WORKERS IN STALIN'S RUSSIA

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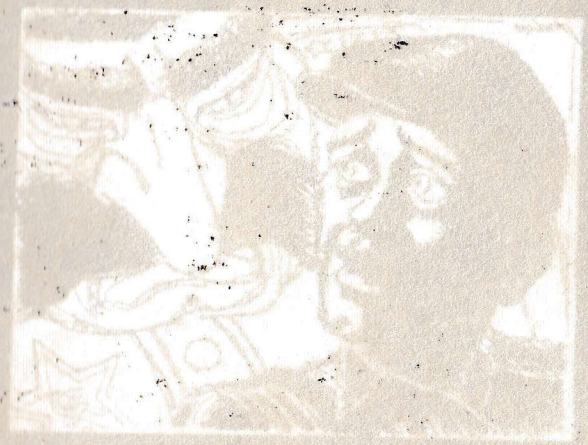

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WORKERS IN STALIN'S RUSSIA

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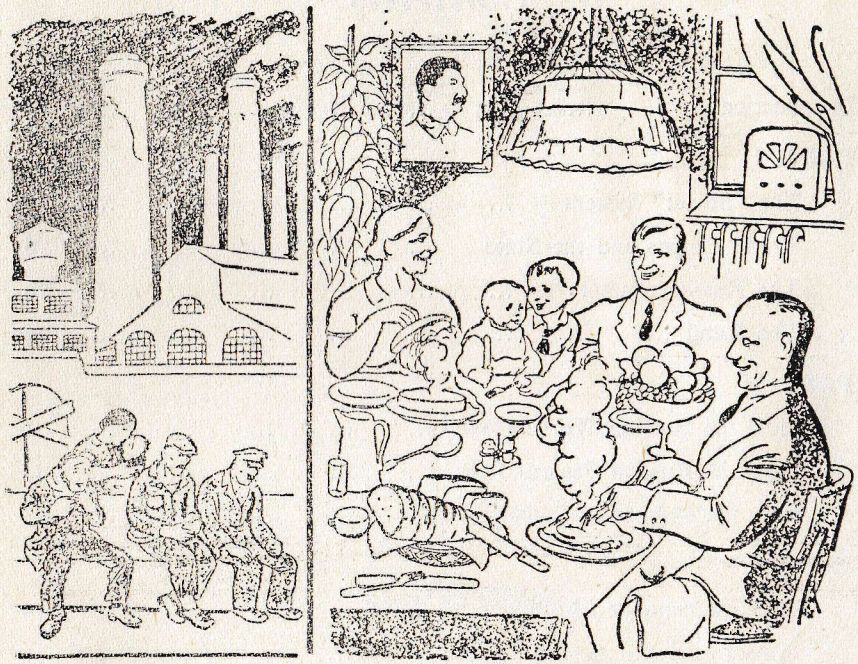


"IN OUR COUNTRY AND IN THEIRS". This is how the *Evening Gazette* published in Moscow in its issue of the 14th November 1936 compares the conditions of the workers in Capitalist countries and in the U.S.S.R. This cartoon is typical of the kind of propaganda put forward by the Soviet Government to convince the Russian people that they are a privileged nation, and that outside Russia only oppression and starvation exist.

INTRODUCTION

IT HAS ALWAYS been difficult to know the truth about the conditions of life in Russia. Both the Communist and the Capitalist press have been interested in disguising the facts in order either to eulogise or to slander the "first socialist state in the world". With the entry of Russia into the war the interests of communists and conservatives, labour men and reactionaries came to coincide. All the parties supporting the present Imperialist war realised that Russia could be an important factor in crushing Germany and, with a few exceptions, they set about boosting the régime and its leaders.

Journalists who, till yesterday, had only referred to Stalin as the Red Butcher, Tory politicians who had thundered against the rape of Finland, trade-union officials who had denounced State dictatorship, military experts who revealed that Russian soldiers went barefooted, bishops who had lamented the immorality of Russian life and the murdering of priests, have now all joined hands to praise Russia as the greatest, mightiest, holiest of our Allies. Speeches are made, articles are written, pamphlets and books are published by the million to "sell" Russia to the British and American public. Such an advertising campaign does not take place to magnify the greatness of our American ally for example, but in the case of Russia our rulers and politicians have realized that it possesses still a great attraction amongst the masses as the "workers' country". By praising it they hope to get a more enthusiastic support for the war effort and increased production at cheap cost.

The boosting of Russia remains purposely vague. We are told of the happiness of the Russian workers, of their high standard of living, of the superiority of their system of education but few details and fewer facts are attached to these assertions. Press and politicians have achieved the incomparable feat of talking almost incessantly about Russia while saying nothing about the régime or the conditions of life of the inhabitants.

When the Russian-German pact was concluded the *Boersenblatt,* the daily news bulletin of the German book trade published a list of anti-bolshevist publications withdrawn from sale on the orders of the Nazi authorities. Books on *Forced Labour in the Soviet Union, How the Russian Worker lives, Revelations about Moscow,* etc., could no longer be sold or bought.

The "democracies" were no less tactful towards the Soviet Union when it joined the Allies. The *Bookseller* reported that most books critical to

the Russian régime had been called back from circulation. The *Nation* 14/2/42 announced that: "Harper Brothers, which recently withdrew a biography of Stalin, has decided not to publish G. E. R. Gedye's book on his experiences as *New York Times* correspondent; and Doubleday, Doran will not issue the reminiscences of Alexander Barmine, former Soviet representative to Greece, who fled to this country after the Moscow trials. Both Barmine's and Gedye's books were completed, but the publishers felt that the times are unpropitious for books critical of Russia".

This is only one of the most obvious aspects of the suppression of information about Russia. Most information does not need to be suppressed by the publishers as it is never recorded on paper. The Soviet Government has a real terrorist organisation which employs every means to prevent information unfavourable to Russia from coming to light. Intimidation is used to gag men and women who have lived in the Soviet Union and who are prevented from speaking lest reprisals be made on their family or friends. If information does see the light its authors are taught such lessons as to discourage most would-be denouncers of Stalin's régime. Krivitsky, author of *I was Stalin's Agent,* committed suicide, Carlo Tresca who denounced Communist machinations was murdered. A campaign was instituted against Jan Valtin, author of *Out of the Night,* a book which created a tremendous sensation, asking that he should be expelled from the U.S.A. Once in a country like Mexico or South America it would have been easy for the agents of the Comintern to make him follow the fate of Trotsky and so many others. In Mexico, Spanish Anarchists who know too much about the manœuvres of the Stalinists in Spain are daily menaced. Recently the Communists asked that Miguel Yoldi, ex-organiser of the Durruti column, Victor Serge who published several books attacking Stalin's régime, Julian Gorkin, an ex-Spanish communist, Marceau Pivert, a well-known French socialist, should be prosecuted by the Government as being fascist agents. These are but a few of the methods used by Communist Parties all over the world to silence any independent opinion on Russia and its régime.

From journalists in the U.S.S.R. it is impossible to know the truth. The censorship is so strict that it has amazed journalists who used to complain bitterly about British censorship. Even in peace time all dispatches had to meet with the approval of the Russian government. Journalists lived in the constant fear of losing their jobs if they allowed themselves the slightest criticism. The result was that the outside world knew nothing about Russia beyond what the Government thought fit to release. Three to seven million people starved to death in Russia during the 1932-33 famine without a word being published in the world press about it. And America had ten correspondents there! Not one dared to speak, all denounced rumours of the famine and were even cowardly enough to deny the information they themselves had given to a British journalist, when at last he made the truth known.

In his book *Assignment in Utopia* Eugene Lyons describes how he and the other foreign journalists in Moscow during the winter of 1932-33 concealed the famine:

> "'There is no actual starvation or deaths from starvation but there is widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition.'
>
> This amazing sophistry, culled from a *New York Times* Moscow dispatch on March 30, 1933, has become among foreign reporters the classic example of journalistic understatement. It characterizes sufficiently the whole shabby episode of our failure to report honestly the gruesome famine of 1932-33. . . .
>
> The episode, indeed, reflects little glory on world journalism as a whole. Not a single American newspaper or press agency protested publicly against the astonishing and almost unprecedented confinement of its correspondents in the Soviet capital or troubled to probe for the causes of this extraordinary measure. . . .
>
> These philological sophistries, to which we were all driven, served Moscow's purpose of smearing the facts out of recognition and beclouding a situation which, had we reported it simply and clearly, might have worked up enough public opinion abroad to force remedial measures. And every correspondent, each in his own measure, was guilty of collaborating in this monstrous hoax on the world."

It is important to keep in mind confessions of journalists such as Eugene Lyons in order to realize that reports from Moscow must be received with a critical mind. Journalists who send cables talking of the enthusiasm of the Russian masses, of the well-being of the population and the excellent conditions of the Army may be lying just as blatantly as the American journalists did in 1933. They may be concealing famines, epidemics, revolts and riots. It is necessary to emphasise this as many people have recently changed their views about Russia merely on account of journalist's reports or broadcasts.

It is of primary importance to the workers to know the truth about Russia. But the difficulty of doing so is great. They cannot rely on the capitalist Press, on the statements of politicians or even on those of their own leaders, they have no direct means of informing themselves and there are very few reliable books.

This pamphlet is meant to fill the gap, in a very modest way. If it criticizes the régime it is not from the point of view of British or American capitalists or diplomats, bourgeois intellectuals and parsons, as are most of the criticisms levelled at Russia. Though their writings on Russia have been often quoted in this pamphlet, their conclusions are vitiated by their personal interests or class prejudices and have been discarded.

Russia has been generally criticized in the past for being too revolutionary while in fact, from a workers' point of view, the revolution has not been deep enough and has too soon given birth to the counter-revolution. It is not the bourgeois who have suffered from the change of régime who must be pitied, but the workers and peasants who have not benefited by it.

The destruction of a mirage is an unpopular task. The man in a desert who is trying to convince his exhausted companion that the coveted oasis he sees in the distance is only a dream is likely to be answered with

curses. The working-class is in an arid desert to-day. Betrayed, abandoned, weak, helpless, it looks towards Russia as a promised land, and the misery and sufferings it has to endure are compensated by the thought that there exists a country where the workers are not slaves. The British worker has failed to gain his independence but he is proud to think that his brother in another country has. He cannot love Britain, where he toils and sweats, the country which oppresses millions of exploited like him, worse than him. He tries to put his faith and his pride in Russia, his adopted fatherland of which he is more jealous, more impatient of criticism than if it were his own. The more unjustified he feels his attachment to be, the more irrational he is about it.

This blind admiration for Russia is demoralizing. Transferred Russian patriotism is just as stupefying as patriotism for Britain, America or Germany. It is illogical, degrading; it has no end outside itself, and even the most ardent admirers of Russia do not attempt to introduce in this country a régime similar to the one they believe to be in existence in the U.S.S.R.

It is important to destroy the myth of a happy and prosperous Russia if workers in this country are going to refuse to fight for lies and are not going to repeat the mistakes made by the Russian proletariat after the revolution. But if the illusions about the happiness of the Russian people must be crushed, the belief in the need and the right to happiness and justice for mankind must remain. That belief must give us the strength and courage to fight against the oppression of capitalism and of the State in order to conquer our freedom and happiness.

THE "SOVIET" SYSTEM

THE U.S.S.R. IS officially organised on the basis of the "dictatorship of the proletariat", a meaningless phrase* which covers in reality the dictatorship of the Communist Party. The revolution was made under the banner of "All Power to the Soviets" and the Soviet of workers, peasants and soldiers played a major rôle during the revolutionary period. But from independent organs, directly under the control of the masses and acting in their interests they gradually fell into the hands of the Communist Party.

The conquest of the Soviets by the Communist Party was not an accident. The Bolsheviks interpreted the slogan: "All Power to the Soviets" as signifying: "All Power to the Party which controls the Soviets" and they went all out to conquer that power.

Already in 1922 Russian anarchists in a *Manifesto on the Russian Revolution*† clearly saw the final aim of the Bolsheviks:

> "When the spokesmen of the Bolsheviks joined in the masses' cry of 'All power to the Soviets!' they evidently never meant it in earnest. What they did strive for, however, was to procure the masses' confidence to make them believe that the Bolshevik party was actually for the slogan. When they had accomplished this, they immediately set about subjugating the Soviets, until they succeeded in making them *supporting props* of the Government machine they created."

During the revolution two organs of power were in existence: the factory and peasant Soviets on one side and the Communist Party on the other. The first represented the will of the masses of peasants and soldiers, the second a minority of professional militants and Party Members, anxious to get the masses under their control.

The struggle between those two organs ended in the victory of the Communist Party. It was inevitable that a clash should occur between the Soviets and the Communists, as one cannot exist with the other. The "Soviet system is a form of direct political representation with elimination of all interferences from a central body in the local self government" (Souchy). The Communist Party, on the other hand, is in favour of centralized control in the hands of a small number; it is opposed to any

*Even the Webbs in *Soviet Communism* admit: "We frankly confess that we do not understand what was or is meant by this phrase."

†Issued by the Anarchist Communist Groups of U.S. and Canada, Federation of Russian Anarchist Groups of U.S. and Canada, Ukrainian Anarchist Groups of U.S. and Canada.

form of local self-management. Sovietism and Communism exclude one another. The term Soviet Communism chosen by S. and B. Webb for their work on Russia represents a contradiction in terms.*

As the Communist Party gained control over the country the Soviets as councils of workers and peasants, organising production and distribution in the factories and in the countryside, disappeared. But the name persisted and is used to designate the organs of State Power which have nothing in common with the Soviets set up during the revolution.

The 1936 Constitution sets up as local organs of State Power the Soviets of working people's deputies. Their rôle is a purely administrative one which corresponds more or less to that of municipal councils:

> "The soviets of working people's deputies shall direct the activity of the organs of administration subordinate to them, ensure the maintenance of public order, the observance of the laws and the protection of the rights of the citizens, direct the local economic and cultural construction and draw up the local budget." *Article 97 of the Constitution.*

The Soviets are now merely reduced to ensure the observance of laws they have not made and to direct economic construction, set up by a Plan they have taken no part in making.

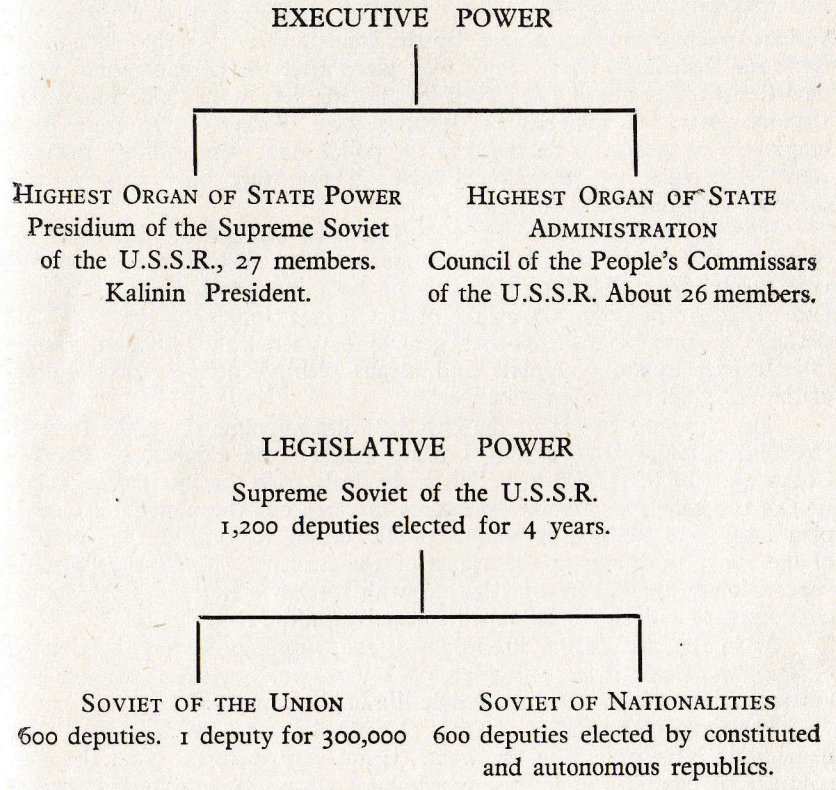
The highest organ of State Power in Russia, the Supreme Soviet of U.S.S.R., has also nothing in common with the early Soviets. It is composed of two parliaments of about 600 members each: The Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities which are elected in a similar way to the House of Commons and exercise the legislative power of the U.S.S.R.

> ARTICLE 34: "The Soviet of the Union shall be elected by the citizens of the U.S.S.R. by electorial districts on the basis of one deputy for every 300,000 of the population."
>
> ARTICLE 35: "The Soviet of Nationalities shall be elected by the citizens of the U.S.S.R. by constituent and autonomous republics, autonomous provinces and national regions on the basis of twenty-five deputies from each constituent republic, eleven deputies from each autonomous republic, five deputies from each autonomous province and one deputy from each national region."
>
> ARTICLE 36: "The Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. shall be elected for a term of four years." (Quoted in *Soviet Communism*, by S. & B. Webb.)

The Soviet of the Union is thus composed of deputies each alleged to be representing something like three hundred thousand men and women and elected for four years! This is very different from the councils of workers' delegates, elected by a small number of workers and liable to be recalled at any time, such as the Soviets used to be. they are subject to recall.

It is obvious that in the circumstances the electorate can have no control over the deputies who can hardly claim to represent the wishes and ideas of hundreds of thousands of people. Furthermore, the candidates are not freely chosen, as is shown by article 141 of the Constitution:

*If the expressions Soviet Russia and Soviet Government are used in this pamphlet it is merely to conform to custom. They should be read as meaning: Bolshevik Russia and Bolshevik government.



According to the Constitution neither Stalin nor the Central Committee of the Communist Party have any power. Though the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet has no legislative power it issues decrees. Its power is further increased by the fact that its members cannot be removed by the Supreme Soviet but that it can dissolve the Supreme Soviet in case of an insoluble difference arising between the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities.

"Candidates for elections shall be nominated by electoral districts.
The right to nominate candidates shall be ensured to public organisations and societies of working people; Communist Party organisations; trade unions; co-operatives; organisations of youth; cultural societies."

The electors have to vote for a list of candidates drawn up by the various organizations recognized by the Constitution. At the elections of the 12th December, 1937, which took place after the promulgation of the new Constitution out of 1143 deputies elected: 855 were Communists, 288 without party. A minority of deputies were workers: 476 were State employees of whom 60 belonged to the police, 111 were military men, 63 were technicians, 73 professional men. There were only 429 workers' deputies as against 476 bureaucrats!

The Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. itself elects a Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. composed of 37 members and endowed with great powers. It interprets existing laws and issues decrees, appoints and replaces the high command of the armed forces of the U.S.S.R., declares a state of war, declares general or partial mobilization, ratifies international treaties, appoints and recalls plenipotentiary representatives of the U.S.S.R. to foreign states, etc.

The Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. also appoints the highest executive and administrative organ of State Power: the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. This body deals with the internal organization of the country. It takes measures to carry out the national economic plan and state budget, to secure public order, to defend the interests of the state, to safeguard the rights of the citizens. It exercises general supervision in the sphere of relations with foreign states, fixes the annual contingent of citizens to be called for active military service, etc.

As in the case of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, the Council of Peoples' Commissars composed of a very small number of members takes decisions which affect the whole life of the country.

The 1936 Constitution, Stalin's Constitution, acclaimed as the "most democratic constitution" in the world, is not very different from the constitution of capitalist countries, which have always been bitterly attacked by the Communists in the past.

The Constitution is given a democratic flavour by declarations such as these:

"The citizens of the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed by law:
(*a*) Freedom of speech;
(*b*) Freedom of the Press;
(*c*) Freedom of assembly and meeting;
(*d*) Freedom of street processions and demonstrations;"
(article 125).

"Citizens of the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed inviolability of the person."
(article 127).

"The inviolability of the homes of citizens and secrecy of correspondence are protected by law." (article 128).

These empty promises are violated every day. Freedom exists only for

those who agree with the Communist Party; social-revolutionaries, anarchists, and communists who happened to disagree with Stalin's policy have been imprisoned or suppressed. Hundreds of letters from Siberian prison camps received by comrades outside Russia give the lie to the generous declarations of the Constitution. Innumerable eye-witness accounts of arbitrary arrests, unjust persecutions, of spying and denouncing persons critical of the régime, make the declaration of the "inviolability of the homes and secrecy of correspondence" read as a joke in bad taste.*

If the Constitution curiously mentions matters to which it would have been wiser not to draw attention it is strangely silent on the rôle of the Communist Party. This gives indeed a good proof of how little importance can be given to official documents in order to determine the nature of a régime. The Communist Party is mentioned only once in the whole constitution and its rôle seems to be merely that of putting up candidates at the elections on an equal footing with the trade unions or the communist youth.

Legally the Communist Party plays a minor rôle, but Stalin's declarations on the importance of the Party are in flagrant contradiction to the Constitution. In his book entitled *Leninism,* he asserts:

"In the Soviet Union, in the land where the dictatorship of the proletariat is in force, no important political or organisational problem is ever decided by our soviets and other mass organisations, without directives from our Party. In this sense, we may say that the dictatorship of the proletariat is substantially the dictatorship of the Party, as the force which effectively guides the proletariat."

In an interview with the German author, Emil Ludwig, Stalin again declared (quoted by the Webbs in *Soviet Communism*):

"In our leading body, the Central Committee of our Party, which guides all our soviet and party organisations, there are about 70 members. Among these members of the Central Committee there are to be found the best of our industrial leaders, the best of our co-operative leaders, the best organisers of distribution, our best military men, our best propagandists and agitators, our best experts on soviet farms, on collective farms, on individual peasant agriculture, our best experts on nationalities inhabiting the Soviet Union, and on national policy. In this areopagus is congregated the wisdom of the Party. Everyone is able to contribute his experience. Were it otherwise, if decisions had to be taken by individuals, we should have committed very serious mistakes in our work. But since everyone is able to correct the errors of individual persons, and since we pay heed to such corrections, we arrive at more or less correct decisions."

The Central Committee of the Communist Party has taken upon itself to issue decrees in spite of the fact that, according to the constitution, it had no power to do so. The laws regarding marriage, divorce and abortion, and many similiar Ukases, were passed by the Central Committee with complete disregard for the law.

However wise these 70 supermen of the Central Committee of the Party are, it seems rather doubtful that they should know what is best for

*G. P. Maximov in *The Guillotine at Work* publishes a great number of letters from anarchists held prisoners in Siberia by the Soviet Government.

160 million people. This leading body of concentrated wisdom is given no power by the Constitution but it not only exercises its dictatorship over the masses but also over the Communist Party itself. Stalin, in his speech at the plenum of the Central Committee of the Party in March, 1937, explained how this was done (*Izvestia* 29/3/37):

> "There are at the head of the Party three or four thousand leaders; they are our superior officers. Then come from thirty to forty thousand members occupying medium posts: this is the body of the subaltern officers. At last, from a hundred to a hundred and fifty thousand form the body of our sub-officers."

All important functions in the country are in the hands of members of the Party. Factory directors are members of the Party, so are all the generals of the Red Army, and twenty per cent. of the colonels, also the majority of university professors, students, technicians, etc. But the real power rests in the hands of the central committee and the political bureau (polit-bureau). The regional and city committees, the factory cells, etc., all follow the directives of the superior organs of the Party. Furthermore, members occupying posts in the Party are never elected by the members of the cells, but are named from above.

To understand the centralisation within the Party, one must realize that the Central Committee is composed of 71 members and 68 deputies, and is itself submitted to the direction of the political bureau composed of ten members, themselves under the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, Comrade Josef Stalin himself.

However, according to the Constitution, Stalin should have no power at all. Up to the time of the entry of Russia into the war Stalin was "only General Secretary of the Party, receiving his salary from Party funds and holding his office by appointment by the Party Central Committee, and, as such, also a member (one among nine) of its most important sub-committee, the Politbureau" (Webbs, *Soviet Communism*). Stalin did not even try to cover up his dictatorial powers by a farce of democracy like Hitler's plebiscite. He was not elected by the majority of the population like Roosevelt. He was not responsible to Parliament as the Prime Minister in this country is supposed to be. He placed himself outside the law, he ruled above the Constitution.

One needs the naïveté of the Webbs to claim that Stalin was not a dictator because he had no such legal status. In fact nobody inside or outside Russia doubted that he was at the head of the Government in the same way as Hitler is in Germany or Mussolini was in Italy. The Russian peasants were given his image to adore like an ikon while foreign diplomats and journalists referred to him as Premier Stalin. Now as Chairman of the State Defence Committee of the U.S.S.R. and Supreme Commander-in-Chief, Stalin has somewhat "regularised" his position, but it is obvious that he did not need to take over those titles to meet Churchill and Roosevelt as equals. Everybody, except two Fabian socialists, saw in Stalin the leader, the führer of the Russian people. That Stalin is only a figurehead,

a stooge put up for the benefit of the Russian people who want some personality to revere is another tentative description put up by the Webbs.* But the history of Stalin's ruthless struggle against his old comrades and possible rivals is there to disprove the theory of a benevolent Stalin submitting himself to the rôle of leader so that the Russian people might have a picture to stick up on their walls.

The fact that Stalin, basing himself solely on his influence inside the Party, influence achieved through manœuvres and intrigues, has been able to rule for nearly fifteen years is the best proof that Russia is not a democratic country. Stalin, no more than Hitler, rules alone. Modern society makes dictatorship impossible without an elaborate system being built for the purpose. Stalin has an efficient and malleable skeleton for that system in the Communist Party (though it needs to be purged occasionally) with which he controls the trade unions, the bureaucracy, the police and the army—that is, all the weapons of State power.

This power is not exercised through persuasion as the Webbs would like us to believe.† Just like the Jesuits to whom they are compared the Communists do not shrink from using torture and murder where persuasion and economic pressure have not succeeded. This is what makes the Soviet system one of the most ruthless dictatorships in the world.

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*"After Lenin's death . . . some new personality had to be produced for the hundred and sixty millions to revere. There presently ensued a tacit understanding among the junta that Stalin should be 'boosted' as the supreme leader of the proletariat, the Party and the State. His portrait and his bust were accordingly distributed by tens of thousands, and they are now everywhere publicly displayed along with those of Marx and Lenin. Scarcely a speech is made, or a conference held, without a naive—some would say a fulsome—reference to 'Comrade Stalin' as the great leader of the people . . . It seems to us that a national leader so persistently boosted, and so generally admired, has, in fact, become irremovable against his will, so long as his health lasts, without a catastrophic break-up of the whole administration," *Soviet Communism*, B. & S. Webb. None of the "junta" is alive to contradict this interpretation of history; Stalin has taken care to remove all potential witnesses.

†"History also records theocracies, and various other 'ideocracies,' in which the organised exponents of particular creeds or philosophic systems have, in effect, ruled communities, sometimes irrespective of their formal constitutions, merely by 'keeping the conscience' of the influential citizens. This dominance may be exercised entirely by persuasion. The practical supremacy at various times of the Society of Jesus in more than one country was of this nature. The Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. frankly accepts the designation of 'keeper of the conscience of the proletariat'," *Soviet Communism.*

TRADE UNIONS AND THE STATE

LIKE THE SOVIETS, the Trade Unions as organs of defence of workers' rights no longer exist in Russia. The Trade Unions have merely become organs of the State, under the control of the Communist Party. This situation was reached gradually, though the struggle between the Trade Unions and the Government began as early as 1920. Lenin maintained at the time that industry would collapse if the Trade Unions preserved their independence. The only way to give them wider functions was to assimilate them in the organs of State power. After many discussions within the Party: "The Communist Party pronounced for a compromise solution. Each union must contain a Communist element, and the Unions must accept a position subordinate to Party control, and be converted by degrees into auxiliary organs of the proletarian State." (Maynard). The Communist Party lost no time in gaining control over the unions; in 1921 Lenin was able to declare: "All the committees of the great majority of the trade unions are composed of communists and merely carry out the Party instructions" (Quoted by Souvarine in *Stalin*).

The Russian trade unions are composed of all wage-earning workers. Out of twenty-six million industrial workers, twenty-two million are T.U. members; this seems on the face of it excellent, but one has to remember that everyone is virtually obliged to become a trade-union member. Though membership is not compulsory, refusal to join a union is considered an act of rebellion against the Government, and non-union workers are often unable to obtain work. A law passed in 1938 halves the insurance benefit of workers who are not members of the Trade Unions. While workers, civil servants and even G.P.U.* members are all included in the trade unions, the peasants are left outside.

The workers are organised in industrial unions, whose committees are theoretically elected by the workers. In reality they have not the right to choose their own committee, but have to accept the candidates

*The G.P.U. is the Russian political police which corresponds to the Gestapo in Germany. After the fall of the Tsar, Lenin formed a political police force commonly known as the Cheka. Its name was later changed to Gossudarstvennoye Politikcheskoye Upravlyeniye or in short G.P.U. Its function was in theory to combat counter-revolutionary activities but in fact it soon became the most dreaded enemy of all revolutionaries who did not submit to the bolsheviks. Later Stalin used the G.P.U. to crush all opposition within the Party and destroy his personal enemies.

nominated by the Party, and vote for them. While the factory workers are forced to continue with these mock elections, their delegates do not, however, elect the district committees or the town and regional committees.

The *Izvestia* of 28/7/37 reveals that the central committees of the unions are entirely composed of members appointed from above. This explains the lack of interest displayed by the workers in the elections for the factory committees. What is the use of voting for candidates proposed by the Party who furthermore will have to take orders from officials named from above? The elections comedy may impress foreign observers or naïve workers in faraway countries, but the Russian worker is not duped. The following incident reported by the *Izvestia* of 26/6/37 (quoted by Yvon) proves it: "In the factory 'Kovki-Chugun' at Kharkov, the president of the union committee closed the gates in order to oblige the workers, on finishing work, to participate in the first elections, with secret vote, of the union organs. As the workers manifested their discontent at not being able to go home, the factory committee offered them a free supper after the speech of its president."

The Communist Party controls, of course, the trade unions. All the officials of the T.U. are members of the Party. The offices of the Party and that of the T.U. are close to one another in most factories, so that the work of controlling the workers is thus simplified.

But the rôle of the T.U. is most clearly shown by the rules which are printed in the T.U. members' subscription books. The object of the unions is not to defend the interests of the workers, but those of the State.

The first point says:

> "The first task of the Trade Unions is to penetrate the large masses of the workers with the idea that they do not work for a capitalist State, but for their State, for the State of their own class."

The second:

> "The member of the T.U. must, by setting an example, bring all the workers to participate in socialistic emulation and to become shock workers (udarniks and stakhanovites). He must help to increase production, remembering that, according to Lenin, it is production which decides in final instance the success of the new social form."

The third point prescribes that the member of the T.U. must:

> "Perfectly understand the Marxist-Leninist theory . . ."

The fourth point:

> "The member of the T.U. must understand the technique of military art, increase the strength of the Red Army, and be ready to defend the socialist fatherland."

The fifth point is:

> "The members of the T.U. must actively participate in the maintenance of that strong proletarian discipline which insures the unity of the constructive work of the working class." (Yvon, L'U.R.S.S. telle qu'elle est)

The five points of the Russian Trade Unions' catechism characteristically enough point only to the duties of the Russian workers. To join the

T.U. gives him no rights; no right to political liberty, to strike, to protest against excesses is mentioned . . . only duties.

The Trade Unions have been deprived of any serious rôle in the running of the factories or the defence of the workers. The T.U. Factory Committees merely carry on insignificant tasks as described in a work which is very sympathetic to the Stalinist régime, *Soviet Communism*, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb.

> "It (the Trade Union Factory Committee) undertakes, as regards all those employed in the factory, office or institution, the detailed administration of the various branches of social insurance; the arrangements for sending workers to convalescent or holiday homes; the management of the factory club, the factory canteen or dining-rooms, and any factory cultural undertakings, and even the allocation among the workers of theatre and concert tickets placed at their disposal. For any or all of these duties separate commissions may be appointed on which trade union members not elected to the factory committee are in constant relations with the management of the factory, office or institute, *over which they have no actual control*, but which must always inform the factory committee of proposed changes, discuss with them any of the workers' grievances, hear their suggestions, and generally consult with them as to the possibility of increasing the output, lessening waste and diminishing cost. It is the factory committee which organises shock-brigades, and, on behalf of the workers, enters into 'socialist competition' with other factories, offices or institutions, as to which can achieve the most during a given period."

It is difficult to understand what use to the workers is this tremendous trade union organisation which numbers 22 million members, with 76,500 officials costing 415 million roubles (three-quarters of the contributions collected). The rôle of the T.U. in the capitalist countries is (or rather was intended to be) the defence of the interests of the workers against those of private capitalists or of the state; the rôle of the unions in an anarchist society would be to run industry and agriculture and to distribute the wealth produced.

But in the U.S.S.R. the Trade Unions appear to play no such rôle. They are merely another instrument of State oppression.* Not content with its Party, its army and its police, the Russian State has put into its service an organisation comprising 22 million workers which will be run, and controlled, by a vast bureaucracy and will cost nothing to the State since it is paid for by workers' contributions. The G.P.U. would not always have the necessary tact to deal with discontented workers. Its means of persuasion are the firing squad, prison, concentration camps, and exile: but the Trade Unions "persuade" the workers merely by propaganda. They will lie to the workers, flatter them, excite them by fear or envy in order to dissipate all aspirations towards liberty, all instincts of revolt.

*"After a long struggle, beginning with the attempts in the early days of the Revolution to achieve the Syndicalist idea of industrial and social control of the Trade Unions—an ideal very close to that of the Anarchists—the Trade Unions have settled down in the U.S.S.R. as organs of the State." *The Russian Peasant: and other Studies*, Maynard.

The Trade Unions dispose of an extraordinary number of newspapers. Each big factory has its own daily paper, smaller factories have weekly papers. This would be excellent if the press were not used to pour into workers' minds the same government propaganda all over Russia. Lectures, meetings, demonstrations are all organised by the T.U. officials to convince the worker of the necessity of increasing production, and to discourage him from protesting by persuading him that he is living in an earthly paradise. Workers are compelled to attend these meetings and demonstrations.

The Central Trade Union Committee collaborates with the Government in fixing workers' wages. But this is merely a sinecure; the T.U. has no control over the total amount of the State income which would be devoted to wages and it cannot therefore increase the wages of the workers if it wishes to do so. Its rôle is clearly explained by Maynard:

> "The officials of the Central Trade Union Committee sit down with the officials representing the various commissariats, and the State Planning Committee. The clerks bring up the figures, showing how much is available for wages. When the accuracy of the calculation is verified, the amount becomes a sort of artificial wages-fund, out of which all claims are to be met. The rest is merely a question of distribution." *The Russian Peasant: and other Studies.*

The only tasks still carried on by the Trade Unions are merely designed to give them a show of importance and authority in the eyes of the workers. In fact, just as under Mussolini's Corporate State or Hitler's régime the Trade Unions have been unable to survive as independent organs and have become part of the State. The Russian workers have been left without any organ of class struggle with which to defend their liberties and material interests and this explains their low wages and bad conditions of work.

THE RUSSIAN FACTORY

MANY PEOPLE ARE willing to admit that the Russian workers do not hold political power but they maintain that they hold economic power, since the means of production are no longer held by private capitalists. It should be obvious to anyone and especially to Marxists that economic freedom cannot exist without political freedom, and *vice versa*. If the State has the means of withdrawing work (that is to say, food) from its subjects, they cannot be politically free. If they, on the other hand, are unable to withdraw their labour power from the State because they are not politically free they will also become economic slaves. This is the position of the Russian worker. The organs of the State have taken away from him his political freedom, and he has lost his economic freedom at the same time.

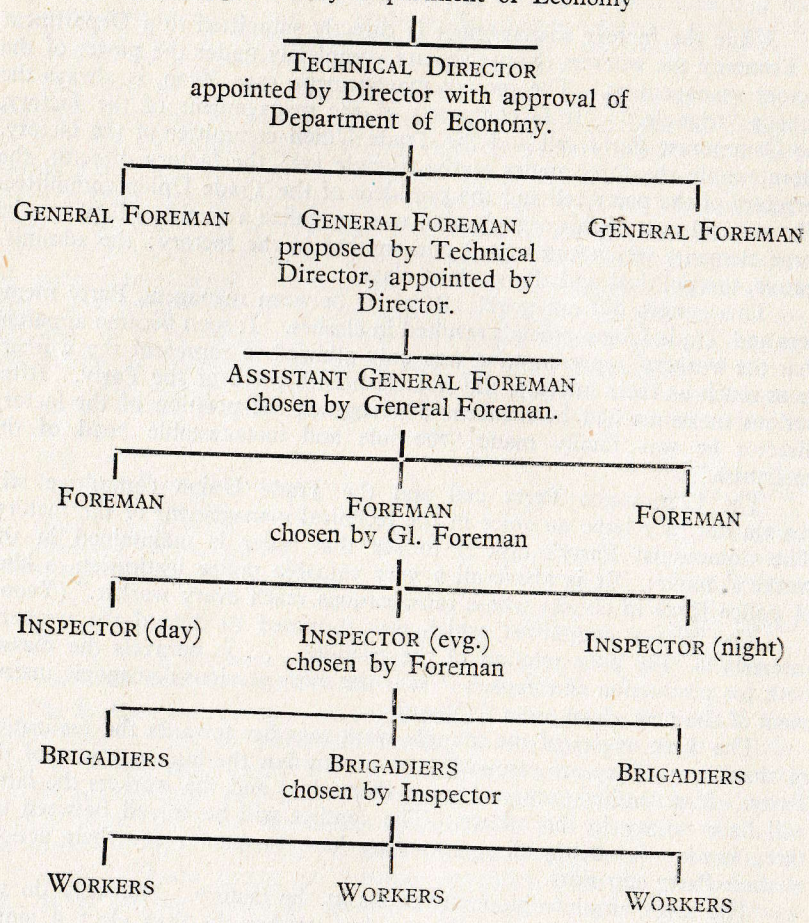
He has thus lost control of the means of production and of what he produces. It is true that there are no longer private capitalists, but the power has passed from them to the State. The entire organisation of production is in the hands of the State.

To hold political and economic power the workers should be able to control the factory they work in, or the land they cultivate. If they allow themselves to become slaves in the factory where they work they have no longer any means of making themselves heard, as they are unable to withdraw their labour from the community. Furthermore, the creative instinct of the workers should be able to manifest itself, not only outside the sphere of their work, but in the factory itself. It is therefore important that the State should not deprive them of the work of organising and running the factory.

In the U.S.S.R., as was to be expected, factories are completely subordinated to the State, which decides down to the smallest detail how the factories shall be run. The distribution of raw materials and finished products, the money to be spent, the programme of work, and the choice of directors—everything is decided from above. It is the commissar who chooses his collaborators; the chiefs of the General Direction of Industry who appoint or depose the directors of the trusts, the factories, or the regional organisations.

Yvon, who has given in his book, *L'U.S.S.R. telle qu'elle est*, a detailed account of how a Russian factory is run, stresses the lack of liberty and autonomy:

> "The factory in a *planned* society cannot, of course, be an autonomous unit enjoying a certain amount of liberty and determining the object and



No one holding a responsible position in the factory is appointed by the workers. The director is no longer elected by them, as was formerly the case, but is named by a superior body in the Department of Economy. He is invested with the greatest authority, and his decisions must not be discussed. It is he who chooses all the cadres of the factory. The man in charge of the workshop is appointed by the factory director and the technical director. He himself chooses the men under him, the foremen and inspectors. The inspectors choose the brigadiers and other workers' leaders, and divide the workers into groups. There are no democratic elections and the strictest discipline is imposed.

volume of its activity. The factory is only the organ of execution which realizes the small part of a great plan which superior authorities have assigned to it."

While the factory management is directly submitted to a Department of Economy the workers themselves are completely under the power of the factory management. The factory management, says Yvon, is always the famous "triangle." "It is composed of the management of the factory, the Communist Party cell and the Trade Union committee of the factory. More simply the three angles of the triangle are: the factory director, the secretary of the party cell and the president of the Trade Union committee. The original aim of this organization was to realize a synthesis between the three elements which confronted one another in the factory: the administrative, the political and the working class."

This system did not work. Rivalries between managers, Party members and Trade Union officials resulted in clashes. It soon became apparent that the workers' representative was only allowed to represent the workers in as much as their interests did not clash with those of the Party. After various measures had been taken to strengthen the position of the factory director he was finally made "the sole and incontestable head of the enterprise."

The Communist Party cell and the Trade Union committee still remain but they have no voice in the technical management of the factory. The Communist Party's task is to see that order is maintained in the workers' ranks: "It is above all a very valuable police institution, a kind of police force in civvies whose ramifications reach every worker." (Yvon).

The factory committee, which was supposed to defend the workers' interests is "the poor relation of the triangle . . . it unravels the masses both for production and politics. It is the most precious demagogic instrument of the new social order." (Yvon).

The three angles of the triangle work together towards the realization of the Plan. They are responsible to no-one but the higher organs of the Party. If a conflict occurs between themselves and the workers the latter will have no say in the matter. The conflict will be solved between the three heads who being all communists, have to answer for their actions to their Party superiors.

The most absolute hierarchy exists in the factory. Not only do the workers no longer elect the director but neither do they elect a single member of the management, technical staff, foremen and brigadiers. The most strict discipline exists. Foreman can impose fines, transfer the worker to lower paid work, sack him. The worker has the right to appeal before the Conflict Commission but the workers are not allowed to complain that they are obliged to produce too much or that the piece rates are too low. The only complaints and criticisms listened to by the management are those directed towards increasing production:

"A worker will never be able to complain that he is obliged to produce too much because the great 'socialist' aim has been, since the introduction of

the Five Year plans 'produce always more and quicker.' He can only accuse his superiors of not giving him the technical conditions by which he can increase production. Everything is directed towards the same aim, even the complaints of the workers . . . If the workers however abandon even slightly that *line* then the Trade Union committee first, then the organ of the Party and, for the incurables, the G.P.U., would intervene."

The posts of director, secretary of the Party, president of the T.U. committee, foremen, etc., carry with them considerable material advantages. Not only are the salaries much higher than for factory workers but their position gives them the right to bonuses. If the factory makes a profit a certain amount goes to the State and the rest goes into the "Management Funds." By law 50% of this fund must be used for the construction of workers' houses and the other 50% can be used to give bonuses to employees and workers to rationalise production, to improve nurseries, canteens and clubs. The factory director is responsible for distributing that part of the fund and, as to be expected, he does not forget himself nor his friends. Yvon quotes the following example of how the funds were used:

"The engineering works of 'Porchène' in Kharkov have distributed the 60,000 roubles of their Management Fund in the following way (*Zo Ind* 29/4/37):

Director	22,000 roubles
Secretary Party Committee	10,000 roubles
Chief of Production	8,000 roubles
Chief Accountant	6,000 roubles
President T.U. Committee	4,000 roubles
A Foreman	5,000 roubles
TOTAL	55,000 roubles

It is not indicated how the 5,000 remaining roubles were distributed. They were probably used to reward the best workers."

The Russian factory does not differ greatly from capitalist ones. The workers have no say in the administration of the factory, they are submitted to a very strict discipline, the incentive to produce more is money or social advancement or both. It may be argued that modern industry can only be run with the maximum centralization and hierarchy but facts have disproved this. Modern factories of considerable size were run by the workers in Spain during the Spanish revolution with the greatest success. It is not for technical reasons that workers' administration was abolished but because the Bolsheviks realized the importance of crushing the spirit of independence and initiative of the workers where it was most alive and would have had the most lasting effect, in the factories and the workshops.

THE LAND

THE STATUS OF THE Russian peasantry has been submitted to many drastic changes since the Revolution. The land passed successively from the hands of the State to those of the peasants and then back to the State again which has kept a more or less rigid control over it ever since.

Now practically the whole of Russian agriculture (90 per cent.) is organized for collective farming. It would be a mistake to believe, however, that Russian collectives have something in common with those created in Spain during the first period of the Revolution by the peasants themselves for their own benefit and that of their fellow workers in the cities. The agricultural collectives in the U.S.S.R. were, as their history shows, created by the State, and imposed by it for its own profit.

In 1917 the Russian peasant helped the industrial worker to overthrow the Tsarist régime, in the hope of conquering the land. It was divided into two categories before the revolution: the land owned by the big proprietors and the communal land which was divided amongst the members of the village every six, eight, ten or twelve years. The land claimed by the peasants in 1917 was that of the big landowners which they wanted to divide to increase the lot of each family holding and redistribute it periodically, according to the traditional practice of the Mir.

The first social-revolutionary government had to abide by the desires of the peasants and agree to the distribution of the land. As Maynard, in *The Russian Peasant: and other Studies,* describes it, the initiative came from the peasants and the Government merely ratified an accomplished fact:

> "After the November Revolution, the agrarian legislation of the new Government was a concession to this demand. The little group of Bolshevik and Left Social Revolutionary rulers *gave the peasant nag his head* (November 8th, 1917). It was a return to the dream of a 'black redistribution', which has danced in the village brain, at intervals, ever since the disappointment of the Emancipation decree. Live and dead stock was to be confiscated and distributed along with the land. Studs, cattle-breeding, and poultry farms were to become the property of the State".
>
> "After the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly a further decree was promulgated. It explicitly abolished private property in land, mineral wealth, waters and forests (February 19th, 1918). It left the local Soviets to make the redistribution, and defined the aims as including the 'encouragement of collective farming' as the more advantageous system in point of labour-saving and productivity, at the expense of individual farming, with a view to transition to Socialist agriculture".

The State thus legalised the expropriation and redistribution of the land by the peasants. It did not however give its support to the Communal farms which had been created for the common use of the land and which would, if they had been a success, have incited the peasants to put and work their holdings in common.

The Bolshevik Government instead of trying to spread collectivization of the land as it had decided in 1918, attempted on the contrary to stimulate private enterprise. The forced requisitions of grain which were extensively carried out during the period known as "war communism" had reduced agriculture to a state of bankruptcy. In order to remedy it the Government introduced the N.E.P., Russian contraction for Novaya Ekonomitcheskaya Politika (New Economic Policy). It was adopted by the 10th Congress of the Party in 1921 and lasted until 1927. It relaxed Government control on agriculture, allowed the Mir to choose between individual and collective farming and admitted a certain amount of private initiative and profit. This return to capitalist economy is described by Maynard in the following words:

> "This period was one in which the leasing of estates from poorer peasants and their cultivation by hired labour increased, and both these practices received official sanction in 1924 provided that the period of lease should not exceed twelve years. In 1927 the whole of the so-called socialised sector of agriculture, including both state-farms and lands tilled communally, amounted to no more than 3% of the whole."

The N.E.P.* introduced inequalities, profiteering and exploitation of the poorer peasant by more privileged ones. But while it lasted production went up and agriculture partly recovered from the blow administered to it by the policy of "war communism". During that period one can say, that the peasants, or more exactly the middle peasants, had a period of relative felicity and their level of life went up. The average wage at the time of the N.E.P. (1927), if bread is taken as a common unit of measurement, was 800 kilos compared with 170 kilos in 1935 after six years of collectivization. (Yvon: *L'U.S.S.R. telle qu'elle est*).

In 1927 however the N.E.P. was abandoned. Ostensibly it was in order to abolish the inequalities which the policy had created and the exploitation of the poorer peasants by the Kulaks (as the more prosperous peasants were called). In fact the Soviet leaders were not very much con-

*Lenin and Bukharin did not try to hide at the time the counter revolutionary nature of the N.E.P. Their surprisingly frank comments recorded in the preface to *The Workers and Peasants of Russia,* by A. Souchy, are worth quoting:

Lenin said, in a speech made on October 17th, 1921: "Our new economic policy consists essentially in this, that we in this respect have been thoroughly defeated and have started to undertake a strategic retreat; before we are completely defeated, let us retreat and DO EVERYTHING ALL OVER AGAIN, but more steadily. Communists cannot have the slightest doubt that we on the economic front have suffered an economic defeat, and a very serious defeat at that."

Bukharin frankly admitted that the N.E.P. was instituted by the Bolsheviks in order to maintain themselves in power: "the fact of the matter is that we are making economic concessions in order to avoid making political concessions".

cerned with abolishing inequalities in the countryside, especially since they were encouraging greater inequalities in industry and in the Army. What they were concerned about was the carrying on of the Five Year Plan which they had just launched to industrialize the country. For this, capital was needed and a market. The State decided to take control over the products of the land so as to be able to feed adequately the industrial workers and to produce industrial products which it could in turn sell to the peasants.

There were other materialistic reasons for the Government to favour land collectivization. A very important one was the inability of the State hitherto to collect taxes from the peasants. They had been able to avoid taxation to such an extent that they had actually improved their standard of life. This was a scandalous situation, the abolition of Tsardom had actually benefited the peasant! Maynard explains how this anomaly was created and how Stalin saw to it that it was abolished:

> The improvement in the peasants' life "was in part due to the breaking up of joint households and the increase in consuming units. In place of 16 million peasant households there were now 25. The increase was stimulated by fiscal arrangements which exempted the poorer households from taxation. The State generally lost something of its dues whenever a household was subdivided: and the attempt to collect dues from many millions of separate units must, in any event, have been administratively difficult. This is what Stalin meant when he told the Party in April, 1928, that the number of farms must be reduced. The substitution of a limited number of collective farms for a much larger number of households was at once a convenient administrative device, and a means of taxing a large number of persons who were exempted under the poverty law".

The Government also hoped that by introducting collectivization it would be able to increase the productivity of the land (it was to be severely disillusioned in that respect, during the following years) and therefore to increase exports. Another practical reason for the Government to favour collectivization was its need for industrial workers which it thought of drawing from the overpopulated country-side. By expelling the kulak from the villages—and everybody could be regarded as a kulak when it suited the Government—a vast reserve of labour was formed. Some of the dispossessed farmers were employed in labour camps but many drifted to the towns and supplied cheap factory labour.

Without taking into consideration the material interests of the Government the equalitarian desires suddenly manifested by Stalin's Government would appear a mystery. It would also be very difficult to understand why such risks were taken in imposing a decree which disorganized the country-side and caused tremendous losses in grain and animals. Where the Government seemed to lose however, it in fact gained. The losses were only borne by the peasants. The results of collectivization are not to be judged by the increased happiness of the peasant but by the advantages the State would draw from improved fiscal administration, increase in exports, plentiful supply of labour for its industries. Considered in that light Collectivization was a success!

The way collectivization was carried out leaves one no doubt as to the real intentions of the Government. The first blow to the N.E.P. was dealt by the Congress of the Party which met in December 1927 and which imposed restrictions upon the rights of hiring labour and leasing land. In January 1928 a decree was passed ordering the exclusion of kulaks from the village Soviet. On November 7th, 1929, Stalin in an article entitled *The Year of the Great Crisis* declared war on small peasant economy, justifying the needs of industrialization. "Put the U.S.S.R. in a car and the peasant on a tractor" was the slogan. In the meantime the Government tried to obtain grain from the peasants at low prices in exchange for imaginary industrial goods with the result that the peasants withheld their crops. Searches, forced requisitions, use of the Army and the G.P.U. followed but gave little results.

In January 1930 it was announced that the liquidation of the kulak and the collectivization of the land would be accomplished in three years. "The task was to liquidate from ten to twenty million peasant holdings out of the 25 millions that existed in Russia. It was necessary to share them out between a few hundred kolkhosi, controlled by a few thousand machinery and tractor stations belonging to the State" (Ciliga, *The Russian Enigma.*)

This plan could only be carried out by force; it met with great resistance and risings took place all over the country. The G.P.U. conducted the punitive expeditions. "It can be considered that 5,000,000 villagers at least, regardless of sex and age, have been chased from their hearths and doomed to a life of iniquitous misery, many to death" (Souvarine, *Stalin.*)

The disastrous results of such a policy obliged Stalin to retreat. On the 2nd of March, 1929, in an article, ironically enough entitled, *Dizzy with Success,* he denounced forced collectivization, putting the blame on the G.P.U. and on too zealous bureaucrats. Not only was collectivization to be slowed down, but it was going to be less radical than originally decided: "Whereas originally everything was to be collectivized down to the last fowl, it was now decided that the peasant was to hand over 'only' essential produce to the collective: his lands, his ploughing cattle, agricultural implements and barns. He was to keep his house, together with what he needed for his own domestic purposes" (Ciliga, *The Russian Enigma.*)

The "democratic" character of the collectivization was a mere joke. If execution and exile to Siberia were less frequently used, economic pressure was adopted instead. Starvation or collective farming was the choice.

The retreat of March did not mark the end of forced collectivization. In December of the same year Stalin ordered the entire collectivization of the wheat districts and the partial collectivization of other districts. This was carried out by terror and caused a general starvation due to the slaughtering of cattle, which cut down the supplies of meat and milk, and to mismanagement on the part of the Government. Furthermore in order to keep up exports the Government forcibly requisitioned all available

stocks not even allowing the peasants to retain stocks for seed and for consumption. The cattle decreased in four years, by half*. Before entering the kolkhozi the peasants slaughtered their cattle as retaliation, for fear of being accused of being kulaks, or in order to feed themselves. Another serious loss was the removal of hundreds of thousands of expert cultivators as the kulaks were not mere parasites but very often clever cultivators. Stalin had to admit that the kolkhoz as a whole worked at a loss.

As usual the Government accepted no blame for the disastrous situation in which it had plunged the country. Scapegoats were found. Zinoviev and Kamenev, together with many other high officials were accused of having organized a counter-revolutionary plot. A general purge of the Party was carried out. The Church was attacked with renewed energy by anti-God societies. Priests and Rabbis were arrested and imprisoned, church-bells were taken down and holy shrines destroyed. Every opportunity to feed the anger of the people but to save the face of the Government was taken.

But the trials, *Pravda* articles and the anti-religious demonstrations did not help to feed the starving population. From 1932 to 1933 it is reckoned that from three to seven million people died in the famine. Eugene Lyons, who was in Moscow at the time, describes the famine in bitter terms:

> "There were few peasant homes in the worst of the famine districts which had not paid toll in life for this harvest. In hundreds of villages half the population was gone: some had been killed by the 'diseases of malnutrition' and others had fled to seek food.
>
> How many actually died will never be known accurately. It is not generally understood abroad that the Soviet Government *stopped the publication of vital statistics for the period in question,* although such statistics were published as a matter of routine in previous years; otherwise it would be a simple matter to compare the death-rate for the winter and spring of 1932-33 with the normal death rate.
>
> Estimates made by foreigners and Russians range from three to seven millions." (*Assignment in Utopia*).

The killing of live stock in the country side threatened the whole economic life of the country and forced Stalin to retreat more and more. Markets were re-opened, and permission granted to the collective farmers to sell their surplus of grain, vegetables, milk and eggs there. This was a flagrant defeat of the integral collectivization and a partial return to the period of the N.E.P. As Maynard remarks: "The private trade in food which was the essence of the N.E.P. was suppressed in 1929: but the markets were

* These are the figures, given by Maynard, in millions of horses and other stock before and after the collectivization decree:

	1928	1933	1938 January 21st.
1. Horses	23	14	16.2
2. Large horned cattle	70	38	50,9
3. Cows (included in the above)	31	20	22.7
4. Sheep and Goats	147	50	66.6

There is a recovery in 1938 but the figures of the pre-collectivization period are still much higher.

reopened in 1930 and have formed an important part of the Soviet system ever since".

Private property and markets created inequalities similar to those of the N.E.P. period. Already on the 8th December, 1936, the *Izvestia* mentions that in the same district some families produce 150 quintals of corn and earn 6 to 10 thousand roubles while others do not produce more than 17 quintals and earn only 500 or 600 roubles (Yvon). Recently in Russia and abroad publicity has been given to Russian farmers who have been in a position to invest millions of roubles in Defence Loans.

There are various types of collectives but in the majority (99%), the work is done in common, the members have joint rights in land and live stock; the surplus product is divided among the members, the incomes are separate and members generally live and feed in their separate families, in their own houses.

The implements of cultivation belong generally to the State which hires them to the collective farms through the Machine Tractor Stations. The collective is under obligation to hire machinery from the M.T.S. for a certain charge. This constitutes, in fact, a kind of tax on the farmers and obliges them to be dependent on the government for the cultivation of the land. A great proportion of the large horned cattle and smaller animals belong to the members of the collective who keep them in their yards.

> "65% of the cows and calves and more than half of the pigs and the sheep in the country are owned and tended by individuals. Of the remainder a large proportion are tended in the sub-farms by persons who are individually responsible for their charges, and remunerated in proportion to their success. The large element of individualism in the system, particularly in respect to cattle, has played a leading part in the reconciliation of the people to its collectivist features." *The Russian Peasant: and other Studies,* Maynard.

Collective farms have been described as "open air factories," a very apt description, as undoubtedly their methods of work follow as closely as possible those in practice in the workshops.

The collective farmers are divided into gangs or brigades under the supervision of a gang leader. The plan has to be carefully adhered to, it decides which field rotation has to be adopted, what amount of land has to be devoted to a certain kind of cultivation, etc. In consequence the farmers are left with very little initiative but an enormous bureaucratic machine had to be set up to see that the plan is carried through. In 1931, shortly after collectivisation was introduced, the number of functionaries in the new "socialist sector" was reckoned at more than 2,000,000.

The collective has at its head a chairman who, in theory, is elected by the General Meeting of the collective, but is, in reality, a member of the Party and nominated by the Government. He often knows nothing about agriculture but is chosen for his "organising" ability and faithfulness to Party orders. This is how Maynard describes collective chairmen:

> "Chairmen are transferred from post to post at the discretion of the

Government. I myself have met one, who had been in charge of a glass factory, before he joined the collective, and had just received orders transferring him to a brick factory. His successor, a woman, had been in charge of a co-operative shop before she joined her new post as Chairman. Neither knew anything of agriculture. Their duty was to supply organising and driving capacity, and both appeared quite fitted to do so. The case may safely be taken to be typical of Bolshevik methods. There was no apprehension that the General Meeting of the Collective might elect someone else in the chair."

The bureaucratization of the land has often produced very bad results. However much drive the makers of the Plan and their executors possessed it could not make up for the life-long experience and patiently acquired skill of Russian farmers. At the end of 1935 a conference investigated the means of improving low yields, heavy losses and the existence of administrative abuses in the collectives. The Bureaucratic inefficiency discovered led the State to give gradually, more autonomy to the General Meetings of the collectives and abandon to the peasants the greater part of the rearing of animals. This, together with the more extensive use of machinery and manure, resulted in an improvement in agriculture. But the independence of the peasants, their communal institutions and their tradition of mutual aid were lost for ever.

The Russian peasant played an important rôle in overthrowing Tsarism and in carrying out the Revolution. He proved that he was not the selfish, backward, reactionary element the Bolsheviks considered him to be. He would have helped to build a free and just society if he had been given a chance. Instead the Soviet Government treated him as a beast of burden who had only duties towards the State and who could be most cruelly punished if he did not obey. The peasant soon became disillusioned in the new régime and rebelled. His rebellion cost him dearly, he had to destroy his grain and cattle, he and his family starved, he was exiled to Siberia or imprisoned. But he was able to force concessions from the Government and if he persists in refusing to fall the victim to Government's propaganda he may be able to recover the liberty and the rights he lost soon after the revolution.

HOW THE RUSSIAN WORKERS LIVE

THERE HAVE BEEN so many contradictory reports on the conditions under which the Russian workers live that it seems at first impossible to form for oneself a true picture of their mode of life. But if one reads with a critical mind books both favourable and unfavourable to the régime, if one takes the trouble to compare reports on the same collectives and factories by different people, it is possible to arrive at a picture of the life of the Russian people which can only be confirmed by the available statistics.

The more one reads about Russia the more one realises that books which give a completely different impression on the standard of life of the Russian people are in reality dealing with different aspects of their life. When one reads in one book about the poor conditions workers live in and in another of their privileges and comfortable life one is tempted to believe that one of the books is the result of the imagination of the author rather than a description of facts. In reality the first book is probably describing the conditions of the majority of the workers while the second describes that of the better paid workers, technicians, officials, party members, etc. The confusion, which has been created intentionally, has been due to an excess of generalisation. Critics of the Russian régime have generally described the Russian workers as all living on bread and salted cod while its apologists want us to believe that all workers in Russia are comfortably clothed and fed and spend their holidays at Black Sea resorts.

The other difficulty in judging the standard of the Russian worker and peasant is that it has varied a great deal from one year to the next. In an agricultural country which does not rely on imported food a poor harvest can have catastrophic results while a good one can immediately raise the standard of the population as it did in 1937. The changes in the Economic Policy of the country also had tremendous repercussions on the life of the people, as they did when the State enforced collectivization in 1929.

It is impossible to give a picture of the *average* standard of life of the Russian worker. It varies probably more than that of the American and British workers. Just as in America it would be impossible to give an idea of how the American workers live by describing a worker going to the factory in his car so in Russia one must not be tempted to believe that all workers are stakhanovites, earning a thousand roubles a month, having comfortable rooms to live in and spending pleasant holidays. Those privileged workers certainly exist but they are a minority. The majority of both workers and peasants have barely enough to eat, may starve, and

they live in overcrowded lodgings. Though starvation and overcrowding are known to the Western European and American workers, the extent to which these conditions exist in Russia has driven students of Russian life like Maynard to compare them with those of Chinese or Indian workers and peasants.

HOW THE RUSSIAN PEASANT LIVES

TWO THIRDS OF the population of Russia lives in villages. This is a fact which tends to be overlooked. Because of the great importance given to the industrialisation of the country attention has been focussed mostly on the life and work of the factory workers. The attitude of indifference and often of contempt which the bolsheviks have adopted towards the peasantry has contributed to their being left in the background. It must be remembered that it was not until 1936 that the peasants were given under the new Constitution equal political rights to those of workers.

Collective farmers form the great majority of the Russian peasants. There are still a few individualist peasants and agricultural workers employed on State farms but since they are not numerous we shall deal only with the conditions of life among the collectivized workers.

The most diverging accounts have been given of the life of the Russian peasant since the collectivization of the land was carried out in 1929-1930. Stalin's supporters maintain that the collectivization, which abolished the kulak, opened a new era of happiness for the Russian peasant. In reality the collectivization of the land resulted in millions of peasants being chased from their homes and sent to Siberia or to work in labour camps and millions of people to die in the famine which took place in 1932-34.

Thanks to their tremendous power of endurance and the great resources of the country the Russian peasants slowly recovered from the great blow which had been dealt them. They started to draw some benefit from the introduction of machinery and the growing of industrial crops and sugar beet. They did not, of course, recover their former liberty. They had to submit to working for long and regular hours under the watchful eye of the gangmaster. They had to comply with the decisions of the *plan* elaborated in offices by people having no knowledge of the conditions under which it had to be carried out.

The collectivized peasant has been submitted to a strict discipline. If his work does not satisfy the gang leader he can lose a "work-day." The People's Commissar's order of April 1938 gives an idea of the penalties which may be enforced. A man or woman, who offends against internal order may have his or her name posted on the "black" board, they may be fined, transferred to lower work, required to work a certain period without pay.

The standard of life of the Russian peasant varies a great deal from one collective to another. There are "millionaire" collectives which have a very big income and whose managers make real fortunes because they grow cotton and sugar beet or because they can grow a lot of wheat. But the majority are not so favoured.

The standard of life of the peasants not only varies from one collective to another but in the collective itself. The workers on the farm do not get a fixed wage. They are paid partly in kind and partly in money. They have what is left after the various government taxes, the machine tractor station, the seeds and the fodder for the animals are paid for. They have also to put aside a certain amount to pay for capital development and social services. What is left of the produce is shared amongst the workers. This is not done according to the number of hours they have worked but according to the amount and quality of the work done. Some men do more than a day's work in one day, some less. Doctors, vets, book-keepers are credited with two or one-and-a-half day's work for each day they actually work. The chairman of the collective gets an allowance of 600 work days and 250 roubles if the requirements of the Plan are carried out.

This system of wages naturally breeds the greatest inequalities. The agricultural worker is not even guaranteed a minimum wage so that there is no depth to the poverty to which he may sink. On the other hand the directors of the collectives can make real fortunes. The Press quoted recently the case of the director of a collective who subscribed a million roubles to the war loan, while it is possible that peasants on the same collective went barefooted.

The fact that the wages of the Russian farmer are paid partly in money and partly in kind increases the difficulty of evaluating his income. Maynard in his book *The Russian Peasant: and other Studies* has conscientiously tried to evaluate the income of the family of a collective farmer. He found that the *average* number of "work days" per member in 1935 was 181, and 378 for the household. In cereals a work day corresponded to 2.3 kilos (or five pounds). As he only worked half the year each member received 2 pounds and half of bread every day: "a short ration for a working man . . ."

It is more difficult to find out how much money the collective farmers receive. Dr. Otto Schiller, quoted by Maynard calculated that he received "from 50 kopeks to a rouble for every work day: from 200 to 360 roubles for a family in the year. He pointed out that a winter coat costs 150 roubles and a pair of boots over 200. But families on incomes of this standard do not wear coats or high boots, but sheepskin, and birchbark sandals or rag wrappings: and the number who wear these, and these only, is still very large."

Sir John Russell in a talk on the B.B.C. on farming in the U.S.S.R. (*The Listener* 1/4/43) confirmed by his description of the life in the col-

lectives the estimates given by Maynard:

> "The cottages they live in are small, mainly with three rooms, built of local material—in the north built of wood, and on the steppe built of wood if they are near enough to the Volga or some other river to get wood. But many of them are built of what in America is called adobe—sun-baked earth. They are of one storey, with a stove in one room, not like ours, of course, but a proper built-in stove and so big that you can sleep on it: it is the warmest place in winter. There are beds in all three rooms because there is very little furniture and what there is is very simple. Housework is virtually non-existent. The cooking is easy because the dietary is quite simple: bread, cabbage soup, and millet used for making porridge—*kasha* they call it. These are the chief items in the south. A certain amount of meat is eaten, and it was a growing amount before this war broke out. I saw tinned meat in the villages in 1939, for instance. The Russians do not go in for decoration in their cottages in the sense that we do. You may see a few photographs on the bare walls and in most of them that I have been in there is an ikon, a sacred picture, hanging up in the corner, perhaps with muslin draped on it, and frequently a lamp in front of it. And of course there is almost invariably a portrait of Stalin."

The glowing accounts of life in collective farms given by enthusiastic admirers of the régime obviously apply to a small minority of collectives only. In the "millionaire" collectives members earn as much as 2,400 roubles a year besides the earnings of their yards. They can therefore enjoy a standard of life comparable to that of the Western worker. They are able to afford radios, bicycles, gramophones and clocks; women begin to buy stockings and lipstick. But in the majority of the collectives the standard of life of the Russian peasant resembles more closely, in the opinion of Maynard who has made a careful study of both, that of the Indian peasant.

Women have somewhat benefited by the introduction of collectivization in as much as they are more independent of the men. The lot of the Russian peasant woman has always been a hard one. She always had to do heavy work and be submitted to the authority of her husband. Now the Russian woman receives separate wages and her own dividends but she has still to do heavy jobs to which she has grown accustomed only through a complete loss of her individuality and femininity. She is unable to look after her children, she has no house in the sense of a home where she and her husband can enjoy some rest after a day of labour. Her house is simply a hut where the family can eat and sleep but which does not provide them with any pleasures beyond the satisfaction of primary needs. In these conditions she is unable to be a companion to her husband, a teacher to her children. She is unable to acquire even the smallest amount of education for herself.

The Russian peasant was placed by the 1936 Constitution on a basis of political equality with the industrial workers but he still remains the pariah of Russian society. Though he pays from ¼ to ⅗ of the whole State expenditure, apart from direct taxation, he does not benefit from public services to any large extent. He has no libraries, no communal

centres, he is not entitled to go to holiday homes or sanatoria. The standard of maternity benefit for the peasant's wife is half pay for a month before and a month after childbirth while the town-worker's wife gets full pay. In the case of Red Army soldiers the dependant's allowance in the village is half that of the town.

The rulers of Russia are conscious of the fact that their policy of oppression and exploitation towards the peasants have won them their enmity and they have always treated the country proletariat with suspicion. At the beginning of the present war with Germany vast masses of peasants were evacuated from the regions likely to be invaded as the Government did not trust them to put up sufficient opposition to the Germans. Maynard who has studied the Russian peasant with particular interest sees in him a potential source of revolt against Stalin's régime: "He stirred, and muttered threateningly, in the crisis of the first Five-Year-Plan. The resistance which he is now opposing to the Germans gives cause for believing that the new institutions have won his support. But none of us can be certain even now that he may not strike out with those irresistible arms, and sweep them into a heap of fragments." hardly supports the conclusions above

HOW THE INDUSTRIAL WORKER LIVES

THE ABSENCE SINCE 1930 of a cost-of-living index makes it difficult to calculate the real standard of living of Russian workers. Books by people who have been to Russia are often most unreliable. They make sweeping statements based on the meals they have eaten at hotels or the banquets to which they have been invited. Charlotte Haldane is typical in that respect. In *Russian Newsreel* she declares:

> "Once obtained, the food was excellent. Above all, I revelled in the butter. At every meal I made a glutton of myself; eating what corresponded to nearly one full week's butter ration at home. It was rich, gold and creamy; real farm butter. The Russians use it for everything, even, unimaginable extravagance from our point of view, for cooking."

Later she goes on to mention that butter was sold at 26-28 roubles a kilo in the cheapest shops. Russians, who on the average earn 200 roubles a month, can therefore hardly afford butter to cook with!

Factory canteens have received a great deal of publicity. Foreign delegations have often been so impressed by the cheerful appearance of the refectories and by the good quality of the food they have seen served that they have concluded that, even if the Russian worker were not able to get good meals at home, what he ate at the factory canteen would be sufficient to keep him in good health.

It did not occur to those delegations that a show was often put on for their benefit. Workers who had lived in Russia have described how foreign visitors were taken round the canteens reserved for the technicians

and Trade Union officials and led to believe that they were frequented by workers. Others describe how everything was beautifully arranged when the delegation was expected and how tablecloths, clean aprons for cooks, pork chops, etc., disappeared as soon as the visitors left. These tricks are common practice all over the world and Stalin's bureaucracy is only walking in the footsteps of those zealous officials who built up entire villages to flatter the eye of Tsarina Catherine. Only credulous people are prepared to base their conclusions on what they see on official tours of inspection.

The delegation of Durham miners who visited Russia in 1936 showed in their report this complete lack of critical sense. Not only did it not occur to them that they might have been allowed to see only the bright side of the medal but they also failed to notice that the ordinary worker was not able to afford the meals served at the canteen.

After having pointed out in their report that: "Naturally those who earned big wages could afford the better quality meals" they give the cost of a better quality meal as varying from 5 roubles to ten roubles. The cheaper meals cost between one rouble and two and a half roubles. For two and a half roubles a worker could get: Borsh soup (55 kopecs), pork chops (1r. 65kps.), fruit salad (38kps.) or coffee (35kps.). Such a meal is not extravagant, one will agree. Now, we are told by the same miners who visited the Kirov works, where this canteen was placed, that the workers there earn 316 roubles on an average if they are skilled and 145 if unskilled. If the unskilled worker spent only one rouble a day at the canteen he would have had to sacrifice for a single, very meagre meal, *one fifth* of his salary. In order to afford pork chops he would have to spend 75 roubles a month or half his salary. It is obvious that the low paid worker could not afford canteen meals but this does not prevent the Durham miners from declaring: "The worker who earned low wages, therefore, could still obtain a substantial meal at prices which were within his reach, and it was obvious that the meals were appetising and enjoyed by the workers."

The assertion is openly contradicted by the facts given by the Durham miners themselves and which confirms a statement made to us by a woman who worked several years in a Russian factory. She never once saw her workmates use the canteen, they could not afford it, as she herself could not, and they had to be content with a piece of salted cod that they brought with them.

That canteens were not commonly used seems to be proved by the fact that the Government recently made attendance at the canteens compulsory. If they had been popular it is difficult to see why the Government would have had to force the workers to use them.

Writers like Colin Clark and Maynard have used more accurate means of determining how the Russian worker lives by comparing his wages with the known price of certain basic commodities.

Stalin declared at the 18th Party Congress that the average wage

of the Industrial worker amounted to 66 roubles* per week in 1938. The real income per head is however smaller because most workers have dependants, though to a smaller extent than in Britain as most women in Russia are wage earners. Colin Clark calculated that there are 23 dependants to 19 workers, or approximately 1⅛ dependant to each worker. Maynard took the average family as consisting of 2 workers and 2⅝ dependants, that is to say, a total of 4⅝. The wage would be 112 roubles per week, the wage of the second worker being reckoned as 70% of the principal wage.

The expenditure of this average family would be:

0.75 roubles in income tax.
2.25 roubles in State Loan (virtually compulsory).
2.65 roubles in house rent.

Maynard assumed that the two wage-earners take twelve mid-day meals in the factory canteen (compulsory). The cheapest meal consisting of a bowl of soup made of cabbages and potatoes with bread cost according to the newspaper *Industriya* 0.78 rouble. They will therefore spend R.9.36 a week on factory meals and R.1.20 have to be further deducted for tram fares.

This leaves 96 roubles out of the wage of the two workers on which they must have breakfast and supper, on which the 2⅝ dependants must buy food and on which to provide clothing, tobacco, amusement, etc. for the 4⅝.

Maynard quotes food prices from newspaper statements at various dates in 1937 and 1938 and at various places on the main railway lines in European Russia. Since then there has been a certain inflation, the increase in the cost of living has been followed by an increase in wages, so that we can assume that Maynards figures remain correct up to the beginning of the war.

Black Bread cost R.0.83—0.85 per kilo (2.2 lb.)
Wheat Flour cost R.1—1.50 per kilo.
Potatoes cost R.0.40—0.65 per kilo.
Lard cost R.13—14 per kilo.
Butter cost R.15—17 per kilo
Milk cost R.1.20—1.75 per litre (just over a quart).
Eggs cost R.0.30—0.45 each.
Pork cost R.10—11.50 per kilo.
Tea cost R.60 per kilo.

With 22.8 roubles a week each to spend on food and clothing it is obvious that a Russian family cannot afford butter, meat or tea.

Maynard defines the diet of the Russian worker in the following terms:

"I have little doubt that the fat which he does use is sunflower and

*It would be very misleading to calculate the value of the rouble on the basis of the official rate of exchange as the rouble is very much over-valued. It has to be calculated in relation to the cost of things. In 1937 Jacob Miller (quoted by Maynard) calculated it to be worth 2d. for the purchase of clothing, 3d.-4d. for food bought in shops, 4d.-5d. for canteen meals. Yvon evaluated it in relation to the cost of bread.

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

One should not forget that these calculations are based on Stalin's figure of the average wages which is more likely to be exaggerated than otherwise. One has also to take into account the great disparity of wages in the U.S.S.R. where they are high for a minority class of technicians and skilled workers. If some are able to enjoy a comfortable life many are obliged to live on less than the average wage.

Another factor to be taken into consideration when trying to estimate what is the diet of a Russian worker is the high price of clothing and industrial goods and the even higher price of cigarettes and cinema. The price of coal is also very high and in a country like Russia it is likely to make a big hole in the family budget. This leaves him little money to spend on food. Maynard gives no figures for the price of Vodka,* the sale of which brings such big profits to the Government. It would be interesting to know what proportion of the worker's wage is absorbed by an occasional glass of the national drink.

Maynard quotes the following figures for the price of clothing and other commodities:

Shoes, controlled price, R.19.50.
Man's suit, R.200—750.
Woman's woollen dress, R.78—135.
Man's shirt, R.240.
Cinema, R.1.50—4.50.
Radio set, R.600.
Coal (per cubic metre), R.30.
Haircut, R.1.60.
Cigarettes (25), R.1—4.50.

If one takes the average cost of a man's suit as 475 roubles, a man with an average wage of 66 roubles per week would have to work over seven weeks to buy it. In Britain it would not take a man with an average wage much more than two weeks to buy an ordinary suit.

In Russia the amount of money spent on rent out of the family budget is smaller than in Britain. According to Ambassador Davies: "The rental in factory housing buildings varied according to the number in the family and the floor space thereof; but in no instance did it exceed 15 per cent. of the monthly wage (a provision fixed by law)." If rent is low the housing conditions (which have always been bad in Russia), are still ex-

*The budget accepted by the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. in 1937 offers some interesting features. A great preponderance is given to indirect taxation, in particular to the turnover tax, which takes effect by additions to prices, in a similar way to our purchase tax. Indirect taxation has always been condemned by Left-wing movements as penalising equally the rich and the poor. Turnover taxes amounted to 76,795 million roubles. An interesting point is that out of 76,795 million roubles brought by the turnover tax 6,190 million roubles are obtained through the sale of spirits. Like the tsarist government the Soviet State is doing well out of poisoning people with vodka.

tremely primitive. There is no question of workers having flats or houses of their own. In the majority of cases they have to share flats and sometimes even rooms.

The houses are generally shoddily built. In Moscow 86% of the houses are of wood, covered sometimes with plaster and concrete, 40% of the streets have no sewage system, whole municipal districts are without piped water supplies (Maynard). While beautiful buildings, marble-faced underground stations and colossal statues of the leaders are built, the majority of the population has to put up with a few and badly constructed houses. The figures quoted above should be borne in mind when looking at the beautiful photographs of modern buildings which cover the pages of pro-Russian publications. Before indulging in the luxury of sumptuous buildings it would have been more sensible and more useful to improve the housing conditions of the whole population.

This is how the Durham miners' report which, as we have seen, tends to be partial towards the Russian system, describes miners' houses:

"We visited several workers' houses in this area and found them laid out much neater and better than those in Golorvka. Everyone had a spacious garden, but in no case did we find water laid on, or find any of the streets or back lanes paved or even laid, they were simply muddy tracks.

Inside we found overcrowding was prevalent. There were two families in one house, and while there was a bathroom we found the room had been utilised as a bedroom, as the water supply had not yet been provided. All the homes, however, were spotlessly clean, but one missed the type of fireside, so familiar in our own country, the ornaments and pictures on the walls, the rugs or mats and lino on the floor . . . Electric light was in every house, and was provided at a very low cost. On the whole, we found the same situation as we found in other places, some overcrowding, poor sanitation, no streets or roads, and a poor water supply."

One does not wish to minimise the difficulties which the housing problem in Russia presented but it is obvious that it was not dealt with in the right way when twenty years after the revolution advertisements appear in newspapers asking to rent *a corner* of a room. At the same time architects designed houses to be built for the new aristocracy with rooms for servants.

Like the problem of food and clothing the housing problem could have been solved by an equitable distribution of goods amongst the population and by using the raw materials for the production of useful products instead of war materials destined to wholesale destruction.

THE STAKHANOVITE MOVEMENT

IN ORDER TO increase production the Soviet Government applied the old capitalist method of payment by result, thereby creating vast inequalities amongst the working-class. Production boards where were listed the names of the best factory workers, badges, honorific distinctions were mere accessories; the Udarnik and Stakhanovite movements relied on material privileges to induce the workers to produce more.

The aim of the Russian revolution has not been, as one would have expected, to reduce the working hours of the worker and to improve his standard of life but to increase his production as much as possible. According to Stalin, socialism can and will defeat the capitalist system: "Because it can furnish higher models of labour, a higher productivity of labour than the capitalist system of economy". But to do this the Bolshevik leaders could think of nothing better than to ape the capitalist methods of production and of workers' exploitation.

Already in 1928 brigades of Udarniks were formed. They were workers who voluntarily undertook to work more and better, "to set themselves to raise the standard of output, to diminish scrap or breakages, to put an end to time wasting or unnecessary absenteeism, and to make the utmost use of the instrument of socialist emulation" (*Soviet Communism*, S. & B. Webb). Udarniks received all kinds of privileges in food, clothes and holidays as well as higher wages thanks to the application of piece work generally practiced in Russia.

Udarniks received, like Stakhanovites later, the greatest publicity and encouragement from the government but production still remained below the standards required. In 1935 a new campaign for increased production was launched with the introduction of the Stakhanovite movement. In May 1935 Stalin addressed a speech to the younger workers of the U.S.S.R. declaring that they must "master technique". This was the signal and the drive for greater production began. In August of the same year the miner Stakhanov, with the help of the communist directors of the mine, established the first record by cutting 100 tons of coal in one day (the average amount of coal cut in the Ruhr is 10 tons, the maximum 16 or 17 tons a day). All over Russia and in every kind of industry, from cotton weavers to shop assistants, from trade union officials to poets, Stakhanovites sprang up. The government insisted on the spontaneity of the movement and explained it by the improvement in the conditions of the workers but it was obvious that it was inspired and supported by the whole government machine. Stakhanov's declaration praising Stalin as the originator of the movement

can be taken literally more than as a compliment to the leader: "I really do not know why this movement is called the Stakhanovitchina; it should be rather the Stalinchina (Stalin's movement)! The beloved leader of the Communist Party and of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., comrade Stalin and the Bolshevik party which he leads have inspired our victories".

The purpose behind the Stakhanovite campaign soon became apparent. The Central Committee of the Communist Party declared that the enthusiasm shown by the workers was due to the betterment of their conditions of life and instead of rejoicing at this improvement proceeded to decree the revision of all norms of work which immediately resulted in a lowering of the standard of life.

A revision of collective labour contracts was carried out, the norms of work were increased so that workers had to work more to receive the same wages. The wages of the Stakhanovites however went up considerably, and sometimes represented as much as ten times the wages of an ordinary worker. An engine driver earns 900 roubles a month instead of 400, etc. This great disparity between the wages of the ordinary worker and the Stakhanovite naturally created hostility and division amongst the Russian workers.*

The Stakhanovite method is not something new. Ford and Taylor had long before defined means by which the workers would produce the maximum work in the minimum time. Their methods were of course hated and despised by the working people all over the world. When a few years ago the Duke of Windsor wanted to visit an American factory in the company of Bedaux the workers threatened to go on strike if he came with a man who had refined the method of exploitation of the workers. The originality of the Russian method was to give a character of spontaneity to the movement, of making it spring from the masses, of covering the increased exploitation of the majority of the workers under a heap of socialist slogans.

Stakhanovite workers did not find *new* methods of work but they rationalised production somewhat by introducing more division of labour and efficient tools. Stakhanov, for example, was helped by a team which prepared the place and removed the coal while he concentrated on cutting the coal with a pneumatic piston pick.

The simplicity of Stakhanov's method is confirmed by his own description of how he achieved his first record:

> "The coal face I was working was divided into eight small sections. There were ten hewers in every shift, and even if one of us had the makings to produce more, there was no chance to do so, for lack of elbow room. The small sections were so crowded with people that they got into each other's

*"The peculiar danger of piece-work is that this method of remuneration will be used to bring down wage-rates by alteration of the norms. This is actually occurring, and we are not surprised at hearing of discontent among those who cannot stand the pace, and even of murderous attacks upon Stakhanovites. The British worker, from his own peculiar point of view, as one who seeks to checkmate efforts to hasten the pace, would probably call them blacklegs." John Maynard, *The Russian Peasant and other Studies.*

way. Besides, the work in general was so organised that the picks were used only three to three and a half hours a shift or even less. The rest of the time went into timbering, for we did both the hewing and the timbering ourselves, and while we timbered the picks lay idle.

When these handicaps were removed, I hewed 102 tons of coal in a single six-hour shift."—*The Stakhanov Movement Explained,* by Stakhanov.

Stakhanovite salesmen quickened their service "by having already packed the quantities usually demanded of the commodities in greatest request" (*Soviet Communism,* S. & B. Webb). Salesmen all over the world do this without socialist emulation!

The fantastic claims of the efficiency of Stakhanovite methods are by now a familiar feature of all Russo-phile literature. *Soviet War News* quoted in the *New Builders Leader,* November 1942, claims that a Russian bricklayer laid 4,800 bricks in three hours:

"Soviet building workers on an important rush job for the State Defence Committee decided to push it through in half the scheduled time. Instructors in Stakhanovite methods altered the technical processes and trained the workers in new methods, so that jobs that used to take five to six months are now done in a month.

Several of the most skilled workers turned out 500 to 600 per cent. of their quota—occasionally they leapt to 1,000 per cent. Stoppages were eliminated, thanks to the planning of every minute of the working day.

A few days ago the best bricklayer in the Soviet Union, Ovchinnikov, set up a new record on this job by laying 4,800 bricks in three hours—26 bricks per minute."

This means that in the time one takes to count one, two, a Russian bricklayer takes up a brick, chooses the right face, covers it with mortar, lays it and taps it level (presumably he hasn't the time to also 'strike' the joints!). In two seconds it seems that there would only be time to drop the brick and hope for the best. A skilled bricklayer in this country can lay 2,000 bricks a day on straightforward work.* It is fortunate that Stakhanovite methods had not been invented at the time when the Romans built their roads, the craftsmen of the Middle Ages their cathedrals and the XIXth century bricklayers their bridges and walls, or there would be very few standing to-day!

The records achieved by Stakhanovite workers were obviously tricked. Gangs worked at night, for example, in order to prepare the work for the next day, a gang of workers assisted the Stakhanovite, etc. This explains how some Stakhanovite workers have achieved records which have aroused the incredulity of most Western workers. Two months after Stakhanov cut 102 tons of coal in one day, for example, the miner Matchekin cut in the same time 1,466 tons of coal! The Government did not take the trouble to explain these figures—it merely wanted to impress the imagination of the average worker and make him feel ashamed of the little work he did com-

*At the present time the output per bricklayer in this country is based on between 45 and 60 bricks per hour depending on the type of brickwork, and bonus is earned on outputs exceeding this number. Therefore in a 10 hour day a bricklayer is expected to lay 600 bricks before earning bonus.

pared with record-breaking heroes. One should mention here that after having achieved these feats the most famous Stakhanovites were taken into rest houses or were sent to lecture in Universities and factories. They did not go back to work, their job was done; they had *proved* that workers should produce more. In April 1936 an Institute of Work which prepared norms compatible with maintaining good health among the workers was closed as harmful, its scientific norms having been brilliantly demolished by the practice of the Stakhanovites!

As might be expected, the already overworked and underfed Russian workers did not accept without resistance an increase in the norms of production which for the majority meant a reduction in salary. The Soviet Press reported many cases* where Stakhanovites met with the hostility of their fellow workers:

"In the factory Krasny Schtampovtchik, a Stakhanovite worker found on her loom a dirty broom with the following note: 'To the comrade Belog, this bouquet is offered in order to thank her for having increased by three times our norms'." (*Troud* 1/11/35).

"'Horses are not men; they cannot follow socialist emulation.' This is what Maximovitch had the audacity to say to Orloff, an official of the Communist Youth, who proposed that he increase the work of horse conductors at the bottom of the mine. When we asked how was the (stakhanovite) method carried out in Loutch we learned by a local paper that out of 38 pits 35 opposed the new method with a more or less open sabotage." (*Izvestia* 2/10/35).

"In a factory where wagons were being repaired two workers were condemned to five and three years imprisonment for having stolen the instruments of a Stakhanovite worker." (*Pravda* 2/11/35).

"The locksmith Konovalov killed the super-udarnik Rachtepa." (*Izvestia* 23/8/35).

"The military tribunal has condemned the murderers of the Stakhanovite Schmirev, the brothers Kriachkov, to the highest punishment for social offence, to be shot." (*Pravda* 21-22/11/35).

The application of Stakhanovite methods naturally affected the health of the Russian worker. The less paid worker suffered from malnutrition and the Stakhanovite from overwork. Kléber Legay, a French miner, member of the C.G.T., who visited Russia in 1936 with a delegation of miners, reports in his book that when he visited the mine of Gorlovka in the Donetz basin he was able to observe the effects of the Stakhanovite system on the health of the workers:

"In 1934, before the introduction of the Stakhanovite system 36,000 roubles were spent for the treatment of 1,951 workers. In 1936 the same expenses have gone up to 106,000 roubles for 1,920 workers engaged in the mine.

I have asked the following question to the interpreter:

'Have those sums been spent to cure sick people?' The interpreter answered: 'Only workers really ill are admitted in these establishments.'

Stakhanovism, method of rationalisation, causes serious ravages amongst Russian miners".

When Stakhanov declares in his pamphlet: "Stakhanovite work does not call for physical over-exertion. It requires only a public spirited atti-

*Quoted in *De Taylor à Stakhanov* by A.P.

tude towards one's work and a thorough study of one's machinery and its technique" he leaves one rather sceptical!*

Outside Russia the Stakhanovite movement was praised only by the communist and russophile press. Workers looked with mixed feelings of amusement and indignation at the 'records' of Stakhanovite workers in Russia. Kléber Legay denounced the dangerous conditions in which Russian miners accomplished their exploits. In France, communist leaders had to write to their communist newspapers to stop the publication of records achieved by Stakhanovite workers as they were received with laughter by the miners. The word Stakhanovite was used by many as an insult!

The Stakhanovite movement is, according to the Webbs, a "revolution in the wage-earners' mentality towards measures and devices for increasing the productivity of labour . . . (because) . . . in soviet industry, there is no 'enemy party' . . . the manual worker in the factory . . . realises that the whole of the aggregate net product . . . is genuinely at the disposal of the aggregate workers . . . in such ways as they, by their own trade organisation, choose to determine."

The Stakhanovite movement is nothing of the sort. It is a method whereby a minority of workers stronger and more skilled than others receive a higher wage and privileges at the expense of other workers. The factory management could afford to pay Stakhanovite workers more than others because they helped to raise the norms of production and therefore lowered the wages of the other workers. As Taylor had already pointed out: "one must pay high salaries in order to have cheap labour."

If the workers in the Soviet Union really believed that by working harder they would increase "the whole of the aggregate product at the disposal of the aggregate workers" there would have been no need to encourage them to produce more by according special privileges to them. Furthermore by paying Stakhanovite workers more the Government made it plain that the aggregate product was not going to benefit equally each worker but only a minority. In many cases where the Stakhanovite worker operated in collaboration with other workers he became a kind of sub-contractor as he alone received the bonus for increased production while his companions were paid ordinary rates.

The only difference between the Stakhanovite movement and the old methods of capitalist exploitation consists in the fact that the workers are made to believe that they are not exploited at all but are, in reality, working for the building up of a socialist state. Workers are asked to stop defending their wages and trying to decrease their hours of work and to put the interest of the State before their own.

In Russia the workers are asked to do this under the pretext of building up a Socialist Country while in reality it is not Socialism which is built on workers' sweat but a class of bureaucrats and politicians.

*Maynard (op. cit.) observes that: "There seems to be nothing to protect the worker against the temptation to exhaust prematurely his reserves of strength."

CONSCRIPTED AND FORCED LABOUR

THE NEWSPAPERS REPORTED on the 16th of April, 1943 that Russia's railways had been placed under martial law, the reason given being the usual one of preventing sabotage "by an unimportant minority of irresponsible workers." The six points of the new decree by Stalin are: —

1—All railways are under martial law; 2—All railway workers are fully mobilised and are unable to leave their jobs; 3—Railway workers are to be held responsible for offences or failures in their work in the same way as soldiers.

4—Offences are to be tried by war tribunals; 5—Offenders will be dismissed and sent to serve on the front unless tribunals pass more severe sentences; 6—The Peoples' Commissar for Transport, Kaganovich, and managers of the railways have power to place offenders under administrative arrest for periods up to 21 days.

To appreciate the severity of the decree one has to bear in mind how strict is the discipline to which the Red Army soldier is subjected. This new *ukase* by Stalin is only, however, in the tradition of the Bolshevik Government. Ever since the revolution the Russian worker has been subjected, except during short intervals, to military discipline. Trotsky had already in 1918 gone far in the direction towards militarising industrial workers. The peasants' lot was no better. In 1919, to the decree ordering the requisition of their goods was added the obligation to provide forced labour and transport. At the end of the civil war the workers' opposition to militarisation increased, but new orders were issued in October 1920 for a mobilisation of labour on military lines accompanied by the typical bolshevik instructions that it should be effected "with revolutionary animation." In 1930 and 1931 a crisis in railway transport was solved by compulsory recall to transport service of persons having technical experience. Again compulsion was used to secure skilled labour for timber floating in the Spring thaw.

Legislation similar to the Essential Works Order in this country existed in Russia long before the present war started. The Russian law "provides a reserve power of complete industrial conscription, which requires that in case of public crisis everyone between the ages of eighteen and forty-five in the case of men (and forty in the case of women) must take part in work required by the Government except only women more than seven months advanced in pregnancy, nursing mothers and women with young children who have no one to look after them" (Labour Code of the Russian Federal Republic, quoted by the Webbs in *Soviet Communism*).

A decree of October, 1930, introduced compulsory transfer of labour:

skilled workmen in non-essential industries could be directed into coal mining or into the building industry. Railway technicians had to go wherever they were directed. Maynard, in *The Russian Peasant and other Studies,* quotes several examples from the Soviet Statute book where compulsory labour was used: —

> "In the spring of 1930, there is to be 'rigorous discipline in connection with timber-floating, after the thaw,' and labour is to be despatched from collective farms to 'seasonal branches of the national economy—construction, floating, agriculture, loading and unloading.' Demands of labour for loading and unloading of grain, and of export and import goods, are to have priority: and all unemployed persons (this refers to 1930) are to obey the call, for work on these tasks, on pain of deprivation of unemployment benefit. Intellectual workers are included in this order. Labour organisations are to create voluntary brigades of shock-workers to work off accumulations of unloading and loading . . . the system of agreements with collective farms for use of their surplus labour involves a measure of compulsion upon individuals."

Children do not escape labour conscription. The Press announced on the 6th of May, 1941, that a decree ordering the mobilisation of 700,000 boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 17 as labour reservists had been issued in Moscow. They were to be in addition to the five millions already mobilised for training in trade schools as skilled industrial workers. A decree of October, 1940, had already restricted the choice of employment by young people. Those in collective farms were chosen by the Committee and obliged to undergo industrial training and remain for a certain period in the trade to which they had been directed.

In view of the number of decrees ordering compulsory labour it is surprising to see that Beatrice and Sidney Webb deny the existence of compulsion in Russia. In *Soviet Communism* they declare: "Unless we are to consider as slavery all work done for wages or salary, in pursuance of contracts voluntarily entered into, and upon conditions settled by trade unions in collective bargaining, there does not seem to be any implication of slavery involved in a planned economy. The Government of the U.S.S.R. has, indeed, no need to employ compulsion to fill its factories or state farms, or even its lumber camps." This statement is contradicted by the Webbs themselves who, a few lines earlier, referred to "the forced removal from their homesteads to other districts, leading normally to less pleasant opportunities of earning their living, of kulaks and other recalcitrants who in 1931-1932 obstructed the formation of collective farms or the timely sowing and reaping."

One might question the validity of contracts entered into by the Russian Trade Unions in the name of the workers. Even if the Central Committee of Trade Unions had given its consent to the labour decrees ordering compulsion, these are nevertheless forced upon the workers. The Russian Trade Unions are merely the instruments of the State and their decisions are not reached by the rank and file members. It would be just as absurd to say that in this country the Essential Works Order is a voluntary contract between the Government and the workers when the workers were never

consulted and when the entire Emergency Regulations controlling the country at the present time were passed by the House of Commons in less than two hours, receiving the support of M.P.s who confessed afterwards that they had had no time to read them.

Not only compulsory labour exists in Russia, but slave labour, too. With the excuse of punishing them for their opposition to the Government, millions of people have been, during the last fifteen years, condemned to penal labour. An immense army of men and women has been formed whom the Government can direct to do the hardest work without payment of wages and kept at starvation level. It was after the decree ordering the collectivisation of the land in 1929 that the Government first experimented in the use of penal labour on a big scale. Peasants who opposed the decree were arrested by the G.P.U. (the Red Army is said to have refused to do the job for fear of revolt in its ranks) and transported to build roads and canals. Since the decree met with great opposition in the countryside, the Government was able to draw from an almost inexhaustible supply of labour: —

> "Before long, Dnieperstroi, Magnitostroi, every important construction job, had its crowded barracks for the deported kulaks, virtual prisoners of the state, as well as for the actual convicted prisoners who were locked in at the end of the working day."—(Eugene Lyons *Assignment in Utopia.*)

For a time the Press, both in Russia and abroad, denied the use of forced labour by the Russian Government. But when the U.S.S.R. started exporting Soviet goods in 1930 at ridiculously low prices, foreign capitalists became alarmed and something became known about conditions in the Soviet penal labour camps. Eugene Lyons, who was in Russia at the time, exposes in his book the lies used then both by the Soviet Government and the foreign journalists: —

> "The Soviet government's denials of forced labour put the finishing touches on the diverting Olympiad of hypocrisy involved in the 'anti-dumping' campaign. 'Prisoners everywhere work, why should not ours?' the Kremlin asked indignantly, thus evading the issue, which was why the U.S.S.R. possessed so many hundreds of thousands of prisoners. It did not explain whether a million or so men and women transported forcibly to places where there was only one job and one employer and then given a free choice of employment were 'forced labour' or not.
>
> "For the special purpose of appeasing American public opinion, an American 'commission' was dispatched to the lumber area and in due time it attested truthfully that it had not *seen* forced labour . . . . I knew all three men intimately, and it is betraying no secret to record that each of them was . . . thoroughly convinced of the widespread employment of forced labour in the lumber industry . . . they placated their conscience by merely asserting ambiguously that they personally had seen no signs of forced labour; they did not indicate that they made no genuine effort to find it and that their official guide steered the 'investigation'."

Forced labour, with its indescribable sufferings and hardships, has found its apologists. Louis Fisher has described the army of slaves of the G.P.U. as a "vast industrial organization and a big educational institution." The G.P.U., in fact, found itself able to employ millions of people with a

minimum of expense. No wonder the G.P.U. soon prospered and became one of the biggest contracting firms in the country, being able to undertake the manufacture of anything from a camera to the building of roads and canals. Maurice Edelman, in *How Russia Prepared*, explains how the prisoners of the G.P.U. *were not allowed to decay in idleness*:—

> "Road building is controlled by the Central Highway Administration of the People's Commissariat for Home Affairs—translated into Russian, the G.P.U. . . . At a time of great social change, when resistance to such change was an offence, the dissidents whom the G.P.U. interned numbered many hundreds of thousands. They were not allowed to decay in idleness. The internees were put to the task of improving Soviet communications, particularly by road and canal."

The G.P.U. saw to it that there was plenty of labour available for its various enterprises: " . . . from the isolated official admissions by the government (at least 200,000 prisoners engaged on the Baltic-White Sea Canal, several hundred thousand in double-tracking the Trans-Siberian Railroad, etc.), a conservative estimate of the total at the time when Fisher's 'vast industrial organization' was at its vastest would be two millions. If we add the exiled peasants transported to areas under G.P.U. supervision . . . the total would be at least tripled" (Eugene Lyons).

The immense armies of slave labour of the G.P.U. have no parallel in any other country in the world. What exists in a sporadic way and in a small scale in countries like India or China has been organised along the most ruthless and efficient lines by the Soviet State. And yet forced labour in the camps of the G.P.U., where people die of hunger and cold, submitted to the discipline of convicts, treated like animals whom it is unnecessary to spare as ten can take the place of the one who falls, is the logical consequence of laws enforcing military discipline on the workers at the time of the revolution. The artisans of the February and October Revolution gave up their right to organise their work and to run the factories themselves. They allowed the State to impose its discipline upon them. At the time the State was still weak and it had to treat them with a certain amount of respect and consideration. But when it succeeded in crushing its bourgeois enemies from outside and the revolutionary movements in Russia itself, the Bolshevik Government was able to build powerful weapons in order to regiment and suppress the Russian working class. Ten years after the end of the revolution, Stalin's Government was able to use compulsion in industry on a great scale and to reduce millions of peasants to the status of slaves, the greatest achievement in the oppression of peoples known in the history of mankind.

WOMEN IN U.S.S.R.

IN 1920 LENIN declared that it was the task of the Government of the proletarian dictatorship to free women "from the old household drudgery and dependence on man". In fact the Soviet State recognised the complete equality of rights for men and women. Women were given the same civic rights as men, they had the same rights to join the Party, the trade-unions and the co-operatives. Legally they had equal rights with men at work and in married life. Though in a backward country like Russia the equality of women was bound not to be always readily accepted by men and, perhaps, by some of the women themselves, the Soviet constitution provided women with the opportunity of taking an active part in the life of the country.

The most original part of the constitution consisted in the rights given to women as wives and mothers. In many capitalist countries women had already the right to vote and be elected to Parliament; most jobs and careers had been opened to women at wages similar to those of men. But the legislators of capitalist countries always showed themselves extremely jealous of the prerogatives of man as master in the family. The Soviet Constitution, though preserving marriage, was careful to deprive it of the character of subjection for women which always accompanied it.

After the revolution marriage tended to be considered in Russia as a simple formality. No stigma was attached to women living with men without being married and they had the same rights as married women. Children born outside marriage had the same rights as legal children. The laws practically delivered women from the shackles of marriage which bind them in capitalist countries. They did not run the risk of being left with children to bring up, even if they had been conceived outside marriage. The woman could make known to the authorities the identity of the father (or fathers where there were any doubts) and he (or they) had to provide for the needs of the mother during the period of pregnancy and during the six months which followed the birth, and pay to the child till the age of eighteen a pension of a certain amount. The mother had to provide half the maintenance of the child but if the parents were unable to provide for him the State provided for him instead. It would be difficult to say to what extent the system was put into practice as there are still in Russia great numbers of abandoned children, and one may wonder in what measure women were able to get the help of the State in bringing up their children. But within the limits in which the system worked it provided women with a great deal of independence from their husbands and men in general.

A very important right was given to women by the decree of 1920 which declared abortion legal as long as it was practised by qualified persons, in State hospitals. The legalisation of abortion in Russia received a tremendous amount of publicity abroad and was perhaps the most discussed aspect of the emancipation of Russian women. Little is known however of the obstacles put in the way of free abortion by the Government since 1924. This fundamental right was finally suppressed in 1936 when the Abortion Law made it a crime to procure abortion and abolished advisory clinics. In 1937, Professor Alexandrov boasted that no Abortoriums existed any longer in the Soviet Union adding that "the same barriers existed to the performance of abortion in Moscow and throughout Russia as in all civilised countries".

The right of women "to dispose of their own bodies" for which the communists professed to have such a deep respect was sacrificed to political expediency. As Maurice Edelman explains in *How Russia Prepared*: "The Law was a war measure. It aimed at increasing the already high birth rate, so that the population of the Soviet Union might outweigh the productive strength of its enemies". Women's independence was sacrificed to the need of the State to have more cannon fodder.

The 1936 Constitution or, as it is aptly called, the Stalinist Constitution, curtailed still further women's liberties. Divorce which had, after the revolution, been made simple and easy, was made more difficult. Women's holidays before and after the birth of a child were shortened. Women working in factories were, according to the law, entitled to two months holiday before and after the birth of a child, while women working in offices and collective farms were entitled to six weeks; they both received full pay during the holiday. Maternity leave was reduced from sixteen weeks to nine and women who changed their jobs after they were two months pregnant (even though they were dismissed by a factory and were employed immediately by another) could not receive holidays with pay at all.

While Stalin was, with his *ukases*, depriving Russian women of many of their rights, he was also trying to glorify the rôle of women as mothers. He started having photographs taken showing him kissing babies and patting mothers with big families on the back in the best Mussolinian style. He even went to the trouble of visiting his old mother in Tiflis whom he had not seen for years. Family ties which had, up to then, been scorned as being bourgeois were suddenly encouraged with enthusiasm. Women who could afford it found in the shops cosmetics and perfumes, and manicure saloons were installed in factories, for the best paid women workers.

The early legislation regarding abortion, marriage and divorce in the U.S.S.R. has been acclaimed by all left wing movements as an example to be followed. The rapidity with which part of that legislation was repealed, merely by the wish of Stalin and a few of his associates, shows how precarious and temporary women's liberty is in a totalitarian country. The repeal of the law legalising abortion offers a good example of the ruthlessness with which the bolshevik rulers act. The law was undoubtedly extremely popular, it is one of the few points on which observers of the Russian régime, whatever their ideas might be, find themselves in agreement. The law was therefore repealed against the wish of the majority of women in the U.S.S.R., in the most dictatorial way.

With their characteristic habit of contradicting themselves the Webbs in their book *Soviet Communism* declare that: "It can hardly be said that the action of the government was dictatorial in form or method" and then go on to admit that "So far as it could be estimated, the opinion of the women (though not that of men) seemed to be preponderatingly in favour of free abortion whenever desired. Nevertheless, so convinced was the government of the need for a reversal of the policy of 1920, that the Sovnarkom (cabinet of ministers) and the Central Executive Committee passed the new law, by overwhelming majorities". It is to be remarked that when a woman decided to have an abortion the husband's opinion was not asked for but, when the Government chose to change the law it decided that it "knew better" and the opinion of women was completely ignored. This is not, according to the Webbs, acting in a dictatorial way.

The Russian experience demonstrates that real freedom for women cannot be established by Government decrees. The cause of women's independence may coincide at certain periods of history with the interests of the Government and even with the ideology professed by that Government.* That was the situation in Russia after the Revolution: Marx's teachings suited perfectly the interests of the bolsheviks which consisted in trying to draw women into all spheres of activity for the enormous task of reconstruction. The "sacred right" of women to decide if they wanted to become mothers coincided with the shortage of food and the bad housing conditions which made the limitation of births necessary. As soon as the economic situation was better, and women had been regimented into industry there was no need for the State to respect their rights. Women can have only a caricature of liberty so long as they are not prepared to organise their own lives but instead allow the State to decide for them in the minutest details.

At present the Russian woman is unable to defend the rights still left to her should the State choose still further to restrict her liberty of action. Russian women have no legal means of protest since the press is in the hands of the government, they have no means of striking or even organising demonstrations; they are at the mercy of Stalin's good will. If they protest

*Left wing governments are by no means the only ones who may have interest in championing women's independence. The Turkish dictator Ataturk did a great deal to liberate women from the tyrannical atmosphere of the Harem. On the other hand left wing parties have sometimes opposed laws giving new rights to women as they would have resulted in a loss of power for their movements. In France the socialists were afraid that if women were given the vote they would lose the elections as they thought most women would vote for the catholic and reactionary parties.

they are imprisoned or sent to Siberia. Liberty administered by the State is not liberty, it is only a new form of slavery.

The laws of the Soviet Government regarding women gave them a great deal of independence, but that independence was greatly increased by the fact that most women became earners and were no longer economically dependent on men. After the revolution the number of women working in industry increased at a tremendous rate. In March 1940 the Government reported that in the past decade the number of women workers had more than trebled; from 3 millions in 1929 to almost 11 millions in 1939. The communists boasted of this as an indication of Socialist achievement but the conditions under which the Russian women are working remind one of the terrible conditions existing in English industry during the 19th century and which were so bitterly attacked in the writings of Marx and Engels.

Russian women are employed in heavy and unhealthy work, in foundries, on the railways and in the mines. According to Charlotte Haldane factory labour in Russia to-day is seventy or eighty per cent. female. Foreign delegations visiting Russia have been shocked by the conditions in which they worked. English and French miners were particularly indignant at the sight of women working in the pits and the Durham miners who visited Russia in 1936, declared on their return: "We always condemn in plain, honest pit terms, the employment of women underground. There is no need to overstate the position or moralise about it. In our opinion, the employment of women underground is wrong, and especially so in a Socialist State, and it should be made illegal". The French miner Kléber Legay expressed his disapproval to the Russian official who accompanied him during his visit to the Gorlovka mine*: "I expressed my surprise," he says, "on learning that under a Socialist régime women are obliged to do such work and I pointed out to him that Russia is the only European country, even taking the fascist countries into account, where women work underground."

The excuse given by the President of the T.U. to Legay and which is often used in the Russian press was that it is better to see women working in the mines than see them, as in France, given up to prostitution! If twenty years after the October Revolution, Russian women have to choose between going down the mines and prostitution, it does not say much for the Soviet régime.

Legay had been assured by an official that women employed in the mines were only engaged on "light work at the pit heads." He was very surprised when he went down the mine to find things quite different: "We had been told that women were only engaged on light work: what a lie! We saw women facing the seam under the following conditions: At the foot of a sloping seam that was being worked were three women.

*Kléber Legay *Un Mineur Français chez les Russes.* (Editions Pierre Tisné, Paris, 1937).

Two of them had to load 20 to 25 tons of coal obtained from the seam into wagons holding one and a half tons."

Recently the *Russian News Bulletin* (30/7/41), announced that women are now even hewing coal, the only job they did not perform at the time when the French delegation visited the Russian mines. "For the first time in the Donetz Basin, a team of women loaders has been organised. Now ten women of the Babicheva's brigade daily load fourteen to fifteen tons of coal each. This team has already its own hewing-machine operator, Polina Tantsyura."

Mines were not the only places where Legay saw women engaged in heavy work. He saw women working on the Permanent Way, working near furnaces, digging up stones and carting earth in hand-barrows. The danger of accidents occurring was so great in some of the mines visited by the French miners' delegation that, in one case, they interrupted their visit because they and the French Communist deputy were "scared" of going further. The sanitary conditions were also very unsatisfactory. The baths were made very much inferior to the ones used by French or English miners. According to Legay, "The pit wash-house can better be described as a bear garden. There is only one for all the workers, men and women. When a shift comes off duty, men and women have to wash together."

Charlotte Haldane in her book *Russian Newsreel* also describes the hard conditions under which Russian women work:

> "In Archangel it was necessary to lay down a light railway track for about five miles along the docks . . . I watched this being done, entirely by women. The track, complete with points, was laid in forty-eight hours. They went at it day and night, by daylight and electric light. It was snowing and freezing, all the time, but this made no difference to their labours. All the cargo checkers were women too. They worked in shifts, twenty-four hours on, twenty-four hours off. During their working period they had occasional brief rests of an hour or two, when they retired to a wooden hut on the quay, ate their cabbage soup and black bread, drank their imitation tea, had an uneasy doze in their clothes, and returned to work."

The Soviet Press and its mouthpieces in this country often boast of the fact that women in the Soviet Union are engaged in heavy industry and are able to do all the men's jobs. Intellectuals who have never touched a shovel gasp in admiration at the idea of women working in mines or foundries, but workers who know what these jobs mean and how exhausting they are, shrink at the idea of women, most of them physically weaker than themselves, engaged in this kind of work.

The Russian women are now being held up as an example to be followed by women in this country. While Royal Commissions deprecate female labour in Indian mines, so-called socialists would like to see the same thing introduced in Britain.

Forward (25/4/42) reports that "In a discussion at the Scots Miners' Conference on whether women should be employed at pit heads, Mr. William Pearson, Lanarkshire, said it was as honourable for girls to be

employed in mines as in nursing or industry. 'What about Russian women who are not only prepared to work at the pit top, but go below?' "

Durham and French miners do not think it is "honourable" for girls to be employed in mines. They condemn it in "plain honest pit terms".

It is not for the honour of being a miner that the Russian woman does such heavy work, nor for the sake of the panegyrics of the lily-handed journalists who write in *Pravda* or the *Daily Worker*. She is forced into that work by economic necessity. Kléber Legay asked a woman loader who received 150 roubles a month for such heavy work, if she would not prefer to work on the surface. She answered that she earned more that way. "As I expressed my surprise to see that she was working facing the seam, and thus exposed to great danger, I was answered that she was not obliged to do that job; she had herself asked to do it in order to earn more."

And Legay rightly comments: "I do not know how the Russian militants justify this, but, in my opinion, there are only two ways to force women to do work for which they are not suited and which the most elementary common-sense condemns. The first is to impose that work by brute force. Secondly by making it impossible for the husband to earn sufficient money to feed and clothe his family, and in the case of a single woman by paying her starvation wages if she does not work in the pits. Violence is certainly not used, but they refuse to pay a living wage if one refuses to go down the mine."

In theory, women in Russia are paid wages equal to those of men, but in fact women generally earn less than men as they are not able to produce as much. Women are also very often put to work in sections which require less strength and ability and receive therefore less wages. The extensive application of piece work is also in many cases unfavourable to women. The injustice of this grading of wages is shown by the fact that women working in a team with men often receive smaller salaries. Legay gives an example of this which he observed in one of the mines he visited:

"A woman was working with a hewer. This work consisted in throwing back for several yards, from 18 to 20 tons of coal. The woman's salary was 180 roubles a month, while her male comrade who was a Stakhanovite earned 700 roubles. The latter can only earn that sum in so far as the woman maintains her effort."

One sees that the formula of equal pay for equal work covers gross inequalities.

The Russian woman has been liberated to a great extent from the slavery of the family, but only to become the slave of her work. Before the revolution, she was imprisoned in her family life, submitted to the wishes of her father or husband; now she has lost those masters only to acquire a more ruthless one, the State. The State has declared her to be the equal of man but that formula is a cynical joke when the means of

achieving that equality are denied to her. It is not by sweating down the mine, while young men spend their time in offices, that women can achieve equality with men. As Legay points out "The formula of equality of man and woman must recognise the right for the woman to work, but at work suited to her sex."

The Russian working class woman is submitted to a double inequality. She is not the equal of her male fellow worker because working as many hours and as hard as he does she earns less; nor is she the equal of the women and men belonging to the privileged class. She slaves in the factories and mines so that a whole population of bureaucrats can afford to live in idleness. She has to become a servant to rich families in order to avoid starvation. She is badly dressed and poorly fed, so that wives of technicians, officers, G.P.U. officials, can enjoy themselves and dress smartly.

Charlotte Haldane who is fond of talking of the equality of sexes in Russia gives an indicting picture of the privileged conditions enjoyed by wives of Red Army officers:

> "When I was discussing the war-work of the Russian women with one of my Russian friends, she surprised me by being rather bitter about 'the best people'. I asked her what she meant by this phrase. It turned out that it referred to the wives of the higher-ranking officers of the Red Army. This interested me and I went into the matter rather carefully with Red Army officers themselves. It appeared to be true that there was no obligation on their wives to do special war-work. The facts of the case were somewhat curious and interesting.
>
> "The Red Army was and is the fine flower of the Russian people. Its pre-war living conditions, educational and recreational facilities, were admirable in every respect. But an Army is an Army. It presents a sex problem. The problem was satisfactorily solved by encouraging marriage and breeding among Red Army officers. And this is a wholly excellent thing. But for some reason which never became quite clear to me there was no demand on any Red Army officer's wife to do more than produce a child or children. She didn't even have to look after her offspring herself, but could hire a nurse to do the job. She was supposed to interest herself in cultural and social activities connected with the Army, the Soldiers' Clubs, and so on; but this was a purely voluntary activity. Her husband was excellently paid; she did not have to work to supplement the family income as the majority of Soviet women do. According to what I was told she was beginning to go quite a long way towards being the 'Colonel's lady', and very definitely not Judy O'Grady. And the war seemed not to have affected this situation. The majority of Red Army officers I questioned as to the whereabouts of their wives and children told me they were in Kazan or Kuibishev or some reception area; and the ladies did not appear to be doing any special war-work."
> —*Russian Newsreel.*

What is the use of talking of equality between sexes when injustices like these exist everywhere?

Visitors to Russia have seen half naked women working a hammer in a forge and at the hotel, elegant, painted and perfumed ladies (such as one may see in any smart hotel in capitalist countries). While the govern-

ment was encouraging women to dress smartly and go to the manicurists, working class women had to prostitute themselves in order to supplement their poor earnings.

If the Russian revolution had given to women the opportunity of receiving according to their needs and not according to the hours of work or the piece work done, if it had given them the power to run the factories where they worked and the farms, then the Russian woman would have truly achieved her own freedom.

NOTE.

Since this pamphlet was written the Russian Government has issued new decrees which emphasise the reactionary trend of Soviet legislation:

A decree increasing State aid to pregnant women, giving special money grants to families of three and more, and instituting special decorations and honours for the mothers of large families was issued yesterday by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

The degree is directed towards encouraging large families and strengthening the care of motherhood and childhood.

Families will on the birth of the third child get a lump sum grant of 1,300 roubles and a monthly allowance of 80 roubles.

The amount of these allowances and grants increases with each additional child until at the eleventh they reach 5,000 roubles lump-sum grant and 300 roubles a month allowance.

Mothers who have borne and brought up five or six children are awarded the "Motherhood Medal". With families of seven, eight or nine children, mothers get the third, second or first class of the order "Mothers' Glory." The title "Heroine Mother" is to be conferred on those who have borne and brought up ten children.

Unmarried mothers will receive a special allowance for children born after the promulgation of the new decree amounting to 100 roubles a month for one child, 150 roubles for two, and 200 roubles for three and more.

The decree fixes the rates of taxes on bachelors, spinsters and couples with one or two children. The tax applies to men between the ages of 20 and 50 and women between the ages of 20 and 45, and is in proportion to the income.

New regulations governing marriage and the family have been introduced.

The decree lays it down that only registered marriage entails the rights and duties of husband and wife—as provided for in the corresponding legal codes.

The existing right of a mother to start court proceedings for ascertaining the paternity of a child and for collecting money for maintenance of a child born out of registered wedlock is abolished.

Divorce proceedings are to be made public, with preliminary publication of a notice in the local newspapers.

The People's Courts must now take measures to bring about reconciliation between man and wife, and only after this can the Higher Courts, beginning at the City Courts, consider the dissolution of the marriage.

Daily Worker, 10/7/44.

The sanctity of marriage and the family! The virtue of bringing masses of children into the world! Mussolini discovered all this twenty years ago . . .

MOULDING YOUTH

THE EARLY SOVIET legislation had adopted progressive measures regarding children. It had not only abolished child labour but also provided for free universal education from top to bottom. Article 121 of the "Fundamental Rights of Citizens" stated: "Citizens of the U.S.S.R. have the right to education. This right is ensured by universal, compulsory, elementary education; by education, including higher education, being free of charge; by the system of state stipends for the overwhelming majority of students in the universities and colleges". This law was not universally put into practice but it indicated the desire to widely extend education.

Stalin was to deprive the citizens of the U.S.S.R. of their right to education. On October 3rd, 1940, the Soviet system of free education was severely curtailed. Students in the eighth, ninth and tenth grades were obliged to pay a tuition fee of 200 roubles yearly in the towns and 150 roubles in the villages, an extremely high fee since it corresponds to about a workers' wages for a month. Students in high schools and colleges were required to pay 400 roubles in the cities and 300 in the towns. Higher education was by that means completely barred to working class children.

Bertrand D. Wolfe in an article in *Harper's Magazine* has described the decree on education in the following words: "This decree does not 'go back to the bourgeois world' but to the last monarch of the nineteenth century Russia, Alexander III, and his minister of Education Delyanov, who issued the celebrated ukaz which read: 'The children of coachmen, servants, cooks, laundresses, small shopkeepers, and suchlike persons, should not be encouraged to rise above the sphere in which they were born'."

The new decree deprived of education the sons of industrial workers and peasants and made it the monopoly of the best paid workers, of bureaucrats, Red Army officers, technicians, etc. While the sons of the new privileged class were trained for their future rôle of leaders in the new régime the sons of workers were sent to work in factories and fields at an early age. Another decree published the same day plainly indicates that the aim of the government is to make education impossible for the children of the poorer classes so that they can be forced to work. The decree provided for the conscription of approximately a million young people between the ages of 14 to 17 for 'industrial training'. These children were drafted to specific industries and given a four year training combined with practical work. They were to be exempted from military conscription and received wages corresponding to one third of the estimated value of

the production of their labour. Since then the conscription of children labour reservists has continued as is shown by the decree of the 6/5/43 quoted in the chapter on forced labour.

The abolition of free education is bound to have disastrous effects. Illiteracy has always been rife in Russia and the government had several times hypocritically declared its willingness to abolish it. A decree of February 1936 provided for "the complete liquidation of illiteracy in the course of the year 1936-37 for the four million workers unable to read or write, and for the two million insufficiently able to".

Russian newspapers frequently complained of the extent of analphabetism. André Gide quotes *Izvestia* of November 16th, 1936 as declaring: "In the first days of the new school year, numbers of schools have already sent us information as to the surprising illiteracy of the school children.

"There is a great dearth of school books. As for those which have to be made use of, they are swarming with errors."

The Government which declared its intention to educate the population never however made any serious effort. School teachers have always been badly and irregularly paid and they often had to find another occupation in order not to die of hunger. André Gide remarks: "One wonders how the teachers live, and whether the liquidation of the teaching profession will not take place before that of 'illiteracy'."

While the teachers starved and the schools received books full of mistakes, Stalin and Molotov decided that children were to receive a uniform as soon as they went to school and that the regulations had to be modified in the sense of a quasi-military discipline (*Izvestia,* 4th September 1935).

New measures introduced in October 1943 mark a further step backwards. Separate schools for boys and girls are to be provided in urban districts; military experts will be appointed to conduct drill and pre-conscription classes; discipline is to be strengthened.

Co-education was introduced in 1918 and has been a feature of the Russian system of education which progressive teachers have always pointed to as an example to follow in other countries. Now however it has been abandoned, and different programmes will be adopted for boys and girls in secondary schools. The shortage of teachers will probably prevent the abandonment of co-education in primary schools for the time being, but now that the principle of segregating the sexes is established one can be sure that it will eventually spread to the whole system.

Girls will now learn such subjects as teaching, handicrafts, domestic science, personal hygiene and the care of children, while technical subjects are left to the boys. This indicates a return of the woman to the standards of the housewife, a position which the Bolsheviks have very much derided in capitalist countries.

At the same time a campaign has been launched for stricter discipline in the schools. Education Commissar Potemkin is reported to have declared

(*Glasgow Herald,* 19/10/43): "Much remains to be done in this field. The slightest signs of rudeness and disrespect towards elders and teachers must be firmly dealt with. There is still reluctance to adopt a strong attitude towards laziness and hooliganism".

At the opening of the school year in October 1943 the teachers read to the pupils the new rules for conduct. The *Glasgow Herald* Correspondent says that they "emphasise the importance of keeping a neat, clean appearance, respecting the aged and weak, maintaining the honour of the school, and displaying generosity, chivalry and kindliness. At the same time the teachers were told that Soviet education required inflexible strictness on their part and that the 'sentimental twittering teacher' who relied on persuasion would not be tolerated. The function of modern Soviet education was summed up recently as the creation of a courageous, purposeful people devoted to the Fatherland who would put the people's interest before anything else, knew how to work, loved work and were disciplined in the broadest sense of the word".

As we can see the whole system of education is now directed to impress the children with the importance of respecting their duties (no mention is made of their rights: to life, joy, liberty) and inculcating in them the respect and fear of their superiors. The Bolshevik rulers realize that the child who learns to respect his father and teacher will later on accept more easily the authority of the Army, officers, Party officials and of the supreme leader Stalin himself. Only in Jesuit institutions or English public schools could one probably find the same importance given to tradition and to the respect for authority and discipline.

From the above decrees one might conclude that the Soviet government has treated the Russian youth harshly. In reality it has attached, like the fascist governments in Italy and in Germany, great importance to winning the support of the youth. The old generations were bound to be resentful when the revolution did not bring them the prosperity they were expecting; no amount of propaganda could have convinced them that the bolshevik dictatorship was there for their own happiness. But the new generations had never had the opportunity to know the meaning of liberty, to compare their fate with that of the youth of other countries. They could easily be moulded in obeying, doggedly faithful soviet subjects. If the government were to treat them with consideration they could even become enthusiastic supporters of the régime. To this aim youth hostels, clubs, parks, stadia were organised. These have received so much publicity outside Russia that it is not necessary to describe them here.

But the Soviet government was not able to build up clubs and amusement parks all over Russia. It was not only impracticable but also undesirable. Children who have to start work when they are fourteen and who know they are going to spend their lives earning starvation wages are not the best material for propaganda. It is the sons of bureaucrats, of technicians, the ruling class of to-morrow who had to be brought up to become

strong and healthy, it is they who must feel gratitude and loyalty to the Socialist fatherland. While abandoned children swarmed the streets of all great cities, children of stakhanovites and technicians were well looked after in the factory créches; while illiterate children were sent to do heavy work, sons of engineers and officers practiced athletic games, danced and enjoyed life, finding nothing to complain of in Stalin's régime.

The Youth of Russia reflects the class society of the country. The sons of the ruling class are preparing to become rulers themselves. They have had a sheltered existence, famines and diseases have not affected them, they are strong and healthy. They have received the education fit for future rulers, they respect the powerful and despise the weak, they are prepared to crawl in front of Stalin and his clique and to crush the workers mercilessly. The well fed, well clothed youth is Stalin's youth, but the youth which slaves and suffers must be filled with revolt by the injustices it witnesses, and in it lies Russia's future.

NOTE.

The description published in *Picture Post* 1/7/44 of the Suvorov School shows that the education of the new rulers of Russia is in every way similar to that given to children in fascist countries.

> "The Suvorov School at Kalinin looks like a church. It is, in fact an old seminary, which has been adapted to a modern use—the education of 510 military cadets, who are the orphans of Red Army men, and who will be the officers of 1951. From the first, they learn discipline. Gone is the day when the Red Army man and his commander were on informal, back-slapping terms. Now, the Russian Army has a formalised discipline, which punishes, for example, failure to salute, as severely as any other army.
>
> The cadets learn to live hard. They must be out of bed by 6.0 a.m. Then they polish their buttons and boots, and make their own beds, carefully folding the sheets in the prescribed military form. With their black uniform, shining buttons, epaulettes, they look model soldiers when lessons begin at 8.0 a.m. The only difference between these orphans of Red Army men and the dashing cadets of the Tsar is that the Red Cadets have their heads closely shaven.
>
> When the headmaster, General Victor Vizzhillan appears, the boys stand to attention and say, "We wish the general good health!" And the general answers in the same way. Good manners are one of the main features of training in the Suvorov School. The pupils learn dancing, singing and music. The intention is that the Red Army Officer should be an example of deportment to the army and to every civilian.
>
> But, in addition, the boys are toughened, like the ancient Spartans, to accept every hardship without complaint, to be familiar with the use of weapons and to consider it their greatest honour to serve their fatherland as soldiers to the end."

"JUSTICE" IN U.S.S.R.

A FEW MONTHS after Russia's entry into the war the *Daily Worker* published the news that a Russian woman had been condemned to five years imprisonment for stealing a cabbage from a garden.* In this country such a sentence would have aroused indignation in everyone, the Communist Party included. In Russia such a sentence is a common occurrence; with the pretext of protecting the common property of the Russian people the Soviet Government has always used the most ruthless methods against theft. Only in the most backward colonies can one find measures of equal severity applied. Progressive people condemn such sentences when they are applied to Indians or Negroes, but in Russia the severity of the law is accepted as a matter of course. And yet what can one think of a State which obliges a woman to steal food when she knows she may be condemned to five years imprisonment for doing so?

If the equality advocated by the socialists existed in Russia there would be no pretext to steal. In 1932 a man working in the biscuit factory "Bolshevite" in Moscow was caught stealing a few pounds of butter and was condemned to death.† Who was responsible if not the society which allowed cakes to be made for the rich while the workers did not have bread?

Though panegyrists of the Russian régime have repeated *ad nauseum* that the aim of Russian justice is not to punish the criminal or to take revenge on him but on the contrary to educate him, the heaviest penalties are inflicted for almost any infraction of the law. It is difficult to explain them by the desire of the State to 'educate' the criminals; they are obviously designed to terrorise the population and to that purpose the criminal is sacrificed and in most cases is not even given a chance to take his place in society again.

It is certainly not for the purpose of education that the death penalty, against which progressive movements in every country have always fought, and which was abolished on paper several times during the revolution, is most liberally applied. It is used on a big scale against the political opponents of the government but it is also applied in cases of theft, even of minor importance.

The decree of the 7th of August 1932 provided sentences of ten years imprisonment or death for theft or damage to property belonging to the

*It is interesting to compare this with bourgeois justice. A man who stole an onion in a London allotment was recently fined 25/-

†"L'U.R.S.S. telle qu'elle est" by Yvon.

collectives or to the State. This decree was applied with ruthless brutality. In a speech reported in the *Pravda* of Moscow on the 28th of April, 1934, the Attorney General of the U.S.S.R., Akoulov, quoted the following case:

> "Paraskeva Chlek, 28 years old, mother of three children, belonging to a kolkhose, and Pachtenko Anna, 40 years, poor member of a kolkhose, illiterate, were condemned (by the decree of the 7th of August) to ten years imprisonment for having stolen 4 kilos of wheat. Following a protest from the Attorney, the Supreme Court annulled the sentence, and, applying another law, reduced it to one year hard labour."

A decree of January 1931 stipulated the death sentence for infraction of discipline in the transport industry when there is "premeditation". In virtue of that decree mechanics and locomotive drivers can be shot after accidents.

Equally punishable by death by the decree of the 7th of August, 1932, are thefts of goods in railways, ships, ports and docks and on farms (cattle, harvest, machinery and tools). Death can also be applied for bad execution of agricultural work or for illegal killing of cattle when it can be attributed to malice.

The decree of June 1934, announced the death penalty for "treason to the fatherland". Soviet subjects, civil or military, who tried to leave Russia—*i.e.*, committed this "treason"—were liable to be executed. The decree committed the whole adult family of the "deserter" as hostages, to be imprisoned for from five to ten years if they did not denounce their relatives, and to five years if they were ignorant of the "crime". How the Government was resolved to prevent anybody from leaving the Soviet paradise is shown by the report published by the news agency TASS of Moscow, on the 5th of November, 1934:

> "The military tribunal of Moscow has condemned to death after having declared him an outlaw and having confiscated his property, a sailor of the warship *Marat*, called Voronkof, who at Gdynia, in Poland, refused to return on board and remained on Polish territory.
>
> According to the law of June 1934, which describes such an act as high treason the family of the condemned man has been arrested and will be tried for eventual complicity, even if passive or unconscious."

Not content with applying the death penalty to men and women for actions which are not even considered criminal in other countries the Soviet Government has applied it also to children, a measure that even Fascist states have not dared to take.

A decree of the 8th of April 1935, abrogated article 8 of the Penal code which excluded children from the application of repressive measures. In cases of theft, violence, bodily harm, assassination or attempted assassination they will be tried by criminal tribunals which will apply all the sanctions of the code, including capital punishment. It is to be noted that these ferocious measures are applicable to children born after the revolution, brought up by the Soviet State and whom the government should have no reason to fear.

In sexual matters Soviet 'justice' is as severe or even worse than in

capitalist countries. A recent decree has made abortion once more a crime, destroying thereby one of the few progressive aspects of the Soviet constitution.

Homosexuality has been made a criminal offence. Up to 1934 the Soviet legislation did not consider homosexuality, but by a law of the 25th April, 1934: "sexual relations of a man with another man (pederasty)" are punished with from 3 to 5 years imprisonment. In grave cases (violence, infant, etc.) the punishment incurred is between 3 and 8 years imprisonment. As in British law, homosexuality among women is, illogically enough, not considered.

This law is much more severe than that under the Tsars. Nicholas II reduced the punishment incurred by the practice of pederasty between adults (above 16) and with mutual consent to three months imprisonment.

The Tsarist code shows a more modern outlook than the Soviet legislation in spite of the fact that the Great Soviet Encyclopædia adopts Magnus Hirschfeld's views concerning homosexuality and in spite of all the protests that socialist theoreticians have directed against the penalties regarding homosexuality in the bourgeois codes.

Soviet justice shows itself extremely ruthless in punishing crimes against property, against bourgeois morals and the state, but it shows itself even more barbarous in its punishment of political crimes. Those who dare to oppose Stalin's iron rule are mercilessly crushed as G. P. Maximoff has shown with overwhelming documents in *The Guillotine at Work*.

Ever since the revolution the opponents of the bolshevik régime have been imprisoned and executed. But during the last ten years Stalin has been legalising a certain amount of political repression. He has found it useful, for the purposes of propaganda to give the greatest publicity to political crimes and to stage monster trials. He was also in some cases obliged to act openly because of the importance of the accused, many of whom were well known bolsheviks occupying, until the last moment, important posts in the government; they could not be silently suppressed like rank-and-file socialist or anarchist militants.

The régime of open terror started in 1934. In December the stalinist official Kirov was killed by the bolshevik Nicolaiev. The motives of the murder have remained unknown, there were no proofs of a plot and even the group affiliations of Nicolaiev have remained unknown. Stalin seized this opportunity to intensify the terror. Without any proof of complicity 103 political prisoners were shot, 14 Communists were condemned to death, Zinoviev and Kamenev were imprisoned as well as 17 Leninists, and others were deported. For one man killed Stalin asked for 107 lives. It was the beginning of a wave of reaction, of a series of purges, of Moscow trials which Stalin used in order to crush all opposition, to vanquish any rival, to satisfy his personal ambition and to have his revenge. Engineers, intellectuals, old Party members, generals of the Red Army, diplomats and

G.P.U. agents who had been too closely connected with the furthering of Stalin's murders, were eliminated.

An appearance of legality, for propaganda purposes, was given to the trials. The Moscow trials, which received such publicity, were staged in the most impressive way, both in order to impress the Russian masses and to give an excuse for the credulity of foreign observers anxious to please Stalin. To any impartial observer it was obvious that fraud, menaces, promises, corruption, were used in order to obtain confessions. No documentary evidence was produced; the accused were sentenced on their confessions, and even according to Russian law a confession does not constitute a proof of guilt!

While the Government staged these trials "to encourage the others", to establish more firmly Stalin's personal dictatorship and to give the Russian masses the impression that they were assailed from all sides, an intense but silent repression was taking place in the fields and in the factories all over the country. Simple Russian workers who had the audacity to protest against some injustice, or who had expressed opinions unfavourable to the Government, disappeared mysteriously. They were not worth a trial, which would have fooled nobody. They were sent quietly to fill the labour camps of Siberia while their families and friends were left in complete ignorance of their whereabouts.

Ambassador Davies, who manages to praise Soviet justice in connection with the Moscow trials, in spite of the fact that in his capacity of lawyer he should have been far from satisfied with the application of the law, gives the following account of how Soviet justice deals with minor citizens:

> "The Terror here is a horrifying fact. There are many evidences here in Moscow that there is a fear that reaches down into and haunts all sections of the community. No household, however humble, apparently but what lives in constant fear of a nocturnal raid by the secret police (usually between one and three in the early morning). Once the person is taken away, nothing of him or her is known for months—and many times never—thereafter. Evidences of these conditions come from many sources. They are: statements made to myself or members of the staff from first hand witnesses; statements based on actual personal observations of members of the staff (as in one instance, the sight of a struggling unfortunate being arrested and torn from his eleven-year-old child on the street in front of the adjoining apartment house at 3.30 a.m.) . . ."—*Mission to Moscow.*

How many times do these scenes take place? The prisons are full, the labour camps grow larger every day. According to Boris Souvarine there are ten million men and women in prison or in concentration camps. Ten million criminals? Or are the criminals sitting comfortably in the Kremlin, growing fatter on the backs of the workers and having only their own intrigues to fear?

THE RED ARMY

THE RED ARMY was formed during the Russian revolution to repel the interventionist armies, but it could not, even then, be called a revolutionary army. It did not spring up from the revolutionary initiative of the workers but was formed by the bolshevik party which was determined to keep control over it. Right from the beginning it was a conscripted army, the soldiers were not able to elect their officers and were even given Tsarist generals by Trotsky. These undemocratic methods had the effect of lowering the morale of the revolutionary workers and peasants in the Red Army and the Army was still further demoralised when it was used by the Bolshevik Party to crush revolutionary movements like that of Makhno in the Ukraine and of the workers and sailors at Kronstadt.

With the strengthening of the Bolshevik State the Red Army became more reactionary in character, Stalin making it his tool for personal dictatorship. The Red Army has now no revolutionary, socialist or communist aspirations; it merely fights to defend the class society which exists in Russia to-day.

Stalin's control over the Red Army has been brought about by a series of measures tending to increase discipline, to create inequalities between officers and men, to build up a privileged officers' caste completely devoted to the régime, to replace the remaining revolutionary traditions by a nationalistic spirit. These measures have made the Red Army the most hierarchical, strictly disciplined, Party controlled army in the world. With the G.P.U. it is the major pillar of the Soviet state.

Discipline in the Red Army has always been strict: Ivor Montagu, a Communist mouthpiece, in a pamphlet on the Red Army, boasts that "Discipline is very strict . . . Officers are saluted on duty and off duty. There must be immediate obedience to all commands, and penalties are strictly enforced". The ruthlessness of the discipline is shown by the Statutes introduced on October 12th, 1940, when Russia was not yet at war. They gave the commander unlimited powers:

> "In case of insubordination, the commander has the right to apply all measures of coercion up to and including the application of force and firearms."
>
> "The commander bears no responsibility for the consequence in case he finds it necessary to apply force and firearms in order to compel an insubordinate to fulfil a command and to restore discipline and order . . . The commander who does not in such instances apply all necessary measures to fulfil an order is remitted to trial before the court martial." (*Red Star,* No. 242, October 15, 1940.)

In no other army have officers the right, in peace time and without

referring to a court martial, to shoot down a soldier merely for not obeying a command!

V. Ulrich who presided at the Moscow Trials, described the new Army Statutes in the *Red Star*, the Red Army paper (22nd October, 1940) and is quoted in the *Word*, September 1941:

> "The disciplinary statutes considerably extend the right of commanders as regards the use of force and firearms."
>
> "Comradely relations between soldiers and officers are no more.
>
> "The hail-fellow-well-met spirit in the relationships between a commander and a subordinate can have no place in the Red Army. Discussion of any kind is absolutely prohibited among the subordinates."

The *Word* also quotes from an article in *Pravda* (6th October, 1940) by Lt.-General V. Kurdyumov the following explanation of the Statutes:

> "Grievances may be introduced only personally and individually. Submission of group grievances for others is prohibited. No more group declarations, no more joint discussions—whether concerning an order, or bad food, or any other topic—all this comes under the heading of 'insubordination' and for it a soldier may be shot on the spot without so much as a court-martial, hearing or investigation, if a superior officer solely and personally so decides."

On June 28th, 1940, an order had already introduced more severe treatment for arrested soldiers. It stipulated that under "strict arrest" no work was to be permitted, no sleeping during day time, sleeping only on a wooden cot at night without mattress and for no more than six hours, hot food no more frequently than every other day.

This increase in discipline has been accompanied by a widening of the inequalities which existed between officers and men. The most direct and glaring proof of this is given by the difference in pay between commissioned officers and men.

The pay of the Red Army soldier is only a nominal one. He is paid only ten roubles and a half a month, rising to 24 roubles if he is a chauffeur and 130 if he is an N.C.O. The pay is doubled for service in the front line and doubled again if he is in a Guards unit but even so it is obvious that the ordinary soldier is unable to afford the extra food, drinks and tobacco with which soldiers in the British and American Army try to find some consolation for army life.

Godfrey Blunden, the *Evening Standard* correspondent, remarked on his return from Russia that: "A rank and file soldier gets few privileges; there is no leave, and his wife gets no maintenance money, although 60 roubles a month is allowed for each child".

Officers on the other hand receive 600 roubles a month when they enter the training colleges and from 900 to 1300 when commissioned. Their pay may rise as high as 1700 for a captain and 2400 for a full colonel. Senior officers receive an additional 20 per cent. increase for each ten years' service.

Blunden comments: "The discrepancy between the pay of officers and men, which may seem excessive to men of the civilian armies of the Allies, is not considered inequitable in Russia". It is difficult to understand or to

believe that such inequalities pass unnoticed in a country which twenty-five years ago made a revolution whose aim was to abolish all privileges. Blunden's following remarks are even more unconvincing: "To-day there is increasing emphasis on the prestige of senior cadres. Generals are expected to dress with distinction, and the social lives of their families must be fully in keeping with their rank. Their wives must dress well, and they have special apartments and rations". The *Evening Standard* correspondent would like us to believe that the Red Army soldier who has not seen his family for months and perhaps years and who gets 10 roubles a month feels satisfied at the idea that his superior officers live in luxurious apartments, are well fed and have smartly dressed wives. However effective Stalin's propaganda might be we doubt if the mentality of the Red Army soldier has sunk to this level.

Besides receiving pay out of all proportion to that of privates, officers receive other privileges. They are extremely well looked after in their living quarters and have sumptuous rest houses, as is shown by the description Kléber Legay has given of the Red Army sanatorium he visited in Sotchi.

> "It is a wonder of construction, a remarkable building. Its construction was decided at the demand of Voroshiloff. The expenses were covered by a deduction of 10% on the State loans. Peasants and their wives were used on the work and 500,000 cubic yards of earth had to be removed before construction could commence.
>
> "The establishment is composed of seven buildings. The central building with restaurant, bar, dance hall and various rooms for games, the whole richly, I may even say, luxuriously decorated. On each side were three other buildings of equal size with three floors and an aerium and solarium. On the first floor there were three beds in each room, on the second floor two beds, on the third floor one bed in each room. Each building was very well arranged. There was nothing missing, comfort everywhere. What a difference from the miners' establishment!
>
> "The staff was very numerous and of an impeccable aspect. When we finished our visit we went to the dance hall not to dance but to ask questions—before answering questions ourselves—to the officers of all ranks who filled the hall with lovely women whose appearance and behaviour made an extraordinary contrast to that of the women we had seen in the streets or during our other visits. They had no cause to envy the smart women of our capitalist countries. . . . Here was a completely new aristocracy but this did not prevent the word *tovarich* from being heard everywhere.
>
> "We began to ask questions: We addressed ourselves to the Party member attached to the Red Army. Our first question was: Who is admitted in your establishment?
>
> *Answer*: All the officers from the rank of lieutenant.
>
> Is everybody ill?
>
> *Answer*: No, but sick people are given preference, those who are not ill can come here for a month or more.
>
> How can one be admitted here and on what conditions?
>
> *Answer*: An officer has to express his wish to come here. He is accepted according to the accommodation available. He is admitted with or without his wife, as he wishes, and free of charge; the travelling is also free. (*It should be noted that miners who earn 200 roubles a month have to pay part or the whole travelling expenses*).

How are the people living here fed?

Answer: There are five meals a day, the last is served at midnight in their rooms. Each meal consists of a choice of forty dishes.

Why this difference of three, two and one bed in each room according to the floor? Does it correspond to a distinction in ranks?

Answer: It depends on the merit and rank but also on the wishes expressed by the patient to be alone or in group.

Have you sanatoriums of this kind for non-commissioned officers, corporals and privates?

Answer (verbatim): They don't need them; those who fall ill are looked after in their military district. If they can't be cured they are sent home where they are looked after by the Health Insurance service.

After this conversation we know what to think of the abolition of classes in Russia".

We have seen elsewhere how officers' wives lead a privileged life, don't have to work and even have servants to look after their children. These inequalities are accompanied by regulations which are intended to put the soldiers in an inferior and humiliating position before their officers. John Gibbons, Moscow correspondent wrote in the *Daily Worker* 9/7/43): "Nowadays, privates and N.C.O.s, travelling in a bus, tube or train, must give up their seats to men of senior rank should they be standing."

With the tightening of the discipline and the widening of inequalities great efforts have been made also to make the Red Army resemble as much as possible the old tsarist Army with its nationalist spirit, its concern for smart uniforms, its patriotic traditions.

Long before the present war the Russian government had been busy replacing the revolutionary and internationalist traditions of the Red Army by tsarist and nationalist ones. The famous Red Army oath was abolished in February 1939. It was too much of a direct appeal to revolution and internationalism: "I, son of the toiling people . . . direct every act and thought to the great aim of the emancipation of the toilers of the world." On the 3rd of January, 1939, the new oath was introduced. It pledged the "citizen" to "defend the fatherland . . . without sparing blood or life itself to win complete victory over the enemy."

Another measure of great significance was the re-establishment of the Cossack regiments. The Cossacks were hated by the Russian people as the instruments of Tsarist oppression and for having fought in the White Armies during the revolution.

At the same time patriotism was encouraged by poems, songs, operas and films. Stalin's speeches took a nationalistic tone and Communist Party leaders followed in that line. Revolutionary heroes were forgotten in favour of national figures who had fought for the Tsar and the Russian fatherland and had even fought against the French revolution like Suvorov, or suppressed peasant uprisings like Kutusov.

With the war against Finland and the "liberation" of the Polish, Rumanian and Baltic provinces, Nationalist feelings were fostered to a maximum. The war with Germany and the invasion of Russian territory

did not bring a return to the revolutionary days when Russian workers and peasants were fighting for the defence of their socialist conquests. Unable to mention the names of those revolutionaries or old Bolsheviks who organised the defence of Russia after the revolution as they had all been eliminated, the Stalinist propaganda machine concentrated on the adulation of heroes of Napoleonic times. Unable to mention the Makhnos and the Trotskys it revelled in exalting the Suvorovs and Kutusovs.

Uniforms and decorations of Tsarist times were reintroduced one by one. Recent decrees reintroduced uniforms which had been abolished during the revolution as being symbolic of the counter-revolution. Officers and men in Moscow were to wear epaulets of "broad flat cloth with shoulder pieces embroidered in gold thread, with gold stars for the rank". Officers' coats were to be "carefully waisted" and to have "high upstanding collars, on which also are embroidered gold or coloured thread marking the rank and corps". "Violators of this order", said the decree, "whatever their rank, will be detained and subject to severe correction".

A further return to Tsarist times was shown by the abolition of the political commissar who played such an important rôle in the early days of the Red Army and the taking over of his functions by the commanding officer. A *corps d'élite* of 60 Guards Units, chosen from regiments which had distinguished themselves was also formed, they were to receive double pay and wear special badges.

John Gibbons' comments on these decrees in the *Daily Worker* (9/7/43) are worth quoting as they are typical of the kind of propaganda put out to revive national pride:

"When the new Red Army uniform made its appearance, men wore almost the exact replica of the uniform worn by their victorious grandfathers when, in 1814, they marched through the streets of Paris after the defeat of Napoleon . . . The uniform was first worn by Russian soldiers in 1469, during the reign of Ivan the Terrible. Some 200 years later, the famous guards regiment of Peter the Great, Preobrazhenskys and Semyenovskys, earned glory for the uniform of which they were so proud, in the great battles of Poltava and Narva.

After the October Revolution, when reactionary officers besmirched the glorious traditions of their uniforms by waging war against their people, the newly formed Red Army refused to wear the same uniforms as these, their enemies.

And now, after two years of hard fighting against what constituted during the first clashes, the world's most powerful war machine, the grandsons of the conquerors of Napoleon, in addition to following in their victorious footsteps, are wearing and adding new pride to the old and glorious Russian uniform.

To-day one of the most colourful and pleasing sights to be seen in Moscow is the smartly groomed military men in their polished knee boots and grey-green uniforms, with brilliant epaulettes containing equally brilliant stars whose number and size vary with rank".

While modern armies are increasingly abandoning the Potsdam tradition the Soviet government issues decrees forbidding: "Men in uniform from attending market places and appearing in streets carrying large parcels

and suitcases" and the newspapers report the case of a soldier in Moscow who had been sentenced for failing to salute an officer because both his hands were occupied with parcels!

This new policy is received with approval by a Press ready to praise anything which comes from Russia; but to Socialists and Anarchists who have always considered militarism with its stupefying discipline, its ridiculous passion for uniforms and medals,* its degrading submission to superiors, the greatest danger to man's individuality and freedom, the measures adopted by the Soviet government offer a further proof of the retrogressive nature of the Russian régime.

*The Russian Government has generously distributed medals since the war started and the people who used to despise them as symbols of a bourgeois régime attach to them now a childish importance. At least the Romans used to get bread and circuses the Russian people merely get medals and the salvos of guns. Many journalists have been struck by the Russians' newly acquired love for medals. Iris Morley describes it in the *Observer* 16/7/44.

> "Viewed from England, the introduction of medals for motherhood might seem rather strange, but here it falls into harmony with the general scene. The Russians have an innocent delight in medals, and although the more sophisticated ribbon has been introduced, most people prefer to wear the real thing. Even on the hottest days you will see soldiers with a bosom full of glittering and distinctly heavy medals and a young girl in a thin print dress will be wearing the famous sea-green and gold of the Defence of Leningrad.
>
> The trams and trains are full of the glitter and clink of medallions, even though their wearers may be carrying gardening rakes and armfuls of vegetables. Like Moscow salutes, it gives that colour to life which the Russians love."

"THE ONLY SOCIALIST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD"

THE U.S.S.R. (the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics) is generally referred to as the only Socialist country in the world. If one takes *socialist* to mean a country in which inequality has been abolished and where there is economic and political freedom one can say straight away that Russia is usurping its title and usurping the reputation attached to its name. If *socialist* is merely taken to mean that private enterprise has disappeared and that the means of production and distribution are in the hands of the State one is nearer to a definition of the conditions which exist in Russia.

The Revolution abolished private capitalism* but this did not result in an abolition of poverty and oppression; the Bolshevik State gradually introduced inequalities similar to those existing in capitalist countries and a suppression of liberty which can only be compared with that of Nazi Germany.

For the needs of propaganda the myth of a free and just Russian régime is still sold to the workers by left wing propagandists while capitalists like Ambassador Davies or churchmen like the Archbishop of York reassure the bourgeoisie by describing Russia as being not dissimilar from America and England.

Actually, Communists such as Reg Bishop, Fabian socialists like the Webbs, Russophiles like Charlotte Haldane, workers' trade union delegations, journalists and bishops while praising Russia, all recognise, in some

* Some features of capitalism have been preserved. Interest on capital is still paid as pointed out by Ambassador Davies: "July 1st, 1937.—The Soviet Government announced the floating of a new defence loan of 4,000 million roubles, bearing interest at 4 per cent. It was to be redeemed in full in 1957.

> "This interests me for two reasons: first, it shows how much they are spending for defence—twice as much as England and France together. Second, it shows that frozen labour (capital) commands payment for use—contrary to the basic Communist idea that compensation shall be paid only for human labour, that no man shall be paid for the use of frozen labour (capital) because that is the vice of capitalism. Interest is payment for the use of capital, and here it is paid by the state itself, in direct violation of the fundamental principle of Marxist philosophy."—*Mission to Moscow.*
>
> The right of inheritance against which socialists and anarchists have fought ever since the birth of a labour movement has been re-introduced. Article 10 of the 1936 Constitution says: "The right of personal property of citizens in their dwelling house and auxiliary husbandry, in household articles and utensils and in articles for personal use and comfort, as well as the right of inheritance of personal property of citizens, is protected by law."

of their writings, that the greatest inequalities exist in "the Socialist Sixth of the World."

Of course they do not always openly admit that inequalities exist. Reg Bishop in a pamphlet called *Soviet Millionaires* even tries to argue that the existence of millionaires in Russia is not incompatible with equity and socialism:

> "Even were a rouble millionaire to be possessed of as much money as a sterling one it would still not necessarily be either anti-social or anti-Socialist, because the atmosphere of social inequity which surrounds a millionaire is due not to the measure of his wealth but to the method of its acquisition, and his use of it to exploit others."

Sidney and Beatrice Webb point out that there are divergencies of income as great as in Great Britain and the United States and try to explain them:

> "Admittedly there is in the U.S.S.R. of to-day no sign of the coming of identical, or even of substantially equal incomes for all workers by hand or by brain. On the contrary, the utmost use continues to be made of such forms of remuneration as piecework rates and payment according to social value (*i.e.*, scarcity) or technical skill, not to mention also such devices for intensification of effort as socialist competition and Stakhanovite rationalism of industrial technique—all candidly justified by their demonstrated results in increasing production.
>
> . . . The effect of those devices is to make the maximum divergence of individual incomes in the U.S.S.R. taking the extreme instances, probably as great as the corresponding divergence in income paid for actual participation in work, in Great Britain if not in the United States."

Ambassador Davies in his book *Mission to Moscow* describes how the new Russian aristocracy lives and this proves that contrarily to what Reg Bishop asserts "the atmosphere of social inequity which surrounds a millionaire" is the same in all countries.

> "There is no question but what human nature is working here the same old way. There are many indications of it. The bureaucracy all live very well and many have their country houses, or *dachas* in the country. Many of the workers are making more money by reason of the piecework system which is being installed to speed up industry. There are luxury shops on the streets here in profusion: fresh flower shops, stores exclusively devoted to perfume, finger nail polish, and so forth for women; the old biological urge to acquire capitalistic money more than somebody else in order to indulge themselves in luxuries. In the government itself they are swinging to nationalism, exalting the fatherland, singing their national anthem. The world revolution is secondary. The same old processes that appeared in the French Revolution are beginning to manifest themselves here except the tempo is slower. The bureaucracy and the military in France combined with the *bourgeoisie* and the bankers to keep themselves in power against the workers. Here the bureaucracy has an ironclad tie-up with the industrial workers against the farmers."

Inequalities have only gone on increasing since the revolution. Whereas during the period of War Communism the members of the Bolshevik Party received preferential treatment in the shape of larger rations, fuel to warm themselves and rooms to themselves instead of sharing with several people,

the leaders of to-day have whole houses at their disposal, and servants besides cars with chauffeurs. Their wives are able to afford expensive clothes, perfumes, and flowers. Perhaps none of them is able to afford the extravagances of a few British and American millionaires but then even in the Tsarist times the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie were never able to afford the luxuries of their opposite numbers in richer countries. The standard of living of the whole population in Russia is lower than in Western countries so that the inequalities which exist at present are perhaps relatively greater than in capitalist countries.

With the return to a bourgeois mode of life one also finds a return to bourgeois values. Money becomes the inseparable complement of power. The new ruling class no longer derives its prestige from the fact of belonging to the Bolshevik Party; it surrounds itself with all the apanage of wealth, luxurious houses, clothes and cars. It is not surprising that Ambassador Davies, whose post put him in the position of mixing freely with the ruling class, found little difference in the psychological make-up of the Russian parvenu and that of the American:

> "We found five lipstick and perfume shops and three flower shops in five blocks on the Arbat or main business street near the Embassy . . . Mrs. Davies and I often talked about these flower shops and perfume shops. It is one of the significant indications of the drift of this government away from the principles of Marxist Communism. Here were shops owned by the state selling flowers in baskets, at prices ranging from $2 in gold value to $15 in gold value. Fifteen dollars was the equivalent of two weeks' wage to the average workman. A capitalistic profit was being made out of the sale of an article, which found its demand in the fundamental instincts of human nature. The male youth of the country, under the biological urge, all wanted to show his particular lady-love that he was bigger and better than his rival. To the degree he could send her better flowers—to that degree he was competitively demonstrating his greater desirability. He therefore had to make more money. He could do so only through the application of the profit motive, the bane of pure Communism. The very essence of Communism, moreover, is a classless society. Here was a stimulus to create a class society, based upon a situation that stimulated the profit motive, because of a state business in a commodity that was desired because of a very primary human instinct." the profits went to the Government though!

It is a sad thing that we should be reminded of the principles of "pure" communism by one of the foremost representatives of American capitalism! The Government is not contented with encouraging the buying of "love" among its most favoured subjects, it buys itself everything which is worth buying; artistic talent, scientific genius, courage, devotion to the fatherland. While in capitalist countries a sense of decency prevents nations from evaluating certain services given to humanity in terms of money, in Russia every worthy act is translated in terms of roubles.

The *Evening Standard* (27/3/43) reported that each year since 1939, Stalin's sixtieth birthday, considerable cash prizes have been awarded for distinguished works of art, literature, science, industry and agriculture. Prizes ranging from 150,000 (about £6,000 according to the 1939 rate of

exchange in London) to 50,000 roubles were awarded in 1943 to contributors to the war effort especially in the field of armament production. One has to remember that in Russia writers and scientists are employees of the State and as such receive a salary which we assume is adequate for them to carry on their work. It is difficult to understand therefore why they should receive money prizes while the factory worker or the miner, whose health may suffer as a result of his occupation, will receive nothing more than a bonus rate. In the same way the Red Army soldier who gives his life on the front does it for a few roubles a month while Russian airmen are paid 1,000 roubles for each airplane they bring down. Obviously the Russian government does not believe that the satisfaction of having fought for the "fatherland" is sufficient for Soviet airmen.

It should be obvious to anyone that the large sums of money given to bureaucrats, writers, scientists and airmen are not produced by some spontaneous generation but are the products of the toil and sweat of the Russian workers and peasants. However, Communist Reg Bishop mantains that, " . . . in the Soviet Union the millionaire has acquired his roubles by his own toil and by services to the Soviet State and people." Those Soviet farmers who can put aside a million roubles in 14 years while other farmers slaving all day have not a kopeck to spare, must have divine powers to produce perhaps 1,000 times as much as their fellow farmers!

Trying to explain this mystery Reg Bishop has to contradict himself a bit. It appears that the millionaire farmers do not have to rely on themselves alone to amass fortunes but that they are lucky to live on farms where the State has developed cotton growing to an enormous extent. The cotton crops are heavily subsidised by the Government. How does the Soviet Government get the money to subsidise those farmers if not by taxing other workers and by exploiting their labour?*

In Russia all workers are employed by the State. To be able to pay some workers more than others the Sate must exploit a certain portion of the workers. Just as, say, Vickers, are able to pay their directors and technical staff high wages by paying low wages to their engineers. Furthermore, directors of farms get a bonus when the requirements of the Plan have been fulfilled. The bonus is not shared amongst all the workers but kept by the director who is in the position of the foreman or contractor in capitalist countries who derives a direct profit from the exploitation of his fellow workers.

* Farmers are not the only people who are able to earn big sums by the sweat of their brow. This Soviet Union can also boast Stakhanovite shepherds of souls: "Bishops of the Orthodox Church and the leading figures of other denominations vied as to which could make the most generous contribution. But the contributions made by the Church dignitaries does not represent the only effort of the clergy. Typical of many others is Vladimir Stefanov, priest of the Moscow Church of the Assumption, who donated his life savings, 73,000 roubles, to the Defence Fund last year".

Reg Bishop's pamphlet further reveals that the millionaire farmers derive part of their income from what, in this country, we would call the black market! This is how the *Economist* politely, but neatly, puts it: "the collective farmers have become wealthy as a result of inflated prices on the uncontrolled sector of the market."

Black marketeering is not, in Russia, a dangerous occupation as in this country or in Germany. It is organised and sponsored by the State. The mechanism is simple. Reg Bishop explains: "In wartime the great bulk of foodstuff was placed on rations from the day of invasion. Such small quantities as were available from sources outside the main stream of supply, such as the small private holdings of the collective farmers, were allowed to be put in the market to fetch what price they could. "And," he adds reassuringly: "Naturally this produce fetched high prices, but in the Soviet Union the people who were able to afford these prices and thus to supplement their rations consisted largely of the skilled workers in the heavy industries, whose requirements were greatest". It is curious that the black market foodstuffs, that is to say food sold outside the ration at higher price, should happen to go to the industrial workers. If the Government was so anxious that they should get extra food why was it not sent to factory canteens? That would have prevented factory directors, high Government officials, Red Army officers, who get much higher wages than factory workers, from getting food outside their rations as well.

Charlotte Haldane in *Russian Newsreel* describes how the Government has taken over and organized the black market:

> "At the beginning of the war the Food Ministry realized from past experience that as soon as rationing was reintroduced, the black market in food would automatically follow. The Government decided, therefore, not to attempt to suppress it, but to corner it. In consequence, after determining the amount of the basic ration for the population, the authorities took control of all rationed foodstuffs over and above it produced by the collective farms, the small farmers still working on the system of private production, and the Sovkozes which are agricultural factories. The Food Ministry, of course, fixed all prices for both the 'cheap' and the 'expensive' shops. The basic price for a kilo of butter, for example, was Rs.26-28. In the 'expensive' shops the same quality butter could be bought for Rs.50. There was no limit, at the higher price to the quantity any given customer might purchase. Sugar, in the "cheap" shop, was Rs.5.50 a kilo; in the higher-priced shop it was Rs.15 or about three times as dear. Meat, of course, varied in price according to the quality of the cut as elsewhere. In the 'cheap' shops the prices were Rs.9 for the lowest quality to Rs.15 for the best. Unrationed meat cost from Rs.25-40. Rationed bread cost, according to the quality, from Rs.1.70 a kilo for the cheapest to Rs.3.50 for the best. Unrationed bread costs exactly double . . . by the middle of the month, and especially towards the end, the 'expensive' shops would come into their own and have the biggest queues."

Like Reg Bishop, Charlotte Haldane argues that the "expensive" shops benefit the factory workers who are, at present, the people who earn more money. This argument is far from convincing because, apart from the

fact that factory workers are by no means the highest salaried section of the population (bureaucrats, officers, writers, artists, earn far more) it is doubtful if people engaged in war work have time to queue up to get extra food. It is more likely that it is the wives of officers and technicians, who do not need to work or who can even send their maids, who are those able to buy in the "black market". Later in her book Mrs. Haldane describes how diplomats being evacuated from Moscow stopped at railway stations and came back with their hats filled with eggs. How this aspect of the black market can be justified is not said in the book.

That the black market gets out of control is also shown by an article in the *Daily Mirror* (7/7/43) by a special correspondent in Russia:

> "On the way, we had a walk around one of the ordinary open markets where you can buy food off the ration, if you have the cash.
>
> Here, potatoes are sold by number, not by weight. There was a surprising amount of fresh, good quality meat in the covered-in meat market, price 500 roubles a kilo, or about £4 a pound.
>
> The gipsy market at first sight looked like a series of spacious stockades.
>
> We inquired the price of a record. It was sixty roubles (some 25s.); the gramophone itself was only 400 roubles.
>
> We saw a man with a pair of new boots slung over his shoulder. They were U.S. Army issue. He only wanted 20,000 roubles for them—a mere £40!
>
> Prices were fantastic. For two cups and saucers and a small teapot in the same pattern, an old dame wanted 500 roubles (£10).
>
> A bicycle new would cost you the equivalent of £240.
>
> A goat costs about £100."

That the government does not intend to give up this profitable business is indicated by the fact that this year at Easter twenty "commercial shops" selling unlimited quantities of wine, vodka, cakes, dates, sweets and sugar without ration cards, have been opened in Moscow. The Russians thus celebrate their victories but while the poor get the noise of the guns firing victory salutes the rich celebrate with vodka and wines.

Black markets flourish all over the world to-day but they assume a particularly revolting form in countries like Spain, Greece, India and Russia where the food situation is worse and where the complete lack of liberty prevents public opinion from exercising any check on the ravages of the black marketeers. Furthermore while the poor are demoralised by hunger, the rich not only preserve their energy and faculties but are able to suppress with the utmost cruelty and ruthlessness the hungry masses. The Russian Government has understood that those who rule must be well fed and has created a vast black-marketeering organization for the benefit of the ruling class.

In a country where inequalities are rife there can be no liberty. The masses do not accept freely to starve while the leaders live in luxury. The Government must devise means by which the people are prevented from protesting and from taking steps to remove those inequalities. The Government must prevent strikes for higher wages, food riots in time of scarcity,

mutinies in the Army when it is sent to suppress popular revolts. The country must be constantly in a state of war and that is why the Governing power cannot allow liberty of the Press and of association.

In Russia both Press and workers' associations can only exist if they are controlled by the Communist Party. Revolutionary Socialist and Anarchist movements were ruthlessly suppressed in the years following the October Revolution and the utmost care is being taken to prevent them from raising their heads again.

The most rigid censorship was applied even in peace-time on news leaving or entering the country. Letters and newspapers were examined by the authorities. Russians were never allowed to leave their country except on special missions and sailors were generally confined to their ships when in foreign ports. In times of famine Russians trying to cross the border in search of food were mercilessly shot. These facts constitute perhaps the most blatant condemnation of the Russian régime. If Russia was the ideal country communist propaganda proclaims it to be, its Government should have had no fear of letting its people go abroad and mix freely with the oppressed and exploited workers of capitalist countries. They would have been the best propaganda agents for the Soviet régime. The people of Germany, France and England would have been more inclined to listen to authentic Russian workers spending their holiday abroad rather than to paid propagandists of the Comintern. Had Russia been a revolutionary and socialist country it is the capitalist governments which would have shut their frontiers to Soviet citizens and not Russia which would have prevented them from going abroad.

Russia should also have welcomed workers of all lands anxious to see socialist ideas at work, but not in conducted tours lasting a few weeks at the most and where foreign delegations were taken round as if visiting an exhibition. They should have been allowed to live with Russian families, move about freely and if they chose work in the factories. Russia, which should have been the country to throw open its doors to workers of all lands wanting to seek refuge or inspiration in a workers' country, is instead a vast concentration camp with its leaders shut up in their Kremlin fortress, its frontiers heavily guarded by Red Army soldiers and G.P.U. agents.

The Russian people, isolated from the rest of the world as if they were living on another planet, naturally became narrow minded and nationalistic. They trusted their leaders and believed that they were the chosen people, a privileged nation, and that outside Russia only oppression and starvation existed.

The conviction of the Russians that they live in a privileged country, that starvation, unemployment and prostitution are to be found everywhere outside the Soviet Union has amazed all foreign observers. They were told by Russians, in all seriousness and with a self-assurance that they were often unable to shake, that Paris had no underground, that Russian films

were not shown in foreign countries, that wives of French miners had to prostitute themselves in order to live. This attitude would be very difficult to understand if one forgot that a great proportion of the population was born after the revolution and was therefore unable to hear anything but the official bolshevik propaganda. Most of them have never had a chance to know the meaning of good meals, of a comfortable life, of leisure and, most important of all, of liberty. For anyone who has been able to observe the Nazi or Fascist Youth the attitude of the Russians will not appear incredible. A young fascist if told that he lives under a dictatorship will deny this most strongly and will endeavour to demonstrate that he is completely free. It has not occurred to him that he has always been reading what the Government allows him to read, that he has never had a chance to listen to men whose opinions differ from that of the Fascist power.

The Russian dictatorship has been in power longer than any of the fascists and its methods of propaganda have been equally efficient. Since Stalin has seized power he was able to work on the new generation who had not been influenced by the Revolution. In 1939 the population of Russia was 170 millions; of these 61 millions were children under 15 and 71 millions men and women between 15-39. At the time when the war started therefore, one can say that the majority of the population of the U.S.S.R. was born after the Revolution. One has also to keep in mind that vast masses of Russian people were illiterate and thus unable to read anything about life in foreign countries and that their geographical position made it extremely unlikely that they would come in touch with the way of life in other countries.

The Russian people were pictured abroad as being free and happy; they were a lie to the world and they became a lie to themselves. The new generations grew up convinced of the superiority of their country, of their régime, of their leaders and finally of themselves. Injustice and oppression together with complete isolation bred their inevitable companion, nationalism. Like all people living under a dictatorship the Russian people have been degraded by a blind nationalism which makes them consider themselves as a superior nation, surrounded by brutal and stupid people whom they have to fight and to destroy. Of course this attitude characterises the privileged classes much more than the workers. People who work hard for a meagre wage are generally refractory to government's propaganda not only in Russia but in every country. They are much more prepared to show feelings of solidarity towards their brothers in poverty of other countries.

The progress that nationalism has made in Russia has struck all foreign observers and is particularly obvious in the Government's propaganda. Russian films and literature, plays and speeches constantly refer to the struggle for the fatherland and to the great patriotic war. Subjects like Potemkin and October have been dropped for National heroes like Alex-

ander Nevsky and Suvorov whose record can hardly be described as that of revolutionaries. Even despots like Peter the Great and Catherine are offered to the adulation of the masses. Decorations have been given the name of Czarist Generals so that the order of Suvorov may find itself beside that of Lenin on the chest of some Russian official!

It is interesting that nationalism should have been particularly boosted when the war started. In this country there was a tendency to leave patriotism aside (it sounded too much like the last war) and talk, on the contrary, of the defence of liberty and democracy. The Russian Government must have felt that it had to give the Russian people something to fight for. It is a terrible admission of failure that it did not think that the memory of the conquests of October, of the collectivization of the factories and of the land, would provide the necessary incentive. The Government realized that it could not fool the Russian people into fighting for the freedom and happiness they had lost, but it could use the age-old trick of building their faith on abstractions, on the concept of the fatherland which was completely new to many of them and which, perhaps for that reason, had a certain attraction. For centuries people have been driven into wars of religion, into wars for the defence of the fatherland, of an insulted flag or outraged national honour. The Russians used the formula again, with a degree of success, it seems.

H. R. Knickerbocker in *Is To-morrow Hitler's?* quotes an American general who defined morale as, "when a soldier thinks his army is the best in the world, his regiment the best in the army, his company the best in the regiment, his squad the best in the company, and that he himself is the best blankety-blank man in the outfit". A revolutionary fighter, a Makhno or a Durruti, would have defined morale in a different way. He would have said that a man's belief in his ideas, faith in the ideal he is fighting for is the determining factor. There are obviously two kinds of morale. There is the morale of the Red Army or German Army soldier who finds the determination to struggle in a blind obedience to discipline, in a fanatic faith in his leaders. There is the morale of the revolutionary which is due to the clear-sighted and reasoned belief that he is fighting for the happiness of mankind. The morale of the Russian people and of the Red Army soldier has been built by an increase in discipline, by an attempt to introduce an unquestioning devotion to the country and its leaders. From a military point of view the results have been fairly good. Russia has been able to repel the invasion, but it would be a mistake to see in this a proof that Russia is a socialist country. Germany under Hitler has fought as well, even if she is ultimately to meet with defeat.

It would seem unnecessary to point to these facts if admirers of the Soviet régime had not tried to create confusion. Ivor Montagu for example, tries to represent the Russian war as one in defence of workers' interests:

> "The morale of the Red Army and the Soviet people is good because the people are really united (they got rid of all their Quislings, thank good-

ness, before the war started, and they are the only people in Europe who have done so); because they have first class weapons; because they have their own country to fight for (it is not owned by private owners); because no individual owners there make profits from their fight or work; because there is no inequality of class; because there is no caste system in the armed forces —the commanders are workers and peasants who spring from the same origin as the men themselves; and because they have already fought so hard and overcome so many obstacles in the course of the past twenty-five years."

It would be difficult to find more mis-statements in a single paragraph. As this pamphlet has briefly shown, the Russian people are not united, they are divided in classes; they have no country to fight for, like the worker and peasant in capitalist countries they don't own the factories, the land and the product of their labour: class inequalities exist everywhere among the civilian population as among the armed forces. The inequalities may not always be due to birth but they exist all the same.

Russia is a nation of double the population of Germany, of greater natural resources, and it had destroyed the capitalist system over twenty years ago. If its people had been free, if they had revolutionary conquests to defend, Russia would have been able to repel any attack without suffering the heavy losses it has suffered in this war. Indeed, if Russia had made a success of the revolution its example would have been followed by other countries. Instead of being at war with Germany it would now live surrounded by happy and free countries.

Advertisement published in *Sovietland* (August 1937) propaganda publication for abroad issued by the United Magazines and newspapers in Moscow. The advertisement is probably for rich foreign visitors or Russian women of the new privileged class; it is certainly not meant for women miners.

APPENDIX

Letter of a British Airman about Russia.

The letter reproduced below was addressed by a member of the R.A.F. to a friend on his return from Russia. The letter was not intended for publication and it is obvious from it that the person who wrote it has no political interests. He merely describes facts that he thinks might be of interest to his friend and which he does not condemn or criticise but merely finds "foxing." He cannot conceal his disappointment at having been segregated from the Russian people. After having spent one year in Russia an Englishman who, from this letter, appears intelligent and observant, does not seem to have the faintest idea of the nature of the régime in Russia. If the Russian government had been anxious to build links of friendship between British and Russian people it would not have prohibited relations taking place between them. It would have allowed the British airmen to visit its factories, its collectivized farms and most important of all the houses of its citizens. Instead the Allied airmen were treated worse than Italian prisoners in this country. It is difficult to justify this under security reasons. The more reasonable explanation is that the Russian government wishes to conceal the low standard of living of the Russian people, their lack of freedom which extends to preventing them from having any contact with people from other lands.

One cannot help thinking of what different experiences the airman would have had if he had gone to Spain during the 1936 Revolution. It is very unlikely he would have been driven to drink by boredom. The progress of the revolution was continually discussed, lectures and meetings were held in the front line. Foreign volunteers were allowed to mix freely with the Spanish people and the most friendly relations were rapidly established. There were no reserves of canned food for the foreign soldiers while the Spanish people starved; all shared the same hardships of the war. It was only later under the influence of Russia that inequalities in the International Brigades were created.

The comparison between Spain in 1936 and Russia in 1943 helps one to understand the difference between a revolution fought for the freedom of the workers and a war waged to defend the interests of a privileged class.

* * *

One very wet day in November 1941 saw a party of about 10 officers and 200 R's waiting up at —— for a storm to die down, so that we could board a dirty little tramp steamer that was waiting off the shore for us.

We eventually boarded her in company with an American author, Negley Farson, who was going to Moscow as the *Express* representative,

the Norwegian Ambassador and his secretary, who were travelling complete with crates of wine and God knows what else, and four members of the Russian Diplomatic Corps who were returning after spending quite a long time in America and England.

We arrived at a Russian port on December the 23rd. Here we came up against another major snag. The Russian Port Authorities wouldn't let us land without receiving permission from Moscow. This of course made us furious, but after much talking three of us managed to get off the boat on December 24th. Here I might add that the Norwegian Ambassador and Negley Farson had no difficulty in getting off the ship, in fact had transport laid on for them.

By this time it was really cold, the thermometer standing between 40° and 50° Cent. below zero, and our subsequent journey to another port was very unpleasant. No arrangements for travelling had been made for us so we had to struggle on as best we could with our interpreter. To reach the station we had to cross a river so we hired a car to take us across the river which at that time of the year is used as a road. Well, it got us over the river, but only just, as it broke down on the other side, leaving the three of us with 5 miles to walk into town. Not a particularly pleasant prospect as the only footwear we had was boots, or wellingtons, and the only headwear was a balaclava helmet: all of it was unsuitable for such climates. The Wing Commander unfortunately was wearing boots, and every ten yards or so went flat on his face on the frozen road—or rather alleged road.

Eventually we reached our destination at about 10 p.m. on Christmas Eve, where luckily we found our Navy very well settled in and who filled us up with rum and vodka until life took on a slightly rosier tint.

The Russian hotel in which we were housed was perfectly b——. The sanitary arrangements only just existent and very much on the lines of horse boxes, with little doors about three feet high. Perfectly easy to see if they were all engaged. Hot water was non-existent so we always ordered two cups of tea in the morning—one to drink, and the other to shave in. Lunch took at least two hours—no exaggeration whatsoever—it taking anything up to three-quarters of an hour before a waiter approached the table.

Such was life in the hotel. Some of our boys had to stay there for months, and as they had nothing to do, never got up before lunch time, spent the afternoon having lunch, and the evening drinking as much as possible, either rum from the navy, gin and whisky from N.A.A.F.I. stores or vodka from the hotel. Altogether a completely soul-destroying existence.

I might mention that we had a really royal spread on Christmas Day with the Service personnel already in existence in the port, and again on New Year's Eve with 'official' Russians that the W/Cmdr. had managed to contact. It was at these two parties that we learned that vodka in large quantities is pretty good as a poison. There is no effect at first and then

something hits you on the back of the head and down you go on the ground, and no will power on earth can make you get up. If you have been drinking a vicious vodka brew called "spinit" which is 95° alcohol you also lose your eyesight for a couple of hours or so. Very unpleasant!

The remaining 25 or so boys whom we left on the ship were not so lucky, as the Russians refused to let them off until well after the New Year, and they had a hell of a time on a completely frozen up ship, and with no drinks, as the ship had run dry. While there they saw one or two nasty sights. The dockers were all convicts looked after by guards with rifles, and apparently one of them made a dive after some garbage that had been thrown from the ship into the ice, and was promptly shot dead by the guard. Another one was made to sit on the frozen ground with his trousers off for half an hour, until the captain of our ship remonstrated with the guard. The temperature was then 51° C. below zero.

The W/Cmdr. and I were going to Moscow to join the H.Q. of the Mission which had at that time just moved back to Moscow from Kuibyshev where it had gone when Moscow was threatened in October 1941. In spite of strong representations from our Air Vice Marshal in charge of the Mission it was not until a month after we had landed that we were allowed to board a train for Moscow.

The journey of approx. 500 miles took us five days, and has been known to take ten days. As we had to take food for this time we travelled rather like a person moving house. There was a cock-up about transport to take us across the ice to the station—the Russians failing to provide cars as promised—so we had to walk a couple of miles in the snow. At the station we found no porters to handle our luggage and stores, so we all had to set to and hump things about: G/Cpt., W/Cmdr. and all.

Once settled in the journey was not too bad and certainly was an experience. We had as food a number of composite rations which are jolly good things and include things like solid broth, cookers, lavatory paper and matches, besides butter, jam, sardines, bacon, beans, etc., so we amused ourselves cooking bacon and beans for breakfast much to the envy of the Russian passengers who were existing on brown bread and vodka, with, if they were lucky, raw herrings, or caviare.

Incidentally there are three classes at least on the railways: sleeper which consists of wagons of the wagon-lit type built in about 1880; soft which are coaches with a small amount of springing in the beds, but no compartments, just a long coach, open and of course mixed, males and females; and hard, which is the same but with a board only as a bed. The fourth class consists of a goods van with a small stove in it. Our Hurricane erection party travelled this way on a journey which took 5 days, excluding three days parked in a siding.

The sanitary arrangements on the trains are grim. As Ethel Mannin put it "The Russians might aim to fulfil various 5 year plans, but when they get near a lavatory they don't aim at all." A perfectly true statement.

After four days we arrived in Moscow where on ringing up the Mis-

sion—a very difficult task as for two hours the police wouldn't let us approach a telephone until they had checked up on us—we were told that the interpreter had just phoned the station enquiries and had been told that the train wouldn't be arriving that day. This while we had already been reposing in the station for a couple of hours.

Anyway in next to no time we were met and taken to a big hotel where we found that all our rooms had a private bathroom. A real bath which had colourless water running from the taps! The water in the previous town being taken from the river was absolutely black. What luxury—we hadn't even dreamed such luxury could exist.

After a while we were fixed up in an Embassy and we took over the Air Attaché's house to live in. After we had settled down a little we started looking around for social connections, only to find to our amazement that Russians are not allowed to talk to foreigners and if found doing so are promptly arrested and warned. This immediately knocked on the head any ideas that we had of being entertained by the locals, and not once during my year or so in Russia was one of us asked to a Russian house, or asked to go to any shows, etc.

There were of course a few people who could speak English who were free to mix with Embassy and Mission members, but they were all members of the O.G.P.U. and had to make periodical reports. The women being nothing more or less than tarts.

Well, so time passed. Our chief relaxation being going to see the ballet or the opera, at the state Big Theatre. They were of course absolutely first class, but what struck me was the number of school children present and the way they behaved at the end of an act. They would rush down to the orchestra pit and absolutely scream for the actors and actresses, the whole house doing the same. Incidentally the orchestra for ballet and opera, was always over 70 strong. Another custom is that of children getting into the theatre without paying, and sitting in an empty seat. When the rightful owner comes along they just get up and find another empty seat. When the lights go down there is an absolutely mad rush to fill up all the empty seats. During the intervals which are very long—the average length of a show being three and a half to four hours—everyone goes to the smoking room which is usually a large hall with a few pillars, and walks around the hall. You must walk, never stand still; This of course gets decidedly monotonous!

Winter turned to summer and we were really settled in our new house and were living like lords as we had a legacy of approx. 100 tons of tinned foodstuffs. Our cooks and servants were Embassy servants, and on the whole we did very well, particularly as at that time vodka cost 3/- half litre; champagne 3/6 a bottle and Caucasian wines at 2/- to 4/- a bottle were plentiful. On top of this we had plenty of N.A.A.F.I. goods, 140 cigarettes a week, 4 bars of chocolate, and a bottle of gin or whisky at 4/- every week. So life wasn't too bad in spite of the fact that we had to find our own entertainment within the Mission circle, including members

of the American Supply Mission.

A few of the Russians, chiefly women, were willing to talk to us in a very furtive sort of way, after dark, etc., and we managed to arrange a ladies' night at the Mess once a week, which helped to break the monotony. A spot of dancing and drinking, and for the girls the only good meal for the week.

We found that walking around in uniform was very embarrassing as whole streets of people would turn around and stare at us, and on the underground platform everyone would gather in a circle around us, so although we were forbidden to wear civilian clothes, some of us bought silk embroidered shirts, and with some old slacks made out of paliasse covers passed as local inhabitants when we had a day off and went swimming in the Moscow-Volga canal.

I think I must say something about the black market. I got mother to send me a pair of ice skates and when I left I could have sold them for a purchase parity price of £15, or an exchange rate price of £75. There are really three rates of exchange in Russia, the official rate of Rs.20 to the pound; the military rate of Rs.48¼ to the pound; and the Diplomatic rate of Rs.100 to the pound.

The purchase parity for goods is approximately 120 roubles to the pound. All very foxing! When I left, articles in the black market were fetching terrific prices, some of which I am quoting below:

20 cigarettes, Rs.75. Diplomatic rate 15/-.
1 bar of chocolate, Rs.50. Diplomatic rate 10/-.
Pair of ladies' shoes, Rs.1,000. Diplomatic rate, £10.
2½ lbs. butter, or jam, Rs.1,500. Diplomatic rate £15.

Absolutely unbelievable. This is not because the average person is earning colossal wages, but because after buying their very small ration of food, there is nothing, literally nothing that can be bought in the shops, so those who have a little money spend it in the black market.

Apart from wines, which quadrupled their price while I was there, we found one thing only which was cheap. The Russians made a copy of the Leica camera called FED which with an F.4-5 sells in peace time for £5, or with F.2 for £10.

We agreed with the Russians that a year in Russia was enough for any Englishman as we had had a few near mental cases through over-drinking and no work in North Russia. In September 1942, the first of our boys was due for relief so we had reliefs nominated and their entry visas applied for. After chasing the Russians for a couple of months they informed us that they would not grant visas to these people. When asked for what reason, they gave none. This went on for another couple of months and was even taken up by our Ambassador, but without result, so we nominated more reliefs, a few of which were allowed to enter Russia. My relief was refused entry, so in January 1943, I passed my work on to someone else in Moscow and started the journey home.

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