship, and an alleviation of tension between East and West. Price cuts were put into effect for food and consumer goods. An amnesty was declared for minor offenders in prisons and forced labor camps. The release of the arrested Kremlin doctors was accompanied by a declaration that high secret police officials had fabricated evidence and abused their authority, that they had sought to stir up national animosities, and that the new leadership was prepared to guarantee the "constitutional" rights of its subjects against any form of arbitrary action.¹⁰²

The most important measure provided for abolition of the judicial privileges of the secret police.

. . . the Special Board of Review inside the MVD was abolished after Stalin's death and Beria's execution. . . . The injustices which that Special Board inflicted on the people are so enormous that the Chief Prosecutor has undertaken an investigation of its verdicts. That has led to the release of some prisoners and to the prosecution of some officials. How far he will go and how thorough his investigation will be are yet to be known. Moreover, the slave labor camps are being transferred to the Ministry of Justice. It is one of the steps taken since Stalin and Beria to diminish the power of the MVD.¹⁰³

There were a number of additional minor measures, but on the whole the reforms were limited:

These proposed reforms are not of course fundamental in the sense that they repudiate the Communist regime. They are not, in other words, seeds of revolution against the government like the complaint of James Otis against the British search warrants in our early days. But they are significant trends. They show genuine ferment in the Communist system and a growing sense of due process.¹⁰⁴

A number of police leaders were arrested and tried.

. . . Late in June [1953] he [Beria] himself was arrested, on charges which included that of attempting to set the MVD "above the Party and

¹⁰² Fainsod, *op. cit.*, p. 499.

¹⁰⁶ Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

the government," and in December he and six close associates were executed, following a closed trial.

After Beria's arrest the MVD was assigned to his former close associate S. N. Kruglov, with I. A. Serov as Deputy Minister. Beria's fall gave new impetus to the policy of announcing apparent curbs on the power of the secret police. . . .

* * * * *

. . . Ryumin's execution was announced in July 1954, that of Abakumov and associates in December. A year later the trial and execution were reported of a number of Georgian secret police officials, and in April 1956 M. D. Bagirov, former Party boss and secret police chief in Azerbaidzhan, was executed along with a number of associates.¹⁰⁵

As the powers and privileges of the secret police were being curbed, the reforms found symbolic expression in another renaming of the police agency; MGB (Ministry of State Security) now became KGB (Committee for State Security).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Simon Wolin and Robert M. Slusser, eds., *The Soviet Secret Police* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957), pp. 28, 29.

¹⁰⁶ Since the dissolution of the OGPU in July 1934, the Soviet secret police has been repeatedly reorganized and renamed. This constant reorganization complicates any discussion of secret police agencies after 1934.

Readers should bear in mind that, whereas the old Cheka and OGPU were separate Soviet government agencies solely assigned to "secret police" or "state security" work, starting in 1934 such work was periodically assigned to a subdivision of a larger governmental apparatus dealing with Soviet "internal affairs" in general.

Thus, after the OGPU was dissolved in July 1934, its tasks were assigned to "GUGBEZ", a section of the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs). The NKVD was a ministry which included, in addition to a secret police section, many other departments dealing with routine police work (e.g., crime investigations), as well as fire protection, and the recording of birth and death certificates. Although from 1934 until February 3, 1941, secret police tasks were assigned only to the GUGBEZ section of the NKVD, Westerners commonly used the term "NKVD" to apply to the Soviet secret police apparatus.

From 1941 until March 1954, the secret police functions in the Soviet Union alternated between a separate agency solely devoted to security work and a subdivision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

On February 3, 1941, the GUGBEZ section of the NKVD became a separate agency under the new name: NKGB (*Narodnyi Komissariat Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti*—People's Commissariat for State Security). On July 20, 1941, it reverted to a department of the NKVD but in April 1943, it once more emerged as a separate organization—the NKGB.

The independent NKGB was renamed MGB (*Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti*—Ministry of State Security) in March 1946. At the same time, the NKVD was renamed MVD (*Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del*—Ministry of Internal Affairs). On March 15, 1953, the MGB reverted to a subordinate position as a department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD). Westerners, however, now popularly applied the term "MVD" to the activities of one of its branches assigned to security work.

On March 13, 1954, the MGB once more became independent of the MVD, leaving the latter ministry with only routine internal affairs duties. The secret police agency, MGB, was at the same time renamed KGB (*Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti*—Committee for State Security). This is the present status of the secret police agency in the Soviet Union.

. . . In March 1954 a new title was devised for this body [MGB], that of "Committee for State Security" (KGB) under the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. I. A. Serov, Kruglov's former deputy, an old associate of Khrushchov and a participant in some of the secret police's most brutal actions, was named to head the KGB. By law the chairman of the KGB is a member of the Council of Ministers.¹⁰⁷

With regard to the victims of Stalin's purges, the Central Committee of the Communist party instituted an investigation, which was kept secret, probably because the revelations would have reflected unfavorably on the leaders of the post-Stalin era.

Having at its disposal numerous data showing brutal arbitrariness toward party cadres, the Central Committee has created a party commission under the control of the Central Committee Presidium; it was charged with investigating what made possible the mass repressions against the majority of the Central Committee members and candidates elected at the Seventeenth Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

The commission has become acquainted with a large quantity of materials in the NKVD archives and with other documents and has established many facts pertaining to the fabrication of cases against Communists, to false accusations, to glaring abuses of socialist legality, which resulted in the death of innocent people.¹⁰⁸

At the same time the supreme court was reviewing old cases and rehabilitating those of the defendants whom they found to have been innocent; many of these, however, were dead; the survivors received some modest money payments from the government.

A large part of these cases are being reviewed now and a great part of them are being voided because they were baseless and falsified. Suffice it to say that from 1954 to the present time the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court has rehabilitated 7,679 persons, many of whom were rehabilitated posthumously.¹⁰⁹

Military leaders executed by Stalin now were given special praise.

. . . Marshal Vasily K. Bluecher, who commanded the Far East Army after the Revolution, and who was executed on Stalin's orders in 1939, was formally rehabilitated in April, 1957, and is now a hero again. A few weeks later the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* listed Marshal Mikhail N. Tukhachevsky, who was shot in 1937, as a Soviet "hero." He had not been mentioned in the Soviet press for twenty years, except as a spy and traitor.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Wolin and Slusser, *op. cit.*, pp. 28, 29.

¹⁰⁸ Khrushchev, "Secret Report," Delivered February 24, 25, 1956 at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, printed in Bertram G. Wolfe, *Khrushchev and Stalin's Ghost* (London: Atlantic Press, 1957), p. 122.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

¹¹⁰ John Gunther, *Inside Russia Today* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1957), p. 233.

With the powers of the police curbed, the general political climate mellowed; fear and tension were not as great as before.

. . . Scarcely a day passes in Moscow now without the return to his family, if the family has survived, of a man who may have been locked up beyond the Arctic Circle for ten, fifteen, or even twenty years—during which period, quite possibly, no word was ever heard from him. . . . A professor of classics has resumed his chair in Moscow University after twenty-two years away—as if nothing at all had happened!—and one case I came across concerns a youth who, arrested at the age of eighteen for no reason whatsoever except that he was the son of an anti-Stalin editor, has been released after no fewer than twenty-six years of obliteration.¹¹¹

. . . Police no longer line the Arbat when ministers drive out to their country villas, and people *dance* at Kremlin receptions. Can one imagine Stalin dancing? Youngsters hold hands in cafés, and kiss in movies.¹¹²

For all the reforms and relaxation in the Soviet police system, the population still does not feel free to oppose the government's policy or openly criticize it; there is no free press, nor has freedom of assembly or freedom of religion been introduced. There is still general apprehension about possible repressions or at least loss of rank and income. Russia remains a land of Communist dictatorship.

. . . Russian citizens are now allowed to travel within limits, and can buy a railway or airplane ticket to all but a few closed areas in the Soviet Union. On arrival at a new city, however, registration is compulsory, and nobody without a job is allowed to stay for longer than a month in certain big cities like Moscow, because of the housing shortage. Soviet citizens are now permitted to marry foreigners. This reform went into effect in November, 1953. But if a Soviet citizen married a foreigner years ago and the husband or wife is outside the country, permission will almost certainly *not* be granted for the Soviet citizen to get out, or the husband or wife to come in. In the realm of law, there have been substantial ameliorations and reforms. As to politics, certain alterations in the structure of government are supposed to be impending whereby the Supreme Soviet will get some vestige of legislative power, and more freedom given to the Union republics. Stalinist contributions to economic theory are being attacked and revised, and his foreign policy revamped.¹¹³

The greater leeway has produced anti-Communist activity, and sometimes the free expression of anti-government feelings, but such expressions are met with stern reaction on the part of the government.

. . . to cite one instance typical of several—when a speaker at a public lecture on international affairs at Leningrad University attempted to explain the Hungarian events, Hungarian and Polish students in the audience rose to contradict him—something almost unprecedented—and then addressed the audience themselves. Wall newspapers appeared in factories, some

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 229.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 230, 231.

mimeographed, some even handwritten, asking for enlightenment. Lecturers at the Lenin Library in Moscow were interrupted by listeners who said that they did *not* believe what they were being told. Most important of all, Moscow University had to expel something like one hundred students, and was obliged to give up several of its courses, because persistent boycotts emptied the halls. . . .

Khrushchev. . . . dryly reminded students that "if they did not approve of the regime they had no right to be studying at the expense of the factory workers." He told them that there was plenty of room for them in the factories, and that others were ready to replace them in the classroom.¹¹⁴

A component part also of the rehabilitation were the new measures taken in regard to the national groups which, as we have seen,¹¹⁵ were summarily deported during the war as punishment for the disloyalty of some of their members. It was a long time before the post-Stalin regime turned its attention to this phase of the Stalin heritage.

In their new regions—later it became clear that these were chiefly Kazakhstan and Kirgiziya—the deported Chechens and Ingushs led the life of poor outcasts. From the date of their deportation to the beginning of 1955 they had neither political nor cultural rights. They had no schools, no press, no libraries, nor any kind of cultural facilities.¹¹⁶

The government's approach was reluctant and hesitant in this, one of the most tragic areas of Stalin's arbitrariness and cruelty.

The rehabilitation of . . . five resettled peoples took place a year after Khrushchev's speech [of February 1956], which did not contain a straight promise of restitution but only exposed the brutality of the measures taken and admitted that they were not dictated by military considerations. . . . In his speech before the Supreme Soviet, Gorkin [Secretary of the Supreme Soviet] condemned these measures as a "gross violation of the Leninist nationality policy" (*Izvestia*, February 12, 1957), characterized them as "unfounded" and confirmed that the deported peoples were also subjected to a "number of restrictions of rights" in their new places of residence. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, Gorkin stated, had examined the situation of these peoples and decided fully to redress the injustice committed.¹¹⁷

There are, however, certain nationalities which have been able to improve their status under the post-Stalin régime, namely the pariah nations of the Stalin period, the Germans, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, Kalmuks, and Karachay. These people were rehabilitated not so much as a result of a revision in Soviet nationalities policy, but as an unavoidable sequel to the reform of the Soviet penal system and the post-

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

¹¹⁵ See pp. 238-240.

¹¹⁶ Walter Kolarz, "Die Rehabilitierung der Liquidierten Sowjetvölker," *Osteuropa*, Stuttgart, No. 6, June 1957, p. 415.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 417.

Stalin amnesties. There were other reasons, too, which prompted a change of Soviet policy towards the outlawed peoples, for instance the demoralizing effect of their plight on other Soviet nationalities, and its adverse repercussions on Soviet prestige abroad.¹¹⁸

The rehabilitation of these nationalities was not uniform, however; there were differences in the approach to individual cases.

It is worthy of special note that the Crimean Tartars and the Volga Germans have been overlooked in this post-Stalin rehabilitation. . . . In handling the problem of the Crimean Tartars and Volga Germans the Soviet government was led mainly by practical considerations. The former areas of the Tartars in the Crimea as well as those of the Volga German A.S.S.R., with their excellent soil, were now more densely populated by settlers than the mountainous and foothill regions of the Chechen-Ingush Republic and the Karachai region or the Kalmyk steppes. Though Stalin's heirs give lip service to "proletarian internationalism," it could hardly be expected that they would really apply this principle to the disadvantage of the new Russian and Ukrainian settlers, especially in favor of the peasants of German descent. In the case of the Crimea it must also be taken into consideration that . . . in January 1954 it became a province of the Ukrainian S.S.R. instead of the R.S.F.S.R.¹¹⁹

Rehabilitation which involved the return of the exiles to their former lands proved to be a difficult problem:

The resettlement of the five nationalities of the Northern Caucasus has turned out to be difficult enough. The Soviet authorities wanted to take the credit for righting a wrong, but they also wanted this to happen without much damage to the Soviet economy and without any undue strain on the budget. Resettlement was therefore to be implemented in stages; that of the Chechens and Ingush was to be spread over four years, to protect the interests of the factories and state-farms of Kazakhstan where the two peoples worked. For the Chechens and Ingush, on the other hand, the return to their homeland was the only thing that mattered; so they ignored official schedules and repatriation plans, and left Kazakhstan on their own initiative. Although only 100,000 Chechens and Ingush were supposed to be repatriated in 1957, in fact 200,000 went back to their ancestral homes in the Caucasus.¹²⁰

8. Forced Labor in the Post-Stalin Era

Another field in which a process of rehabilitation and revamping set in was the Soviet forced labor system.

¹¹⁸ Kolarz, "The Nationalities Under Khrushchev," *Soviet Survey, A Quarterly Review of Cultural Trends*, published by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, Paris, No. 24, April-June 1958, p. 59.

¹¹⁹ Kolarz, "Die Rehabilitierung der Liquidierten Sowjetvölker," *Osteuropa*, Stuttgart, No. 6, June 1957, p. 419.

¹²⁰ Kolarz, "The Nationalities Under Khrushchev," *Soviet Survey, A Quarterly Review of Cultural Trends*, published by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, Paris, No. 24, April-June 1958, p. 60.

The first post-Stalin era was marked by a wave of strikes and bloody conflicts in corrective labor camps throughout the Soviet Union.

The political earthquakes which shook the Soviet Union during the post-Stalin era had their impact on the most sensitive area of today's Russia—her concentration camps. The amnesty of March 1953 aroused great hopes, made the prisoners more demanding and increased their self-confidence. The execution of the supreme police leader heightened the expectations and the improvements introduced in the "regime" of the camps stimulated an increase of protests and demands. The result was a wave of strikes in the corrective labor camps at various times in 1953, 1954 and 1955. A strike at Norylsk started in May 1953, was broken off, and then resumed in August of the same year; it was suppressed by military force. According to reports from Norylsk, the number of dead and wounded reached 1,500 out of a total of 2,500 prisoners. In the camps of Karaganda the first strikes occurred in 1952 and others between the 15th and 17th of May, 1954; about 200 were killed and 140 wounded. In Kanguir (Kazakhstan) strikes broke out in the summer of 1954. On the island of Sakhalin, too, strikes broke out during 1953-1955; in the camps of Taishet (Siberian railroad) in May 1955. Of great importance were the repeated strikes in the extensive Vorkuta camps, where a large mass of political prisoners had been concentrated; the strikes occurred in the summer of 1953, the fall of 1954 and the summer of 1955; large numbers of Vorkuta prisoners were killed by guards in the fighting. The Kolyma camps, with more than 150,000 inmates, revolted in May 1954; 200 were killed and 180 wounded by guards.¹²¹

Although they were suppressed by armed force, the strikes obviously produced much uneasiness in Moscow; while they fought the outbursts of the desperate prisoners, the authorities decided to make some improvements in the living conditions of the camps.

The changes made in camp regulations as a result of this unrest and other conditions were not insignificant. The old filthy barracks were replaced by new ones. Beds are clean, and the elite among the inmates have the privilege of separate beds. Food of the relatively "well-paid" male working population is satisfactory. The working time has been reduced to ten hours a day, with three or four days off a month. Medical care and medications, while insufficient, are available in the larger camps. The attitude of the administration has improved, too; as a rule inmates are not beaten and punishment by confinement to dungeons is not as frequent as before. In the majority of the camps loudspeakers broadcast news from Moscow, and Moscow and local papers are available. The prisoners, some of whom are politically intelligent, are in general aware of world events.¹²²

Forced labor was not abolished, however; the modest improvements indicate, on the contrary, that it was intended to maintain the system

¹²¹ Dallin, "Crime and Punishment under the Soviet Regime," in *Handbook on World Communism*, J. M. Bochenski and G. Niemeyer, eds. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, to be published in 1960).

¹²² *Ibid.*

in the future. In July 1953, before he was liberated from a corrective labor camp, the Norwegian former Communist Otto Larsen was told by one of the Russian inmates:

"When you get home," he said, "the Russians may easily announce that all political prisoners have been freed and that this kind of thing"—his hand swept round the prison camp—"and that this kind of thing has ended. Don't believe it. Don't let anyone believe it.

"You can only believe it if and when the workers of the capitalist countries are allowed to travel here, and to go about this country. And—even more important," he said, shaking my arm, "*when* the ordinary Russian workers are allowed to travel *anywhere* inside the capitalist countries. That's the *only* way the world can learn the truth about Russia.

"And don't you listen either," he said, "to the rubbish delegations will tell you after they have been in Russia—wining and dining and being treated to the best. They are the most dangerous people of the lot. . . ." ¹²³

The gradual reorganization of the labor camps which took place in subsequent years was due mainly to economic reasons, in the first place to the realization by the government that forced labor is unproductive and that manpower is wasted in the process.

. . . Exploitation of human beings was the system used exclusively and successfully by Stalin for a long time, but Stalin was dead. Furthermore, methods appropriate for forcibly raising a nation from a backward, agrarian economy no longer achieved the same results once that nation became a technologically advanced industrial power. Khrushchev himself must have doubted, even if he *had* inherited Stalin's means of power, whether tightening the grip on the people could squeeze out the added human effort needed to accomplish his projects. ¹²⁴

In addition to these considerations, improvement of conditions in the camps, where the death rate was so high and productivity so low, was also seen as a means of conserving manpower, of which there was a shortage in Russia during the second half of the 1950's created by the low wartime birthrate.

By an unpublished decree of October 25, 1956, a new system of corrective labor institutions was introduced, but this did not, in essence, represent any substantial change from the old system. "Labor camps" were abolished and replaced by (or merely renamed) "colonies." The camp administration, GULAG, was accordingly renamed GUITK (*Glavnoe Upravlenie Ispravitelno Trudovyykh Kolonii*—Main Administration of Corrective Labor Colonies). . . . In accordance with the October 1956 decree, prison sentences must be served in the area of residence.

Deputy Prosecutor-General Kudriavtsev has stated that 70 per cent of all camp inmates were released since Stalin's death; that two-thirds of

¹²³ Otto Larsen, *Nightmare of the Innocents* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), p. 213.

¹²⁴ Levine, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

all labor camps in Siberia were abolished; that the number of political prisoners amounts to less than two per cent of all prisoners; that revision of all forced-labor sentences of the last twenty-five years was carried out; and that a multitude of prisoners were rehabilitated. In an interview in the United States in January 1959, Vice-Premier Anastas Mikoyan stated that there are no political prisoners in Russia at all. . . . Both statements were made to foreigners; they were not reported in the Soviet press, and cannot be considered entirely reliable.

On the other hand, the authoritative Soviet jurist, Professor S. Utevski, says that "special corrective labor institutions of a closed type," with a harsh regime, must be maintained for habitual prisoners, parasites, and the like; moreover, the term "habitual" must not be applied "mechanically" to second offenders only, but must include first offenders who are "dangerous" because of their former activities.

In many labor camps, whether they are now called "camps" or "colonies," work continues, if only because forced labor is still of economic significance.¹²⁵

At the end of 1958, Prosecutor-General Roman Rudenko announced that a new "Code for Corrective Labor Colonies and Prisons" would be put into effect. It has not been made public so far; it is likely that it will, like its predecessors, be kept secret.

The claim of the Soviet authorities that forced labor has been entirely abolished—a claim made only in conversations with foreigners is doubted by many experts.

Millions were released from slave-labor camps, and effort was made to find them work and a place to live. (Other millions remain in camps.)¹²⁶

Actually there is no reason to believe that the system of concentration camps is on the way to being abolished, although the numbers of inmates have diminished. . . .

(1) Sentences to be served in concentration camps are still being meted out in the U.S.S.R. . . .

* * * * *

(2) Recently repatriated prisoners have reported that even in the zones where the number of inmates has been substantially reduced, new inmates continue to arrive, though on a smaller scale. . . .

* * * * *

. . . reports about the period in question [1953–57] indicate that none of the large complexes of concentration camps has been dissolved. Three Japanese, who returned in 1956 from Kolyma to Maizuru, have even declared that the authorities did not stop sending new contingents of prisoners to the concentration camp system of that region. They estimate that at present 1,300,000 inmates are in the "grave of slaves"—this is the term

¹²⁵ Dallin, "Crime and Punishment under the Soviet Regime," in *Handbook on World Communism*.

¹²⁶ Levine, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

that the victims themselves use. The prisoners of war repatriated to Germany at the beginning of 1957 have seen with their own eyes the camps in the Archangel region, in the region between Taishet and Bratsk, in the vicinity of Inta, Makariev, Solikamsk, Berezniki, Kizel and Potma.

* * * * *

. . . There are "colonies" which correspond to the old "camps" and there are others which are the equivalent of the old "colonies,"¹²⁷ where only a change of name has been made.¹²⁸

Improvements made have not always been maintained. The great mass of criminals were removed to sections separated from political prisoners, but a number of criminals remained behind:

Although since 1948 there has been a separation of the two categories [criminal and political offenders], the camp authorities have not ceased using the criminals to terrorize the political prisoners. Moreover, statements confirm that since 1954 large groups of "criminals" have been sent to the camps which until then had been reserved for "political prisoners" only.¹²⁹

A number of Soviet republics, among them the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, have promulgated new laws which provide for deportation, without court trial and by a simple majority vote (which can be easily arranged by the police), of certain citizens considered by their communities "anti-social" or "parasitic."

. . . by the spring of 1957, several Soviet republics had already introduced the legislative texts which, in new forms, again put into effect the summary procedures.¹³⁰

The new law has been put into effect in Uzbekistan, for example, where

. . . an assembly of citizens has unanimously decided on the banishment for five years of a kolkhoz peasant who "took advantage of all the rights of a kolkhoz peasant, had a private plot, but systematically avoided taking part in the socially useful work"; the verdict was confirmed by the executive committee of the soviet. It is obvious that in this case a peasant was doing more work on his private plot than on the collective farm and his deportation was part of a campaign launched at the beginning of 1956 to force the rural population to work less on their own plots.¹³¹

¹²⁷ "Corrective Labor Colonies" have existed as a milder form of punishment since the 1930's.

¹²⁸ Paul Barton, *L'Institution Concentrationnaire en Russie 1930-57* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1959), pp. 376, 377, 383, 385.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

Because of the acute manpower shortage, the camp administrations try to engage the labor of released prisoners; in many cases they achieve their goal by force, threats or promises. Part of the population of the "colonies" (former camps) consists of this hybrid of free workers and slaves:

. . . a large part of those who were liberated from the camps in the last years found themselves obliged, let us not forget it, to remain in the distant regions where they had been detained; others, who had been permitted to leave the region where they had been imprisoned, were not permitted to return to the places of their previous residence.¹³²

"Socialist legality," which again became a slogan, was ostensibly the essence of the new criminal code that was promised soon after Stalin's death but which was not promulgated until December 25, 1959. On that date

. . . the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted a series of laws, the most important of which were the "Foundations of the Criminal Legislation of the USSR and the Soviet Republics" and "The Law on Criminal Responsibility for Crimes Against the State."

During the period since Stalin's death certain Stalinist tenets were abolished as contrary to the system of "Socialist legality." Among them was the thesis that "remnants of the capitalist classes" are becoming more and more aggressive and that measures of extreme terrorism are therefore appropriate. Another repudiated thesis was that of convicting defendants "by analogy," namely, by applying provisions of the criminal code to cases not specifically provided for in the laws (a practice adopted by Nazi Germany). Once defended by Andrei Vyshinsky, "analogy" was now rejected, the more so since Vyshinsky's stature as a jurist diminished markedly during the post-Stalin years.

One of the basic principles of the new code is that "*criminal* punishment may be applied only upon a court sentence." The apparent differentiation between criminal and non-criminal (administrative) punishment reopens the door to the allegedly abolished system of sentencing of defendants by the police. This may also explain why the government refused to accept the universally recognized formula that a person is innocent until proved guilty in a court.

The term of confinement in a prison or corrective labor colony in the Soviet Union is now limited to ten years, or, "in exceptional cases," to fifteen years. (The limit was initially ten years, but was increased to twenty-five years in 1937).¹³³

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 384.

¹³³ Dallin, "Crime and Punishment under the Soviet Regime," in *Handbook on World Communism*.

The death penalty, abolition of which was promised more than once since the Soviet revolution of 1917, is retained in the new law and is applicable to a large number of political crimes. However,

The new law describes execution (to be carried out by shooting) as an "exceptional measure of punishment, until its complete abrogation." There is no indication as to when abrogation may be expected; capital punishment has been applied almost without interruption throughout the existence of the Soviet realm. Under the new law, in peacetime it is almost exclusively reserved to political crimes; the only other crime punishable by death is murder, and then only in grave cases specified by law.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

Chapter XII. Khrushchev in Power

1. The De-Stalinization.

The program of repudiation of various elements of Stalin's system, carried out at first in a tentative and groping way, assumed considerable proportions in 1955 and reached a peak in February 1956, at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party. Addressing a closed session of the congress on February 24, Nikita Khrushchev, in a 4-hour speech, re-evaluated Stalin's personality and methods of government. The text of his address was communicated confidentially to the central committees of non-Soviet Communist parties and via this source found its way to the United States. The U.S. Department of State made it public early in June 1956.

Khrushchev's "de-Stalinization speech" produced an unprecedented crisis in Communist ranks all over the world. While it confirmed accusations that had been leveled against Stalin by numerous anti-Communists and former Communists, the denunciatory speech by the leader of Soviet Communists precipitated confusion, disagreements, protests, and defections. It became a landmark in the history of the international Communist movement. For the non-Communist world it became important as a document showing the narrow and artificial limits of anti-Stalinist criticism when it emanates from a Communist leader.

Khrushchev started and finished his secret speech with an attack on the "cult of the individual" (or "cult of personality") which, to him, was contrary to the tenets of Leninism. He did not condemn either terrorism or dictatorship as such, but only branded as evil the concentration of excessive power in the hands of one individual.

The questioning of Stalin's terror, in turn, may lead to the questioning of terror in general. But Bolshevism believes in the use of terror. Lenin held that no one was worthy of the name of communist who did not believe in terror. . . .

* * * * *

. . . To use the word *dictatorship* in the indictment would lead to calling in question dictatorship in general as a method of ruling a great country. It would call in question "the dictatorship of the proletariat," which in practice means the dictatorship of a single party, the dictatorship over that party of its leaders, and ultimately the dictatorship of a single

leader, based on the leader's being the authoritative expounder of doctrine and the man in control of the party machine.¹

Khrushchev, however, pictured Lenin as the embodiment of Communist wisdom and, at least in regard to the party's leaders, even humaneness. He mentioned Lenin's critical references to Stalin;² Lenin's abolition of the death penalty in January 1920 (it was restored in October 1920); the conferences and congresses which in Lenin's time were convened to deliberate and decide (actually Lenin carried out his own plans always and under any conditions); and Lenin's lenient attitude toward oppositionists like Zinoviev, Trotsky, Bukharin and others (actually Lenin introduced the severe statutes that eventually developed into the terroristic measures used against "deviationists," "traitors," and "enemies of the people"). Contrary to Leninist traditions, Khrushchev said,

Stalin originated the concept "enemy of the people." This term automatically rendered it unnecessary that the ideological errors of a man or men engaged in a controversy be proved; this term made possible the usage of the most cruel repression, violating all norms of revolutionary legality, against anyone who in any way disagreed with Stalin, against those who were only suspected of hostile intent, against those who had bad reputations.³

Khrushchev acknowledged that Lenin had preached and applied terroristic measures against other political groups, and this Khrushchev approved; Stalin's crime was only that he applied these measures to Communists:

. . . Vladimir Ilyich demanded uncompromising dealings with the enemies of the Revolution and of the working class and when necessary resorted ruthlessly to such methods. You will recall only V. I. Lenin's fight with the Socialist Revolutionary organizers of the anti-Soviet uprising, with the counterrevolutionary kulaks in 1918 and with others, when Lenin without hesitation used the most extreme methods against the enemies. Lenin used such methods, however, only against actual class enemies and not against those who blunder, who err, and whom it was possible to lead through ideological influence and even retain in the leadership. Lenin used severe methods only in the most necessary cases. . . .

Stalin, on the other hand, used extreme methods and mass repressions at a time when the Revolution was already victorious, when the Soviet state was strengthened, when the exploiting classes were already liquidated

¹ Bertram D. Wolfe, *Khrushchev and Stalin's Ghost* (London: Atlantic Press, 1957), pp. 93, 95.

² See pp. 144-148.

³ Nikita S. Khrushchev, "Secret Report," Delivered February 24, 25, 1956 at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, printed in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

and socialist relations were rooted solidly in all phases of national economy, when our party was politically consolidated and had strengthened itself both numerically and ideologically.

It is clear that here Stalin showed in a whole series of cases his intolerance, his brutality and his abuse of power.⁴

Khrushchev told the congress that the Presidium had studied documents pertaining to the Seventeenth Party Congress (1934) and the Central Committee elected at that congress:

It was determined that of the 139 members and candidates of the party's Central Committee who were elected at the Seventeenth Congress, 98 persons, *i.e.*, 70 per cent, were arrested and shot (mostly in 1937-1938). . . .

* * * * *

The same fate met not only the Central Committee members but also the majority of the delegates to the Seventeenth Party Congress. Of 1,966 delegates with either voting or advisory rights, 1,108 persons were arrested on charges of revolutionary crimes, *i.e.*, decidedly more than a majority. This very fact shows how absurd, wild and contrary to common sense were the charges of counterrevolutionary crimes made out, as we now see, against a majority of participants at the Seventeenth Party Congress.⁵

Reviewing the events chronologically, Khrushchev told the true story of the murder of Kirov,⁶ the trial of Nikolaev, the strange conduct of the NKVD leaders, the suspicious role of Stalin in the affair, the appointment of Nikolai Yezhov in 1936,⁷ the liquidation of the ranking leader Pavel Postyshev, and the orgy of the purges of 1937-38:

. . . It should suffice to say that the number of arrests based on charges of counterrevolutionary crimes grew 10 times between 1936 and 1937.

* * * * *

Now, when the cases of some of these so-called "spies" and "saboteurs" were examined, it was found that all their cases were fabricated. Confessions of guilt of many arrested and charged with enemy activity were gained with the help of cruel and inhuman tortures.

At the same time, Stalin, as we have been informed by members of the Political Bureau of that time, did not show them the statements of many accused political activists when they retracted their confessions before the military tribunal and asked for an objective examination of their cases. There were many such declarations, and Stalin without doubt knew of them.⁸

Khrushchev dealt in greater detail with the trial and execution of Robert Eikhe, a Soviet leader of the time.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 114, 116.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 124-126.

⁶ See pp. 187-189.

⁷ See p. 192.

⁸ Khrushchev, "Secret Report," printed in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, pp. 138, 140.

Comrade Eikhe was arrested on 29 April 1938 on the basis of slanderous materials. . . .

* * * * *

Eikhe was forced under torture to sign ahead of time a protocol of his confession prepared by the investigative judges, in which he and several other eminent party workers were accused of anti-Soviet activity.⁹

In October 1939, Eikhe twice wrote to Stalin, in whom he still firmly believed:

. . . On 25 October of this year I was informed that the investigation in my case has been concluded and I was given access to the materials of this investigation. Had I been guilty of only one hundredth of the crimes with which I am charged, I would not have dared to send you this pre-execution declaration; however, I have not been guilty of even one of the things with which I am charged and my heart is clean of even the shadow of baseness. I have never in my life told you a word of falsehood and now, finding my two feet in the grave, I am also not lying. My whole case is a typical example of provocation, slander and violation of the elementary basis of revolutionary legality. . . .

* * * * *

. . . Not being able to suffer the tortures to which I was submitted by Ushakov and Nikolayev [the investigating judges]—and especially by the first one—who utilized the knowledge that my broken ribs have not properly mended and have caused me great pain, I have been forced to accuse myself and others.

* * * * *

. . . I am asking and begging you that you again examine my case, and this not for the purpose of sparing me but in order to unmask the vile provocation which, like a snake, wound itself around many persons in a great degree due to my meanness and criminal slander. I have never betrayed you or the party. I know that I perish because of vile and mean work of the enemies of the party and of the people, who fabricated the provocation against me.¹⁰

On February 2, 1940, Khrushchev reported, Eikhe was brought before a "court." Eikhe told the judges:

"In all the so-called confessions of mine there is not one letter written by me with the exception of my signature under the protocols which were forced from me. I have made my confession under pressure from the investigative judge who from the time of my arrest tormented me. After that I began to write all this nonsense. . . . The most important thing for me is to tell the court, the party and Stalin that I am not guilty. I have never been guilty of any conspiracy. I will die believing in the truth of party policy as I have believed in it during my whole life."

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 140, 142.

¹⁰ As quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 142, 144, 146.

On 4 February Eikhe was shot [Khrushchev related].
(Indignation in the hall.)¹¹

Khrushchev proceeded to tell the story of Ian Rudzutak, chief of the Communist party's Central Control Commission, which on paper existed to check on all party agencies and leaders. Rudzutak had made the following statement to the Supreme Military Tribunal:

" . . . there is in the NKVD an as yet not liquidated center which is craftily manufacturing cases, which forces innocent persons to confess; there is no opportunity to prove one's nonparticipation in crimes to which the confessions of various persons testify. The investigative methods are such that they force people to lie and to slander entirely innocent persons in addition to those who already stand accused. . . ."

. . . he [Rudzutak] [Khrushchev continued] was not even called before the Central Committee's Political Bureau because Stalin did not want to talk to him. Sentence was pronounced on him in 20 minutes and he was shot.

(Indignation in the hall.)¹²

Khrushchev mentioned the names of the most evil members of the NKVD, aides of Stalin, and their methods of inquisition. One of these, Zakovski, told the prisoner Rozenblum:

You, yourself, (said Zakovsky) will not need to invent anything. The NKVD will prepare for you a ready outline for every branch of the center; you will have to study it carefully and to remember well all questions and answers which the Court might ask. This case will be ready in four-five months, or perhaps a half year. During all this time you will be preparing yourself so that you will not compromise the investigation and yourself. Your future will depend on how the trial goes and on its results. If you begin to lie and testify falsely, blame yourself. If you manage to endure it, you will save your head and we will feed and clothe you at the Government's cost until your death.¹³

Turning to the events of the war, Khrushchev accused Stalin of disregarding all the warnings given him by other governments about Hitler's preparations for an attack on the Soviet Union. He mentioned Winston Churchill and Stafford Cripps (and also a number of Soviet agents in the West), but omitted Sumner Welles, who twice had forewarned the Soviet government about Hitler's plans. This omission of mention of a friendly gesture on the part of the United States was another example of the limitations of Khrushchev's criticism of his predecessor. In a side attack on deposed Premier Georgi Malenkov, Khrushchev told the congress how during the early days of the war he

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹³ As quoted in *ibid.*, p. 152.

had tried, through Malenkov, to contact Stalin to discuss strategic issues with him:

. . . I telephoned to Comrade Malenkov from Kiev and told him, "People have volunteered for the new Army and demand arms. You must send us arms."

Malenkov answered me, "We cannot send you arms. We are sending all our rifles to Leningrad and you have to arm yourselves."¹⁴

Citing several examples, Khrushchev deprecated Stalin as a strategic leader; some of the Soviet defeats and retreats were due to the "genius" of Stalin, he said.

On one occasion after the war, during a meeting of Stalin with members of the Political Bureau, Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan mentioned that Khrushchev must have been right when he telephoned concerning the Kharkov operation and that it was unfortunate that his suggestion had not been accepted.

You should have seen Stalin's fury! How could it be admitted that he, Stalin, had not been right! He is after all a "genius," and a genius cannot help but be right! Everyone can err, but Stalin considered that he never erred, that he was always right. He never acknowledged to anyone that he had made any mistake, large or small, despite the fact that he made not a few mistakes in the matter of theory and in his practical activity.¹⁵

After the war Stalin turned against Soviet marshals and generals who had won fame on the battlefields. Defending Marshal Zhukov (this was still 1956), Khrushchev reported:

Stalin was very much interested in the assessment of Comrade Zhukov as a military leader. He asked me often for my opinion of Zhukov. I told him then, "I have known Zhukov for a long time; he is a good general and a good military leader."

After the war Stalin began to tell all kinds of nonsense about Zhukov, among other things the following, "You praised Zhukov, but he does not deserve it. It is said that before each operation at the front Zhukov used to behave as follows: He used to take a handful of earth, smell it and say, 'We can begin the attack,' or the opposite, 'The planned operation cannot be carried out.'" I stated at that time, "Comrade Stalin, I do not know who invented this, but it is not true."

It is possible that Stalin himself invented these things for the purpose of minimizing the role and military talents of Marshall Zhukov.¹⁶

Khrushchev then reviewed the summary deportation of "disloyal" nationalities,¹⁷ and gave some details of the mysterious "Leningrad affair."¹⁸ Next he turned to the conflict with Tito in 1947-49, accusing Stalin of unnecessary aggravation of relations. To show Stalin's

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 170, 172.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

¹⁷ See pp. 238-240, 313, 314.

¹⁸ See p. 255.

almost abnormal self-assurance, Khrushchev described his own discussion with Stalin of the Yugoslav affair:

. . . Once when I came from Kiev to Moscow, I was invited to visit Stalin who, pointing to the copy of a letter lately sent to Tito, asked me, "Have you read this?"

Not waiting for my reply he answered, "I will shake my little finger—and there will be no more Tito. He will fall."

We have dearly paid for this "shaking of the little finger." This statement reflected Stalin's delusions of grandeur, but he acted just that way: "I will shake my little finger—and there will be no Kossior"; "I will shake my little finger once more and Postyshev and Chubar will be no more"; "I will shake my little finger again—and Voznesensky, Kuznetsov and many others will disappear."

But this did not happen to Tito. No matter how much or how little Stalin shook, not only his little finger but everything else that he could shake, Tito did not fall. Why? The reason was that, in this case of disagreement with the Yugoslav comrades, Tito had behind him a state and a people who had gone through a severe school of fighting for liberty and independence, a people which gave support to its leaders.¹⁹

Khrushchev shed some light on the "doctors' plot." Members of the Politburo, he admitted, were shown some false "documents"—yet they backed Stalin:

Shortly after the doctors were arrested, we members of the Political Bureau received protocols containing the doctors' confessions of guilt. After distributing these protocols, Stalin told us, "You are blind like young kittens; what will happen without me? The country will perish because you do not know how to recognize enemies."

The case was so presented that no one could verify the facts on which the investigation was based. There was no possibility of trying to verify facts by contacting those who had made the confessions of guilt.²⁰

Khrushchev dwelt in great detail on Stalin's conceitedness and self-adulation. In a biography of himself published by the party, Stalin inserted the following words about himself:

Although he performed his task of leader of the party and the people with consummate skill and enjoyed the unreserved support of the entire Soviet people, Stalin never allowed his work to be marred by the slightest hint of vanity, conceit or self-adulation.²¹

On other occasions Stalin wrote:

. . . Stalin is the worthy continuer of Lenin's work, or, as it is said in our party, Stalin is the Lenin of today. . . .

* * * * *

¹⁹ Khrushchev, "Secret Report," printed in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

²¹ As quoted in *ibid.*, p. 216.

. . . At the various stages of the war Stalin's genius found the correct solutions that took account of all the circumstances of the situation.

* * * * *

Stalin's military mastership was displayed both in defense and offense. Comrade Stalin's genius enabled him to divine the enemy's plans and defeat them. The battles in which Comrade Stalin directed the Soviet armies are brilliant examples of operational military skill.²²

Khrushchev pointed out that the new national anthem contained the following words:

Stalin brought us up in loyalty to the people, he inspired us to great toil and acts.²³

Finally, Khrushchev approached the crucial question:

Some comrades may ask us: Where were the members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee? Why did they not assert themselves against the cult of the individual in time? And why is this being done only now?²⁴

Khrushchev's answers were unconvincing: Differences in the approach of the leaders to current issues and to Stalin's personality, Stalin's "popularity," his violent reaction to criticism.

Stalin evidently had plans to finish off the old members of the Political Bureau. He often stated that Political Bureau members should be replaced by new ones.²⁵

Khrushchev could hardly give a correct answer to the question: Where were the Communist leaders when Stalin was committing his crimes? Khrushchev was one of those who had praised and adored Stalin, approved his policies, and joined in the chorus against the "enemies of the people." They were equally guilty with Stalin.

Because they [the other leaders] are so deeply involved in his despotism, they exculpate him of the charge of having been a "giddy despot." And indeed the crimes were really not the acts of a giddy despot so much as those of a despotic dogma and a despotic system, of which the despot himself is but a product.

That is why they are able to identify themselves in their hearts with their dead leader whose dogmas, whose system, and whose crimes they shared and justified and benefited by and believed in. Only by virtue of this identification with the tyrant can Khrushchev bring himself to speak of the latter's motives as those of "defense of the interests of the working class and the toiling people." Only by virtue of this identification can

²² As quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 216, 218.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

Khrushchev have hit upon this mealy mouthed term for all the crimes: "the cult of the individual."²⁶

The limitations of Khrushchev's attack on Stalin were also seen in his circumspect avoidance of discussion of the trials of the Communist "deviationists"—Zinoviev, Bukharin, and others. Khrushchev emphasized his agreement with Stalin on the "de-kulakization," in which millions of peasants were uprooted and large numbers died; he approved Stalin's course against the "leftists" and "rightists." He spoke in Stalinist language when he said:

The party led a great political-ideological struggle against those in its own ranks who proposed anti-Leninist theses, who represented a political line hostile to the party and to the cause of socialism. This was a stubborn and a difficult fight but a necessary one, because the political line of both the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc and of the Bukharinites led actually toward the restoration of capitalism and capitulation to the world bourgeoisie. Let us consider for a moment what would have happened if in 1928–1929 the political line of right deviation had prevailed among us, or orientation toward "cotton-dress industrialization," or toward the kulak, etc. We would not now have a powerful heavy industry, we would not have the *kolkhozes*, we would find ourselves disarmed and weak in a capitalist encirclement.

It was for this reason that the party led an inexorable ideological fight and explained to all party members and to the non-party masses the harm and the danger of the anti-Leninist proposals of the Trotskyite opposition and the rightist opportunists. And this great work of explaining the party line bore fruit; both the Trotskyites and the rightist opportunists were politically isolated; the overwhelming party majority supported the Leninist line and the party was able to awaken and organize the working masses to apply the Leninist party line and to build socialism.²⁷

2. Ferment Within Communist Ranks

When Khrushchev's "secret speech" was read before closed sessions of Communist party organizations, it was received in a matter-of-fact way and with the standard approval given all pronouncements coming from above. In the ensuing process of de-Stalinization, busts and statues of Stalin began to disappear, publication of his books ceased, quotations from his speeches and writings were no longer used, and mention of him in the daily press became rare; some of his tenets, up to then obligatory, were abolished or revised.

. . . For years a group of galleries in the Pushkin Museum was stuffed with gifts he [Stalin] had received, particularly those which arrived from all over the world on his seventieth birthday; these have been relegated inconspicuously to back rooms in the Museum of the Revolution. He has

²⁶ Wolfe, *op. cit.*, pp. 251, 253.

²⁷ Khrushchev, "Secret Report," printed in Wolfe, *op. cit.*, pp. 102, 104.

been cut from the name of the Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin Institute (also for same reason Engels has been dropped) and, even if actual cities have not been renamed, many lesser entities like factories and institutes are now known by some other name. In at least one airport, where enormous frescoes of Lenin and Stalin stood on opposite walls of the reception hall, that of Stalin has been ripped out; nothing replaces him, and the whole wall is an angry scar. Perhaps most interesting of all, the Stalin Peace Awards have been renamed the International Lenin Prizes for Strengthening Peace Among Peoples. . . .

. . . Above all, Soviet history itself is being revised. The army in particular has insisted on describing events during World War II more truthfully, and scarcely a day passes without news of some historian or other being given the sack for clinging, despite the contemporary enlightenment, to Stalinist hallucinations.²⁸

The de-Stalinization measures of the government were kept within limits lest criticism spread to other political fields and personalities.

. . . Numerous Soviet equivalents of counties and provinces, factories and educational institutions bearing Stalin's name were changed. (However, Stalingrad and Stalinabad, Mount Stalin and others have remained.) . . .

Svetlana's Breath, a perfume named after Stalin's daughter, fell into bad odor and disappeared from cosmetic counters.²⁹

The Soviet anthem, adopted during the war, contains Stalin's name.³⁰ Now only the stirring music was played and the words were not sung—an odd thing for a national anthem.

. . . In the Tretyakov Gallery old Russian classics by Shishkin, Repin, and Kramskoi have replaced portraits of Stalin. (However, Stalin remained in lobbies of the Metropole and National Hotels and stone statues of Stalin continued to dominate Moscow's Gorki Park and Agricultural Exhibition and countless thousands of Soviet enterprises throughout the land.)

The name of the Moscow Stalin Auto Works was changed to the Likhatchov Auto Works. (But Stalin's body still lies next to the revered Lenin's in the mausoleum in Red Square.)³¹

In the far-off provinces de-Stalinization was carried out reluctantly and at a slower pace. In Tashkent, for example,

In between the old city and ballet theater is Stalin Square, which fronts on Stalin Park, whose entrance is adorned with busts and pictures of Stalin. . . .

²⁸ John Gunther, *Inside Russia Today* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1957), pp. 230, 231.

²⁹ Irving R. Levine, *Main Street, U.S.S.R.* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1959), p. 46.

³⁰ See p. 328.

³¹ Levine, *op. cit.*, pp. 47, 48.

. . . Stalin remains at least a visual god. His statues far outnumber those of Lenin, and most of the major streets and thoroughfares still bear his name.³²

In Uzbekistan, in the Samarkand Historical Museum,

. . . Stalin was ail over—in every picture, every painting, every wall statement.³³

Immediately after the congress and before the new official anti-Stalinist course had assumed large proportions, a movement of protest against the dethroning of Stalin developed among the Communist youth of Stalin's native Georgia. The pro-Stalin agitation was intermingled with Georgian nationalist emotions and strong anti-Russian feelings.

. . . Under them [Stalin and Beria], Georgia was highly favored. It got big appropriations. . . . The only overt political disturbance in the USSR in many years occurred in Tiflis in March, 1956, on the third anniversary of Stalin's death. Stalin was not mentioned in the press—not a word—and citizens resented this; the next day students demonstrated all over the town, carrying Stalin portraits. This was, it is important to point out, not so much an anti-Soviet as an anti-Russian demonstration.³⁴

The true story of the disturbances was withheld from the Russian public; the press did not mention them. Foreign observers were able, however, to restore the picture.

. . . on March 4th, a group of students asked the Rector of the State University in Tbilisi for permission to stage a demonstration the following day to commemorate the third anniversary of Stalin's death. This request was refused, on the basis of a 1955 state decree which sanctions such demonstrations only on the birthdates of great figures, but not on death-dates. The following day, hundreds of students lined up in front of the enormous statue of Stalin in the central park of Tbilisi. Similar gatherings took place for the next three days, with each day more and more people participating. . . .

On the 9th, the Communist Party staged its own demonstration in honor of the unveiling of a statue of Lenin. On this day troops, army troops—not security troops—took over the city, lining the streets with machine guns and tanks. . . . Young students, many of them apparently still in our equivalent of high school, stoned cars, disrupted communications and transportation. . . . close to 11:30 in the evening, several thousand young students marched “in a human wave.” . . . A conservative estimate of casualties is 100 dead, many of them shot in the back trying to rush off.³⁵

³² Marvin L. Kalb, *Eastern Exposure* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1958), pp. 139, 140.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

³⁴ Gunther, *op. cit.*, p. 443.

³⁵ Kalb, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-63.

As 1956—the year of de-Stalinization—was approaching its end, the effects of the dangerous operation were becoming evident. Stalin was dragging down with him into the abyss many Russian institutions and doctrines and many Russian leaders. Severe criticism became loud in the Italian Communist Party; American and Canadian Communists, too, were among the vociferous critics. Tito could point to Khrushchev's revelations as proof of how right he had been in his anti-Stalinist moves. In the satellites, where so many "Titoists" had been imprisoned and executed, the new trends, it appeared, were opening up a path toward emancipation from Moscow's dictatorship. The Soviet bloc, it seemed, was tottering and beginning to disintegrate. The Communist parties were moving away from Russia. The new trends found expression in the slogan of "national" or "separate" paths to socialism: adherence to the Russian pattern, which was essentially Stalinist, was no longer obligatory. The danger to the Soviet empire inherent in the de-Stalinization prompted Khrushchev to put brakes on the new drive. Stalin was partially restored to an honorable place.

At a New Year's reception in the Kremlin in 1957, Khrushchev

. . . warmly praised Stalin as "a great fighter against imperialism" and "a great Marxist."

* * * * *

"I grew up under Stalin." . . . "Stalin made mistakes but we should share responsibility for those mistakes because we were associated with him."³⁶

The magazine *Voprosy Istorii* (Problems of History) stated:

Despite the gravity of J. V. Stalin's mistakes we cannot view his activity solely through the prism of these mistakes. This would be a distortion of actual party history, in which J. V. Stalin figures as an outstanding Marxist-Leninist. . . .³⁷

The same article quotes Khrushchev as saying:

. . . the chief and most important matter for Marxist-Leninists is the defense of the interests of the working class, the cause of socialism, and the struggle against the enemies of Marxism-Leninism—in this main and most important respect, may God grant, as the saying goes, that every communist could fight as Stalin fought.³⁸

Events in Poland and the uprising in Hungary marked the crisis of the de-Stalinization. (These events will be discussed in a subsequent volume of this *Facts on Communism* series dealing with Soviet foreign

³⁶ *New York Times*, January 2, 1957, p. 1.

³⁷ "Za Leninskuyu Partiinost v Istoricheskoi Nauke" (For Lenin's Principle of the Party's Predominance in the Field of History), *Voprosy Istorii* (Problems of History), Moscow, No. 3, June-July 1957, p. 10.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

affairs.) In Moscow, these developments strengthened the position of the "conservative" Soviet leaders and prompted Khrushchev, in his fight to remain in power and conserve the Soviet bloc and Russia's leadership of it, to put an end to a development which, known as "the Thaw," had brought a degree of liberalization in post-Stalin policies.

3. Ferment Among Russian Intellectuals

"The Thaw," the phrase used to describe the political climate of the early post-Stalin era, came from the title of a novel by Ilya Ehrenburg. Ehrenburg, a writer sensitive to the changing course and usually playing a semiofficial role, depicted, in his otherwise undistinguished novel, the new, milder climate and the end of repressions. *The Thaw* was followed by a number of other books written in a freer spirit and sometimes containing bold criticism of the conditions that had prevailed under Stalin's "Socialism." Even the tenet of "Socialist realism" seemed to be coming in question. Similar developments prevailed during the years 1954-56 in the fields of history and philosophy.

The politically significant literary event of 1956-57 was a new novel by Vladimir Dudintsev, *Not By Bread Alone*. The unfavorable reception of the book by the press and its condemnation by the Communist party marked the end phase of the "thaw." In the book

. . . A school teacher turned inventor, by name Lopatkin, invents a new method for casting drain pipes. . . . Lopatkin, a lone wolf, is frustrated at every turn in trying to get his invention adopted, although it will save the government millions of rubles. His bureaucratic boss, Drozdov, blocks his way, as do the ministries involved. But Drozdov's wife falls in love with Lopatkin and helps him; so does an elderly crackpot individualist inventor. Lopatkin almost starves, but against a variety of gross obstacles pushes doggedly ahead with his invention. He is eventually accused of betraying state secrets, and is packed off to a labor camp in Siberia.³⁹

Mention of Siberian "labor camps" in Soviet novels, up to then taboo (except when the writer was to praise the humanitarian setup of the camps) was now permitted; it served to stress the improvement in the general atmosphere.

. . . But one of the judges on the military court that convicted him [Lopatkin] is an honest man, and helps to clear his name. He is released from imprisonment, and at last his invention is adopted and put to use, after a rival machine, supported by Lopatkin's bureaucratic rivals, is proved to be a failure. . . . Lopatkin and the former Madame Drozdov marry and presumably live happily ever after, but Drozdov, the villain, becomes a vice minister. Even so, this ending is apt, artistically effective, and true to Soviet life.⁴⁰

³⁹ Gunther, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

The significance of the novel and the boldness of its author were seen in the fact that

. . . The hero is an individualist, who, when down on his luck, calmly lives on borrowed money instead of working. Moreover (horror of Soviet horrors) he sleeps with another man's wife, and other women express interest in his person. The thesis that a good Communist has no room for a personal life is challenged, and the hero wins through in the end, without being forced to give up his principles. One of the most significant lines of the book is spoken by Lopatkin toward the end, when he emerges from incarceration. "Somebody who has learned to think can never be deprived of freedom." Also the presentation of Drozdov shows up a familiar Soviet type for what it is—the man who makes unscrupulous use of Communism to satisfy and expand his own ruthless ego and ambition.⁴¹

Published at the end of the "thaw" era, Dudintsev's novel provoked conflicts in Soviet literary circles and Communist-controlled writers' organizations:

Hundreds of literary meetings took place to discuss *Not By Bread Alone*, and thousands of agitated words were printed about it. In the end Dudintsev was rebuked, but was not otherwise punished as far as I know. . . . Dudintsev, who must be a resolute character, refused to accept rebuke. One report of the meeting condemning him said that "he brushed aside all criticism in a demagogic speech." People *can* (sometimes) express themselves in the Soviet Union. Then an astonishing thing happened. No other personage than Mr. Khrushchev leaped into the struggle, and attacked the book for being "slanderous."⁴²

In three speeches before meetings of Soviet writers in May and July 1958, Khrushchev tried to restore the predominant role of the Communist party in literature and art—a Stalinist principle that was assailed and negated by many during the "thaw" era. Though repudiating Stalin's extremes, Khrushchev said:

. . . The Soviet people reject equally such an, in effect, slanderous work as Dudintsev's book "Not By Bread Alone" and such cloyingly sweet films as "Unforgettable 1919" and "Kuban Cossacks."

Unfortunately, there are among our workers in literature and the arts advocates of "creative freedom" who desire us to pass by, not to notice, not to subject to principled appraisal and not to criticize works that portray the life of Soviet society in a distorted fashion. It appears to these people that the guidance of literature and the arts by the party and the state is oppressive. They sometimes oppose this guidance openly; more often, however, they conceal their feelings and desires behind talk of excessive tutelage, the fettering of initiative, etc.

We assert openly that such views run counter to the Leninist principles of the party's and state's attitude to questions of literature and the arts.⁴³

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 288, 289.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 289.

⁴³ *Pravda*, August 28, 1957, p. 4.

The tenet that independence of literature from the Communist party is an evil was emphasized by the Soviet leader:

. . . One of the primary principles is that Soviet literature and art must be indissolubly linked with the policy of the Communist party, which constitutes the vital foundation of the Soviet system. . . .

* * * * * * *

It is impossible to tolerate such grave shortcomings in the work of the Moscow branch of the Writers Union, which should set an example for the unions of creative workers in other cities. We hope that the writers themselves, with the aid of the party organizations, will probe the causes of these shortcomings and take steps to correct matters.⁴⁴

These principles were applied in the case of Boris Pasternak and his novel, *Doctor Zhivago*. A strictly independent writer, known as a non-Communist, the Soviet poet, translator and novelist quietly wrote this major work during the last Stalin and early post-Stalin years. The novel dealt with the civil war era in Russia, the fighting, horror, and chaos; but the author was objective in picturing the "Whites," the guerillas, the everyday life, and the prevailing misery and want; his implicit appeal was for a return to Christian ethics. Soviet publishers, accustomed to presenting anti-Bolsheviks as vicious creatures, were uncertain whether or not to publish the book. The magazine *Novyi Mir* rejected it in 1956. Still expecting that his novel would be published in Russia, Pasternak submitted it also to an Italian publisher, Feltrinelli. When the Union of Soviet Writers condemned the novel, it requested Feltrinelli to hold up publication. The novel was published in Italy in 1958 and was translated into many languages. In October 1958 the Swedish Academy awarded it the Nobel Prize for Literature. The author's first reaction was one of gratitude in his message to the Academy he said he was "immensely thankful, touched, proud, astonished, and abashed."

A storm, initiated by various Communist party groups, began to brew in Moscow:

Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev and other Soviet leaders sat near by as Vladimir Y. Semichastnyi, chief of the Young Communist League, called on the poet to emigrate to his "capitalist paradise."

Television showed more than 12,000 youngsters at a mass rally cheering as Mr. Semichastnyi described Mr. Pasternak as a "pig" who, by "dirtying" the place in which he eats and lives, has done what "even pigs do not do."

* * * * * * *

Mr. Pasternak, he said, is the proverbial "bad sheep" that appears "even in the good herd."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *New York Times*, October 30, 1958, pp. 1, 2.

If he wanted to emigrate, said the speaker,

. . . I am sure that neither our public nor the Government would create any obstacles.⁴⁶

The campaign against Pasternak continued for a certain time.

The Moscow section of the Soviet Union of Writers has petitioned the Government to strip "the traitor Pasternak" of his citizenship and expel him from the country. . . .

* * * * *

. . . Eight hundred critics and writers were said to have approved the petition unanimously.

Among other things they said: "No honest person, no writer, none who are loyal to the ideals of peace and progress will ever shake the hand of him who has betrayed his homeland and his people."⁴⁷

Pasternak decided to renounce the Nobel Prize. In his second message to the Swedish Academy, he said:

In view of the meaning given to this honor in the community to which I belong, I should abstain from the undeserved prize that has been awarded to me. Do not meet my voluntary refusal with ill-will.⁴⁸

On November 1, the government, disregarding Pasternak's new message to Stockholm, announced:

In the event that Pasternak should wish to leave the Soviet Union permanently, the Socialist regime and people he has slandered in his anti-Soviet work, "Doctor Zhivago," will not raise any obstacles. He can leave the Soviet Union and experience personally "all the fascinations of the capitalist paradise."⁴⁹

Pasternak then wrote a letter to Khrushchev:

I am tied to Russia by birth, by life and by work. I cannot imagine my fate separated from and outside of Russia.

* * * * *

Whatever my mistakes and errors, I could not imagine that I should be in the center of such a political campaign as has started to be fanned around my name in the West.

Having become conscious of that, I informed the Swedish Academy of my voluntary renunciation of the Nobel Prize.

Leaving my motherland would equal death for me. And that is why I ask that you do not take this final measure in relation to me.

With my hand on my heart, I can say that I have done something for Soviet literature and can be useful to it in the future.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴⁷ *New York Times*, November 1, 1958, p. 1.

⁴⁸ *New York Times*, October 30, 1958, p. 3.

⁴⁹ *New York Times*, November 2, 1958, p. 2.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

The violent anti-Pasternak campaign continued, however, and the author decided to make a retreat. In a letter to *Pravda*, dated November 6, he said:

I accepted the award of the Nobel Prize as a literary distinction. I rejoiced at it and I expressed this in the telegram addressed to the secretary of the Swedish Academy.

But I was wrong. I had reason to make such a mistake because I had already been nominated as candidate for it approximately five years ago, i.e., before my novel existed.

After the end of the week when I saw the scope of the political campaign around my novel, I realized myself that this award was of a political measure, which has now resulted in monstrous consequences, and on my own initiative, without being compelled by anybody, sent my voluntary refusal.

* * * * *

I have never had the intention of causing harm to my state and my people.⁵¹

At the same time the author had to say, "I regret:"

The editorial office of *Novy Mir* warned me that the novel might be understood by readers as a work directed against the October Revolution and the foundations of the Soviet system. I did not realize this, and I now regret it.

Indeed, if one were to take into consideration the conclusions emanating from a critical appraisal of the novel, it would appear that in my novel I am allegedly maintaining the following erroneous principles. I am supposed to have alleged that my revolution is a historically illegal phenomenon, that the October Revolution was such, and that it brought unhappiness to Russia and the downfall of the Russian intelligentsia.

It is clear to me that I cannot endorse such clumsy allegations. At the same time, my work, which has received the Nobel Prize, gave cause to this regrettable interpretation, and this is the reason why I finally gave up the prize.⁵²

The letter, a painful sacrifice for this proud and independent Soviet writer, was accepted as a sign of repentance on the part of Pasternak and no repressive measures were taken against him.

Boris Pasternak died at home on May 30, 1960.

4. End of Collective Leadership

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union continued to grow in size after Stalin's death. From a reported 6,882,145 members at the time of the Nineteenth Congress (October 1952), the membership grew to 7,215,505 in February 1956, the date of the Twentieth Congress, and

⁵¹ *New York Times*, November 6, 1958, p. 4.

⁵² *Ibid.*

to 8,239,000 in January 1959, when the Twenty-First Congress took place.⁵³ By January 1, 1960 the membership reached 8,708,000.⁵⁴

In addition to the two congresses held during the post-Stalin era, plenary sessions of the Central Committee (the so-called plenums), more regularly convened, attained some importance. Expression of divergent views, banned at the congresses, was permitted in the plenums of the Central Committee; the fights between the Malenkov and Khrushchev factions took up part of the sessions. Only some of the proceedings of the plenums, in the main those dealing with economic issues, were made public; the record of discussions of internal political affairs or foreign policies remained secret. It was the "secretariat" of the Central Committee, which Khrushchev had controlled since mid-March 1953, that proved to be the strongest of the party bodies and agencies and, as had been the case under Stalin, the victor over all oppositionist factions and leaders. The Presidium of the Central Committee now met weekly.

The Presidium, which is the party's high command meets regularly at least once a week, he [Khrushchev] added. Similarly the Council of Ministers, which is the central body of the Government, meets at least once weekly, he said. Questions of high policy are settled by a simple majority vote, but "usually there is unanimous decision," he continued.⁵⁵

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union remained a member of the Cominform; it was, in fact, the leading member of that body. However, the Cominform itself, which had never been of great importance in the international Communist movement, had been on the decline since 1955 as a result of the rapprochement of Soviet Communists with Tito's party in Yugoslavia. Expelled from and vilified by the Cominform, Tito not only refused to rejoin its ranks, but demanded its dissolution as a component element of a worldwide de-Stalinization; nor did the Cominform enjoy great prestige in the satellites. To the Soviet Communist leadership the abolition of the Cominform was no great loss inasmuch as the Foreign Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had long before assumed all the functions of a leading international Communist body.

⁵³ *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Large Soviet Encyclopedia) (2nd ed.; Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Nauchnoe Izdatelstvo "Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya" (State Scientific Publishing House "The Large Soviet Encyclopedia")), vol. L (1957), p. 271; and *Vneocherednoi XXI S'ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuz 27 Yanvarya—5 Fevralya 1959 Goda, Stenograficheskii Otchet* (Extraordinary Twenty-first Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, January 27–February 5, 1959, Stenographic Report) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury (State Publishing House for Political Literature), 1959), vol. I, p. 112. The figures given above include both full members in the Communist Party and candidates for membership.

⁵⁴ *Partinaya Zhizn* (Party Life), as quoted in *New York Times*, March 17, 1960, p. C-8.

⁵⁵ *New York Times*, May 11, 1957, p. 3.

In April 1956 the eight Communist parties comprising the Cominform published a statement announcing its dissolution:

The Central Committees of the Communist and Workers' Parties comprising the Information Bureau, having exchanged views regarding its work, recognized that the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties, founded by them in 1947, had fulfilled its function, in view of which they unanimously agreed to dissolve it and to cease the publication of its journal "For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy!"⁵⁶

In its final issue, the Cominform's newspaper made some statements that were a concession to ideas of emancipation from Moscow, labeled as "national communism":

. . . each Communist and Workers' Party has its own concrete practical tasks which arise from the diversity of conditions in different countries, conditions which determine the variety of forms of struggle for the interests of the working class and the entire toiling people.⁵⁷

Creation of a new international organization, suggested by various Communist parties in the following year, was rejected because such an organization, which, it was obvious, would be controlled by Moscow, would be contrary to the pretense and claim of "complete independence" and "sovereignty" of the "people's democracies." Instead, it was decided to hold frequent bilateral and multilateral meetings of the leadership of various Communist parties, grouped regionally or otherwise. The existing cooperative arrangements, including exchange of information and preparation of meetings, between the foreign departments of the central committees of the individual Communist parties were maintained.

Of the meetings subsequently convened, the most important were those held in Moscow in November 1957, during the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Soviet revolution. In the 18 months between the dissolution of the Cominform and the Moscow meetings there had occurred the uprising in Hungary, the Soviet-Polish conflict and renewed intensification of trends toward "national communism" in various countries. One outcome of the meetings was that the Yugoslav Communists again turned against Moscow, and Soviet ire was now directed at "national communism." Under the label of "revisionism," "national communism" was assailed as the "main danger," while Stalinism (now labeled "dogmatism") was viewed as an error of only secondary magnitude.

The meetings in Moscow were tantamount to an international Communist congress. A great majority of 83 Communist parties (with a membership of 33 million) was represented. In the "Manifesto"

⁵⁶ *For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy*, Bucharest, No. 16 (389), April 17, 1956, p. 1.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

signed by 65 parties, they reiterated the old slogans: Adherence to Marxism-Leninism, "struggle for peace," "peaceful coexistence," etc.⁵⁸ At the same time the 12 Communist parties of the Soviet bloc of European and Asian nations signed a sharply worded "declaration" against "revisionism" and in favor of the orthodox "proletarian (or "socialist") internationalism." The Yugoslavs refused to sign the declaration.

In condemning dogmatism, the Communist parties believe that the main danger at present is revisionism or, in other words, right-wing opportunism, which as a manifestation of bourgeois ideology paralyzes the revolutionary energy of the working class and demands the preservation or restoration of capitalism. . . .

Modern revisionism seeks to smear the great teachings of Marxism-Leninism, declares that it is "outmoded" and alleges that it has lost its significance for social progress. The revisionists try to exorcise the revolutionary spirit of Marxism, to undermine faith in socialism among the working class and the working people in general. They deny the historical necessity for a proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat during the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, deny the leading role of the Marxist-Leninist party. . . .⁵⁹

The leading role of the Soviet Union in the "Socialist camp" was proclaimed a supreme principle; the Warsaw Pact, which subordinated the military forces of the satellites to a Soviet marshal, was approved:

The Conference has also found it necessary to stress in its Declaration the leading role of the Soviet Union in the socialist camp. . . .

. . . The tremendous successes of the soviet people in communist construction, in the development of the economy, science and culture, as well as the peace-loving foreign policy of the Soviet state represent an inspiring example for the working class, for all toilers, for progressive people of the entire globe. The Soviet Union has become the center and bulwark of peace, world progress and international socialism.⁶⁰

From the Moscow meetings Khrushchev emerged a recognized leader of the international Communist movement except among those parties and groups which belonged to dissident factions. A new international monthly Communist magazine appeared in Prague in September 1958 under the title *World Marxist Review: Problems of Peace and Socialism*. It is now being issued in 26 languages.

Until the summer of 1957, inasmuch as the Presidium consisted of divergent Communist factions and personalities, both the slogan and the practice of "collective leadership" were maintained. One of these factions, headed by Khrushchev, enjoyed the support not only of the Central Committee but of the ramified party "apparat" in the provinces.

⁵⁸ *Pravda*, November 23, 1957, p. 2.

⁵⁹ *New York Times*, November 22, 1957, p. 6.

⁶⁰ *Kommunist*, Moscow, No. 17, December 1957, p. 28.

The other faction, led by the veterans Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich, though its leaders were not unanimously in agreement on all issues, claimed rank and prestige as the living heir to Lenin and actual builder of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union during its 40-year history. The members of the Malenkov-Molotov-Kaganovich faction were never permitted, however, to state their views in public or in the press; in order to stay in the party they had to remain silent. Actually they strove for the overthrow of Khrushchev as leader of the Communist party; a victory by them would have meant a different political course for the Soviet government, since the faction was the nucleus of a different Communist trend.

The sharp controversy came to a head in June-July 1957. Molotov and his group intended to seize a moment when only eight members were in Moscow for a meeting of the Presidium. The meeting

. . . was extremely agitated, and Khrushchev was not able to hold the chair. It seems that Molotov had engineered this meeting for a time when he knew that several outright Khrushchevites would be away from town, vacationing. Only seven members, aside from Khrushchev himself, were present. The lineup to remove Khrushchev was four to three—some versions say five to two. Apparently Bulganin deserted Khrushchev when it appeared certain that he was beaten, and then came back. Only Mikoyan stood by his side right through.

So, it seemed, Khrushchev was out. Malenkov was to become prime minister again, and Shepilov party secretary. Khrushchev would be relegated to the comparatively minor post of Minister for Agriculture. But Khrushchev did not admit defeat.⁶¹

Khrushchev did not submit to the decision of the Presidium; instead he turned to the members of the (in theory at least) higher-ranking Central Committee; within 24 hours 70 full members of the Central Committee (out of 133) demanded an immediate meeting of the committee to consider the situation. Helped by the planes at Marshal Zhukov's disposal, the majority of the Central Committee members were able to reach Moscow. The session opened on June 22.

. . . the meeting lasted eight full days, from June 22, and was stormy. Suslov was in the chair. There were 309 delegates present, including alternates and others. The Soviet account of all this, which does not by any means tell the full story, stresses above all the extraordinarily "democratic" nature of the proceedings. Two hundred fifteen of those present asked to speak; sixty did make speeches, and the others submitted written memoranda. Molotov, Kaganovich, and Malenkov each spoke twice, defending their attitude. At the end the vote was unanimous in favor of Khrushchev, with one abstention. Molotov—considerable tribute to his inflexibility and

⁶¹ Gunther, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

courage—refused to go through with the usual hypocritical business of agreeing to his own condemnation, and abstained.⁶²

The official communiqué on the meeting of the Central Committee, published a week later, said that the three members of the “anti-party group” (as well as Dmitri Shepilov, who had sided with them) were excluded from the Central Committee and the Presidium; instead Marshal Zhukov and several others were elevated to full membership in the Presidium. The “anti-party” men were not, however, expelled from the party, nor were they arrested. They were given various jobs in distant provinces.

Perhaps the most significant thing about the whole affair was that none of those dismissed were shot. This, needless to say, marks a momentous change in Soviet techniques. The culprits, far from being executed, were given jobs, and, although disgraced, were still made use of and in fact allowed to play roles in the national activity. True, they were put in posts a long way from Moscow. Molotov became ambassador to Outer Mongolia—not an unimportant post. Malenkov was made manager of a hydroelectric installation, one of the biggest in the Soviet Union, at Ust-Kamenogorsk, in Kazakhstan. Kaganovich is supposed to be running a cement factory in the Urals, and Shepilov was appointed to the faculty of an institute in Kirghizia. As always, the Soviet people were not told about these developments for a considerable time, and even now have not been told everything.⁶³

For a time the names of the dissidents were frequently mentioned in public meetings, where abuse was heaped on them. Although this campaign gradually calmed down, the ideas and political program of the Communist opposition remained a potential and subversive force.

The main accusations leveled against the “anti-party” group in the official statements and by the Khrushchev faction, which were of course anything but objective, depicted the opposition and its program as follows:

1. In the area of international relations the opposition, and Molotov in particular, refused to accept the new idea that it was possible to achieve communism without armed revolutions and bloody wars.⁶⁴ He rather

(a) adhered to the old doctrine that war remains inevitable and

(b) refused to agree to the principle of “national roads” to socialism;

. . . He [Molotov] opposed the fundamental proposition worked out by the party on the possibility of preventing wars in the present condition, on the possibility of different ways of transition to socialism in different countries, on the necessity of strengthening contacts between the C.P.S.U. [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] and progressive parties abroad.⁶⁵

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 249.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 250, 251.

⁶⁴ *Izvestia*, July 12, 1957, p. 1.

⁶⁵ *Pravda*, July 4, 1957, p. 2.

(c) Molotov opposed the rapprochement with Yugoslavia and the agreement with Austria and Japan.

For a long time, Comrade Molotov, in his capacity of Foreign Minister, far from taking, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, measures to improve relations between the U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia, repeatedly came out against the measures which the Presidium of the Central Committee was carrying out to improve relations with Yugoslavia. . . .

Comrade Molotov raised obstacles to the conclusion of the state treaty with Austria and the improvement of relations with that country, which lies in the center of Europe. . . . He was also against normalization of relations with Japan.⁶⁵

(d) Finally, Molotov opposed the new policy of visits of Russian leaders to other countries:

. . . In particular he denied the advisability of establishing personal contacts between the Soviet leaders and the statesmen of other countries. . . .⁶⁷

2. In Soviet internal affairs the opposition was adhering to old notions and policies (the term "Stalinism" was not used but the sense of this indictment was that the opposition disagreed with the anti-Stalinist course):

Comrades Malenkov, Kaganovich, and Molotov put up a stubborn resistance to the measures which the Central Committee and the whole of our party were carrying out to do away with the consequences of the personality cult, to eliminate the violations of revolutionary law that had been committed, and provide such conditions as would preclude their recurrence. . . .

. . . they set out to change the policy of the party, to drag the party back to the erroneous methods of leadership condemned by the Twentieth Party Congress. . . .

. . . they were and still are shackled by old notions and methods, they have drifted away from the life of the party and country, failed to see the new conditions, the new situation, they take a conservative attitude, stubbornly cling to obsolete forms and methods of work that are no longer in keeping with the interests of the advance towards communism. . . .

. . . they are sectarian and dogmatic, and they use a scholastic inert approach to Marxism-Leninism.⁶⁸

In particular, the "anti-party" group opposed the rehabilitation of the deported nationalities—the Balkars, Chechens, Ingushs, Kalmuks, and Karachais:

. . . The [Communist] party has corrected this mistake that was one of the results of the personality cult. . . .

* * * * *

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

. . . The anti-party group of Malenkov, Kaganovich and Molotov opposed this Leninist policy.⁶⁹

Malenkov was also accused of complicity with Beria in the bloody Leningrad affair.

It is now established that the "Leningrad affair," which was organized with the active assistance of Malenkov, was falsified.⁷⁰

Much of the blame lies with Comrade Malenkov, who fell under the complete influence of Beria and acted as his shadow and tool. Holding a high position in the party and state, Comrade Malenkov not only failed to restrain J. V. Stalin but made skillful use of his weaknesses and habits in the last years of his life. On many occasions he urged him to actions that deserve the strongest condemnation.⁷¹

3. In economic affairs they opposed the reforms carried out on the initiative of the Khrushchev group:

They were against the extension of the rights of the Union Republics in the sphere of economic and cultural development and in the sphere of legislation and against enhancing the role of the local Soviets in the fulfillment of these tasks. Thereby, the anti-party group resisted the party's firm course towards the more rapid development of economy and culture in the national republics, a course ensuring the further promotion of Leninist friendship between all the peoples of our country. Far from understanding the party's measures aimed at combating bureaucracy and reducing the inflated state apparatus, the anti-party group opposed them. On all these points, it came out against the Leninist principle of democratic centralism being implemented by the party.

The group persistently opposed and sought to frustrate so vastly important a measure as the reorganization of industrial management and the setting up of economic councils in the economic areas, approved by the whole of the party and the people.⁷²

Accusing Khrushchev of a "pro-peasant," or "populist" deviation they opposed his appeal to the self-interests of the peasantry and the kolkhozes:

. . . They would not recognize the necessity of increased material incentives for the collective farm peasantry in expanding output of agricultural products. They objected to the abolition of the old bureaucratic system of planning on the collective farms and the introduction of a new system of planning, such as would release the initiative of the collective farms in carrying on their economy, a measure which has already yielded positive results. They drifted so far away from reality as to be unable to see the

⁶⁹ M. Tsameryan, "Leninskaya Politika Rasshireniya Prav Respublik" (Lenin's Policy of Expanding the Rights of the Republics), *Trud* (Labor), Moscow, July 13, 1957, p. 2.

⁷⁰ N. M. Shvernik, Speech, *Pravda*, July 7, 1957, p. 4.

⁷¹ Khrushchev, Speech, *Pravda*, August 28, 1957.

⁷² *Pravda*, July 4, 1957, p. 1.

actual possibility of abolishing at the end of this year obligatory deliveries of farm produce by collective farmers from their individual plots.⁷³

The program of catching up with and overtaking the United States in the production of milk, meat, and butter met with opposition on the part of this group; the Malenkov group considered that such a slogan could lessen the interest in the increase of steel, pig iron and coal production. "It is a rightist peasant deviation," said Malenkov.⁷⁴ The cultivation of virgin lands also called forth protests:

They carried on an entirely unwarranted struggle against the party's appeal, vigorously supported by the collective farms, regions and republics, to overtake the U.S.A. in the next few years in per capita output of milk, butter and meat. . . .

It cannot be considered accidental that Comrade Molotov, a member of the anti-party group, who manifested a conservative and narrow-minded attitude, far from realizing the necessity of making use of virgin lands, resisted the cultivation of 35,000,000 hectares of virgin lands, an enterprise which acquired such tremendous importance in the economy of our country.⁷⁵

A few months after the removal of the "anti-party" men from the supreme bodies, the pro-Khrushchev minister, Marshal Georgi Zhukov, was likewise ousted. A new "plenum" of the Central Committee, held at the end of October (1957), accused Minister of Defense and Presidium member Zhukov of striving for greater autonomy of the military forces—a sin of which a long line of Soviet military leaders had been accused and for which some had been executed under Stalin.

. . . the Central Committee found [Khrushchev said] that the former Minister of Defense, Comrade Zhukov, had violated the Leninist principle of leadership in the Armed Forces and had pursued the dangerous line of curtailing the work of party organizations, political agencies and Military Councils and of cutting off the army from the party, which is very harmful to the defense of our Fatherland and to the building of socialism and communism.

The resolution of the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union aims at a further increase of the role of the party in guiding the Armed Forces.⁷⁶

"He [Zhukov] asked for leave and it was granted," Mr. Khrushchev said. "He deserves a leave."

"He did not turn out well as a political figure."⁷⁷

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *New York Times*, July 10, 1957, p. 3.

⁷⁵ *Pravda*, July 4, 1957, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Khrushchev, Speech Delivered November 25, 1957 at the Reception in the Kremlin for Graduates of the Moscow Military Academy, *Pravda*, November 26, 1957, p. 1.

⁷⁷ *New York Times*, November 14, 1957, p. 23.

Unlike the "anti-party" leaders, Zhukov was not given a new appointment and he retired to private life.

He [Marshal Zhukov] has "learned to fish quite well," is drawing his pension and is writing his memoirs, the present Defense Minister, Marshal Rodion Y. Malinovsky, said. . . .⁷⁸

Premier Nikolai Bulganin, otherwise a supporter of Khrushchev, had sided for a brief moment with the "anti-party" group in crucial June 1957. He was forced to resign on March 27, 1958. Nikita Khrushchev became Premier.

With the summit posts of both the party and the government now concentrated in his hands, Khrushchev reached full power. "Collective leadership" was no longer discussed, no longer mentioned in the press or in public speeches; the leadership was again personal, as it had been under Stalin, although up to now Khrushchev has not used his personal power in the terroristic way that Stalin did.

5. Changes in Ideology

At the Twentieth and Twenty-first Congresses of the Communist party of the Soviet Union, Khrushchev announced certain modifications of some general principles guiding Soviet policy. Prepared in advance at closed sessions, and often violently opposed by the "anti-party group," the new tenets reflected in the main the new trends that had begun to prevail under Khrushchev.

Mikoyan, second highest leader after Khrushchev, considered the Twentieth, the first post-Stalin, Congress as more important than any of the congresses held in the three decades between 1924 and 1956:

It would be no exaggeration to say that the 20th party congress is the most important congress in the history of our party since Lenin. *The Leninist spirit and Leninism permeated all our work and all our decisions, just as if Lenin were alive and with us.*⁷⁹

In his report at the open sessions of the congress, Khrushchev proceeded to refute the Leninist-Stalinist doctrine that wars are "inevitable" as long as the capitalist system prevails in the major countries.

Millions of people all over the world are asking whether another war is really inevitable, whether mankind, which has already experienced two devastating wars, must go through still a third one? Marxists must answer this question, taking into consideration the epoch-making changes of the last decades.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *New York Times*, June 10, 1959, p. 10.

⁷⁹ *Pravda*, February 18, 1956, p. 6.

⁸⁰ *Pravda*, February 15, 1956, p. 4.

Lenin and Stalin were not wrong, Khrushchev announced; the situation, he said, has changed since the founding fathers conceived their theory:

As we know, there is a Marxist-Leninist precept that wars are inevitable as long as imperialism exists. . . .

For that period, the above-mentioned thesis was absolutely correct. At the present time, however, the situation has changed radically. Now there is a world camp of socialism which has become a mighty force. . . .

. . . War is not a fatalistic inevitability. Today there are mighty social and political forces possessing formidable means to prevent the imperialists from unleashing war and, if they try to start it, to give a smashing rebuff to the aggressors and frustrate their adventurist plans.⁸¹

In this connection, Anastas Mikoyan declared that the notion of capitalism and imperialism inherited from Stalin was no longer correct; Soviet sociology and political science are inadequate:

We are seriously lagging in the study of capitalism's contemporary stage; we do not study facts and figures deeply; we often restrict ourselves for agitation purposes to individual facts about the symptoms of an approaching crisis or about the impoverishment of the working people, rather than making an all-round and profound evaluation of the phenomena of life abroad. Our *economists*, in studying the economies of the Soviet Union and the people's democracies, often skim the surface and fail to plumb the depths; they produce no serious analysis or generalizations and avoid elucidating the peculiarities of the development of individual countries.⁸²

Stalin's predictions, Mikoyan continued, that capitalism would lose markets and was already entering an era of decay were false:

Stalin's well-known pronouncement in "Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R." concerning the U.S.A., Britain and France, to the effect that after the world market had been split up "the volume of production in these countries will contract," can hardly help us in our analysis of the condition of the economy of contemporary capitalism and is hardly correct. This assertion does not explain the complex and contradictory phenomena of contemporary capitalism and the fact that capitalist production has grown in many countries since the war.⁸³

This apparent concession to a more moderate trend was not tantamount, however, to the inauguration of a consistent peaceful policy, a renunciation of Communist territorial expansion. Communism's progress, Khrushchev repeated, will continue; it may, however, be achieved without war.

. . . Wars, Khrushchev told the 20th Congress of his Party. . . . can be avoided because the "imperialists" will be sensible enough to abstain from

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Pravda*, February 18, 1956, p. 6.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

military operations. Not that the Soviet Union will abstain from vigorously assisting "anti-imperialist" and Communist upheavals abroad, or the territorial expansion of "Socialist nations," but the opponents, recognizing the superior power of the Soviets, will retreat and give in. . . .

* * * * *

. . . Khrushchev expects to be able to augment the "Socialist" realm without a war because he is certain that his adversaries, being sensible men, are aware of their inferiority. They will not even try to face the Soviet ground forces, which are several times larger than theirs; and they will not use atomic weapons, if only because this would solve nothing. . . .

Communism is superior to capitalism, Khrushchev frankly told the Canadian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, because "Communists are tougher and more patient." They can stand up to sacrifice better than the Westerners, he asserted. The West "will not accept the sacrifices that prolonged defense preparations involve."⁸⁴

Another old tenet, also inherited from Lenin and Stalin, was that the transition from capitalism to socialism is marked by bloody revolutions and civil wars; this tenet takes a dim view of parliaments. In the de-Stalinizing mood which prevailed at the time of the Twentieth Congress, Khrushchev proceeded to refute the "inevitability" of such prospects; consideration for the newly-won friendship with the "neutralist," though non-Communist, nations of Asia and Africa (India, Burma, Indonesia, Egypt, Syria, and some others) prompted Khrushchev to soften, at least in words, the Communist attitude toward democratic constitutions:

. . . the question arises of whether it is possible to go over to socialism by using parliamentary means. No such course was open to the Russian Bolsheviks, who were the first to effect this transition.⁸⁵

Yes, Khrushchev answers,

. . . this institution [the parliament], traditional in many highly developed capitalist countries, may become an agency of genuine democracy, of democracy of the working people.

The winning of a firm parliamentary majority based on the mass revolutionary movement of the proletariat and of the working people would create conditions for the working class of many capitalist and formerly colonial countries to make fundamental social changes. . . .⁸⁶

Violent revolutions are not generally rejected.

. . . There is no doubt that in a number of capitalist countries violent overthrow of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the sharp aggravation of class struggle connected with this are inevitable. But the forms of social revolution vary. And it is not true that we regard violence and civil war as the only way to remake society. . . .⁸⁷

⁸⁴ David J. Dallin, "Khrushchev's Berlin Campaign," *The New Leader*, vol. XLII, No. 14 (April 6, 1959), p. 9.

⁸⁵ *Pravda*, February 15, 1956, p. 4.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

Khrushchev stressed, however, his adherence to the old principle that development toward socialism, even in parliamentary form, is possible only under the leadership of the "working class," meaning the Communist party.

In all the forms of transition to socialism, an absolute and decisive requirement is political leadership of the working class, headed by its vanguard. The transition to socialism is impossible without this.⁸⁸

The third innovation in ideology was represented by Khrushchev's attempt at collaboration with nations and political parties which, in the Communist concept, occupy a middle position between imperialism and communism: first, the ruling parties and governments of former colonial countries, and second, the socialist parties of the West. Not exactly novel, these ideas were now considered more than a passing tactical maneuver. We have to work untiringly, Khrushchev said,

. . . to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation with the Republic of India, Burma, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Egypt, Syria and other countries which stand for peace; to support countries which refuse to be involved in military blocs; to cooperate with all forces seeking to preserve peace.⁸⁹

This policy prevailed for a number of years; it had its first crucial test in the Soviet-Egyptian conflict over Iraq in 1959 and the Tibetan uprising in the same year. These events proved that Communist governments did not respect the principle of non-interference in another nation's affairs and the sanctity of treaties.

Collaboration with the socialist parties was believed a step toward the "unity of the working class."

. . . Unity of the working class, of its trade unions, unity of action of its political parties, the communists, the socialists and other workers' parties, is acquiring exceptional importance.

Not a few of the misfortunes harassing the world today result from the fact that in many countries the working class has been split for many years and its various detachments do not present a united front—which only plays into the hands of the reactionary forces. Yet today, in our opinion, a prospect of changing this situation is opening up. . . .

. . . Cooperation is possible and essential with those circles of the socialist movement which have different views from ours on the forms of transition to socialism. Among them are many who are honestly mistaken on this question, but this is no obstacle to cooperation.⁹⁰

In the same year Khrushchev had occasion to test his new strategy in his talks with the Labor Party in London and the French Socialists in

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Moscow. His attempts failed. The Socialist International likewise rejected his bid.

In the 3 years between the Twentieth and Twenty-first Congresses of the Communist Party (1956 and 1959), Khrushchev's trend toward moderation ended. Although theories and policies rejected in 1956 were never revived, modifications in program and theory took another direction. Reinstated in the role of leader of the worldwide Communist movement, the Communist party of the Soviet Union tried to visualize and forecast the development of the Soviet Union toward communism as a social setup. The goal, it declared, would be reached in the next 10 or 15 years.

. . . we now have every basis for declaring that communism is no longer in the distant future. . . .

* * * * *

. . . The Soviet people have set themselves a very realistic aim—to catch up in the coming few years with the USA per capita output of meat, milk and butter. . . .

. . . The estimates of our planning staff show that the Soviet Union can in the next fifteen years not only catch up with the USA in the production of basic items but also outstrip it.⁹¹

Khrushchev's main thesis at the Twenty-first Congress in 1959 was that

. . . The Soviet people, under the guidance of the party, has reached heights and accomplished a grandiose reorganization in all fields of economic and social-political life that make it possible for our country to enter a new, most important period of development—the *period of full-scale building of a communist society*.⁹²

This was the main idea of the 7-year plan adopted by the Twenty-first Congress, which was proclaimed the “decisive step” toward communism.

Concluding his address, Khrushchev told the congress:

. . . Many generations dreamed of a happy future, of an organization of society in which there will be no rich or poor, where there will be no oppression of toiling people. They dreamed of Communism. . . .

The seven-year period which we are entering now is a new, important, it might be said decisive, stage on the road of the historical development of our country. The communist party, the entire Soviet people are firmly convinced that they will take this boundary and will enter the wide plateau, and then new horizons will open, then it will be easier to go forward.⁹³

The notion of communism as a social and political structure that would be attained “in our time” was made more precise in Khrushchev's report. It was an immutable Soviet principle that “socialism” in

⁹¹ *Pravda*, November 7, 1957, p. 4.

⁹² *Pravda*, January 28, 1959, p. 2.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Russia had been attained in the 1930's and that the subsequent decades were a period of transition from socialism to communism. The issue was one of great importance because to sincere Russian Communists and to Communist youth the new "Socialist" setup, with its class distinctions, its inequality and the abject poverty of the mass of the population, was still a disappointment. It had to be replaced by another, better, social system—communism.

According to Khrushchev, no more than 10 or 15 years lie between "our time" and the era of accomplished communism; transition will be gradual and smooth; the Soviet Union is actually already entering, in one area after another, the radiant mansions of communism. Describing the Communist system on the threshold of which Russia stands, Khrushchev wisely warned that not too much must be expected; the standard of living he projected was indeed modest:

. . . it must be borne in mind that man's requirements of the means of existence are not limitless. A person cannot, for instance, consume more bread and other food than his organism needs. There are also definite limits to the amounts of clothing and housing that can be used. Of course, when we speak of satisfying people's requirements, we have in mind not whims or claims to luxuries, but the wholesome consumption of a cultured person.⁹⁴

He stressed the "limits" of the future standard of life:

Full satisfaction, within necessary and reasonable limits, of all the Soviet people's requirements of food, housing, and clothing can probably be attained in the near future.⁹⁵

On the other hand, the obligation of every citizen to work at full capacity was also emphasized:

. . . Communist construction will be completed when we shall have provided a complete abundance of everything needed to satisfy the requirements of all the people, when all the people learn to work according to their ability, so as to multiply and accumulate communal wealth.⁹⁶

In this context, what communism promised to the average Soviet citizen was a standard of life that now prevails in the United States for at least 80 percent of the population and has probably been surpassed by 50 percent. The other elements of future Russian communism, as Khrushchev envisioned it, were equally simple and earthy, for example, a modest reduction in working hours:

Reduction of the working day has always been regarded by the Communist party as one of its propagandistic goals. The draft control figures call for completing in 1960 the change-over of workers and employees to a seven-

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

hour working day, and of workers in leading underground occupations in coal and ore mining to a six-hour day. The change-over of workers and employees with a seven-hour working day to a forty-hour week is envisaged in 1962.⁹⁷

Other elements, too, of Khrushchev's socialism and communism had actually been component parts of the "capitalist system" for a long time:

It must be borne in mind, of course, that even under socialism a considerable and ever-increasing portion of material and cultural products will be divided among members of society independently of the quantity and quality of their work—that is, gratis. Society carries immense costs of free education, free health service, pensions, grants to large families, free club services, free libraries, etc.⁹⁸

Gradual transition from socialism to communism does not, Khrushchev said, imply abolition of inequality in the foreseeable future:

In articles and lectures, some social scientists voice the view that distribution according to work signifies application of bourgeois law to socialist society. They ask whether the time has not come to shift from this principle to equalitarian distribution of the social product among all personnel. One cannot agree with this view.⁹⁹

In the "first period of communism" the old wage system, termed "Socialist" by Khrushchev, but actually inherited from "capitalist" times, will prevail:

. . . Inasmuch as different people have different skills, talents and working ability and different sized families, it is natural that with equal pay for equal work they have in fact unequal incomes. But this system is inevitable in the first phase of communist society.¹⁰⁰

Equality of income would unjustly benefit shirkers:

. . . One cannot fail to see that leveling would lead to unjust distribution: the bad worker and the good would receive an equal share, which would be to the advantage of the slackers only. The material incentive for people to work better, to raise productivity and produce more, would be undermined. Leveling would signify not transition to communism, but discrediting of communism.¹⁰¹

Khrushchev repeated the old doctrine that the state and its machinery will "wither away" in the era of transition from socialism to communism, but compulsion akin to that which prevailed under the pre-revolutionary system will remain. "Our army, which has the function of protecting the Soviet state against attack from without," Khrushchev

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

said, "will remain; nor will the militia and 'the courts' or even the state security agencies (secret police) disappear soon":

. . . We have said and we say, that the state agencies of compulsion will gradually wither away and will ultimately die out altogether, as will the state itself. But, naturally, this will not happen abruptly, but gradually, at some stage of the development of Communist society. It would be a gross mistake, a leftist blunder, to weaken our state administrative agencies now, to abolish the agencies of compulsion which, as I have already said, are now mainly agencies of defense against the machinations of external enemies.¹⁰²

Definite functions will remain, of course, with the courts, the militia and the prosecutor's office. These agencies will continue to function in order to exert influence on persons who maliciously refuse to submit to socialist society's standards of behavior and are not amenable to persuasion.¹⁰³

Moreover, the state security agencies need strengthening. Though claiming "political indictments" were no longer being made in the Soviet Union, Khrushchev said:

. . . The state security agencies, which direct their spearhead primarily against agents sent into the country by imperialist states, must be strengthened, as must other agencies which have the mission of blocking the provocative actions and intrigues of our enemies from the imperialist camp.¹⁰⁴

6. Sputniks, New Ambitions, and the New Offensive

The last months of 1957 marked the beginning of a new period in the policies of the Soviet government. By that time Khrushchev had virtually eliminated his opponents from leadership and asserted a well-knit system of personal rule. In the ranks of the international Communist movement, after years of vacillation, disputes and defections, the guiding position of the Soviet party was again recognized. Some progress had been achieved in Soviet industry and agriculture. These developments brought a new rise in Soviet ambitions and a new self-assurance.

The self-assurance was in particular enhanced by the launching from Soviet bases of the first artificial satellites and by Soviet progress in the production of ballistic missiles.

. . . on October 4, came the successful launching of the first Soviet earth satellite, or artificial moon. Once again the world was stirred—and doubly shocked. The Sputnik has major importance in all sorts of fields, including its propaganda value and usefulness in pure scientific research, but perhaps the most vital and significant thing about it is its launching mechanism, which is of a weight and thrust far beyond anything

¹⁰² *Pravda*, November 19, 1957, p. 1.

¹⁰³ *Pravda*, January 28, 1959, p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

in possession of the free world at the moment; it staggered scientists everywhere that such a mechanism could have been developed by anybody. . . .

On November 3 came the launching of the second Sputnik, complete with dog.¹⁰⁵

The success of the Soviet Sputniks contrasted with the comparatively small achievements of the West in this field in the beginning. As a result, the Soviet feeling of backwardness in regard to technics and science began to give way to a new pride and sense of superiority:

What was left for the Americans to do? [Khrushchev asked.] They said:

We will also launch our own satellite. They announced that on a certain date they wanted to launch an American artificial Earth satellite the size of an orange and weighing about 1.5 kilograms. They also said that their satellite would be so small that it would not be visible. They actually did try to launch an artificial satellite but nothing came out of it. A film is now being shown which reveals how their satellite, without rising into the air, exploded on the spot and burned up along with the rocket.

Then there was nothing left for them to do but admit: Yes, the Soviet Union has indeed surpassed the U.S.A. in the development of science and technology, that the Soviet Union is training three times as many engineers every year as the U.S.A.¹⁰⁶

Soviet leading circles were convinced that Russia had finally reached the stage of "catching up with and overtaking America":

. . . We can double and more than double the weight of the satellite because the Soviet intercontinental missile possesses enormous capacity which would make it possible for us to launch an even heavier satellite to a still greater height. And we shall probably do so!¹⁰⁷

The success of the Sputniks was part of the Soviet progress in production of weapons, especially intercontinental ballistic missiles, which are able, Moscow asserted, to reach the United States and which, if carrying atomic warheads, would have tremendous destructive power.

On August 26, 1957, the Soviet government announced the successful launching of its "ultimate weapon":

. . . The rocket flew at a very high, unprecedented altitude. Covering a huge distance in a brief time the rocket landed in the target area. The results obtained show it is possible to direct rockets into any part of the world.¹⁰⁸

The notions and estimates of American military experts had to be revised and Russia's widely increased power recognized:

For a long time it was thought that the principal Soviet handicap was its vulnerability to American air attack. It is much easier for the United

¹⁰⁵ Gunther, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

¹⁰⁶ *Pravda*, January 26, 1958, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Soviet communique, as quoted in Gunther, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

States to attack Russia by air than vice versa, by conventional means. Using long-range bombers, we have been in a position to envisage assault on key targets in the Soviet Union almost with impunity. . . . But Soviet development in the ICBM has seriously altered this strategical picture.¹⁰⁹

The Western governments, the leaders of NATO, military writers and experts, especially in the United States, categorically denied the superiority of Soviet military power taken as a total. The Soviet advance, mainly limited to intercontinental missiles, was temporary and would not last more than another 2 or 3 years. These Western statements remained, however, unknown to the Soviet people and Khrushchev tended, contrary to facts known to him, to minimize the role of military aviation, in which the United States was superior, and to emphasize instead, missiles, in which the Soviet Union had surpassed America:

The present period [Khrushchev said in an interview] is something like a turning point. Military specialists believe that planes, whether bombers or fighters, are in their decline. Bombers have such speeds and altitudes that they are vulnerable to attack by modern rockets [missiles]. Fighters, on the other hand, now have such a great speed that their use against fighters is becoming difficult, while against bombers they are also insufficiently effective. Moreover fighters are manned by people, whom of course we do not want to lose.¹¹⁰

In an interview with the American editor, William Randolph Hearst, Jr., Khrushchev said:

I also want to tell you, Mr. Hearst, that in the creation of new types of weapons we have outstripped your country. We now possess the absolute weapon, perfected in every respect and created in a short period of time. I say this not to intimidate, there is no need for that, I am simply stating a fact! Our scientists, engineers, technicians and workers have produced the most modern armament. The Soviet Union possesses intercontinental ballistic missiles. It has missiles of different systems for different purposes; all our missiles can be fitted with atomic and hydrogen warheads. Thus, we have proved our superiority in this matter.¹¹¹

From the success of the Sputniks and the ICBM Khrushchev drew far-reaching conclusions as to the all-out competition of the Soviet Union with the United States. He emphatically rejected the theory that Russian progress was due to the help of German scientists brought to Russia after the war; he insisted that the missile was a purely Soviet product and a measure of Russia's scientific achievements:

. . . Some public figures in the United States say now that we were helped by German specialists captured during the second world war. This of course is nonsense. . . .

¹⁰⁹ Gunther, *op. cit.*, pp. 389, 390.

¹¹⁰ *New York Times*, October 10, 1957, p. 10.

¹¹¹ *Pravda*, November 29, 1957, p. 2.

The development of rocket technology in the U.S.S.R. is a result of the development of Soviet science and technology, of our industry. These achievements are a source of pride of our Soviet people and our socialist state.

Our designers also have developed rockets that could, in the event of an attack on our country, strike any base in Europe, Asia, and Africa. On the first try our missile fell exactly on the target area.¹¹²

The Soviet intercontinental missile, the Soviet military experts concluded, makes the network of American military bases outside the country vulnerable and possibly useless. Said Khrushchev:

. . . Let us not play hide-and-seek with the facts; let us look them in the face. Can it be supposed that military bases are known only to those who established them? But if their location is known, then, given the present level of missile and other technology, they can speedily be rendered ineffective.

We are convinced that very soon the peoples of those countries in which American military bases have been set up many thousands of kilometres from America herself, will come to realize more fully what a terrible danger these bases constitute for their countries and will resolutely demand the immediate abolition of foreign bases on their territory.¹¹³

Thus, as a result of the ICBM, Soviet foreign policy greatly increased its offensive toward abolition of "military bases in foreign lands," and the offensive assumed large proportions in the subsequent period.

In the sphere of economic competition, the drive toward rapid overtaking of the United States set in motion the new 7-year plan and a long-range plan of transition to a definite Communist system within the next decade or two:

In this stage of competition the Soviet Union intends to surpass the United States of America economically. The United States production level is the ceiling that the capitalist economy has been able to reach. We know that favorable historical and natural conditions played their part in it. To surpass the level of the U.S.A. is to surpass capitalism's highest indices.

The fact that we have now set ourselves this task shows how much our strength and capacity have grown. . . .

* * * * *

. . . *Fast tempos are a general law of socialism, now confirmed by the experience of all the countries of the socialist camp.* . . .

The world socialist system has the advantage of superior rates of economic growth. The average annual industrial production increase for the socialist camp as a whole in the past five years (1954-1958) has amounted to 11 per cent, whereas in the capitalist world as a whole it was less than 3 per cent.¹¹⁴

¹¹² *Pravda*, November 19, 1957, p. 2.

¹¹³ *International Affairs*, Moscow, No. 11, November 1957, p. 15.

¹¹⁴ *Pravda*, January 28, 1959, p. 6.

These new ambitions and exaggerated notion of successes prompted the Soviet government to start its new offensive in the international field, namely, the drive against the independence of West Berlin, begun in the fall of 1958. Convinced of its superiority in military matters, and minimizing the West's capacity to stand up to the Soviet Union with firmness and consistency, the Soviet government expected the West to yield, thereby losing face, and to retreat all along the line.

. . . the Soviet Union [is] soon to become [Khrushchev told a public meeting in East Germany on March 7] the most powerful nation in the world, economically as well as militarily. . . .¹¹⁵

More than four decades have passed since the seizure of power in Russia by the Bolshevik, the eventual Communist, party. In this space of time Russia has undergone a multitude of changes, lived through severely repressive eras as well as through periods of some relaxation, has seen a succession of leaders, awful wars as well as some progress. However, the basic elements of Leninism have been maintained to this day—a stern one-party rule, negation of political freedoms to the population, emphasis on military power, antagonism to democracy as a system and to the democracies as nations, and consequently—a permanent threat of a terrible conflict in the world. Soviet “Communism” has remained the greatest danger of our days.

¹¹⁵ *New York Times*, March 15, 1959, p. 5.



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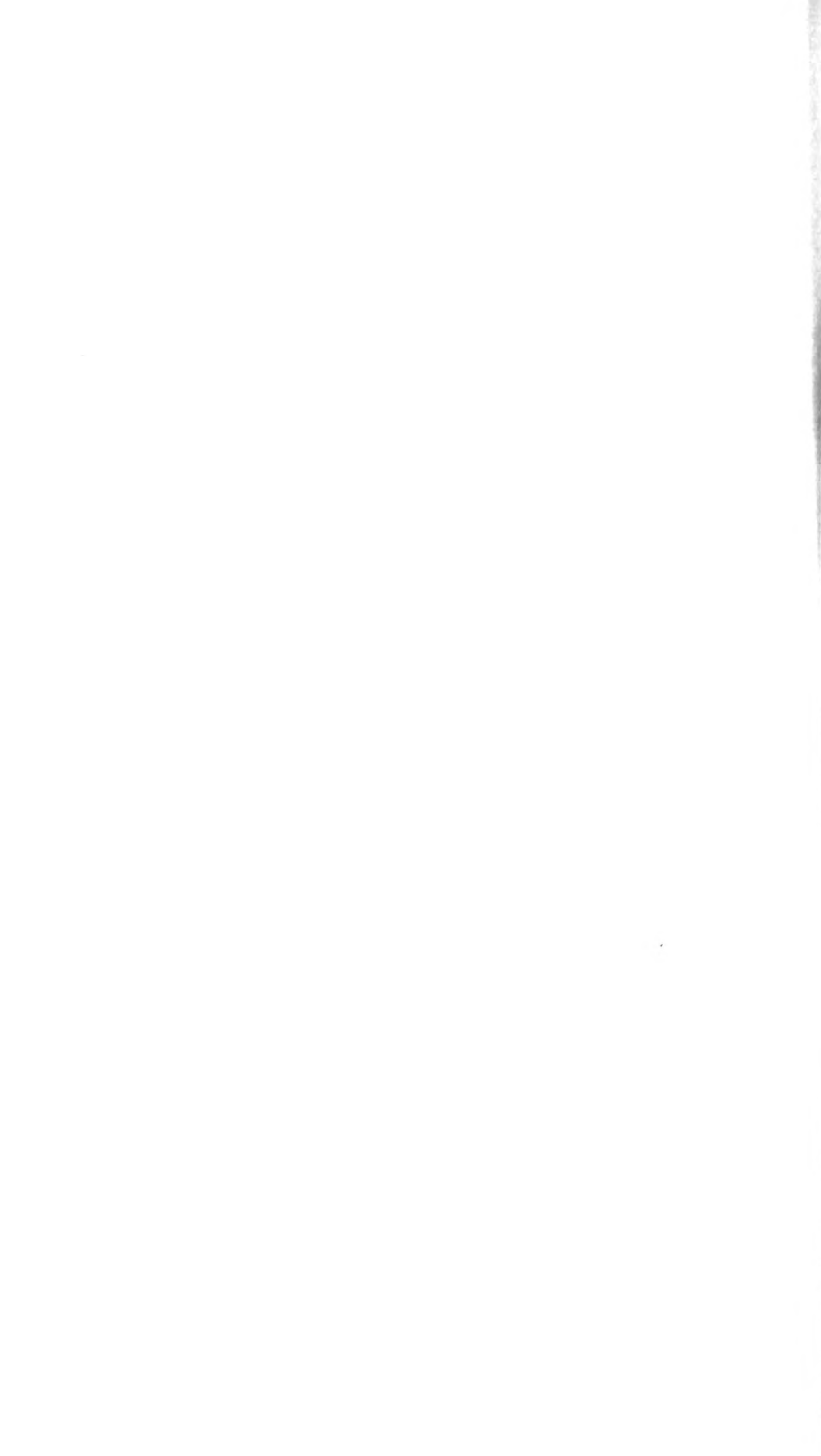
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[EXPLANATORY NOTE: A great variety in the spelling of proper names appears in this volume of Facts on Communism, due to the use of numerous quotations from works in English and other languages. This index does not attempt to reflect every spelling variant. Russian names appearing in the index follow a transliteration system which corresponds closely to the original Russian, with the exception of widely-known Russian personages and organizations which retain the popular Western spelling.]

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