

The soviet form of government is, so far, the only one which has proved capable of abolishing capitalism and laying the foundations of a socialist society.

Half a century of parliamentary socialism in Scandinavia has left capitalism practically intact, complete with monarchy and the rule of finance-capital. Within a week of the establishment of soviet power, capitalism disappeared from the Russian

scene, never to return. These historic facts speak for themselves.

When they finally come to grips with the bureaucracy, the Russian workers will no doubt re-establish these organs of working-class democracy which served them so well in three revolutions, and will once again give reality to the proud name their country bears.

MICHAEL BANDA

Why and How the Bureaucracy Arose

IT IS a sad task to recapitulate, even in a condensed form, the sordid history of the rise of the Soviet bureaucracy. But it is no more possible to narrate the history of the Russian Revolution without mentioning the subsequent Stalinist degeneration than it is to write about the French Revolution without attempting to explain the causes and analyse the significance of the overthrow of the Jacobins by the Thermidorians, and the consequent death of 'Sansculottism'.

STALINISM AND THE WORLD REVOLUTION

The Bolshevik leaders were internationalists first and Russians afterwards. Acutely aware of the cultural backwardness of Russia and of the great preponderance of petty commodity production, they believed that it would be a well-nigh impossible task to achieve the transition to socialism without the support of the west European working class. The fate of the Russian Revolution was intimately connected with the failure or success of the revolution in the rest of the world.

The truth of this thesis is amply confirmed by the rise and consolidation of the bureaucracy in Soviet Russia. While it is true that the triumph of the Revolution in Russia precluded the return of the old régime, nevertheless the successive defeats of the European revolution effectively prevented the Soviet workers from obtaining the much-needed technical and financial assistance which would have eased their burden of toil and given them more time to participate in the administration of men and things. The low level of productivity, the deep disillusionment in the international revolution and the unprecedented burden of industrialization—all these things contributed to the political expropriation of the working class by an ambitious and ruthless caste of parvenu careerists. In this lies the whole secret of Stalin's success and—incidentally—his so-called 'greatness'.

HOW THE BUREAUCRACY AROSE

The historic task of the Russian Revolution was the destruction of the tsarist State and the production relations on which it rested and the creation of a new type of State—a Soviet State—based on a new type of production relations: on nationalized property.

The task of administering one-sixth of the earth's surface on an entirely new basis by a class lacking in statecraft and with a very low level of culture had never been attempted before.

The danger of bureaucracy in the State apparatus was inherent, but given the best possible conditions it could have been curbed. These conditions were lacking. The defeats of the revolution in Germany and Hungary (1919), the terrible privations and misery of the Civil War and the War of Intervention and the extreme centralization of State and party authority (inevitable and necessary during this period) enormously favoured the growth of bureaucracy. It was during this time that Stalin's faction wormed its way into control of the three most important organs of power: the Central Control Commission, the Organization Bureau and the Secretariat.

As early as 1918 Lenin sensed the danger to the Soviet State and warned the party:

'Apart from the law there is still the level of culture which you cannot subject to any law. The result of this low cultural level is that the soviets, which by virtue of their programmes are organs of government by the toilers, are in fact organs of government for the toilers by means of the advanced stratum of the proletariat but not by means of the toiling masses.'

THE PARTY AND ITS DEGENERATION

The role and the achievements of the Bolshevik Party bore absolutely no correspondence to its numerical strength. This 'puissant cohort of free men associated by common thought and discipline of action' was able to achieve so much in so little time because it concentrated within its ranks the experience, the energy, the courage and the finest traditions of the Russian working class. But even the finest instrument is liable to damage and decay. The Bolshevik Party—despite the scale of its conquests and the grandeur of its leadership—was no exception to historical laws.

Between 1919 and 1922 the membership of the party multiplied more than tenfold. Yet a breakdown of the membership figures revealed that only two per cent. of the 1921 membership had joined before 1916 and 20 per cent. before 1918. Many people at this time joined the party not so much out of conviction but from sheer expediency. The Chistka (purge) of the party conducted in 1921 revealed—in a very ominous way—how the pressures of hostile social forces and a desperate economic situation were sapping the foundations of the government party.

In the purge 72,177 members were expelled. Of these 16 per cent. were found guilty of corruption, blackmail, abuse of official positions and criminal acts, 32 per cent. were expelled for breaches of party discipline and 38 per cent. for ambition, drunkenness, brutality, observance of religious rites and anti-Semitism. In all more than 200,000 members were expelled in the years 1921-22.

The danger to the party lay in the fact that it was the ruling party and that its members were becoming more and more occupied with administrative tasks and were consequently paying less and less attention to the moods and needs of the common people who had raised them to power. This tragic paradox can be statistically illustrated.

In 1922 out of every 100 communists employed in the RSFSR 35 were employed in Soviet government departments, 21 in the Army or Navy, 14 in industrial enterprises, 6 in transport, 8 in agriculture, 6 in party or trade union organizations, 8 in other employment and 2 as artisans. Strictly speaking, even at this time the party had ceased to be a combat organization of the working class and was rapidly being transformed into a part of the State apparatus.

This tendency was deliberately intensified by Stalin after 1923. What was once a distortion became, under him, a system of administration.

The following figures supplied by Trotsky in 1927 speak for themselves:

Workers engaged in industry and transport	430,000
Workers engaged in agriculture or employed by peasants	15,700
Peasants (more than half now government employees)	303,000
Officials (half of them former workers)	462,000

The position in the higher organs of the party was worse still. Only ten per cent. of the personnel were factory workers.

Christian Rakovsky in his brilliant thesis 'On the Occupational Risks of Power' summarizes this development succinctly:

'When a class takes power, part of it becomes the agent of this power. Thus arises the bureaucracy. In a socialist State, where capitalist accumulation by the members of the leading party is forbidden, this differentiation begins on the basis of functions. This leads to social differentiation. I am thinking now of the social position of a communist who has at his disposal a car, a good apartment, regular holidays and the maximum salary authorized by the party. His position differs considerably from that of a communist who works in the coal-mines and gets fifty or sixty roubles a month. You know that the workers and clerks are divided into eighteen different categories . . .'

THE OPPOSITION

The growth of bureaucracy could not be reconciled for long with the ideas and institutions of the proletarian dictatorship. Lenin before his death had formed a bloc with Trotsky to fight bureaucracy in the party and in his testament demanded the removal of Stalin as general secretary. At the Tenth Congress of the party he fought for the right of trade unions to strike against the State and had defined the State as a 'workers' State with bureaucratic deformations'. In his last writings he made a final bid to rally the whole party to the struggle against the bureaucracy. Premature death deprived him of the fate of those who shared his views. The struggle was left to the Opposition.

The struggle of the Opposition was an unequal one. Against the barrage of lies, slander, innuendo and misrepresentation of the Stalinist apparatus this seems almost an understatement.

ROBERT ANDREWS

The Bolshevik Resistance to Stalinism (1923-28)

RECENT RESEARCH and discussion have pretty well established what were the material conditions in Soviet Russia and the capitalist world which in the 1923-28 period enabled the bureaucracy to dominate Soviet society, and enabled Stalin to rise to its apex.

The Left Opposition of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was no less the product of the historical forces, the vanguard—temporarily isolated and defeated—of the Soviet and the international working class.

The question 'Who will conquer whom?' was raised sharply by Lenin in his report to the Eleventh Congress of the CPSU in 1922 (Selected Works, vol. 9).

R. Page Arnot put the central difficulty quite well in his (now very scarce) 'Study-Guide to the Russian Revolution', which the Labour Research Department published in 1922:

'Clearly the effect of reviving capitalism, of renewed profiteering, of large fortunes rapidly made, and of all the other phenomena, constituted an extreme danger for the party that governs Russia. The Communist Party might be corrupted both individually and as a whole. A capitalist Russia is being evolved under the guardianship of the representatives of the working class. Who is to see that these guardians will perform their task seriously?' (Tom Bell dealt editorially with the same point in Communist Review, vol. 3, no. 3.)

In the autumn of 1923 the rising discussions within the party about planned economic development and capital accumulation, the kulak danger and national oppression all led straight back to the question of the regime within the party.

The storm broke with the issue of the 'Declaration of the 46', signed by many leading Old Bolsheviks (but not by Trotsky), challenging the 'triumvirate' of Zinoviev, Kamenev

From 1923 to 1927 the Opposition fought tenaciously for industrialization, collectivization and workers' control. The bureaucracy resisted all along the line and continued with the NEP until it was almost too late. Its monopoly of the means of propaganda constituted a powerful weapon, and its control of the State apparatus at a time when there were more than a million unemployed in the USSR gave it an overwhelming power over the working class and its representatives. But greater and more significant than all these was the series of agonizing defeats inflicted on the working class in Germany (1923), Britain (1926) and China (1927). These defeats helped the bureaucracy to consolidate itself and finally expel the Opposition in 1927.

The soviets had ceased to exist, the party was transformed, the trade unions were so only in name. The secret police became a State within a State. The victory of Hitler in 1933 increased the disillusionment amongst the workers and thereby helped the bureaucracy to smash and obliterate every vestige of working-class opposition. The terrible destitution and misery of the workers during the First and Second Five Year Plans also enabled the bureaucracy to supplement its forces by encouraging the worst forms of 'Babbitry', such as Stakhanovism.

The Moscow trials—that terrible travesty of socialism—brought to a bloody and tragic end for a long time to come the great hopes awakened by October 1917.

* * *

The Revolution however lives in the consciousness of the Soviet workers, and in the socialized property relations which the bureaucracy has distorted but not overthrown. The regeneration of Lenin's party, of the soviets, of the trade unions, of the whole of Soviet society, is inconceivable without the overthrow of the parasitic bureaucracy, without a political revolution.

and Stalin, into whose hands the control of the party machine passed during Lenin's last illness.

Already there was delay in the publication of Lenin's article 'Better Fewer but Better' (Selected Works, vol. 9, p. 387). This was written on February 6, 1923, and involved very sharp attacks on the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, of which Stalin had recently been the head, though it did not name Stalin. The Politburo only published it at all on the insistence of Kamenev and Trotsky.

In Lenin's Testament, written at the end of 1922, he was perspicacious enough to say that in Stalin and Trotsky were the personalities large enough to become the figures round which conflict could crystallize, and in the postscript (January 4, 1923) he advised the removal of Stalin.

At the Twelfth Congress, in April 1923, the triumvirate consolidated itself by diverting and avoiding any open discussion critical of the leadership or of its Great Russian chauvinism on the Georgian question, which had given rise to the scandal at the turn of the year before Lenin's death (as is shown by the letters published by Khrushchev).

NOMINEES FROM ABOVE

Kosior is reported by E. H. Carr to have attacked the Organization Bureau of the CPSU (the head of which was Stalin) for victimizing critics and imposing nominees from above on local party committees as secretaries.

Trotsky did not yet formally identify himself with any of the critical currents within the party, but his articles in Pravda in December 1923 (republished as 'The New Course') clearly identified him as against the leading faction.

'The Declaration of the 46' was issued on October 15, 1923. The Politburo resolution of December 5 was the last indication of agreement between Trotsky and the 'triumvirate'. This was the resolution which is distorted by Stalinist tradition as Trotsky's agreement not to press his criticisms. Wide publicity

was given to it in this sense in Pravda and Inprecorr, and on December 8 and 9, 1923, Trotsky read a statement at a conference of the Moscow party organization in which he put his interpretation on the resolution as not prohibiting discussion. At this stage we see the first appearance of the attempts to exploit the differences as being Trotsky versus the 'Old Guard' of the Bolshevik Party.

Trotsky's 'Lessons of October' (1924) originally published as a preface to a new edition of his work '1917', took up the reasons for the passivity of the Comintern under the leadership of Zinoviev and Stalin in the revolutionary crisis in Germany in autumn 1923.

As Zinoviev and Radek later revealed when they had broken with Stalin, the 'triumvirate' reacted to these writings by the so-called 'literary discussion', in which party history was for the first (but not the last) time systematically rewritten, to create a legend of 'Trotskyism', to defend the theory of socialism in one country and to rake up and fake up old disputes in order to counterpoise Trotsky to Lenin.

The 'triumvirate' occupied a middle position in the party, with the 'critics' on the Left and the support from the Right of Tomsy and Rykov.

The 'Right' danger was no chimera, for even at the end of 1922 the kulak and Nepman had grown strong enough for a proposal to be made in the central committee of the party to dismantle the foreign trade monopoly.

In his 'Theses on Industry', unanimously adopted by the Twelfth Congress of the CPSU, Trotsky made the following proposals for industrial development: stabilization of the rouble to make it possible to raise capital by taxing and borrowing from the new bourgeoisie; planned industrial development, including planned participation in foreign trade and attraction of foreign concessionaires in limited fields of economy; and a revival of workers' control of industry to combat bureaucracy and red tape.

UNDER STALIN'S CONTROL

The campaign against 'Trotskyism' showed its paces at the Thirteenth Congress of the CPSU, the first after Lenin's death.

Here the provincial delegations tended to be under the control of Stalin and those from the great industrial centres to consist more of experienced Bolsheviks and 'critics'. Having nothing to gain from disturbances within the country, and hoping to win the leadership of the party masses, the 'Left' felt no need to take up these provocations.

Stalin's position on the central question of capital accumulation was expressed at the Fourteenth Congress, in May 1925:

'Further development of industry presupposes a new technical basis, namely the provision of new machinery and the building of new factories. . . .

'If we are to pass from a policy of making the best use of our existing industries to a policy of establishing a new industrial system upon a new technical foundation, upon the building of new factories, we shall require a large quantity of capital.

'Since however there is a great lack of capital in this country, we have good reason to expect that in the future the growth of our industry will not proceed so rapidly as it has in the past. It is otherwise with agriculture.'

THE COMINTERN'S PRESTIGE

The party's acceptance of Trotsky's 'Theses on Industry' in 1923 encountered the resistance of the bureaucracy. Here is the seed of the Russian and international campaign of slander against Trotsky for 'underestimation of the peasantry'.

It grew from the 'triumvirate' line of conciliating the richer peasantry and the bureaucracy.

Maurice Dobb, who had more chance to see all these documents than almost anyone else in Britain, did not clarify the issue in his writings—for instance, in his review of the discussion in 'The Economic Progress of the USSR', Labour Monthly, September 1927.

The discussions developed almost without the knowledge of communists abroad. The prestige of the Comintern, with Zinoviev at its head, sufficed to cramp the discussion of

'Lessons of October', which the young parties were at the same time called upon to condemn!

But in 1925 new factors entered. The Comintern developed a strongly-marked turn to the Right, exemplified in Britain in the association with the 'Lefts' on the General Council of the Trades Union Congress and in China with political support for Chiang Kai-shek and bourgeois nationalism.

The relations within the CPSU were soon much embittered. The 'triumvirate' had greatly bolstered its position shortly after Lenin's death by opening the party to some 200,000 recruits, mostly without revolutionary experience, and some, like the 'Changing Landmarks' trend, with counter-revolutionary experience.

The pressure on the 'triumvirate' disintegrated it, and Radek and Zinoviev joined the 'Left'.

The machine freely used against the 'Left' the resolution of the Tenth Congress of the CPSU, passed at the time of the NEP crisis in Spring 1921, to prohibit factions within the party.

AGAINST BOLSHEVIK TRADITION

This crisis decision, so contrary to Bolshevik tradition that it was kept secret even when it was passed, now became a major weapon in the hands of the 'official' party controllers.

The machine now resorted to increased repressions against the 'Left'. During 1927 the 'Left Opposition' formally constituted itself as a faction, feeling the need to do so to protect its means of publishing its ideas.

The GPU then entered the struggle. It sent one of its agents, who happened to be an ex-officer of the counter-revolutionary army of General Wrangel, to contact a young member of the Opposition and offer him paper for publishing the Left Opposition material on a duplicator.

Innocently, the young man accepted the offer, and the GPU then accused the Opposition of working with White Guards!

The decisive statement of the policy of the Left Opposition is to be found in its Platform, a long document introduced into the central committee of the party during September 1927.

This was simply declared an 'anti-party' document. Its circulation thus became not merely critical, but illegal. It is published in English in a work edited by Max Eastman entitled 'The Real Situation in Russia'.

With the defeat of the British General Strike in May 1926 and of the Shanghai workers in April 1927, the foreign policies of the Stalin leadership suffered a serious blow, but general material conditions did not strengthen the Opposition but for the time being even further reduced its basis.

The Left Opposition participated in the demonstrations for the tenth anniversary of the Revolution on November 7, 1927, with its own banners: 'Fulfil the Testament of Lenin', 'Against the Kulak, the Nepman and the Bureaucrat'.

NORMAL PARTY METHODS

Stalinist writers later tried to depict this as an attempt at insurrection, of which there could have been no possible thought. For the methods were those normal in party life, essentially the spreading of ideas.

There could be no other possible means for the Left Opposition to achieve its aim, unless we assume the improbable suggestion that all its work was a 'cover'. By far the simplest explanation is that it resisted bureaucracy and favoured an internationalist policy. That it could achieve its aims by sabotage of the Soviet regime would be self-contradictory.

The Fifteenth Congress of the CPSU in December 1927 endorsed the recommendation of the central committee that the Left Opposition be excluded from the Party.

This was followed at once by the deportation to Siberia of the leading Left Oppositionists, including Trotsky, Rakovsky, Radek and Preobrazhensky. In all some 11,000 are believed to have been deported about this time.

The capitalist Press and the financial bourgeoisie pretty well agreed that, as a choice between evils, they preferred Stalin, and commented accordingly.

Rykov's alliance with Stalin did not last long. Along with Bukharin and Tomsy, the other leaders of the 'Right', he came under fire from the bureaucracy early in 1929.

Rykov was removed from the chairmanship of the Council of People's Commissars, Tomsy from that of the trade unions, and Bukharin from the editorial chair of Pravda and the chairmanship of the Comintern.

For a time the exiled Left Oppositionists were able to keep in touch with each other and to exchange political ideas in letters.

ROBERT HUNTER

THE PURGERS AND THE PURGED

I AM WRITING on the purges and trials in a publication devoted to celebrating the October Socialist Revolution. Here now we confront man's highest with his lowest qualities, glory with degradation, the enlargement of his spirit with its restriction, the rising of his hopes with his moral and physical annihilation.

Such a confrontation calls for fundamental answers. I will be satisfied if I have asked the right questions.

It is no longer a question of arguing for the innocence of the accused. The issue has been raised above pamphleteering. Our judgment we find in the people's need to overthrow the iniquity that condemned the accused.

Two hundred thousand demonstrated at Rajk's reburial and proclaimed his innocence. The crisis among the inquisitors leads to Khrushchev's speech at the Twentieth Congress.

The quibbling of innumerable commissions, the rehabilitation of the dead, suitably garbed for the purpose of the living ('victims of enemy slander'), all the ink, hectoring and pontificating cannot hide the final judgment; the people cannot live with the iniquity which framed and tortured its judicial victims.

If Stalinism insisted on the drawing of political conclusions based on the 'guilt' of the accused, we no less must insist on arriving at political conclusions based on their innocence.

It is just this development Stalin's heirs try to prevent. Indeed Klugmann may be ordered to write 'From Trotsky to Tito', but we will wait long enough for the companion volume 'From Tito to Trotsky'.

I cannot regard the trials as 'crimes and errors', as resulting from the cult of the individual. The trial and conviction of the Rosenbergs was a 'crime and error', and this trial leads us to conclusions about American society.

In seventeenth century Scotland

When such crimes and errors are multiplied millionfold it demonstrates not the nature of a mature political form, but history in the making, the process of creating a new political form, the enforcing of a new discipline on a society in flux.

Those who see the purges as a 'Great Madness' know neither their history nor the forms social struggle may take in 'pre-history'.

Scotland in the seventeenth century knew under the church, that damned 'democratic theocracy', all the external forms and purpose of a purge, not in this case against 'enemies of the people' but against 'witches'.

Where have we read something like these passages taken from Tom Johnston's 'History of the Working Class in Scotland', if not in descriptions of the purges?

'When a woman ceased to be obdurate and yielded up the names of her "associates" each "associate" was of course arrested and a similar course of examination and torture arranged. . . .'

Nor were the witches failing in the self-accusation demanded of 'enemies of the people'.

'Poor Isabel Gowdie at Auldearn was bullied into saying "I desire to be rein upon iron harrows and worse if it could be devysit".'

Stalin made what was for him one of his greatest mistakes in exiling Trotsky alive, with the result that the work of the Left Opposition could go on.

We today may well feel that without their struggles we should have infinitely more difficulty in understanding the crisis of Stalinism, what has happened to the Soviet Union, where it is going, and how communists should act towards it.

And is this seventeenth century Scotland or Russia under Stalin:

'Each trial usually involved a large number of women, and as the evidence given in one trial was held as evidence over against women who were not themselves upon trial, blanks being left in the charge-sheet for such fresh names as might be discovered during the trial, each commission meant a fresh holocaust of victims.'

Shall some Marxists now tell us that the cult of John Knox explains all this—those Marxist historians whose task is, as they say in eastern Europe, 'not to interpret history but to change it'?

After allowance has been made for this or that factor, for external pressure, for historical traditions, for Slavonic souls, for the social problems of industrialization, for 'sickly suspicion', the key to the purges lies in the bureaucratic degeneration of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; and hence it lies in the struggle of a group to impose its discipline on society as a whole.

At the heart of Marxism

It is when we come to consider the nature of the discipline that the core of the problem is reached.

It is not a problem for Marxism which does not exist separate from Marxists, but a problem for those very Marxists as living, moral and thinking people, a problem which goes to the heart of the Marxist as a person, to the heart of Marxism as a science.

The discipline the bureaucracy imposed on the Russian people followed a victorious socialist revolution and was imposed in the course of laying the essential groundwork for social advance—industrialization.

It was imposed as the bureaucracy took advantages for itself and at the same time paid lip-service to the cause of socialism and Marxism, to ideals it could neither practise nor deny.

Marxism is acknowledged, but whereas Marxism regards freedom as the recognition of necessity, the bureaucracy elevated every transient necessity to a freedom.

Its very existence created the necessity to oppress the workers in its own interests.

The torturing of reality

This torturing of reality to give it the character of man determining his own history split truth itself apart. There then appeared two contradictory categories, subjective and objective truth: subjective truth the province of intellectuals, revisionists, old and new reasoners; objective truth the province of the political committee of the British Communist Party and the NKVD.

Consciously to elect for such 'objective truth' is to have no faith in people. The people must not be told the truth, as this would damage the cause of socialism.

They must not be told of the persecution of Jews, as this would damage the cause of socialism. They must not be told of perversions of justice, as this would damage the cause of socialism.

They must not be told of the harriving of the peasants or

the destruction of trade union rights, as this would damage the cause of socialism.

And when each successive inroad into the structure of socialism has placed it in jeopardy—then they must be told it has been constructed.

In the end those who 'kept their mouths shut' in the cause of socialism found themselves repudiated in the cause of socialism.

But the solution to the personal problem, the moral problem, the problem of Marxism as a science, is ever more clearly seen as an uncompromising adherence to truth, to the facts of the matter.

Not to speak out against the trials, against the oppression of Stalinism, is in the end not to aid socialism but to betray it by creating illusions instead of criticizing 'a situation which has need of illusions'.

Before a policy of principle all the self-torturing explanations why Magnitogorsk should be balanced against the execution of a Kameney, Sztalinvaros against the annihilation of Rajk, are seen as the weaknesses of little men developing into unprincipled bureaucrats, little men who do not know that people rise above defeats, renew their hopes, and above all need, not illusions, but the truth.

The cult of the individual is based on the self-cult of many individuals forming an élite, guardians of arcane secrets, directors of the people's will, builders of socialism, guiders of the arts and sciences, and recipients of higher rations.

So the man of little faith becomes the bureaucrat, leading his fellows by higher committee decisions, by administrative decrees, moulding their opinion by control of Press, radio, art and literature.

Petty bourgeois turned aristocrat

His decisions shape the destiny of man. Broad vistas unfold for him. He feels omnipotent; indeed, over his fellows he is. All opposition has been smashed. All the ideological rubbish left over from capitalism has been routed. All petty-bourgeois filth is ended—except himself.

For what is the bureaucrat but the petty bourgeois turned aristocrat?

The purges inside the CPSU, which appear so inexplicable, can be explained by the situation which exists inside any mature Stalinist party.

A garrulous member of the executive committee of the British Communist Party revealed to a lower committee Stalin's part authorship of the first draft of the so-called 'British Road to Socialism'.

The committee members were thunderstruck. The EC member was written to by the district organizer in the hope of a recantation or a direct repudiation of the statement.

With incredible ingenuousness the EC member avoided denial or affirmation of his remark but—and he has suffered for such ineptness since—concluded his reply with the words: 'This will teach me to reveal confidences to lower committees'.

Always this contradiction within the Stalinist parties between the members, confused but revolutionary, and those who occupy leading positions.

Divisions, suspicion, purges, terror. Stalinist parties carry within themselves the contradictions which lead to purges. In capitalist countries these contradictions express themselves in a high turnover of members.

Purgers are in crisis

Today the purges are not over, but the purgers are in crisis. The contradictions within Soviet society for which Zhdanov searched so assiduously are knocking at the door of the central committee.

And it is not criticism and self-criticism conducted in a rarefied atmosphere free of social stress but our old friend 'Robin Goodfellow himself', the Russian proletariat, who knocks.

We must remember on this fortieth anniversary of the October Revolution that the world proletariat is not split into autonomous national groups; victories and defeats are common to all and affect all.

The defeat of the west European proletariat is not contrasted with the victory of the Russian proletariat, but is part of the latter's defeat.

Again, the desperate misrepresentation and conspiracy of silence about events in eastern Europe are a sign that the Russian bureaucracy knows that victories in one sector can lead to victories in others.

The only way we can make sure of the defeat of Stalinism—the only monument we can raise to the victims of the purge—is to further the victory of socialism in Britain.

The Stalinist parties have passed their zenith and are in decline. Whereas in the twenties and thirties the whole intellectual ferment of the Left dealt with assessing the October Revolution, now the ferment is directed towards analysing the defeat of the Russian workers under Stalinism.

The New Reasoner, Universities and Left Review, Labour Review, Forum and The Newsletter reveal an ideological struggle and development based on the attack on Stalinism in eastern Europe and on the rising militancy of the British workers.

We can celebrate this fortieth anniversary of the glorious October Revolution with hope, for today the heirs of the Revolution struggle to rehabilitate its architects.

The Fate of Lenin's Central Committee

The central committee of the Bolshevik Party, elected at the Sixth Congress in August, 1917, numbered 31 members and alternate members. The identity of 29 of these is known.

Seven of them died between 1917 and 1924—Dzhaparidze, Shaumyan, Artyom, Uritsky, Sverdlov, Nogin and Lenin.

Of the remaining 22, eleven are known to have been physically destroyed in one way or another by Stalin.

Joffe (ambassador to China) and Skrypnik (party leader in the Ukraine) were driven to suicide.

Trotsky (commissar for war) was assassinated in Mexico in 1940.

The others—executed or dead in prison—were Kameney (leader of the Moscow party organization), Zinoviev (leader of the Leningrad party organization

and of the Comintern), Bukharin (editor of Pravda and leader of the Comintern), Sokolnikov (commissar for finance and ambassador to Britain), Rykov (chairman of the Council of People's Commissars), Smilga (economist), Preobrazhensky (economist) and Krestinsky (ambassador to Germany).

The fate of Berzin, Kiselev, Lomov, Muranov, and Varvara Yakovleva is uncertain.

Only Dzerzhinsky, Milyutin, Alexandra Kollontai and, of course, Stalin himself, are known (?) to have died natural deaths in freedom.

Bubnov, imprisoned by Stalin in 1937, returned to liberty in 1956, at the age of 77, but has not been heard of since.

The only member of Lenin's central committee known to be still alive and active in public life is Elena Stasova, aged 84.

DON RENTON

THE RED ARMY: MIRROR OF SOVIET SOCIETY

1918

(1) I, son of working-class parents and a citizen of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, assume the title of soldier in the Army of Workers and Peasants.

(2) Before the workers of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and the whole world I pledge myself to bear this title in honour, to learn the art of war conscientiously and to cherish as the apple of my eye the property of the people and protect it against all robbery and destruction.

(3) I pledge myself to observe revolutionary discipline strictly and resolutely and to obey without demur all orders given me by the commanders set over me by the Government of Workers and Peasants.

(4) I pledge myself to abstain from all actions derogatory to the dignity of a citizen of the Soviet Union and to restrain my comrades from such actions, and to direct my every action and thought towards the freeing of all workers.

(5) I pledge myself to respond to the first call from the Government of Workers and Peasants by placing myself at its disposal for the defence of the Republic of Workers and Peasants against any attack and peril from any enemy, and to spare neither my strength nor my life in battle for the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and for the cause of socialism and the fraternization of all races.

(6) May the scorn of all be my lot and may the hard hand of the revolutionary law punish me, if ever with evil intent I break this my solemn oath.

The RED ARMY OATH

1939

I, citizen of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, on entering the Red Army of Workers and Peasants, swear and pledge myself to be an honest, brave, disciplined and zealous soldier, to keep strictly all military and State secrets and obey without demur the military code and all orders given me by commanders, commissars, and others set over me.

I pledge myself to learn the art of war conscientiously and to protect with all my strength the property of the Army and the People and to cherish unto death my **People**, my **Soviet Homeland** and the **Government of Workers and Peasants**.

I am ready to respond at the first call from the **Government of Workers and Peasants** to defend my **Homeland**—the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics—and I pledge myself, as a soldier of the **Red Army of Workers and Peasants**, to defend it with manliness and judgment, with dignity and honour, sparing neither my blood nor my life for the cause of complete victory over the enemy.

May the inexorable hand of the Soviet law punish me and may the hate of all and the scorn of the workers be my lot if ever, with evil intent, I break with this solemn oath.

THE February Revolution was largely the result of the agonies of the first world war. From the Baltic to the Black Sea, two million perished in mud and snow. Five million were wounded. Speculation was rife in the rear. Two million deserters voted for peace—with their feet.

A new army had to be created to fight a new war, a bitter civil war which demanded still greater exertions and sacrifices from the people. In June 1917 the all-Russian conference of soldier Bolsheviks resolved to create a new, democratically-organized, voluntary Red Guard. Within a month there were 10,000 Red Guards organized in units of thirteen men. Kornilov's attempted putsch lent a great fillip to the construction of the Red Guard. Together with detachments of revolutionary soldiers and sailors, and led by the Military Revolutionary Committee, this Guard was enough for the actual insurrection. But afterwards a stronger force was needed. A Committee for Military Affairs and an All-Russian Collegium were set up very soon after the insurrection. The Red Guard became the Red Army in January 1918.

After a violent but democratic debate in the party the Brest-Litovsk peace was obtained at the price of the loss of Bessarabia, the Baltic States and the Ukraine, which was to prove the first hotbed of civil war. The Whites, basing themselves on the more backward regions of Russia, soon began operations, too.

In the Ukraine with its nationalist traditions and well-to-do peasants, independent and politically unstable guerilla movements sprang up. But within a year or so these bands had either taken sides or had been dispersed. In Siberia the traditions were different. Poor peasants doubly exploited by virtue of their class and their nationality became stout defenders of the Soviet régime.

The assimilation of the guerillas infected a layer of the Red Army with their outlook. These were the former NCO's in the old army (Voroshilov, Budyenny) who thought in terms of small-scale tactical operations, and who advocated shooting ex-tsarist officers instead of mobilizing them compulsorily to make up for the terrible dearth of military experience.

The history of the civil war is a history of communist heroism and of mass heroism. There is not space here to do justice to the heroes of those years. Guerilla war in the Ukraine; the revolt of the Czechoslovak Legion in the heart of Siberia; Tukhachevsky's brilliant stroke whose momentum carried him to the Far East; these are some of the aspects of this war. Commissar for War Trotsky's slogan 'Proletarians, to Horse!' created a new cavalry arm for the Revolution which smashed the much vaunted White Cossacks.

Suddenly, in April 1920, the Poles struck from the west. They were repulsed and rolled back to the gates of Warsaw. The Polish campaign was supported by Lenin and a majority of the Bolsheviks in the hope of making a juncture with the German Revolution. It was a gamble, which Trotsky and Radek opposed because of the deep-seated Polish resentment against Russian occupation. In the event, a Polish counter-stroke forced the Red Army back into Russia.

In March 1921 the garrison of Kronstadt, diluted in the course of the war by peasant draftees, rose against the government. The rebellion was suppressed, but it ushered in a period of relaxation of the policy of war communism (the systematic requisitioning of food and supplies to meet the exigencies of civil war); it was discovered that bureaucracy had grown in all the organs of government and administration. The danger signal was sounded by Lenin.

The peace which followed the Polish campaign resulted in a spate of discussion on the future organization of the army. One school, the ultra-Left, with Tukhachevsky for spokesman, was for a standing army with an international general staff, as an active defender and a powerful offensive force prepared to go to the support of revolution in any part of the world. Lenin and Trotsky disagreed, on the basis that the material premises for such an army did not

exist as yet. Others were for the socialist militia system. In the end a compromise, transitional system was agreed on. Up to 1934, 74 per cent. of the army was based on territorial organizations. It was a standing-cum-militia type of army.

Socialist politics permeated every aspect of the Red Army's life at first. The political department carried out cultural and educational work; officers and men of all ranks rubbed shoulders in the same education classes. Careerism and swollen-headedness were actively combated. Later all this was to change, when the party organization in the army became an organization for carving out careers. But in the early days the most a corps commander could earn was 150 roubles a month. Officers had no special mess and no batmen. Insignia of rank were almost disregarded, and a true communist spirit permeated all ranks.

The first shake-up came in 1926. Salary increases, officers' messes—and, later, special accommodation and housing, new uniforms and insignia and even epaulets in tsarist style. Caste snobbery crept in and fraternization between ranks was frowned on. The old officers' ranks were reintroduced in 1936. Along with the change in the material standards of the military leaders there came an ideological one, with a return of Great-Russian chauvinism, and the glorification of the tsarist generals Suvorov and Kutusov.

In 1937 the world was shocked to hear of the execution of the Red Army's general staff after a secret trial. These men had either, like Tukhachevsky, completely abstained from the internal disputes in the party, or, like Gamarnik, had sided with the Stalinist machine. It has been suggested that Stalin carried out these executions as a gesture of good will towards Hitler. Another explanation is that the generals had decided to remove Stalin, but that they hesitated a moment too long. The purge in the army carried away by one means or another 30,000 officers, eleven deputy-commissars, and 75 out of 80 generals and admirals on the

Council of War. It destroyed an entire cadre, in which was embodied a priceless wealth of experience of revolutionary warfare, dating back as far as 1905.

The Finnish war showed corruption and thieving in the commissariat of supplies, bureaucratic neglect of the men's equipment and poor transport organization. These defects were exposed again when Hitler attacked on June 22, 1941. In the first stage of the Nazi offensive the Red Army lost some two million men as prisoners. Several hundred thousand (mostly members of the national minorities which Stalin had treated so badly) deserted. Stalin was so confident that Hitler would keep his word that he neglected Russia's defences. The shameful story has been told by Khrushchev. Stalin refused to believe repeated warnings from Britain, from his own intelligence agents and from German deserters. These were warnings of imminent attack. When the attack came he dismissed the incursions of German forces as excesses on the part of undisciplined units.

Khrushchev has also revealed the sorry state of military preparedness at that time: insufficient artillery, aeroplanes, anti-aircraft guns, anti-tank ammunition and rifles. Stalin at one stage lost hope, Khrushchev tells us. Hundreds of thousands paid with their lives for the bureaucratic mishandling of the campaigns and the callous neglect of the men's welfare.

Yet there was, fortunately, another side to the 'Great Patriotic War'—the determination of the Russian people, especially the workers of Leningrad and Stalingrad, to defend their socialist system, their factories, their land and their homes. Their resistance halted Hitler. Industrial workers worked long hours at a terrific pace. The partisans fought back valiantly. The peasants scorched the earth. German imperialism broke its neck on these things. The ordinary people and the ordinary Red Army man defended the great gains of October, despite all the bureaucracy had done to undermine this defence.

About The Newsletter

AN independent socialist weekly of news and views, THE NEWSLETTER has been appearing regularly since May 10, 1957.

Each issue contains six or eight pages, and it is posted to reach subscribers on Fridays.

The subscription, which began as 10s. for twelve issues, post free, is now down to 8s. for twelve issues, post free—a reduction made possible by the increase in circulation over the past six months.

Outstanding features of past issues have included:

The first full report of the Wortley Hall conference of socialist forums;

J. B. Salsberg's account of 'Talks with Soviet Leaders on the Jewish Question';

The text of the British Communist Party's 'Political Letter to Members' (May 1957);

Paul Hogarth on 'The Artist and Communism';

The first news of Len Wincott's release;

A special strike supplement during the provincial busmen's strike in July;

Harry Constable's analysis of the lessons of the Covent Garden and Port of London stoppages (reprinted as a twopenny pamphlet);

Maurice Pelter's account of conversations with young Soviet citizens during the Moscow Youth Festival (also reprinted as a twopenny pamphlet; some readers will have seen Pelter's subsequent articles in the *Manchester Guardian*);

An analysis of the Scottish miners' delegation report on conditions in Hungary;

A socialist doctor's views on the Wolfenden Report; Joseph Clark's letter of resignation from the U.S. Communist Party;

An editorial examination of the Brighton Conference of the Labour Party (later reprinted as a twopenny pamphlet);

The Writer and the Commissar by Howard Fast.

Contributors who follow the Soviet Press keep readers in touch with political, scientific, cultural and other developments in the USSR.

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The British industrial and political scenes are constantly surveyed, and active trade unionists and Labour Party members are frequent contributors.

Books and periodicals of special interest to socialists are reviewed.

Alison Macleod, formerly of the *Daily Worker*, writes on wireless and television matters. J. H. Bradley, the science correspondent, has built a solid reputation for his accounts of developments and discoveries in science and technology.

There is a lively correspondence 'forum'.

THE NEWSLETTER began with the aim of providing a unique service to socialists. There is no doubt that it has fulfilled this aim.

JOSEPH HANSEN

The Communist International and Soviet Foreign Policy

THE TRUISM that foreign policy is the extension of domestic politics applies with special force to the Soviet Union. The key to understanding the truly enormous shifts in the Kremlin's aims and actions abroad since 1917 lies in the changes in the relations of social forces within the world's first workers' republic.

These changes have not been simple. However, they may be reduced—if schematism is not objectionable in a brief discussion—to direct working-class rule giving way to that of a bureaucracy concerned primarily with preserving and extending its own caste privileges.

In the first period, the Leninist leadership aimed at repeating the workers' victory in other countries; narrow national interests were subordinated to those of the international socialist revolution.

In Stalin's time, the order was reversed. Russian nationalism took predominance as the leaders of Lenin's generation fell victim to the bureaucracy, whether by conforming to it or by suffering martyrdom. Socialist internationalism became displaced by xenophobia and the cult of what has been called the 'personality'.

The 1919-22 chapter in the history of the Communist International is today virtually forgotten in the radical movement. Yet it is one of the most instructive in all the volumes of Marxism.

The first two congresses dealt with problems strikingly similar to those immediately following World War II. The third and fourth congresses, marking a turn in the politics of Europe, considered questions of great complexity, including the phenomena we see today of transitional governments that are opposed to capitalism yet cannot be called proletarian.

Problems of the colonial revolution, which today breaks out repeatedly from Korea to Ghana, were discussed by the best minds in the team assembled by Lenin.

The inter-relationship between defence of the Soviet achievements and advancement of socialism in other countries, which seems to confuse so many radicals today, received its due attention.

The blotting-out of this chapter from the consciousness of militant workers is one of the 'successes' that can be granted Stalin.

The theses, resolutions, manifestos and declarations of the first four congresses do not fit in well with the cult of his personality. His name is mentioned, I think, only twice in the official records and he does not appear to have taken the floor even once.

Aside from Lenin, who died shortly afterwards, the principal figures at the first four congresses ended up in Stalin's lexicon as 'fascist mad dogs'.

Above all, the policies formulated by these congresses of Lenin's time were in diametrical opposition to those advanced by Stalin for similar situations in the world political arena, and thus spoke in every sentence against Stalin's counter-revolutionary course.

Study of the first four congresses has long been hampered by the rarity of materials. Recently, however, a selection of key documents has been made available by the Oxford University Press, 'The Communist International 1919-1943, Documents'. Volume I covers the early period.

It is especially interesting as a record of the team-work of Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Radek and the others in teaching and shaping a young leadership which they hoped would do at least as well as they had when the opportunities came.

Trotsky's 'First Five Years of the Communist International' (in two volumes) contains additional invaluable material.

When the Communist International was formed in 1919, a working-class revolution had already broken out in Germany; and Italy was giving symptoms of the movement that was to culminate in 600,000 workers occupying the factories in 1920.

Direct consequences of the first world war, these upheavals pointed towards great new socialist victories as an immediate prospect in the heart of Europe.

The leadership of the Communist International, emerging from the Second International which had collapsed into pro-Allied and pro-German camps in the war, considered their primary task to be regroupment of the socialist forces into new parties capable of guiding the revolutionary-minded workers to success.

While the Communist International put defence of the Soviet Union high on the agenda, the Soviet Union put its political resources at the disposal of the world revolution.

Those were the days of imperialist blockade of the young workers' State, of civil war and intervention, of famine and epidemics, of stirring appeals and heroic action, of great hope that out of the social turmoil touched off by the destruction and slaughter of imperialist war would emerge the new classless society of socialism.

They were also days of blindness and wretched betrayals on the part of the leaders of the Second International, of profound dilemma and crisis among members loyal organizationally to the social-democratic parties that had first aroused them to political awareness.

COMINTERN'S THREE PROBLEMS

The Communist International found itself up against three main problems in creating a new leadership.

The first problem was due to the attraction that revolutionary Russia held for workers everywhere. Many pseudo-socialist leaders, particularly in Germany, France, Italy and Scandinavia, responding to this pressure, proclaimed their solidarity with the government of Lenin and Trotsky.

Since they had no intention, or no ability, to apply within their own countries policies such as the Bolsheviks had applied in tsarist Russia, their advances had to be repulsed—without alienating their followers.

The second problem was the ultra-Leftism of leaders, generally the younger ones, who reduced Bolshevik policies to the simplistic formula of 'No Compromise' with anything smacking of reform or transitional stages.

Could their enthusiasm be tempered with political sagacity within a period of months?

The third problem was lack of discipline due to ignorance of the meaning of democratic centralism or proper appreciation of its role in revolutionary struggles or, in some cases, determination to resist its application.

The time granted by history to solve these problems was not enough. Grave errors were made. The revolutionary tide receded before a capable new leadership could be consolidated.

Within the Soviet Union the strain resulting from counting on immediate revolution in Germany and elsewhere brought things to the snapping point and a domestic retreat had to be called. Private enterprise was granted a breathing spell.

This was the New Economic Policy, worked out by Lenin and explained and defended by Trotsky at the Third Congress of the Communist International in 1921.

How long it might take for a new revolutionary upsurge to appear was difficult to determine. It could not be too long, for capitalism was in the epoch of its death agony. In the meantime, preparatory steps had to be taken.

In 1921, at the Third Congress, the Communist International recognized that the temporary recession in revolutionary opportunities called for a change in tactics.

Under the banner of the united front, the sections of the International offered to join the social-democratic parties in common action to win partial demands of the working class.

The aim was to unite the workers in struggle while at the same time demonstrating the superiority of the communist programme and communist leadership.

Concurrent with this, the Soviet government sought to

utilize to advantage the contradictions existing among the imperialists. An outstanding instance was the Rapallo treaty with Germany, signed at the expense of the Allied Powers.

By the time of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922, the Soviet Union was in a relatively strong international position and the Communist Parties in many countries were forging auspiciously ahead.

The delegates noted with satisfaction that an international party able to act in a disciplined manner had at last been achieved.

At this critical juncture, however, the Soviet bureaucracy had already elbowed close to power. With Lenin's death, Trotsky was left to lead the fight which the two had initiated against the political crystallization around Stalin.

But the Soviet proletariat proved to be too weak and exhausted to win the battle. The future dictator took the Communist International along with governmental power, and the centralism of the world-wide party was turned into an instrument serving bureaucratic instead of proletarian interests.

The record of Soviet foreign policy in the succeeding years is not exactly an inspiring one. The revolutionary situations in China in 1925-27, Germany in 1931-33, Spain in 1931-39, France in 1936, were at least as good as the one in tsarist Russia in 1917, if not better.

In each of them, the working people, trusting in Soviet guidance, suffered crushing defeats. These helped prepare the conditions that made possible a second world war and the invasion of the Soviet Union by German imperialism.

The new element in foreign policy after the defeat of Leninism was the growing, if unproclaimed and even unacknowledged, recognition by the bureaucratic caste that its rule in the Soviet Union was threatened as much by proletarian revolution in other countries as—from the opposite side—outright capitalist intervention.

There is no other rational explanation for such a complete reversal, as seen in Spain for instance, of the policies worked out by the first four congresses of the Communist International.

Pseudo-socialist figures, instead of being repulsed as in Lenin's time, were hailed as 'friends' of the Soviet Union.

Liberal capitalists—even the early Chiang Kai-sheks!—were considered pillars of support, as 'popular frontism', the new label for the hoary class-collaborationist policy of the Second International, swept the Communist International under the inspiration of Stalin's personality.

On the other hand leaderships of sections of the Communist International that dared show independence, not to speak of revolutionary initiative, were summarily rooted up. In Poland, for instance, the leadership was exterminated.

TONY GUTHRIE

The Soviet Union and the 'People's Democracies'

IN THE EARLY years, especially from 1944 to 1947, the 'people's democracies' were very much concerned with the rebuilding of their war-damaged industries. Initially there was a fair degree of independence in all these countries, in spite of the fact that Rumania, Hungary and Poland moved to socialism as a result of Red Army occupation. Czechoslovakia followed in 1949, as a result of her own domestic crisis.

Moreover these countries made considerable progress. The former fascist countries, such as Rumania and Hungary, and those torn apart by war-time devastation, such as Poland, stood on their feet as workers' States for the first time. They nationalized the means of production, destroyed the roots of capitalism and began to rebuild. In all of them illiteracy came under attack. State education was introduced on a grand scale. Prodigious achievements were carried out in half a dozen 'people's democracies'. Irrigation schemes were started; entirely new industrial centres were set up. In Poland

The entire International was converted into a tightly controlled network of border outposts manipulated according to ephemeral shifts in diplomatic needs.

Class struggles were utilized only as levers in bargaining with imperialist governments. Lenin's policy of manoeuvring among inter-imperialist rivalries was caricatured into supporting 'peace-loving' against 'war-mongering' powers and these categories were determined by the temporary pacts formed from time to time.

Even Hitler was presented in a favourable light after Ribbentrop signed the 'peace' pact sought by Stalin.

Finally, the Communist International, built to provide the revolutionary socialist leadership which had proved beyond the capacity of the Second International, was liquidated in 1943 at the request of Roosevelt.

In the Soviet Union itself, Stalin's much-publicized phrase about building socialism 'in one country' was dropped during the second world war, as was only logical, and the most vulgar Russian nationalism replaced even the ritualistic talk about socialism.

In post-war Italy and France, the Communist Parties successfully saved the capitalist structure in face of the greatest mass movements since the end of the first world war.

However, the ruling caste constitutes only one element of the present-day structure in the Soviet Union. The decisive feature is the nationalized economy, and in some situations this manifests itself even in foreign policy.

This was proved in the victory over Germany when the Soviet frontier was pushed across eastern Europe.

At a certain point the ruling caste felt forced to knock out the props of capitalism in these lands and nationalize the economy.

Muffled, distorted, coloured with reaction, the echo was none the less discernible of the 1917 Revolution.

As has since been proved by the events in east Germany, Poland and Hungary, the extension of the Soviet economic structure helped undermine Stalinism.

The proletarian side of the Soviet Union, which had spoken with utmost clarity in the first four congresses of the Communist International, was strengthened.

The historic victory in China, ending the isolation that had served Russian bureaucratic interests for so long, had a similar, perhaps weightier effect.

Stalin's heirs are now faced with a far different relationship of social forces on the world arena and in the USSR from that which made possible the displacement of working-class rule and the entrenchment of totalitarianism in the Soviet Union.

the people virtually rebuilt and modernized a Warsaw that had been deliberately destroyed by the nazis. And in those early years especially, a tremendous enthusiasm gripped the people, above all the youth. Those who worked on the Yugoslav youth railway will know how infectious and how real this enthusiasm was in those first years of peace.

Gradually the Soviet Communist Party, or rather the Soviet security organization, achieved an exaggerated power in most of the 'people's democracies'. This was in part a result of many party leaders in these countries having spent years in the Soviet Union and being Soviet-trained.

Nevertheless industrial power had been consolidated by the working class in all these countries and the repairing of war-damaged factories could scarcely have been achieved without the direct participation of the workers. Thus Julius Walawek! tells us that 'the workers spontaneously established councils in Poland in 1944 with the object of rebuilding hundreds of devastated factories'. There is evidence to show that a similar

¹'Workers' Councils', Polish Trade Union Review, no. 2, 1957.

state of affairs existed in other countries of the socialist 'camp'. Perhaps one day a trade unionist from Rumania will be as free to reveal what the Poles have already revealed.

Soviet policy began to move in the direction of the control and ultimate exploitation for raw material of all the socialist countries. Such a policy would fit in with the habit of defending the 'first socialist State'. But it led to the very unsocialist conclusion that one should accept the 'leadership' (i.e., dictation) of the Soviet Union.

In September 1947 the Information Bureau of Communist and Workers' Parties was launched because of 'the need for the exchange of experiences and for voluntary co-ordination of action among the parties . . .'. Even then there were those who were doubtful about how voluntary this co-ordination would be. Gomulka was outspoken in his opposition to the Cominform. Later in 1947 the movement for Balkan Federation became such a threat to Russian chauvinism that something serious had to be done about it. It was one thing for Tito to make his proposals on behalf of the Yugoslavs. But when Dimitrov called for a Federation of Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Greece (the partisans were still fighting in Greece at that time) something had to be done quickly. Pravda attacked Dimitrov's views on 'questionable and fabricated federations' and the Soviet Union prepared to strike at the only completely independent country² from whence Federation achieved its backing—Yugoslavia.

THE DOCILE LEADERSHIPS

On June 28, 1948, the Cominform resolution tore up the Stalinist parties' last pretences of observing proletarian internationalism. Zhdanov declared at the meeting that the Soviet Union possessed 'information that Tito is an imperialist spy'.

After 1948 the Stalinists turned their attention to the docile leaderships of the 'people's democracies'. On the whole they found it easy to pursue a policy that tied every one of the socialist countries firmly to the Soviet economy. Occasionally objecting leaders were expelled or imprisoned. Sometimes they were shot as imperialist spies or Titoists. Soviet methods were transplanted en bloc to countries with very different levels of social and economic development. In order to enforce 'Five Year Plans' on the Soviet model, intensive centralization became necessary. This spelt the doom of workers' independence and workers' committees. These plans in themselves were used to confuse and deceive the people. Of course there were tremendous achievements carried out as a result of such plans, but there were also distortions and falsifications. Production figures were juggled. In Poland they even claimed a 27 per cent. rise in real wages in the Six Year Plan and this created an understandable resentment among the workers, for the truth was very different. Workers put in excessive overtime for years. There was no democracy as it is understood by trade unionists in this country. The trade unions worked, in effect, as local government overseers. We do not need to repeat the revelations of recent months in detail here. It is enough to say that the economies of the socialist countries were geared to the Soviet bureaucracy, that life was becoming increasingly hard in all the 'democracies', and that the Soviet security police dominated the national security forces of the various countries. Such was the picture at least by 1949.

TRADE AGREEMENT BROKEN

We have at this period an interesting contrast between the orthodox 'people's democracies' and Yugoslavia. The former had considerable industrial improvements to their credit and other improvements in health and social services, but depended on terror to maintain a bureaucracy. The Yugoslavs suffered a deterioration in living standards and great privations in many ways, but there was an upsurge of personal freedom and greater democracy. It was at the time of the worst privations in Yugoslavia that, out of sheer necessity, their workers' councils were born. The Yugoslavs certainly

suffered from isolation from the 'people's democracies', and particularly from the Soviet Union, for at the time of the Cominform resolution the Stalinists broke their trade agreements with the Yugoslavs, thus seriously damaging the economy of a country slowly recovering from war and devastation. At the same time they gained little that really assisted them from the capitalist West.

From then on the Stalinists had hoped that there would be a revolt against the Tito administration, but like most bureaucrats they gravely underestimated the intelligence of the people. By 1950 the Yugoslavs had turned from excessive centralized planning to workers' councils and decentralization.

SOCIALIST NATIONS' EQUALITY

The tremendous importance of the Polish events in October 1956 was that they raised the question of the equality of socialist nations, and the right of the people of the various countries to pursue their own affairs after their own fashion. In spite of intimidation in the shape of a top-level delegation from the Soviet Union that included Khrushchev and Molotov, in spite of ominous Soviet troop movements, the Polish people stood firm, swept out of office the great majority of Stalinists, and gave powerful backing to the Eighth Plenum with its emphasis on truth, humanism and the rectification of crimes and abuses. One of the greatest boons to the international socialist movement was the revelation of hitherto concealed facts about working conditions and the distortions of trade union practice by the Stalinists. The Hungarian tragedy revealed the same feature and made it clear that the Soviet leaders would resort to a blood-bath in order to keep the anti-Stalinists from taking power. The Polish events caused the biggest crack yet seen in the Stalinist framework. Polish leaders encouraged national independence because they saw in it the only hope. Some of them, especially the trade union section, still hanker after workers' control on the Yugoslav model. Leaders of the Polish United Workers' Party also accept much greater democracy internally, but in view of such manifestations as the Lodz tramway strike it seems that this democracy exists largely because a majority of the leadership dare not suppress it. There is a minority in the Polish leadership which has genuine faith in the people and which would interpret 'socialist democracy' in much the same way as did the Bolsheviks in 1917.

There were huge contradictions in the former immense fabric of bureaucracy in eastern Europe. Factories in east Germany and Poland built obsolete motor-cars by the thousand: the output of the workers in spite of overtime dropped by alarming proportions.³ Prices were fixed quite artificially often far below production costs.

PRESSURE FROM BELOW

Occasionally unrest burst into the open. The Berlin riots of June 1953 were an early example. I have heard from reliable sources in Rumania that Red Army tanks were used in 1952 to break strikes there.

If we take the above into account the serious deterioration in living standards in all the 'people's democracies', and with it the morale of the people, becomes easier to understand.

What is the present position in the 'people's democracies'? Soviet officialdom has been badly scared by the impetus to discussion and change given by the Twentieth Congress. Khrushchev's denigration of Stalin was necessary at that time in order to defend the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy. But it is clear that this move came about as a result of popular pressure, both from the Soviet Union and the 'people's democracies'. The original disclosures, inadequate though they were, had a snowball effect on the countries dominated by the Soviet Union. Ulbricht's early pretence of reassessment set the wheels of criticism moving in East Germany, but in Hungary and Poland the economy was so brittle and the façade of socialist democracy so transparent, that in six months matters moved to breaking point.

As the result of the Hungarian Revolution all the countries of the socialist 'camp', save for Poland, have been forced

²Yugoslavia had never submitted to the penetration in her party or armed forces of Soviet security chiefs or their methods. Moreover socialism came to Yugoslavia as a result of internal revolution, not Red Army bayonets.

³In Poland in 1955 there was a 36 per cent. drop in output per work-day per person in the mines (Gomulka, Eighth Plenum speech).