Stalin, J.W.

Biographies and Tributes to Stalin 1945

1879-1944

Author's Note

WHEN Joseph Stalin succeeded Lenin in the leadership of the Soviet Union few people outside her frontiers knew anything of him. The channels of information were also so choked with prejudice and ignorance that it was exceedingly difficult for people to make up their minds about him. When they did so their conclusions were usually wrong. Of no statesman of our day and generation have so many people been compelled to revise their opinions.

His life has been so completely absorbed in the Russian Revolution that to write of one without the other would be as absurd as to write of Hamlet and ignore Shakespeare. Indeed, I think it is no exaggeration to say that no man has been so completely absorbed in his life's work to the subordination of almost every other interest. The biography of Stalin must perforce be a political biography, and I make no apology for being unable to describe his favourite dishes or the colour of his pyjamas.

I have attempted to tell the story of his career without either adulation or personal antipathy, to appraise him as I think history will appraise him, in the hope that it will prove helpful to the understanding of the man and the cause he serves.

In conclusion, my warm thanks are due to Sir Stafford Cripps for his introduction, H. Kemp, H. W. Leggett, F. W. Hickinbottom, and Dr. John Lewis for their invaluable and varied help, and to Ian Gibson-Smith for kindly reading the proofs.

J. T. Murphy

Introduction

By Sir Stafford Cripps, K.C., M.P.

This book deals with one of the greatest men of all times judged by the immensity of the changes he has brought about in the largest country in the world.

He is little understood in the Western world and the knowledge of his past life, his experiences, his beliefs and his purposes are a closed book to millions of people in this country whose lives have been intimately affected by his actions.

Jack Murphy has long studied the affairs of Russia, and was himself in the early days of the revolution in personal contact with many of its leaders. He has woven the life of Stalin into the revolutionary developments in the Soviet Union for which he was so largely responsible, and the picture thus given should serve to make clear to the reader both the part which Stalin played and the course which the revolution took.

Some part of this book consists of the opinions of the author and with these we may agree or disagree, but the large part is a statement of facts which can be historically verified.

These facts have been brought together in an easily readable form which brings out the main points of interest in the development of Stalin's policy and in that of the Soviet Union. A great deal of history has been compressed into a small space, but enough to give an accurate conspectus and to whet the appetite of those who wish to make a more thorough research into this profoundly interesting period of history.

This knowledge is vital to the understanding of our relationship with the Soviet Union. Unless we appreciate the purpose of the revolution and the policy of the man who has been responsible for its direction ever since the death of Lenin, we shall be incapable of carrying out our own policy of friendship and co-operation with the Soviet Union.

Upon the success of this policy our own future and the future of the world will very largely depend. It is then surely worth our while to spend a little time in studying the life and opinions of one who must—as long as he lives—continue to have an outstanding influence upon the future of world policies.

I myself would, from my own experience, endorse the views expressed by Mr. Winston Churchill after his first meeting with Marshal Stalin in Moscow. It is very fortunate for Russia in her agony to have this rugged chief at her head. He is a man of outstanding personality, suited to the sombre and stormy times in which his life has been cast. He is a man of inexhaustible courage and will-power, a man of direct and even blunt speech. Above all, he is a man with a saving sense of humour which is of high importance to all men and to all nations. Premier Stalin left upon me an impression of deep, cool wisdom and a complete absence of illusions of any kind.

Those who read this book will, I think, endorse those words of our Prime Minister.

Stafford Cripps

Contents:

Joseph Stalin Arrives

Only the neighbours shared her joy that a son was born . . .

Of the parents of Joseph Vissarion Djugashvili, better known to the world as Joseph Stalin, there is little to say. His father, Vissarion, was a Georgian shoemaker of generations of shoemakers. His mother, Ekaterina, was an Ossetian woman of great character. Their home in the little Georgian town of Gori was a very humble affair comprising a living-room five yards square adjoining a kitchen. The living-room had one small window. The floor was of brick, the walls of wood. An oil-lamp stood on a table in the middle of the room. A large sofa covered with a straw pallet stood on one side and a sideboard with a samovar on the other. Three wooden stools and a stove completed the furnishings. It had no doorstep, and the door led straight into a cobblestone alley down which trickled a dirty stream. Across the alley were more shanties with their inevitable stove-pipes poking out irregularly from roofs and walls.

This was the best accommodation Vissarion could afford, for shortly before Joseph’s birth his old craftsman’s occupation, inherited from his fathers, had

been swept away by the new industrialism that had invaded the Caucasus from the west. He had become a factory hand, working for a pittance ten to twelve hours a day in a boot factory in Tiflis. His wife was only twenty when on December 21st, 1879, her fourth child was born. He was the only one of the four to survive birth, and she treasured him accordingly. She was a lovely woman, dark-eyed, oval-faced, and serious with the deeply religious seriousness of one who had dedicated herself to bear hardship with fortitude in the service of heavenly things. She had no knowledge of the world beyond Gori with its 5,000 inhabitants, and probably little of that. Nevertheless, she must have prayed her son would escape the fate of his father. Though neither theologian nor politician, she was a Christian, to whom the Church gave consolation and hope. No higher service or better life could she conceive for her boy than that he should become a priest. And since there were none to tell her that her child was destined to become a giant among the leaders of the nations, only the neighbours shared her joy in his birth, and probably Vissarion, celebrating the event with his workmates, swore to make of him as good a cobbler as his long ancestry of cobblers.

So Ekaterina hummed her lullabies and dreamed of the day when he would become a priest of the Orthodox Church. The lullabies ceased as young Soso, as she called him, stepped out to meet the boys of his generation in the courtyard and alleys around his home, but the dream remained. At the age of seven the lad fell ill with smallpox, of which he bears the marks to this day.

Stalin himself says nothing about these formative years of his childhood. That it was spent amid surroundings of which the harshness was barely mitigated by his mother's passionate love is self-evident. But more potent as a factor in the moulding of his character were his school years, from eight to eighteen, when he began to make contact with the larger world.

When he was eight his mother arranged for him to become a student at the Church Day School of Gori, and there he attended daily during the next six years. Like every school in Russia, the Gori Church School conducted all lessons in Russian: Stalin had to learn his natural Georgian from his mother. Had there been no other means of discovering that he belonged to a subject people, that fact would have impressed it on him. The evidences, however, were many. They were all round him. The conversations of his elders, the ever-present Czarist officials, the frequent appearance of the Cossack soldiers in the mountain passes and on the mountainsides which were the natural playgrounds of the boys and girls, all reinforced the fact that he was a Georgian.

Georgia is a small country on the southern side of the Caucasus range, with mountains towering to 18,000 feet. Its gorgeous valleys and rich lands stretch down to the shores of the Black Sea. Batum and Tuapse are its principal ports, to

which oil now flows through pipe-lines from Baku on the shores of the Caspian. The rush for this new liquid wealth had hardly begun in the years of Stalin's boyhood—the first railway in Georgia was constructed only the year before he was born. But the country was rich in other things, in manganese, copper, iron, vineyards, and semi-tropical crops. Wild animals still roamed the forests on the mountainsides, and the mountain eagles so captured the imagination of the young Stalin that in later days, when commenting on the genius of Lenin, he frequently used the expression "he was the mountain eagle of our party."

Gori itself is an old battle-scarred town built round an ancient Byzantine mountain fort, which has been captured and re-captured countless times in the course of a thousand years of war between the Georgian tribes and Greek and Turk, Mongol and Persian, Finn and Russian.

When Joseph attended the Gori school he was a slimly-built lad. His hair was thick and black as jet, growing rather low over his forehead. No one can look at a portrait of this youngster without recognising at a glance that here was a boy whose character was written clearly on his countenance. The eyes are bold. The mouth is firm, the nose straight, and the chin well up. Already, here is a boy one would not expect to be talkative or easy to turn from any course upon which he had decided. He proved, too, to be a good pupil and a favourite of his teacher. At the end of six years he won a scholarship which opened the doors of the Tiflis Ecclesiastical College and led to new experiences that decided the main direction of his life.

The years at the Gori school were not extraordinary. Young Soso played his games, learned Russian and (at home) Georgian, rambled with other boys into the mountain passes, the caves and woodlands, like any normal youngster of the district. When he was eleven years of age his father died, and from that time throughout his schooling he was dependent on his widowed mother, whose whole income henceforth was earned by washing and sewing for her neighbours.

This of course added to the generally sombre atmosphere of the home. No wonder he began to ask why there should be so much misery dimming the beauties and clouding the grandeur of the land. He felt it was all wrong, but neither teacher nor priest could help him in his search for an explanation. His schoolboy friends had little to offer beyond hatred of the Russians, derived from their parents.

He was still in this junior school when he read Darwin's *Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*. The fact alone tells much concerning his swift progress towards maturity. When a boy under fourteen reads books of this kind he has begun to take life pretty seriously and has a native capacity for using his mind. But in Stalin's circumstances it has another significance. It is certain he

did not receive the books from his teacher or his boy friends. He had, in fact, made contact with the wider world, where there was a library into which the winds of western thought had blown ideas of vast import.

The effect of these books on Soso was profound. They destroyed whatever religious ideas he had derived from his mother or his school training. Yaroslavsky records in his reminiscences how a boyhood friend was shocked to hear young Stalin say, "You know, they are fooling us. There is no God."

"How can you say such things, Soso?" exclaimed his friend.

"I'll lend you a book to read; it will show you that the world and all living things are quite different from what you imagine and all this talk about God is sheer nonsense," answered Soso as he urged his friend to read the works of Darwin.

It is characteristic of the shrewdness and secretiveness bred in one born under a repressive régime that, having come to such a conclusion, he could continue at the Church School and later pass on to a seminary for the training of students for the priesthood. Nor did he speak of these new ideas to his mother. It may have been that he did not wish to distress her, but it is equally likely that, nurtured in a country where women were regarded as domestics unqualified to discuss such questions, the idea of explaining his new notions to her did not even occur to him. That he was fond of her throughout her life is clear enough. But there is no evidence of her participation in his mental development, nor of any effort on his part to persuade her to think as he thought. Even when in later years her dreams of his becoming a priest were shattered, his decision was accepted as a matter of course and he was still her "good boy."

Never should it be forgotten that every new idea in Imperial Russia was subversive and had to be spread in secret. Clandestine meetings and underground movements were natural to the Czarist political climate, and in no part of the Russian Empire was this more pronounced than in Georgia, which had for centuries been the gathering-place of secret revolutionary associations. To keep one's tongue still and wait for the right moment to strike the decisive blow had become second nature to the Georgians; and in these qualities of secretiveness and cautiousness Stalin was but developing according to Georgian tradition.

Thus the atheism inspired by the great nineteenth-century scientific renaissance in England led him to exclaim, "They are fooling us. There is no God."

But he was not yet conscious whither such a conclusion would lead him. Conclusions are always new beginnings. The Russian Church had lost its hold on his mind. Russian oppression of his native land filled him with a hatred of

Czarism. The squalor and the misery around him worried him, although as yet the causes of it remained obscure.

He did not know in these young days, nor did anyone else at the time, that the world stage was already almost set for the great clash of empires, the "Russian Colossus" already stumbling toward disaster. He had not yet heard of Marx or Lenin, nor of the modern Labour and Socialist movement which was soon to capture him body and soul. Modern capitalism had only just begun to plough the Caucasus and tear up the Georgian soil ready for the seeds of modern Socialism. But when the young Stalin left provincial Gori to study at the Tiflis Seminary for the training of priests, it was a landmark in his life.

He was fourteen years old, and in many respects as mature as the Western youth of seventeen or eighteen. He had visited Tiflis many times before; it was from a Tiflis library that he had secured the Darwin books; but to live in Tiflis was another and bigger thing. Tiflis had then a population of 160,000 people. It was (and is) the capital of Georgia and with its libraries, museums, and university, was the centre of the country's intellectual life. There, too, gathered the revolutionary committees of Georgians, Armenians, Ossetians and refugees from other Caucasian countries. In the first year of Joseph's new student life occurred the massacre of more than 100,000 Armenians by the Turks. This slaughter stirred the world and almost brought England and Turkey to war. Thousands of Armenians found refuge in Tiflis. England heard the cries from afar. Young Stalin lived on the threshold of the calamity and breathed the atmosphere of hatred and suffering it entailed.

The theological college was more than a place for the training of priests. It was a centre of subversive ideas that streamed into it from the turbulent environment around. Not that the monks in charge and responsible for the curriculum encouraged any interest in the outer world. They were the instruments of the Church, and the Church was the instrument of the Russian Government, repressive and brutal. The college had cells in which to confine students for breaches of discipline. The regulations forbade them to belong to any public library or to hold meetings for any purpose outside the curriculum. The teachers spied on the pupils, searched their cupboards for forbidden books, and reported suspicious circumstances to the Head of the college. This college had a reputation. In the years just before Stalin entered its precincts it had been closed for periods because of the students' anti-Russian demonstrations. It was here too that one of the rectors had been killed by a student for being too vocal in his contempt for the Georgians.

It would be folly, therefore, to compare this theological college with an English or American college of any denomination; and for that matter this applies to all colleges in the Russia of the '90's. All were centres of repression, and by

consequence all were prone to breed groups of students ready to revolt. Many well-known revolutionaries came from these student ranks and left their mark on the history of their times. The Tiflis Seminary in particular contained youths in abundance whose ideas were hardly in strict accord with the teachings of their masters. It was astir with latent national revolt, while all around changes were taking place which were transforming Tiflis itself into a cosmopolitan city of modern capitalism.

When Joseph arrived here he did nothing rash. Even at this time he showed that poise which has characterised all his later life. He did not air abroad his atheistic views, for that would have meant expulsion straight away, and he did not want to be expelled; he regarded his enrolment in this college, with all its limitations, as an opportunity to acquire knowledge, and accordingly he quietly proceeded not only to learn but to reach out to the wider world for the knowledge which the Seminary could not provide. Beyond the ambition to be a student he had no clear purpose as yet. The priesthood was ruled out (though his mother did not yet know it) by his convictions, but the alternative was not by any means clear. Certainly he wanted to be neither priest nor peasant, nor cobbler nor factory hand. He was already deeply interested in literature, history, sociology, and other sciences. Poetry attracted him, and his old school friends tell of Sundays spent together on the slopes of Mt. Goridjvari reading the poems of the Georgian Ilya Chavchavadza and other national writers.

In these days, however, he had travelled far beyond the range of the purely national writers. Many translations came his way besides those of the works of Darwin. Lyal's *Antiquity of Man*, Flammarion's books on Copernicus and Galileo and his *Wonders of the Universe*, all absorbed his attention. The Russian writers Chernyshevsky and Pisarev, Tolstoy and Chekhov and Gogol, fascinated him; and the echoes of these youthful affections are often heard in his speeches of later years.

He had been in the Seminary for about a year when the Rector summoned him to his study. Joseph's tutors had reported their suspicions of his wider interests. He was duly lectured and warned. Soon there appeared in the Conduct Book this passage:

It seems that Djugashvili has a ticket to the Cheap Library, from which he borrows books. To-day I confiscated Victor Hugo's *Toilers of the Sea*, in which I found the said library ticket.

S. MURAKHOVSKY, ASS. SUPERVISOR; FATHER GERMOGEN, SUPERVISOR.

For this Joseph was sentenced to a period in the punishment cell, as he had

already been warned for being found with a copy of Hugo's *Ninety-Three*. On a later occasion he was caught with a copy of Letourneau's *Literary Evolution of the Nations*, and again was sent to the punishment cell. This was the thirteenth time books deemed subversive had got him into trouble.

Had this been the only kind of offence he committed in the course of these student years, he would probably have been able to complete his academic terms at the Seminary. But more serious things were afoot. He spread new ideas among others. He had been there little more than a year when he became associated with an illegal group of Russian Marxists that had been formed in Tiflis, and through them first learned of Plekhanov and Marx and a whole group of Russian Socialist writers.

The Russian Marxists had not yet sorted themselves into those sharp divisions which were soon to characterise the Russian political scene. They merely testified to the increasing penetration of the most revolutionary theories of the Western Labour movement, as modern capitalism furrowed ever more deeply into Russia's economic and social life. The Marxists were young. As yet they had no traditions—the working-class of Russia was not conscious of itself as a class. The labour for the factories, the mills and the mines, the oil wells and all the new enterprises which capitalism produces, had only recently been drawn from the peasantry and craftsmen of the countryside and villages. Russian Marxism was therefore in the great formative period during which a rising movement has to decide who shall direct it, how it shall be directed, and whither it shall go. The decisions still lay ahead when Joseph made his first contact with the Tiflis group.

The membership introduced him to the works of Marx and Engels, of Plekhanov and Kautsky, of Adam Smith and Ricardo, of Buckle and Letourne, of Feuerbach and many more, with which to supplement his already wide reading of Russian and Georgian writers. Later, but only later, he was to learn of Lenin through this group. It was not easy to get some of the works of these writers. There was only one copy of Marx's Capital in the whole of Tiflis, and this was laboriously copied by hand and passed from group to group, section by section, and read aloud to its members.

Soon the young student was busy forming other groups of workers for the study of Marxism, and inevitably the time came when he felt confident enough to become the central figure of such an illegal group within the Seminary itself. All the intensity of aim and absorbing passion characteristic of those who have found a purpose in life, now began to mark everything he did. This did not mean he had suddenly become a convert to a new cause through the persuasion of some exponent. The new associations had attracted him because he was searching the world for the meaning of the social contrasts which confronted

him at every turn. The associations brought him into contact with Marxism, and this both answered many of his questions direct and pointed indirectly toward the answers to many more.

With such developments proceeding apace the sequel was inevitable. On September 29th, 1898, the Rector of the Seminary received a report which said:

At 9 p.m. a group of students gathered in the dining-hall around Joseph Djugashvili, who read them books not sanctioned by the seminary authorities, in view of which the student was searched.

On May 27th, 1899, Father Dimitry proposed to the Seminary Council to "expel Joseph Djugashvili as politically unreliable." He was expelled.

Much has been made of this incident, as if it were the deciding point in the young man's life. The really decisive moment of his career, which set him on the tracks that have led him to where he is to-day, is that at which he joined the Marxist group in Tiflis. Stalin himself said later: "I became a Marxist, thanks, one may say, to my social position—my father was an operative in a shoe factory, and my mother too was a worker—and also because there was a stir of revolt in the *milieu* in which I moved, which was of the same social level as my parents, and finally because of jesuitic repression and martinet intolerance of the Orthodox Church seminary where I spent some years. The whole atmosphere round me was saturated with hatred of Tsarist oppression, and I threw myself whole-heartedly into revolutionary work."

He was eighteen when he was expelled. He had then had nearly four years of association with the Marxist group, and in the last two years had actively participated in the agitation of the workers' organisations newly formed in Tiflis. A few months before his expulsion he had become a foundation member of the Tiflis branch of the Russian Social Democratic Party formed in 1898.

East Meets West

I am sure the conservative people who have introduced capitalism into Russia, will be one day terribly astonished at the consequences of their doings.—ENGELS, 1897

JOSEPH STALIN the revolutionary and the newly-developing working-class of Russia were fortunate in the time of their appearance in history. The conditions associated with that appearance were such as obtained in no other country. Capitalism in Russia, slowly developing in a vast arena of feudalism, received, in the second half of the nineteenth century, a terrific impulse from Europe. Moreover, it started at a higher technological level than in the countries of the

West. The Russians did not have to invent the steam-engine and pass through all the stages which marked the growth of our factory system, beginning with the small factory and developing towards the large. Capital was much more concentrated. Already in 1885, at the Morozov mill of Orekovo-Zuyevo, near Moscow, there were employed no fewer than 8,000 workers. Between 1890 and 1900 the number of workers engaged in Russian industry rose to 7,500,000, with a much greater proportion engaged in large factories than in any country of Western Europe or America.

During this time the unchecked exploitation of the new industrial workers knew no bounds—long hours of labour averaging twelve to fourteen hours a day; wages of seven to eight roubles a month[1]; metal workers and foundry men receiving not more than thirty-five roubles a month; no factory legislation; trade unionism prohibited and each attempt to form trade unions brutally repressed; a foul insanitary barrack system of accommodation for the workers existed at the large factories; all the excesses which characterised the early years of capitalism everywhere, here classically exemplified.

Parallel with this development of the industrial working-class, the capitalist revolution in agriculture proceeded equally rapidly. The law for the abolition of serfdom, promulgated in 1861, failed to emancipate the peasants. They had to face a "redemption price" of 2,000,000,000 roubles, pay rent in kind, and cultivate the landlords' lands with their own implements and animals. The so-called liberation from serfdom was really only an exchange of serfdom for a new kind of slavery in the name of freedom, driving many off the land altogether to seek new employment in the mills and factories. It also differentiated the peasants widely, dividing them, into rich (the kulaks or capitalist farmers), middle, and poor, according to their ability to meet the impact of their "emancipation," *i.e.*, to pay their redemption price and the poll tax, to render services to the landlords, and to exploit one another in the process. This was the evolution of rural capitalism.

These vast economic and industrial changes were not inaugurated by a far-seeing government and a ruling class that wanted them. The Czars were absolute monarchs and the czarist governments, throughout the nineteenth century, were grotesquely antiquated affairs expressing the interests and the outlook of the serf-owners and the ex-serf-owners. Russia was vast. It covered more than 8,000,000 square miles, stretching from the Baltic to the Pacific Ocean and from the Arctic to the semitropical frontiers of Persia. It was an empire in which the Russian autocracy governed 160,000,000 people, sixty millions of whom were non-Russian. The absolutism of the Czars was supremely conservative. They desired purely and simply an Asiatic despotism. They were proud of a Russia's backwardness, and buttressed their autocratic centralised bureaucracy with a

Church system which was never anything but a spiritual slave to the autocracy. Two hundred thousand priests and monks were as much a part of the mechanism of government as the police, the army, and other state officials. Russia had had no Reformation, nor any period marked by the craft guilds and manufacturers that had characterised Western European countries, including our own, during the centuries of transition from feudalism. What craftsmanship that had appeared was based upon agriculture and the peasants. Agriculture itself grew by the expansion of the cultivated area rather than by improved cultivation.

All these features of Russian life account for the slowness of Russian development until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, for the reputed "laziness" of the Russian people and their so-called "fatalism." The fact is that the millions of peasants scattered over Russia's vast territory were backward, brutalised, ignorant, illiterate, superstitious, and kept so by a despotism uninterested in the development of the means of production. It was comparatively easy for centralised armed forces, equally ignorant and brutal, to crush whatever peasant revolts arose, especially since these could only be local or regional, and equally easy to crush nationalist revolts of the subject peoples of the Empire—Poles, Georgians, Armenians, and so on.

These familiar facts have frequently given rise to the interpretation of the Russian Revolution as a revolt of goaded, ignorant millions against a stupidly reactionary ruling class. Of course these were factors in the revolution, but the explanation is too superficial. It ignores a most important phenomenon in the social and political history of Russia, without which I think it not too extravagant to say there would have been no November Revolution in 1917. I refer to the existence of the Russian *Revolutionary intelligentsia*. They were revolutionary because the régime made them so, and in this respect the development of Russia in the nineteenth century differs from that of all the countries of Western Europe.

In these states capitalism had superseded feudalism long before the industrial working-class had become conscious of its independent rôle or Socialism had become a science. The intelligentsia which had grown up with the triumphant capitalism of the nineteenth century was thus not a revolutionary element in society. Here and there were a few individuals who could be so classified, Marx and Engels being out-standing examples; but few others could be included. The majority were conservative, capitalist-minded, and at best liberal capitalist. Capitalism in Western Europe (including Britain) and America did not repress the intelligentsia. Everywhere industry was growing with rapidity. Improved lines of communication broke down the isolation populations. Railways, cheap and rapid postal services, cheap telegraphy, newspapers with mass circulations, popular education, the extension of the franchise, all contributed their

opportunities for the intelligentsia to lead a liberal life, and for the working-class and its organisation to grow.

When the intelligentsia became interested in this latter development, their interest was not revolutionary. They did not come to the working-class to revolutionise, but to liberalise. True, they compounded a little with Socialism, occasionally wore red ties and adorned the brow of the working-class movement with the reddish halo of a far, far distant Socialism; but nowhere in any of these countries did they pursue a revolutionary course. Even in Germany where the Social Democratic Labour Movement began under the banner of Marxism, and subscribed to its general tenets under the direct influence of Marx and Engels, the intelligentsia were "revising Marxism." In place of "the revolutionary conquest of power" the German Social Democratic Labour Party was steadily evolving as a Parliamentary Party of reform.

In the same period the British working-class was gathering its forces under the banner of Trade Unionism. Although Marx and Engels had for many years lived and worked in England, there were not many people in this country who knew anything of Marxism. Only a few of the writings of Marx had been translated into English. The revolutionary years had long since gone and the Chartist Movement was almost forgotten when the Socialist organisations began to re-form. The Labour Party was not yet born. Only small Socialist organisations such as the Social Democratic Federation, the Fabian Society, and the Independent Labour Party expressed the growth of Socialist opinion, and none of these groups was Marxist. The Fabians rejected Marxism out and out. Socialism, according to their view, would come from the permeation of the bureaucracy of capitalism with Socialist ideas and the gradual evolution of capitalism into Socialism. Efficiency, adult education, reform, the conversion of the capitalists through reason and the general improvement of the conditions of the people would effect the transformation. The Independent Labour Party was a more or less Christian Socialist Party seeking Socialism through the conversion of the people and a parliamentary majority of Socialists. The Social Democratic Federation wanted the emancipation of the workers through a Socialist Parliamentary majority. It propagated the economic teachings of Marx but it would have nothing to do with his notion of a revolutionary struggle for power. When this Federation split into two parties and the Socialist Labour Party was formed, the latter regarded itself as the propagandist of Socialism and the industrial organisations as the means whereby the workers would achieve power. Hence in this period there was thus no fusion of the working-class with scientific Socialism, but rather with Fabianism, which denied the historic rôle of the working-class as defined by the Marxists.

In the Latin countries of Europe, where capitalism was not so advanced as in

Britain and Germany, the workers' movements were nevertheless following a similar course, led by a similar intelligentsia. In America where capitalism was developing with great speed, there was only a small Socialist party similar in outlook to that of the Social Democratic Federation of Britain, and the revolutionary syndicalism of the Industrial Workers of the World which visualised a revolution with the General Strike as its principal weapon.

But in Russia there existed in this period a revolutionary intelligentsia familiar with the language of revolution though little acquainted with Marxism. This class had a long and remarkable history dating back to the reign of Peter the Great, who opened the windows of Russia to let in the light of Europe. His work was carried forward during the eighteenth century by Catherine II, a German princess and an intellectual of no mean standing. She was a disciple of Montesquieu and corresponded with Voltaire and Diderot, the great writers and thinkers who were busily preparing the French Revolution. That revolution and the armies of Napoleon spread the liberal ideas of the rising capitalism. It was out of the Napoleonic wars that a group of Russian officers of the Guards, impregnated with liberal ideas and thrilled with the notion of bringing a constitution to Russia, and liberating the peasants from serfdom, prepared a palace revolt. Some plotted the assassination of the Czar Nicholas I. These became known as the Decembrists, because of the date on which they had planned their rising. Five were hanged and the rest sent to Siberia. Thus the first revolutionaries among the intellectuals met their fate by the only weapons the Czars of the nineteenth century knew for the suppression of ideas. But ideas, once spread, are not killed by killing those who do the spreading, especially ideas which have behind them the driving force of human emancipation.

The great period of Russian writers ushered in the next stage. Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol and Tolstoy, Chekhov and Turgeniev, set the pace to Russian culture among the educated people. Then came Dostievsky and Khosiakov, Alexander Herzen, Belinsky and the famous anarchist Bakunin. Pushkin was killed in a duel. So was Lermontov. Herzen was exiled. Dostievsky was sentenced to death and reprieved as he and others stood before the firing squad, only to spend long years ini prison. Belinsky was expelled from the university. Bakunin was imprisoned and exiled.

Among the great intellectuals too was N. S. Chernyshevsky, the nearest to the Marxists of all the Russian Socialists of the middle of the nineteenth century. From these writers spread the liberal, Socialist and humanist ideas, and it was their work which inspired the growth of the Narodnik (Peoples') Movement, the Nihilists, who denied all authority, the anarchists, and later the Socialist Revolutionaries. Whether their views were extreme or moderate, they were always met with repression; and it was this fact, persisting through the century

and beyond, which called forth the policy of terrorism directed against the autocracy.

There was a fundamental weakness in the intellectual policy. It had no mass support, not because the masses disapproved of the policy of violence—to that their daily life had long been accustomed—but they knew nothing of what the intellectuals were doing or why. The revolutionaries sought to stir the people by the glory of the sacrificial act of the individual, to make the revolution *for* the people instead of *with* the people. No country was richer in the number of its idealists of this kind who, reflecting on the inequalities and injustices of their generation, dared to give their all that things might be changed.

There were two main trends of opinion among them. One was akin to the Liberalism and utopian Socialism of the West, and the other expressed a distinctly Russian or Slavophil idea based on the overwhelmingly agrarian life of Russia with its primitive organisation of the *Mir* or Village Commune. The former wanted a Constituent Assembly and representative government of the Western type, the latter wanted the communes to be the basis of a Socialist society that would have nothing to do with the Western industrialism. The anarchists among them wanted a community of voluntary co-operative societies and village communes without any state authority whatever. All were against the autocratic régime and regarded it as the principal enemy of the people. All fought for their ideas, and throughout the century there is a long trail of young men and women of this stratum of society going into the prisons of Russia and Siberia and to the firing squad.

From this generation of middle-class intelligentsia—university students, writers, school teachers, inspectors, journalists—came the Plekhanovs, the Gorkis and Chitcherins, Litvinovs and a host of others. There were many families like that, for example, of Ilya Nikolayevitch Ulyanov. This man was an inspector of primary schools of the province of Simbirsk, a liberal civil servant. His wife, Maria Aleksandrovna, was born of a family of small gentry with an estate in the province of Kazan. They had six children—Alexander, Vladimir, Dimitri, Anna, Olga and Maria. All grew up as revolutionaries. The eldest of the six, Alexander, was foremost of a group of young men who planned to assassinate Czar Alexander III. They were arrested, tried, and hanged in 1887. They had belonged to a group of Narodniks—Socialists whose movement made no distinction between the working-class of the town and the peasants. The Ulyanov family was not unique in producing a household of revolutionaries: rather was it typical of its kind. It stands out from the rest only because Vladimir Ilyitch Ulyanov became known to the world as Lenin.

When Plekhanov introduced Marxism to Russia in 1884, it did not follow that the whole body of intellectuals was waiting ready to swallow it whole. But it did

mean that there existed a large number spiritually prepared to revalue their ideas in the light of the new teaching. This fact was all-important for the development of the modern revolutionary class—the rising industrial working-class. For Socialist theory is not the product of the proletarian class. Neither Marx nor Engels nor Lenin were of this class. Nor were Sir Thomas More, nor Godwin, nor Owen nor a whole host of thinkers of many countries. Ironic and contradictory as it may be, Socialism as a theory was derived from the intelligentsia—a social group born of the middle classes. It is they who have developed Socialist theories for society, and it is they who are responsible for scientific Socialism or Marxism.

And yet how natural was this development! The doors of the kingdom of knowledge were open to them when they were closed to the proletarians, who remained illiterate until the increasing intricacy of industrial technique made compulsory elementary education a necessity. Again, the intellectuals were not tied to the mechanism of industry for long hours every day in order to secure the physical means of life; their brains could function unfettered by the exhausting drain of energy which every proletarian's toil imposed on him.

The situation of Russia was thus unique among the powers. Capitalism was rapidly producing a modern industrial working-class and giving it no means of social and political development other than through revolution. Indeed, capitalism itself was revolutionary. It had needed a "1789" to relieve it of the impedimenta of Czarism and feudalism: now the intelligentsia, made revolutionary by the despotism of the régime, began to assimilate Marxism and link up "1789" and November 1917. Thus the Russian Social Democratic Labour Movement was soon to rescue the revolutionary teachings of Marx from the swamp of Revisionism which was engulfing them in the West, and in doing so it was to pave the way for the creation of the first Socialist state in history.

Within a very short time three principal political schools crystallised among the intelligentsia as a result of the impact of Marxism. There were those who supported Plekhanov and the Emancipation of Labour groups and accepted the new doctrine completely. Another group, led by P. Struve, who became known as "legal" Marxists, held that capitalism must precede Socialism and drew the conclusion that the capitalist class must therefore come to power and establish political democracy as in the Western countries. A third group, while holding to the view that Russia must have a revolution, rejected Marxism and placed all its hopes on the peasantry. This dependence on the peasantry became the cardinal point of the policy of the Socialist Revolutionary Party.

It was in the midst of this preparatory work that Lenin became acquainted with the works of Marx. He first began to study *Capital* in 1888, when he was eighteen years of age, and already a first-class scholar steeped in the history of

Russia and widely acquainted with European history and revolutionary doctrine. Although convinced of the necessity of revolution, he at no time subscribed to the terrorist policy which had brought his brother to an untimely end. He went to St. Petersburg in 1893, and by that time he held fully-formed opinions. He had found in the works of Marx and Engels that for which he had been searching. His arrival in St. Petersburg created a tremendous stir in revolutionary circles, for it quickly became clear that here was a leader and creative thinker of outstanding qualities.

From this moment a new development began among the Marxists and in the working-class. Lenin supported Plekhanov and his colleagues in their propaganda and joined in the battle against the Narodniks and the "legal Marxists," but passed from the stage of forming educational circles to organise political agitation with the workers. He formed in St. Petersburg a League for the Emancipation of the Working-class, led strikes, and showed how to combine the struggle for economic and political reforms with the struggle against Czarism. It was at this decisive moment in the history of Russia when the industrial working-class was appearing on the scene with a new type of leader, that Joseph Stalin at eighteen years of age turned his back on the Theological College and plunged headlong into the new revolutionary stream. Geographically, Lenin and Stalin were far apart, the one in northern St. Petersburg, the other in the Caucasian South. Neither so much as knew of the existence of the other, and years were still to elapse before they could meet. But already they were developing as part of the same forward movement.

The Master Revolutionary

I am only a disciple of Lenin and it is my whole ambition to be a faithful disciple.—STALIN

JOSEPH STALIN, then, was attracted to Marxism without even knowing of the existence of Lenin. It was in 1898, while he was still in the Theological College of Tiflis, and of course already an active member of the illegal group of revolutionaries, that an article written by Lenin in a paper published by the St. Petersburg League for the Emancipation of the Working-Class arrested his attention. Whatever else he had learned in his college days he had acquired a preciseness of utterance and an analytical method of thinking which made him an outstanding figure among his fellow-students. When he saw the article by this hitherto, to him, unknown writer, it was these qualities in it which at once appealed to him.

It was entitled *Who are the Friends of the People and how they fight Against the Social Democrats*. The "Friends of the People" were the Narodniks. The article contained an analysis of the economic development of Russia. It also

declared that Marxism was not a dogma but a scientific theory. It had this virtue—it squared with the facts. The article concluded:

It is on the industrial working-class that the Social Democrats centre their attention and their activity. When the advanced members of that class shall have assimilated the ideas of Scientific Socialism and the idea of the rôle of the Russian workman in history, when their ideas are widespread and the workmen have created stable organisations that will transform the disconnected economic war of to-day into a conscious class struggle—then will the Russian Workman, rising at the head of all democratic elements, overthrow absolutism and lead the Russian Proletariat (by the side of the proletariat of all countries) along the straight way of open political struggle towards a Victorious Communist Revolution.

It appeared to the young Stalin that here was a leader who understood Russia and the workers, who knew what he wanted and how to get it. From the moment of reading this article he watched for every word from the new writer. Soon this unfamiliar figure on his horizon became his hero of heroes. Without Lenin knowing it, he had won a disciple who was absorbing his teaching and enthusiastically expounding it every day. One of his fellow-students recalls how, one morning in 1898, he found Stalin in the college square with a group of students around him trenchantly criticising the views of Jordania, a Georgian leader of the Social Democratic Group. Stalin had just read an article by Lenin which was the key to his criticism. He passed it to his friend Kapanadze, saying: "I must meet him at all costs."

He first got to know him by correspondence five years later. Of his view of Lenin at that time Stalin himself said long afterwards, "I saw in him then, not a simple leader of the Party, but its actual founder. For he alone understood the inner being and immediate needs of our Party. When I compared him with his brothers-in-arms, Plekhanov, Martov, Axelrod and the others, they were a head lower than Lenin. Beside them he was not just one of the leaders, but a leader of a higher type, a mountain eagle, who did not know fear in the struggle and who boldly led the Party forward over the unexplored paths of the Russian revolutionary movement."

It was not until 1905, at a Party conference in Tammerfors, Finland, that he met his hero face to face. Then he got a shock. He says:

I was hoping to see the mountain eagle [how this phrase recurs!] of our Party, the great man, great not only politically, but, if you will, physically, because in my imagination I pictured Lenin as a giant, stately and imposing. What, then, was my disappointment to see a most ordinary-looking man, below average height, in no way, literally no way, distinguishable from ordinary mortals . . .

It is accepted as the usual thing for a “great man” to come late to meetings so that the assembly may await his appearance with bated breath; and then, just before the great man enters, the warning goes up: “Hush! . . . Silence! . . . He’s coming.” This rite did not seem to me superfluous, because it creates an impression, inspires respect. What, then, was my disappointment to learn that Lenin had arrived at the conference before the delegates, had settled himself somewhere in a corner and was unassumingly carrying on a conversation, a most ordinary conversation with the most ordinary delegates at the Conference. I will not conceal from you that at that time this seemed to me to be rather a violation of certain essential rules.

That Stalin promptly made a revaluation of the qualities and bearing necessary to leaders goes without saying, for of all men to-day none carries himself with less affectation. Other qualities of his hero impressed him greatly. Of Lenin’s speeches he said:

I was captivated by that irresistible force of logic in them, which, although somewhat terse, thoroughly overpowered his audience, gradually electrified it and then, as the saying goes, captivated it completely. I remember that one of the delegates said: “The logic of Lenin’s speeches is like a mighty tentacle which seizes you on all sides as in a vice and from whose grip you are powerless to tear yourself away: you must either surrender or make up your mind to utter defeat.”

When Lenin met Plekhanov, Axelrod, and others, one and all agreed that here was a leader out of the ordinary. Plekhanov is said to have described him as a future Robespierre, and Axelrod, meeting him in Geneva, was convinced that he was in the presence of the future leader of the Russian Revolution. In what consists the greatness of Lenin, that he should create such a powerful impression on the minds of the young revolutionaries and even on the elders among Russian Marxists? I think it can be summed up thus: Lenin was the living embodiment of all that is contained in the epigram of Marx—“Hitherto philosophers have explained the world in various ways. Our task is to change it.” Lenin did not reject the task of explaining the world, but he explained it in order to change it. Having found from Marx the laws governing the evolution of society, he proceeded to apply them to his own age and generation, creating a technique that was essential for the harnessing and development of the forces which were to change the world according to his will.

He studied the laws of social development as taught by Marx and Engels, applied them to the development of society and enlarged the theories behind them. His analysis of the Russian economic and political situation convinced him, not that it would automatically and inevitably become Socialist, but that it would present in the course of the next decades an opportunity to avoid to a

large extent a whole epoch which had marked the history of other countries—always provided the Russian working-class could be developed by a revolutionary Socialist leadership in time to seize the opportunity when it arrived.

Plekhanov and others saw this too. It was not in this that Lenin the Marxist differed from the elder Marxists or from Marx himself. He differed in his conception of the means of developing the working-class into a revolutionary Socialist class. Plekhanov, Axelrod and many more were the propagandists and the exponents of the written word. Lenin applied the principles of Marxism to life. What Marx and Engels had written he treasured, and possibly knew better than any man every book and every document ever penned by them; but to him documents were documents and remained documents. Life is ever-changing. He digested the ideas in the books as means to the understanding of changing phenomena. He read history deeply, not for the sake of erudition but to learn from the experience of man in order to make history anew.

It never entered his head to think that Marx and Engels were infallibles who had said the final word on philosophy, science and history, and that all he had to do was to throw three volumes of Marx's *Capital* at every working-man's head in order to make him a revolutionary Socialist. On the contrary, he grasped what Marx and Engels had done, and making their principles his own proceeded to develop and apply them. This great distinction between Lenin and his colleagues was noticable in the days following his arrival in St. Petersburg and was soon seen to be of fundamental importance. It was agreed by all that there should be a Social Democratic Labour Party. But what kind of party was it to be? Of whom should it be composed? What principles should govern its conduct? What were its tasks?

Lenin was convinced and determined that it should be a party such as had never yet seen the light of day—a party of determined revolutionaries equipped with scientific Socialism, who were deeply rooted in the industrial working-class, who were daring and courageous in their conduct. They must be without illusions about the meaning of revolution and what it entailed, refuse to reflect the backwardness of the workers but be ready to *lead them into civil war and the insurrectionary struggle for power*.

It will be appreciated that here was an entirely new approach to the problem of forming a political party. Every party hitherto formed had been limited to the defence of particular interests, the propagation of a programme to be secured within the existing structure of society, of the conspiracy of a group to seize power on its own account. A conservative party arises to hold society to its yesterdays, a liberal party to liberalise it, a labour party to reform it by words and gentle persuasion, a fascist party to save it by convulsions, a socialist

revolutionary party to terrorise it into making peasant reforms. But here was a proposition to organise a new kind of party, with new methods and a new outlook on life itself. It would be composed of members who would scientifically analyse the structure of society and the relationship of the contending class forces within it. It would place greater value on the quality of its members than on their number. It would carry no passengers. It would integrate itself with the rising class and develop a strategy and tactics governed by one dominating purpose—*the insurrectionary conquest of political power by the working-class as the essential prerequisite for social revolution*.

Marx had not conceived such a party. The nearest approximation to it, but only in a programmatic sense, was the Social Democratic Party of Germany, which accepted Marxism as its philosophy in general, and contained in its programme "the dictatorship of the Proletariat" and the recognition of the necessity of the conquest of power through civil war. But these features had faded into the background as the party grew and became more and more parliamentary. Indeed, so concerned were Marx and Engels about its rapid degeneration from their principles that on more than one occasion they were on the point of dissociating themselves from this party they had done so much to develop. Lenin saw from the outset that it was not sufficient to have subscribers to a programme. The Party of his conception must also have regard for the quality of its members and the criterion of quality must be the activity of the members.

To Lenin revolution was an art as well as a science. He saw Russia as a country already in a process of revolution. Every social class except the most backward of serf-owners and nobility were against the antiquated despotism that ruled the land—capitalists, peasants, the working-class, the oppressed nationalities, the intelligentsia. Not one of these could make a revolution on its own. None of the oppressed nations of the Russian Empire could secure its own liberation. The peasants could revolt, but never lead a Socialist revolution. The capitalists wanted a revolution which would bring them to power, but were afraid of any attempt to lead one on the French model of 1789 lest the Jacobins of Russia should carry the revolution beyond them. Nor had the capitalists become strong enough yet to be decisive in the political struggle. Moreover the demand for political democracy was growing as the new industrial working-class began to develop mass struggles against the conditions governing their daily lives. As Lenin saw the situation unfolding it would be a race between the working-class and the capitalist class.

Therefore the working-class had to be provided with a general staff of trained Socialist leaders, and must be united in its convictions. The leaders must be trained in revolutionary warfare, and the best of the workers trained with them,

so that they could transform an unarmed working-class into an armed working-class ready and willing to use its arms. Furthermore they must infect the forces of the crown with their ideas. Lenin summed up the situation thus:

History has placed before us a task which is more revolutionary than the immediate tasks of the proletariat of any other country. The completion of this task, the destruction of the strongest bulwark of European, and we may say Asiatic, reaction would make of the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international proletarian revolution. And we have the right to believe that we will earn this title of honour—deserved already by our, predecessors, the revolutionaries of the Seventies—if we are able to inspire our movement—a thousand times more extensive and profound than theirs—with the same unconditioned audacity and energy.[1]

The creation of such a party could not be achieved by merely publishing a programme and calling for supporters; and here again Lenin stands out from other leaders in that he saw clearly how the party must germinate amid strife, grow amid strife, and produce in its striving all the qualities demanded of it by the revolution it was designed to lead. Lenin started on his great work as the master revolutionary by plunging into a fierce ideological battle with the revolutionary intelligentsia and carrying the battle direct to the workers of St. Petersburg. From the outset it was a new kind of political fighting, for he would not permit the battle to be merely a theoretical discussion. Every issue discussed had to have its practical application. Theory had to be tested by practice. How he waged this fight and watched every step in its development, is to be clearly seen at an early stage in a remarkable publication (published 1902) called *What is to be Done?* wherein he says:

The history of Russian Social Democracy can be divided into three distinct periods: The first period covers about ten years, approximately the years 1884 to 1894. This was the period when the theory and programme of Social Democracy germinated and took root. The number of adherents to the new tendency in Russia could be counted in units. Social Democracy existed without a labour movement; it was, as it were, in its period of gestation.

The second period covers three or four years—1894 to 1898. In this period Social Democracy appeared in the world as a social movement, as the rising of the masses of the people, as a political party. This is the period of its infancy and adolescence. Social Democratic ideas spread among the intelligentsia like an epidemic and they became entirely absorbed in the fight against Populism (the Narodniks) in going among the workers, and the latter, in their turn were entirely absorbed in fomenting strikes. The movement made enormous strides. . . .

The third period, as we have seen, began in 1897 and definitely replaced the second period in 1898 —. This was the period of confusion, disintegration and vacillation. In the period of adolescence the youth's voice breaks. The voice of Russian Social Democracy in this period began to break, began to strike a false note. . . . But it was only the leaders who wandered from the path; the movement itself continued to grow and advanced by enormous strides. . . . The fourth period will see the consolidation of militant Marxism. . . . We will have a genuine vanguard of the most revolutionary class. . . .

So he proceeded step by step, examining each stage, looking both back and ahead with scientific eyes, always coming down with sureness upon the next thing to be done. He answers his own question fully and completely. The book was the first of its kind, for hitherto there had been no theoretical treatment of the question of how to organize a revolutionary social democratic party. For the first time Marxism is applied to its own weapon. Lenin himself never refers to any of his contributions as "Leninism": that was left for his successors. But herein is his first distinctive contribution to the theory and practice of Marxism in Russia.

I say "in Russia" advisedly, for of all men he would deride the idea of automatically transferring the Russian party organisation elsewhere. He would insist that its *principles* were meet for application anywhere, but they must be adapted to circumstances or the results would not give satisfaction. *What is to be Done?* examines every trend of opinion in the Russian working-class movement, analyses it, and having analysed states the conclusions with a precision which leaves no room for misunderstanding. These were Lenin's conclusions:

I assert: (1) That no movement can be durable without a stable organisation of leaders to maintain continuity; (2) that the more widely the masses are drawn into the struggle and form the basis of the movement, the more necessary is it to have such an organisation and the more stable must it be (for it will be less easy then for demagogues to side-track the more backward sections of the masses); (3) that the organisation must consist chiefly of persons engaged in revolution as a profession; (4) that in a country with a despotic government, the more we restrict the membership of this organisation to persons who are engaged in revolution as a profession and who have been professionally trained in the art of combating the political police, the more difficult will it be to catch the organisation; and (5) the wider will be the circle of men and women of the working-class or of other classes in society able to join the movement and perform active work in it.

He follows these five proposals with another—the establishment of an all-Russian newspaper of an entirely new type—a paper which would be at once agitator, propagandist, and organiser. It was to be the means of centralising

leadership and developing the activity and thinking of the masses—in short, to give a lead to the revolution everywhere.

I have dwelt upon this work of Lenin because it is fundamental to the understanding of the man and his life-work and to comprehending Joseph Stalin, his successor. The party was the instrument without which he could not function in the task of changing the world. But because it was a living, vital, human instrument, attracting to itself all the other instruments of revolution which were growing as part of a tremendous social movement, the intensity of the ideological struggle within it far exceeded that within other institutions. Every problem had to be thrashed out theoretically, yet always Lenin made the theoretical conflict into a practical political fight.

What is to be Done? did not put the proposals he had outlined as an ideal scheme which one could accept or reject without affecting the work in hand. First the ground must be cleared by a fight against those who wished the workers to concentrate on economic questions, those who wanted them to follow trade union politics—which were concerned only with the "improvement of the conditions of the workers," those who talked of "spontaneous revolution," and those who relied on local activity and opposed centralisation. These varying trends were all in the movement, and had to be eradicated before there could be unity.

His eminent practicality did not deny Lenin his dreams. He dreamed of the electrification of all Russia, and began to make it come true in the midst of the famine and desolation of the years of civil war. He dreamed of the day when Sir William Ramsay's scheme for the gasification of coal in the earth would become a reality and it would no longer be necessary for hundreds of thousands of miners to burrow into the bowels of the earth as a means of life. He dreamed of the new social man who would deem it a crime to exploit his fellow man; of men and women who had become comrades in a rich and abundant life, of a day when the most advanced would strike off the political and mental fetters of the most backward. But he never let his dreams run away with him. First things with him had to come first, and these consisted of creating the conditions in which the dreams could materialise.

The influence of this man on the young Marxist movement of Russia when Joseph Stalin began his apprenticeship to revolution was universally acknowledged. That Stalin turned to him as his teacher and leader can hardly be a matter for surprise, nor is it surprising that this circumstance played a decisive part in the moulding of the Georgian student into the professional revolutionary who was to become Lenin's successor.

Notes

1. Lenin’s collected works, vol. V, p. 138.

The Revolutionary Apprentice

I was the hall sweeper of the Revolution.—J. STALIN

WHEN in later years Stalin used this expression to indicate the lowliness of his position in the revolutionary movement of his youthful days, he was exaggerating his insignificance. Actually neither in his youth nor at any time was he the “hall sweeper.” It is much nearer the truth to say that on the day he joined the Marxist group in Tiflis he became an apprentice to the profession of revolutionary leadership.

That apprenticeship was a long one, lasting eleven years, from 1894 to its completion in the 1905 rising. It was also most unusual, for it amounted to a

dedication of the apprentice to the task of revolution as another man might dedicate himself to a religious order—although it was an order which rejected religion as a fetter on the mind of man.

In the practical field, three things were essential. The apprentice had to study the history of society and learn the laws of its development; to grasp its present trends in order to see clearly the forces at work and appraise their significance; and to practise leadership of the working-class in all kinds of situations, of whatever importance, in order to direct them towards the revolutionary goal.

Having made his decision, Stalin could not, had he searched the world, have chanced upon more favourable circumstances in which to learn his new trade, than those existing in the Caucasus at the turn of that century. Russia's industrial revolution was in its stride. Cosmopolitan capitalism was forging ahead under the protection of the despotic Czarist regime. Railways and factories were being built on a large scale. Oil wells were being sunk with great rapidity. Workers by the thousand, of all nationalities, were pouring into the new enterprises. They were being massed together by the processes of production. Their conditions of life were an abomination almost without parallel, and they were forbidden to combat them by organising trade unions—except those fostered by the police. Life was brutalised, and anyone who tried to bring light into this darkness, organisation and purpose into the ranks of this oppressed and terribly exploited mass would either be broken spiritually and physically in a few years, or in order to succeed would have to display outstanding qualities which sooner or later would stand forth as greatness.

Stalin acquired the essential principles of scientific Socialism by years of study with the secretly organised Marxist group called the Messaneh Dassy (Social Democrats). Then came the day when he was permitted to take charge of a group of workers from the Tiflis railway workshops, picked workers who were keen to learn the new teaching. He did not find it difficult to talk with these men. After all, his parents belonged to the same social stratum and his schooldays had by no means lifted him out of it. He was as poverty-stricken as they. His clothes were much like theirs. The only difference between him and them was in education. He had learned how to think coherently, and had already become pretty expert in explaining things simply.

This teaching of working-men was fascinating work. He enjoyed it. It gave him tremendous satisfaction when he saw the light of pleasure in the eyes of his pupils as they grasped some new idea.

But his apprenticeship called for much more than academic learning or even instruction to others, and it was a great day when the Social Democrats gave him the job of organising the distribution of leaflets to the factory workers. This may

appear of little moment to us in Britain where millions of leaflets are freely distributed at factory gates without much interference; but in the Russia of those days political agitation was illegal, the printing had to be done on a secret press, and the money to meet it had to be raised by subscription from members of the group and sympathisers. The production and distribution of leaflets under such conditions is an art calling for much ingenuity and care lest producers, distributors, and printing-press are swept up by the police.

The next stage of apprenticeship was more difficult still, since it meant political agitation and the organisation of strikes and public demonstrations. This development was the result of an important division in the ranks of the social democrats, similar to that which had taken place when Lenin arrived in St. Petersburg and founded the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working-Class. At first sight this division might appear to affect little the cardinal question of whether the working-class would ever fight for power, especially at the existing stage of development of the Russian Social Democratic Movement. The question, however, was soon to be revealed as one of the main issues dividing the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, as the two factions were subsequently called (*see below*). Lenin held the Bolshevik view that strikes should be given a revolutionary political direction, and that that direction must be given by the Social Democratic Party. Those who became known as Mensheviks held the view that the social democratic groups should not lead strikes but remain as study groups and propaganda associations. The logical development of the latter point of view is seen in its most classic form in the evolution of the British Labour Party, which leaves strike leadership entirely to the Trade Unions and directs all political questions into Parliament. Of course in Russia at the dawn of the Twentieth Century there was no Parliament, but the Menshevik view led all the same toward the situation in which the strikes are denuded of their political significance and the strike weapon is looked upon as a means of struggle for economic issues only.

In this first sharp division among the social democrats young Stalin followed the course laid down by Lenin. How far-reaching was this decision! From the day he participated in a strike of the Tiflis railway workers until the Revolution of March 1917 he had to abandon all the normal modes of life. He became one of the hunted, compelled to dwell in secret places, to adopt aliases and to walk with senses ever on the alert.

It was, on May 1st, 1900, that he addressed a meeting of 500 Tiflis workers. “Not much” he would say, “but a beginning.” It was his first mass meeting. On April 22nd, 1901, he headed a demonstration of 2,000. Again “Not much,” but more important than the figure implies. The demonstration was savagely attacked by the Russian police. Stalin survived. The affair was of a new kind in

the experience of the Tiflis workers, for the assembly had been an illegal demonstration, illegally organised and illegally held. It was therefore a major event, and afterwards Stalin and his friends, V. Kurnatovsky who had come from Lenin's group in St. Petersburg, Zoda Ketskhoveti who had been a fellow student in the Theological Seminary, and Tsulukidze, forming as they did the minority among the social democrats, felt they had good reason to be satisfied.

To repeat the experience more effectively they agreed that they needed a revolutionary newspaper; so together they tackled the problem. Sylvestia Todria, who was a member of one of Stalin's study circles, tells a story of this period which illustrates Stalin's rather sardonic humour. Joseph asked him what was taught in the legally-sanctioned Sunday schools of the moderate social democrats, which Todria attended. The young fellow explained that he learned how the sun moves and other astronomical facts. Joseph said to him, "Listen, friend, don't you worry about the sun; it will not stray from its orbit. What you had better learn is how the revolutionary cause should move, and help me to arrange a little illegal printing plant."

By September 1901 he and his group organised such a plant in Baku and published the first Georgian Social Democratic newspaper, called *Brdzola* ("The Struggle"). The leading articles were written by Stalin and Ketskhoveli. The apprentice was making headway. In November of the same year the Tiflis Social Democratic organisation held its first conference of twenty-five delegates and elected the first leading committee of the Russian Social Democrats in the Caucasus region. Stalin was elected to this committee and was promptly sent to Batum to create a similar movement there. His capacity as an organiser was quickly recognised. He got things done. The Batum police soon knew him for a dangerous fellow. Their records said:

. . . The development of the Social Democratic Movement has made great progress since the autumn of 1901, when the Tiflis Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. sent one of its members, Joseph Djugashvili, a former sixth-class student of the Tiflis Theological Seminary, to Batum to carry on propaganda among the factory workers. Thanks to Djugashvili's activities, Social Democratic organisations have begun to spring up in all the Batum plants, at first directed by the Tiflis Committee.

Batum was a big working-class centre where the Rothschilds, Nobels, Mantashevs and others had established large oil refineries. Here were opportunities which the youthful Stalin seized with both hands. He first organised workers' study circles in all the factories, then quickly followed this work with leaflets and the newspaper. There was no doubt about his enthusiasm. Listen to his peroration at a conference of workers' circles disguised as a New Year's party: "See, the day is already dawning! Soon the sun will rise. That sun

will shine for us. Believe my words, comrades."

With the preparatory work well done the Social Democratic groups passed to the organisation of strike committees and led strikes; and on March 7th, 1902, the authorities passed from observation to mass arrests. The following day Stalin organised a demonstration to demand the release of the strikers from the Rothschild and Mantashev plants. The police arrested 300 of the demonstrators. Stalin avoided arrest and countered the police action by organising a greater demonstration the next day, when he persuaded dockers and railwaymen to join in. Carrying red banners, the demonstrators with Stalin at their head marched to the deportation barracks to demand the release of the arrested men. The police answered with rifle shots: fifteen workers were killed and fifty-four wounded. How Stalin was missed by the fire neither he nor anyone else could tell. The demonstration was broken up, but not before it had secured the release of the arrested men. Stalin helped the wounded to get clear of the crowd.

Three days later he arranged the public funeral of those killed in the struggle. In these days he had to dodge the police at every turn, but he wrote a leaflet, had it printed on a secret press and distributed it in Batum and district. The language of the leaflet is interesting, revealing his revolutionary fervour but at the same time not a little of the religious associations of his earlier days:

All honour to you who have laid down your lives for the truth! All honour to the breasts that suckled you! All honour to you whose brows are adorned with the crown of the martyrs, and who with pale and faltering lips breathed the words of struggle in your hour of death! All honour to your shades that hover over us and whisper in our ears "Avenge our blood!"

Of course it was inevitable that sooner or later the police would seize him. He had changed his address many times and found place after place in which to hide his printing plant and papers. But on April 5th, 1902, during a meeting of the leading Party group, he was arrested and convicted of being the chief leader and teacher in the revolutionary movement of Batum. He was taken first to the Batum prison and then to a prison at Kutai. So another stage of his apprenticeship was reached.

The Russian prison system was by no means as efficient as the British. It was more brutal in some respects and less in others. Like most Continental systems, and unlike the British, it separated political prisoners from those guilty of other crimes. Whether this is a reflection on the political backwardness of Britain or is due to the fact that our rulers have been more astute than their Continental counterparts is open to question. In Britain a convicted person is a criminal whatever his offence, and once sentenced, though his crime be political opposition to the régime or conscientious objection to war, he is thrust among

thieves and rogues, sexual perverts and all the lowest types. The Russians separated their political prisoners from the rest and sometimes, indeed frequently, treated them more savagely. But as a rule they were not individually isolated. They were frequently herded in large cells and could discuss anything they wished. Nor were books forbidden.

Into this environment Joseph Stalin brought something new. Naturally he did what others had done in similar circumstances, and learned how to maintain contact with the outside world; but his distinctive contribution emphasises an outstanding characteristic which has marked his career—he held the view that what has to be done should be done in an organised manner. So when he arrived in prison he would have none of the gossipy individual discussions which so commonly mark the gatherings of political enthusiasts and Russian political enthusiasts in particular. These discussions are endless, and break off only to resume without achieving anything beyond helping to pass away the time and occasionally fraying the tempers of the participants. To Stalin this was a futile waste of time. “Discussion? Yes, certainly,” he would answer, “but it must be an organised discussion. The subject must be agreed upon. The spokesmen must be appointed. It must be an organised debate with a view to arriving at decisions.”

Especially did he insist on this method when, after a year in the Kutai prison, he was exiled to the village of Novaya Uda in the Balajanst district, in the Province of Irkutsk in Siberia. Novaya Uda is some 3,000 miles from the Caucasus and the climate is far more severe, though fortunately the journey was made in the summer months. Exiles were sent in batches. It was a long, long trail, partly by boat, partly by rail and many weary miles on foot. It was the first time Stalin, now twenty-four years of age, had been out of his native Georgia.

The village of Uda was one of many prison camps far away from the centres of civilisation. The authorities relied on distance to secure their prisoners, although there was considerable police serveillance. There was also, however, some social life in these villages, and certainly plenty of scope for political discussions. The places were full of exiled political offenders from among the Narodniks, Social-Revolutionaries, and Social Democrats of various trends. These centres of exile often proved to be “schools of Communism” in which many revolutionaries became followers of Lenin. It was here Stalin received his first letter from Lenin. He tells of the thrill he got from it and regrets that from conspiratorial habit he destroyed it.

It began the personal acquaintance of our apprentice with the master craftsman of revolution. At this time Lenin was far away in London, fighting amid a conference of delegates drawn from Russia, for those ideas which were soon to determine the course of Russian history. At this time also a district conference of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was held in the Caucasus. It elected

Joseph Stalin in his absence to its leading committee.

Stalin was not the kind to sit long in a prison camp if he saw the possibility of getting away from it. On January 4th, 1904, he escaped and made his way through Siberia's snows, across the Urals and the Volga, and back to Georgia. Six weeks after his break-away there came a knock at the door of Natalia Kistadze's house in Batum where once Stalin had lived. It was midnight. "Who's there?" she called. "It's me, let me in," Stalin answered. There was excitement in the house at that. He was certainly unexpected. His friends wanted to know all about his journey. He wanted to know all about what had happened in his absence. Since receiving Lenin's letter his mind had been full of nothing but schemes of activity. He had felt different since the letter's arrival. The figure which had appeared so distant and gigantic now seemed very close. He was convinced his new-found leader would stick at nothing to achieve the aims they had set before them, and he was impatient for more action; for he fully shared Lenin's overwhelming consciousness of their tremendous race against time.

In the very month that Stalin escaped from Siberia the Japanese had started a war against Russia with what we have recently learned to call their "Pearl Harbour" strategy. Without giving any notice of their intentions or declaring war they blockaded Port Arthur, invested the port, defeated the Russian fleet stationed there, and marched into Manchuria. Of course there had been "developments" before these events. Indeed, the Russian Home Minister Plehve had told General Kropotkin that Russia was on the brink of revolution and that the one thing to stop it was "a small victorious war." The Japanese gave them the war but not the victory. Russia had for long been advancing in the Far East. She had taken control of Manchuria, and the Japanese had been manœvring for years to secure for themselves a free hand in Korea. They would have been content to leave Manchuria in Russian hands, at least for a period, had the Russians agreed to their having Korea. But Czar Nicholas regarded the proposition as an impertinence. The Japanese then sent their plenipotentiary Ito to Russia to secure an agreement. He was treated discourteously, and the Japanese countered by scouring a treaty with England whereby England would support Japan if France and Germany intervened to support Russia in a war against Japan.

Having secured this insurance, the Japanese without more ado struck at Russia and caught her unawares. Russian policy was in chaos. There was a switching of leaders and forces while Nicholas struggled with his conscience whether or not to "share the dangers and privations of his army." He didn't. The Russian forces moved from defeat to defeat and slaughter to slaughter. Having lost the Far Eastern fleet at Port Arthur at the outbreak of war the Czar ordered the Baltic fleet to sail round the world to do battle with the fleet of Admiral Togo. Whether

the Russian admiral and commanders were drunk and thought when they had reached the North Sea that the Japanese fleet had come to meet them is not certain. It was called "a misadventure" when the Russian ships fired on the British fishing fleet at Dogger Bank. On reaching thee Sea of Japan on May 27th, 1903, they met their doom at Tsushima. In three-quarters of an hour Admiral Togo's fleet sank or destroyed thirteen of the Russian ships and captured four.

In the meantime the main forces of the Russian army had never been sent eastward and Kropotkin's forces were retreating all along the line. In the battle of Mukden alone the Czarist army of 300,000 men lost 120,000 killed, wounded, or taken prisoner.

When Joseph Stalin returned to the Caucasus in the midst of all this he found the country astir with indignation. Such a war could hardly rouse a nation to enthusiasm. On the contrary, it revealed in all its nakedness the rottenness of the ruling forces, the incompetence, peculation, gigantic profiteering, and total indifference to the welfare of the people. Instead of "a little victorious war" for the diversion of revolutionary feeling, a disastrous unwanted war fanned the flames of revolution. Plehve, who had used the choice expression, was blown to bits by a bomb from a Social Revolutionary named Sazonov. In place of Plehve the Czar appointed a liberal, Prince Svyatopolk-Mirsky. His appointment was followed by a national conference of representatives of the Zemstvo (local councils). This conference pleaded for civil liberties—of person from arbitrary arrest, of conscience, of speech, of press, of meeting and the formation of associations. It also asked for a representative national assembly. It was told to mind its own business and not interfere in politics. Lenin and Stalin therefore saw clearly enough that unless they hastened with their work a revolutionary uprising would come without the working-class being ready for it and without leadership to direct it victoriously.

Stalin's impatience to get into action can therefore be well understood. He hastened to Tiflis to meet his colleagues and take the measure of the changes that had occurred during his nearly two years of imprisonment. The Social Democratic movement had grown almost beyond recognition, but it was far from being the kind of organisation which Lenin had advocated in his book *What is to be Done?*

There are two ways of describing the internal situation of the Russian Social Democratic Party in this period. We may say it was torn with dissensions, doctrinaire squabbles, and jealousies. On the other hand we may say it was in a condition of immaturity, suffering from all kinds of growing pains and reflecting all the moods of a rising movement groping for a way forward. Stalin's appraisement was certainly based upon the latter view. To him the disputes were

not doctrinaire controversies of academic students; every point at issue had for him a direct bearing upon the development of the revolution.

A few months before his return, while he was still in Siberia, the Social Democrats had held their second conference in London, and the clear division of the Party into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks had been made. Stalin had already placed himself under the banner of Lenin, the leader of the Bolsheviks, long before the conference. Much has been made of a remark he is alleged to have uttered to his friend Tsulukidze that the disputations at the London Conference were nothing more than "a storm in a tea-cup." Maybe he did say this. It matters little. Of much more importance is the fact that both before and after this conference, he persistently upheld the views expounded by Lenin, and combatted the Mensheviks with a vigour which brought upon him more hatred than has been displayed towards any other man in the Caucasus.

Let us here be clear about what is meant by these terms "Bolshevik" and "Menshevik," for immediately after this conference they came into general use to define the principal trends of policy in the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. They begin as two currents in one movement, separate later into two rival movements, and finally one destroys the other. The word "Bolshevik" is derived from the word "Bolshinstvo" meaning majority. The word "Menshevik" is derived from the word "Menshinstvo" meaning minority. At this particular London conference of 1903 the supporters of Lenin's conception of how the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party should be organised were in the majority. Those who supported the views of Plekhanov, Axelrod, Martov and Trotsky were in the minority. The point at issue which led to the division might at first sight appear incidental and the storm which it raised indeed little more than "a storm in a tea-cup." The conference was discussing the proposed conditions of membership of the party organisation. Lenin formulated a rule that "one could be a member of the Party who accepted its programme, supported it financially and belonged to one of its constituent organisations." Martov formulated an alternative: "one can be a member of the Party who accepts its programme and supports it financially but not necessarily belongs to a constituent organisation."

Why then the storm? Lenin argued that unless it was an obligation on every member to belong to a Party organisation and therefore be subject to its discipline, any Tom Dick and Harry could join without the Party having any control over him whatever. Martov and his supporters argued for the enrolment of large masses without too great a regard for their credentials. In this disregard for quality Lenin saw a threat to the future of the Party and the revolution, although it is doubtful whether this was realised by his supporters at the time. The rift broadened. It was quickly revealed that those who accepted Martov's

point of view differed from Lenin and the Bolsheviks in their views on almost everything else too, though all of them had come together and agreed upon a Marxist programme for the Party.

Whatever Stalin's initial impressions of the 1903 conference may have been, there was no doubt about his subsequent ones when he got back to Tiflis. He found the Social Democrats debating the London Conference decisions and grouping themselves round the leading Party personalities. At once, without hesitation, he came down on the side of Lenin and during succeeding months toured the cities and towns of Caucasia expounding Lenin's views with all his energy. He was a fearless debater, and preferred organised debates to any other form of public speaking. His friends of the time tell of the quietness and orderliness of his speeches in these conflicts. While his opponents became excited he was always cool and measured in his replies. I can well believe these accounts, for the same characteristics have marked his manner of speech whenever I myself have heard him in later years. They were not acquired: they were native to his development.

But polemics by speech and pen did not fill his time, although he was leading the authorities a pretty dance by the variety of his aliases as he moved from place to place. Probably the most important piece of work he undertook in these days was the building up of the illegal press. What became known as the Alvabar press was possibly the biggest piece of careful planning for the issue of illegal publications in the history of the Russian Revolution. For two years the Russian police searched for the plant without being able to find it. Meanwhile there poured from it leaflets, proclamations, pamphlets, books, periodicals in Russian, Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijanian. Many of these were written by Stalin. A long list of publications issued from this press could here be given, but let the newspaper *Kavkas* ("Caucasus") of April 16th, 1906, report on what the police at last discovered.

Secret Printing Plant. On Saturday, April 15th, in the courtyard of an uninhabited detached house belonging to D. Rostomashvili in Alvabar, some 150 or 200 paces from the City Hospital for Contagious Diseases, a well was discovered some seventy feet deep, which could be descended by means of a rope and pulley. At a depth of about fifty feet there was a gallery leading to another well, in which there was a ladder about thirty-five feet high giving access to a vault situated beneath the cellar of the house. In this vault a fully-equipped printing plant has been discovered with twenty cases of Russian, Georgian and Armenian type, a hand press costing between 1,500 and 2,000 roubles, various acids, blasting gelatine and other paraphernalia for the manufacture of bombs, a large quantity of illegal literature, the seals of various regiments and government institutions, as well as an infernal machine

containing 15 lbs. of dynamite. The establishment was illuminated by acetylene lamps and was fitted up with an electric signalling system. In a shed in the courtyard of the house, three live bombs, bomb casings and similar materials have been found. Twenty-four persons have been arrested at a meeting in the editorial offices of the newspaper *Elva* ("Lightning") and charged with being implicated in the affair. A search of the *Elva* offices revealed a large quantity of illegal literature and leaflets as well as about twenty blank passport forms. The editorial offices have been sealed up. Since electric wires have been discovered issuing from the secret printing plant in various directions, excavations are being made in the hope of discovering other underground premises. The equipment discovered in this printing plant was removed in five carts. The same evening three other persons were arrested in connection with this affair. All the way to the prison the arrested men kept singing the Marseillaise.

The revolutionaries had obviously been preparing something more than the use of the printed word. But this account was written after the great events that shook Russia from end to end before the discovery of the press. Had the police made their haul in 1905 instead of 1906 they would most probably have found more weapons than type.

In the autumn of 1904 the press was in full swing. November found Joseph presiding at a conference of Bolsheviks in Tiflis and pleading for exceptional unanimity and unity of action among all sections of the Social Democrats for a "decisive onslaught against the Czarist autocracy." A month later a great, well-organised strike of workers took place in Baku. Its leading committee was composed of Bolsheviks and Stalin was working with them. It ended in a resounding victory for the workers, who secured a collective agreement with the owners, the first of its kind in the history of the Russian working-class. This event reverberated throughout Russia. Hardly had its echoes died away than the workers of the Putilov works in St. Petersburg went on strike over the dismissal of four men and the strike spread to the mills and factories of the great city.

There was much more spontaneity about this strike than about that of Baku. Nor were the Social Democrats in charge of it. The St. Petersburg workers had fallen under the spell of one Father Gapon, who turned out to be a police agent forming a union controlled by the police. It was called the "Assembly of Russian Factory Workers" and had branches in all the districts of St. Petersburg. When the strike broke out Gapon stepped into the leadership of it and proposed a procession to the Czar with a petition for the rectification of the workers' wrongs. The most the Social Democrats were able to do was to persuade the meetings of workers to accept amendments to their petition and to supplement their demands with others such as the granting of a Constituent Assembly. On January 9th, 1905, Gapon headed the demonstration with cross and church

banners and the petition. Some 140,000 workers marched to the Winter Palace.

The spirit of this demonstration can best be appraised from the appeal to the Czar. Could anything be more naïve and pathetic!

We workers, inhabitants of St. Petersburg, have come to Thee. We are unfortunate, reviled slaves. We are crushed by despotism and tyranny. At last, when our patience was exhausted, we ceased work and begged our masters to give us only that without which life is a torture. But this was refused. Everything seemed unlawful to the employers. We here, many thousands of us, like the whole of the Russian people, have no human rights whatever. Owing to the deeds of Thine officials we have become slaves. . . .

. . . Sire, do not refuse aid to Thy people! Throw down the wall that separates Thee from Thy people. Order and swear that our requests will be granted, and Thou wilt make Russia happy; if not, we are ready to die on this very spot. We have only two roads: freedom and happiness, or the grave.

They were not met by a beneficent "Little Father." They were greeted by machine-guns, rifle-fire, and a charge of the Cossacks. Blood flowed freely. According to police reports 1,000 were killed and 2,000 wounded. The day has ever since been called "Bloody Sunday."

If the Baku strike was the first clap of thunder heralding the storm that now burst on Russia, "Bloody Sunday" opened the flood dykes. Gone for ever was the "Little Father" illusion of the working-class. "Down with the autocracy!" became the leading slogan of every workers' demonstration and of every strike. What Lenin and the Bolsheviks had for years been striving to do by agitation and propaganda the Czar's "Bloody Sunday" did in one day. Strike followed strike and demonstration followed demonstration throughout the vast country. In February 1905, the Grand Duke Sergius, uncle and brother-in-law of the Czar, was assassinated in Moscow. The strikes widened, in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw, Riga, Baku, Lodz, Odessa. In the spring the revolt spread to the peasants, and one-seventh of the counties were affected. In June barricades appeared in Lodz and the workers battled with the troops for three days. In Ivanovo-Voznesensk 70,000 struck work and held out for two and a half months. The spirit of revolt spread to the fleet, where the *Potentkin* led the way. The sailors were defeated, but no incident of the year so raised the "spectre of revolution" before the rulers of Russia.

All classes were roused. And from afar one man watching with eagle eye wrote the warning message "The proletariat is fighting; the bourgeoisie is stealing towards power." It was. Alarmed by the trend of events, they pressed upon the Czar to make concessions. In August the Government had proclaimed

that it intended to establish what became known as the Bulygin constitution—a consultative Assembly with a preponderance of landlord representation. Instead of appeasing the people the announcement incited them to further protest. Before the year was out the peasants had wrecked 2,000 estates. Over one-third of the counties were now affected.

On all sides there was justification for alarm. In September a printers' strike began in Moscow and spread into an extensive political strike. In October a strike of railway workers began on the Moscow-Kazan railway and within a few days spread to the telegraph services, into factories, mills and mines. It was joined by students, lawyers, engineers, until it became an all Russian general strike with the country at a standstill and the Government in a state of paralysis.

On October 30th, 1905, the panic-stricken Czar issued a manifesto promising "the unshakable foundations of civil liberty; real inviolability of person, and freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and association" and a legislative Duma (Parliament). But there was a catch. Indeed there were many catches. The manifesto did not promise that the Parliament would be able to introduce legislation on its own initiative, or would have power over the actions of the State officials. In fact it permitted the preparations for the operation of the Bulygin Constitution to proceed and proposed to leave to this assembly of landlords' representatives "the further development of the principle of general suffrage."

What was really in the Czar's mind has been vividly revealed in his letters to his mother, quoted by Sir Bernard Pares in his invaluable book *The fall of the Russian Monarchy*. I will quote only one, written two days after the issue of the Manifesto.

You remember, no doubt, those January days when we were together at Tsarskoe—they were miserable, weren't they? But they are nothing in comparison with what has happened now. . . . All sorts of conferences took place in Moscow, which Durnovo permitted, I do not know why . . . God knows what happened in the universities. Every kind of riff-raff walked in from the streets, riot was loudly proclaimed—nobody seemed to mind. . . . It makes me sick to read the news! . . . But the Ministers, instead of acting with quick decision, only assemble in council like a lot of frightened hens and cackle about providing united ministerial action. . . . Trepov made it quite plain to the populace by his proclamations that any disorder would be ruthlessly put down. . . . One had the same feeling as before a thunderstorm in summer! . . . Through all those horrible days, I constantly met Witte. We very often met in the early morning to part only in the evening when night fell. . . . There were only two ways open; to find an energetic soldier and crush the rebellion by sheer force. . . . That would mean rivers of blood, and in the end we should be where we had

started. . . . The other way out would be to give to the people their civil rights, freedom of speech and press, also to have all laws confirmed by a State Duma—that of course, would be a constitution. Witte defends this very energetically. . . . Almost everybody I had an opportunity of consulting is of the same opinion. Witte put it quite clearly to me that he would accept the Presidency of the Council of Ministers only on condition that his programme was agreed to, and his actions not interfered with. . . . We discussed it for two days and in the end, invoking God's help, I signed. . . . In my telegram I could not explain all the circumstances which brought me to this terrible decision which nevertheless I took quite consciously. . . . I had nobody to rely on except honest Trepov. There was no other way out than to cross oneself and give what everybody was asking for. . . . All the Ministers are resigning and we have to find new ones, but Witte must see to that. . . . We are in the midst of a revolution with an administrative apparatus entirely disorganised, and in this lies the main danger.

On October 26th the first meeting of the St. Petersburg Soviet (or Council) of Workers' Deputies assembled. This was a new phenomenon, illegal, spontaneous, a direct product of the repression of, constitutional trades unionism. The repression had thrust all agitation into the factories and places of work. From these came the delegates of the workers, one for every thousand, a proportion they had learned from the Gapon union. It was not led by the Bolsheviks nor formed on their initiative. At its head were a lawyer named Choustalev-Noser, as chairman, and Leon Trotsky as vice-chairman, who arrived in St. Petersburg on the day of the meeting. There were 226 representatives from 100 works. The gathering was of immense significance, foreshadowing the form of the next revolution which lay twelve years ahead. It was led by the Social Democrats, most of whom were of the Menshevik variety. It demanded the Eight Hour Day, a Constituent Assembly, and the arming of the people. The Soviet took no steps to get arms or seize power. The arming of the people which it called for was to take the form of a people's militia under the control of the local authorities. At this stage the Soviet was nothing more than the means for waging a political general strike.

The publication of the Czar's manifesto weakened the strike in St. Petersburg. In a few days it was called off, only to be renewed on November 13th on receipt of news of a mutiny among the Kronstadt sailors and the proclamation of martial law in Poland. A hundred thousand workers again ceased work. When the strike extended to the telegraphic services the Government acted, arrested the chairman of the Soviet, and on December 18th arrested almost all its members.

Then Moscow came into action. On December 20th the Moscow Soviet called for a political general strike. Here the Soviet was in the hands of the Bolshevik section of the Social Democratic Labour Party, and they began to prepare for an

armed uprising. Two days later barricades were in the streets, and for nine days 8,000 armed workers resisted the Czar's forces. The Government locked the Moscow garrison in for fear the soldiers would join the insurgents. The rising was quelled by the Government bringing the Semenovsky Regiment from St. Petersburg.

Moscow's battle represents the high-water-mark of the revolution of 1905. It had spread through a hundred cities and towns and a great section of the peasantry, into the Army and Navy and among the oppressed nationalities. It is estimated that in these struggles 4,000 were killed and 10,000 wounded.

And where was Joseph Stalin, the apprentice to revolutionary leadership, in these stormy days? Much has been written by his enemies and critics of later times to show that he was not in the limelight of events. It is true that when Lenin and Trotsky and others wrote of "1905" they concentrated their attention on St. Petersburg and Moscow and the happenings in the Army and Navy. Practically all other centres are referred to only in an incidental manner as part of the general statistical information. This is even the case in the official history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, published in 1938. Unquestionably St. Petersburg and Moscow, as the principal cities of Russia, dominated the situation, and those interested mainly in the Revolution as such and not in the activities of a particular participant, would naturally concentrate on them and tend to pay most attention to the leaders in these key centres. But the spotlight of publicity is not always a reliable guide: it is often out of focus and too artificial to reveal the real leaders.

Stalin was not in the capital city. Nor was he an orator stirring the crowd with great speeches. Throughout 1904 and 1905 he was mainly in the Caucasus, far from the limelight of St. Petersburg. But it was in the Caucasus that in December, 1904, the struggle began, and it was in the Caucasus that it lasted longest and registered the greatest successes. From the moment of his return from exile, Joseph had to work under conditions of illegality. Long before the October strike in St. Petersburg he was issuing leaflets from the Alvabar press calling for preparations for an armed uprising. The *Proletariatis Brdzola* of July 15th, 1905 contained an article of his entitled "Armed insurrection and our tactics." In this paper he waged a continuous campaign against the Mensheviks, who were in a majority in the Caucasus region. The reminiscences of one present at a meeting in Nadzaladevi, Tiflis, in October 1905, show him to be no longer an apprentice, but a "journeyman" of the revolution.

At this moment [says the narrator] Comrade Koba (Stalin) mounted the platform and addressed the audience: "You have one bad habit," he said, "of which I must plainly warn you. No matter who comes forward, and no matter what he says, you invariably greet him with hearty applause. If he says 'Long

Live Freedom!'—you applaud; if he says, 'Long live the Revolution!'—you applaud. And that is quite right. But when somebody comes along and says, 'Down with arms!'—you applaud that too. What chance is there of a revolution succeeding without arms? And what sort of revolutionary is he who cries 'Down with Arms!'? The speaker who said that is probably a Tolstoyan, not a revolutionary. But, whoever he is, he is an enemy of the revolution, an enemy of the liberty of the people. . . . What do we really need in order to win? We need three things, understand that and bear it well in mind—the first is arms, the second is arms, and the third is arms and arms again."

This may not have been great oratory, but it was plain speaking which it would be difficult for even the most dense of his audience not to comprehend. In November 1905, he was leading the Bolshevik conference of the Caucasian Federation of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. There were present delegates from the Baku, Imeretino-Mingrelian, Tiflis, and Batum Committees and from Guria. The Guria Soviet was one of the best and one of the last to be suppressed. For a number of weeks it had complete control of the local life of the people.

In December, Stalin attended the all-Russian conference of Bolsheviks in Tammerfors (Finland). It was here that he first met Lenin and worked with him on the leading political committee of the conference. It ended its work quickly in order that the delegates should return to the scenes of conflict. Lenin went to St. Petersburg and Stalin returned to the Caucasus. Although this conference was composed only of the Bolsheviks of the Party, it marks the advance of Stalin into the central councils. His contact with Lenin from this time onward was firmly established, although several years had yet to elapse and the two sections had definitely to separate into independent parties, before he became officially a member of the Central Committee with Lenin at its head. Though he did not leave the Causasus or go into exile, henceforth he was to be the loyal henchman of the master revolutionary, in constant communication with him and carrying out his orders with all the thoroughness of which he was so capable. He had become a leader; the fierce apprenticeship had not broken him. On the contrary, it had hardened him and developed his powers of clear exposition and capacity to conquer difficulties. He would need all these qualities for the fiercer strife ahead.

The End of the Prologue

Who is it speaks of defeat?
I tell you a Cause like ours
Is greater than defeat can know;—F. ADAMS

THE defeat of the insurgents of Moscow did not end the 1905 Revolution. The December fighting at the barricades was the climax of an uprising which began in December 1904 and faded away in 1907. The struggle was really a prolonged civil war, a series of spontaneous outbursts against the stupid brutalities of a despot and his officials who could as little understand the times in which they lived as a cave-man could understand the calculus.

Here was a Czar, an absolute monarch, at the head of a vast sprawling empire of 160,000,000 people whose ways of life were being upturned by an economic and industrial revolution. He was a man who would have been all that is meant by the expression "a perfect country gentleman" had he lived with his superstitious, ignorant, and pretty wife on a small estate in southern England, financed by a comfortable pension. There, passionately devoted to each other as they were, the couple could have spent their petty lives in idyllic bliss and harmlessness, what we have been assured was their "real gentle nature" being given full opportunity to blossom. Unfortunately for them both, Nicholas was the son of Alexander III, Czar of all the Russias, and succeeded him in the Imperial line of inheritance. The times made his job too big for him. He could think only in terms of holding to his traditional power without being able effectively to wield it. Had he possessed even the glimmering of understanding about the changes that were taking place under his nose he would himself have proposed that he become a constitutional monarch supported by a Parliament which would amalgamate the interests of the landlords and the rising capitalists, and provide legitimate channels for the complaints of the peasants and urban

workers.

But of such understanding he was entirely devoid. He made concessions under duress, only to wrest them back again when the pressure was released. The ministers appointed by him received their appointments and dismissals without warning or explanations. He never felt at ease unless he had near him the faithful police officer Trepov, a man who understood the "old way" of "keeping the riff-raff out of the universities" and the populace on its knees. A despot conscious of his own weakness must derive strength from something, and the loyal Trepov had the simplicity of mind which he could understand. It worked according to a simple formula: "Call out the Cossacks!" and had its classic expression in "Bloody Sunday." The clever politicians such as Witte, the head of his Government at the time, were too much for Nicholas.

Witte combined cleverness with shiftiness. He would appear to bend to the storm of public opinion, only to give the form of concessions and not the substance. The Czar's Manifesto of October 30th, 1905, was the work of Witte. It furnished the shell of constitutional government but not the content. The Czar wanted to furnish neither. He longed for the stability of yore and the safe absolutism of his fathers, with a band of Trepovs to guarantee them. The times, however, were out of joint, and while the Trepovs gathered in the form of the Black Hundreds to combat the social upheaval, the foundations of stability were no longer there. The Czar needed more than anything else, though he did not realise it, a far-sighted leader of the capitalist class in whom to place his confidence and to guide him. Such a leader was absent. So it was that concessions had to be forced out of him, and every concession he regarded as a calamity because his way forward always led backward.

Nevertheless, the Manifesto appeared to some as the herald of a new epoch of liberalism, and new parties appeared. The Constitutional Democratic Party, which became known as the Kadet Party, had recently been formed after the conference of the Zemstvos. It was a capitalist Liberal Party, anxious to make the most of the new developments. Another was the Octobrist Party, so named to commemorate the date of the Manifesto and to support its proposals. The doubters in the community, who had recently formed the Union of the Russian People, under the patronage of the Grand Duke Nicholas, to support the autocracy, visited the Czar to find out what he really intended by the document. With them he felt at ease, and made it clear that he had not abandoned autocracy, "for this was a religious principle." He soon proved his point by issuing new fundamental laws before the Duma was opened. The Union of the Russian People went on its way, and organised the Black Hundreds for conducting pogroms, especially against the Jews. This organisation was really a forerunner of the Nazi Party, having much in common with what has become

known as Nazism and Fascism.

The Union may not have been the embodiment of the Czar's political ideals, but he had a good deal of sympathy for the organisation and its work. On the day following the publication of the manifesto, more than a hundred pogroms were conducted by this organisation and thousands of people were massacred.

The new "fundamental laws" issued before the election of the first Duma (Parliament), made it clear that the imperial prerogative remained intact, and that all the ministers would be responsible to the Czar and not to Parliament. The Government also was to be free, according to an article numbered 87, to issue any new law it deemed advisable during a vacation of the Duma, on condition that the law was presented to the Duma for ratification within two months of its next sitting. A number of subjects such as Defence, foreign policy, and currency were reserved to the Emperor. Prime Minister Witte borrowed huge sums from France in anticipation of "trouble" from the Duma when it met, and the German Emperor sent several cruisers and two squadrons of torpedo-boats to assist the Czar in the event of the revolution threatening to prove too much for him. Meanwhile Nicholas had so little confidence in Witte that henceforth before showing any document to him, he submitted it to Trepov, who had become his personal minister, for his observations.

The Duma was elected on an indirect suffrage while punitive expeditions were raging and the Black Hundreds were assisting the military and the police. It met on May 10th, 1906, in St. Petersburg. Witte was dismissed on the eve of the meeting, and the first Prime Minister to meet the new assembly was one Goremykin. He suited the Czar's mood admirably, and at once made it clear to the delegates that "any attempt to alter the imperial view will be quite useless and only dangerous to you." Within a few weeks the Duma was dissolved.

This short-lived assembly did produce one thing. It brought into the foreground of Russian politics a new minister Stolypin, who was to gladden the heart of the Czar by "restoring order" with Napoleonic zeal. He was an able official drawn from the ranks of the governors of the provinces, and was prepared to pursue a policy of violent repression and reform in order to smash the revolutionaries and canalise discontent. He superseded Goremykin, put most of the members of the First Duma into prison, set up field courts-martial, organised punitive expeditions on a large scale, and introduced under article 87 a reform law for the peasants.

Having disposed of the Duma which had brought him to power, he held another election on the same restricted franchise. Meanwhile he prepared a new electoral law which would restrict it even further after he had dealt with the Second Duma. His great complaint about this body was that it took too long a

time to die. But he was assisted in the matter of securing its demise by an interesting police conspiracy.

The Second Duma met on March 5th, 1907. Sixty-five Social Democrats had been elected. This was too much for the police. They conveniently discovered a non-existent plot of the Social Democrats and Social Revolutionaries to assassinate the Czar. It was later revealed that the whole business was a huge fraud hatched in the police headquarters, but by that time it was too late: the trick had served its purpose. The Czar issued a new manifesto accusing the Duma of having plotted against the Sovereign, and on June 3rd, 1907, the Duma was dissolved. The sixty-five Social Democratic deputies were arrested and exiled to Siberia. The new electoral law was then promulgated. It abolished all semblance of universal suffrage and placed the elections almost entirely in the hands of the country gentry. Most of the towns lost nearly all their members, and the new arrangements were such that when Sir Bernard Pares later asked a member of the Third Duma how he could explain a certain step to his constituents, he received the reply: "My constituents could all be gathered in one room." Such a situation corresponded to the period of the "rotten boroughs" in England before the Reform Act of 1832. This Third Duma was elected in the autumn of 1907. It had 442 members, of whom eighteen were Social Democrats. It lasted until 1912, when the Fourth Duma was elected on the same franchise and continued until swept away by the November Revolution of 1917. In this Duma there were six Bolsheviks and seven Mensheviks, who in the course of time found their way to Siberian prisons.

Thus the Czar and his advisers, including the debauched Rasputin, prevented Russian Parliamentarism from ever passing beyond its incubation period, until the Revolution smashed eggs and incubator alike. The conservative reluctance to make political changes was matched with an inability to stop the economic transformation of the country. Indeed, the same Stolypin who had used the "hangman's necktie" to strangle the political revolution, fostered the economic revolution and thereby encouraged the development of the social forces he sought to destroy. His agrarian reforms were aimed at breaking up the feudalism remaining after the 1861 "Peasant Emancipation law," together with the communal lands of the countryside, and creating instead a capitalist farming community, or yeomanry, as the bulwark of Czarism. But these measures again accentuated the economic differences among the peasants, strengthening the better-off—the kulaks—and sweeping no fewer than a million of the poorer off the land altogether. The effect of this was twofold. There was an increased demand for manufactured goods, and the growing industries were provided with masses of cheap labour. Thus capitalism in the towns also flourished, although it had its characteristic periods of stagnation. Nor did this industrial development carry with it a progressive expansion of the concessions to the workers, beyond

those won in the early months of the revolution. On the contrary, although they had secured the Ten Hour Day, the right to organise trade unions, a degree of freedom of speech and association and press, by 1908 the working day was everywhere lengthened to twelve hours, wages were cut by ten to fifteen per cent, systems of fusing flourished, and the trade unions were repressed. By 1912, when a new wave of strife began, only a residue of the gains of 1905 remained: the press had increased liberty, there was more freedom of religion, and the political concessions to Finland, Poland and the Ukraine were not withdrawn.

The subsiding of the revolutionary effort after the climax of the December rising in Moscow, was by no means a tame process of retreat before the Stolypin reaction. The workers and peasants fought tenaciously until well beaten. In 1905 there were 14,000 strikes and 2,900,000 strikers. In 1906 there were 6,100 strikes and 2,100,000 strikers. In 1907 there were 3,600 strikes and 740,000 strikers. In that year 1,692 death sentences were pronounced and 748 executions were reported in the press. In Tiflis and Kutai provinces—the familiar regions of Stalin's activities—3,074 persons were deported by administrative order. These figures take no account of the results of the field courts-martial or the punitive expeditions in which many thousands perished. Thus the unplanned revolutionary wave and the counter-revolutionary measures of the Czar's officials, left much wreckage of the young Social Democratic Labour Movement on the fields of battle. There were thousands dead and wounded, and many more thousands filled the prisons of Russia or lingered in Siberian exile.

Naturally there had to be an examination of this tremendous experience, which had been thrust upon the infant party of revolution, long before it was either physically or spiritually ready to face so great an ordeal. Many questions which had hitherto been debated theoretically had now been answered in practice. The actions of the newly-formed capitalist parties, such as the Kadets, and of the Social Revolutionaries and Narodniks in general, had left the way clear for the Social Democratic Labour Party to be recognised as the only party with any appeal to the industrial working-class. But the Social Democrats were divided into two camps—the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. Both had their own organisations within the Party and each was striving for a majority over the other. The Bolsheviks were more than ever intent on building the Party as Lenin had outlined it in *What is to be Done?* The Mensheviks had also been drawn into the struggle, and thousands of them had been counted among the casualties of the revolution, while not a few had gained considerably in prestige. The workers wanted a united party too, but were not so clear about the terms of unity. And they were tired and exhausted.

The aftermath of defeat and repression soon began to affect all sections except

the leaders of the Bolsheviks. Lenin gathered his depleted forces together in no spirit of defeatism, and in this sentiment he and his young disciple Stalin were one. The whole experience for them was rich in lessons of revolutionary practice which they at once began to assimilate. They were convinced that the 1905 Revolution was but the prologue to a greater and more far-reaching revolt, and they wanted the working-class to be better equipped without delay.

They did not spend time in laments. Armed with their Marxist philosophy they faced the situation realistically, and this is what they saw. The power of Czardom had been shaken to its foundations. The capitalist class had come close to gaining power but had proved that at this stage it was incapable of seizing it. Fearful of the Jacobin masses, it had joined forces with the Czar and the landed interests against the workers and peasants, thus proving again that once the working-class of any country becomes conscious of itself and acquires its own leadership, the capitalist class is no longer a revolutionary force but reactionary. The Russian working-class had advanced greatly. It had left behind the Father Gapons and attacked Czarism under the banner of its own party. It had created the Soviets—Workers' Councils—and demonstrated to the world the form of government through which it would ultimately wield power. It had shown how to combine the mass political strike with the armed struggle, although its efforts had been neither simultaneous nor guided by singleness of aim. Where the workers had taken up arms they had fought defensively and not planned their military efforts for attack. They had given no preliminary attention to military tactics or the organisation of street fighting. The working-class of the towns and cities was not united with the peasantry, whose revolts bore the same sporadic features as their own. There had been no preliminary work of revolutionary education in the armed forces. In an article entitled "Two Conflicts," published in January 1906, Stalin summed up the situation thus: "What the victory of the uprising demands is a united party, an armed uprising organised by the party, and a policy of attack."

In April 1906 the Social Democratic Labour Party held a conference in Stockholm—the first all-Russian conference of the Party that Stalin had attended. It was called a "Unity Conference." There was little unity in it, and whatever existed was entirely formal, being merely that the Bolsheviks (who were in a minority owing to many of their local organisations having been destroyed) and Mensheviks refrained from pushing their differences to the point of setting up separate parties. The differences between the two sections were too profound to be composed, but Lenin declined to force the issue and establish an independent Bolshevik Party until the assimilation of his ideas by the Social Democrats was much further advanced, and in addition he wished to secure a majority in the local organisations, the Party central machinery, and the Party newspaper before the split should come. He therefore used the conference to

drive home the lessons of recent experience, and show the Party and the workers the different policies of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in practice.

The more the Mensheviks defended their position the more clearly they revealed themselves. They felt the defeat acutely, and held the view that the Social Democrats should unite with the Liberals because capitalist democracy must precede and prepare the way for socialism. It was Stalin who on this occasion defined the cleavage. He said, "Either the hegemony of the proletariat or the hegemony of the democratic bourgeoisie—that is how the question stands in the Party, that is where we differ." Evidently he had learned the language of the Marxists, which means in this case, "Either the capitalist class or the working-class must lead the revolution against Czarism. We Bolsheviks are for the working-class led by the Social Democratic Labour Party." Then he should have added, "and the Social Democratic Labour Party to be a Bolshevik Party." On this issue the Bolsheviks were defeated. The Conference then had to define the policy of the Social Democrats with regard to the Land question. Up to this time they had gone no further than supporting the peasants in securing improvements to the so-called Emancipation Law of 1861. Lenin said the time had now arrived when they must demand the nationalisation of the land. He held that this would be possible only after the overthrow of Czardom, when it would be easy for the workers, in alliance with the peasants, to pass to Socialism. The demand was therefore a call to the peasants to rise with the workers against the Czar and the landlords. The Mensheviks opposed this proposal also, and advocated a programme of municipalisation. They wanted the landed estates to beat the disposal of the Zemstvos (local councils), and each peasant to be able to rent his land from his local authority and to have as much land as he could pay rent for. The Bolsheviks refused to support the proposal because it would not rouse the peasants to revolution. On the contrary, it would prevent a movement by them, localise their activities, and isolate them more than ever from the workers in the towns. But the Mensheviks held the majority.

Then the Conference had to decide whether the Social Democrats should have anything to do with the Duma, or Parliament; and once again there was a breach. The Mensheviks regarded the concession of the Duma, for all its limitations, as the first step in the democratic revolution, and welcomed it. The Bolsheviks saw in it an appendage of Czardom, to be discarded when the Czar thought convenient. However, although they had boycotted the election to the First Duma, they agreed to participate in the next in order to use the elections and the Duma itself to rouse the workers and peasants to revolution. The Mensheviks, still led by Plekhanov and Martov, deplored the fact that the workers had taken up arms. The Bolsheviks insisted that on the contrary the weakness lay in the workers not having had enough arms, not enough military preparation, and that they had fought defensively. They required more arms and a policy of attack.

With such a fundamental cleavage in the Party there could be no real unity. The Mensheviks outvoted the Bolsheviks, and secured a majority on the Executive Committee and the editorial board of the Party's newspaper *Iskra*. The "unity" conference then ended with both sections hastening back to the local organisations.

It was at this conference that Stalin first met Klim Voroshilov. He was a Bolshevik delegate from the Ukraine, young, vital, already a leader of strikes. He differed from Stalin in many respects, being round-faced and fair, merry-eyed, always ready for mischief and fun, whereas Stalin was oval-faced, black-haired, swarthy, rather sombre in disposition and possessed of a sardonic humour, but equally vital. Stalin was more erudite than Voroshilov by virtue of his longer time at school. Nevertheless they had much in common besides their passionate devotion to Lenin. Both were predominantly men of action. They both sprang from the workers. Their ways of life were the same, and neither would ask others to do what he was not prepared to do himself. They began a friendship at this conference which has endured through the years of underground warfare and civil war, until to-day they stand together at the head of the armed forces of the Soviet Union to direct Russia's greatest war.

Soon after this conference Voroshilov joined Stalin in Baku, and there with another Georgian, Ordjonikidze, who had become a firm friend of Stalin, they worked together among the oil workers and established the Bolsheviks firmly among the workers of Baku. As soon as Stalin returned, he became the recognised leader of the Bolsheviks in Transcaucasia, and a regional Bureau was formed under his leadership to do battle with the Mensheviks. He wrote a pamphlet entitled *The present situation and the Unity Conference of the Workers' Party*, explaining what had happened at Stockholm and why. This he followed with articles in the newspaper *Elva* which the police seized when they discovered the Alvabar press. The whole purpose of this campaign was to win over Social Democrats to the Bolshevik point of view, isolate those who stood with the Mensheviks, and secure a majority in the local organisations.

In pursuing this policy Stalin was again showing qualities which distinguished him from the rest of the Russian leaders. Before a conference he organised his forces. The debates with the Mensheviks were to him as much a part of the war against Czardom as a conflict with the police, and far more important. Such debates were not allowed by him to be simply an exchange of ideas between fellow-travellers. For Stalin they were always a battle; and when in later years he led the fight against Trotsky and many others, this difference of conception as to the nature of the struggle stood him in good stead. Following this course relentlessly now, he was paving the way for another national conference which would give the Bolsheviks control over the Social Democratic Labour Party.

This congress met in May 1907 in the Brotherhood Church, London. The Bolsheviks had done their preliminary work well. In the congress of 336 delegates they held a majority on every issue. Stalin wrote a report which immediately on his return to Baku was published as a pamphlet. He gave it the title *Notes of a Delegate,* and in it analysed in detail the composition of the Congress and the manner of its voting on the various issues before it, stating the respective positions taken by the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks. Wherever opportunity offered he added an additional kick of his own against the Mensheviks and the Liberals. He wrote:

. . . the London Congress helped considerably to further the unification and consolidation of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

That is the first important result of the London Congress . . . the Congress ended in a victory for "Bolshevism," a victory of revolutionary Social-Democracy over "Menshevism," the opportunist wing of our party. . . . From henceforward, therefore, the Party will pursue a strictly class policy of the socialist proletariat. The red banner of the proletariat will no longer be lowered before the liberal spell-binders. Intellectualist vacillation, so unbecoming to the proletariat, has received a mortal blow.

That is the second, and no less important, result of the London Congress of our Party. . . .

The language of the young agitator and writer of poems is no longer apparent. Here is the measured tread of organised forces that have defeated an enemy. He reports on the discussions and relishes the fierce hitting. One passage of arms gave him more pleasure than any other event in the Congress. He recalls when Tyszko, representing the Polish delegation, said that both factions "assure us that they firmly stand by the Marxist view. And not everybody will find it easy to determine which of them, after all, does stand by the Marxist view, the Bolsheviks or the Mensheviks . . ." He was interrupted by cries from several Mensheviks "It is we who stand by the Marxist view!" "No, comrades" Tyszko retorted, "you do not stand by, but *lie down on*, the Marxist view: for your helplessness in leading the class struggle of the proletariat, the fact that you are able to learn by heart the great words of the great Marx, but unable to apply them in practice, prove this beyond room for doubt."

"That was a masterly hit," said Stalin, and I can see his shoulders shake as the delegates roar their approval.

It was at this Congress he first saw Trotsky, who was to cross his path so many times in future struggles. They had no conversation with one another. Trotsky would no doubt at that time consider Stalin to be beneath his notice. He

was too busy fighting Lenin. He was opposing the Bolsheviks and had quarrelled also with the Mensheviks. He tried to form a group of his own—to secure, he said, a united party by reconciling the differences. But these differences were not reconcilable. Hardly had the Congress ended and the delegates departed for Russia, than the Second Duma was dispersed and sixty-five Social Democratic deputies were exiled to Siberia. The Stolypin reaction was in full swing and the punitive expeditions were busy with the Stolypin "necktie" and the firing squads. The working-class organisations of the towns were shattered. The "Liberal Springtime" was no more, and a deep depression set in among the parties of the Left. The effect on the Social Democratic Labour Party was exceedingly grave. The 150,000 members with which they began 1907 dwindled to a few thousand, while the correspondingly depressing mood among the leaders gave rise to a variety of opinions concerning policy—even to decrying the revolution and pleading for the liquidation of the Party and the revision of Marxism.

Here was a test for the new philosophers who would change the world. To all superficial appearances the twelve years of effort had been of no avail, and the Philistines were scathing. In every great crisis such views recur. Nevertheless, T. Dan, a Menshevik opponent of the Bolsheviks, felt impelled in after-years to write of the Bolsheviks of this period of blackest depression:

Whilst the Bolshevik section of the Party transformed itself into a battlephalanx held together by iron discipline and cohesive guiding resolutions, the ranks of the Menshevik section became ever more seriously disorganised by dissension and apathy.

There is no evidence of Stalin becoming "disorganised" or depressed. He entered this period steeled by experience and ready for whatever the new circumstances might demand of him. Where the Organisation of the Bolsheviks had been destroyed he would renew it. For him there could be no end to this war until the goal had been achieved. And in this attitude he was not alone.

The shattering blows of the reaction certainly plunged the Party into extreme difficulty. Its means of financial support were broken. Leoni Krassin, an engineer by profession who was the Party financier, had raised much money to maintain the professional revolutionaries, the illegal presses and publications, and even the purchase of arms and munitions. Much too had been raised from middle-class "sympathisers," while in the struggles of 1905 and 1906 some of the armed groups had "expropriated" a few banks to assist them in getting further arms. What should be done now? The funds of the Party had practically vanished. The "sympathisers" were no longer sympathetic. Unless something out of the ordinary were done the Party would be paralysed. Krassin called on Stalin to solve the problem. A great deal of nonsense has been written about

what he did in these circumstances. Admittedly much depends on the critic's point of view. If he wishes to prove that Stalin was a bandit and to build up a picture of the horrors of banditry, then here are the materials with which to do it. If he holds the view that the Bolsheviks should have allowed their organisations to perish rather than engage in such activities, then of course he will denounce Stalin. The Bolsheviks themselves, however, had one criterion for their conduct: That which helps the party of revolution to fulfil its task is good; that which hinders it is bad.

Stalin was the organiser of partisan groups in the Caucasus region. He had as his principal assistant a devoted friend of his boyhood days, one Ter-Petrossian, whom Stalin affectionately nicknamed "Kamo." Kamo was a veritable Robin Hood of the Caucasus. He had the most amazing record of arrests and escapes. Twice brought to the gallows, once made to dig his own grave, he was imprisoned again and again and always by some stratagem got free to pursue his revolutionary work in the Georgian tradition. He organised the better elements among the outlaws of the Caucasus, drilled them, and inspired them with his own revolutionary spirit. He and they lived on no more than 50 kopeks (one shilling) each a day. Kamo was the leading spirit of the group Stalin organised for the job of holding up the Treasury carriage carrying 250,000 roubles under escort from a Tiflis Post Office to the State Bank in another part of the city.

On the morning of June 23rd, 1907, two carriages containing a cashier and a clerk, the 250,000 roubles, and two police officers, and accompanied by an escort of five Cossacks, started on their journey from the Tiflis Post Office to the Tiflis State Bank. A woman, Palsya Goldava, gave the agreed signal to the waiting conspirators. Anna Sulamlidze in turn signalled to another along the way to Erivan Square. A number of men were waiting along the route. Six were loitering in the square. Suddenly two terrific explosions rent the air. Two policemen and a Cossack fell to the ground. The horses dashed through the escort towards the other waiting men—for the carriage containing the money had not been blown up. A bomb was then thrown between the horses' legs, following which one man seized the bag of money from the vehicle and made off. Meanwhile Kamo, dressed as an officer, was in a carriage in the square. On seeing the commotion he rose in his seat, began shouting and firing off his revolvers as if attacking the culprits, and finally rode off after them. When the soldiers surrounded the square everyone had escaped. The money had been taken to a house, and was finally hidden in the private office of the director of the Tiflis Observatory.

Some six months later, Maxim Litvinov, to-day famous throughout the world for his diplomatic genius, was arrested in Paris in the act of exchanging some of the money into foreign currency. A few other men, also now well-known, were

arrested for the same offence in other countries.

There was a great outcry about this incident, and the Mensheviks of the Party together with not a few Bolsheviks denounced Stalin. It should be understood, however, that the outcry was not of the kind such an incident would call forth in England. It was political, not moral. In a country of punitive expeditions and thousands of hangings, accustomed to brutality and familiar with assassinations, the killing of two policemen, some Cossacks and a few civilians was in the ordinary course of events and hardly likely to cause a thrill of moral indignation. The criticism against the perpetrators denounced them as supporters of individual robbery. If Stalin were asked to-day what he thought of the episode he would no doubt answer: "Such incidents were not an integral part of our policy, but desperate situations call forth desperate remedies. He who sets another standard than that of unlimited service to the party of revolution should not join it." With a twinkle in his eye he would continue, "I think we had better change the subject. I move next business." There are in Tiflis of to-day a street, a hospital, and several nurseries bearing the name Kamo in memory of a man who was the hero of many revolutionary adventures and accomplished much for the Russian Revolution.

Other incidents of the period showed that at the foundations of the Russian Empire explosive material continued to generate. Stalin went back to Baku. Here, with Voroshilov and Ordjonikidze, he took charge of the *Baku Worker* and launched a struggle for the leadership of the industrial workers. They beat the Mensheviks handsomely, and Voroshilov became the leader of the Oil Workers' Union. As this union grew in influence and power the employers proposed a conference with it. Should it agree to such a meeting? The Mensheviks were divided on the question, some saying "yes" some saying "no." Stalin, on behalf of the Bolsheviks, said in the *Baku Worker*: "Yes—on conditions: recognition of the union, free election of delegates, and a free press." These proposals won the support of an overwhelming majority of the workers and placed the Bolsheviks at the head of the Shop Stewards Council. "For two weeks," say the records, "in the period when reaction was rampant in Russia, a workers' parliament sat in Baku with a Bolshevik presiding. In this parliament they worked out the demands of the workers and carried on widespread propaganda for their minimum programme." Thus began a long struggle between the oil workers and their employers, and in it Stalin played a leading part. He succeeded in making the district a strong centre of political activity, which grew continuously throughout the period of reaction when the rest of the country seemed to be overcome and demoralised.

It was during the early months of this period that Stalin married a Georgian girl named Catherine Svanidze, who was also a Bolshevik. Very little is known

about her, and Stalin is not a man who talks of his domestic life. One thing, however, is certain. Whatever domestic bliss these two may have experienced it was short-lived, for both were members of an illegal party and both were leading lives that made every "home" the most temporary of stopping-places. By March 25th, 1908, the police again interrupted his work and put an end to even this slender and interrupted domestic life.

He was arrested, taken to the Bailov prison and sentenced to eight months' imprisonment and three years exile at Solvychegodsk in Siberia. When he was in prison on the previous occasion the conditions had been comparatively mild. But under the influence of the great reaction the prison authorities were now steadily abolishing the old conditions, and the rules became ever more stringent. The political prisoners were in rebellion. On Easter Sunday of 1908 the authorities decided to "teach them a lesson," and the Solyansk Regiment was brought in to pacify them. The political prisoners were lined up in the prison courtyard. Two files of soldiers were also lined up. The prisoners were then driven in single file between the two rows of soldiers, who belaboured them with their rifle butts. Stalin, with head erect and carrying a book under his arm, marched unflinchingly under the rain of blows.

Deep in the Underworld of Revolution

SEMYA VERESTCHAK, a fellow-prisoner and political opponent of Stalin, writing of their days in the Baku prison, says:

One day a new face appeared in the Bolshevik camp. I enquired who the comrade was, and in great secrecy was told "It is Koba [Stalin]". . . . Koba stood out among the various circles as a Marxist student. He wore a blue satin smock with a wide open collar, and no belt. His head was bare. A bashlik—a sort of detached hood with two tapering scarves—was thrown across his shoulders. He always carried a book. Of more than medium height, he walked with a slow cat-like tread. He was slender, with pointed face, pockmarked skin, sharp nose, and small eyes looking out from a narrow forehead, slightly indented. He spoke little and sought no company.

The Stalin of these days was defiant; he submitted to no regulations. The political prisoners at Baku endeavoured to segregate themselves as much as possible from the criminals, and the younger among them were punished if they infringed this unwritten law. Openly flouting the custom, Koba was constantly to be seen in the company of bandits, swindlers and thieves. He chose as his cell-mates the Sakvadelidze brothers, one a counterfeiter, the other a well-known Bolshevik. Active people, people who did things, attracted him. . . . .

At a time when the whole prison was upset, sleepless, tense, in expectation of a night execution, Koba would calmly compose himself in slumber. . . . He generally enjoyed in the Caucasus the reputation of a second Lenin. He was regarded as the leading Marxist expert. Hence his very special hatred of

Menshevism. . . .

He was still in the Baku gaol when his wife gave birth to a son. The boy was named Jacob, but is now popularly known as Yasha. He saw very little of his father in his childhood, for Stalin could rarely reach home, and until the great release of political prisoners caused by the Revolution, he spent more time in prison and exile than anywhere else. After eight months in the Baku prison he was exiled to Vologda, in the north of Russia. In June 1909 he escaped, made his way to St. Petersburg, and then returned to Baku to resume his work with the Bolshevik organisation. And it was always the Mensheviks of varying shades who received the maximum of his attention.

This may seem like an obsession on his part, and of the Bolsheviks in general, unless it is realised that the Mensheviks were their nearest rivals for the confidence of the workers. The Bolsheviks regarded them as an extraordinary danger because they gave coherence and a certain rationality to the mood of the masses. At one time they were classified as "softs" and the Bolsheviks as "hards"; and there was much that was appropriate in these respective characterisations. For it invariably happened that the Mensheviks expressed all the doubts and fears and weaknesses which beset the workers and the peasants. For them the defeat of the 1905 revolution was overwhelming. "The workers ought not to have taken up arms," they said. "The workers could not lead the Revolution. It is a bourgeois revolution and must be led by the bourgeoisie." The Bolsheviks regarded these declarations as the language of despair.

The Bolsheviks agreed that the Revolution was defeated, but said "Next time we will have more arms and fight better. The workers must lead the revolution, for with the peasants as their allies they hold the future in their hands." Their faith was unbounded. "Get ready," they called, "for the next revolution, which is on the way, and the Bolsheviks will lead you to Socialism."

The fight of the Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks was thus a fight for the soul of the working-class, and in such a contest they would give no quarter.

As soon as Stalin again arrived in Baku he plunged into the fray with unabated vigour. His *Letters from the Caucasus* appearing in the central Party press soon earned the applause of Lenin. It was in these letters that his struggle with Trotsky began—a struggle which never ceased until the firing-squads of the revolution settled the argument for many of Trotsky's supporters and an assassin's blow cut short his own career in far-away Mexico. At this time he and Stalin were both members of an illegal movement. Trotsky was with other exiled Social Democrats in Europe. In his first efforts to conduct Social Democratic agitation he had been arrested in 1898, spent a year in prison and then been exiled to Siberia. From there in igo1 he had escaped and gone abroad,

and had only returned to St. Petersburg on the day of the first meeting of the St. Petersburg Soviet in 1905. After his imprisonment, following his arrest with the Soviet deputies, he had been again banished to Siberia, and from there had escaped and gone straight out of Russia into European exile, where he had made a name for himself as a brilliant journalist and orator. But his experience in the Russian working-class movement prior to 1917 was essentially the experience of an *émigré*.

Nevertheless, with voice and pen he played an important rôle. From the outset of his acquaintance with Lenin he became an opponent of the Bolsheviks in general and of Lenin in particular. At first he was definitely on the side of the Mensheviks. Then he broke with them to take up a position between the two contending forces, calling for unity where unity was impossible, while reserving for Lenin and the Bolsheviks the most bitter of his polemics. On the wave of the Revolution of 1917 he capitulated to Lenin as the master revolutionary, in the Elisha hope that in due time the master's mantle would fall upon him.

At the period when Stalin was organising in Baku, Trotsky was busy in Europe attacking the Bolsheviks for their intransigence. But Stalin did not continue for long. On March 23rd, 1910, he was again arrested, served another six months in the Baku prison, and was exiled once more to Solovychegodsk. In the summer of 1911 he escaped for the third time, and at the request of the Party leadership went to St. Petersburg to strengthen the Bolshevik Organisation. Hardly, however, had he got into his stride there than in September he was caught by the police and returned to Vologda. He was annoyed beyond measure to be so soon in their hands again. For months he had been agitating for the convocation of a new Party conference, the publication of a legal newspaper and the formation of an illegal centre to conduct the practical work in Russia. He had no quarrel with Lenin's leadership from abroad. To Lenin he was giving unswerving loyalty and expounding his views with all the fervour of a devotee. But he knew that the party of revolution must be organised *in Russia*. And, now, just when the vital conference was about to be held—in January, 1912—he is again immobilised.

The conference was held at Prague, and represents a decisive stage in the history of the split within the Social Democratic Labour Party. Lenin had come to the conclusion that the time for further manœuvring with the Mensheviks in the Party was ended. He was convinced that a new wave of revolution was pending, and that it would be fatal if the party of revolution was to be hampered by faint hearts and muddleheaded leadership. Everything that had happened since he wrote his book *What is to be Done?* had endorsed the convictions expressed within its pages. Henceforth therefore the Mensheviks and the like of Trotsky were to be treated not as fellow-travellers, but as enemies of the Party

and outside the ranks of organised revolutionary Marxism.

This proposal the Prague Conference put into effect. The Mensheviks were expelled, and on Lenin's instructions Serge Ordjonikidze was sent to see Stalin in exile, to tell him of the decisions of the Conference and that he, Stalin, had been put in charge of the Russian Bureau of the Central Committee working within Russia.

Thus Stalin became second-in-command of the Bolshevik Party. To have held him in Vologda after receiving this news it would have been necessary to put him in chains. In the bitter winter days of February, 1912, he again escaped and made his way to St. Petersburg, there to begin energetically to carry out the decisions of the Prague Conference, and especially to launch the Party's legal newspaper.

His existence was precarious in the extreme. The police were hot on his trail, and he feared to stay in one abode more than a night at a time. He was not aware that a fellow-member of the Party's central committee was also a member of the Okhrana (the secret police), and was constantly giving hints to headquarters as to where the police would be likely to find him.

There was one bright patch in the heart of this grimness. A friend he had known in the Caucasus had become a foreman in an electrical station in St. Petersburg. His name was Alleluiev, and his wife was a native of Georgia. They had two daughters, Hura and Nadya, twelve and ten years old respectively. Stalin was a great friend of the whole family and stayed with them frequently. He was, too, the hero of little Nadya. Perhaps it was here that there began the romance of Stalin's life, for years later it was Nadya, grown to be a beautiful woman who became Stalin's second wife. After the first few months of married life in Baku he saw very little of his first wife, who because of his imprisonment went to live with her parents, and in their house brought up the boy Yasha. A few years later, while her husband was still in exile, she died of tuberculosis, and thereafter the lad's grandparents had charge of his upbringing until the Bolshevik leaders were installed in the Kremlin.

It was in the midst of the great preparations for the publication of *Pravda* ("Truth"), the first legal newspaper of the Bolsheviks, that rifle-fire in far-away Siberia echoed round the world and set in motion Russia's millions who for years had appeared to be sunk in silent despair. In the Lena goldfields Czarist soldiers had opened fire upon strikers, and hundreds were shot down. Immediately, in protest against the bloodbath, a spontaneous wave of strikes swept through the industrial towns and cities of Russia. The workers were on the march again. This is how Stalin describes the effect of the Lena shootings:

The superficial observer might have thought that the day of revolution had been lost for ever, that the period of constitutional development of Russia along the lines of Prussia had arrived. And certain old Bolsheviks, sympathising at heart with preachings to that effect, were at that time leaving the ranks. The triumph of the knout and of darkness was complete.

The Lena Days broke upon this malodorous morass like a hurricane, and revealed a new scene to everybody. It appeared that the Stolypin régime was was not so solid. The Duma had aroused contempt in the masses, and the workers had stored up sufficient energy to throw themselves into battle for a new revolution.

It was enough to shoot down workers in the depths of Siberia for Russia to be inundated by strikes and for the St. Petersburg proletariat to pour into the streets and wipe out with one stroke, the impudent slogan of the braggart Minister Makarov that "it has always been so and will always remain so." . . .

On April 22nd, 1912, *Pravda* appeared. On that day too, Stalin was arrested once more. Again he was sent to Siberia, this time to the Narym district. By September he had escaped and was back once more in St. Petersburg in time to direct the Bolsheviks during the elections for the Fourth Duma. Six Bolsheviks were elected. He then worked out the policy they should pursue within the Duma, and had a difficult time convincing the half-dozen that they would do better not to associate themselves with the seven Mensheviks who also had been elected. All the Bolsheviks were working-men and rather conscious of the advantages held by the Menshevik intellectuals. After days and nights of discussion with his group Stalin secured an agreement and then proposed that the deputies should meet with the central committee of the Party. Lenin had moved to Cracow to be near the Russian frontier, and the meeting with the deputies was held without a great deal of difficulty.

But more important than the meeting was its sequel. Stalin remained in Cracow and Vienna for two months. For several weeks he stayed with Lenin and there for the first time the two leaders had the opportunity freely to exchange their views on all the problems before them. What was outstanding in these discussions and occupied Stalin most of the time he was abroad, is revealed in a letter of Lenin to Gorki written in February, 1913. It said: "I agree with you that it is time to take up seriously the national question. We have here with us a wonderful Georgian who has collected all the Austrian and other materials and settled down to prepare a big article on the subject." The article was later published in three parts, and still later as a book.

At first this may appear to be of little account. Actually its influence on the Russian Revolution was far-reaching and may yet prove of far-reaching

importance to the rest of the world. Published finally under the title *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, it was undoubtedly the product of much discussion with Lenin, but that it was wholly written by Stalin is clear enough. Every paragraph bears the imprint of his character. How frequently it was drafted and discussed neither of them subsequently attempted to recall. It is more than probable that both made notes, but I am confident that within a few minutes of their meeting they would be so completely absorbed in the subject that their relative contributions to it would be forgotten. This happened with everyone who met Lenin. It happened with me, and I am sure it happened with Stalin, for Lenin had been Stalin's hero ever since the latter's early years at Tiflis. To spend days on end with Lenin and become a collaborator with him in leadership was to fulfil the dream of his young manhood.

They had worked together on the political commissions of the Tammerfors and London Conferences, but this was the first time the elder man had called in a colleague to undertake so important a task as that of exploring a theoretical problem which was soon to be among the greatest practical political problems to precede the Revolution. I do not know of Lenin taking this course on any other question or with any other of his colleagues. That he had great confidence in Stalin's theoretical opinions and sound judgement as a Marxist I do know, for I well remember that in one of my conversations with Lenin in 1921 he referred to Stalin as "our nutcracker" and explained that if the "political bureau were faced with a problem which needed a lot of sorting out Stalin was given the job." It says much for Lenin's estimate of Stalin and his work that from this time onward Joseph is the outstanding exponent of "National and Colonial" questions. As soon as the Bolsheviks came to power Lenin secured his comrade's appointment as the first minister of the Soviet State to have the practical handling of this subject, and in every subsequent conference he was the reporter on it, drafted every relevant resolution for the Central Committee, and adapted the Soviet Constitution to the principles he had expounded with conviction and lucidity.

The problems the two leaders set out to solve on this now famous occasion were beset with more confusion than any other in the realm of revolutionary politics. Within the Russian Empire were over 60,000,000 "foreigners" in varying stages of development, split into national groups, oppressed, exploited, forbidden to use their own languages, and in many instances without any political rights whatever. Outside Russia, Europe itself was a jigsaw puzzle of nationalities in varying degrees of liberation, while in the world at large the Great Powers had almost completed the acquisition of colonial territory and held hundreds of millions of colonial peoples in complete subjection. Other hundreds of millions occupied great stretches which were only partly independent; there were now no new lands to discover and no new peoples to be enslaved. We were

hastening towards the clash of empires and a lethal struggle for the redivision of the world.

In the evolution of Socialist thought certain definite principles had long been firmly established. Marx for example, years earlier, had affirmed the principle that "no nation could itself be free as long as it held another in bondage." The Marxists stood firmly for the principle of "self-determination of nations." The Austrian Socialists had written a great deal about the "National Question," and with the Poles and Jews had rung the changes on schemes of "national autonomy," "cultural autonomy" and so on. A special problem had been created in Russia by the formation of Labour Parties according to national groupings, thus cutting right across the efforts of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party to include in its ranks all social democrats within the Russian Empire. Working-class organisations were still being urged to separate the nationalities and organise on racial lines. The need for clear guidance through this maze of confusion was urgent.

The result of Stalin's labour will always stand high among the records of scientific Socialism. His method of analysis is exceedingly lucid. He leaves no loose ends to entangle the enquirer. He begins by asking "What is a nation?" and searches for a fool-proof definition. He proceeds:

A nation is primarily a community, a definite community of people.

This community is not racial, nor is it tribal. . . . The modern Italian nation was formed from Romans, Teutons, Etruscans, Greeks, Arabs, and so forth. The French nation was formed from Gauls, Romans, Britons, Teutons, and so on. The same should be said of the British, the Germans and others, who were formed into nations from peoples of different races and tribes.

From this he draws a conclusion—"Thus, a nation is not a racial or tribal, but a *historically constituted community of people*." That is clear enough. But he adds:

It is unquestionable that the great empires of Cyrus and Alexander could not be called nations, although they came to be constituted historically and were formed out of different tribes and races. They were not nations, but casual and loosely connected conglomerations of groups, which fell apart or joined together, depending upon the victories or defeats of this or that conqueror.

So he draws another conclusion. "Thus," he says, "a nation is not a casual or ephemeral conglomeration, but a *stable community of people*." We are a step further on, but only a step. For he adds lest we stay satisfied . . . "not every stable community constitutes a nation. Austria and Russia are also stable

communities, but nobody calls them nations." He says these are political communities and not national communities, and before we can enquire further he puts the question for us: "What distinguishes a national community from a political community?"

This starts a new train of enquiry. He says:

One of the distinguishing features is that a national community is inconceivable without a common language, while a state need not have a common language. The Czech nation in Austria and the Polish in Russia would be impossible if each did not have a common language, whereas the integrity of Russia and Austria is not affected by the fact that there are several, different languages within their borders. . . .

We are thus driven to another conclusion: "*Community of language* is one of the characteristic features of a nation." That also is clear. But our enquiry must not stay here. He carries us further by drawing our attention to the fact that

this does not mean that different nations always and everywhere necessarily speak different languages, or that all who speak one language necessarily constitute one nation. A common language for every nation, but not necessarily different languages for different nations. There is no nation which at one and the same time speaks several languages, but this does not mean that there may not be two nations speaking one language. Englishmen and Americans speak one language, but they do not constitute one nation.

So there is something more required to constitute a nation? Yes.

Differences of territory led to the formation of different nations. Thus *community of territory* is one of the characteristic features of a nation. . . . Community of territory requires, in addition, an internal economic bond which welds the various parts of a nation into a single whole.

Relentlessly he drives us on until he has exhaustively examined the argument, and then he summarises his definition thus:

A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture. . . . It goes without saying that a nation, like every other historical phenomenon, is subject to the law of change, has its history, its beginning and end. . . . It must be emphasised that none of the above characteristics is by itself sufficient to define a nation. On the other hand it is sufficient for a single one of these characteristics to be absent and the nation ceases to be a nation.

Stalin then proceeds to analyse the definitions of the Austrian Socialists and others. Having shown what he considers to be their total inadequacy and the political futilities into which they are thereby drawn, he examines the growth of nations and shows how one becomes subject to another in consequence of their class stratification. Hence it becomes necessary to examine them and their "rights" in relation to the inter-class struggles within them.

One by one he examines the ideas of the various schools of nationalism, the Poles, the Jews, the Georgians, etc., and always relates the question at issue to the revolutionary struggle of the workers against Czarism. He argues with relentless persistence that none of the nations under Czarism has the slightest possibility of securing its rehabilitation unless it joins with Social Democracy in Czarism's overthrow. Then he formulates a solution, which has the superior value over others, that it has been applied and works. It reads:

. . . the right of Self-Determination is an essential element in the solution of the national problem. Further. What must be our attitude towards nations which for one reason or another will prefer to remain within the general framework? . . . The only real solution is regional autonomy, autonomy for such crystallised units as Poland, Lithuania, the Ukraine, the Caucasus, etc. The advantage of regional autonomy consists firstly in the fact that it does not deal with a fiction deprived of territory, but with a definite population inhabiting a definite territory. Secondly it does not divide people according to nation, it does not strengthen national partitions; on the contrary, it only serves to break down these partitions and unites the population in such a manner as to open the way for division of another kind, division according to class. . . .

Of course not one of the regions constitutes a compact homogeneous nation, for each is interspersed by national minorities. Such are the Jews in Poland, the Latvians in Lithuania, the Russians in the Caucasus, the Poles in the Ukraine, and so on. . . . What is it that agitates a national minority? A minority is discontented not because there is no national union but because it does not possess the right to use its own language. Permit it to use its own language and the discontent will pass of itself. . . . Thus *national equality in all forms* (language, schools, etc.) is an essential element in the solution of the national question. . . .

We know whither the division of workers along national lines leads. The disintegration of a united working-class party, the division of the trade unions along national lines, the aggravation of national friction, national strike breaking, complete demoralisation within the ranks of the Social Democratic movement—such are the results of organisational federalism. . . . The only cure for this is organisation on internationalist lines. The aim must be to unite the workers of all nationalities within Russia into united and integral collective

bodies in the various localities and to unite those collective bodies into a single party. . . . Thus the principle of *international solidarity of the workers is an essential element* in the solution of the national problem. . . .

The preciseness of the language, with its complete absence of loose phrases, the clarity with which he shows the relationship of principles to practice, combine to make this document outstanding among all Stalin's writings. And it has stood the test of time and experience.

As soon as he had finished this work, he prepared to go back to St. Petersburg and resume the greater duties of central leadership which the Party had thrust upon him since the Prague Conference. Hardly had he got there than he noticed he was being more closely shadowed than ever before. Malinovsky, the police spy within the central committee, had also been in Cracow, knew all the new developments, and was ably assisting the police in their relentless policy of depriving the Social Democratic Labour Party of its leaders. Now they were after Stalin and Sverdlov, who was on the central bureau with him. At a concert for the benefit of *Pravda* held in St. Petersburg on February 23rd, 1913, Stalin was again arrested. This raid was the beginning of a series, in which Sverdlov, Kamanev, Spandaryan and the Bolshevik deputies in the Duma were finally rounded up and exiled to Siberia.

This time Stalin was sent for a term of four years, to the remote region of Turukhansk. At first he was in the village of Kostine, but early in 1914 he was sent farther north to the village of Kareika, Siberia, within the Arctic Circle. The Czar's officials were determined he should not escape this time; and within this wilderness of ice and snow he was kept under close observation until Czardom itself crumbled under the impact of war and revolution.

Twice in the months following their arrest Lenin made efforts to free Stalin and Sverdlov. On each occasion Malinovsky informed the police department and the guards were strengthened. Now Stalin's capacity to wait on events would be tested as never before. A thin, frequently-interrupted line of contact with the world beyond the Arctic Circle was maintained, through which he could occasionally influence the course of events, but his main task was to wait and watch as best he might; and a fierce sombre mood took hold of him as he brooded over the course of events.

But suddenly a revolver shot at Serajevo exploded the powder magazines of the world. The barricades of the Russian working-class fell. The war-drums rolled, and the armies dutifully assembled and marched under the banners of the Kings and Emperors and Presidents of the world of capitalism. As the shadows of the autumn days of 1914 lengthened across the Arctic wilderness, the revolutionary prospects of the Bolshevik leaders seemed to be vanishing. The

lights of Europe had indeed been dimmed; all the resolutions of the international Socialist movement as to what the workers must do in the event of war had vanished into air.

And yet really the course of history had speeded up to a degree surpassing imagination. Mankind was about to crowd centuries into years, years into months, rushing toward the very dawn for which the men and women in exile had worked and dreamed.

A Long Interlude and How it Ended

Mankind will yet be masters of the earth. The right of the people to make the laws—this produced the first great modern earthquake, whose latent shocks, even now, are heaving in the heart of the world. The right of the people to own the earth—this will produce the next. Train your hands, and your sons' hands, gentlemen of the earth, for you and they will yet have to use them—JAMES FINTON LALOV

IN the remote hamlet of Kareika, amid the snowy wastes of the Siberian province of Yeniseisk, Stalin waited on events. Kareika stands on the banks of a

river of the same name, and consisted at the time of fifteen peasant huts. Stalin had a room in one of these, and Sverdlov a room in another. The owner of Stalin's hut lived with his family in another room and a kitchen. Fifty miles away there was a lead mine. One hundred and fifty miles in a westerly direction lay the prison colony of Turukhansk, where there were some 300 political prisoners. Both Turukhansk and Kareika were but specks in this vast tundra region of northern Asia. While fish abounded in the rivers and streams and the land was a huntsman's paradise teaming with wild animal life, it was not a place an active political leader would choose for his residence.

Yet here was Joseph Stalin, a product of the semi-tropical Caucasus, condemned to stay nearly four winters amid the biting arctic winds, the ice and snow which monopolise eight to nine months of each year. The winter nights seemed almost interminable, a glimmer of daylight breaking the darkness for only an hour or two of the twenty-four. The monotony of this gloom was scarcely compensated by the summer months when the sun barely tipped the horizon before ascending again towards the zenith.

Now and then a peasant neighbour from the nearby huts would look in, and on rare occasions a few political prisoners would make a dash from the Turukhansk colony to talk things over with Stalin and Sverdlov. Vera Schweizer, a political exile in this colony, tells of a visit she and Suren Spandaryan made to Stalin at Kureika. She writes:

During that part of the year day and night merge into one endless Arctic night pierced with cruel frosts. We sped down the Yenisei by dog-sled without a stop, across the bleak wilderness that lies between Monastyrskoye and Kureika, a dash of 200 kilometres, pursued by the continuous howling of wolves. . . . Comrade Stalin was overjoyed at our unexpected arrival and did all he could to make the "Arctic travellers" comfortable. The first thing he did was to run to the Yenisei, where his fishing lines were set in holes through the ice. A few minutes later he returned with a huge sturgeon flung across his shoulder. Under the guidance of this "experienced fisherman" we quickly dressed the fish, extracted the caviar and prepared some fish-soup. And while these culinary activities were in progress, we kept up an earnest discussion of Party affairs. . . . In a corner was stacked fishing and hunting tackle of various kinds, which he himself had made. . . .

Thus the leader of revolution had adapted himself to the new environment and become expert hunter and fisherman, gathering energy and health that he would sorely need when the waiting days were done. The lines of contact with the world beyond the tundra were very attenuated. At long intervals letters would reach him from his friends the Alleluievs, with news of Lenin and the workmen of the Putilov in St. Petersburg and the oil fields of Baku. But there was no

possibility of him directing any struggle from afar. Newspapers and certain books would reach him months after publication. Some people have queried, "Where are the theoretical works of Stalin in this period?" as if he had been deported to the Reading Rooms of the British Museum instead of a peasant's but in the Arctic.

Nevertheless, Stalin and Sverdlov watched as best they could the onward-sweeping tide of events destined to end their exile once and for all. It was difficult to see so far ahead. But the Bolsheviks were certainly not taken by surprise when the war burst upon the world. Socialist leaders of every country had been warning mankind since the dawn of the twentieth century, of the coming conflagration. They were not too precise in this matter, however. They did not say who would fight whom. But they insisted that competitive capitalism, struggling fiercely for raw materials and markets, and incessantly piling up armaments, was carrying mankind towards world war.

This lack of precision in diagnosis had its corollary in the generalised character of the recommendations on what should be done by the working-class of the world to counter these developments, and thus accounts to some extent for the complete absence of organised preparations to prevent the outbreak of war. Since the formation of the International Socialist Bureau in 1889 each international Socialist conference had propounded certain principles which were to govern the actions of the Socialist working-class movement in every country. At each conference there had been a sharp division of opinion, and each resolution represented a compromise for the sake of retaining a certain formal unity. The clearest and most precise was the resolution passed at the Basle Conference of 1912. Thus, afterwards published as a manifesto, said,

If a war threatens to break out, it is the duty of the working-classes and their parliamentary representatives in the countries involved, supported by the co-ordinating activity of the International Socialist Bureau, to exert every effort in order to prevent the outbreak of war by the means they consider most effective, which naturally vary according to the sharpening of the class struggle and the sharpening of the general political situation.

In case war should break out anyway, it is their duty to intervene in favour of its speedy termination and with all their powers to utilise the economic and political crisis created by the war to arouse the people and thereby to hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule. . . .

The Congress records that the entire Socialist International is unanimous upon these principles of foreign policy. It calls upon the workers of all countries to oppose to capitalist imperialism the power of the international solidarity of the proletariat. It warns the ruling classes of all states not to increase by belligerent

actions the misery of the masses brought on by the capitalist method of production. It emphatically demands peace. Let the Governments remember that with the present condition of Europe and the mood of the working-class, they cannot unleash a war without danger to themselves. Let them remember that the Franco-German War was followed by the revolutionary outbreak of the Commune, that the Russo-Japanese War set into motion the revolutionary energies of the peoples of the Russian Empire, that the competition in military and naval armaments gave the class conflicts in England and on the Continent an unheard-of sharpness, and unleashed an enormous wave of strikes. It would be insanity for the Governments not to realise that the very idea of the monstrosity of a world war would inevitably call forth the indignation and the revolt of the working-class. The proletariat considers it a crime to fire at each other for the profits of the capitalists, the ambitions of dynasties, or the greater glory of secret diplomatic treaties. . . .

When the war actually broke upon the world in July and August 1914, the proletariat did not answer it with revolt. Nor did the Socialists. It burst the international Labour and Socialist movement apart. And only one party of the International, the Russian Bolshevik Party, took its stand on the revolutionary principles indicated in the manifesto of the Basle Conference. The trade unions of every country followed their respective governments. The Socialist and Labour Parties, with the exception of those which were pacifist and a few small groups, did likewise.

The Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, were completely isolated, for even among the dissidents there was confusion. But there was no ambiguity about the Bolshevik position. It is only necessary to state it to appreciate how remote it was from those taken up by other parties. It can be given in two phrases: “Transform the Imperialist War into Civil War”—“The enemy of the workers is the Government at home.” There was jubilation in the distant huts of Kareika and Turukhansk when Lenin’s resolution reached them. Stalin read it with deep satisfaction, for the master revolutionary had confirmed the views that Joseph had independently expressed to his fellow-exiles long before.

Twenty-five years later, standing in Lenin’s shoes, Stalin declared as the Second World War crashed upon Europe—“the resolution of 1914 holds good.”

The first declaration by Lenin and the half-dozen members of the Bolshevik Party in Geneva, said:

The European and World War bears the sharp marks of a bourgeois-imperialist and dynastic war. A struggle for markets, for freedom to loot foreign countries, a tendency to put an end to the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and democracy within the separate countries, a tendency to fool, to

disunite, to slaughter the proletariat of all countries by inflaming the wage slaves of the other for the benefit of the bourgeoisie—this is the only real meaning and significance of the war. . . .

From this statement much followed. The Bolsheviks in Russia endorsed the point of view expressed by Lenin, and developed their policy accordingly. The transformation of the Imperialist war into civil war was thenceforward the key to all the activities of the Party within Russia. Liebknecht and Luxemburg were the outstanding supporters of the policy outside Russia, but it was of greater significance for Russia than for any other country, for of all the nations none was comparable in its ripeness for revolutionary changes. The chaos in the governing classes revealed by the 1905 rising was not swept away by the triumph of the Stolypin reaction—the killing of thousands of revolutionaries and the filling of the prisons and camps of exile. The autocracy was still intact. Feudalism was still at the helm of government. The capitalist economic revolution was gathering speed and reproducing on an ever-widening scale the conditions which had engendered the ideas behind the 1905 affair and made it possible.

Russia, at the outbreak of the war in 1914, harboured the seeds of two revolutions. Had the Czar given his country her "1789 Revolution" in 1905, *i.e.*, established a constitutional monarchy with a liberal constitution, Russia would have entered the war of 1914 in the full flush of expanding industrialism. The Czar did nothing of the kind, and hence the war made demands upon the Czarist Government that it was congenitally incapable of handling. Prime Ministers and Ministers of State followed each other across the stage of history with panic rapidity as the hysterical Czarina urged her feeble husband to do the bidding of the disreputable Rasputin. The industrialists engaged on war production racketeered without interference. The peasants gave their sons to the war by the million, and the soldiers fought bravely despite stupendous losses. Slowly at first, then with increasing speed, the rear became incapable of maintaining supplies to the fighting forces. Regiment after regiment was left without guns or ammunition. At home, prices soared and real wages fell. In 1913 the average monthly earnings of employees in industry amounted to 85.5 roubles (about £8 11s.) a month. By January 1917 they were down to 38 roubles (£3 16s.) a month. Meanwhile rents rose in the cities and towns to 200 and 300 per cent above the 1913 level. Strikes, which had almost vanished on the outbreak of war, reappeared with increasing frequency and on a constantly larger scale. During August-December of 1914 there were only sixty-eight strikes involving 34,753 Workers. In the same months of 1916 there were 1,410 strikes involving 1,086,364 strikers.

The spirit of defeatism spread both at the top and bottom of society. It spread

at the top until members of the nobility assassinated Rasputin and flung his body into the Neva. It spread at the bottom in misery and hunger until the masses rose in revolt and forced the Duma, composed of the gentry, to insist on the Czar's abdication. On March 8th, 1917, after an interview with Protopopov, the Prime Minister, who had tried to tell him of the serious state of affairs throughout the country, the Czar left St. Petersburg. He went to the headquarters of the Army, and wrote to his wife the same night: "I shall take up dominoes in my spare time. . . . My brain is resting here, no ministers, no troublesome questions demanding thought. I consider that this is good for me. . . .

On the day of his departure to "take up dominoes" there were food riots in the streets of St. Petersburg. Two days later the crowds were vaster, and the Cossacks were friendly to the people. That night at 9 p.m. in response to a telephone message, Czar Nicholas replied: "I demand that the disorders in the capital shall be stopped to-morrow." As well might he have commanded the tides to cease. On the 11th of March the Volynsky Regiment fired on the crowd, retired to its barracks, mutinied, and shot one of its officers. The revolution had begun. The Czar ordered the Duma to be dissolved. This conservative assembly had now to assume revolutionary responsibilities or perish. Shulgin, the leader of the Conservatives proper, urged Rodzianko, president of the Duma, "to seize power before somebody else more dangerous took things in hand." Instead of agreeing to the Czar's demand, the Duma formed what it called a "Progressive Bloc" and set up a Provisional Government.

Meanwhile the workers in the factories were electing delegates. The Soviets were coming into being. And the Soviets elected an Executive Committee which established itself in the hall of the Budget Committee of the Duma. One of its Vice-Presidents was a leader of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, and was also a member of the Duma. His name was Kerensky.

The crowds in the streets were growing. The old Tory Rodzianko, who no more desired a revolt than to work in a coal-mine, made ponderous speeches to the crowds, and the crowds sang the *Marseillaise*. Prime Minister Protopopov and other Czarist ministers were arrested by the Provisional Government. Fighting was going on in St. Petersburg when on the 14th of March the Czar set out with escort to return. On the 15th the soldiers began to elect delegates to the Soviets: the Czar sent other troops to "restore order." The new troops fraternised with the revolutionary soldiers. Czardom was gone.

Because of the danger in St. Petersburg, the Czar's carriage was diverted to Pskov. Meanwhile capitalists, lawyers, and gentry all gathered round the newly-formed government; and on March 15th, Nicholas signed a form of abdication in favour of his brother the Grand Duke Michael. The latter, however, understood the situation better than the Czar, and refused the honour unless the invitation

were to come from the promised Constituent Assembly—that political bran-tub of the revolution to which bourgeois politicians of all shades posted their pledges for the morrow.

Two new authorities were now in control of the situation—the Provisional Government of the Duma, headed by Prince Lvov, and the Soviets, representative of the risen people, workers, peasants, soldiers, and sailors. The Provisional Government was only indirectly a product of the upheaval. It had not come from the people. It was an appendage of Czardom which, severed from the Czar, had had thrust upon it responsibilities of government which it had no desire to shoulder. Its foreign policy was that of the Czar—continuation of the war and fulfilment of the Treaties made by the Czar's governments. Its home policy consisted of holding back the Jacobin crowds and postponing all radical changes until holding of the Constituent Assembly which it hesitated to call together.

It was the revolutionary rising of the people that had forced it to break with the Czar, and similarly its future policy would be determined by this new force organised in the Soviets. As soon as the first Executive Committee of the Soviets was formed it established liaison with the Provisional Government, and the liaison officer was the Social Revolutionary lawyer Kerensky. So long as this liaison could be maintained the Provisional Government would be recognised as the head of the State and the possibility of restraining the revolution from going "too far" remained. The liaison committee therefore became the means by which the Government maintained organic contact with the masses, while the promise of the Constituent Assembly successfully devitalised the Soviets by the constant deferment of their domestic demands to a vague and nebulous future.

It was a most confused situation, in which nothing was definite except the fact that Czardom had gone and no authority was yet firmly established in its place. All classes were fraternising, singing the songs of liberty, hailing the unaccustomed freedom; and no one seemed to know what should be done next. The prison doors had opened, but the exiles had not yet reached home.

Some there are, who, anxious to belittle Bolshevism, point to this state of affairs as a complete refutation both of the responsibility of the Bolsheviks for the Revolution and of their theories concerning revolutionary development. It is obvious that the Bolsheviks did not plan this uprising, the fact being that they did not hold the view that such a rising could be planned. A minority can plan an insurrection, organise it, and seize power; but the kind of revolution the Bolsheviks had in mind must be timed to coincide with the rising of the people or fail. No Bolshevik ever held the view that it is possible to make a revolution in a non-revolutionary situation, and none ever thought that a revolutionary

situation could be created by propaganda. Nor had Lenin left his party in doubt as to what he meant by a "revolutionary situation." He explained that it has three outstanding characteristics:

(1) When it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their power unchanged; there is a crisis "higher up," taking one from another; there is a crisis in the policy of the ruling class; as a result there appears a crack through which the dissatisfaction and the revolt of the oppressed classes burst forth . . . (2) the wants and the sufferings of the oppressed classes become more acute than usual; (3) . . . a considerable increase in the activity of the masses; without these objective changes, which are independent not only of the will of the separate groups and parties but even of separate classes, a revolution, as a rule, is impossible. The co-existence of all these objective changes constitutes a revolutionary situation.

No Bolshevik would therefore dream of claiming responsibility for the March Revolution of 1917. But only the most prejudiced would disregard the influence of the Bolsheviks on the Russian working-class which had set the revolution on the march. Nor can we afford to ignore the fact that ever since the 1905 Revolution the Bolsheviks had insisted upon the necessity of preparing for the next, and had incessantly combated the Mensheviks on this very issue. As long ago as 1906, at the Stockholm Conference of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, Stalin had posed and answered the question of its leadership when he declared: "Either the hegemony of the proletariat or the hegemony of the democratic bourgeoisie—that is how the question stands in the party, that is where we differ."

Then both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks had been clear about the prospective situation; but neither had foreseen the confusion which was to emerge in March 1917. Neither had come to any clear decision as to the part to be played by the Soviets. Bolshevik and Menshevik alike had thought the revolution would consist of the abdication of the Czar, the destruction of absolutism, and the establishment of a democratic régime of the Western type. The programme of the Bolsheviks said:

. . . the first and immediate task put before itself by the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party is to overthrow the Czarist monarchy and to create a democratic republic whose constitution would guarantee the following:

(1) The sovereignty of the people, *i.e.*, the concentration of all supreme state power in the hands of a legislative assembly, consisting of the people's representatives, and forming one chamber.

(2) Universal, equal, and direct suffrage for all male and female citizens,

twenty years old or over, at all elections to the legislative assembly and to the various local organs of self-government; the secret ballot at elections; the right of every voter to be elected into any representative institution; biennial parliaments; salaries to be paid to the people's representatives; proportional representation at all elections; recall, without exception, of all delegates and elected officers, at any time, by the will of the majority of their electors. . . .

This programme was retained by the Bolsheviks when they established themselves as an independent party by expelling the Mensheviks. But it is only necessary to examine it in relation to Russian conditions to realise that when its authors drafted it, they had in mind the circumstances of the Western countries rather than the specific Russian circumstances to which it would have to be applied. The conditions specified in the second paragraph were almost exclusively applicable to countries with the industrial and cultural level of Western Europe.

The programme assumed the possibility of elections as in Germany or England, press campaigns, public meetings, publicity campaigns on the part of parties and candidates, and above all, an electorate that could read and write. But seventy-five to eighty per cent of those who would be called upon to vote could neither read nor write! There was a further assumption that the industrialisation of Russia and the accompanying developments of modern capitalist society were already fully established, which as everybody knows, they were not.

Why had the Bolsheviks thus stopped short in their analysis of the Russian Revolution? I think the answer lies in the fact that no one prior to March, 1917, had developed Marx's theory of the State from where Marx had left it. While he had emphasised repeatedly that the capitalist State must be destroyed and be replaced by "the dictatorship of the Proletariat," he had not worked out the structural form of the proletarian State, though he had certainly seen its prototype in the Paris Commune. But in 1917 Lenin carried Marx's analysis to its logical completion in his "April Theses" and his book *State and Revolution*. Until the March uprising the Bolsheviks had merely fought the Mensheviks on the issue of which class should lead the revolution—bourgeois or proletariat—and had come down on the side of the "proletariat." They were quite clear about conquering power by revolutionary means—armed insurrection and civil war—but they saw the situation too simply, namely as the overthrow of the Czar and his administration, the establishment of a single-chamber parliament on the Western model, and the setting-up of the Bolshevik Party as the leading party of the proletariat. They had failed to see that the type of social revolution they were aspiring to lead develops its own organs of government.

Hence when the Revolution of March, 1917, again brought Soviets into being as the power-instrument of workers, peasants and soldiers, it developed the

Soviets much further than in 1905. In that year they had been essentially strike weapons, weapons of the political general strike. The soldiers did not form their Soviets. But when the revolt in 1917 surged through Army, Navy, towns and villages alike, the masses everywhere formed Soviets. They were not puzzled about how to organise themselves. The majority could neither read nor write, but they knew who could speak for them and they could elect their spokesmen, if not by secret ballot, certainly by show of hands in open meeting. This they had learned from the events of 1905 and the persistent campaigns of the Social Democrats. The Soviets thus represented the strength of the masses, the means whereby they would exercise their dictatorship in due course when they had become conscious of the power which lay in their hands. The Bolsheviks were to give them that consciousness, but not yet.

The more the revolution spread throughout the country the less could the Provisional Government do without the support of the Soviets. But those who had formed them had done so without realising that they were challenging the continued existence of another power in the community. They were forming a State power without realising the full implications of what they were doing, and the Provisional Government's promise of a Constituent Assembly added to the confusion.

Only one man saw at once the full significance of the situation and was insistent on the course of action to be pursued. That man was Lenin. Joseph Stalin, his second in command, did not as yet see matters with Lenin's eyes.

Neither of the leaders was in St. Petersburg when the Revolution burst upon the world. Stalin was in Siberia, Lenin in Geneva. As soon as the news of the Czar's abdication reached Siberia the guards of the prison villages melted away, and thousands of political exiles set off for home. Stalin and Sverdlov, however, like many other revolutionaries, had no homes in the domestic sense. In any case it was not of domesticity they were thinking. On March 25th, 1917, Stalin arrived at St. Petersburg. Sverdlov arrived. Kamenev arrived. Kalinin arrived. Lenin was reported on his way.

Without more ado the returned exiles resumed their leading positions in co-operation with the St. Petersburg Committee of the Bolshevik Party. Actually they would have proved themselves wiser men had they waited awhile. Their position was a difficult one. On March 18th the Central Committee of the Party had issued a manifesto based on the old Party programme:

It is the task of the working-class and the revolutionary army to create a Provisional Revolutionary Government which is to head the new republican order now in the process of birth. The Provisional Revolutionary Government must take upon itself to create temporary laws defending all the rights and

liberties of the people, to confiscate the lands of the monasteries and the landowners, the crown lands and appanages, to introduce the 8-hour work-day and to convoke a Constituent Assembly on the basis of universal, direct and equal suffrage, with no discrimination as to sex, nationality or religion, and with the secret ballot. . . .

Pravda had followed with leading articles proclaiming that "Our slogan is—pressure on the Provisional Government"—*i.e.*, to make it go the Bolshevik way. The new arrivals thus found a policy already formulated and in operation, which by no means answered the problems arising from the Revolution. The Central Committee, in fact, had spoken according to its written programme without first finding out whether the words were appropriate to the circumstances.

Stalin and Kamenev were put in charge of *Pravda*, and were at once faced with all the conundrums that events had so unexpectedly presented. Was this the "bourgeois democratic revolution" for which they had striven and to which they had directed the workers? If so, which was the real authority, the Provisional Government of the Duma or the Soviets? Or were both these bodies but temporary affairs pending the promised Constituent Assembly? The Bolsheviks were definitely puzzled.

They were opposed to the war, which they had denounced as Imperialist: the Provisional Government had assumed all the obligations of the Czar's Government and was for continuing the war. The Bolsheviks were in a minority in the Soviets, and the majority, who were followers either of Kerensky and the Socialist Revolutionary Party or of the Mensheviks, were likewise for the war.

The Bolsheviks began to grope towards a new orientation. Writing in *Pravda* two days after his arrival, Stalin said:

the Soviets had to hold on to the rights that have been won, in order to finish off the old forces and, in conjunction with the provinces, advance the Russian revolution still further. . . . They must consolidate their position, make the Soviets universal, and link them together under the ægis of the Central Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies as the organ of the revolutionary power of the people. . . .

Two days later he wrote: "We must tear the mask from the imperialist and reveal to the masses what is really behind the present war—but this means declaring real war on war, it means making the present war impossible." By the end of the first week he had got to the stage of saying that it was necessary to "mobilise all the living forces of the people against the counter-revolution. . . . The only body that can serve as this organ is a National Soviet of Workers',

Soldiers', and peasants' Deputies." "Groping" is the only appropriate word to describe such writing. The measure of Stalin's dissatisfaction with the position is the dissimilarity of these quotations to his usual lucid and emphatic style.

Fortunately for the Bolsheviks there was a man approaching from Geneva who was not groping. On April 16th, 1917, Stalin and other Bolshevik leaders went to meet Lenin at Byelo-ostrov and travelled with him to St. Petersburg. The story of Lenin's arrival has been variously told. He was in a hurry, and uninterested in bouquets and cheers. Of course he was happy to be back in Russia. But what had happened to the Party leaders? Why this groping and confusion? What sort of rubbish is this in *Pravda*—"to support the Provisional Government in so far as . . ."?

Lenin had not seen in advance that the revolution would take the form which marked these days. But not for a moment was he confused by them. With that amazing capacity of his for understanding history in the making, he analysed the situation and set forth his strategy for the party of insurrection. Day by day, ever since receiving the first news of the revolution, he had sent off his "Letters from Afar" from Geneva, but they had not reached *Pravda* until he himself arrived. On his way home he had written what have become famous as his "April Theses." On the day of his arrival he hastened from the railway station to the headquarters of the Party and put the Theses before the Party leaders.

No political bombshell ever burst with more telling effect. Anyone reading them had to make up his mind about them in a decisive way. They could not be side-tracked or dismissed as of no account. Whoever was groping for the forward path would find it lit up with blazing light. Whoever rejected them would have to fight as never before.

Lenin wrote:

The revolutionary proletariat could give their consent to a revolutionary war of defence only on condition (*a*) that all power was transferred to the proletariat and its ally, the poorest sector of the peasants, (*b*) that all annexations be renounced in deeds, not merely in words; (*c*) a complete break with all interests of capital.

The present situation represents a transition from the first stage of the revolution to its second stage, which is to place all power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest strata of the peasants. . . . Hence no support can be given to the Provisional Government. . . . The Bolsheviks are in a minority in the Soviets. They must win the majority. . . . No longer do we want a Parliamentary Republic, for that would mean a step backward. We must go forward to a *Republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', and*

Peasant Deputies. We must nationalise the land and merge the banks into one great National Bank controlled by the Soviets. Our immediate task is *not* to introduce Socialism but to bring all production under the control of the Soviet Government. . . . The confusion in the Party must be ended by a Party convention which will change the programme of the Party and bring it into line with the needs of the revolution . . .

Consternation took hold of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks alike. Lenin laid about his opponents with a vigour and an incisiveness which astounded friend and foe. Never had a leader dared so much. It was clear he was determined that the Bolshevik Party should accept his point of view or he would split it and form a new one. The fact that the whole Party was in an uncertain state of mind reduced the opposition to a minimum. Kamenev, who in all crises proved himself more a Menshevik than a Bolshevik, led what fight there was. Stalin listened, distressed that he had not seen the situation clearly from the first. The more he thought over the arguments advanced by Lenin, the more feeble his own policy appeared to him. He talked over the situation with Lenin, saw that his leader was right, and without further hesitation lined up with him for the coming struggle.

Years later, speaking of these events, Stalin said: "It is no wonder that the Bolsheviks, having been scattered by Czarism into prison and exile and only now able to come together from all the ends of Russia to work out a new platform, could not in one stroke find their way in the new situation . . . I shared my mistaken viewpoint with the majority of the Party, and surrendered it fully about the middle of April, adopting Lenin's April Theses."

This alibi comes very feebly across the years, and certainly tones down the importance of the Party crisis in those April days when Russia's millions were rising from their knees. Surely the bigness of the crisis cannot be measured by its two weeks' duration, but rather by its intensity. The fact is that none of the Bolshevik leaders agreed with Lenin because his proposals were so profound that they revolutionised the whole Party programme; and one may be forgiven for wondering what price the Russian workers and peasants would have had to pay in terms of bitter experience had not Lenin arrived and swept the Party into line behind him.

It may be asked, what of Trotsky in all this? The answer is that Trotsky who was not a member of the Bolshevik Party, had not returned from his self-imposed exile in the U.S.A, where he had formulated the demand for "No Czar, but a Workers' Government"—a demand which Lenin castigated as "playing at seizing power."

Fortunately for the Bolshevik Party and the fate of the Russian Revolution, Lenin and his April Theses had arrived. The road to the November Revolution

was made clear. The party of insurrection had still to prepare for the insurrectionary days that lay ahead, but it now *knew* that it had to prepare for them and how to prepare. And therein lay the great difference between the affairs of March and the affairs of April.

On the Road to Insurrection

There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood . . .—SHAKESPEARE

REVOLUTION grows. An insurrection is planned and organised. The art of leading a Socialist insurrection consists in fusing the insurrection with a growing workers' revolution and seizing power at the right moment. The "right moment" is that at which the most decisive forces of the revolution are supporting the party of insurrection and the enemy is weak and indecisive.

The March Revolution of 1917 was a revolution without an insurrection. The masses rose. Czardom collapsed. The Provisional Government of the Duma was the creation of the ruling classes in response to the revolutionary pressure of the workers, peasants, and soldiers forming the Soviets. It cannot be said the capitalists of Russia seized power. They received it as a legacy from Czardom. It simply fell into their hands, leaving them bewildered by the course of events. It is true they had been "creeping towards power," and their influence was growing, but they had never planned to seize power. So unprepared were they, indeed, for its exercise that they little knew what to do with it when they had got

it. They were obliged to act as the undertakers of Czardom, though even at so late a date they would have much preferred its resurrection in the form of a constitutional monarchy.

Meanwhile things were so wonderful! The happy days of the first release from a tyranny and the collapse of the old apparatus of government and administration infected everybody. Officers and men, employers and employees, publicly embraced, and all joined in singing the Marseillaise as if 1789 had repeated itself in all its glory. A sentimental ecstasy took the place of thought, and for a time it was as if the heart had become the thinking organ. The orators had great scope and the emotions full play.

Nevertheless, a revolution does not stand still. Legacies have their obligations and even mediocrities have to do something. It is a fact that when indecisive hands hold the reigns of government, especially in periods of revolution, all the different movements of opinion and interest have free scope and soon begin to resolve themselves into organisations for further struggle.

The period from March 17th, 1917, until November 7th, 1917, may be described rather as a prolonged revolutionary situation than a triumphant capitalist revolution. At no time in these eight months did the Provisional Government of the Duma show decisiveness or constructive purpose. It had not led the revolution, and had no desire to lead it. In fact it would have liked to carry on as if there had been no revolution. As the social forces swirled backwards and forwards and finally took definite shape around class interest, its leading figures stumbled blindly into office and out of it. They became decisive only when forced into defensive positions for their special interests or when pushed into action on behalf of their inherited obligations.

Of the 197 days of the Provisional Government—which changed both its form and personnel repeatedly—fifty-six were spent in governmental crises. At its birth the Grand Duke Michael shocked its members by refusing the succession, and Rodzianko the President of the Duma, who had bellowed to the crowds about “Mother Russia” and felt himself to be the legitimate Prime Minister of the new government, bowed resignedly when he was passed by and the Kadet Party gave the post to Prince Lvov. Within a few weeks Miliukov, the Foreign Minister, and Gutshkov, the War Minister, were forced to resign when the masses raised an outcry against their policy; and hardly had they passed to the rear than Lvov had to give way to Kerensky. The first Provisional Government had to give way to a second, the second to a third. Even Kerensky, though he retained his position as the various combinations succeeded each other, was never anything more than a cork bobbing on the crest of events until the revolutionary tidal wave of November 7th swept him away for ever.

When the Provisional Government behaved liberally it was because it had not the wit to be otherwise; and this was only at the beginning of the revolution, when it reflected the sense of freedom and the mood of the people at the collapse of the autocracy. The changing composition of the ministry then tells its own pathetic story. The first Provisional Government was composed of ten capitalist ministers and one Social Revolutionary (Kerensky). It was essentially a government of the Octobrists and the Kadets. Early in May, after the enforced resignation of Miliukov and Gutshkov, reconstruction led to more Social Revolutionaries being drawn in. Kerensky became the War Minister, Tchernov the Minister of Agriculture, Pereversev the Minister of Justice, Peschekhonov the Minister of Food, Skobolev—a Menshevik—Minister of Labour, and Tseretelli—another Menshevik—Minister of Posts and Telegraphs. The capitalists still held a majority; the ministry was a coalition of ten capitalists and six labour.

Now all kinds of congresses appeared on the scene—a Congress of Kadets, a Congress of Trade and Industry, a Congress of officers. The old State Duma showed signs of life, and even the old State Council of Czarist officials came together as the process of class grouping proceeded under the banner of the Coalition Government. The First Coalition Government was responsible for the renewal of military activities known as the July Offensive. That finished the First Coalition; the ten capitalist ministers resigned, leaving a government of Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. The more difficult the situation became for the capitalists the more dependent they became on the Labour Movement to "save the situation."

This rump of the First Coalition was responsible for the great slander campaign against Lenin, whom it accused of being a "German spy," and for the vigorous repression of the anti-war demonstrations in the capital. Having carried through this campaign, a third coalition government was formed in August (the rump of the First was reckoned as the Second). This had Kerensky at its head as President and Minister for War, a majority of Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and a number of the Kadet Party. The Third Coalition was formed on condition that the Labour Ministers were independent of the Soviets.

Having thus detached itself from the latter, the Provisional Government proceeded to set itself against the Soviets with a view finally to destroying them. It was to secure a wider "democratic" basis for this latter purpose that the Provisional Government, with the Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets, called a State Conference of selected bodies. The representations consisted of an overwhelming majority of generals, capitalists, and their supporters, and the Conference proved a means for General Kornilov to gather his forces for an attempt to establish a military dictatorship which would end

both the Kerensky régime and the Soviets. The Leningrad and Kronstadt Soviets, under the influence of the Bolsheviks, frustrated Kornilov's plan. Thereupon, in place of a State Conference, the Provisional Government staged a "Democratic Conference," but not before Kerensky had tried to set up his own directorate modelled on that of Kornilov, and for the same purpose. However, there was a great swing to the left throughout the country before he and his five "directors" could get fully into their stride, and the "all-in" Democratic Conference was the result. But ten leading spokesmen of the Coalition passed before the audience to little avail: the Movement outside the conference hall could not be stopped by platform speeches.

Lenin wrote at the time of this Democratic Conference:

During a revolution, millions and tens of millions learn in a week more than they do in a year of their ordinary somnolent life. For during a severe crisis in the life of the people it becomes particularly apparent what aims the various classes of people are pursuing, what forces they control, and what methods they resort to in action.

Against the elemental movement of millions of people the Provisional Government was helpless for three reasons which it did not comprehend and with which, had it comprehended them, it could not have dealt. With the collapse of Czardom had gone the collapse of its administration and the Provisional Government had not the means at its disposal to create a new administration in the midst of revolution. Out of what substance could it create a new police force, a new legal system, a new superstructure for society, when millions of workers, peasants, and soldiers were forming fresh organs of power with which they would decide who should order things to be done? The Government required social peace in which to create a new State apparatus, and social peace is not a feature of social revolution.

Still more fundamental was the fact that the revolution had its origin in the complete inability of the mixed capitalist and feudal economy of Czarist society to meet the economic demands of the war. The latter required from Russian economy the output of a great modern industrial society. The capitalists had proved, and were continuing to prove daily, that their method of organising production could not cope with the demands thrust upon it. The army was dissolving day by day because of the lack of equipment and food. The peasantry were hoarding food because they were not getting value for their goods. The workers in industry were ceasing to work because food was becoming increasingly difficult to get. There was thus a crisis in the process of production, and that crisis was beyond the power of the Provisional Government to control because it had no methods of production to introduce other than those of its predecessors. And week by week the economic situation moved on to

catastrophe.

This alone was enough to ensure the Provisional Government's powerlessness. But there was also the further embarrassment of its foreign policy, a legacy willingly inherited from Czardom, which committed it to a continuation of the war on account of the Secret Treaties and the pledges given to the Allied Powers. The attempt to stage an offensive in July, 1917, without regard for the economic crisis was calamitous. It aggravated social discontent in every direction, while the lack of supplies at the front increased the demoralisation and disaffection in the Army. Thus calamity was ever at the heels of the Provisional Government from the moment of its birth down to the last of the 197 futile days before the revolution swept it aside. Such a conclusion its members had neither planned for nor even foreseen.

Whatever the critics of Bolshevism may say, it has to be admitted that they not only saw the possibility of such a situation, but pursued a policy based on possibility becoming probability, and probability becoming certainty. They had put Marxism to the test of practice, and under Lenin's leadership it had proved reliable. It is true there had been crises in the Bolshevik ranks, and that even in the early days of the Revolution there had been an extraordinary crisis in which all the leaders of the Party, with the exception of Lenin, had slipped up badly in their understanding of the situation. Lenin had crashed in upon his colleagues at the beginning of April and again put the Party of his creation on the right path.

By speech and by pen he had, within two weeks, won over the Bolsheviks of Petrograd and Moscow and the majority of the Central Committee to his point of view. On May 7th to 12th, was held the all-Russian Congress of the Bolshevik Party. There were 151 delegates present, representing 80,000 members of the organisation throughout the country. Lenin led the fight for his "April Theses." Kamenev and Rykov led the opposition. Lenin won, and the "April Theses" became the guiding policy of the Party—the Party Line.

It was in these days of re-assimilation of the Bolshevik forces that a new period of Stalin's life began. This Congress witnessed the intimate relations of the two men thoroughly re-established. That Stalin, on his return from Siberia, had not fully appreciated the nature of the new developments of the revolution and had failed to see them as Lenin saw them, was not held against him. He was re-elected to the Central Committee of the Party, and also to the Political Bureau of the Central Committee, here created for the first time; and he has remained a member of this most powerful body from that day to this. In its hands is vested the political direction and authority of the Party in respect of all its activities between Central Committee meetings. The Central Committee was in charge of three secretaries; Stalin was one of them, and at the same time one of the editors of the Party newspaper, *Pravda*.

I think it is true to say that even at thus stage in the history of the Bolshevik Party, no other member had so much executive and administrative responsibility. Lenin of course was the acknowledged political leader and functioned as chairman. Stalin was his chief of staff by virtue of the positions just enumerated; and as the insurrection drew near he will be seen in the leading staff organisations which prepared it.

There were two other men in this central group of the Party who also possessed remarkable executive ability, Sverdlov and Dzerzhinsky. With Stalin and Lenin these men formed a remarkable combination and steered the Revolution through its most difficult years. Lenin, first of the four, the "genius of revolution" at the height of his powers, was forty-seven years of age, physically sturdy, burning with energy, a superb leader of men. Sverdlov, not yet forty, was lanky, black-haired, spectacled, powerful-voiced, a superb organiser who had made his name as a leading Bolshevik far away in the towns at the foot of the Urals. A foundation member of the Party, one of its first executive members, he had been banished to the same place as Stalin in 1913. Felix Dzerzhinsky was a Pole who had formed the Social Democratic Party of Poland, and under Lenin's influence became a Bolshevik. He was tall, well-built, with a head and face, when I met him in his later years, like the classic paintings of the Man of Nazareth. He was an intellectual, born of a Polish landlord family in Lithuania. Prison had been his main university. At the time of the Revolution he was forty-five. He was to become the first organiser of the "Red Terror"—not a job he liked but it was one he fulfilled with that integrity and efficiency which marked everything he did. He was a man of great faith and conviction as well as ability, and had he had a choice of work after the revolution had triumphed he would have become the Minister or Commissar of Education. And in this he would have shone brilliantly.

Stalin at this time of preparation for the "grand assault" was thirty-eight, fit and ready for the struggle. Always cool and shrewd, sound in his judgement of men, he knew how to organise them and give them responsibility. He and his fellow-leaders were tireless in their labours and completely absorbed by them. Some people write history as if the leadership of revolution consisted only of making speeches and writing articles. But somebody has to organise the meetings, organise the speakers, arrange for them to go here and go there, establish team-work in every department, build up the party of revolution, educate its members, spread them into the factories and workshops, the Soviets, the Army, the Navy, the transport services and the countless departments where the masses employed are going to play a decisive part in the great transformation. This work was not confined to Petrograd and Moscow. The 80,000 Bolsheviks were spread over a great area of Russia, and in the course of eight months were to increase to 300,000 who in turn. were to lead millions.

These figures alone indicate the magnitude of the task undertaken. For the enrolment was not a mere recording of names of those who adhered to the Bolshevik programme. They had to be organised for work. They were the material of the collective leadership. The three secretaries of the Central Committee held in their hands the threads of every activity of the Party from headquarters to the remotest group of Bolsheviks to be found in Russia. They were in action day and night, sleeping only when forced to break off from sheer exhaustion.

For most of the time that Stalin was in Petrograd he made his home with the Alleluievs, his old-time friends from Georgia. This meant he had somewhere to sleep when he could. But his days and nights were spent in committee meetings and journeys, editorial meetings, arranging for the publication of pamphlets, periodicals, and the writing of articles, meeting district organisers, committees, groups, attending conferences, arranging central committee meetings and political bureau meetings, preparing demonstrations, attending factory meetings and Soviet meetings, and, not least, organising the arming of the workers. No one who has not been at close quarters and witnessed the fullness of the activities of leading Bolsheviks can imagine the intensity of their work and the completeness of their absorption in it.

The Congress which elected Stalin to the Central Committee and made clear the new policy of the Party was the first and last legal conference of the Bolshevik Party held in Russia prior to the November Revolution. Even while it was assembling, another critical stage in the evolution of revolution was reached. The great May Day Demonstrations of Petrograd were made the occasion for Miliukov and Gutshkov to announce the adherence of the Provisional Government to the war aims of the Czar. This ended the happy era of liberty and fraternity of the classes. The days immediately following saw demonstrations of a new kind. Soldiers and workers poured into the streets to denounce the war policy of the Government. Their hopes of peace negotiations were shattered, and they were angry. They marched from the barracks and factories to the Tauridier Palace to protest. The middle classes, officers, and gentry marched down Nevsky Prospect under the leadership of the Kadet Party supporting the Government. Lenin could not have provided evidence more apt than that given by the Government and the demonstrations.

The Soviets, as yet composed largely of Social Revolutionaries and Menshevik delegates, forced the resignation of Miliukov and Gutshkov, not because they were pro-war and the Mensheviks and their allies against the war—for these also were pro-war—but because they objected to the open imperialist character of the speeches. With the removal of Gutshkov, Kerensky became Minister for War. At once he began the fateful preparations for the July

Offensive without regard for the conditions in the rear, the food situation and the capacity of Russian industry to provide the Army with fighting equipment. His policy was that of his predecessors. Again great protest meetings and demonstrations were held in the capital, and the cry grew loud and strong—"Down with the ten capitalist ministers! All Power to the Soviets of Workers and Soldiers and Peasant deputies! Bread! Peace! Freedom!"

Here was clear evidence, as the thousands, carrying hundreds of banners bearing these slogans, marched to the Tauridier Palace, that the Bolsheviks were giving coherence and conscious purpose to the feelings of the masses. Nevertheless, on July 1st the offensive was opened. Disaster at once followed, and again there were mass demonstrations and revolt. This time the ten capitalist ministers resigned and on July 15th left the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks with full responsibility for the repression of the armed demonstrations of soldiers and workers. Clever manœuvring! Perhaps a little too clever.

The occasion put the Bolshevik leadership to the test as never before. The soldiers and the workers of Petrograd especially were angry and militant. The Kadets and the officers, still possessing considerable military strength, were waiting for the Government to repress the demonstrators. They were waiting also for the Bolsheviks to give the call for insurrection. The Government was still tied to the Executive of the Soviets, and the parties of the Government still held a majority in the Soviets. Had the Bolsheviks made this the moment to seize power they would have led the masses into war against the Soviets as well as against the Provisional Government; and such an action was exactly the hope of the Kadets and officers. They were waiting for the workers and soldiers to have a civil war of their own, and at the right moment they would step in with a "whiff of grape shot" to restore order under a military dictatorship. Thus the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks were to begin the counter-revolution, and the militarists and Kadets complete it.

Soldiers, sailors and workers, half a million strong and bearing arms, poured into the streets of Petrograd. Stalin relates how on July 16th,

there was a city conference of Bolsheviks discussing municipal questions. It was interrupted by a soldier from a machine-gun regiment informing them that workers and soldiers had decided to rise and were sending out delegates to the regiments and factories. At four o'clock the Central Committee under Lenin's chairmanship met to decide the course of the Bolsheviks. It decided against action. I was commissioned to carry the decision to the session of the Executive Committee of the Soviets. I conveyed all the facts, I proposed that they take the necessary measures. At five o'clock the city conference adopted a similar resolution. All participants went to their districts and factories to restrain the

masses from rising. At seven o'clock two regiments appeared outside the Party's headquarters carrying banners reading "All Power to the Soviets." Two of our comrades came out to persuade the soldiers to return to the barracks. They were met with cries of "Down!" This had never happened before. At this time a procession of workers came up with the cry "All Power to the Soviets."

Here was a critical situation indeed. The masses felt themselves ready, and were appealing to the Party which had prepared them, to lead them to the assault. What a test for leadership! Lenin and his colleagues knew that if they did not come out at the head of the demonstrations and lead the attack they would lose the confidence of the masses, at least for a time; and that time would be valuable, for in the hour of their weakness they would be liable to incur the full weight of the Government's repressive measures. Yet they knew they had not yet a majority in the Soviets of Petrograd and Moscow, and that the peasants were still under the influence of the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks.

It was Stalin who negotiated with the Soviet Executive and made it clear that "we are not rising against the Soviets." It was he who was sent to the Peter and Paul Fortress to persuade the rebel soldiers to vacate their positions. Thus the Bolsheviks succeeded in transforming a widespread and spontaneous uprising into peaceful demonstrations. Yet in spite of their efforts there was some street fighting. The Government declared martial law, and felt its turn had arrived. By the 19th of July it was on the offensive against the Bolsheviks and the workers and soldiers who had demonstrated. The Bolsheviks were held responsible for all that had happened and accused of an attempted insurrection. Now began the great "German spy" campaign against Lenin already alluded to. The Party headquarters were sacked. The offices of *Pravda* were raided and the paper closed down. The printing-press was smashed. Leaders were arrested wholesale and Petrograd ransacked to find Lenin.

On the evening of July 22nd, four men could have been seen walking along the crowded boulevard of Petrograd towards the railway station from which the trains leave for Finland. They were Lenin, Zinoviev, Stalin and Alleluiev. The two latter were guarding the two former as they manœuvred them on to a train that was to take them to a pre-arranged hiding-place in the forests in the environs of Petrograd; for the Central Committee of the Party had decreed that on no account must Lenin or Zinoviev be allowed to fall into the hands of the Government forces. The mad campaign alleging them to be pro-German was so fierce that had they been caught they would have been lynched long before they could have been brought to prison. The Volynsky Regiment, which had been the first to participate in the revolutionary uprisings of March, was so inflamed that it pledged itself to effect their arrest.

Thus once again the full responsibility for leading the Bolshevik Party fell

upon the shoulders of Stalin, aided by Sverdlov and Dzerzhinsky. The Party headquarters were in ruins. New ones had to be found. A new paper and a new press had to be discovered. The wave of reaction had to be beaten back and the Party strengthened . . . New headquarters were found, a new printing-press was secured. *Pravda* reappeared under another name.

During this time Trotsky, with his small group of supporters known as Mezrayontsi, had not yet joined up with the Bolsheviks. Arriving in Petrograd after the "April Crisis" of the Party and the firm establishment of the new policy, the group declared itself in agreement with Lenin. In the meetings of the Petrograd Soviet, Trotsky had supported the Bolsheviks most powerfully. But when the Provisional Government attacked the Bolsheviks they let Trotsky alone. Again he declared himself a supporter of Lenin's policy, and asked to be arrested, which he was, and imprisoned. This had its publicity value for him and increased his popularity among the masses, but it cannot be said that it gave leadership to those masses or helped in any way to carry out the stupendous task of reassembling the Bolshevik forces and developing their organisation under the Provisional Government's repressive blows. Certainly, Trotsky was to play an important rôle in the leadership of the Bolshevik Party and to be a power in carrying through what every member believed to be its great historic task; but not yet. These were still the days when Stalin was the unquestioned deputy of Lenin. Now his unrivalled experience as a party builder in conditions of illegality was given full scope. The fact that he was no orator holding the platform in the spotlight of publicity was an asset, for it led his enemies to underestimate his power and gave him greater freedom of movement.

If there is any doubt about either the confidence of Lenin in his deputy or the latter's standing in the ranks of the Bolshevik Party, his rôle in the all-Russian Party Conference, held within a month of the Government attack and the many arrests, should remove that doubt. The Conference was held under conditions of illegality. The three secretaries of the Central Committee prepared it, and Stalin was the principal reporter of the main questions before it.

Before the smashing attack of the Government began, the Party had grown to 240,000. It had forty-one publications, twenty-nine in Russian and twelve in other languages. Although the frenzied campaign against it was still at its height when the Conference was in session (July 26th to August 3rd), 157 delegates attended. That it had to meet secretly signifies the tenseness of the relations between the classes. Superficially it appeared the ruling forces of the old régime were about to effectively re-establish themselves. At no time since March 17th had they felt so confident. The Provisional Government had been detatched from the influence of the Soviets; through it now the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks were repressing the Bolsheviks and devitalising the Soviets; the

military leaders under Kornilov, the General in charge of the military forces of Petrograd, were preparing for an open military dictatorship. Nevertheless the Conference of Bolsheviks had not met to wind up their affairs but to continue their progress along the road to power; and in fact, less than fourteen weeks were to elapse from the final session of this Conference before the Bolshevik Party swept the Provisional Government aside and established the Republic of Soviets.

Stalin, as head of the conference, was able to say that by July 10th the Party had been able to issue a new paper, *Worker and Soldier*, in place of *Pravda*. The Bolsheviks did not regard the actions of the Provisional Government as evidence of strength and confidence in the situation. On the contrary, Stalin summed up the situation before the Party and the workers of Russia in these words: “Only one thing remains, namely, to take power by force, by overthrowing the Provisional Government. And only the proletariat in alliance with the poor peasants can take power by force.”

Such a conclusion was based on the knowledge that not one of the basic problems confronting the Revolution had been dealt with by the Government. The food situation was worsening daily. The Army and Navy were being called on to do the impossible. And the masses were turning to the Bolsheviks for leadership.

The Conquest of Power

Beat on the street the march of rebellion,
Sweeping over the heads of the proud;
We, the flood of the second deluge,
Shall wash the world like a bursting cloud.—V. MAYAKOVSKY

AT the Sixth Congress of the Bolshevik Party, held during the July-August days of repression, two incidents occurred which were later to prove of great moment in Stalin's life. They were not so regarded at the time; events had yet to confirm their great personal significance, although their political importance was recognised, in part, immediately. It was here on Stalin's proposal, obviously with the approval of Lenin, that Leon Trotsky and the Mezrayontsi were admitted to the Party. The group consisted of former Bolsheviks and Mensheviks who, since 1913, had vacillated between the two divisions, criticising both and sometimes supporting one, sometimes the other, and occasionally neither. The group now declared it accepted the programme and policy of the Bolsheviks without reservation, and asked to be admitted.

It would appear at first that Trotsky here brought to an end his fifteen years' quarrel with the Bolsheviks, by admitting that they were right and he wrong. Such a conclusion, however, over-simplifies the meaning of the event. Trotsky was a man of great ability, a first-class orator and journalist. He was of the same age as Stalin and of about the same height and figure, but of an entirely different personality. Trotsky's sharp features and inevitable pince-nez, his quick nervous movements, sharp tongue and quick wit, reflected the superb egotist who saw history as a drama staged to show him as producer, manager, and leading actor. He would eventually write history, based on the theme "I and the Russian Revolution." He had a great capacity for generalisation but lacked the balance imparted by the scientific method and therefore often generalised too soon and short-circuited history with grand phrases, for he was a lover of words and their sounds. When he joined the Bolshevik Party he did not regard it as a collective body which would have any power over him. On the contrary, he regarded his joining as a means of acquiring power over the Party and becoming second-in-command to Lenin. He himself wrote of the action in words which are very self-revealing: "Trotsky came to Lenin as to a teacher whose power and significance he understood later than many others, but perhaps more fully than they." A less conceited person would have left the latter observation to others. The egotist could not wait.

Stalin, however, knew how to wait. His capacity for waiting has often annoyed friend and foe. Histrionics were not among his qualities. He moved or appeared to move more slowly than Trotsky, perhaps because he was not interested in firework displays or mental gymnastics. He had, and has, a remarkable memory, and analysis is his favourite method of exposition. Above all he is a collective worker *i.e.* one who works with a group or team, probably more so than Lenin, a superb organiser of men and work. He was by no means a "yes-man" of Lenin, but a convinced disciple, striving always to make Lenin's principles his own. He lacked the refinements of those who, while he organised the submerged proletariat of the Caucasus and was laying the fuses of the Revolution in hard and difficult places, had rubbed shoulders with Western intellectuals. The older he got the more he gave the impression of possessing great reserves of strength and sureness of grip.

When he proposed that Trotsky and his colleagues be admitted to the Party he was little concerned about the personal relations between Trotsky and himself. These had hardly yet begun, although there had been a few political skirmishes between them in the press. The admission of the newcomers to Bolshevism he regarded as a necessary measurer and he proposed it without any doubt that the Party could assimilate them and handle any dissidents, however big or important they might be.

The second incident was to have its echoes throughout the later years; Preobrazhensky, later an ardent devotee of Trotsky, moved to amend the resolution on the conquest of power, which Stalin had proposed to the Congress. This amendment asked the delegate to declare that the country could be directed towards Socialism *only in the event of a proletarian revolution in the West*. Trotsky was not present or he would then have shown how superficial and temporary was his unity with the Bolsheviks.

Here was the issue which was to form the great divide in the Bolshevik ranks. Could Russia advance to Socialism without a revolution in the West? Lenin had already answered the question in unequivocal terms in his writings, but it was not then an issue affecting the immediate policy of the Party. It was soon to become a fundamental question affecting the whole course of the Revolution, the future of the Soviet Government and the as yet unborn Communist International, but as it was not yet urgent the debate was a little academic. Stalin answered Preobrazhensky with these words:

The possibility is not excluded that Russia will be the country that will lay the road to Socialism. . . . We must discard the antiquated idea that only Europe can show us the way. There is dogmatic Marxism and creative Marxism. I stand by the latter.

There was not a big debate on the question. Stalin's resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority, and there were no immediate echoes. The lightning had flashed, but the thunder only came a long while afterwards. At the same time it is true to say that had Stalin's statement been broadcast to the world, the whole Socialist and Labour movement would have laughed it out of court. All the "Marxist" schools of Western Socialism, as well as the other schools of Socialist thought, held the view that Socialism must come first in the most highly developed capitalist countries; and the majority of them held the view that it would come through parliamentary democracy. The Bolshevik Party was comparatively unknown to the Western Socialists. A few German and Austrian Socialists were acquainted with the Russians, but even if all the parties of the West had known of the Bolshevik Party and its doctrines, the Marxists would have rejected them as non-Marxist and the rest would have rejected them because they were revolutionary. And all would have accused Lenin and Stalin of being Utopian visionaries for thinking it possible for Russia to lead the world in Socialism.

Although the Bolsheviks were the product of international Marxism their evolution had been practically ignored, and their inner struggles dismissed as examples of the Russian intellectual's flare for doctrinaire disputation. The fact is that the Bolsheviks had seized upon the revolutionary content of Marxism which international Socialism had shed, and step by step had given it a specifically Russian application. This was of course perfectly natural. When Stalin made his statement concerning Socialism in one country it never entered his head that this was a denial of the international significance and character of the Russian Revolution. Nor was he accused of such a denial. It was only later, when Trotsky took his stand on the principle that at least a European Revolution must precede the possibility of Socialism in Russia that Stalin's statement was turned into a denial of world revolution. Actually the two theories had flashed across the Congress without its full recognition of their implication. In fact neither theory has ever been fully developed. Certainly it is true to say that up to this time the theory of international revolution had hardly got beyond the stage of a few sweeping generalisations and assumptions, while the idea of Socialism first coming to fruition in a backward country had just been born. Preobrazhinsky's proposal was really a derivative from Western Marxism, which had sloganised certain principles and generalised a process without sufficient examination of the data. Marx had concluded the "Communist Manifesto" with the stirring call "Workers of all Lands, Unite!" Unite for what? Obviously an international revolution. "Capitalism is international! The workers have no country!" The exploited of all lands must answer the international combinations of the capitalists with the Socialist International! From such general principles and slogans, and not from any careful analysis of the world of capitalism, came the idea of an international simultaneous revolution. In the

minds of the Russians who seized upon this idea was also the Menshevik theory that the proletariat of Russia could not lead the Russian Revolution to Socialism because of the country's technical backwardness. Therefore, argued the Mensheviks who had become Bolsheviks, the working-class of Russia must be reinforced by the technically advanced industrial proletariat of Europe before it can advance to Socialism. And so it appeared on the face of things that the original Bolsheviks were less revolutionary than the converted Mensheviks.

Stalin, however, had derived his idea from Lenin, who was the first Marxist to formulate what is known as the "law of unequal development of capitalism." He had written in 1916:

The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in various countries. It cannot be otherwise under the commodity production system. From this it follows irrefutably that Socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously in all countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while others will remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois for some time . . . [1]

Stalin was thus reiterating the teaching of Lenin and by no means expounding a new notion of his own. But there were no immediate repercussions from the incident. Nor did he proceed to set before the Congress the task of building Socialism immediately after they had conquered power. On the contrary, he followed the course which Lenin had so emphatically advocated in his fight for his "April Theses." The immediate task before the Revolution after the conquest of power would be to secure peace, nationalise the banks, establish workers' control over production and distribution, and give the land to the peasants. Standing before the 285 delegates, Stalin quietly but firmly brought them to the main task with these words—"Only one thing remains, namely, to take power by force. . . ." He carried the Congress with him.

Outside the hall events were moving swiftly towards that decisive moment when his declaration would be fulfilled. On August 1st, 1917, General Kornilov was made Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of Russia and on the very day that the Bolshevik Congress finished its proceedings he demanded the introduction of the death penalty in the rear as well as at the front. Kornilov was a Cossack—"a simple Cossack," some writers describe him. Sir Bernard Pares says of him that he had the vaguest understanding of politics and allowed himself to be directed in them by Zavayko, a financier with the ambition to become Minister of Finance. Kornilov's simple understanding of the situation was, however, sufficient for him to plot a military dictatorship with himself as military dictator.

When on August 12th Kerensky convoked a Council of State in Moscow, it consisted almost wholly of representatives of the landlords, capitalists, generals,

officers, and Cossacks. The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries were there in a minority representing the Soviets. Stalin and his colleagues thereupon set the Bolshevik Party into action and led strikes of protest in the streets of Moscow and other cities. Kerensky boasted to the Council of State that he would suppress the revolutionary movement "by iron and blood." Kornilov went a step farther, and bluntly demanded that "the committees and Soviets be abolished." Supported financially by bankers, merchants, and manufacturers, he quickly set his troops in motion on the plea that the Bolsheviks were planning an uprising in the capital for August 27th. Kerensky increased his terror against the Bolsheviks, and then suddenly took alarm at the movement of the masses towards them. Fearful lest they would sweep away both Kornilov and the Provisional Government, he made an abrupt change of front and turned against the General.

On August 25th Kornilov moved the Third Mounted Corps under General Krymos against Petrograd. The action ended the doubts and fears of the masses with regard to the Bolsheviks. Lenin, of course, in constant communication with Stalin, directed matters from his hiding-place, but it was Stalin who implemented Lenin's policy with practical decisions on the spot, guiding the Party press and leading the Bolshevik forces into action. The moment Kornilov began to move his troops the Bolsheviks struck. The Central Committee of the Party called the workers and soldiers to armed resistance. Red Guard detachments of armed workers from the factories grew rapidly. The trade unions were mobilised. Armed sailors by the thousand arrived from Kronstadt. Delegates went out to meet the "Savage Division" with the force of an idea. Then as soon as the Cossack troops realised they were being used to destroy the Soviets, they refused to advance. Agitators were sent to other Kornilov units, while the mobilising of soldiers and workers for the armed defence of Petrograd went on apace.

Kerensky having so changed his tune that he was now appealing to the Bolsheviks for aid against Kornilov, had released Bolshevik prisoners, among whom was Trotsky. The Kornilov revolt collapsed; and that began the great change in the composition of the Soviets. During July, when the Provisional Government of Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had been conducting its campaign of slander and repression against the Bolsheviks, the Soviets sank to such a low level of ineffectiveness that the Bolsheviks had to suspend their slogan of "All Power to the Soviets" and appeal directly to the masses in the factories and Army units. Now the tide had turned. At once new energy poured into the Soviets. Factories and military units held new elections, turned out the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, and elected Bolsheviks. The day following the Kornilov defeat the Petrograd Soviet supported the Bolsheviks. Moscow followed. Other cities and towns fell into line.

During September and October the masses everywhere got into their stride. The peasants in great numbers seized the landed estates, ploughed up the fields of the landlords, pushed the landlords aside, and divided up the land among themselves. Neither punitive expeditions nor coaxing could stop them. The Provisional Government wired to the Provincial officials—"Seizures of property are damaging the cause of the Revolution—put a stop to it and bring about order." Shingarov, a Government Minister, wired—"A solution of the land question without legal enactment by the Government as a whole cannot be permitted." How familiar the tune! It must be that all governments from the day of the first labour dispute recorded the formula and passed it on from generation to generation for appropriate use. Bureaucrats everywhere and at all times have seemed incapable of learning that the sea of human unrest can never be swept back by the broom of a legal formula. From the county of Kursk came the report of the Commissar: "In the village of Ipsyagach, in the Spass District, anarchy reigns supreme. The peasants are storming the gardens and looting. Resistance was offered the Commissar and fifty soldiers. The owners, who have fled, ask for protection." From the Province of Tambovsk came the account of the destruction of the property of Prince Vnazensky: "Two thousand peasants stormed the grounds and arrested the Prince. He was guarded by three militiamen chosen by the crowd, who took him to Gryaze, where he was brutally murdered by the soldiers. The crowd then destroyed the adjacent grounds of Velyamenatch. The local garrison is unreliable. The dragoons sent from Tambovsk are insufficient. Unrest is growing."[2] The fighting grew in bitterness. By September, thirty-five out of seventy-five districts in the Central Province were in the throes of violent movements.

In the towns conditions were moving from bad to worse. The budget deficit in 1916, the last year before the fall of the Czar, was 76 per cent of the total expenditure. In 1917 it grew to 82 per cent. Inflation covered the deficit with inevitable consequences. Production declined. In 1916 Russia produced 616 locomotives for ordinary use and 215 for special war purposes. In 1917 the figures were 410 and 69 respectively. The production of industry in fifty-eight provinces of European Russia in 1916 rose to 121.5 per cent, above production in 1913, but during 1917 fell to 77.3 per cent of 1913. Wages in industry fell from 24.7 roubles a month in 1916 to 21.2 roubles in 1917. In 1916 there was a monthly issue of 288.1 million paper roubles. During the eight months of the Provisional Government the monthly issue rose to 1,175,000,000 roubles. Prices soared to fantastic levels. In Moscow the price index of the Finance Commissariat showed prices in 1917 to be 870 per cent above those of 1913. And the Army was melting away. General Dukhonin reported to Kerensky in August 1917 that it had lost 2,000,000 dead, 5,000,000 wounded, 2,000,000 prisoners and 2,000,000 deserters.

The grimness deepened. Petrograd, the seat of Government, is at the best of times not the most cheerful of cities when September and October creep upon it. The skies are dull. Heavy grey clouds hang overhead and rain falls drenchingly. The days shorten. Darkness settles over all at three in the afternoon and remains until ten the next morning. As the weeks pass the rain turns to sleet until the frosts finally bind the thick blankets of snow upon the land throughout the long winter months. But now there were added troubles. Food was scarce. There was milk for only one-half of the city's babies, and adults saw next to none. The allowance of bread fell week by week down to one quarter of a pound per head per day. There was inevitable and unending queueing for basic necessities. Cold winds swept up the Neva from the Gulf of Finland. The terror of hunger pushed its way into apartment houses and flats, and armed guards had to be appointed by the inhabitants to protect the people from hungry house-breakers.

While the Provisional Government passed its days and nights in successive crises and the working people queued and splashed through the drenching autumn rains of Petrograd's darkening days, the parasitic elements of society carried on as usual, though perhaps a little more hectically. Ladies drank their tea and the gentlemen proved their stamina with vodka. The theatres were crowded. The glorious voice of Chaliapin held admiring crowds. The feminine intelligentsia listened to lectures on theosophy, astrology, and similar topics. And Moscow "Society" rivalled that of Petrograd.

But everywhere, in cities and towns, there were ceaseless meetings, demonstrations, protests, conferences of co-operatives, Soviets, priests, officers, gatherings of factory committees, assemblies of soldiers in the trenches and barracks. Smolny Institute, a one-time school for the daughters of ladies, had been taken over by the Petrograd Soviet and was now also the headquarters of the Bolsheviks. From Smolny every day poured loads of political literature of all kinds.

In the midst of this massive process of disintegration and ferment the Provisional Government was apprehensive, and Kerensky wondered what he could do to discredit the Bolsheviks in the eyes of the masses. It was clear to everyone that the Petrograd garrison had "gone Bolshevik." He therefore thought out a scheme to remove it and replace it with "reliable" troops. He instructed the General Staff to send it to defend Reval, and to bring "uncontaminated" forces into Petrograd to "restore order." It was unfortunate for the scheme that Dybenko, the representative of the Kronstadt sailors, was present at the Petrograd Soviet when the question of the defence of Reval was raised. Dybenko told the Soviet that the Kronstadt sailors would take care of Reval. "We will guarantee to defend Reval if you will stay in Petrograd and defend the Revolution." That finished the Kerensky scheme for the removal of

the garrison.

It was at this time also that Stalin went to see Lenin in Finland, where they worked out plans for the final stages of the insurrection. Immediately on his return the Party Central Committee appointed a Military Revolutionary Committee consisting of Stalin, Sverdlov, Bubnov, Uritsky and Dzerzhinsky. This military committee had to prepare the insurrection not only in Petrograd but in Moscow and other large centres.

The formation of the Red Guards in the factories for the defence of Petrograd against Kornilov provided the Military Committee with increasing numbers of men ready to fight. No sooner had the change in the political complexion of the Soviets become apparent than the preparation for the transfer of power to them became the order of the day again. But there was a shortage of arms. Stalin did not repeat the tactics of the St. Petersburg Soviet of 1905 and call upon the Government to form a militia under the local authorities. Instead he called a conference of the Bolshevik delegates of the Putilov Arms factory in Petrograd and gave them on behalf of the Petrograd Soviet a written requisition for 5,000 rifles. A deputation of 500 militant workmen presented the order to the management, and received immediate delivery. In 1905 Stalin had said, "There are three things we need: the first is arms, the second is arms, and the third is still more arms." In 1917 he got them. Nothing was to be left to chance. He wrote in *Pravda* appealing to the soldier deserters to join the Red Guards.

The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, deeply concerned with this progress of the Bolsheviks and their own waning influence, convened an All-Russian Democratic Conference. They still held firmly to the view that power should not pass to the Soviets but to a Constituent Assembly and a bourgeois Parliamentary Republic. The conference consisted of representatives of the Socialist Parties (Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries), the Soviets in which these parties had a majority, the Zemstvos, trades unions, and commercial, industrial, and military circles. It was this conference that set up the Provisional Council of the Republic which became known as the Pre-Parliament—an obvious attempt to stem the course of the Revolution at an hour when questions of constitutions and forms of government meant little, unless at the same time they gave immediate answers to the demand for "Peace and Bread."

The Bolshevik Central Committee decided to boycott the Pre-Parliament, although a faction of Bolsheviks appeared at the conference and on the fourth day was withdrawn. For the majority of Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, Stalin, and also, now, Trotsky, it was by this time all or nothing. They must either seize power or perish. Behind the smoke screen of the Pre-Parliament a second Kornilov affair was in preparation. There could be no further delay without disaster in forcing the preparations for the insurrection. The Bolsheviks were in

a majority in the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets, and through them they convened the second All-Russian Congress of Soviets for the second half of October.

But not all the Bolshevik leaders were in favour of the course the Party was taking. On October 7th Lenin returned from Finland. On October 10th the Central Committee met to make its historic decision:

Considering therefore that an armed uprising is inevitable and that the time for it is fully ripe, the Central Committee instructs all the Party organisations to be guided accordingly, and to discuss and decide all practical questions . . . from this point of view.

Two members, Kamenev and Zinoviev, voted against the resolution outright, denouncing it as adventurism. And then came the first dispute between Stalin and Trotsky—not a big affair, but a forerunner of much to follow. Trotsky moved an amendment proposing that the uprising should not be started before the Second Congress of Soviets met. Stalin was opposed to any delay. He was the representative of the Political Bureau on the Party's Military Revolutionary Committee, and all other committees worked under its direction. The Petrograd Soviet set up a Military Committee with Trotsky as chairman, but it was composed entirely of Bolsheviks answerable to the Political Bureau through Stalin. The defection of Kamenev and Zinoviev and the publication of their denunciation of the proposed uprising in a non-party paper gave full publicity to the preparations already afoot and much which should have been kept secret. Lenin angrily denounced them as "traitors" and "strike-breakers," and demanded their expulsion from the Party. The Central Committee denounced them, but refrained from the drastic course of expulsion. It disciplined them into the Revolution.

But the publicity made any delay all the more dangerous. The Provisional Government called a meeting to decide extraordinary measures against the Bolsheviks. On November 1st it summoned troops from the front to Petrograd, intending them to occupy the Smolny Institute, the headquarters of the Bolsheviks, on the eve of the Second Congress of the Soviets. It was too late. Stalin, Sverdlov, Dzerzhinsky, Trotsky and Uritsky were at their posts. The time for disputation was gone. On the morning of November 6th, Kerensky ordered the suppression of the Bolshevik press and dispatched armoured cars to the premises. But Stalin had mobilised Red Guards, who drove off Kerensky's forces and stood ward over the press. At 11 a.m. the Party's paper *Rabochy Put* ("The Workers' Path") came out with a call for the overthrow of the Provisional Government. The insurrection had begun. Red Guards from the factories, Revolutionary soldiers from the Petrograd Garrison, and the Kronstadt sailors, moved into their pre-arranged positions and on to the attack. Railway

stations, Post Office, Telegraph Office, the Ministries, the State Bank, were occupied. The cruiser *Aurora* moved up the Neva and trained its guns on the Winter Palace. Lenin moved to Smolny Institute and with Stalin took charge of the uprising.

At 2.35 p.m. on the afternoon of November 7th, Trotsky, Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, and its Military Revolutionary Committee, announced to the assembled deputies:

I declare in the name of the Military Revolutionary Committee that the Provisional Government has ceased to exist. Some Ministers are arrested. The rest will be arrested in the next few days or hours. The revolutionary garrison, which is under the command of Military Revolutionary Committee, has dissolved the meeting of the Pre-Parliament. It has been said that the rising of the garrison would at least lead to pogroms and that the revolution would be drowned in blood. To the best of our knowledge there has not been a single victim. There is no other example of a revolution known to me in history in which such great masses took part and which was so bloodless. The power of the Provisional Government, with Kerensky at its head was dead and was only waiting for the broom of history to sweep it away . . .

Trotsky was followed by Lenin; and while they were addressing the Petrograd Soviet, Stalin was directing the revolutionary armed contingents to all the decisive points of the city. He was not in the limelight, but in his hands were the reins which guided forces in accordance with the collective will. At 3.15 p.m. soldiers of the Pavlov Regiment held up the traffic on Nevsky Prospect. At 3.45 p.m. troops of the Military Revolutionary Committee occupied Kazan Square. At 6 p.m. the Winter Palace was invested. At 10.45 the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets opened in Smolny Institute. At the call of the Presidium of the Congress Lenin stepped on to the platform, facing the assembled deputies. When the seemingly never-ending ovation which greeted him had at last subsided he began to speak—"We shall now proceed to construct the Socialist order. . . ."

Thus the first Soviet Socialist Government stepped on to the stage of history. And while its declarations on this day echoed round the world the harassed Kerensky dived into an American motor-car and fled.

Notes

1. *War programme of the Revolution*, Collected Works, Vol. XIX, p. 325, Russ. ed.

2. Report of District Commissar, August 25th.

First Things First

The nation which first achieves socialism will see all the frenzied powers of reaction hurled against it at the same time. It will be lost if it is not prepared to seize a sword, to answer bullet with bullet, so that the working class of other countries may have time to organise and rise in its turn.—JAURÈS

IT was one thing for the Bolsheviks to seize power, another for them to hold it. That they knew. The seizure of power did not mean the end of civil war. On the contrary, it meant that the civil war would soon burst into unexampled fury and stir class passions throughout the world. The audacity of Lenin and his Bolshevik Party shocked the traditional rulers of countries far beyond the frontiers of Russia. Those among them who were not speechless with indignation strained the limits of their national vocabularies for words of abuse. Their passion warped their judgement. None believed that the Bolsheviks could hold power, and naturally not one government in the world welcomed the November Revolution and the new force.

All the Allied Powers had welcomed the March Revolution with shoals of telegrams and thousands of speeches. That fact speaks volumes for their "understanding" of the affairs of Russia. Had the March Revolution been the

kind their wishful thinking led them to believe, they would, indeed, have had cause for rejoicing. All thought *their* class in Russia had *conquered* power. But their Russian equivalents were incapable of conquering power. Events had proved that even when it fell into their laps they could not hold it. Now power had been seized by another class—a subject class, that in the judgement of these onlookers was incapable of ruling and should never have been permitted to acquire the opportunity. It was a disaster and a portent. It could not, must not, and would not be permitted to endure without a challenge which would make enemy governments into "co-belligerents" and foes into friends against the "common danger."

That Lenin and Stalin and all Bolsheviks anticipated such a reception from the governments of the world can be accepted without question. Indeed one and all were convinced that the Revolution they had consummated by establishing the Soviet Republics was the precursor of world revolution—in fact, was the first stage of world revolution. But how, and when it would spread beyond the frontiers of Russia, none could tell, though hopes were universally high that it would spread quickly. What is more important to realise, if we are to understand the course of the subsequent struggle in the ranks of Bolshevism itself, is the fact that the Bolshevik Party was as yet far from being that "monolithic" party of Lenin's conception in which unity on the basis of Marxist principles and methods provides a common mode of approach to all problems in the struggle for Socialism. It was still in the days of its young manhood, and would have to be greatly "purged," and hammered in terrific inner struggles reflecting the stupendous upheaval designated as the opening stages of the world Socialist revolution, before its unity became in any sense "monolithic."

There were three definite trends within the Bolshevik Party at the very moment that it became the leading party of the Revolution and took the reins of the newly-formed Soviet Government. The leaders in the Central Committee were Lenin, Stalin, Sverdlov, and Dzerzhinsky, representing Lenin's version of Marxism. Kamenev, Zinoviev, and Rykov formed a group with a policy at times indistinguishable from that of the Mensheviks, and Bucharin, Radek, Shliapnikov headed a group of "Left Communists." Trotsky vacillated from group to group.

Circumstances united all groups in the hour of the conquest of power. Whatever their respective estimates of the Revolution, one and all were convinced that all the governments of the world were the enemies of the Soviet Government. Just as it was necessary to win the masses from the control of their class enemies within Russia, so they deemed it necessary to appeal to the masses in the rest of the world over the heads of the governments.

Lenin and Stalin had foreseen the probability of a Socialist State existing side

by side with the capitalist states for a period, the duration of which none could tell. But at the moment of the seizure of power everyone saw this conquest as a smashing blow against international capitalism, in fact, as the transformation of the imperialist war into international civil war. It was a "break through" at the weakest link in the world capitalism. How far they would be able to "fan out" beyond the frontiers of Russia no one knew, no one could know. The differences between the groups in their attitude to this situation reveals the fundamental differences in their political philosophy, which would one day lead them into entirely opposite camps.

Lenin was prepared to exploit the "break through" to the full, realistically consolidate his forces, and get ready for the next stage of the struggle. He regarded the Bolshevik Party as the general staff of the proletariat waging an age-long war. He would therefore exploit this great victory to the uttermost, but the extent of that uttermost only life itself could reveal. Hence to try to define the full scope of the revolution would, he held, be fatal to it. This was precisely the basis of his disagreement with Trotsky at this time. Trotsky insisted that the Revolution must reach to the boundaries of western Europe or perish, and the question of accomplishing this task governed all his views of policy within Russia. The Kamenev and Zinoviev group did not believe that the proletariat of Russia could lead the Revolution. Hence their opposition to the Bolsheviks taking power, and their numerous vacillations which were always governed by this attitude of no-confidence. The Bucharin-Radek group idealised the principles of the Revolution and Socialism and called for a "revolutionary war" and the full Socialist programme when they had not the means for either.

All these different trends were not observable outside Russia. Two names echoed round the world in unison—Lenin and Trotsky, "the madmen of revolution," and we outside Russia did not know that these names represented different policies and philosophies. So it was that in crisis after crisis, when these groups clashed, outsiders got the impression of "Bolshevism in disintegration" and were shocked beyond measure as the process of assimilation finally led the dissidents to the prisoners' dock and the firing squad. But here were differences rooted deeply in the history of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, reaching back to the first rift of opinion out of which Lenin created the Bolshevik Party.

When Lenin at the opening of the Second Congress of Soviets took the first steps for the implementing of the policy of "Peace and Bread" for the people of Russia, it was at once a challenge to the warring powers and an appeal to the masses of all countries, over the heads of their governments, to bring the war to an end. "The Government of Russia proposes to *all warring peoples* immediately to conclude such a peace. It expresses its readiness at once

and without the slightest delay to take the necessary steps towards the final confirmation of the terms of such a peace by the plenipotentiary conventions of the representatives of all countries and all nations. . . .” To that declaration the Congress of Soviets and all sections of the Bolshevik Party agreed.

No sooner had Lenin made this great move for peace than he at once turned to the land question which had wrecked governments and parties. Without hesitation the Bolsheviks simply legalised the seizure of land from the landlords which the peasants had largely accomplished before the party of revolution came to power. This action, like many others taken by the Bolsheviks, has been regarded as a violation of their principles and their programme. It was denounced by Socialists because it meant small-farm and not large-farm cultivation; but the critics failed to understand that at this stage of the struggle the land question was not one in which size and shape and methods of cultivation were paramount. The principal issue, as the Bolsheviks saw it, was to settle the question of ownership—to drive the landlords out of possession and shatter their political and economic power. The Bolsheviks would have much preferred to nationalise the land and organise agriculture on the collective farm basis but that was an utter impossibility at the then existing stage of development of both Russian industry and agriculture. First things had to come first, and the first thing of all was to settle the question of power. The peasants themselves had decided the means. The Bolsheviks, by legalising the means, won the peasants over completely to alliance with the workers of the towns.

Then came the proposals for the composition of the first Soviet Government—the Council of People’s Commissars, with Lenin as Chairman of the Council. Joseph V. Stalin was elected Commissar for Nationalities, though this did not mean he was released from other responsibilities. Nor did it mean that somewhere in the city there was a state Department of Nationalities with a staff of civil servants waiting for its new director to take charge. None of the new departments of the new State had offices, not even that of the chairman. Smolny Institute was still the headquarters of the general staff of the Revolution, who were busily directing the conquest of positions throughout the capital and extending the Revolution from district to district until it should reach the boundaries of the Russian Empire. The Council of Commissars acclaimed by the Congress had to find its accommodation as best it could.

Pestovsky, a Polish Bolshevik who became secretary to Stalin, tells how he obtained quarters for the Commissariat of Nationalities. Stalin gave him a mandate, with which he acquired half a large room at the Smolny Institute occupied in the other half by some commission. He found a table and some chairs, posted a notice on the door, “People’s Commissariat for Nationality Affairs,” borrowed 3,000 roubles from Trotsky, who had found money in the

former Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and began to work. But it appears his work had little to do at this stage with nationality questions. That would come later when the Revolution had gone farther.

At this time Stalin was in Lenin's office, another improvised affair. Here were the headquarters of everything, and here sat Lenin, Stalin, Sverdlov, Trotsky, conferring, drafting declarations, issuing directives. There went forth a stream of declarations and decrees to serve as guides for the new commissariats once they were able to function. Stalin's particular commissariat was to be guided by the following decree of the Council of Commissars:

(1) Equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia; (2) Free selfdetermination of the peoples of Russia, including the right to secede and form an independent state; (3) Cancellation of all national and national-religious privileges and disabilities; (4) Free development of national minorities and groups of peoples who live in Russia.

It would take time for the constructive side of most of the decrees to come into operation. The striking-off of fetters, the liberation of the people from the laws and restrictions of the preceding régime, however, were immediate in their effect. At the same time it did not follow that because the Bolsheviks had seized power and received the support of the Second Congress of Soviets every other political force in the country acquiesced in the changes. Their opponents had certainly been out-generalled and outclassed. Most of the members of the Provisional Government were in prison. But the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, although in a state of disintegration, retained forces in all kinds of institutions which would provide rallying grounds for a counter-struggle. The old leaders of the First Soviet Congress refused to recognise the decisions of the Second Congress, and used Soviet funds to finance strikes against the Soviet Government. They controlled the Railwaymen's Union, and persuaded large sections of the railwaymen to refuse to operate the railways. A similar strike was put in force by the telegraph workers and the staff of the telephone exchange. The bank staffs refused to function. The heads of the Kerensky army refused to obey Soviet orders. This latter fact led to the now famous occasion on which Lenin and Stalin, during the night of November 9th, conversed at length over the ticker-telegraph with the Commander-in-Chief, General Dukhonin.

I recall [says Stalin] how Lenin, Krylenko and I went to staff headquarters in Petrograd . . . It was an anxious moment. Dukhonin and the Army headquarters categorically refused to carry out the orders of the Council of Commissars. . . . As regards the army of twelve million men under the control of the so-called army committees—it was unknown what their attitude would be . . . I recall how after a short pause at the wire, Lenin's face became lit up with an unusual light. It was clear that he had made his decision. "Let us go to the radio station," said

Lenin. “It will render us a service. We will issue a special order removing General Dukhonin and appointing in his place as Commander-in-Chief, Comrade Krylenko and we will appeal to the soldiers direct, over the heads of their officers, to arrest the generals, to suspend military operations, to establish contact with the Austro-German soldiers and to take the business of peace into their own hands. . . . ”

As soon as Krylenko arrived at the front Dukhonin was arrested and lynched by an infuriated mob of soldiers.

When Stalin was not by Lenin’s side he was on some mission for him. The railwaymen’s strike engineered by the Mensheviks had to be ended. Kamenev had been sent to confer, but without avail, and Stalin was despatched—with complete success. It was Stalin whom Lenin sent to Finland to aid the Finnish Revolution; it was Stalin who was sent as plenipotentiary of the Soviet Government to negotiate with the Ukrainian Rada and bring about its collapse in favour of a Ukrainian Soviet Government.

The fate of the Revolution seemed to be in the balance. Moscow quickly followed in the wake of Petrograd, and on November 15th, after fierce fighting for the Kremlin, the Soviets were victorious. On the 10th of December Soviets were established in Siberia. On the 12th a Monarchist conspiracy was discovered in Petrograd. On December 22nd General Kornilov and General Denikin joined General Alexiev in the Don region to lead the forces of counter-revolution, while Generals Kaledin and Dutov were supporting counter-revolution in the Ukraine.

Thus revolution and counter-revolution were sweeping across the country, and in these circumstances there could not be much regularising of Government departments. The commissars were communist leaders, and all of them were sent hither and thither under the direction of the group in Lenin’s office. These men had to direct a civil war, create the apparatus of government, organise an army, develop the Bolshevik Party with the utmost speed, and travel along uncharted routes of policy.

In these gigantic tasks they possessed an advantage which had not accrued to the Provisional Government when it was faced with the problem of creating new machinery of administration. Through the genius of Lenin the Bolsheviks had quickly recognised the Soviets as the mass-created means of government when every other political party and group was turning from them and pinning its faith to Western Parliamentarism. Here, in the Soviets, were expressed the will and power of the people, and on these the Bolsheviks relied. Based not on residential qualifications but on labour activity in fields and factory and workshop, in Army and Navy, the Soviets’ power was to do as well as to say what should be done.

The great majority of the people might be able neither to read nor write, but all could see and hear and know their neighbours at work or under arms. They elected their deputies in meetings by show of hand. The meetings which elected the deputies could recall them. The Soviets were the barometers of mass opinion, and the means of translating opinion into action. They were the great reservoirs of human energy from which the Bolsheviks had to draw and on which they had to depend for victory. In this lay the Bolshevik strength, and once they had won a majority they never lost it. They not merely relied on the Soviets, but infused into them their own energy and ideas and drew the best elements of the Soviets into the Bolshevik Party. The construction of the apparatus of government was not something imposed from Petrograd, but a calling to life of the means of administration from the masses in the Soviets.

In the first months and years of the Revolution the Soviets were also the battlegrounds of the parties, and issue after issue had to be fought out there. Had the Bolshevik Party at this time been the "monolithic" party it aimed to be, its task would still have been stupendous. But its own immaturity increased its difficulties. At the very moment when the forces of counter-revolution were gathering and the issue of power was still in the balance there developed out of the divisions in the leadership of the Party a crisis which led almost to the defeat of Lenin and his group.

The appeal for international peace negotiations was rejected by the Allied Powers. The Soviet Government thereupon decided to start its own peace negotiations with the Central Powers. On the 15th of December an armistice was signed, and another attempt was then made by radio to get the Allies to participate in the negotiations. This effort was ignored. Meanwhile millions of leaflets were distributed among the German and Austrian troops and fraternisation spread along the thousand-miles front. The Soviet Government declared for a peace without annexations and without indemnities, and for subject-nations to have the right of self-determination. The Soviet delegation was received by the delegates of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey. On December 25th the Quadruple Alliance announced the acceptance of the principles laid down by the Russians. Trotsky, now Commissar for Foreign Affairs, headed the Soviet delegation which met the delegates of the Quadruple Alliance, headed by Von Kuelman and Hofmann, at Brest-Litovsk. Another of Trotsky's great days had arrived. The stage was his and he made tremendous use of it. He turned the conference into a forum from which he addressed the workers of Europe over the heads of the German leaders. But such fireworks could be only of short duration. What then? What were the precise terms of peace to be? It was not Karl Liebknecht who was on the opposite side of the table, but the Prussian General Staff, and the German Revolution was slow in getting on the wing; revolutionary developments were certainly on the way, but

far from fast enough to affect the negotiations.

On January 7th, 1918, Lenin urged the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party to accept the terms of peace proposed by the Germans, severe though they were. “At all costs,” he argued, “the Revolution must get a breathing space.” The terms meant the loss of considerable territory, stretching from Courland to the Ukraine and including all Poland and Lithuania and part of White Russia; also the payment of an indemnity. The Ukraine was already declared to be an independent Ukrainian National Republic, with which the Quadruple Alliance would deal separately.

Now came the clash within the ranks of the Bolshevik leaders. Bucharin, Radek, and Piatakov rejected the proposals outright and demanded a revolutionary war against the Germans, for which they found support outside the ranks of the Bolsheviks in all the oppositional forces arrayed against the Soviet Power: Trotsky stood between Lenin’s group and Bucharin’s with a new slogan—“Neither Peace nor War.” Lenin, Stalin, and Sverdlov denounced the Bucharin group as romanticists. Lenin said Trotsky’s proposal was futile word-spinning and the refusal to accept the German terms would lead to more severe demands, such as the loss of Esthonia and Dvinsk. At first the combination of Bucharin’s and Trotsky’s supporters secured a majority, and Trotsky proceeded with his forensic efforts at the Peace Conference. He now made his famous declaration based on “Neither Peace nor War,” and refused to sign the Treaty.

On February 15th, he wired for instructions. Lenin replied, “I should like to consult Stalin before replying to your question.” Later, conversing with Trotsky over the wires, Lenin said, “Stalin has just arrived. We will confer with him and give our joint answer.” On February 17th the Germans declared the armistice at an end, and their armies began to march precisely as Lenin had said they would. Lenin and Stalin announced Soviet readiness to accept the terms. On February 21st the Germans answered with an ultimatum giving the Soviet Government forty-eight hours in which to accept new conditions, and meanwhile their armies continued the invasion. On the 23rd of February the Central Committee met again and Lenin secured a majority of one vote. The next day the All-Russian Executive of the Soviets by 126 votes to 85, with 26 abstentions and 2 absentees, accepted the German terms.

Thus events had revealed again that the Bolshevik Party was far from being thoroughly united. The old struggle which had marked the history of the Social Democratic Labour Party until the split of 1912 was now raging furiously within the Bolshevik Party itself. And as before, Lenin not only won the struggle but raised his prestige enormously. Again in a decisive hour he had saved the Revolution when Trotsky and his supporters had nearly lost it. This time, however, Lenin did not have to fight single-handed. Stalin and Sverdlov were

his principal lieutenants. Dzerzhinsky, feeling bitterly the position of the Poles, had refrained from voting. But the Bucharin group carried their opposition to great lengths, mobilised the Moscow Committee of the Party, some members of the Central Committee, and a number of Commissars against Lenin and his group, and even going so far as preparing to arrest and imprison Lenin, Stalin, and Sverdlov.

Another Party Congress was called. It met on March 6th, 1918. Reporting to this Congress Lenin said:

The severe crisis which our party is now experiencing, owing to the formation of a "Left" Opposition within it, is one of the gravest crises the Russian Revolution has experienced. This crisis will be overcome. Under no circumstances will it break the neck of our Party, or of our Revolution. . . . The revolution will not come as quickly as we expected. . . . We must be able to reckon with the fact that the world Socialist revolution cannot begin so easily in the advanced countries as the Revolution began in Russia—the land of Nicholas and Rasputin. . . . But it is wrong, absurd, without preparations to start a revolution in a country in which capitalism is developed, which has produced a democratic culture and has organised every man. We are only just approaching the painful period of the beginning of the Socialist Revolution. This is a fact. . . .

Yes, we will see the international revolution, but for the time being it is a very good fairy tale, a very beautiful fairy tale. But I ask, is it becoming for a serious revolutionary to believe in fairy tales? . . . It will be a good thing if the German proletariat will be able to attack. But have you measured, have you discovered the instrument with which to determine whether the German revolution will break out on such and such a day? No, you have not, and we have not. You are staking everything on this card. If the revolution breaks out everything is saved. Of course! But if it does not turn out as we desire, if it takes it into its head not to achieve victory to-morrow, what then? Then the masses will say to you: you behaved like egotists—you staked everything on a fortunate turn of events that did not take place, you have proved unfit for the situation that actually arose in place of an international revolution, which will inevitably come, but which has not opened yet. . . . You are assisting German imperialism, because you have surrendered wealth amounting to millions—guns and shells—and anybody who had seen the incredibly painful state of the army could have foretold this. . . . Having learned this we shall overcome our split, our crisis.

Of Trotsky's position he said:

We must discern two aspects in his activities: when he started negotiations at Brest and made excellent use of them for the purpose of agitation, we were all in agreement with him. . . . But it had been arranged between us that we would

hold out until the Germans presented us with an ultimatum and that when the ultimatum was presented we would yield. . . . In so far as Trotsky's tactics were directed towards playing for time, they were correct; they became wrong when the state of war was declared to be at an end and peace was not signed.

The Congress supported Lenin's views. The treaty was signed on March 2nd, 1918, and ratified by the All-Russian Congress of Soviets on March 17th. The question of "Socialism in one country," foreshadowed at the July-August Congress by Stalin when he declared that "Russia may lead the way to Socialism," had not been formally raised during the crisis, but it is impossible to overlook the fact that circumstances had thrust it forward in the most concrete form. For if the revolution in Europe still belonged to the realm of "Fairy tales," then the Russian Revolution had to make up its mind whether it would be a Socialist revolution or surrender to capitalism. Lenin's opening sentence to the triumphant Congress of Soviets which took into its hands the Government of Russia—"We will now begin, the construction of Socialism"—could leave no doubt as to where he stood in the matter. How far they would get with it would depend on the length of the "breathing space," but there could be no doubt as to whither they were going under his leadership. Nevertheless, all the incalculable factors were uppermost. The Revolution had broken through the structure of world capitalism. It was now fighting for its existence, and the conditions of the fight were determining the answers the revolutionaries could give to all questions. Trotsky's attempt to impose the arbitrary dimensions of Europe as a pre-requisite of victory within Russia had jeopardised the Revolution and cost Soviet Russia the loss of considerable territory and people. Now all attention was concentrated on holding the power that had been won and on the question of how quickly the working classes of other countries would come to Russia's aid.

There is no evidence of bitter relations between Lenin and Trotsky or between Stalin and Trotsky, although throughout the crisis Stalin had stood firmly alongside Lenin. Trotsky, however, resigned from his post as Commissar for Foreign Affairs and became Commissar for War. The "left" Social Revolutionaries who were members of the Government resigned in protest against the signing of the peace treaty with Germany. The Government was now a one-party government although the community was not yet a one-party community. The Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries, Kadets, and Octobrists were dying organisations, but still striving desperately not to die.

While the crisis over peace was at its height these people seized on another big issue as a means of combating the Bolsheviks. All the parties, including the Bolsheviks, had been committed to the calling of the Constituent Assembly. The Provisional Government had continuously postponed calling it. Now the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries were more than ever anxious for it to

meet. It was called, and met on January 5th, 1918. The Bolsheviks were in a minority, and the parties of the majority called for the Assembly to displace the Soviets. The Bolsheviks demanded that the Assembly endorse the passing of power to the Soviets and then dissolve; after which they withdrew. Late in the night the Red Guards at the door of the hall intimated to the President of the remaining members that it was time to go home. The Constituent Assembly passed into the night and nobody shed a tear for its passing. Power rested with the Soviets.

This calling of the Assembly only to dissolve it may seem a strange act on the part of the Bolsheviks. It has to be remembered, however, that for twenty years the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party had been demanding a Constituent Assembly, and that therefore many workers and peasants still saw in this gathering their hope of the future. The Bolsheviks were convinced that when it met and openly revealed to the masses that it would not recognise the power of the Soviets they would have no further thought for it. And in this the Bolsheviks were entirely right.

The respite gave the Bolsheviks the opportunity to consolidate their forces a little. Lenin used it to introduce his programme of development. Contrary to a still popular misconception, he did not propose to "leap to communism," nor even to nationalise all industry, but held firmly to the programme he had outlined on his return to Russia—nationalisation of the banks, workers' control of industry, land to the peasants, peace. In December the Supreme Council of National Economy was formed, composed of representatives of the Trades Unions, factory committees, Government technical experts and specialists. Its task was to bring order out of chaos in the factories and work out plans for nationalisation in the future. In a remarkable speech Lenin summed up the immediate situation and its tasks in these words:

An extraordinarily difficult and dangerous situation in international affairs; the necessity of manœuvring and retreating; a period of waiting for new outbreaks of the revolution which is maturing in the West at a painfully slow pace; within the country a period of slow construction and ruthless "tightening up," of prolonged and persistent struggle waged by stern, proletarian discipline against the menacing petit-bourgeois laxity and anarchy—such in brief are the distinguishing features of the special stage of the Socialist Revolution we are now living in. . . . Try to compare the slogans that arise from the specific conditions of the present stage viz: manœuvring, retreat, wait, build slowly, ruthlessly tighten up, stern discipline, smash laxity—with the ordinary every day concept "revolutionary."

Beyond the nationalisation of the banks and the land no more than 500 individual enterprises had been nationalised by July 1918. But an unprecedented

storm was gathering that was to force the Soviet Government into what has been designated “War Communism,” when nationalisation, requisitioning, and rationing were to become drastic political weapons for the maintenance of Soviet power.

Shortly after the great days at the beginning of November 1917, General Alexiev, the Chief of Staff of Kerensky’s army, made his way to the Don region and began the organisation of the “Volunteer People’s Army” to fight the Soviet Government. Then, in December, the Mensheviks of Tiflis captured the local arsenal. Alexiev was joined by Generals Kornilov and Denikin. The Ukrainian National Government supported the Don Cossacks against the Ukrainian Soviet Government, with its headquarters at Kharkov. The Russian Soviet Government moved from Petrograd to Moscow as the German forces threatened to march on Petrograd. During February and March, 1918, British troops were landed at Murmansk. General Mannerheim invited the Germans to send him military assistance to crush the Finnish Revolution. Thirty thousand troops under General Von der Goltz arrived, and during March the Finnish Revolution was crushed. In the first week of July the “Left” Social Revolutionaries and the anarchists staged an armed revolt in Moscow, denouncing the Bolsheviks as “betrayers of the Revolution.” A corps of Czecho-Slovaks (Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war) seized Chelyabinsk on the trans-Siberian railway. The Social Revolutionaries murdered V. Volardarsky, the People’s Commissar of the press. The Germans were in control of the Ukraine. The Turks were invading the Caucasus. The food situation was becoming increasingly serious as the forces of counter-revolution closed in from every side. They were threatening Tzaritsyn (now Stalingrad) and the whole system of food-supply from the south when Stalin was charged with the task of securing the Republic’s larder.

The Political Soldier

Between 1918 and 1920 Stalin was the only man whom the Central Committee kept sending from one front to another, to the point at which the Revolution was in the greatest peril.— K. VOROSHILOV

TO-DAY all the world recognises Marshal Stalin as a great military strategist, and wonders how it came to be that one of so modest an origin, who did not pass through the military academies, could achieve such eminence in so specialised a science. There should be no mystery about it to those who have followed his career and understood the philosophy which has guided him. His life has been that of a political warrior and leader of political warriors in a land where politics have consisted of unrelenting warfare.

When Trotsky was appointed Commissar for War there was no prior discussion among the Party leaders as to his military qualifications. Yet the Bolshevik Commissar for War had to do no less than create an army. At the time of his appointment there was only an army in embryo in the form of some 100,000 Red Guards—armed working men. It is to Trotsky's credit that he proved himself the greatest of recruiting sergeants. His inspiring oratory and *élan* brought recruits flooding into the ranks of the Red Army. Later he was assisted by the passing of a conscription decree, but he lured into the ranks men of every kind, including thirty to forty thousand officers trained in the Czar's army. Trotsky was conscious of the lack of military training among the working class, and thought to make up for it by persuading the trained officers to enlist. Aware that they might prove politically unreliable, he introduced the system of political commissars to keep check on their integrity in action.

Before ever it was possible to train this army it was flung into battle on many fronts, and Trotsky himself had to reveal his qualities as a military leader. That he had read a great deal concerning the structure of armies, much of the history of revolutions, and not a little about military strategy, is undoubted. But he lacked both military practice and the practice of organising revolutionary warfare. From 1898, when he was nineteen, to 1917, he had hardly been in

Russia; and until, on Stalin's proposal, he and his group were accepted into the Bolshevik Party in July, 1917, he had fought the Bolsheviks with voice and pen.

The disagreement was fundamental and was never eliminated. It was now to appear again in quarrels with Stalin concerning the Red Army. The fact is, he never really accepted the principle governing the relationship of Lenin's party with the masses because he was incapable of believing in the creative power of the proletariat. He was an egotist, with all the over-confidence of the egotist. He was of the stuff of which dictators are made, and his conception of leadership had as its premise the recognition of *his* abilities plus a proletariat which would do as *he* ordered. *They* had to be organised. *He* would organise them as part of a machine under the control of a staff drawn from the middle classes—the intelligentsia and the Army officers, with himself at the head. He was efficient. He admired efficiency. But he could never surrender himself to the idea of integrating himself with the proletariat, or believe that the qualities he saw in the middle-classes were latent in the proletariat also and that the revolutionary struggle would bring the working-classes into the ranks of leadership. They could be educated in the long run, he thought, but not in the short. His intellectual snobbery ruined him as a revolutionary.

That he performed great feats of service as the Commissar for War is undeniable. Lenin remarked to Gorki, "Show me another man who could have created an army in so short a time." His tremendously inspiring effort in rousing the proletariat for the defence of Petrograd against Yudenitch, in 1919, is unforgettable. But the nature of these triumphs is in keeping with the man. They were feats of emotional appeal and efficiency in dictatorial organisation.

All this might have proved successful had the war it was called upon to fight been a national war and not a class war. But to staff a proletarian class war army with officers drawn from its class enemies without first ensuring their political reliability, was to ask for trouble of a most fatal kind. This Trotsky did not see. Obsessed by the technical qualifications of the professional officers, conscious of the technical backwardness of the proletariat, he relied too much on his capacity to make good the political deficiencies of his officers through the cadres of commissars. That many of these officers were destined to give of their best as loyal and efficient soldiers is true, but their best could not make up for the fact that they were being called upon to fight a war of a kind outside their experience—a military political war in which father would fight son, a fluid war, sometimes a guerrilla war, and always a war of unfamiliar ideas.

The results were to lead, among other things, to Trotsky's first big conflict with Stalin. It arose from Stalin's appointment as Commissar in charge of securing food supplies from the south of Russia.

Such an appointment bears its own testimony to the seriousness of the situation. The tolerance of the Bolsheviks towards their opponents at the beginning of the Revolution enabled the forces of counter-revolution to recover. Officers who had been put on parole made their way to the centres of resistance to the new power. Employers, bank staffs, functionaries of the old Government departments, confident that the Revolution must fail, sabotaged production. The workers, aware of their new power, had not yet learned the discipline of production emphasised by Lenin in his speech on the "Tasks of our Time." Production declined to low levels. The peasants, fearful of the morrow and distrustful of the paper currency, hoarded food for their own use and held back supplies for the towns. By May, 1918, the Soviet Government was surrounded within a sixth of the territory of the country. But eight armies were defending the encircled republic. They were not well-equipped armies and often they were fluctuating forces which had to be reinforced with the best revolutionary elements from the factories. They were armies which had to be welded by the force of an idea in the very process of the war.

When Stalin was appointed to his new post he had no intention, nor had the Government, that he should interfere with military affairs. But on his arrival at Tzaritsyn, the key centre for the transport of food from South to north, he had to face a disastrous situation. The army was disorganised. The officers were demoralised. Those whose sympathies were not wholly with the enemy regarded themselves as nothing but employees of the Government, "staff workers," not leaders of a revolutionary war. There in its most extreme form was the ultimate logical sequel of Trotsky's policy in regard to the composition and leadership of the army. Stalin appraised the situation at once, and asked the Central Committee of the Party for authority to deal with it. He had none of Trotsky's inhibitions concerning the workers, and rejected outright Trotsky's ideas about the army. Steeped in Lenin's theory of the rôle of the *Party* as the leader of the Revolution, he was convinced that a revolutionary class war could result in victory only if conducted under leaders who were themselves convinced revolutionaries.

The situation was appalling. The line of the Red Army had been cut. The Cossacks were near the city. On Tsaritsyn the North's food depended utterly, and already starvation conditions obtained in Petrograd.

Stalin found disorganisation and confusion in the city. All the supporters of the counter-revolution who had lain low when the Red Army appeared to have the upper hand had now come into the open, confident their new day was at hand. The Army command was inept, infested with supporters of the enemy, and had no conception of its task. Indeed, it had just ordered a retreat, and while the military bands were playing in the square counter-revolutionaries were walking

the streets freely.

It was not Stalin's way to wait for the War Council to settle matters by correspondence. From his youth onward he had been thrust into situation after situation in which he had to make decisions quickly, though this was the biggest and most challenging he had ever been called on to handle. To suggest that he now began to interfere with military affairs because he disliked Trotsky is absurd. It is more than doubtful whether on arrival in Tsaritsyn he gave any thought to the possibility of a quarrel between them. The situation was too serious. Writing to Lenin on July 7th, 1918, he said:

I am driving and bullying all who require it. Hope soon to restore the position! You can rest assured that we shall spare nobody, ourselves or others, and the grain will be obtained. If only our military "specialists" (what cobblers!) would not sleep and idle, the line would not have been broken; and if we restore the line it will not be thanks to the officers, but in spite of them.

He received authority from the Revolutionary Military Council, headed by Lenin, instructing him to take the situation in hand, "restoring order, amalgamating detatchments into regular army units, appointing the proper authorities and driving out the undisciplined." On July 11th he sent Lenin a telegram which is illuminating:

Everything is complicated by the fact that the Headquarters Staff of the NorthCaucasus Command has proved to be absolutely incapable of fighting against counter-revolution. It is not only that our "specialists" are psychologically incapable of striking a decisive blow against the counter-revolution, but also that they, as "Staff" workers, are capable only of "drafting plans" and elaborating schemes of organisation, but are entirely indifferent to military operations . . . and generally speaking, behave as though they were outsiders, guests. The military commissars could not fill the gap. . . . I consider I have no right merely to observe this with indifference, when Kaledin's front is cut off from supplies and the North cut off from the grain district. I intend altering this and many other shortcomings in the localities; I shall take measures, even to the dismissal of those officials and commanders who are ruining the cause, despite the formal difficulties, which where necessary I shall break through. Of course, I shall take full responsibility before all the higher institutions.

Lenin was anxious concerning the possibility of a rising of the "Left" Social Revolutionaries in Tsaritsyn. Promptly Stalin answered: "As for the hysterical ones, rest assured, our hand will not falter, we shall deal with enemies as enemies."

He formed a Revolutionary War Council within Tsaritsyn itself, composed of men of his personal selection. Among them were Kaganovitch and Voroshilov, with whom he had worked in the Caucasus and whom he knew intimately. Voroshilov had only recently arrived, after performing the most remarkable feat of leading 15,000 fighting men and conveying 35,000 non-combatant refugees hundreds of miles across the Ukraine amid continuous fighting. He had had no previous military training: that trek began his military career. He was now put in command of the defence o£ Tsaritsyn. With him, Kaganovitch, and others whom he knew to be reliable Bolsheviks, Stalin established a Cheka or committee to deal with counter-revolution in the rear. He then proceeded to clean up both the civilian and military institutions. Nossovitch, the Chief of Military Direction appointed by Trotsky, went over to the enemy. He afterwards left on record in a newspaper called *The Surge of the Don*, issue of February 3rd, 1919, his own account of the change wrought by Stalin. He writes:

We must be fair to him and admit that any of the old administrators have good cause to envy his energy; and it would be well for many others to learn from his capacity to adapt himself to his work, and the local circumstances. Gradually, as his task became less, or rather, as his direct tasks became smaller, Stalin began to examine the work of all the administrative departments of the town, and the task of organising the defence of Tsaritsyn in particular, and the whole of the Caucasian, so-called revolutionary, front in general. . . . By this time the atmosphere had become heavy at Tsaritsyn. The Tsaritsyn Cheka was working at full speed. Not a day passed without plots being discovered in what had seemed to be the most reliable and secret places. All the prisons of the town were full. . . . The local counter-revolutionary organisations also, which adopted the Constituent Assembly as their motto, had become considerably strengthened and, having obtained money from Moscow, were preparing an insurrection to help the Don Cossacks to free Tsaritsyn. Unfortunately, the leaders of this organisation who had arrived from Moscow, Engineer Alexeyev and his two sons, were not well acquainted with the existing state of affairs and, as a result of a badly-arranged plan, which included bringing into the ranks of the active participators a Serbian battalion that had lately served the Bolsheviks in the Extraordinary Committee, the organisation of this plot was discovered . . . Stalin's resolution was short: "To be shot!"

The same writer recalls Trotsky's intervention:

A characteristic peculiarity of this drive was the attitude of Stalin to instructions from the centre. When Trotsky, worried because of the destruction of the command administration formed by him, with much difficulty, sent a telegram concerning the necessity of leaving the staff and the war commissariat on the previous footing and giving them a chance to work, Stalin wrote a

categorical, most significant inscription on the telegram: “To be ignored!”

But Trotsky had no intention of being “ignored.” He wired to Lenin—“I insist categorically on Stalin’s recall. . . .” Stalin was recalled, and Lenin patched up the dispute. Voroshilov was transferred to the Ukraine. But Stalin had done his job, and the fundamental difference between him and Trotsky remained. Trotsky wanted his “specialists.” Stalin wanted Bolshevik leadership of the Army and was determined to get it. And thus began the great struggle between the two men which was to reach its conclusion in 1938 with the final purge of the Red Army leadership and the execution of the generals who were organising an insurrection against Stalin’s Government. It should be understood that Stalin was not opposed to former Czarist officers joining the Red Army, but he insisted that before they held positions of leadership they must become revolutionaries steeped heart and soul in the purpose of the Revolution. He was also convinced that many a Bolshevik workman could acquire the military knowledge and ability to become an army leader. And it was he, in pursuance of this belief, who brought to the front such men as Frunze, Voroshilov, Budienny, Timoshenko, and many others, workmen and peasant revolutionaries, who have since blazed their names across the battlefields of the Soviet Union.

Hardly had the Tsaritsyn crisis subsided than the Social Revolutionaries turned again to terrorism. Two Bolshevik leaders, Uritsky and Volodarsky, were assassinated, and Dora Kaplan attempted the assassination of Lenin. He was severely wounded, and undoubtedly the event shortened his life by years. The passion aroused among the workers carried the civil war to unprecedented heights of fearfulness. The Bolsheviks answered the “White Terror” with the “Red Terror,” and in the days immediately following the attempt on Lenin thousands were shot for merely looking bourgeois. But in a few weeks, although one bullet remained unextracted, Lenin resumed activities, for the steel ring about the Soviets was closing in.

At the end of 1918 Lenin telegraphed as follows:

To Trotsky, the President of the Revolutionary War Council, at Koslov or wherever he may be, Moscow, December 31st, 1918. There are several Party dispatches from Perm concerning the catastrophic condition of the Army and drunkenness. I am sending them on to you. You are asked to go there. I thought of sending Stalin—am afraid Smilga would not be firm enough in his attitude towards . . . who also, it is said, drinks and cannot restore order. Telegraph your opinion.

Trotsky answered, “I agree to Stalin’s journey with the powers of the Party and the revolutionary war council.” Stalin and Dzerzhinsky, the head of the Cheka, were accordingly sent to investigate. The Third Army was at Perm and

in a demoralised condition. The investigators restored order. They reported, and again Stalin proceeded with his relentless exposure of the composition of the leadership, and the process he had carried through at Tsaritsyn he carried through at Perm. On January 5th, 1919, he and Dzerzhinsky reported by telegraph to Lenin:

The investigation has begun. How the investigation goes on we shall inform you from time to time. For the time being we consider it necessary to inform you of one requirement of the Third Army which brooks no delay. The point is that out of 30,000 previously in the army, there remain only about 11,000 tired, exhausted men, who can scarcely hold out against the attacks of the enemy. The units sent by the Commander-in-Chief are not reliable, some are even hostile to us, and need seriously combing out. To save the remnants of the Third Army and avert the rapid advance of the enemy towards Viatka (according to reports received from the commanders at the front and the Third Army, this is a very real danger) it is absolutely necessary to send immediately from Russia at the disposal of the Army Commander at least three absolutely reliable regiments. We urgently request you to bring pressure to bear in this direction on the military institution concerned. We repeat: without such measures the fate of Perm awaits Viatka; this is the general opinion of the comrades on the spot, which we share on the basis of all the information at our disposal.
STALIN, DZERZHINSKY, 5th January, 1919
Viatka.

On the 15th of January Stalin reported to the Council of Defence: "1,200 reliable infantry and cavalrymen have been sent to the front; a day later two squadrons of cavalry." On January 10th he writes:

. . . the 62nd regiment, 3rd brigade has been carefully combed out. These reinforcements made it possible to stop the enemy, roused the spirit of the Third Army and opened up the way for the attack on Perm, which up to now has been successful. In the rear of the army a serious cleansing of the Soviet and Party institutions is taking place. In Viatka and other provincial towns revolutionary committees have been organised. . . . The entire party and Soviet work is being reorganised on a new basis. The military control department has been cleansed and reorganised. . . . The unloading at the Viatka junction is proceeding. . . .

The enemy was stopped and the Eastern front took the offensive. From Perm Stalin was sent to the Ukraine to assist Voroshilov in the struggle against Denikin. Steadily Denikin's army was being pushed back upon Kiev, when suddenly another crisis confronted Stalin with a new challenge. General Yudenitch, at the head of a mixed army of Russian "Whites," Esthonians, and Poles, supported by the British, crossed from Esthonia and began to march on Petrograd. Lenin reluctant to weaken the drive against Denikin, proposed the

abandonment of Petrograd until Stalin's forces had beaten Denikin. To this Stalin was flatly opposed. So also was Trotsky—a rare situation! Lenin gave way, part of the southern army was diverted to Petrograd, and Stalin and Trotsky were sent to take charge of the situation. It was here that Trotsky leaped again into the limelight by his terrific rally of the workers of Petrograd for its defence. But Stalin had another task. There was treachery at the front, both in Petrograd and in Kronstadt. Two telegrams from Stalin to Lenin tell the part he played, and in them he again attacks the "specialists." The first said:

On the heels of "Red Hill" we have liquidated "Grey Horse"; their big guns are in complete working order. . . . The naval specialists assured us that the capture of Red Hill from the sea would overthrow all naval science. There is nothing left but to mourn the loss of this so-called science. The speedy capture of the "hill" was the result of the most brutal interference on my part, and civilians generally, in the operations, including the cancelling of orders on land and sea, and giving our own instructions. I consider it my duty to declare that I shall continue to act in this way despite all my reverence for science.
STALIN

The second telegram, sent six days later, said:

The turning-point in our units has arrived. For a week there has been no single case of individual or group desertion. The deserters are returning in thousands. There are more frequent desertions from the enemy to our camp. In a week 400 men have deserted to us, the majority with their weapons. We began the attack yesterday afternoon. Although the promised reinforcements have not arrived, it was impossible for us to remain on the line we occupied—it was too close to Petrograd. The attack so far is successful; the whites are running; to-day we took the line Kernovo-Voronino-Slepino-Kaskovo. We have taken prisoners, two or more guns, automatics, cartridges. The enemy ships have not appeared, they apparently fear the "Red Hill" which is now entirely ours. Urgently send the two million cartridges for the 6th division.

For this victory both Trotsky and Stalin were awarded the order of the Red Flag. But the dispute between them was by no means at an end. Hardly had the defence of Petrograd and the defeat of Yudenitch become history than it flared up again to new heights, this time on a question of strategy. Denikin's army was advancing in the Ukraine at an alarming rate, whereas Kolchak's army had been thrown back from the Volga to the Urals. Should Kolchak be pursued and his forces completely smashed, or should all attention be diverted to defeat Denikin? Trotsky, who in his memoirs fully admits his blunder, decided on leaving Kolchak to concentrate on Denikin. Stalin was emphatically opposed to this plan, and the Central Committee supported him in his contention that such a decision would leave Kolchak time to recuperate, reorganise, and re-equip his

forces behind the Urals. The Red Army, he urged, must advance and "liquidate" him and his army. It did advance, and Kolchak and his army were liquidated.

Stalin now urged Lenin to remove Trotsky from his position as War Commissar. He wrote on June 4th, 1919: "The whole question now is whether the Central Committee can find courage to draw the proper conclusions. Has the Central Committee sufficient character and firmness?" Trotsky promptly countered by submitting his resignation, which Lenin and the Central Committee were not prepared to accept. Stalin too thought better of his proposition, for he also voted that Trotsky's resignation should not be accepted. Was it because here his hand faltered and his "courage" failed him? Hardly. He retreated because it was expedient. He could wait. But one thing is certain—by this time he had become convinced that Trotsky was a danger to the Revolution.

Shortly after this incident Stalin, Voroshilov, Kirov, and other leading Bolsheviks were sent to the Denikin front. Stalin was requested by the Central Committee to take charge of the situation. At once his deep conviction concerning Trotsky came to the top, and before accepting the post he insisted on three conditions, (1) That Trotsky should not interfere in the affairs of the southern front, and should not cross its boundary line; (2) That a number of workers whom he (Stalin) considered unsuitable for the work of restoring the position among the troops should be immediately withdrawn; and (3) That new workers, to be chosen by himself, should be immediately despatched to the southern front, who would be capable of fulfilling the task.

It speaks much for the genius of Lenin that he was able to hold his forces together in the face of such a demand. Imagine a leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1944 stipulating drastic limitation of the authority of the Red Army's Commander-in-Chief before accepting a task assigned by the Central Committee! But Stalin's conditions were accepted, and as soon as he arrived at the front he overhauled the situation with his characteristic thoroughness. The following letter, sent to the Central Committee, sets out with telling effect what he found, what he thought of it, and what he proposed to do:

Two months ago, the Higher Committee agreed in principle that the main attack should be directed from west to east through the Don basin. This operation was not carried out because of the situation created by the retreat of the troops from the south during the summer, that is to say because of the automatic re-distribution of the troops on the south-eastern front which caused a considerable loss of time of which Denikin took advantage. But now the situation, and with it the re-distribution of the forces, is completely altered. The Eighth Army (one of the principal forces of the old southern front), has advanced and has the Donetz basin before it. The Budienny Cavalry Army (another important force) has also advanced. A new force has also been added,

namely the Lettish Division which, in a month's time, when it has been reorganised, will again threaten Denikin. . . What is there to compel the Higher Committee to keep to the old plan? It can obviously only be the spirit of obstinacy, so short-sighted and so dangerous for the Republic, which is fostered in the Higher Committee by the "Ace of Strategists" [presumably Trotsky].

Some time ago the Higher Committee gave Korin directions to advance on Novorossisk across the Don steppes by a route which might perhaps be practicable for our airmen, but over which it would be impossible to take our infantry and our artillery. It is childishly easy to show that this senseless advance in the midst of hostile country, on an impossible line, would in all probability be utterly disastrous. It is easy to show that such an advance upon Cossack villages could only have the effect, as it did not so very long ago of grouping the Cossacks round Denikin for the defence of their villages against us, and of enabling Denikin to pose as the saviour of the Don; that is to say, it could only succeed in strengthening Denikin's hand. For this reason the old plan must be changed at once, without a moment's delay and must be replaced by that of a central attack on Rostov through Kharkov and the Donetz basin. So that, in the first place we would not find ourselves in the midst of hostile country but, on the contrary, in friendly surroundings, which would facilitate our advance. Secondly, we would occupy an important railway line (that of the Donetz) and the principal line of communication of the Denikin Army, the Voronezh-Rostov line. Thirdly, we would split Denikin's Army into two portions of which one, the "Volunteers," can be dealt with by Makhno, whilst we would be threatening the rear of the Cossack Army. Fourthly, we might succeed in estranging the Cossacks from Denikin, for, if our advance were successful, Denikin would try to make the Cossacks fall back to the west, which the majority of them would refuse to do. And fifthly, we would obtain coal, whereas Denikin would not be able to get any. No time must be lost in adopting this plan of campaign. . . .

To sum up: the old plan, which, owing to recent events, is now out of date, must in no case be put into operation, as it would endanger the Republic and would certainly improve Denikin's position. A new plan must be substituted for it. Not only are conditions and circumstances ripe for this, but they urgently call for such a change. . . . Otherwise, my work at the southern front becomes meaningless, criminal and useless, which gives me the right, or, rather, compels me to go no matter where, even to the devil, but not to remain here.
Yours, STALIN

The Central Committee endorsed his plan. Within a few weeks the Ukraine and the north of the Caucasus were in Soviet hands and Denikin's Army was utterly defeated. But Stalin never received any public credit for his work at the fronts. In the eyes of the workers generally the victories were "the triumphs of

the Red Army and its great leader Trotsky."

The incessant activity and extraordinary strain placed on Stalin began to wear him down. His nerves became frayed. He became somewhat capricious, and for a time lost his customary calm. He complained to the Central Committee that he "was being transformed into a 'specialist' for cleaning out the Augean stables of the War Department." Nevertheless, when a further crisis arose on the Caucasian front in January, 1920, he was requested by the Central Committee to go there. He tried to avoid the job. He sent a telegram to Lenin which brought back a reproof that hurt. The telegram said:

It is not clear to me why the care for the Caucasus front should be put first upon me. In the order of things, the care of consolidating the Caucasus front lies wholly on the Revolutionary War Council of the Republic, the members of which, according to my information, are in full health, and not on Stalin who, as it is, is overburdened with work.

Lenin answered: "The task of expediting the arrival of reinforcements from the southern front to the Caucasus front is entrusted to you. One should generally be helpful in every way, and not become a stickler for departmental spheres of authority." Stalin went as requested.

But after he had liquidated the troubles on the Caucasian front his health broke down completely, and he had to be released from duties for a period. He recovered, however, in time to be called upon to take charge of the south-western army. Tukhashevsky was in charge of the army on the central front, and Gais in charge of that attacking in the north-west. Striking victories were registered on all fronts. I remember the excitement of these days when the delegates to the Second Congress of the Communist International were assembled in the Kremlin watching first one and then another move the red flags on a great map, marking the advance of the Red Army against the foe.

There had been a sharp dispute among the leaders of the Party about the advisability of advancing into Poland. Trotsky, Radek and Dzerzhinsky were against it. Stalin was on the sick list at this time, and absent from the discussions. Lenin was for the advance. The central army swept the Poles before it with such rapidity that it ran away from its supplies. Tukhashevsky reached the suburbs of Warsaw, and all Europe waited breathlessly for the news that the Polish capital had fallen to the "Reds." But it was not to be. The French sent General Weygand by aeroplane to assist the Poles. Rapidly appraising the situation, he ordered the Poles to attack both the Russians' centre army and their northern. Desperately the Poles answered his call. The advancing Red Army was cut off from its supports, and Gais's army was defeated and also cut off. Two hundred miles away the army under Stalin, Voroshilov, and Budienny had

meanwhile cut its way to within a few miles of Lemburg (Lwow).

Trotsky, in his history of the Russian Revolution, accuses Stalin of disobedience to the demands of the War Council in order to satisfy his personal ambition to take Lemburg. Certainly a barrage of telegrams were sent calling on the south-western army to abandon Lemburg and turn to the relief of the central army before Warsaw. Stalin was reluctant to let Lemburg go, expressing the view that its capture would be likely to draw forces away from Warsaw, whereas to turn aside and make for Warsaw would have no effect on the centre situation. It would take a week to move their forces into the proposed positions, during which time it would be possible for the Poles and French to settle with the centre and northern armies and then turn on the southern. This actually occurred, and the southern army had to fight its way back to Russia. The real blunder lay not in the failure to take Lemburg nor in the failure of the southern army to reach the central, but in the headlong rush of Tukhashevsky's army ahead of its supplies and reserves. Indeed, the whole conception of advancing on Warsaw was an error. For this Lenin was primarily responsible, and time and again he referred to it publicly as his mistake.

One other enemy now remained in European Russia. Wrangel, who had received money and supplies from Britain and France, was advancing from the Crimea. On August 3rd, 1920, the Central Committee decided that

in view of Wrangel's success and the alarm, over the Kuban, the tremendous and altogether exceptional importance of the Wrangel front must be recognised and it must be considered as an independent front. Stalin must be charged with forming the Revolutionary Military Council; all available forces must be concentrated on that front; Egoroff or Frunze must be put in command at the front, as arranged by the Higher Council in consultation with Stalin.

Stalin organised this new front and planned the strategical measures for the liquidation of Wrangel and his army. I well remember Lenin outlining this plan to me in the later months of the year, and with what confidence he asserted at the very moment when Wrangel appeared to be within a hundred miles of Moscow—"His army will be shattered within two to three weeks from now." The names of the men in charge of the operations should be observed. They will be heard of again in the history of the Red Army—Voroshilov, Frunze, Kirov, Budienny—all convinced Bolsheviks in the course of rising from the ranks. Their military training had been derived only from these wars of intervention and the insurrectionary warfare of the Bolshevik Party. Stalin was proving his theory in practice, and the Red Army was experiencing a metamorphosis which would make Trotsky's position untenable and the Army itself into a wholly different body from that which he had conceived. Lenin's disciple had proved himself a pupil who had surpassed the expectations of friend and foe. His

manner may not have been the most courteous, but his military judgement and capacity for getting things done had been put to the test and found extraordinarily reliable.

Retreating to Advance

We were unable to retain all the positions we had taken, but, on the other hand, it is only because, rising on the crest of the enthusiasm of the workmen and peasants, we had conquered so much space, that we had so much to give away and were able to retreat a long way back, and may still continue to retreat, without forfeiting the essential and fundamental.
Lenin's Works, xviii, p. 27

WHEN Joseph Stalin was given the task of securing the food supplies from the south of Russia and became involved in military leadership, he was not relieved of other responsibilities. He was still Commissar for Nationalities, also a leading member of the Political Bureau of the Party and its Secretariat of three. Any one of these posts contained enough work to occupy an ordinary person twenty-four hours a day. Headquarters were now in Moscow, and this change in the centre of gravity of Stalin's work brought with it a great change in his domestic life. For the first time since he left the paternal roof to embark on his underground political career he secured a home. This home consisted of two or three rooms in a large block of buildings in the Kremlin which previously had been occupied by attendants of the Czar. The Kremlin stands on high ground—I think the highest in Moscow. Its high, towered walls surround palaces and churches, dwelling-places, a hospital, and an armoury, all monuments of the centuries that are gone; but I doubt very much whether Stalin, as he moved into his new quarters, gave much thought to these historic associations. He was too busy shaping the pathways of the morrow. One side of the Kremlin towers alongside the lovely river Mosckva which winds its way through the city. Another side forms part of the framework of the great Red Square, now famous throughout the world as the final resting-place of Lenin. Within these walls Stalin came to have his permanent address.

It was here that in 1919 he brought Nadya Alleluiev, the daughter of his old friend of early Bolshevik days, and now grown into a beautiful woman. He was at this time forty and she seventeen, but for her he was still the same hero who had once come from afar and taken refuge in her parents' home. This was Stalin's great love affair. He was by nature monogamous. Those in search of sexual scandal in his life will search in vain. I recall Radek speaking to me of Stalin's reaction to the vagaries and often abominable aberrations in the sexual life of modern civilisation. Several illustrated German books dealing with the subject lay on Radek's table, which was as usual piled with volumes newly arrived from Europe and America. Stalin was just about to leave Radek's room when he noticed these books and began thumbing over their pages. Turning to

Radek he asked: “Are there really people in Europe who do these kinds of things?” “Yes, of course,” answered Radek. “Stalin,” Radek said to me, “looked utterly disgusted, shrugged his shoulders, and walked away without saying another word.” To Stalin they reflected a diseased way of life, and he was a normal healthy man in his reactions to disease whether of the mind or of the body.

He and Nadya Alleluiev were happily married. Of this marriage there were two children, and no blow Stalin ever received was so severe as that of her death in 1929. But that is to anticipate. In 1919 the word “home” began to have for him a new connotation, and that home life he cherished although he as yet had little opportunity to enjoy it.

The intervention war did not end until the closing months of 1922, when the last Japanese soldier left Vladivostok promising to return. By the end of 1920, however, all Russia in Europe and a part of Siberia were free from the foreign foe, and the counter-revolution had been mastered. This was a great achievement. But without in any way seeking to distract from its greatness, it would be a mistake to visualise it in terms of the great clash of arms which had characterised the western front in the first world war or was to characterise the eastern front in the second. The improvised Red Army was fluctuating. It had no soft jobs to offer, no emoluments worth speaking about, nothing but grim, hard fighting with troops ill-equipped, poorly fed, and badly clothed. Indeed, there were hardly any uniforms but what could be secured from the enemy, together with old ones left over from the Czarist army. I saw regiments march through the streets of Leningrad and Moscow in 1920 clad in the uniforms of almost every country in Europe—French, British, German, Polish, Russian, and many others. If ever there was an army which fought “with sweat and blood and tears,” clothed in rags and tatters, on a minimum of food, and with a minimum of equipment, it was this army of the Revolution between 1918 and 1922. It was fighting for an idea, and it was this idea which held the army together and inspired it—the new life of Socialist society which lay ahead. It is doubtful if at any period during these years the Red Army had rifles for more than 600,000 to 700,000 men, or more than 1,000 guns and 3,000 machine-guns. And all these were not of the same manufacture. Lenin once described to me how reliable sections of the Red Army went over to the advancing enemy and advanced with them until they had got food, clothing, and equipment, then returned to their own ranks with reinforcements. On the other hand, the efforts of the fourteen countries which sent considerable supplies and forces to assist the Russian counter-revolution were also not comparable with their efforts in either Great War. Their aid had to be sent in opposition to the will of their own people. The Revolution had stirred all Europe. For a short period a Bolshevik Government had reigned in Hungary, and the tide of revolution had been so great in Germany

that it had swept the Kaiser from power and thrown up Workers' and Soldiers' Councils throughout the country. Germany, in fact, had had her "March Revolution" in November, 1918. In France and Britain the "unrest" had mellowed down to great strikes and widespread anti-capitalist movements. The people everywhere had had enough of war, and at length rose in widespread protest against the intervention policy of their governments. It was this great "Hands off Russia" movement, combined with the political rottenness of the Russian "White" armies, the disintegrating effect of Bolshevik propaganda even among the Allied forces, and the growing fighting strength of the young Red Army, that finally led to the defeat of the intervention forces and the Governments of Europe coming to terms one by one with the Soviet Government.

Various explanations have been given of the motives of the Powers in adopting intervention. The British were being "loyal to their friends in Russia who had made the alliance with them for the Great War." The Americans were watching the Japanese in Siberia and making sure they did not stay there to the disadvantage of the U.S.A.; and so forth. But one and all made the same mistake. They supported the forces which were for the restoration of the power of the landlords and for depriving the peasants of their new freedom of possession of their own land. This alone doomed intervention to disaster, while providing one more classic demonstration of the Marxist truism that the propertied classes have a "property patriotism" which transcends nationality and ignores all boundaries and legalities. Not one government *declared* war on Soviet Russia, but fourteen governments sent armies to *make* war on her, to destroy her administration, to re-establish the landlords in possession of the land and the capitalists in possession of the factories, the mills, the mines, and the State.

They failed. But they left behind them a legacy of immeasurable destruction. Attempts have been made to estimate the damage in terms of cash. Such estimates are of little value, for it is impossible to calculate the cost of the diversion of human energy from the tasks of construction to the tasks of war. We can count the shattered bridges, the destroyed and disabled locomotives and waggons, the upturned streets and battered buildings, the blown-up factories and burnt-out farms and possibly count the number of the killed and wounded, although I doubt it. But who can tell the number of crops that would have been sown and reaped had not vast stretches of territory been time and again over-run by the fighting armies? Who can tell the loss in labour productivity in the mines and factories from the continuous recruiting of the best workmen to fight? What was the social cost of the diversion of the Soviet Government from the economic policy Lenin had outlined at the beginning of 1918 to that of War Communism? It is impossible to answer these questions. The devastation was

tremendous. I saw it. It brought in its trail hunger such as the peoples of the invading Powers had never experienced. It laid great areas of the country naked for the scorching suns of 1920 and 1921 to parch completely, turning hunger into famine and bringing epidemics that affected more than thirty millions directly and the whole population indirectly. The number who perished from famine and disease in the bitterly cold winters of 1921 and 1922 has been variously estimated as between five and ten millions. Perhaps in these days, when we have adjusted ourselves to hearing without turning a hair, of disasters involving multitudes, such figures may mean little. But we may at least appreciate that those who lived through these terrible years in Soviet Russia find it difficult to forget the experience and who was responsible. Yet there are persons stupid enough to declare that the "War Communism" of these years corresponds to the real aims of the Bolsheviks and to hold them responsible for the sufferings of the country.

When Stalin requisitioned the grain of the south to feed the hungry population of the north, he had regard neither for the open market of capitalism nor for the principle of the future exchange of goods in communist society. He was doing what any State power would have had to do if it intended to survive, whether that State were a slave, feudal, capitalist, or socialist. The economics of War Communism were the economics of survival, and that they took on extreme forms of centralisation of authority, applied measures of confiscation right and left, requisitioned without regard for the economic niceties of the market, is incidental.

At this period Stalin and Trotsky again found themselves in opposite camps. Flushed with enthusiasm for the growing discipline of the Red Army, Trotsky initiated the transformation of its regiments into military Labour Battalions. Again showing his characteristic lack of confidence in the workers, he proposed to militarise labour in industry and make the Trade Unions into governmental institutions which would effect the necessary discipline. He opposed the election of trade union officials and favoured their appointment by the Government. "What does militarisation mean, if not organisation, strict execution of orders, war against idleness?" he asked in a speech. "Misery engenders avarice, famine, epidemics, which at all times have devastated Russia. All these should have become a thing of the past with the arrival of the workers and peasants in power. We shall lift our country out of the dirt, misery and poverty. The basis of our State is the rule of universal labour. It is time to put this principle into practice."

Lenin and Stalin together fought Trotsky's proposal. They insisted that the Trade Unions be voluntary and democratic, elect their officials, adopt methods of comradely persuasion, and eschew the dictatorial practices of the military-minded.

A group of workers led by Shliapnikov, a metal worker named Medyedyev, and Kollantai, went to the other extreme and fought for a syndicalist policy. They wanted the entire national economy to be entrusted to an "All-Russian Producers' Congress." They contended that the Trade Unions were the highest form of working-class organisation, and in necessary opposition to the State and the Party. Stalin and Lenin led the struggle against this group too, insisting that this lop-sided exaggeration of the rôle of the unions threatened the Party and the State, and, above all, the alliance of the workers and peasants in the Revolution. But these by-products of War Communism were swept aside by a more powerful and significant movement among the masses, which ended War Communism altogether by a revolt—essentially a peasant revolt, although it took the form of a revolt of the sailors at Kronstadt.

Most of the sailors were drawn from the peasantry. The composition of those at Kronstadt had changed considerably since the days when the *Aurora* had steamed up the Neva to bombard the Winter Palace. Time and again they had sent the pick of their forces to the various fronts of the civil war, and their ranks had been replenished with peasant youths. Situated at the frontier of the revolution, feeling acutely their own conditions of semi-starvation, and knowing the full effect of the requisitioning policy in the villages from which they had come, they were inflamed by the "Whites" centred in Helsingfors and Reval. This I know from personal observation. As I passed through Reval on my way to Petrograd several weeks before the revolt burst forth, the newspapers of Esthonia and Finland were full of reports of uprisings in Kronstadt and Petrograd. The people of Reval were excited by the so-called news. I was urged by friends not to proceed with my journey. I was told that Petrograd had been seized by the Whites; the Czar's flag was again flying over the Winter Palace; civil war was raging. But on arriving in the city several days later I found all quiet. There was not even a meeting in progress. Thus it is no exaggeration to say that the "Whites" were fanning the discontent, which undoubtedly existed, into open warfare. But the discontent had a real basis far more serious than their machinations. The relaxation of the pressure imposed by the civil and intervention wars led the peasants to protest against the continuation of the requisitioning system, whereupon the hunger in the towns developed bitterness among the workers against both the Government and the peasants.

Although the Government crushed the revolt at Kronstadt, it had to do more than just answer the protests with the gun. It had to retreat from "War Communism" to what became known as the "New Economic Policy." How the press of the world rejoiced over what was interpreted as the abandonment of the Bolshevik programme and the "return to capitalism and sanity." The governments of the world still held the view that the Bolsheviks could not maintain themselves in power, and saw in this new policy an opportunistic mode

of surrendering the Soviets' revolutionary purpose. Again they underestimated the Bolsheviks. It was not easy for the latter to retreat and disillusion many valiant men and women who had fought and sacrificed ceaselessly for years in the belief that they were rushing full-speed-ahead through terror to triumph and the era of plenty. Yet it had to be done. In all the regions that had been overrun by the armies, the richest food-growing regions of Russia, the marching forces of each side had requisitioned the reserves of the peasants, and the peasants had almost ceased producing. Thousands of draft animals had perished. Hospital and medical supplies were gone. There was a universal shortage of consumer goods. The paper roubles were almost valueless. The cities and the towns were in a hopeless state of disrepair. Nothing could be more drab and colourless than Petrograd as I saw it in 1920. Shop windows were boarded up. Streets were dangerous for vehicles because of their battered condition. Buildings grimly recorded the bespattering of their walls by machine gun fire. Railways were cluttered with shattered rolling stock. Not more than a tenth of the locomotives available at the outbreak of the Great War were running. Bridges by the thousand had been destroyed. Coal production was down to 7,000,000 tons per annum. There was a dearth of everything. Hunger stalked town and village alike, and brigandage was rife throughout the countryside. Money payments gave way to payments in kind. Industrial labour had shrunk to half pre-war figures and output was down to 18 per cent of the level of 1913. Ten million peasants were using wooden ploughs.

Civil war, with frontiers that expand and contract like a concertina, is not a period of enhanced production but of industrial decline. It is not the period in which a country can pass from small-farm to collective-farm economy: on the contrary, economy becomes more primitive and the production forces grow less.

When Lenin led the retreat from "War Communism" to the "New Economic Policy" the Bolsheviks were faced with more than a strategic withdrawal to prepared positions. New problems loomed. The strategy governing the N.E.P. consisted of maintaining the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" by the State retaining its hold on key positions such as the banks, railways, telegraphs, postal services, large industrial enterprises, and foreign trade, and re-establishing private ownership in small-scale industry, with free market conditions for the exchange of commodities, industrial and agricultural. The peasants were released from requisitioning raids, and were free to sell any surplus production over and above the tax in kind which they had to deliver to the State.

The position thus approximated to that outlined by Lenin in his "April Theses" of 1917 and his first report to the Soviet Congress in 1918, but only approximated. Had there been no civil war and no intervention, the Bolsheviks would not so early have made such great inroads into private ownership or have

adopted a policy of requisitioning the peasants' supplies. Now they had to push ahead with the nationalisation of industry not for economic but political reasons. The N.E.P. therefore consisted of a mixture of Socialist and capitalist economy. It has been described as "a return to capitalism" and as "State capitalism." Neither description is wholly true. The State-owned section of economy was Socialist, but had to struggle in a milieu of capitalist market conditions, to enter into competitive relationships in commodity production and be subject to their characteristic fluctuations.

When the N.E.P. came into operation the whole character of revolutionary activity had to change. A "good communist" was no longer the man who could storm the barricades, but one who could understand and practise the art of management and master the technique of production. Here was a test of adaptability and political leadership without parallel or precedent. The majority of Bolsheviks had presumed that the Revolution would have swept Europe by this time and simplified the problems of production for them by reinforcing the Soviet working-class with the more technically-trained workers of the industrial West. But while the surging movement of revolution indeed swept across Europe, nowhere, except for a short period in Hungary, had it reached its November 7th.

At the same time the dread sequel to the desolation and destruction caused by the Great War, the civil war, the over-rumoring of the country by the armies of intervention, and the summer droughts of 1920, was at hand. Famine in all its horror was drawing ever closer, and would soon threaten 30,000,000 people with extinction. No orator could master this situation with words. The Bolsheviks had to prove they could organise production anew. The strategical answer of the N.E.P. carried with it, therefore, the need for a complete overhaul of the Bolshevik Party. The battlefield had called forth its militant abilities, its military leaders, its iconoclasts, its storm troops for battle. Now the call was for builders of industry, pioneers of construction, accountants, managers, educationalists, people who could teach illiterate peasants to become industrial workers and, in short, could heave the masses from their degradation and abysmal ignorance to the level of industrial society o£ the twentieth century.

These facts led to a new crisis. It was met in a new way, and Stalin played a rôle which led him to the most powerful position in the Party. In the days when the Party had been passing through its crises with the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, people had left it or joined it as the result of each new controversy, until by 1921 it had grown to nearly 700,000 members. But numbers were not everything, and in the new circumstances I have outlined the Central Committee organised a "purge" and expelled nearly 170,000 members in order to improve the Party *quality*.

Stalin has frequently been held responsible for the "purge." He was not its author. This party-cleansing was done under Lenin's leadership. It is a process which is unique in the history of political parties. The Bolsheviks, however, do not regard it as an extraordinary measure for use only in a time of crisis, but a normal feature of Party procedure. It is the means of guaranteeing Bolshevik *quality*. To regard it as a desperate move on the part of leaders anxious to get rid of rivals is to misunderstand how profoundly the Bolshevik Party differs from all others, even from the communist parties of the rest of Europe. It has, also, an important bearing on the conduct of the ex-Bolsheviks who were to appear in the famous trials later on.

The purge on this occasion was carried through at open meetings in which non-Party members were permitted to take part. On these occasions each group or branch of the Party holds a meeting and every member, no matter what his rank, is under obligation to review his history before his comrades, to tell of his social origin and circumstances and his political career, to explain his views on Party policy, to recall his practical work, to admit his mistakes and explain them. The meeting then makes its judgement and recommendations to the Party control commission which is in charge of the task of verifying the membership. "Confession" is therefore a common practice in the ranks of Bolshevism. Its sociological origin may be traced through the religious practices of the Orthodox Church, which for centuries dominated the life of the Russian peasants, to the circumstances of life in the peasant communities in which every villager knows intimately the business of his neighbour and openly discusses it. However, the Marxist type of "confession" is very different from that of the poor wretch whose mind is tormented by his sins and feels he *must* unburden himself to someone. The Bolshevik is called on to review his own activity objectively, to recognise that he is a social unit in a great social process. What he thinks and does must be tested in the light of the principles and aims of the Party, to which he voluntarily committed himself when he joined. I can imagine the consternation in the ranks of any party in Britain if some daring executive ventured to stage a "purge" on Bolshevik lines!

Lenin initiated the first great "cleansing" of the Bolshevik Party just as the transition had begun from "War Communism" to the New Economic Policy. The social composition of the Party and its unity were improved. In 1922, when, as Lenin put it, "the Party had rid itself of the rascals, bureaucrats, dishonest or wavering communists, and of Mensheviks who have repainted their 'façade' but who remained Menshevik at heart," another Congress took place; and it was this Congress which advanced Stalin to the key position of Bolshevik power. He was elected General Secretary of the Party, a position he holds to this day. In his hands the post ceased to be simply an administrative one, and was transformed into a political position of outstanding importance. Upon him fell the

responsibility for preparing the agendas of the Political Bureau; its decisions passed through his hands to the executive and administrative organs of the Party; it brought him into intimate contact with every functionary of the organisation, enabling him to examine their work as well as their ideas. No one had assimilated more thoroughly than he, Lenin's teachings on the rôle of the Party as the organiser of leadership in every institution of the country. And none, not even Lenin himself, was more determined to make it function efficiently. He was ruthless yet patient. He knew how to drive and how to wait. He was never a shouter, but he knew how to hustle—with a gun and without.

His handling of the Commissariat of Nationalities confirms these observations. Pestovsky, the Pole who became his first secretary in this department, writes:

There were Lettish, Polish, Lithuanian, Esthonian, and other elements in the council of his secretariat. They were afflicted with the ideas of Left Bolshevism. I myself belonged to that faction. . . . I am almost certain that Trotsky, who accuses Stalin of "dictating," would in three days have dispersed the oppositional council and surrounded himself with his own followers. But Stalin acted differently. He decided to educate us by slow and persistent efforts, and displayed much discipline and self-control. He had his conflicts with individual members of the council, but was loyal to the body as a whole, submitted to its decisions even when he disagreed, with the exception of such cases where there was a violation of party discipline. Then he would appeal to the Central Committee, and, of course carry his point.

Here Stalin was the patient collective worker. But it was also while carrying through the policy of this department that he showed his ruthlessness and capacity to act swiftly as soon as he had made up his mind. The Georgian Committee, led by Mdiviani, with whom he had worked in his younger days, had proved incapable of dealing with the remnants of the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who were using in a campaign for secession the declared right of a nation to withdraw from the Soviet Union. Stalin, with Dzerzhinsky and Ordjonikidze, went to Tiflis to "straighten out" the situation. They convened a conference of Georgian Bolsheviks, at which Stalin lashed the secessionists and those who had been so weak as to give them scope. Many of the delegates to the conference were old personal friends. He spared neither friend nor foe. Within twenty-four hours the three chiefs established a new Georgian leadership among the Bolsheviks, since when there has been no more Georgian secessionist agitations.

Some biographers, Trotsky included, assert that Lenin was violently opposed to the course taken by Stalin on this occasion, and that he sought to make a "bloc" with Trotsky in the forthcoming Party Congress with a view to removing

Stalin from his new post as General Secretary. There appears to be some truth in the tale, although it is surrounded with contradictory facts. Lenin was ill at this time—the early autumn of 1922—and unable to participate in the meetings of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau. Neither Trotsky nor any other member of the Central Committee opposed Stalin's report on the matter to the Congress, and all voted for his resolution on the Party's policy in the Nationalities Question. It was at this period, however, that Lenin drafted his famous "Testament," which undoubtedly reflects his forebodings with regard to Stalin's brusqueness but says not one word in criticism of his policy. The storm about this document still lay ahead; at the time no one knew of its existence, and meanwhile, as already said, Stalin was not challenged. Nor did Lenin challenge him on his return to activity in the latter part of the year. On the contrary, it appeared they were in complete accord, for together they brought to completion the work of amalgamating the Soviet Republics into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Stalin had played a great part in the shaping of the Union, and it represented his greatest political achievement to date. At the First All-Union Congress of Soviets, which met on December 22nd, 1922, on the joint proposal of Lenin and Stalin the delegates endorsed the important decision. Stalin's sense of triumph is conveyed in these words that he addressed to the Congress:

Comrades, this day marks a turning-point in the history of the Soviet Government. It places a landmark between the old period, now past, when the Soviet Republics, although they acted in common, yet each followed its own path and was concerned primarily with its own preservation, and the new period, already begun, when an end is being put to the isolated existence of each of the Soviet Republics, when the republics are being amalgamated into a single federal State in order to successfully cope with economic disruption, and when the Soviet Government is concerned not only with its preservation, but with developing into an important international power, capable of influencing the international situation and of modifying it in the interests of the toilers.

The greatness of this achievement in human association can hardly be exaggerated. To bring into being a multi-national State uniting races which for centuries had been at each other's throats, inflicting pogroms and enslaving each other; races which were largely illiterate, steeped in superstition, and engulfed in abysmal ignorance, was daring in the extreme. Every nation became free to speak its own language, have its own schools, form its own government, and exercise its own clearly-defined right to federate or withdraw from the federation. But in making the U.S.S.R. its creators had at the same time founded their union on economic and political foundations that were international. In the defence of the new federation, in the development of its means of defence, in foreign policy, in regard to the banks, the railways and means of

communications, the planning council of the Union Government transcends all frontiers and unites the basic forces of production. The boundaries of the republics are neither customs barriers nor military frontiers. The military frontier is the frontier of the Union. The customs barriers are at the frontiers of the Union. The boundaries of the republics and other autonomous regions are but the demarcation lines of authority in essentially *national* matters. Again, the Bolshevik Party is an international party—a single party of the Union and not a collection of national parties. Thus national culture comes to flower in the soil of international economic and political unity and the abolition of class exploitation. And as class oppression vanishes, national oppression vanishes also. Every nation has the "right" to separate itself from the Union, but none is likely to wish to exercise that "right" when its economic and social existence and national freedom are tightly bound up with union.

The Bolshevik attitude towards the relationship of national independence to class exploitation has generally been misunderstood. They have always held the view that where there is class exploitation there cannot be national freedom, and in the struggle for that freedom they have therefore always put the "labour question" first. This was the case before the Revolution, and it remains the case after it. Before the revolution the Bolsheviks had opposed the formation of separate working-class parties and trade unions under the banner of each nation, and stood firmly for one party uniting the workers of all the nations in the common struggle against Czardom. After the Revolution they stood for national freedom on the basis of working-class union.

The history of the struggle in Georgia is a classic example of an attempt to dismember the Soviet Republics under the banner of Georgian self-determination. The Georgian Mensheviks aimed at an independent bourgeois Georgia. Their allies were the British and French forces of intervention. Had they won, the outcome would have been a pseudo-free republic under the patronage of Anglo-French capital predominantly interested in the oil of Georgia and not the emancipation of the Georgians. The Bolsheviks unhesitatingly put the issue of Georgian freedom on the basis of the settlement of the class issue, brought the Red Army to the aid of the Georgian proletariat, swept the Mensheviks aside, and in short, handled matters so that the freedom of Georgia to-day rests on the strength of its class foundations in the Soviet Union.

The Constitution of 1922, for which Lenin and Stalin were responsible and most of which was drawn up by Stalin, was by no means the final form of the Union. Fourteen years later Stalin was to draft another and still greater project. But even in the project of 1922 the lineaments of the future synthesis of nationalism and internationalism, of the classless society in the World Socialist Community of Peoples, are discernible amid the dark days of famine and before

the approach of death towards the leader who had created the party of leaders.

During 1922 Lenin had fallen ill. The fire of his life was burning low. He recovered somewhat during the later months of the year, but to those of us who saw him on the occasion of his speech to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, held about the time of the Soviet Congress which formed the Union, he was already talking from the shadows. When I met him in the Congress Hall and spoke with him, I felt as all who saw him then must have felt—torn between hope and fear, refusing to believe in the possibility of him not recovering. But hope was of no avail. The wounds he had received in 1918, together with years of overwork, were proving too much for him. Shortly afterwards he ceased all political activity, and the burden of leadership fell primarily on the shoulders of Stalin—though not before he had given another amazing example of his creative genius and capacity to see through the most confusing situations to the goal ahead. In the midst of the period of hunger, civil war, and strife on many fronts, with their tremendous daily problems commanding his attention, he was also working on a plan for the "electrification of Russia." In March, 1921, Stalin had written to Lenin about this plan:

It is a masterly outline of an economic, a really constructive plan, a real "State" plan, in every accepted sense of the word. It is the only real Marxist attempt of our times to put the superstructure of Russia, so economically in arrears, on a "really true" industrial technical basis, only possible under existing conditions. . . . My advice? . . . First: Not to waste one moment more in chattering about this plan. Secondly: To begin carrying the scheme out immediately in a practical manner. Thirdly: To subordinate at least one-third of the available labour to the interests of the commencement of this new work. . . . Fourthly: as the collaborators of the plan, in spite of all their good qualities, are nevertheless lacking in practical experience, practical men must figure on the "Plans Commission." Fifthly: The newspapers *Pravda*, *Izvestia* and especially *Economiicheskaya Zhizn* must devote themselves to popularising the Electrification Plan both so as to bring it to everyone's notice and to give all material details about it . . .

The pundits of the West thought Lenin crazy, but the scheme was put into operation without delay, and soon the planning machinery for electrification grew into a State Economic Planning Commission. Thus amid the contradictions and confusion of the birth period of the New Economic Policy, a clear programme was emerging which would eventually dominate the whole course of development of the economics of the Union. But this period produced its own crop of problems, which during Lenin's illness became the occasion for renewing the struggle between the various groups within the Bolshevik Party. Once more Bucharin, Trotsky, and others reflected the doubts and fears

concerning the new era. Bucharin wanted to dispose of the State Monopoly of Foreign Trade and to allow Western capitalism to satisfy the demand for consumer and industrial goods more freely. Trotsky was in favour of starting an economic drive against the peasants as a means of ending what was called the "scissors crisis"—the widening gap between industrial and agricultural prices. At the same time he opened an attack upon the "bureaucracy of the Party."

The controversy that now arose found Stalin the custodian of Lenin's policy; but with Lenin no longer there to prevent it, the open clash between the forces soon assumed big dimensions. Lenin had written from his sick-room against Bucharin's policy of relaxing the State control of Foreign Trade; but he was too ill to deal with Trotsky's "New Course" when that appeared. This Stalin dealt with, rejecting the proposal for a class war of the proletariat against the peasantry, and instead, at the Party Congress of December, 1923, raising the cry of a fight against "Trotskyism."

Was this due to some anticipation that Lenin would be permanently absent, and that the "courage" he had called for on the military fronts could now be given free play? It may be. That personal feeling was there in abundance is a fact. However, it is also a fact that the fundamental political cleavage between the two men was there also. While personal feelings might be subdued, the challenge of rival policies demanded action. That Lenin was alarmed by this struggle in the Party leadership is clear from his *Testament*, written during his first illness as a result of the impression created by Stalin's fierce drive against Trotsky while going from one front to another to "clean up the War Commissar's Augean stables." On the other hand, that Lenin had an admiration for Trotsky's abilities despite his own fierce polemics against him is equally clear from the *Testatnent*. It is obvious, too, that the whole purpose of this document was to prevent if possible "a split of the Party." It states:

I have in mind stability as a guarantee against a split in the near future and I intend to examine here a series of considerations of a purely personal character. I think that the fundamental factor in the matter of stability—from this point of view—is such members of the Central Committee as Stalin and Trotsky. The relation between them constitutes, in my opinion, a big half of the danger of that split, which might be avoided, and the avoidance of which might be promoted, in my opinion by raising the number of members of the Central Committee to fifty or one hundred.

Comrade Stalin, having become secretary-general, has concentrated an enormous power in his hands; and I am not sure that he always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution. On the other hand, Comrade Trotsky, as was proved by his struggle against the Central Committee in connection with the question of the people's commissariat of ways and communications, is

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

These two qualities of the two most able leaders of the present Central Committee might, quite innocently, lead to a split; if our party does not take measures to prevent it, a split might arise unexpectedly.

. . . Stalin is too rude, and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us communists, becomes insupportable in the office of secretary-general. Therefore, I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint to it another man who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority—namely, more patient, more loyal, more polite, and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc.

This circumstance may seem an insignificant trifle, but I think that from the point of view of the relation between Stalin and Trotsky which I have discussed above it is not a trifle, or it is such a trifle as may acquire a decisive significance.

There is no criticism in the document of Stalin's policy, but only this delineation of personal qualities, written in extraordinary circumstances. It appears strange to have held over such a document until after the author's death and more than twelve months after it was written. Nevertheless, it was a vain hope of Lenin's that an improvement in Stalin's manners would contribute so much to the overcoming of fundamental political differences. Had Lenin not died, there is no doubt that he would have been able to hold the team together because both disputants would have accepted his leadership and authority. But his absence made all the difference. Stalin might pursue Lenin's policy, but Trotsky could not adopt it from Stalin. Thus amid the gathering shadows of Lenin's illness, so soon to end in his passing, there loomed a conflict destined to decide the fate of the Revolution and Stalin's fate for years to come.

That Stalin deeply felt Lenin's personal criticism is certain. For more than twenty years Lenin had been his teacher and he a faithful disciple. But he could "take it." He has many of the qualities of the master. He is no yes-man. He has deep convictions, tremendous will-power and determination, and—could Lenin have lived long enough to see it—a patience which at times seems inexhaustible.

In January, 1924, Lenin died. Sorrow immeasurable descended on the millions of Russia, and on millions beyond her frontiers. This man was loved as no other leader in the history of the working-class movement. The disputes in the ranks of the Party were immediately hushed. For days, in a temperature registering forty degrees below zero, vast crowds filed their way slowly past the bier in the

great Hall of the Trade Unions in Moscow. Stalin and other leaders, with the exception of Trotsky, stood for hours by his side as the guard of honour. His body was embalmed and he was laid to rest in a Mausoleum in the Red Square, where red soldiers guard his tomb to this day. On January 26th, at a special memorial session of the Second All-Union Congress of Soviets to honour Lenin's memory, Stalin made the following declaration:

We Communists are people of a special mould. We are made of a special stuff. We are those who form the army of the great proletarian strategist, the army of Comrade Lenin. There is nothing higher than the honour of belonging to this army. There is nothing higher than the title of member of the Party whose founder and leader was Comrade Lenin. . . .

Departing from us, Comrade Lenin adjured us to guard and strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat. We vow to you, Comrade, that we will spare no effort to fulfil this behest with credit! . . .

Departing from us, Comrade Lenin adjured us to consolidate and extend the Union of Republics. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that this behest, too, we will fulfil with credit!

Time and again did Lenin point out to us that the strengthening of the Red Army and the improvement of its conditions is one of the most important tasks of our party. . . . Let us vow then, comrades, that we will spare no effort to strengthen our Red Army and our Red Navy. . . .

Lenin had died. But Leninism had been born, and Stalin was its banner-bearer.

Stalin versus Trotsky
Revolution and Counter-Revolution

I cannot forget what a highly-placed and saddened Frenchman told me recently in Washington when we were discussing the purge. “Yes,” he said, “it must have been awful, like a madness as you call it. But don’t forget, *mon ami,* that in Russia they shot the Fifth-Columnist and in France we made them cabinet ministers. You see both results to-day and on the Red War front.”—W. DURANTY

WHEN at the Party Congress of December, 1923, one month before the death of Lenin, Stalin raised the cry for the destruction of “Trotskyism,” it was clear to every observer on the spot that he had made up his mind to settle accounts with Trotsky, to destroy his influence and with it the ideas for which he stood. Not for a moment would I suggest that Stalin had thought out the various stages

through which the conflict with Trotsky and his associates would pass, from the first ideological struggle within the Party to Trotsky's banishment and the reverberations of the execution squads. Stalin has never been a man to shoot first and argue afterwards. In fact, I venture to assert that at no time in the political history of any country has there been so lengthy a warfare of words, and only words, between leading members of a political party; and I would add that no leader with such power in his hands as that possessed by Stalin, ever showed such patience with an opponent. I write as one who was a witness on the spot, and even a not infrequent participant in the long controversy extending from December, 1923, to January, 1929, when Trotsky was banished from the Soviet Union.

When Stalin at this Congress again labelled the views of Trotsky with an "ism," as Lenin had done before him, he provided the Bolsheviks with a means of canalising every oppositional force within and without the Party. Likewise when on the death of Lenin he labelled Lenin's teachings as "Leninism" and made himself its leading exponent, he was executing a master-stroke of political warfare.

It would be fruitless to discuss here whether in virtue of Lenin's *Testament*, Stalin should have been set aside in favour of Trotsky. A great deal of fuss and many unwarrantable claims have been made for this document.
Lenin's *Testament* was nothing more than an attempt by means of a post-dated letter to prevent a split in the Bolshevik Party which his presence had hitherto averted. It was written by a sick man and was not the wisest of documents. Its characterisation of the leaders of the Bolsheviks was probably sound enough at the time, although subsequent events proved that he had over-estimated Trotsky and under estimated his "wonderful Georgian." The circumstances of the letter's delivery may have been other than he anticipated. It was really a shot in the dark, and it missed its mark almost entirely: instead of uniting his successors, it became the weapon of the very forces he had consistently belaboured and denounced. Yet for all that, it was not difficult for Stalin to turn it aside. When he read it to the Thirteenth Congress of the Party and commented, "Yes, I am rude to those who would destroy Lenin's party, etc.," he shifted the issue from one of good manners to the larger battle-ground of the principles, aims and rôle of the Party as the leader of the Revolution. Nevertheless, he was to take to heart Lenin's homilies on refinement.

So much attention has been focused on the personal aspects of the struggle between the Bolshevik leaders from this time onward, that the issues involved have been more often than not completely obscured. "Stalin destroys the Old Bolsheviks, the Old Guard, the Friends of Lenin"—"Stalin the Dictator murders the most brilliant of the Revolution"—"Stalin creates a yes-man party of

mediocrities"—"The Revolution has had its Thermidor and Stalin is the foulest of the Thermidorians"; such were the thunderings that rolled round the world, until one day, after Hitler's armies had been flung back from the gates of Moscow and the Soviet Union had surprised all mankind with its unity, enthusiasm, and power, it dawned on the world that it would have to think again about the Soviets and Stalin's leadership. It sighed with relief to find that all the doleful prognostications of weakness and internal collapse were wrong, and was stirred by the majesty of Soviet might and thrilled by the glory of its achievements.

It is easier to discern the meaning of many events when we see them in retrospect. Up to 1924 the disputes between Stalin and Trotsky had appeared to be incidental and unrelated. Neither had set down in comprehensive form a systematic exposition of his views, be it on the Russian Revolution in particular or revolution in general. Both declared themselves the disciples of Marx, but each expounded Marxism in his own way. Their quarrel turned not on what Marx had said, but on the application of Marxism to the environment in which each functioned as a leader.

At the moment when the battle opened, the Bolshevik Party and Stalin were forced to make one of those great decisions which have determined the whole course of the Russian Revolution. Since the events of November, 1917, all eyes had been watching for the longed-for extension of the Revolution in Europe. Instead they had seen the short-lived Bolshevik régime in Hungary swept away, the German Revolution diverted into the Weimar Constitution and bogged there. In 1923 the leaders of the Communist International—Zinoviev, Bucharin, and Trotsky—were convinced that a proletarian revolution was imminent in Germany and Radek was sent by the Comintern to advise the leaders of the German Communist Party. He was not a success, and the uprising was defeated. It was then clear to even the most fervent that revolution in Europe was definitely on the ebb, and no one could tell how long it would take for the tide to turn.

Although Stalin had been with Lenin at the formation of the Communist International in March, 1919, and had appeared at the Second Congress in 1920, where I first saw him, he had written little, and spoken little, on international affairs. All his political writings, even his book on the nationalities question, had concentrated on the struggle within the Russian Empire. He had shared Lenin's internationalist view of the war of 1914-18, but about this too he had written next to nothing. His introduction to international questions was essentially an empirical one. When he went abroad in 1905 to Finland, 1906 to Stockholm, 1907 to London, 1912 to Cracow and Vienna, he was not interested in anything but Party matters. His first real contributions to affairs beyond the frontiers of

the Russian Empire began after he had become Lenin's second-in-command. When the crisis arose concerning the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, he came down heavily on the side of Lenin, favouring the immediate signing of the Treaty. He had no illusions then about the possibility and probability of early revolution in Europe, and when the revolutionaries of Germany failed in 1923 they finally sealed his conviction that the Russian proletariat had to drive full-speed-ahead towards Socialism in the Soviet Union.

That in doing so they would have the friendly support of the workers of other countries he was sure, but not for a long time the aid of another workers' State. In his judgement the fate of the Russian Revolution turned primarily upon this issue—could the Soviet Union become a powerful Socialist country before the capitalist world again made war on her? This question would permit of no equivocal answer. If Stalin and the Bolshevik Party answered in the affirmative, they were faced with a colossal undertaking which would tax their powers to the uttermost. They did answer in the affirmative, and it was Stalin who took the lead in giving the answer during the period when the New Economic Policy was in operation.

The capitalist world may have looked on this period as the "retreat to capitalism." The reformists may have looked upon it as the beginning of a liberal period in which the Soviet Union would exhibit an expanding liberalism, turning eventually into Socialism as the N.E.P. men became Christian, and the Bolsheviks left behind them their unpleasant revolutionary methods. Stalin regarded it as a "breathing space" in which the Revolution retreated to "prepared positions" in order to regroup the Bolshevik divisions before storming new heights.

This, of course, is an estimate of the period couched in class-war military terms. But any attempt to appraise Stalin and the course of the Revolution from any other angle does not make sense. We may not like the way the Bolsheviks made history. We may think leaders and led on both sides might have conducted themselves more decorously, but that will not help us to understand what really happened. Stalin held the Bolsheviks' point of view, was animated by their aims and governed by their principles. Once this is lost sight of, immediately the entire process ceases to have meaning and the tragic story turns into nothing more than a series of outrages, murders, suicides, panic, and an orgy of personal jealousies and frustrated ambitions.

In the final analysis the whole dispute, from the first clash at the formation of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party to the purge of the Red Army in 1938, resolves itself into a prolonged struggle between revolution and counter-revolution, although it is not thought of in those terms until the final stages. At the outset Lenin and Stalin stood together against Trotsky and his colleagues on

the question of which class was to lead the Revolution. After the conquest of power Lenin and Stalin stood firmly for the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty: Trotsky vacillated between "No War and No Peace" and a revolutionary war, when the Soviet Government had no arms with which to fight. Stalin demanded that the Red Army be led by leaders who were Bolsheviks: Trotsky handed over the army staff positions to recruited officers of the Czarist Army. Trotsky proposed the militarisation of Labour, with the Trade Unions as compulsory State institutions: Lenin and Stalin stood firmly for the Trade Unions as voluntary organisations and against Labour militarisation. Lenin and Stalin declared that Socialism can be built in one country: Trotsky insisted that the Russian Revolution must fail unless it was immediately supported by a pan-European revolution.

It is impossible to view these issues in sequence without observing that Trotsky's practical proposals were disastrous and his opinions defeatist. He jumped out of the Menshevik camp into the Bolshevik some three months before the November Revolution—only after it had become certain that the Menshevlks were a waning force. Moreover, it is quite obvious from what followed immediately after the Revolution, that he had not changed fundamentally in his approach to revolutionary problems. He had only changed his vantage-ground.

It was in the middle of the New Economic Policy era, following on the great Party purge, that Stalin set the issue "Leninism versus Trotskyism." But, having learned from Lenin how to present questions of doctrine in concrete political forms, he directed all theoretical discussion into an examination of "building Socialism in one country." He asked "How did Trotsky regard this question?" and answered in the words of Trotsky taken from his book *The Year 1905*:

It was during the interval between January 9th and the General Strike of October 1905 that the views on the character of the revolutionary development of Russia, which came to be known as the theory of the "permanent revolution," gradually crystallised in the author's mind. This somewhat complicated term represented a rather simple idea; though the immediate objectives of the Russian Revolution were bourgeois in nature, the revolution, upon achieving its objectives, would not stop there. The revolution would not be able to solve its immediate bourgeois problems except by placing the proletariat in power. And the latter, upon assuming power, would not be able to limit itself to the bourgeois framework of the revolution. On the contrary, precisely in order to secure its victory the proletarian vanguard would be forced in the very early stages of its rule to make deep inroads, not only into feudal property, but into capitalist property as well. In this the proletariat will come into hostile collision not only with the bourgeois groupings which supported the proletariat during the first stages of revolutionary struggle, but also with the broad mass of the

peasants, who were instrumental in bringing it to power. The contradictions in the situation of the workers' Government in a backward country with an overwhelming majority of peasants can be solved only on an international scale, on the arena of the world proletarian revolution.

Then, taking his stand on "Leninism," Stalin wrote:

Lenin speaks of the *alliance* of the proletariat and the toiling strata of the peasantry as the foundation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In Trotsky we find the "*hostile collision*" of the "proletarian vanguard" with "the broad masses of the peasantry."

Lenin speaks of the *leadership* of the toiling and exploited masses by the proletariat. In Trotsky we find "contradictions in the situation of the workers' Government in a backward country with an overwhelming majority of peasants."

According to Lenin, the revolution draws its forces chiefly from among the workers and peasants of Russia itself. According to Trotsky, the necessary forces can be found *only* "on the arena of the world proletarian revolution."

But what is to happen if the world revolution is fated to arrive with some delay? Is there any ray of hope for our revolution? Comrade Trotsky does not admit any ray of hope, for "the contradictions in the situation of the workers' Government . . . can be solved *only* . . . on the arena of the world revolution." According to this there is but one prospect for our revolution to vegetate in its own contradictions and decay to its roots while waiting for the world revolution.

What is the dictatorship of the proletariat, according to Lenin?

The dictatorship of the proletariat is the power which relies on the alliance between the proletariat and the toiling masses of the peasantry for the "complete overthrow of capital" and "the final establishment and consolidation of Socialism."

What is the dictatorship of the proletariat according to Trotsky?

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a power which enters "into hostile collision . . . with the broad masses of the peasants" and seeks the solution of its "contradictions" merely "on the arena of world revolution."

In what respect does this "theory of the permanent revolution" differ from the well-known theory of Menshevism which repudiates the concept dictatorship of the proletariat?

In substance there is no difference.

Thus the ideological battle opened. Stalin was not only a debater of some power, but as an organiser and tactician he left Trotsky standing. Having assisted Lenin to carry through the great purge, now on Lenin's death he brought into the Party 200,000 recruits inspired by the great idea of service to Lenin's cause. He put forward no new gospel, but stood before the Party and the masses as Lenin's banner-bearer and disciple. His enemies angrily refer to this recruitment as the "mobilisation of the mob" into the "Party of yes-men." In politics, when people in the mass do things of which we disapprove or support someone whom we dislike, they become automatically "the mob," generally the "hysterical mob." When the same mass of people do what we approve, we refer to the "voice of the awakened people" or "the dignified expression of democracy at its best."

At the time this great discussion began, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bucharin, Radek, Kamenev and Rykov were, along with Stalin, members of the Political Bureau of the Bolshevik Party. All were able men. Zinoviev was a fat, clean-shaven, stocky Jew with a mop of tousled hair. He had a rather shrill, penetrating voice and was an orator of no mean ability. For many years he had been an exile with Lenin in Geneva, Paris, and other places. He it was, along with Kamenev, who had denounced the insurrection of November, 1917, as "adventurism" and made his most powerful speeches when advocating a retreat. He was the first chairman of the Communist International, in which post he was succeeded by Bucharin.

Nicholas Bucharin was a little fellow, who in his early days had been a school-teacher, but became a clever theoretician in the ranks of the professional revolutionaries. He was an artist and penman of ability, and much loved by his colleagues for his boyishness and pleasing personality. He was, however, temperamentally unstable, and liable to become both gushing and hysterical. He secured his place among the leaders of Bolshevism by virtue of his scholastic abilities.

Karl Radek, his close friend, was a brilliant journalist and one of the best informed men in Russia on international affairs. In origin a Polish Jew, by nature he was a wit and in respect of socialism an exceedingly able exponent. Slim, wearing huge spectacles, and a beard which hung round his jaws like a piece of well-worn fur, he was always prominent in any crowd. He too had joined the Bolsheviks while young.

Kamenev, who had long been a member of the Bolshevik Party and had served years of imprisonment and exile, always gave me the impression of a Russian small-business man who had got himself mixed up in strange political circles in which he was never at home, and from which he was always seeking a

way of escape without being able to find it.

Rykov, who for some years held the post of Premier, had the appearance of a Russian peasant who had come to town in his "Sunday best" and liked all too frequently to "bend his arm." He was an able man, but could not stand the pace of the Russian Revolution. He would have been happy enough in a quiet life, but unfortunately he had chosen the wrong age in which to be born, and under the pressure of circumstances, he degenerated.

All these men, who were soon to become part of a "bloc" against Stalin, held other prominent positions. Rykov was Premier. Trotsky was Commissar for War. Zinoviev was Chairman of the Communist International. Bucharin was editor of *Pravda* and Radek was the editor of *Izvestia*. At first they were not united with Trotsky. Indeed, they were very much opposed to him, and it was only as the implications of Stalin's "Leninist" policy began to unfold themselves during the N.E.P. and Industrialisation periods that, each in his own way, they joined the opposition led by Trotsky. That all of them had their own personal loyalties and ambitions is true enough. How far they were afraid of Trotsky on the one hand and Stalin on the other is a problem for the psychologists, but one thing is certain—that Trotsky drove Zinoviev and Kamenev on to the side of Stalin by the publication of his book *The Lessons of October*. When this appeared both men were infuriated by Trotsky's references to their opposition to the insurrection of 1917. All that Stalin had to do was to leave them to answer Trotsky, knowing full well how self-revealing they would be in the process.

It was the practical problems arising from the New Economic Policy and Stalin's drive for industrialisation which brought all the opposition forces together against him and his programme. The economic life of the country revived under the N.E.P., as had been expected, or there would have been no justification for the abandonment of "War Communism." But the N.E.P. was not an end in itself. It was neither capitalist economy nor Socialist economy, but a compromise under which the nationalised section had to function amid the capitalist market conditions that accompanied the restoration of peasant proprietorship, private trading, and small-scale capitalist industry. That this could not remain the permanent state of affairs is obvious. The Bolshevik Party had to make up its mind whether N.E.P. should be the means of restoring capitalism or advancing Socialism. Stalin was never in doubt on the matter: he was determined to lead the country to Socialism. Trotsky too, was never in doubt: he did not believe it possible to advance to Socialism without a European revolution. There was consistency of principle in both attitudes. But let it be clearly understood that Trotsky's position, however it might be decorated with revolutionary phrases, meant a return to capitalism.

There was no loyalty to principles in the position of Zinoviev, Kamenev and

the others. At one moment they supported Stalin, at another they supported Trotsky. In their weakness of character they became more and more convinced that Socialism in one country was impossible. Now they joined in the chorus of criticism against the "Party bureaucracy" which had not perturbed any of them when power was firmly in their hands. They declined to accept its discipline, and, with Trotsky, began the organisation of a rival party. They held meetings clandestinely, produced a new programme, and at last emerged with street demonstrations. From a group of critics within the Party they had transformed themselves into an anti-Party force. When in 1927 Stalin and the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party introduced the Five Year Plan, the opposition countered with a rival plan.

Of course Trotsky had others with him besides Zinoviev and Kamenev and Radek. There were Rakovsky, one-time ambassador to Britain, Piatakov, and a number of other able men. I knew these leaders and many of their supporters personally. I had listened to their arguments in commissions, in conferences, in public and private conversations. I had heard them time and again declare that they were wrong and Stalin right. I had seen Stalin agree to their reinstatement in leading positions, only to witness them renew their attacks on him and his policy. On the Tenth Anniversary of the Revolution I saw and heard Radek, from the balcony of the Bristol hotel, harangue the crowd as it marched to the Red Square. I watched Trotsky attempting the same thing further along Mockavia. And still after four years of public debating nothing more serious had happened to them than expulsion from the ranks of Bolshevism. A few weeks before these incidents Stalin had shown the world how completely they had isolated themselves from membership of the Bolshevik Party. The futility of their efforts on the Tenth Anniversary showed how small had become their influence on the masses. But a change was imminent.

The introduction of the Five Year Plan early in 1928 began the new Socialist offensive. The N.E.P. had brought the country to the point where in both industry and agriculture it had attained the levels of 1913. The debating period had come to an end. Stalin had told the country that it was more than a hundred years behind the nations of the West, and that it must catch up and surpass them within ten years or be defeated when the "breathing space" came to an end. The Bolsheviks set a tremendous pace. Soon it proved too much for Rykov, Bucharin, Tomsky, and others, and they passed into Trotsky's camp. New leaders came up to the side of Stalin, leaders of a new type: Kaganovitch, Kuibishev, Kirov, all most able organisers and administrators, all passionately convinced that Socialism in one country was possible.

When Stalin faced the Party Congress two years after the Plan had been launched, he was in good form and simply laughed the opposition out of court.

He asked:

Do you remember Chekhov's story *The Man in the leather case*? The hero, Belikov, you may remember, always went about in galoshes and a wadded coat, with an umbrella, both in hot and cold weather. "Why do you need galoshes and a wadded coat in July, in such hot weather?" Belikov used to be asked. "You never know," Belikov replied. "Something might happen. There might be a sudden frost; what should I do then?" He feared everything new, everything that went beyond the bounds of the daily rut of humdrum life, as he would the plague. A new restaurant was opened and Belikov was already in alarm: "It might, of course, be a good thing to have a restaurant but look out that nothing happens." A dramatic circle was organised and a reading-room opened and Belikov was again in panic: "A dramatic circle, a new reading-room—what for? Look out-something may happen."

We have to say the same about the former leaders of the Right Opposition.

Do you remember the affair of handing over the technical colleges to the Economic People's Commissariats? We wanted to hand over only two colleges. . . . A small matter, it night seem. Yet we met with the most desperate resistance of the Right Opposition. "Hand over two technical colleges to the E.P.C.? Why? Hadn't we better wait? Look out, something may happen as a result of this scheme." And to-day all our technical colleges have been handed over to the economic commissariats. And we are getting on pretty well, nevertheless. . . . It is this fear of something new, this incapacity to approach new questions in a new way, this alarm that "something may happen," these features of the man in the leather case that prevent the former leaders of the Right Opposition from amalgamating properly with the Party.

. . . If any difficulty or hitch has appeared anywhere, they already fall into a panic, lest something may happen. A cockroach somewhere stirs, without having time even to crawl out of its hole, and they are already starting back in terror, and beginning to shout about a catastrophe, about the ruin of the Soviet Government. . . . And volumes of paper begin to pour in. Bucharin writes theses on the subject and sends them to the Central Committee, asserting that the policy of the C.C. has brought the country to a state of ruin, and that the Soviet Government will certainly perish, if not at once, then in three months' time. Rykov supports Bucharin's theses, with the reservation, however, that he has a serious difference with Bucharin, namely, that the Soviet Government will perish, in his opinion, not in a month, but in a month and two days. Tomsky supports Bucharin and Rykov, but protests against the fact that they have not been able to do without theses, have not been able to do without a document which they will have to answer for later on: "How many times have I told you—do what you like, but don't leave a document behind, don't leave any traces. . . .

No wonder the Congress roared with laughter. But a more sombre hue began to colour the general situation. As ever, Socialism had to fight its way forward against hostile class elements. The N.E.P. had been favourable to them and had allowed them to speculate and make good. Now they had to get out of the way, and, as hitherto, the private interests did not want to get out of the way. They could not conceive of themselves as survivals from an outdated society; and so the class war began to wage again, this time on the economic front. The State with its weapons of the political police (the G.P.U.) was called into action as the wreckers began to get busy. The Schacti Trial of Wreckers in 1928 was the forerunner of events which soon followed one another in rapid sequence. Who were the wreckers? They were counter-revolutionaries intent on fomenting revolt by creating an impression of "Bolshevik inefficiency" through the derailment of trains and the blowing-up of factories. In 1930 a group of professional engineers known as "The Industrial Party" were put on trial for sabotage of industrial construction. 1931 was noticeable for the Trial of the Mensheviks on charges of counter-revolutionary activity. In 1933 came the famous trial of the Metro-Vickers engineers who had become involved in conspiracies to impede construction.

The threads of these affairs were leading out of the country into the capitalist centres abroad. The complete eclipse of the opposition inside the Bolshevik Party and the expulsion of its leading elements led them to the formation of secret opposition groups outside the Party, but retaining widespread connections within it and within the Government and Army.

One day in 1934, when Stalin, Kaganovitch, and Voroshilov were in the latter's headquarters, a secretary called out Kaganovitch and handed him a telegram. It announced that Kirov, a member of the Political Bureau and leader of the Party and Soviet of Leningrad in succession to Zinoviev, had been shot dead. Kirov was one of the ablest of the younger men in the leadership of the Party and a close personal friend of Stalin.

His assassination by one Nikolaev was the first murder of a leading member of the Party in Soviet Russia since Uritsky had been killed in 1918.

The shot that killed Kirov had far-reaching consequences. It set into new motion the "Red Terror" which had been in cold storage since 1921. This time it was operated by the G.P.U., on a broad front and over a long period; for the investigations set on foot by the Kirov murder led to the unravelling of a conspiracy the like of which it would be difficult to find anywhere in history. Nikolaev, a member of the Party, was tried and shot. Zinoviev, Kamenev, and eleven others were brought to trial and accused of forming a counter-revolutionary terrorist organisation for the purpose of disorganising the work of the Soviet Government. They were found guilty of associating with Trotsky and

with foreign powers, and were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment. Later, in 1936, when the investigations had gone further, Zinoviev, Kamenev and fourteen others were charged with treason and organised terrorism under Trotsky's leadership. All confessed their guilt and were shot. In 1937, seventeen more leaders, among them Piatakov, Radek, and Muralov, were also accused of treason. After a common confession of guilt most of them were shot, the others, who included Radek and Rakovsky, being sentenced to long periods of imprisonment. In June, 1937, Marshal Tukhashevsky and seven other generals of the Red Army were tried by court-martial for conspiracy with a foreign enemy and planning a military *coup d'état*. They too confessed their guilt and were shot.

These trials and executions were the high lights of a period in which "purges" and terror spread throughout the country. As the industrialisation programme was rushed ahead and industry became able to supply machines for agriculture, collectivisation of the latter led to the "liquidation of the kulaks as a class." (The "kulak" may be defined as the rich peasant who had become money-lender to poorer peasants and their employer on semi-feudal terms.) They resisted collectivisation bitterly, often fighting with arms in hand. Hundreds of thousands of them and their families were deported to Siberia and other regions in the process of new development. This was class warfare with a vengeance. By the end of it the collective farm system had superseded peasant proprietorship, the State and the co-operative enterprises had superseded private capitalism. Socialist economy had emerged triumphant. The political sequel was the "liquidation" of all political elements and social classes which actively rejected the building of "Socialism in one country."

Whatever criticism may be made of the mode of operations, of the trials, terror, bureaucracy, fanaticism, and injustices of the period, they must be seen against the background of this fact: that all the trials—Schacti, Menshevik, Industrial Party, Metro-Vickers, Tukashevsky—and the terror against the N.E.P. men and kulaks, represent in common the struggle between revolution and counter-revolution in a country surrounded by hostile governments and beset by perils which would allow no time for pleasantries or refinement of procedure. To ignore this is to distort everything. Civil war is not pleasant. It is waged by masses who are not always discriminating, either in the means they use or in their choice of victims. And the whole period from the Schacti Trial to the final bloody purge of the Red Army was one of civil war.

And in far-away Mexico when all his forces within the Soviet Union had been beaten and destroyed, Trotsky still echoed his theme. Writing in September, 1939, shortly before his death, he said:

The October Revolution was not an accident. It was forecast long in advance.

Events confirmed this forecast. The degeneration does not refute the forecast, because Marxists never believed that an isolated workers' state in Russia could maintain itself indefinitely. . . . Let us suppose that Hitler turns his weapons against the East and invades territory occupied by the Red Army. . . . Partisans of the Fourth International while, arms in hand, they deal death blows to Hitler, will at the same time conduct revolutionary propaganda against Stalin, preparing his overthrow at the next and perhaps very near stage. . . .

Thus Trotsky's epilogue echoes his prologue and confirms the substance of the confessions of those who were tried by the Bolshevik State. In 1918-21, because the struggle involved the masses on a large scale, the Cheka, led by Dzerzhinsky, and the Red Army, had been the principal weapons of the Soviet Government. In the civil war of 1931 to 1938 only a relatively small portion of the vast community was involved, and the G.P.U., the law courts, and the courts-martial were the principal State weapons. But it remained a civil war.

The struggle shocked the world because the world did not think in terms of civil war, but judged the events from the standpoint of a State's relations with its citizens in a period of peace. Journalists, frequently working themselves into a state of hysteria, suggested the most sinister means of extracting confessions from the prisoners in the trials—drugs, false promises of leniency, third degree, all manner of threats—and continually saw, behind the screen of the courts, the "cynical, cruel, and cunning" figure of Joseph Stalin waiting for the right moment to dip his pen in blood and sign another death warrant. On the other hand it should not be overlooked that some lawyers, some journalists, some ambassadors, watching the proceedings with more impartial eyes, had no complaints to make of the proceedings of the courts, and while still amazed with the confessions of the prisoners, believed them to be true. Two other things are generally overlooked, one legal, the other psychological and political. The G.P.U. and the Supreme Military Tribunal of the U.S.S.R. are special institutions for dealing with matters relating to the safety of the State. They are not the same as the civil courts, which deal with ordinary social delinquents such as drunkards and thieves.

The G.P.U. is an active political institution, composed of picked men of the Bolshevik Party. Neither it nor the Supreme Military Tribunal operates on the principle that a man is innocent until proved guilty. They see no reason to try the innocent to prove their innocence: a person is arrested because either they possess the evidence of guilt already, or they are pretty sure they can get it. The political trials are therefore of people already known to be guilty, and the aim of the court procedure is not to prove the prisoner innocent but to marshal the evidence before himself and the public with a view to his open acknowledgement of the correctness of the evidence and the justice of the

sentence about to be imposed. Hence the unusual thing in such a trial would be the absence of a confession. The idea that only Russians confess in such circumstances is quite erroneous—the British engineers in the Metro-Vickers trial long ago proved that; and the recent Kharkov trial again proved it, in that Germans as well as Russians made confessions of guilt.

The search for mystical and psychological explanations for the confessions should therefore end here. A guilty person face to face with evidence of his guilt, evidence which he knows to be true, will find great difficulty in avoiding confession, especially when he has complete freedom of speech before the public and the press in court. The freedom of the prisoner to defend himself, to call witnesses, to cross-examine, to sum up and state his case or to employ defending counsel, leaves very little authentic scope for observers to criticise the means of securing evidence, to allege third degree, drugging, and the like.

But there still remains the fact that so many of those who appeared in the great trials and confessed went to extraordinary lengths in their self-abasement. Most of them were men of outstanding ability, who had held leading positions in the State and in the Bolshevik Party. That Party had meant much to them. To be expelled from it was to have one's whole inner life uprooted more thoroughly than by expulsion from any religious order. The very violence of their reactions to their defeat in the struggle with the Party, and to the realisation of the full implications of their counter-revolutionary deeds perpetrated in the name of the Revolution, was a measure of the inner conflict in the minds of men whose whole adult life had been associated with a Cause greater than themselves. The form of the confessions and the intensity of feeling accompanying them varied from prisoner to prisoner according to temperament, degree of culture, and the magnitude and character of the crime. Note Bucharin's final words. I knew him well, worked with him, joked with him, laughed with him. His whole life from boyhood had been an intimate part of the revolutionary struggle. It is impossible to deny the ring of sincerity, the clarity of utterance, and the anguish of his mind when, standing before his judges and the world at large, he said:

Repentance is often attributed to diverse and absurd things such as Thibetan powders and the like. I must say of myself that in prison, where I was confined for a year, I worked, studied and retained my clarity of mind. This will serve to refute by facts all fables and absurd counter-revolutionary tales.

Hypnotism is, suggested. But I conducted my own defence in court from the legal standpoint too, orientated myself on the spot, argued with the State prosecutor: and anybody, even a man who has little experience in this branch of medicine, must admit that hypnotism of this kind is altogether impossible.

This repentance is often attributed to the Dostoyevsky mind, to the specific

properties of the soul, and this can be said of types like Alyosha Karamazov, the heroes of the "Idiot" and other Dostoyevsky characters who are prepared to stand up in the public square and cry: "Beat me, Orthodox Christians, I am a villain."

But that is not the case here at all. . . .

I shall now speak of myself, of the reasons for my repentance. Of course, it must be admitted that incriminating evidence plays a very important part. For three months I refused to say anything. Then I began to testify. Why? Because while in prison I made a revaluation of my entire past. For when you ask yourself: "If you must die, what are you dying for?"—an absolutely black vacuity suddenly rises before you with startling vividness. There was nothing to die for, if one wanted to die unrepentant. And, on the contrary, everything that glistens in the Soviet Union acquires new dimensions in a man's mind. This in the end disarmed me completely and led me to bend my knees before the Party and the country. And when you ask yourself: "Very well, suppose you do not die; suppose by some miracle you remain alive, again what for? Isolated from everybody, an enemy of the people, in an inhuman position, completely isolated from everything that constitutes the essence of life. . . ." And at once the same reply arises. At such moments, Citizens, judges, everything personal, all the personal incrustation, all the rancour, pride, and a number of other things, fall away, disappear. And, in addition, when the reverberations of the broad international reach your ear, all this in its entirety does its work, and the result is the complete internal moral victory of the U.S.S.R. over its kneeling opponents. . . .

The point, of course, is not this repentance, or my personal repentance in particular. The Court can pass its verdict without it. The confession of the accused is not essential. The confession of the accused is a medieval principle of jurisprudence. But here we also have the internal demolition of the forces of counter-revolution. And one must be a Trotsky not to lay down one's arms. . . . (p. 777 *Verbatim Report of Trial*).

Inevitably there were some who, when confronted with the evidence of their crimes, refused to confess. For them there was therefore no public trial—but they were shot nevertheless.

No less part of the civil war than the trials and purges was the liquidation of the N.E.P. men and kulaks. The G.P.U., let loose by Stalin, swept up the kulaks by the hundred thousand, drafted them with their families into the building of new towns and cities, the digging of great canals, and the development of Siberia with new industrial enterprises. The struggle was elemental, brutal, ruthless, harsh in its discipline, severe in its conditions—and yet constructive.

From the vast concourse of forcibly-removed people emerged new men and women—engineers, builders, architects, leaders of industry and administration, convinced Soviet workers who discovered they were the creators of a new civilisation.

But in the summer of 1938 there came a day when Voroshilov returned from an extensive review of the Red Army. He was worried. Speaking to Kaganovitch, who had just returned from the Urals, he talked of the effect of the purge in the Army. He said, "The foundations of discipline and comradeship are crumbling. No one dares to trust his fellow, either superior or subordinate."

Stalin at this time was taking a summer rest in the Caucasus, near to the home of his boyhood. Beria, another member of the Political Bureau and the Party Secretary of the Caucasian Federation, had just called on him and told him that the purge had gone too far, when he received a telegram from Kaganovitch and Voroshilov saying the same thing. The next day these two arrived by aeroplane; and from the meeting that ensued dates the cessation of the second civil war. It had chased the N.E.P. men out of the cities and the towns. It had swept the kulaks from the countryside as with a mighty broom. It had cleaned the administration of those who set themselves to obstruct the building of "socialism in one country," and all departments, including the Red Army, of the Quislings who were working to overthrow the Stalin régime when the hordes of Nazi Germany should have created the crisis conditions necessary to a counter-revolutionary *coup d'état*. Unavoidably, in accomplishing this stupendous task, there had been mistakes, excesses, exaggerations, and casualties along the road. Stalin denies none of them.

From outside the Soviet Union came protests, much slander, much misunderstanding, and little sympathy for or appreciation of the immense purpose that was being achieved. For much as these events preoccupied the press of the outside world, the fact remains that all the elements of the counter-revolution—Trotsky's supporters, N.E.P. men, and kulaks—together formed a comparatively small proportion of the vast population of the

Soviet Union. During this same period the greater proportion was being led by Stalin into colossal constructive efforts for which the peoples of the Allied countries see reason to-day to be more than grateful.

Bulding a New Civilisation

By equality we do not mean the levelling of the personal requirements and conditions of life, but the suppression of classes: that is to say, equal enfranchisement for every worker after the overthrow and expropriation of the capitalists. It is the duty of everyone to work according to his capacity, and the right of everyone to be paid according to the work he does. Marxism starts from the fact that the needs and tastes of men can never be alike, nor equal either in quantity or quality.
J. STALIN

It is only from this point that men, with full consciousness, will fashion their own history; it is only from this point that the social courses set in motion by men will have predominantly and in constantly increasing measure, the effects willed by men. It is humanity's leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom.
F. ENGELS

WITH the ending of the great purge Stalin had achieved one of the most important of his aims. Ever since he became General Secretary of the Bolshevik Party he had determined that it should become a "united party free from all factional struggles." This had now been achieved. For the first time in its history the Party was free from oppositional groups. Lenin had striven for the same end from the time of his entrance into the Russian Social Democratic Labour Movement, both he and Stalin referring to this unity as "monolithic," by which term they meant a party united in aim, principles, methods, and action. The Bolshevik Party is built up on what are called the principles of democratic centralism, whereby authority for direction is vested by the membership and the members voluntarily accept the discipline of their chosen leader to ensure unity in action. The lower units of the Party elect delegates to congresses of districts and the Congress of the Union. The Congress of the Union elects the Central Committee. This is the highest authority between sessions of Congress. The

Central Committee elects the Political Bureau, which is the highest authority between Central Committee meetings. All lower organs of the Party carry out the decisions of the higher. The Political Bureau is therefore the most important body, carrying the authority of the Congress, and in short actually leads the Party.

The latter maintains its quality by imposing a qualifying period before granting full membership, and by periodical "cleanings" of those who fail to live up to the high standard set. There is also another check called the "Control Commission," a body consisting to-day of some 200 members, elected by the Congress to control the decisions of the Central Committee. The principal work of the Commission is to see that the decisions of the Party are carried out, and how this is done.

Party members join voluntarily. They subscribe to the Party Programme, pay contributions, and must be members of some Party organisation applying its policy. Stalin says of the Bolshevik Party which he has done so much to create:

The Party is the organised detachment, but not the only organisation of the working-class. The latter has a series of others which are indispensable for its struggle against capital: trade unions, co-operatives, factory committees, etc. . . . Most of these organisations are non-party, or a ramification of it. . . . . But how can unity of direction be realised with organisations so diverse? . . . These organisations, it may be said, carry out their work each in its special sphere, and therefore cannot be in anyone's way. That is so. And they all serve one class, the proletariat. Who is it then determines this one direction? What central organisation is there, experienced enough to work out this general line, and able, thanks to its authority, to induce all these organisations to follow it, able to secure unity of direction and to prevent any possibility of sudden halts and deviations?

This organisation is the Party of the Proletariat.

It possesses, in fact, all the qualities that are required. First, it includes the flower of the working-class, an elite directly connected with the non-party organisations of the proletariat and often leading them. Secondly it is the best school for the production of leaders able to direct the various organisations of the working-class. In the third place, its experience and authority make it the one organisation capable of centralising the fight of the working-class and of transforming in this way all the non-party organisations of the working-class into organs for connection with the latter. The Party is the highest form of the class-organisation of the proletariat.

. . . It is impossible to win and maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat

without a party made strong by its cohesion and discipline. But iron discipline cannot be thought of without unity of will and absolutely united action on the part of the members of the Party. This does not mean that the possibility of a conflict of opinion within the Party is excluded. Discipline, indeed, far from excluding criticism and conflict of opinion, presupposes their existence. But this most certainly does not imply that there should be "blind" discipline. Discipline does not exclude, but presupposes understanding, voluntary submission, for only a conscious discipline can be iron discipline. But when discussion has been closed and a decision made, unity in will and action is the indispensable condition without which there can be neither Party nor discipline. . . . [1]

It must be fairly clear that once rival classes are abolished and the whole population becomes a working community, such a party must modify itself into an organisation of those undertaking the vocation of leadership in the construction of Socialism; and when that happens the whole process of selection of candidates for Party membership, as well as the qualities required for membership, must perforce take on a new character. The iconoclasts have to give way to the pioneers of construction, the militant agitators to the educators, scientists, directors, engineers, the accountants, builders, and administrators.

This was the stage reached by the end of the great purges, and it marks a turning-point in the history of the Revolution. The new types were not there and ready, just waiting to leap into action. There were in 1924, in the midst of the period of N.E.P., not more than 446,000 members of the Party besides the 200,000 who had been chosen by the workers to reinforce it after Lenin's death. "Chosen by the workers" is the correct expression, and reveals a development of great importance. Stalin had encouraged the presence of non-party workers at "Party cleanings." Now non-party workers begin the process of selecting those who shall be permitted to make application to join the Party. This phenomenon is new in the history of political parties, and is likely to grow as time goes on. In the first instance it was the result of a wave of emotion following the death of Lenin. Later, when Socialist construction had grown to be a permanent feature of Soviet life, it would become systematic.

The team of men and women comprising the Party—fewer than 700,000 out of Russia's 160,000,000—had undertaken under Stalin's guidance to lead the way in the most gigantic undertaking ever conceived by man—nothing less than the building of a new civilisation with new powers and new values, and the incidental creation of a new type of human being. The world to-day stands amazed at the achievements of the Soviet peoples, and but for the overwhelming evidence of their reality furnished by the shattered armies of Nazi Germany it would still doubt them.

At the time when Stalin faced the Union with its tremendous task, of the

446,000 Party members, 44 per cent were workers, 26 per cent peasants, and 30 per cent employees in institutions of one kind or another. At this time too there were only 1,780,500 workers engaged in large-scale industry, of whom only 15 per cent were Party members. The percentage of peasant members among the 53,000,000 peasant population, Stalin reported, was only 0.26. He recognised that the numbers were far too small, but it by no means weakened his confidence in either the Party or the masses to accomplish what he had set before them. This is how he spoke of their position:

You know that our Party consists of carefully chosen members. In this respect we have done what no party in the world has ever been able to do before. The fact that our membership is so carefully selected is what gives us an immeasurable influence in the working-class, so that our Party has a monopolist position in the working-class. . . .

. . . One thing must be recognised: during this year the successes of our socialist construction work have proved that the working-class, after overthrowing the bourgeoisie and seizing power, is capable of reconstructing society upon a socialist foundation. That is an achievement of which no one can deprive us. . . .

That the Bolsheviks ever entertained the idea they could impose their solution on the masses is absurd, and that Stalin could impose his will on the Bolshevik Party is equally absurd. That he expressed the will and power of the Party more emphatically than any other man is more a tribute to his qualities as a collective worker than an indication of domination by personal power. His method of working is somewhat different from Lenin's. Lenin usually presented his "theses" for discussion by the Political Bureau, committee, or commission. He would supplement his written document with a speech amplifying the ideas contained in it, after which every member would be invited to make his critical observations, to amend or provide an alternative. Lenin would consult specialists on particular aspects of a problem, and no one ever went to such lengths to talk matters over with the workers individually and collectively.

Stalin on the other hand rarely presents theses and resolutions first. He will introduce a "problem" or a "subject" requiring a decision in terms of policy. The members of the Political Bureau, the Central Committee, or the commission of which he may be the chairman, are invited to say what they think about the problem and its solution. People known to be specially informed on the topic are invited to contribute to the discussion, whether they are members of the committee or not. Out of the fruits of such collective discussion, either he himself will formulate the decision or resolution, or someone specially fitted will prepare the draft.

Stalin holds the view that decisions made by one person are nearly always one-sided. He does not believe in “intuitions.” He regards the Bolshevik Central Committee as the collective wisdom of the Party, containing the best managers of industry, military leaders, agitators, propagandists, organisers, the men and women best acquainted with the factories, mills, mines, farms, and different nationalities comprising the life of the Soviet Union. And the Political Bureau of this Central Committee he regards as its best and most competent part. If its members are otherwise they will not hold their position for long. Hence he believes in everyone having freedom to correct the mistakes of individuals, and in there being less chance of a collective decision proving lop-sided than an individual one. But once a decision is arrived at he likes to see it carried out with military precision and loyalty. Throughout his career his victories have been triumphs of team-work and of his native capacity to lead the team by securing a common understanding of the task in hand.

This position of Stalin in relation to the Party was matched by the position of the Party in relation to the masses. It had to make the Party aims into the masses’ aims, and this could be done only by winning the confidence of the majority and getting them to act with it. So far the Bolsheviks have succeeded. Since the moment when they first secured a majority in the Soviets prior to the November Revolution they have retained the confidence of the majority, or they could not have maintained power. But it is one thing to gather a people together to smash a common enemy, and another to build a new civilisation. Here was a population of some 160,000,000, belonging to various races and nationalities, spread over a vast territory, and just recovering from the desolation of international war, civil war, and famine. A high percentage of these people were still sulk in immeasurable ignorance, superstition, and social backwardness. The housing conditions were an abomination. There was lack of sanitation everywhere, and disease was rampant from one end of the country to the other. Hundreds of thousands of homeless children ran wild in the cities and the countryside. There were not more than 5,000,000 industrial workers, and fewer than 2,000,000 of these were employed in large-scale industry. While the peasants had cleared out the landlords and taken charge of agriculture, they had in the process cut up most of whatever large-scale farms there had been, and 25,000,000 peasants, mostly with primitive instruments and backward forms of agriculture, occupied small farms. The standard of life was lower than that of the unemployed workers of Britain existing on unemployment insurance and poor relief. To precipitate such a multitude, amid such conditions, into an industrial and agricultural revolution destined to overhaul and surpass the technological levels of capitalism; to floodlight the intellectual and spiritual darkness with universal and all-round education; to dispel the superstition of the millions and make the dumb masses of the “backward nations” articulate; and to do all this in less than two decades, was something few people, if any, outside the ranks of

the Bolshevik Party, believed possible.

There were three organisations through which these millions could be mobilised for action—the Soviets, the trade unions, and the co-operatives. The collective farms had still to come into being. The Soviets were the channel through which the political alliance of proletariat and peasantry could be most effectively made operative. They were also the means whereby self-government could be made real to the millions. For these representative bodies—local, district, regional, republican and All-Union—elected by the people on the basis of adult suffrage at eighteen years, have executive as well as administrative powers. The local Soviets have their clearly-defined responsibilities for the development of the economic and social life of the people. So have the district, regional, republican, and All-Union bodies. They draw the millions into the responsibilities of government. They discuss what is to be done, plan it, and carry out what they have planned. The local plan is embodied within the district plan, the district plan within the regional, the regional within the republican, the republican within the All-Union plan of the central planning commission. Thus the initiative and will of every individual are drawn into a vast co-ordinated scheme of human development and scientific exploitation of the resources of the Union.

The Bolsheviks had to procure leadership in the Soviets through election by the non-party voters, in competition with non-party candidates. That these Soviets would function perfectly from the beginning, just as if every elector had had half a century's schooling in political democracy, could not be expected. But despite blunders and mistakes they have "worked," and their working has so far been among the most astounding features of the "Century of the Common Man."

Supplementing the Soviets were the trade unions, the organisations of the industrial workers. Membership was, and is, voluntary. Drawn mainly from the workers in the factories, mills, and mines, the unions control the conditions of labour, train labour, and function as partners with the Bolshevik Party and the State in the administration of industrial production. The Bolsheviks had to win the leadership of the trade unions by individual applications for union membership and then by proving themselves the most active and capable trade unionists. That in this rôle they would provide a thousand examples of immaturity, bureaucracy, "communist conceit" and interference, and "non-democratic methods," measured in terms of the richly-experienced Western trade unionism, there was from the first no doubt. But they would constitute a system of self-government in industry such as obtained nowhere else.

Still another important means of self-government in the realm of production were the co-operative societies, the connecting links in the transfer of goods

from producer to consumer. As with the trade unions, to become leaders of the co-operatives the Bolsheviks had to prove themselves the most capable co-operators and so win election to the leading committees.

As a matter of fact [wrote Stalin in January, 1923], the power of the State over all large-scale means of production, the power of the State in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat, etc., is not this all that is necessary in order to build a complete Socialist society out of the co-operatives, out of just the co-operatives and nothing else? This is not yet the building of a Socialist society, but it is all that is needed and sufficient for building it.

Stalin's leadership through the period of the Five Year Plans bears all the marks of strategic and tactical genius which have since been exhibited in his direction of the Red Army during the Second World War. He never regarded any situation as static. Things and people are, in his view, always on the move, and it is the duty of a leader to lead and not to apply a drag. Of the strategy of revolution he says:

Strategy is the determination of the direction of the main proletarian onslaught in this or that phase of the revolution; the elaboration of the best plan for the distribution of the revolutionary forces (the main reserves and the secondary reserves), and the endeavour to carry out this plan during the whole of this or that phase of the revolution. [2]

Of tactics he writes:

Tactic is concerned, not with the war as a whole, but with the fighting of this or that campaign, with the gaining of this or that victory which may be essential during a particular period of the general revolutionary advance or withdrawal. Tactics are thus parts of strategy, and subordinate thereto.

With such principles guiding him it can hardly be a matter of surprise that from the moment when he saw the time at hand for calling a halt to the N.E.P., he should begin active preparations for the next stage. His whole-hearted endorsement of Lenin's electrification plan, and his urge for its immediate implementation despite the conditions set up by civil war and famine, is a measure of how strongly he felt that the economic, industrial and social transformation of the country was the key to the problems of his time. The State electrification plan was the beginning of planned economy. The commission appointed to set it in being became the State Planning Commission years before the question arose of preparing the First Five Year Plan. Under its auspices grew up a statistical bureau and a staff of experts, collecting and collating the

information necessary for the vast tasks ahead.

Side by side with the development of the Planning Commission went the reorganisation of the scientific resources of the country. The Russian Academy of Science was transformed into the Soviet Academy of Science and its work brought into direct association with industry and agriculture. A new relationship was established between the scientists and the workers, research problems being now submitted from field and factory, mill and mine, and all the other institutions for production and social well-being. Students were admitted to the universities on the basis of ability only, and paid while they studied. Research laboratories were established in factories and on farms. All that science had to offer was to be harnessed to planned economy and the enlightenment of the whole population. Timing the actual introduction of the plan with the recovery of the economic position to the level of 1913, Stalin brought his team into action with this declaration:

We must transform the U.S.S.R., from a weak, agrarian country dependent upon the caprices of world capitalism . . . . drive out without mercy the capitalist elements, widen the front of the Socialist forms of economy, create the economic basis for the abolition of classes in the U.S.S.R. and for the construction of a Socialist society . . . . create in our country an industry which would be capable of re-equipping and organising not only the whole of our industry but also of our transport and our agriculture on a Socialist basis . . . to transform our small-scale and scattered agriculture into large-scale collective economy, so as to ensure the economic base for Socialism in the rural districts and thus eliminate the possibility of the restoration of capitalism in the U.S.S.R. . . . create in the country all the necessary technical and economic prerequisites for increasing to the utmost the defensive capacity of the country, enable it to organise determined resistance to any and every attempt at military intervention or military aggression from outside, to any and every attempt at military attack from without.

Thus the new civilisation was ushered in. The press, the schools, the radio, every conceivable means of propagating the plan was enlisted, with the emphasis always on the construction of a new technique of modern industry. Soon every town and city seemed to be buried under a mass of scaffolding. New mines, new power stations, new factories sprang up in places hitherto untouched. Imports from abroad were predominantly of machinery. Hosts of engineers and technicians from America, Germany, and Great Britain, were brought in at high prices to pioneer the new technique and train Soviet workers. Modern motorcar plants equipped with American machinery were erected, and masses of raw peasants recruited to work them. For anyone with experience of machinery it was heartbreaking to see these beautiful machines handled by such

labour and to witness the multitude of breakdowns due to sheer ignorance. Yet this labour was the only human material on which the Bolsheviks could draw. It had to learn by practice, whatever the cost—and the cost was high. The waste was prodigal, the discipline appalling, and there were blunders innumerable. Red tape embellished with a thousand knots abounded everywhere. There were enough data concerning how not to do things to fill the newspapers of the world with overwhelming evidence of the failure of planned economy. And yet it did not fail. The drive continued at increasing speed, and the difficulties were overcome.

At no time did Stalin lose control of the situation. He was a director who knew how to direct, moving his forces at the right time to the right place, emphasising first one phase of the struggle and then another. In 1928 all the emphasis was laid on new construction, new technique, new engineering works, chemical and tractor plants, power stations, and coal-mines, plus the development of a new working-class of technicians and brain-workers of all kinds.

In 1929 he directed attention to agriculture. The tractor and combine factories were producing sufficient to set the peasants on the move towards a Socialist solution of their problems. Stalin did not advocate collectivising all farms at once, but beginning slowly, attracting the poor and semi-poor peasants and inviting them voluntarily to pool their farms into a collective enterprise. This is how he framed his proposals to the Sixteenth Congress of the Bolshevik Party:

. . . Amalgamate the petty and tiny peasant farms gradually but steadily, not by means of pressure, but by example and conviction, into large-scale undertakings on the basis of communal, fraternal collective tillage of the soil, applying agricultural machinery and tractors, applying scientific methods for the intensification of agriculture . . .

During 1928 and ’29 Soviet farms received 18,000 tractors. It had been estimated that by the end of the First Five Year Plan some 30 per cent of the farms would be collectivised, but suddenly towards the end of 1929 and in 1930 the process of transformation developed into a mass rush of the poor and middling-poor peasants into collectivisation, a rush that entirely outstripped the capacity of the still developing industry to supply the requisite technical equipment. With the characteristic Russian flare for making “the sky the limit,” agricultural collectivisation at all costs and by all means, including compulsory methods, became a universal craze, until in the Moscow region the Bolsheviks actually set out to complete by the spring of 1930 what the Plan had outlined as their aim for 1932. Stalin put on the brakes. Standing firmly on the cumulative decisions of the congresses, he published an open letter telling the Bolsheviks they had become “dizzy with success,” and brought them back to the line of voluntary collectivisation. Then, consolidating the new situation and

overcoming the crisis conditions which this enthusiastic rush had created, he led a drive to complete the collectivisation process by raising the cry for the "liquidation of the kulaks as a class."

He was not afraid of difficulties. He regarded those of the Soviet people as quite different from those of capitalist countries. He said to the Sixteenth Congress of the Bolsheviks:

. . . our difficulties are not difficulties of decline or stagnation, but difficulties of growth, difficulties of revival, difficulties of progress. . . . And what does this mean? It means that our difficulties are of such a kind that they contain within themselves the possibility of overcoming them. . . . But in order to utilise these possibilities and transform them into reality, in order to crush the resistance of our class enemies and achieve the overcoming of our difficulties, there exists only one method—to organise the offensive against the capitalist elements along the whole front and isolate the opportunist elements in our own ranks, which hinder the offensive, which rush in panic from side to side, and which give rise in the Party to uncertainty as to our victory. . . .

To-day even the blind can see that a tremendous and radical turn has been taken by the peasantry from the old to the new, from kulak bondage to free life in the collective farms. There is no returning to the old system. The kulak class is doomed and will be liquidated. There remains only one path, the path of the collective farms. And this is no longer an unknown and untried path. It has been explored and tested in thousands of ways by the peasants themselves. It has been explored and summed up as something new which brings the peasants emancipation from kulak bondage, from want and ignorance. In this lies the foundation of our achievements. . . .

He went on to attack those who could not see the wood for the trees, who could only look on the acts of repression as a process of war and not as an essential to the construction of a new way of life. Stalin said:

Some think that the main thing in the Socialist offensive is repressions, and if repressions don't increase there is no offensive. Is this true? Of course it is untrue. Repressions are a necessary element in the offensive, but an auxiliary, not a principal element. The principal element in the offensive of Socialism, in our present-day conditions, consists in increasing the rate of development of our industry, increasing the rate of development of our Soviet farms and collective farms, increasing the rate of the economic squeezing out of the capitalist elements in town and country, mobilising the masses around the cause of Socialist construction, mobilising the masses against capitalism. You may arrest and exile tens and hundreds of thousands of kulaks, but if at the same time you do not do everything necessary to hasten the building of the new forms of

economy, replace the old capitalist forms of economy by new forms, blow up and liquidate the productive origins of the economic existence and development of the capitalist elements in the villages—the kulaks will be reborn and grow just the same. . . .

The class-war warrior was in his stride toward clearly-defined objectives. He declared:

We are advancing full steam ahead along the path of industrialization—to Socialism, leaving the age-long "Russian" backwardness. We are becoming a country of metal, a country of automobiles, a country of tractors. And when we have put the U.S.S.R. on an automobile, and the muzhik on a tractor, let the esteemed capitalists, who boast so loudly of their "civilisation," try to overtake us! We shall see which countries may then be "classified" as backward and which as advanced.

The First Five Year Plan was completed in four years and three months. The country was transformed from one predominantly agricultural to one predominantly industrial. In 1913 industrial production represented not more than 47 per cent of the total output of the country. In 1932 it represented 70.7 per cent and agriculture 29.3 per cent. By 1933 the Second Five Year Plan was under way. Stalin defined the aim of this plan thus:

"The basic political task of the Second Five Year Plan is the final liquidation of capitalist elements and of classes in general; the final annihilation of the causes which lead to class differences and to exploitation; the overcoming of all remnants of capitalism both in our economy and in the consciousness of our people; the transformation of the entire working population of our country into conscious and active builders of a classless Socialist Society."

It was in the following year that Kirov was murdered and the terror against the remnants of the old order was unleashed, to continue right into 1938. It has been argued that the terrific campaign set back Soviet economy at least five years. There is plenty of evidence of its interruption of production and that a terrible atmosphere of fear clouded the administration of the country. In this, as in almost everything else undertaken by Russians, there were no half-measures but full measures brimming over. Nevertheless the "observers" exaggerated a little. The Second Five Year Plan was fulfilled on time, and there is abundant evidence in this fact that Stalin was not spending all his days and nights chasing the supporters of Trotsky or listening behind the scenes to the trials of the Fifth Columnists. When the intelligentsia and technicians had become reconciled to the growing power of the Soviet State, Stalin drew them into new positions of responsibility, improved their conditions and removed the disabilities that had been imposed upon them. After the period of rapid construction had ceased to

demand first place he threw himself energetically into the question of developing new cadres for improving the quality of production. Addressing the Red Army Academies on May 4th, 1935, he said:

In order to set technique going and to utilise it to the full, we need people who have mastered technique, we need cadres capable of mastering and utilising this technique according to all the rules of the art. Without people who have mastered technique, technique is dead. In the charge of people who have mastered technique, technique can and should perform miracles. If in our first-class mills and factories, in our state farms and collective farms, in our transport system and in our Red Army we had sufficient cadres capable of harnessing this technique, our country would secure results three times and four times as great as at present. That is why emphasis must now be laid on people, on cadres, on workers who have mastered technique. That is why the old slogan, "Technique decides everything," which is a reflection of a period already passed, a period in which we suffered from a dearth in technique, must now be replaced by a new slogan "Cadres decide everything. That is the main thing now."

One day Stalin told how a group of timber-haulers in Siberia returned to their village with one of their comrades missing. Stalin asked about him, and received the indifferent reply that he had remained behind. A request to explain this elicited the answer, "Drowned, of course."

"One of the men," said Stalin, "strolled away to attend to his horse, and when I reproached him with having more concern for this animal than for human life, I received the reply, 'Why should we be concerned about a man? We can always make men. But just try to make a horse.'" Stalin added. "It is time to realise that of all the valuable capital the world possesses, the most valuable and decisive is people."

Similarly when mass elementary education had got into its stride, he brought to the forefront the development of higher education. In all things the people must now pass from quantitative to qualitative production. From concern about things, buildings, machines, dynamos, mines, blast furnaces, crops, animals, the emphasis must shift to persons.

The Second Five Year Plan was completed. They must go onward to the third. The industrial army of a people now wholly united was working with tremendous energy and verve. It was a mighty force, now 180,000,000 strong. There is nothing with which to compare its development. To judge the incidents of this mightiest of human emancipatory movements by the yardsticks of Western political democracy is a sheer waste of the critical faculty. Stalin and the Bolshevik Party were leading a war which had to be won quickly because war of another kind was already in the offing. In this period Russia was no

eldorado. The Socialist Society was not falling as heavenly manna from the skies. It was being won with "sweat, blood and tears" and the casualties were great. Thousands upon thousands were killed and wounded, frozen to death, starved. Thousands were court-martialled, shot. The winning of the industrial battle of Magnitogorsk, which gave the Soviet Union her greatest steel-producing plant, made possible the winning of the Battles of Stalingrad, Kharkov, Kiev, and many more, but it was not without casualties. The riveters who froze to death on the top of the great construction, the riggers who fell from swaying scaffolding, the thousands who starved in tents in the Siberian temperatures of forty below zero, must not be forgotten in assessing the costs of saving the world from Nazi domination. To crowd into ten years whole centuries of human experience would have been impossible without casualties, injustices, and suffering unpardonable judged by the standards of another society enjoying a period of comparatively quiescent development.

Stalin was leading three closely interwoven revolutions, and it was his consciousness of the nearness of the impending clash of world Powers that set the pace. He had to finish off the class war by eliminating the N.E.P. men and the kulaks; he had to lead an industrial and agrarian revolution, and in the process a spiritual one in the breasts of the millions fighting their way upwards from medieval poverty, ignorance, national hatreds and superstitions.

The last-named task he said:

consisted of helping the working masses of non-Russian nationality to overtake the more advanced central Russia, or, in other words, in helping them (*a*) to develop and strengthen the Soviet State in their own midst and in forms adapted to the national and traditional circumstances of these peoples; (*b*) to develop and strengthen judicial, administrative, and economic services in their own language, so that all the organs of power should consist of local people well acquainted with the customs and psychology of the local population; (*c*) to develop their own press, schools, theatres, clubs, and all other cultural and educative institutions in their own language; (*d*) to create and develop a farflung network of schools both of a general educative and of a professional and technical character in their own language, especially for the Kirghiz, Bashkir, Turkmen, Uzbek, Tadjik, Azerbaidjanian, Tartar, and Daghestanian peoples, in order that there maybe trained with the greatest possible expedition cadres of native skilled workers and Soviet and Party organisers, and administrators in all spheres of government and especially in the spheres of popular education.

Probably in no phase of this great struggle did Stalin show his genius for collective work to greater advantage than in his method of encouraging initiative among the people. The shock brigade tactic for harnessing "Socialist emulation," by which groups of workers set the pace for higher norms of

production, was a political conception derived from the practice of leadership by the Bolshevik Party. But the Stakhanovite Movement was something quite different and quite new. It did not originate in the ranks of Party leadership. It started in a coal-mine, and its pioneer was a miner named Stakhanov. He applied his mind to the problem of raising the production level of coal. In the West we should probably call the technical process the rationalisation of industry. Stakhanov, however, did more than introduce new technical methods. By his initiative he infused a new spirit into the rationalisation process which developed a passion among the workers of all categories for scientific knowledge and its application to every method of production. Stalin seized on this new phenomenon and gave it an organised form. He initiated conferences of miners, railwaymen, engineers, and scientists to learn from Stakhanov, and addressed all of them. He saw in the new movement the forerunner of a new type of human activity in which manual and intellectual labour would no longer be divided. He asks, "What type of people are these Stakhanovites?" and answers:

We have before us people like Stakhanov, Busygin, Smetanin, Krivonoss, the Vinogradovs and many others, new people, working men and women, who have completely mastered the technique of their jobs, have harnessed it and driven ahead. We had no such people, or hardly any such people, some three years ago. . . . Look at our comrades, the Stakhanovites, more closely. What type of people are they? They are mostly young or middle-aged working men and women, people with culture and technical knowledge, who show examples of precision and accuracy in work, who are able to appreciate the time factor in work and who have learned to count not only minutes, but also seconds. The majority of them have taken the technical minimum courses and are continuing their technical education. They are free of the conservatism and stagnation of certain engineers, technicians and business executives; they are marching boldly forward, smashing the antiquated technical standards and creating new and higher standards; they are introducing amendments into the designed capacities and economic plans drawn up by the leaders of industry; they often supplement and correct what the engineers and technicians have to say, they often teach them and impel them forward, for they are people who have completely mastered the technique of their job and who are able to squeeze out of technique the maximum that can be squeezed out of it. . . Is it not clear that the Stakhanovites are innovators of industry, that the Stakhanov movement represents the future of our industry, that it contains the seed of the future rise in the cultural and technical level of the working-class, that it opens to us the path by which alone can be achieved those indices of productivity of labour which are essential for the transition from Socialism to Communism and for the elimination of the distinction between mental and manual labour.

This movement, nowadays grown to great dimensions, typifies the qualitative change which was the product of the mass educational efforts of the years since first the Soviet efforts to wipe out illiteracy and backwardness throughout the world. John Scott, in his extraordinarily fascinating account of his six years as a worker in Magnitogorsk, says:

"Every night from six until twelve the street cars and buses of Magnitogorsk were crowded with adult students hurrying to and from schools with books and notebooks under their arms, discussing Leibnitz, Hegel, or Lenin, doing problems on their knees, and acting like high-school children during examination week in a New York subway. These students, however, were not adolescents, and it was not examination time. They were just the run of the population of the Soviet Union making up for several centuries of lost time." [3]

From the day this Stakhanov Movement appeared it can be said that science was no longer the preserve of the few, a particular department for experts. Fields, factories and workshops, mines, quarries, every unit of productive activity became a people's laboratory of science, the workers themselves scientists at work. It was a turning-point in human history. The Revolution had produced the new type of workman—the worker-scientist, the prototype of the men and women of the coming civilisation in which Man must learn to master both the machine and nature.

The crowning glory of Stalin's leadership came when, gathering up all the many strands of the people's achievement, he reflected them in what has become known to the world as the Stalin Constitution. Since the first Soviet Constitution of 1922, for which he and Lenin were principally responsible, great changes had taken place. He had no longer to deal with a largely illiterate community. Illiteracy had been almost eliminated. He had no longer to consider the position of hostile classes. They had been liquidated. That section of the Churches which had assisted the forces of counter-revolution had been dealt with, and the Churches had purged themselves of all leadership hostile to the Soviet régime. The "kulak" peasantry were gone, and the peasants of the collective farms were enthusiastic for the great changes which had been made in their way of life. The foundations of the classless society were firmly laid. The liberated nations had had great experience of their new status. The time had thus arrived for an advance in democracy, the removal of disabilities no longer necessary and the simplification of government and administration. In 1935 the Seventh Congress of Soviets made a decision to change the Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

Once again Stalin revealed himself as the great leader of collective work. He functioned as chairman of a large commission appointed to prepare a draft of the Constitution. On the commission were such men as Molotov, Zhdanov,

Kaganovitch and many more of the best known and most able leaders in the country. When their draft was ready there ensued the greatest discussion known to history. Sixty million copies of the draft were issued in all the languages of the nations forming the Union. It was printed in full in 10,000 newspapers with a circulation of 37,000,000 copies. It was broadcast from every radio station and discussed at 527,000 meetings attended by 36,000,000 people. Suggested amendments numbered 134,000. In factories and mills, in co-operative societies and clubs, in farms, workshops and mines the Constitution was discussed and studied. The commission examined every amendment, whether emanating from individuals or organisations. The final draft was submitted to an extraordinary Congress of the Soviets on December 5th, 1936.

The Constitution declares that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a Socialist State of workers and peasants:

All power in the U.S.S.R. belongs to the working people of town and country represented by the Soviets of deputies of the working people. . . . All citizens have equal irrevocable rights irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, State, cultural, social and political life. . . .

Any direct or indirect limitation of these rights, or conversely any establishment of direct or indirect privileges for citizens on account of their race or nationality as well as any propagation of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred or contempt, shall be punished by law.

The Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. consisting of two chambers with equal rights, the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities, is elected by the citizens of the U.S.S.R. for a term of four years on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot. All citizens of 18 years and over, irrespective of race or nationality, religion, standard of education, domicile, social origin, property, status or past activities, have the right to vote and to be elected, with the exception of the insane and persons convicted by court of law to sentences including deprivation of electoral rights.

The economic foundations of the U.S.S.R. consist of the Socialist economic system and the social ownership of the tools and means of production. . . . Socialist property has either the form of State property or the form of cooperative collective property. . . . The law allows small-scale private enterprise . . . provided there is no exploitation of the labour of others. . . . The right of personal property in their income from work and their savings, 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 . . . Work is a matter of duty and a matter of honour for every able-bodied citizen on the principle He who

does not work shall not eat.

Citizens have the right to work, guaranteed employment and payment for their work in accordance with its quantity and quality . . . the right to rest . . vacation with pay, the provision of a network of sanatoria, rest homes and clubs . . . security in old age, sickness or loss of capacity to work. “These rights are ensured” by the wide development of social insurance . . . at State expense, free medical service and the provision of a wide network of health resorts. . . . Citizens have the right to education, including higher education free of charge. . . . Women are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, State, cultural, social and political life . . . and State protection of the interests of mother and child, pregnancy leave with pay, the provision of a network of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens. . . . The Church shall be separate from the State, and the school from the church. Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda shall be recognized for all citizens. . . . In accordance with the interests of the working people and in order to strengthen the Socialist system, citizens are guaranteed by law Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and demonstration. . . . No one may be subject to arrest except by an order of the court and with the sanction of a State attorney. The inviolability of the home of citizens and secrecy of correspondence are protected by law.

With these rights are duties.

It is the duty of every citizen to observe the constitution, to carry out its laws, maintain labour discipline, honestly perform public duties, respect the rule of the Socialist community, safeguard and strengthen public Socialist property, as the source of the wealth and might of the fatherland, and a sacred duty to defend the fatherland.

The representative system of government through which these rights and duties operate and are made secure is based upon a universal franchise whereby deputies are elected to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.; the Supreme Soviet of the Constituent Republics; the territorial and provincial Soviets; the Supreme Soviets of the Autonomous Republics; the Soviets of the autonomous provinces, regions, towns and rural districts. All citizens shall participate on an equal basis, women equally with men and have the right to be elected on equal terms. Citizens in the ranks of the Red Army have the right to elect and be elected on equal terms with all citizens. The elections are direct and the voting secret. Candidates are nominated by electoral districts and all organisations and associations of the working people, the Communist Party organisations, trade unions, co-operatives, organisations of youth and cultural societies, have the right of nomination. All deputies to all institutions are obliged to report on their work and the work of the institutions and may be recalled by a decision of a

majority of the electors in the manner prescribed by law.

This Constitution of the U.S.S.R. rounded off ten years of triumphant industrial, economic, and social progress over seemingly insuperable difficulties. In 1917 there were 130,000,000 Russian subjects who could neither read nor write. In 1937 illiteracy was almost a thing of the past, and the Soviet Union had 9,000,000 technicians. When Stalin, in 1927, led the way with the First Five Year Plan, Russia had only 210 research laboratories. In 1937 there were 2,300. In 1941 his own writings had a circulation of 509,000,000 copies in many languages, the works of Lenin a circulation of 171,000,000. Book production had risen from 26,200 titles, involving 86,700,000 copies, in 1913, to 40,000 titles involving 692,700,000 copies in 1938. The Russian classics by the great authors, from Herzen and Gogol, Pushkin and Tolstoy, Lermontov and Chekhov, to the modern writers, are now issued in scores of millions and translated in some cases into as many as seventy-two languages. The classics of other lands, Byron, Dickens, Shakespeare, Goethe, Victor Hugo, Cervantes, Anatole France are circulated in millions of copies in from six to forty languages. The total circulation of 859 newspapers in the whole of Russia in 1913 was not more than 2,700,000 copies. In 1938 there were issued 8,550 newspapers (2,188 of them in non-Russian languages) with a circulation of 37,500,000. In 1940, 850 theatres catered for the Union, a unique feature being that 173 of them are for juveniles only. In 1914, 8,137,000 persons were attending schools of all grades. In the school year 1936-7, no fewer than 38,335,000 enjoyed free elementary education up to 15 years of age, while 10,834,000 children received a secondary education and 700,000 young men and women received higher education of university standing. In 1939 there were 86,266 public libraries containing 166,000,000 books. In the same year the Academy of Sciences had sixty scientific institutes and its budget was 158,000,000 roubles. In 1940 the total expenditure of the State on cultural purposes was 42,875,000,000 roubles.

Nor are these astounding developments confined only to men. In 1940, 12,000 women were research workers in the Academy of Sciences. Twenty per cent of the leading positions in Government and Party work are held by women, while no fewer than 428,570 hold elected offices in the numerous organisations of the various republics. It is not too much to say that the cultural revolution has rushed ahead of that of all other lands.

Letting in the light of knowledge has facilitated vast changes in social welfare. The preventative and curative organisations of maternity and child-welfare clinics form a great network of health institutions endowed by the Government. Mortality figures have decreased since the days of Czarist Russia by 55 per cent, and infant mortality is less than half the old figure. The population increases at

the rate of 3,000,000 a year. Perhaps, however, the greatest achievement of all in which Stalin rejoices is that of the solution of the problem of nationalities. The one-time "colonial" nations have leaped from feudalism and barbarism to civilisation. Stalin has worked on the principle that all nations and races should have equal rights and opportunities irrespective of differences of colour, language, culture level, and economic development. This principle was embodied in the original Soviet Constitution, and the twenty years' effort in its application have witnessed nomadic tribes and backward peoples grow into self-governing nations of collective farmers and industrial workers-literate, educated, and cultured persons who have left behind the age of pogroms and inter-racial hatreds and conflict. Stalin's native Georgia, once a primitive semi-colony, is now one of the most advanced Socialist Republics in the Union, while in the flourishing neighbour Republic of Armenia the days of persecution are a bad memory. Both have now their own educational systems, from primary schools to university. In Uzbikistan, Bukhara, Tadjikistan, Kirghizia, Turkmenistan, Kazakh, Yakut, Siberia and all the regions incorporated in the republics of Soviet Asia, short cuts have been taken from primitive life to modern civilisation. The machinery of industry has entered these regions as a liberator, and science has rushed in to sweep away the mental fetters which had accompanied the brutal enslavement of the lands when they were the colonial possessions of the Imperial regime. The foul, smoke-filled huts and primitive filth are replaced by new houses, modern furniture, new industries, collective farms, new schools, new habits, new ways of life. But, while throughout the Union individual national culture and political forms find untrammelled expression, all rest firmly on the economic unity of the Union as a whole. There are no customs barriers at the national frontiers, no outdated attempts at national autarchy. As a productive organisation the U.S.S.R. is a single unit, one in defence and one in purpose.

Stalin explains the triumph as being due to—

The absence of exploiting classes, which are the principal organisers of strife between nations; the absence of exploitation, which cultivates mutual distrust and kindles national passions; the fact that power is in the hands of the working-class, which is the foe of all enslavement and the true vehicle of the ideas of internationalism; the actual practice of mutual aid among the peoples in all spheres of economic and social life; and, finally, the flourishing national culture of the peoples of the U.S.S.R.—culture which is national in form and Socialist in content—all these and similar factors have brought about a radical change in the aspect of the peoples of the U.S.S.R.; their feeling of mutual distrust has disappeared, a feeling of mutual friendship has developed among them, and thus real fraternal co-operation among the peoples has been established with the system of the single federated state. As a result, we now have a fully-formed

multi-national Socialist State, which has stood all tests, and whose stability might well be envied by any national state in any part of the world.

Of the economic transformation which has been accomplished he proudly reported to the Eighteenth Congress of the Bolshevik Party:

In the sphere of economic development we must regard the most important result during the period under review to be the fact that the reconstruction of industry and agriculture on the basis of a new, modern technique has been completed. There are no more, or hardly any more, old plants in our country, with their old technique and hardly any old peasant farms, with their antediluvian equipment. Our industry and agriculture are now based on new, up-to-date technique. It may be said without exaggeration that from the standpoint of the degree of saturation of industry and agriculture with new machinery, our country is more advanced than any other country, where the old machinery acts as a fetter on production and hampers the introduction of modern technique.

The social composition of the country presents an entirely new picture. In 1937, 34.7 per cent of the population were classified as manual and clerical workers; 55.5 per cent were classified as collective farmers, co-operative craftsmen and artisans, 5.6 per cent as individual peasant craftsmen and artisans, and 4.2, per cent as students, pensioners and armed forces. In the same period the Bolshevik Party grew from 470,000 members in 1925 to nearly 2,000,000 reinforced by an organisation of 5,000,000 Young Communists.

All these great constructive changes were proceeding while Stalin was settling accounts with the opposition elements now generally classified as Russia's Fifth Column. Had a little less attention been given to this struggle which so few understood, and a little more to the gigantic constructive work which Stalin directed during the same years, there would have been fewer miscalculations concerning the power of the Red Army and Soviet people to deal with their enemies when the German challenge came.

The race against time in the internal affairs of the Revolution had been won. But in his hour of triumph shared with the people of the Union, Stalin never lost sight of the gathering storm soon to beat so furiously upon the new civilisation he had guided to maturity. And as he stood at the head of the mighty force of his creation, with the same serenity and poise which marked his years of greatest adversity, there were no signs of his hand faltering while he prepared State and Party for the greatest challenge of all.

Notes

1. *Theory and Practice of Leninism*, by J. Stalin.

2. *Leninism*, p. 146.

3. *Behind the Urals*, p. 174.

Stalin and the World Revolution

Departing from us, Comrade Lenin adjured us to remain faithful to the principles of the Communist International. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will not spare our lives to strengthen and extend the union of the toilers of the whole world—the Communist International.
J. STALIN, January, 1924

The dissolution of the Communist International is proper and timely because it facilitates the organisation of the common onslaught of all freedom-loving nations against the common enemy—Hitlerism . . .
J. STALIN, May 28, 1943

ALTHOUGH Joseph Stalin had reached the front rank of the Bolshevik Party leaders before 1914, he had, as already stated, written and said little about international matters until released from exile by the March Revolution of 1917; and in fact it was not until 1924 that he first gave considered expression to his views on foreign affairs, in the form of a volume entitled *Leninism*. Rushed from one front to another during the years of preparation and consolidation, organising and fighting desperately, he had been content to be Lenin's leading "practitioner." Now, having put on Lenin's mantle, he was still content to be Lenin's "disciple," faithfully expounding the Master's teachings. This is how he summed up his views at the time:

. . . the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the power of the proletariat in one country alone, does not *per se*, mean the complete victory of Socialism. Having consolidated its power and having secured the support of the peasantry, the victorious proletariat can and must proceed to upbuild a socialist society. Does this mean that thereby the victorious proletariat will achieve the final victory of Socialism? Does this mean that the workers in one country alone, unaided, can definitely install socialism, guaranteed against intervention, guaranteed against a restoration of the old régime? No, certainly not. For that the victory of the revolution, if not everywhere, at least in several countries, will be requisite. That is why the fostering of revolution, the support of revolution, in other countries, is incumbent upon the country where the revolution has triumphed. That is why a country in which the revolution has triumphed must not look upon itself as an independent magnitude, but as an auxiliary, as a means of hastening the victory of the proletariat in other lands. . .[1]

What forms the "fostering of revolution, the support of revolution, in other countries" would take, must depend on circumstances. As a Marxist he could not

say that at all times and in all circumstances he would call on revolutionary Russia to send her Red Army to aid an insurrection in some other country. But in one way or another it would assist the development of revolution everywhere.

That Stalin subscribed to Lenin's view of the epoch as one of "War and Revolution" he made abundantly clear in *Leninism*:

In former days, it was customary to regard the proletarian revolution as an outcome of conditions that were purely local to the country under consideration. . . . This formulation is obsolete. Nowadays we have to regard the proletarian revolution, first and foremost, as the outgrowth of antagonisms within the world-wide system of imperialism, as the outcome of an effort which (in this country or that) breaks the chains of world-wide imperialism. . . . Where is the front likely to be broken next? Again at the weakest point, obviously. . . .

Earlier, in March, 1919, he had with Lenin, Trotsky, Bucharin, Zinoviev and others been a delegate at the foundation congress of the Communist International. From the moment when the Second Socialist International collapsed at the outbreak of war in 1914, Lenin had been insistent on the need for the formation of a Communist International "free from opportunism"; and when the Russian Revolution roused tremendous enthusiasm in the ranks of the working-class of other countries he led the way in creating this body. It has been asserted that it was formed as an appendage of the Soviet Foreign Office. That assertion I regard as wholly inaccurate. There is ample evidence in Lenin's writings to prove that he would have established it even had there been no Russian Revolution. The latter, however, presented him with far more favourable circumstances, since it not only gave a great impetus to the development of the Bolshevik Party in Russia, but stirred the Socialist and working-class movements in every country with a desire to form parties in emulation of the Bolsheviks. Stalin had no hesitation in supporting Lenin's proposal.

In that first gathering in the Smolny Institute in Leningrad there was no discussion of the new International's relation to Soviet Foreign policy, or to the problems which would arise when the intervention war should be ended and diplomatic relations be established between the Soviet and capitalist governments. Indeed, at that time there appeared to be little prospect of such relations ever being established. The Soviets were fighting with their backs to the wall; many months of heroic struggle had yet to be endured before such problems of inter-State relations would arise. Nor was there the smallest guidance in any Marxist or Socialist writings. From the inception of relations with the capitalist countries, the Bolsheviks would be treading unmapped territory.

The Congress of 1919 was a small one, composed of a number of people connected with the Socialist movements of other countries who happened to be in Russia, and the leading members of the Russian Bolsheviks. Beyond making a few declarations and announcing the formation of the international it did little more than prepare the way for a really representative Congress in the following year.

The Second Congress met in July and August of 1920. Parties and groups of Socialists in more than fifty countries were represented. It was a remarkable assemblage which gathered first in the Uritsky Theatre in Leningrad and later in the St. Andrew's Hall in the Kremlin. The Revolution had acted like a great magnet and drawn delegations from every continent and clime. But the revolutionary developments had not gone deep enough to split the great Labour Parties on a scale large enough to secure a wide mass-basis for the new International in Germany and Britain, while the working-class of the United States was still in its political infancy and had little of a movement to split. The official Social Democratic and Labour Parties of the Second International were not invited, being regarded as disintegrating bodies to be superseded by the parties of revolution.

In Italy, France, Czecho-Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Rumania the major Socialist parties responded to the invitation. Groups and parties large and small, were faced at once with Lenin's insistence upon a revolutionary qualitative standard based upon the principles which had guided him in the building of the Bolshevik Party. This meant that some of the groupings, the French and Italian in particular, were faced with the obligation of splitting as a condition of membership of the International.

This Second Congress did not change its estimate of the international situation. Zinoviev, the first President, boldly asserted that a year, or not more than two years, would see the end of capitalism in Europe at least. And nobody contradicted him. Lenin analysed the character of the epoch opened by the Russian Revolution. He set no specific time limit to its duration. Indeed, he warned the revolutionaries against the conception that the current crisis was a hopeless one for the capitalists. He said:

There are no conditions which can be absolutely hopeless. The conduct of the bourgeoisie is like that of a desperate robber who has lost his bearings. It is committing blunder on blunder, aggravating the situation and hastening its own downfall. All this is true. But one cannot "prove" that there is absolutely no possibility for the bourgeoisie to beguile this or that minority of the exploited, by means of some concession; that it cannot suppress this or that movement or crush an uprising of some fraction of the oppressed and exploited. To attempt to "prove" beforehand the "absolute" hopelessness is merely pedantry, mere play

of ideas and phrases. The real "proof" in this and similar questions can be derived only from experience. The bourgeois régime all over the world is undergoing the greatest revolutionary crisis. Now the revolutionary parties must prove by actual deeds that they possess sufficient class-consciousness, sufficient power of organisation, are sufficiently in touch with the exploited masses, have enough determination and efficiency to take advantage of this crisis for a successful victorious revolution.

To get this "proof" ready is the main purpose of assembling here in the present Congress of the Communist International. . . .

No one asserted that there could be a simultaneous rising in all countries, but it was accepted that the Revolution was on the up-grade and that every communist party had to prove itself capable of leading an insurrectionary struggle designed to establish in the immediate future, the dictatorship of the proletariat and soviets. It was also accepted that the Communist International Executive had to function as the centralised leadership of the world revolution. In short, it is clear that the Communist International set out to be an international party. At its Third Congress, held in 1921, it put matters thus:

In order to break the front of the international counter-revolution, in order to make use of the combined forces of the Communist International, and bring nearer the victory of the revolution, we must strive, with all our energy, for united international leadership in the revolutionary struggle. The conditions essential to this are the political and centralised organisation of the component elements of the Communist International, the doing away with the autonomy *trickery* of the opportunist, the creation of an appropriate political organisation of the Communist International and its entire machinery. . . . The Congress takes into account the national peculiarities according to countries, the differences in the conditions under which the struggle takes place, the strength of the enemy and the fighting ability and strength of the revolutionary forces. But the nearer we get to uniform international fighting leadership, the more necessary it becomes to harmonise the forms of organisation and tactics of the affiliated sections. . . .

Thus Revolutionary Marxism, derived from Europe in the '90's, was borne on the wings of the Russian Revolution back to Europe and on to the rest of the world.

The first world Congress of the Communist International in which Stalin played the leading rôle was the Fifth since its formation, was called the Congress for the Bolshevisation of the Communist Parties of the International, and was held in 1924 when the struggle with Trotsky was getting into its stride and the process of consolidating the Russian Party on the issue of "Socialism in

one country" was maturing. Stalin at once thrust this issue before the young parties of the International. He did not regard it as purely Russian. It was fundamental. Lenin's exposition of the "law of unequal development of capitalism" was not confused to Russia, and it was important that the other parties of the international should realise this. Moreover, their realisation would help Stalin's position in the Russian Party; for at the moment of his succession to Lenin, Trotsky, Bucharin and Radek were representatives of the Russian Bolsheviks on the Executive of the Communist International. One by one, as they exposed themselves for men of little faith in "Socialism in one country" and deviators from Marxism as expounded by Lenin and Stalin, they were thrust out of the ranks of Bolshevism and Stalin's supporters took their places in all institutions.

It will be observed that while there was recognition of the "unequal development" of the countries in the tactical aspects of the policy of the Comintern, the organisation of this body was to be governed by entirely the opposite principle, that of strict international centralisation. When therefore Stalin raised the question of "Socialism in one country," the country which dominated the situation was naturally Soviet Russia. The Bolsheviks were convinced believers in centralisation of direction, and equally convinced that what was good for their Party must be good for the whole world despite its variations of development. It dawned on no one that the "law of unequal development of capitalism" might ultimately prove so potent that a centralised international Party would turn out to be impracticable both in theory and practice.

When Stalin became the leader of the Communist International in 1925 it was generally accepted in Communist circles that the revolution had ebbed. He regarded the international's task as that of training the reserves of the Revolution, and developing Communist Parties that would be able to take advantage of the turn of the tide whenever and wherever that might occur.

He did not confine himself to the issues derived directly from Russian experience, but studied the situation and problems of other parties with the thoroughness which has marked all his labours. The stories of his inaccessibility and living in an atmosphere of strictly guarded seclusion are the product of journalistic imagination. The difficulties the journalists encountered in getting interviews with him are really the measure of the importance he attached to them in relation to his work. He was, and is, a most systematic worker. His office at the headquarters of the Russian Bolshevik Party is a model of simplicity and good order. He has a large room, plainly furnished. At one end there is a large table-desk at which he sits working and smoking his pipe for hours on end every day and far into the night. I don't know whether he has taken

to smoking proper pipe tobacco, but on all occasions on which I have been in his company he has smoked cigarette tobacco, breaking up the long-stemmed Russian cigarettes and tearing off the paper. Down one side of his room is a long table with some sixteen chairs—seats for the members of the Political Bureau. On the wall are large portraits of Marx and Lenin. He is never flustered, either by the amount of work before him or by its nature. Nor does he ever, when he has agreed to meet you, appear conscious of the fact that his secretary has set a time limit to the conversation. Indeed, when he is greatly interested he will ignore the time and the secretary must make adjustments later.

From the end of his period of dashing from one war front to another, the headquarters of the Russian Party claimed him. Out of this centre his influence and directives radiated to all parts of the world, into this centre from the ends of the earth came information, requests, greetings, demands. In the morning a car waited for him at the door of his Kremlin home. It returned with him in the small hours of the next day. Occasionally if some important issue was at stake in the headquarters of the Communist International he would take part in its discussions. Occasionally he would attend some performance at the Bolshoy Theatre. Now and then he would deliver a lecture to students. His home was a restful corner hidden from the eyes of the world.

His days were spent in conferences with the leaders of Government departments, of the republics, the trade unions, industry, the Army and communist organisations in other countries. His nights were filled with hours of work, studying the problems the day had provided and projecting the tasks ahead. But at no time did he appear overworked. His serenity hid his tireless activity. And contrary to the common conception of his relationship with other people, he was always seeking collective decisions. This applied as much to his relations with the leaders of the foreign Communist Parties as to those with the Political Bureau and Central Committee of his own Party. It is a plain fact that the numerous critical situations in the history of the parties making up the C.I. were examined, and decisions were taken by their leaders, more frequently in Stalin's office than in the headquarters of the C.I. This has laid him open to the charge of being the dictator of the International. The accusation, however, overlooks the circumstance that he and his colleagues were the Russian Party representatives in the C.I. Executive, and that all parties within this organisation looked to the Russians as their leaders.

The stages in the history of Stalin's leadership of world revolution are as clearly defined as those in the history of the Soviet Union itself. He took over the leadership at a period which he described as one of "partial stabilisation of capitalism," and set before the parties of the International four essential tasks: (*a*) to unite the working-class in defence of the Soviet Union, the fatherland of

world revolution; (*b*) to lead the workers in their defensive struggles by means of the "united front" policy calculated to defend the workers' interests, wages, hours of labour, political rights, etc.; (*c*) by the same method to expose the Social Democratic leaders of the Second International and destroy their influence; and (*d*) to organise the Communist Parties on the principles of the Russian Communist Party in preparation for the new period of revolutionary struggle for power which lay ahead.

Conscious of the immaturity of the leaders of the other parties,' Stalin and his colleagues in the C.I. Executive gave detailed attention to the question of training in leadership and assisting the leaders with their problems both theoretical and practical. The headquarters of the C.I. became much more than a place from which to issue documents, manifestos, and directives. It also boasted a great research department staffed by picked research workers drawn from the parties of other countries, who were constantly preparing reports on every phase of the economic, political and social life of the lands from which they had come. These were studied by the leaders and reinforced by countless interviews with delegates who streamed to Moscow from every quarter of the globe—from trade unions, parties, co-operative societies, cultural organisations of all kinds. Stalin himself frequently met workers' delegations, listened to them, questioned them, and answered their questions.

In the first period of the C.I. world Congress succeeded world congress in rapid succession. By 1925 it had held five. The Red International of Labour Unions, formed in 1922 to develop the revolutionary process in the trade unions, had held three. Other international bodies such as the Class War Prisoners' Aid, the Workers' International Relief, the Friends of the Soviet Union, each in its own way assisting the revolutionary process, and all of them conceived as a means for developing mass sympathy and cadres of revolutionary leaders, also held frequent congresses.

After 1925, however, there was a change. Instead of the world congresses there appeared in the Comintern what was called the Enlarged Executive, meeting annually. This was a miniature world congress, but more select. The first stage aimed at creating a wide basis for the selection of leaders, the second at strengthening the centralised leadership. It was Stalin who led the transition from one to the other, and due to him that there was no further world congress until 1928.

Stalin then held the view that the world situation had considerably changed and called for new directives. The Soviet Union had launched the Five Year Plan and was leaving the New Economic Policy behind. Capitalist economy in the rest of the world had recovered sufficiently to pass beyond its pre-1914 levels of production. It was developing new techniques, and the trusts, cartels,

and State capitalism were growing. The production levels were mounting and the markets were contracting. A new period of imperialist wars was foreshadowed, including wars of imperialism against the U.S.S.R. Gigantic class battles were beginning. Britain had just emerged from the General Strike, and there was a great movement of colonial peoples in China and India. The Chinese Revolution had just passed a high peak of ferocity and Chiang Kai-shek had slaughtered revolutionary workers by the thousand. Capitalism was on the eve of new crises. The "stabilisation period" was verging on a period of immense cataclysm.

The parties of the Communist International were therefore brought together and subjected to a detailed examination of their experiences. What then?

. . . alarm for the fate of the U.S.S.R. against which the military forces of the imperialists are being collected . . . fight against imperialist war . . . defend the Chinese Revolution and the U.S.S.R., call for militant international solidarity of the working-class. Intensify the struggle against the Social Democratic leaders. . . .

Each party received directions and advice according to the situation in its particular country. The struggle was still defensive but there was a prospect of insurrectionary battles.

Stalin did not appear at this Congress, although throughout its proceedings he was in constant consultation with Molotov, who was his second-in-command. The next Congress did not take place until 1935, seven years later. (It should be understood that a number of the Executive of the Comintern, including leading members of the most important parties, were resident in Moscow and constituted a permanent directing body.)

Much had happened in the interval between the Sixth and Seventh World Congresses. The Soviet Union had almost fulfilled two Five Year Plans and was hurrying from strength to strength. The capitalist world had emerged from the greatest economic crisis of its history. Japan had invaded Manchuria and the Chinese Communists were leading a Soviet Revolution against Chiang Kai-shek. The Nazis of Germany had come to power and smashed the working-class movement of that country. Mussolini had invaded Abyssinia. All the Axis powers had left the League of Nations. The Soviet Union had joined it. The armament race was in full swing. Dimitrov, Kuusinnen and Manuilsky were now leading the Communist International. Here is how Dimitrov summed up the situation.

If, thanks to the struggle for peace of the Soviet Union and the toilers of all capitalist countries, war can be delayed even for a certain time, this also will

better enable the proletariat to strengthen its position in the capitalist countries, to strengthen the power of the Soviet Union and to create more favourable conditions for transforming the war between the imperialists, or a war of the imperialists against the Soviet Union, into a successful and victorious revolution.

However, should the proletariat not succeed in preventing war, the new world war launched by the imperialists will be a war of the imperialist bandits for plundering the peoples of the Soviet Union, for enslaving the small and weak peoples who are to-day independent and for the re-division of the colonies and spheres of influence of the imperialist Great Powers. . . . The launching of war by the imperialists will mark the beginning of a revolutionary crisis throughout the entire capitalist world. The task of the proletariat will be to fight for the victory of revolution and for the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war against the bourgeoisie.[2]

Did Stalin read this speech before Dimitrov delivered it? We can only assume that he did. That Dimitrov had at least discussed it with him during its preparation is certain. Two things were established by it. First, that in the opinion of the C.I. war was rapidly approaching. Second, that however the war might begin it would develop into a war against the Soviet Union by the imperialist Powers. The possibility of the present alignment of forces, by which Britain and America are allies of the Soviet Union, was not envisaged.[3]

While these Congress proceedings gave full recognition to the "unequal development of the Powers," and admitted a justification for seeking an anti-Fascist combination in the struggle for peace, there was always the overriding assumption that whatever the Powers might do to postpone war, once war came they would unite against the Soviet Union. That this was Stalin's view also will be clear from the course of events.

The immediate policy which emerged from the Congress was complementary to the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. The Fascist danger was recognised as paramount, and therefore, supremely conscious of the war threat to the Union, the Comintern advocated "collective security against the aggressor" as the method for at least prolonging the peace. It supplemented this "State" policy with a campaign for "A People's Front against Fascism and War." Abruptly ceasing to wage a headlong war against the Social Democrats, it took up the fight for the preservation of Political Democracy against the growing Fascism of the State. It announced: "The toiling masses in a number of countries are faced with the necessity of making a definite choice and of making it to-day: not between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois democracy, but between bourgeois democracy and Fascism."

This continued until 1939, when the reluctance of the non-aggressor powers to ally themselves with the Soviet Union led Stalin to sign the non-aggression pact with Germany. Soon afterward, Hitler's army marched into Poland and the war burst upon Britain and France. Then, apparently still holding to the view that however the war had started it would be switched into a general capitalist war against the Soviet Union, Stalin declared to the working-class movement of the world that "Lenin's theses of 1914 on imperialist war hold good." The Comintern declared likewise, and the Communist Parties floundered into a semi-pacifist muddle until Hitler's armies switched from West to East and struck at the Soviet Union in June, 1941.

This I regard as Stalin's first big mistake since March, 1917, when he found himself floundering with other Bolshevik leaders, and Lenin crashed in upon them with his "April Theses." This mistake lay not in characterising the war of 1939 as imperialist. That was true enough as a generalisation. Germany, Italy, France, and Britain were certainly imperialist powers. It lay in seriously under-estimating the strength and character of their differences. To lump all the imperialist Powers into one bag as having reached the same stage of development and decay makes no sense either of subsequent history or of the policy Stalin had been previously pursuing. If it was right for Communists, revolutionary Socialists, democrats and the peace-loving peoples of France and the U.S.A. to support the alliance with the Soviet Union in the war against the Nazi powers in 1941 and onwards, surely it was also right in 1939 when Britain and France declared war on Nazi Germany for them to strive for such an alliance. As a matter of fact, this was precisely the course they had been advocating under the banner of collective security for at least five years before 1939. The democratic powers were imperialist then and are imperialist now.

It appears to me that Stalin's blunder has its roots in his one-sided elaboration of Lenin's theory of the "unequal development of capitalism." Stalin was the first to seize on the significance of Lenin's doctrine of "building Socialism in one country" as it applied to Russia, but he had by no means developed it fully as applied to the foreign policy of the communists of other countries. It was generally recognised that the internal problems before the Communist Parties of other countries varied considerably, but their policy on international affairs was based on the over-simplified conception that the world is divided into two sections—the Socialist U.S.S.R. and the remaining capitalist world uniformly anti-Soviet. While they recognised differences in the capitalist countries and differences between them, there is always the assumption in their policy that the capitalists would converge into a common front against the U.S.S.R. That there were, and are, strong tendencies in each country in favour of the latter policy is obvious; so strong were they at one time in Britain that we almost found ourselves at war with Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union together. Had the

British and French expeditionary forces landed in Finland this, thanks to Mr. Hore-Belisha, Mr. Chamberlain, and others, would have been the result. But once again the contradictory interests of the capitalist States intervened and saved us from that disaster.

Fortunately capitalism as a whole has never been able to secure world unity on anything. Groups of capitalists, groups of capitalist countries, can and do, combine. These groupings, however, only reveal cleavages on a large scale and none is ever stable. No sooner has one struggle been "settled" by them than new groupings appear on the basis of new contradictory interests. Paper schemes may provide an abstract basis for a unified world of capitalism, but the world of capitalist reality can never operate them.

It is an amazing fact that the foreign policy of the Soviet State in relation to other States has always been based on the recognition of this fact, but the policy of the Communist International for which Stalin was also responsible has been based on precisely the opposite assumption.

Such an over-simplification of class and capitalist relations was bound to bring its nemesis when Nazi Germany turned to attack the U.S.S.R. Then the Communists were at last compelled to recognise that, because of the unequal development of the political and social structure, the working-class in each country had to face different tasks even in foreign affairs. In the Soviet Union they had to support an alliance of the Socialist State with Imperialist States. In Germany they had to wage an underground struggle towards insurrection and to welcome the defeat of their own country. In the countries of political democracy they had to form an alliance with their own capitalist forces in the war against Nazism.

The unity of the working-class forces of the world operating in a world torn asunder by the contradictions and chaos of capitalism can be only a dialectical unity. The slogan "Workers of the World Unite" has no meaning apart from unity in the struggle for Socialism. The struggle for Socialism is as "unequal" as the development of capitalism, as varied in its forms and as contradictory. At one and the same time it may demand of the working-class in some countries an alliance with their capitalists and in other countries a fight to the death against their capitalists, as at the present time. This is the fundamental reason why all international organisations of workers have never been little more than loose associations for limited purposes and even then have broken apart under the impact of the ever-changing combinations of the capitalist forces. Capitalism divides the working-class and its organisations as well as unites them. But the full unity of the working people of the world will be realised only when capitalism has ceased to divide them, and that point can be reached only by the victory of Socialism in one country, then in another, and finally in all.

Had Stalin developed Lenin's theory with regard to the unequal development of capitalism and applied it in the field of the international class struggle, as he certainly has done in relation to the building of Socialism in Soviet Russia, he would have recognised long ago that the function of the Communist International was that of a school to coach communist parties and groups to stand on their own feet in fraternal relations with each other, armed with the teachings of Marx and Lenin and the Russian Revolution. He would have seen that a centralised international party can only be based on a uniformity of experience and conditions, and that uniformity did not exist; that as things are to-day there can be unity of principle, of aim, of method, but never uniformity of application. Had he seen this, it would not have been necessary for him to have waited until world affairs forced his hand before he took the decision to dissolve the Comintern because it could no longer function.

The Communist International was not the first of the revolutionary international organisations to be dissolved. There was a Red International of Labour Unions. It has gone. There was the Workers' International Relief Organisation. It too has gone. There were the Class War Prisoners' Aid and the League against Imperialism. All are gone, not because Stalin or anybody associated with them has abandoned their principles or their aims, but because the changing forms of the struggle have destroyed the bases on which they were formed. The shifting, contradictory manner of the workers' struggle has not destroyed the basis of the communist parties but it has certainly destroyed the Communist International.

I think, therefore, it would be unjust to say that Stalin's dissolution of the Communist International signifies his abandonment of Leninism and a betrayal of his teacher. On the contrary, I consider it was his strong loyalty to Lenin, his consciousness of the fact that the C.I. was Lenin's creation, which delayed the decision until it was forced on him by events. His mistake consists in having developed Leninism in a one-sided way—on the side of building Socialism in the Soviet Union and leaving it, as far as the working-class of other countries was concerned where Lenin had left it years ago. For this, however regrettable the admission, is true.

Notes

1. *Leninism*, p. 109.

2. *Report of the Seventh World Congress of the C.I.*, p. 74.

3. Lest this criticism be regarded as an example of wisdom after the event, I venture to remind my readers that I foreshadowed the present alignment in 1935 at the Bristol Conference of the Socialist League. See my book, *New Horizons*,

p. 313-15.

Stalin and the Foreign Policy of the U.S.S.R.

We see, therefore, that those who, forgetting the international character of the October Revolution, declare the victory of the revolution in one country to be simply and solely a national phenomenon, are wrong. No less wrong are those who, while recognising the international character of the October Revolution, are inclined to look upon it as something passive, destined simply to receive aid from without. In actual fact, not only does the October Revolution need the support in other lands, but the revolution in these other lands needs the support of the October Revolution in order to hasten and push forward the day when world imperialism shall be for ever overthrown.
J. STALIN, *Leninism*, p. 216

We Marxists believe that revolution will occur in other countries as well. . . . Export of revolution is nonsense . . . to assert that we desire to bring about revolution in other countries by interfering with their way of life is to speak of something that does not exist, and which we have never preached.
J. STALIN in an interview with MR. HOWARD, March 1st, 1936

IT was in May, 1925, that once again a great assembly of delegates of the Bolshevik Party met within the Kremlin walls. Here were men and women of all kinds, industrial workers, peasants, officials, intellectuals, and professional revolutionaries in the process of becoming statesmen. On the platform at the top end of St. Andrew's Hall, before great portraits of Marx and Lenin, were Kalinin, the President, Molotov, Litvinov, Bucharin, Kamenev, Kaganovitch, Dzerzhinsky, and many other leaders well known to the throng assembled from every part of the Union. At the speaker's desk, about to address the conference, stood the swarthy, black-haired, serious figure of Joseph Stalin in his khaki tunic. Great excitement animated the crowd. It rose and cheered him as he placed his notes on the desk and stood, quietly waiting for the cheers to subside.

It was the first Party Conference since Lenin had died. Lenin's successor stood before them, and however slow the world might be to recognise the fact, they knew it. It was not the first time he had taken charge of a Bolshevik Conference in the absence of the Master, but this time Lenin would not return. The battle to prove that Stalin was in his rightful place was in full swing. True to the Lenin tradition he was about to review the world situation and the tasks before them. He was conscious that what he had to say would be read by millions outside Soviet Russia as well as inside. He knew that his critics and opponents would scan every line through a magnifying glass. But there was no hesitation in his utterance and no mistaking his meaning. He proceeded:

. . . between our country and the countries of the capitalist world there has been established a sort of provisional equilibrium of forces. . . . Capitalism is

emerging out of the chaos in production, trade, and finance which resulted from the war; here and there it has already emerged from that chaos. . . . Speaking generally, we may say that the post-war economic crisis in Europe is over, and that production and commerce are tending to regain the pre-war level. . . .

Instead of the revolutionary flood-tide which was noticeable during the years of the post-war crisis, we now see, in central and western Europe, an ebb in the revolutionary movement. This means that the question of the conquest of power, the question of the seizure of power by the proletariat, has, in western and central Europe, been postponed from to-day's agenda until to-morrow's. . . .

After amplifying these points in great detail he went on to outline the tasks of the Party in relation to the international revolutionary movement and to the foreign policy of the Union. Touching the first he said:

We must work along the following lines. First of all we must do everything we can to strengthen the Communist Parties in the West, and to help these parties to win over the majority of the working masses. In the second place, we must intensify the struggle of the Western workers to achieve trade union unity, and to consolidate the friendship between the proletariat of the Soviet Union and the proletariat of the capitalist countries. . . . In the third place, we must establish and strengthen the alliance between the proletariat of our country and the liberationist movements in oppressed countries. . . . In the fourth place, we must consolidate the Socialist elements in our own country. . . .

Then, turning to the tasks of the Party in the domain of Soviet foreign policy, he continued:

First of all, we must carry on the struggle against new wars, the struggle to maintain peace and to secure the persistence of the so-called normal relationships towards capitalist countries. . . .

In the second place, we must extend our commerce with the foreign world on the basis of the consolidation of the State Monopoly of Foreign Trade. . . . In the third place, we must promote a *rapprochement* to the countries that were vanquished in the imperialist war . . .

In the fourth place, we must join forces with the dependent and colonial countries.

Here is a clearly-defined separation of the functions of the Communist International and the Soviet State. Yet the control of both lay in his hands. He was watching the enemy world of capitalism and on the look-out all the time for the revolutionary movement to get into its stride again.

The shape of things to come was not very clear in the chaotic condition of the world, but the Soviet régime had emerged from the depths of famine and the wreckage of the wars of intervention and he was confident of its constructive power. One by one the capitalist governments were "recognising" the Soviet Government as the legitimate or at least the *de facto* authority in the territory which had once been the Empire of the Czars. But there was no friendship in the recognition. Soviet representatives had been murdered. Soviet institutions had been ransacked. The capitalist press everywhere insulted, derided, and in every way showed its hatred of the new régime.

The conflict of interests and rivalry between the Powers was, however, most profound. Vigorously though the League of Nations manufactured pacificist and liberal dreams for the future, the victorious Powers within it could not restrain their animosity towards the defeated countries nor hide the differences existing among themselves. This conflict facilitated Stalin's policy of preventing the formation of a united anti-Soviet front. The Italians and Germans, Turks and Austrians, smarting under the terms imposed by the victorious countries, turned to make fresh terms with the Soviet Union. But while these secured the western border of Soviet Russia from immediate attack because there could be no war against her there unless Germany became its spearhead, they also gave rise to a new trend in the anti-Soviet policy of the Allied Powers. First they were to be the means of directing the reviving German trade away from the markets of the victors, and of enabling her to secure profits out of which to pay her indemnities and reparation payments. Later they would become the basis for diplomatic efforts to secure a united bloc of the Western Powers against the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, Stalin and the Bolsheviks could counter these trends by racing ahead with "Socialism in one country," developing the anti-capitalist unity of the workers and encouraging revolutionary developments, especially in China, already in the throes of revolution. Maybe from here would come the next great movement of masses along the "Moscow Road." The Chinese Revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat Sen had been developing since 1911. The Russian Revolution had already influenced it greatly by the simple act of repudiating the colonisation policy of the Czars, recognising the Government of Sun Yat Sen and renouncing all extra-territorial treaties and privileges still maintained by the imperialist Powers.

Stalin saw this revolution evolving into a Soviet revolution. Through State recognition and mutual aid he would help the national revolution in its fight against feudalism and imperialism and through the Communist International he would assist its transition to the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Thus is Stalin's historic "line" in relation to China. Its application has varied according to the relation of class forces in China itself, and China's relations with other Powers.

Addressing the Enlarged Executive of the Communist International on November 30th, 1926, he said:

I believe that the future revolutionary power in China will, in its character, resemble the power which was spoken of in our country in 1905, *i.e.*, a dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry but with the distinguishing feature that it will be predominantly an anti-imperialist power. It will be a power of transition to a non-capitalist, or, to be more exact, to a Socialist development in China.

This is the direction in which the revolution in China is likely to develop. This path of development which China will follow, will be facilitated by three circumstances—firstly, in that the point of the revolution in China, as a national revolution for freedom will be directed against imperialism and its agents in China; secondly, in that the large bourgeoisie in China is weak, weaker than the national bourgeoisie was in Russia in 1905, which facilitates the hegemony of the proletariat, the leadership of the proletarian party as against the Chinese peasantry; thirdly, in that the revolution in China will develop in circumstances which make it possible to make use of the experience and the aid of the victorious revolution in the Soviet Union. . . .

In 1925 active assistance had been given to the Cantonese forces fighting against the feudal war lords. The Communist Party of China was affiliated to the Kuomintang. The Chinese Nationalist Party, now led by Chiang Kai-shek, accepted M. Borodin as political adviser to the Kuomintang and General Galen as military adviser. In 1927 Chiang Kai-shek turned on the communists and revolutionary workers and his forces slaughtered tens of thousands. A period of civil war opened in which Chiang Kai-shek endeavoured to exterminate the "Reds." Relations with the Soviet Government were severed. The civil war ended only after the "Reds" had captured Chiang Kai-shek and persuaded him to lead a united Chinese national struggle against the Japanese who had invaded North China and were meeting with almost no resistance.

Immediately the Chinese Government came to terms with the Communist Party of China, new relations were established with the Soviet Government and the latter has supported China with arms and war equipment for this struggle despite its treaties with Japan.

Such contradictions existed everywhere and were bound to exist in a world torn by class, national, and imperial interests and consequently presenting a host of temporary and changing combinations.

Naturally the capitalist elements of every country, each influenced by, their own special interests, accused the Bolsheviks in general and the Soviet

Government in particular of responsibility for all the "disturbances" and "unrest" in the world. Stalin answered the critics: "The accusation does us too much honour! Unfortunately, we are not yet strong enough to give all the colonial countries direct aid in their struggle for liberation . . ."[1]

Sometimes the outcry against the aid given to working-class organisations and colonial peoples in their struggles reached immense proportions, and jeopardised the "normal" relations between the Soviet State and other States. But Stalin was unperturbed by these outcries. In Britain, where the ruling class had persistently shown its hatred of the Soviet régime from the moment the Bolsheviks came to power, the protest reached panic proportions when in 1926, the Russian trade unions collected from their members £1,000,000 to aid the locked-out miners. This incident undoubtedly paved the way to the severing of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1927, but the severance did not divert Stalin from the policy of aiding the workers of other countries. Nor did the prospect of the rupture of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee prevent him from dissociating the Russian trade unions from the policy of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress when it betrayed the miners in the General Strike.

When I was in Moscow at this time I criticised him vigorously for the severity of his strictures and warned him that it would mean the end of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee. He answered me very quietly but very firmly, "No doubt that will follow. It may also make it easier for the British Government to break off relations with the Soviet Government. That also is regrettably true. But better so than that the British working-class should hold the Russian trade unions in any way responsible, even by implication, for the betrayal of the miners." The Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee was dissolved. A little later, at the instigation of the Home Secretary, Mr. Joynson Hicks, Arcos was raided and trade and diplomatic relations between the two countries were broken. Probably at no time since the end of the intervention war had the class feelings of the British Government so overwhelmed their sense of judgement. The Blimps in politics had the upper hand, and could they have mustered sufficient support from the governments of other countries they would have gladly led Britain into war against the U.S.S.R.

Fortunately they failed. There was too much discord between the Powers on other counts, and Stalin, who knew this, was unperturbed. Some of his colleagues, however, were more excitable and disposed to panic. I heard Bucharin, who was then the leader of the Communist International, deliver a speech which sent the people of Moscow rushing to the shops to buy in stocks because he had declared war was imminent. Stalin stopped the rush by promptly denouncing the forecast. He knew that neither the British Government nor the French, despite their common hatred, could either independently or together

make war on the Soviet Union without first securing Germany or some group of countries bordering the Union as jumping-off grounds, while the U.S.A. could only vent its spleen from afar. Therefore, although the relations of the Soviet Government with the capitalist governments of the world were unstable and founded on the unstable relations of capitalist society everywhere, it was this very instability which gave durability to the "breathing space" begun at the termination of the intervention wars.

Soviet Russia seemed to be the centre of a world gone crazy. Yet geography and history were on her side. The country was vast and its reserves inexhaustible. Given time in which to develop them she would become unconquerable—and time was being given her. Having consolidated her internal political power she was now on the verge of consolidating her Socialist economic power. Henceforth her internal difficulties would be those of growth, not of decay.

Outside her frontiers the world was torn with class conflict and rival interests of every kind, economic, national, imperial, industrial, political. This made the common aspirations of the people everywhere into very big and plain issues—peace, security, trade, freedom, social betterment—but everywhere unrealisable, however much they might figure on the political banners of the Governments. Yet each of these issues was integral to the policy of the Soviet Government at home and abroad. Soviet Russia had no imperial ambitions; her colonial peoples had been set free to climb the ladder of full national development in co-operation with all their brethren in the Union; the development of her Socialist economy was producing the classless society. Stalin's foreign policy was therefore simplified to a degree with which that of no other government could compare.

When the Soviet representatives said they wanted peace they were not talking with tongue in cheek. They meant it, because the longer the peace, the better they could realise their Socialist aims. Interest and aspiration alike were served by peace. When Litvinov, Stalin's great collaborator in the conduct of foreign policy, proposed to the International Disarmament Conference that the nations should simultaneously disarm, he was derided as utopian. Why it should be wrong to propose disarmament to a disarmament conference, I have not yet been able to discover. Did Stalin or Litvinov think that the Powers assembled at this particular League of Nations gathering were likely to agree to disarmament? Not at all. On the other hand, could Stalin have accepted such a decision had the rest agreed? Certainly. A world disarmed could not threaten the Soviet Union, and the wealth that had to be diverted to the production of arms could have been devoted to social construction. Stalin knew, none better, that only a Socialist world, by the nature of its economy and the organisation of its political and

social life, could dispense with armaments; and correspondingly that capitalist states could never disarm. But the fact that they had called the Disarmament Conference gave him the opportunity, through Litvinov, to make this clear to the world.

The capitalist world wanted trade and economic stability. So did the Soviet Union. Stalin offered trade and peaceful relations to the capitalists; and the rejection of his offer proved that class prejudice in the governments concerned were stronger than their desire for trade and peace. Where trade and peaceful relations were established, they helped the economy of the Union and assisted her in organising resistance to the attempts to form a common front against her.

It is a striking fact that even when confronted with this perfect illustration of the unequal development of capitalism, Stalin continued to cling firmly to the view that despite the cleavage between the capitalist Powers, they would sooner or later converge into a united bloc for war on the soviets. He could not help remembering that only a few short years ago, enemies had become co-belligerents in an almost universal capitalist combination to destroy the infant Bolshevik State. Nor did he fail to note the reception given by leaders of capitalism in every country to Japanese aggression in the Far East and the rise of Nazism in Germany. With few exceptions the ruling class everywhere looked with approbation upon Japanese attacks on the Soviet frontier, and on the conquest of Manchuria, especially when they thought these efforts the prologue to open war against the Soviet Union. But Stalin never showed panic. As long as the Powers were entangled in their own troubles and rivalries he was gaining time for the development of the Soviet Union.

In 1930 he again gave one of the periodic reviews in which he took stock of the Socialist and capitalist worlds. Addressing the Sixteenth Party Congress he said:

. . . What is the picture to-day?

To-day: an economic crisis in nearly all the industrial countries of capitalism. To-day: an agricultural crisis in nearly all the agrarian countries. Instead of "prosperity," poverty of the masses and colossal growth of unemployment. Instead of a boom in agriculture, the ruin of millions of peasants. The collapse of illusions about the omnipotence of capitalism generally, and United States capitalism in particular. . . . And the "universal" noise about the "inevitable destruction" of the U.S.S.R. is being replaced by "universal" malevolent hissing, about the necessity of punishing "this country," which dares to develop economically while crisis reigns around. . . .

He proceeded to elaborate these observations and then summed up the

situation in these words:

. . . the stabilisation of capitalism is coming to an end . . . the revival of the revolutionary movement of the masses will develop with new force. . . . The world economic crisis will, in a number of countries, grow into a political crisis. And this means, in the first place, that the bourgeoisie will seek a way out of the situation in further fascination in the sphere of internal policy, making use of all the forces of reaction for this purpose, including Social Democracy.

It means secondly, that the bourgeoisie will seek a way out through a new imperialist war and intervention, in the sphere of external policy. It means finally, that the proletariat, fighting capitalist exploitation and the war danger, will seek a way out through revolution.

It is noticeable that in this speech the familiar references to the tasks of the Communists in other countries are missing. But he outlines Soviet foreign policy in a few words:

Our policy is a policy of peace and trading relations with all countries . . . we shall continue this policy with all our strength and all our resources. We don't want a single foot of foreign territory. But we shall not give up a single inch of our own territory either, to anyone.

When Hitler rose to power in Germany, Stalin answered with a sweeping change of strategy in the foreign policy of both the Soviet Union and the Communist International. The spearhead of capitalist attack, pointing directly at the heart of the Revolution, had at last emerged from the chaos of capitalism, and there was not a moment to lose. It was conspicuous that no government in the capitalist world quivered with apprehension when this new power arrived. The world's conservative press hailed it with glee, and there was not a Tory who, as he nodded approval of the Hitler and Mussolini method of dealing with the "labour problem," did not feel confident that in the bargain-basements of diplomacy, he could make a deal with the new anti-Bolshevik champion. Certainly none of the capitalist states saw in this new phenomenon the rise of a Power which would shortly set out to conquer themselves and the world.

Within a few months, however, the approbation among the Tory leaders was already less universal. The Disarmament Conference, meeting at the time of Hitler's seizure of power, quietly vanished. Conscription was re-introduced into Germany. Page after page of the Versailles Treaty was torn to shreads. Germany left the League of Nations. While their senile heads bowed to the new challenger, the democratic powers began to dither, and in the name of "peace" hoped Hitler would turn eastward and leave them alone. Almost alone among conservatives Mr. Churchill, although he had previously eulogised Fascism, now

saw the Nazi power of Germany as a threat to the British Empire and Britain's place in the world. The Trades Union and Labour Movements in all countries had been anti-Fascist from the outset.

Stalin's answer to the new situation was most striking. Without hesitation he steered the Soviet Union into the League of Nations despite the evidence that the latter was already disintegrating. Britain and France were the only great Powers left within it, and his action was a clear demonstration of his willingness to co-operate with them against the new challenger. This was the beginning of his campaign to secure "collective security" against the aggressor. Litvinov became the protagonist of this policy in the League of Nations, and warned the world that "peace was indivisible." The Communist International swung into line with the demand for a "people's front against War and Fascism."

Five years after this far-reaching development Stalin reviewed the tragic course of events. It was March, 1939. He said:

. . . The preceding crisis had already mixed the cards and intensified the struggle for markets and sources of raw materials. The seizure of Manchuria and North China by Japan, the seizure of Abyssinia by Italy—all this reflected the acuteness of the struggle among the Powers. The new economic crisis must lead, and is actually leading, to a further sharpening of the imperialist struggle. It is no longer a question of competition in the markets, of a commercial war, of dumping. These methods of struggle have long been recognised as inadequate. It is now a question of a new redivision of the world, of spheres of influence and colonies by military action. . . .

. . . Here is a list of the most important events during the period under review which mark the beginning of the new imperialist war. In 1935 Italy attacked and seized Abyssinia. In the summer of 1936 Germany and Italy organised military intervention in Spain, Germany entrenching herself in the north of Spain and in Spanish Morocco, and Italy in the south of Spain and in the Balearic Islands. Having seized Manchuria, Japan in 1937 invaded North and Central China, occupied Peking, Tientsin and Shanghai and began to oust her foreign competitors from the occupied zone. In the beginning of 1938 Germany seized Austria, and in the autumn of 1938 the Sudeten region of Czecho-Slovakia. At the end of 1938 Japan seized Canton, and at the beginning of 1939 the island of Hainan.

Thus the war, which has stolen so imperceptibly upon the nations, has drawn a population of over 500,000,000 into its orbit and has extended its sphere of action over a vast territory, stretching from Tientsin, Shanghai and Canton, through Abyssinia, to Gibraltar.

After the first imperialist war the victor states, primarily England, France and the United States, had set up a new system of relations between countries, the post-war régime of peace. The main props of this régime were the Nine-Power Pact in the Far East, and the Versailles Treaty and a number of other treaties in Europe. The League of Nations was set up to regulate relations between countries within the framework of this régime on the basis of a united front of states, of collective defence of the security of states. However, three aggressive states, and the new imperialist war launched by them, have upset the entire system of this post-war peace régime. Japan tore up the Nine-Power Pact, and Germany and Italy the Versailles Treaty. In order to have their hands free these three states withdrew from the League of Nations.

The new Imperialist war became a fact.

. . . It is a distinguishing feature of the new imperialist war that it has not yet become universal, a world war. The war is being waged by aggressor states, who in every way infringe upon the interests of the non-aggressor states, primarily England, France and the United States, while the latter draw back, making concession after concession to the aggressors. . . . Incredible, but true.

To what are we to attribute this one-sided and strange character of the new imperialist war?

. . . Is it to be attributed to the weakness of the non-aggressive states? Of course not! Combined, the non-aggressive democratic states are unquestionably stronger than the Fascist states, both economically and militarily.

To what then are we to attribute the systematic concessions made by these states to the aggressors?

. . . The chief reason is that the majority of the non-aggressive countries, particularly England and France, have rejected the policy of collective security, the policy of collective resistance to the aggressors, and have taken up a position of non-intervention, a position of "neutrality."

Formally the policy of non-intervention might be defined as follows: "Let each country defend itself from the aggressors as it likes and as best it can. That is not our affair. We shall trade both with the aggressors and with their victims." But actually, the policy of non-intervention means conniving at aggression, giving free reign to war and, consequently, transforming the war into a world war. The policy of non-intervention reveals an eagerness, a desire, not to hinder the aggressors in their nefarious work, not to hinder Japan say, from embroiling herself in a war with China or, better still, with the Soviet Union; not to hinder Germany, say, from enmeshing herself in European affairs, from embroiling

herself in a war with the Soviet Union; to allow all the belligerents to sink deep into the mire of war, to encourage them surreptitiously in this; to allow them to weaken and exhaust one another; and then, when they have become weak enough, to appear on the scene with fresh strength, to appear, of course, "in the interests of peace" and to dictate conditions to the enfeebled belligerents.

Cheap and Easy !

After this fearless analysis and bold indictment of the democratic Powers, which he elaborated in great detail with complete disregard of the sensibilities of agressors and non-aggressors alike, he continued:

Far be it from me to moralise on the policy of non-intervention, to talk of treason, treachery and so on. It would be naïve to preach morals to people who recognise no human morality. Politics are politics, as the old, case-hardened bourgeois diplomats say. It must be remarked, however, that the big and dangerous political game started by the supporters of the policy of non-intervention may end in a serious fiasco for them. . . .

Naturally the U.S.S.R. could not ignore these ominous events. . . . In order to strengthen its international position, the Soviet Union . . . in 1934, joined the League of Nations, considering that despite its weakness the League might nevertheless serve as a place where aggressors can be exposed, and as a certain instrument of peace, however feeble, that might hinder the outbreak of war. The Soviet Union considers that in alarming times like these even so weak an organisation as the League of Nations should not be ignored. In May, 1935, a treaty of mutual assistance against possible attack by aggressors was signed between France and the Soviet Union. A similar treaty was simultaneously concluded with Czecho-Slovakia. In March, 1936, the Soviet Union concluded a treaty of mutual assistance with the Mongolian Peoples' Republic. In August, 1937, the Soviet Union concluded a pact of non-aggression with the Chinese Republic.

It was in such difficult international conditions that the Soviet Union pursued its foreign policy of upholding the cause of peace.

Stalin next set out, with a clarity which should have been obvious to the whole world, that he now took his stand on the ground that the Soviet Union was surrounded with a world of enemies who might at any moment converge for a general attack on her. While preferring an alliance with the democratic Powers against the Fascist Powers, he would be concerned mainly to prevent the combined onslaught on the Union by keeping the enemy divided against itself. The initiative rested with the Powers. He stated:

The foreign policy of the Soviet Union is clear and explicit:

(1) We stand for peace and the strengthening of business relations with all countries. That is our position; and we shall adhere to this position as long as these countries maintain like relations with the Soviet Union, and as long as they make no attempt to trespass on the interests of our country.

(2) We stand for peaceful, close and friendly relations with all the neighbouring countries which have common frontiers with the Soviet Union. That is our position; and we shall adhere to this position as long as these countries maintain like relations with the Soviet Union, and as long as they make no attempt to trespass, directly or indirectly, on the integrity and inviolability of the Soviet State.

(3) We stand for the support of nations which are the victims of aggression and are fighting for the independence of their country.

(4) We are not afraid of the threats of aggressors and are ready to deal a double blow for every blow delivered by the instigators of war who attempt to violate the Soviet borders.

Such is the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

Then, to make doubly sure that his position would not be misunderstood, he continued:

In its foreign policy the Soviet Union relies upon:

1. Its growing economic; political and cultural might;

2. The moral and political unity of our Soviet Society;

3. The mutual friendship of the nations of our country;

4. Its Red Army and Red Navy;

5. Its policy of peace;

6. The moral support of the working people of all countries, who are vitally concerned in the preservation of peace;

7. The good sense of the countries which for one reason or another have no interest in the violation of peace.

Turning his attention directly to the Bolsheviks he set out their tasks.

The tasks of the Party in the sphere of foreign policy are:

1. To continue the policy of peace and of strengthening the business relations with all countries.

2. To be cautious and not allow our country to be drawn into conflicts by war-mongers who are accustomed to have others pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them;

3. To strengthen the might of our Red Army and Red Navy to the utmost;

4. To strengthen the international bonds of friendship with the working people of all countries, who are interested in peace and friendship of the nations.

It was at this time that Litvinov asked to be released from his post as Commissar for Foreign Affairs. The gesture was promptly taken by the outside world to mean that he disagreed with Stalin, and not as a warning, to the democratic Powers in particular, to beware. Some day it will dawn on the mass of non-Russian people that Stalin's lieutenants are not political children or yes-men, but leaders who are in fundamental accord in principles, outlook, and aims, and not a collection of men of dissimilar philosophies and interests. When Molotov took over the office of Foreign Affairs in addition to his post as premier, it should have been obvious to the governments of all countries that the arrangement was a temporary one and that a new page of history was being turned. It meant that the centre of gravity of Soviet Foreign Affairs had shifted from Geneva to Moscow.

Molotov was the obvious man to function as Stalin's first lieutenant. He had no long list of speeches about "collective security" to explain away. He was a most able administrator and had been a close personal friend since the days when Stalin first moved to St. Petersburg. From the hour of Stalin's great speech that I have quoted at length, the Soviet Union stood ready to negotiate and come to terms with either "aggressors" or "non-aggressors," "democratic" or "Fascist" governments. If the democratic Powers, even at this late hour, would unite with the Soviet Union against the aggressor states, well and good. Better late than not at all. If they would not, an alternative line of action remained. For more than a year the Nazi Government of Germany had been offering terms for a non-aggression pact. Despite their violent propaganda against the Bolsheviks and the anti-Comintern pact with Italy and Japan, the Nazis had not abrogated the Rapallo Treaty of 1922. German capitalists had given better credit terms than the "democratic" capitalists. In 1938 the Nazi Government had offered a 100,000,000 mark loan and still more favourable trade terms. Stalin, fully understanding the nature of Fascism and the strategy of Hitler, had rejected the offers, preferring "collective security" with the democratic Powers.

This was not based upon sentimental considerations, but primarily on the power relations of the countries. He knew, both from his acquaintance with the programmatic statements of *Mein Kampf* and the "Rosenburg Plan," and from his knowledge of the economic geography of Europe, that Germany was not likely to attempt the conquest of the Soviet Union without first securing complete control of the industrial belt from Northern France, Belgium, and Luxemburg through the Ruhr to Czecho-Slovakia.

Without these resources the Nazis could not surpass the rapidly growing productive power of the Soviet Union, which was by this time producing 20,000,000 tons of steel a year. Had the "democratic Powers" formed an alliance with the Soviet at this time, their combined steel potential, which is the basis of military strength, would have been at least double that of Germany. But those in control of the "democratic Powers" had other things in mind.

Nevertheless, when the British Ambassador on March 18th, 1939, a week after Stalin's speech, asked the Soviet Government as to its attitude towards Hitler's threat to Rumania, Stalin replied by proposing a conference of Britain, France, the U.S.S.R., Poland, Turkey and Rumania, to "devise ways and means of resisting further aggression." But as in the case of a similar proposal after Hitler had marched into Austria in 1938, their suggestion was regarded as "premature." Instead, the British Government proposed a joint declaration against aggression. Still patiently hoping for something more, Stalin agreed, only to be met with the refusal of the Polish Government to sign any document which should have on it the signature of a leader of the Soviet Government.

On the 18th of April, 1939, the British Ambassador asked the Soviet Government to make a unilateral guarantee of Poland and Rumania. Again Stalin answered with the proposal for a triple pact between, Britain, France, and the U.S.S.R. against aggression anywhere. Between April 17th and May 9th no reply came. When it did arrive it ignored the proposal for the Triple Pact and contained a counter-proposal for the Soviet Union to guarantee the border States without any indication of the kind of assistance Britain and France would give should the arrangement lead to war. Stalin repeated his suggestion for a triple pact. It took until May 29th for the two governments to agree to a discussion of it.

Meanwhile Hitler was busy too. Since the beginning of the year his government had been pressing the offer he had made in 1938 and which Stalin had then turned down. Molotov on May 31st, 1939, publicly announced before the Supreme Soviet that a reconsideration of the proposals might be made and that a new Trade Agreement had been made with Italy. Even this announcement did not make the "democratic Powers" hasten. Instead the British Government sent to Moscow "to talk things over," a Foreign Office official who had neither

the standing nor the power to arrive at decisions.

But still Stalin pressed for action on the lines of "collective security" and while hope remained at all, held off any agreement with the Nazis. Zhdanov, one of the most able of the men on the Political Bureau of the Bolshevik Party, wrote an article in *Pravda* openly declaring that the British and French Governments were not really desirous of making a pact of mutual assistance, but only of placing on the Soviet Union the onus of bearing the brunt of the responsibilities for "mutual aid."

On July 23rd, the British and French Governments agreed to send a military mission to Moscow. It did not arrive until August 5th, as Hitler's forces were knocking at the gates of Danzig. On arrival it disclosed that it had no power to decide anything, and the Polish Government meanwhile declared itself ready and able to meet a German attack without help from the Soviet Union!

Stalin and his colleagues turned from this spectacle of ineptitude with contempt. The crisis had reached its climax. The signal was given, and without a moment's hesitation Hitler sent his Foreign Secretary and entourage to Moscow and the non-aggression pact with Germany was signed.

It was a dramatic moment when in the conference room of the Kremlin, Stalin and Molotov, the leaders of world revolution, stood side by side with Ribbentrop the spokesman of Hitler, the leader of world counter-revolution. But Stalin was unperturbed. His valuation of the course of events and of the forces engaged was not that of the frantic critics in the West. Rightly or wrongly, he was convinced that he had averted, at least for a time, a war with Nazi Germany in which the Chamberlain and Daladier Governments of Britain and France would have become first Hitler's arms merchants and finally his co-belligerents. He felt that his conscience had nothing with which to reproach him. He laughed to scorn those who regarded the pact as a wedding of Bolshevism and Nazism, and regarded their attacks as the chatter of fools. Why should he be regarded as a criminal for signing such an agreement when the statesmen of the critics' own governments had been in constant political and personal association with the leaders of Nazism and Fascism, and had made pacts with them without consulting the Soviet Union or even the League of Nations, of which they were members and with which they were pledged to prior consultation? The fact is that Stalin regarded the whole bunch as varieties of the same species, and, if the interests of the Union were served thereby, had as little compunction in being photographed with Ribbentrop as with any other statesmen.

Now began the period of "strict neutrality." Gone for the time being was the classification of the Powers into "aggressors" and "non-aggressors." Gone were his jibes against "non-intervention." He had moved back to the simple

classification of the “Socialist world” and the “capitalist world”—the world of peace and Socialist construction, and the world of war and disintegration.

It was simple—too simple. Here it was that he blundered by giving a lead to the world’s Communist Parties, on the premise that 1914 had been repeated. An imperialist war, he proclaimed, was raging, and it was the task of the workers to turn it into civil war and overthrow their own governments. For he was still animated by the idea that the war would be war transformed into a general class war against the Soviet Union. He therefore applied himself at once to exploiting the new circumstances to aid the workers in other countries in the class-war policy, by letting them use the Soviet Union as a peace negotiator while he kept his own powder dry and drove ahead with the development of Soviet industries and military power.

Within a few weeks the peace manœuvre was abandoned. The swift advance of the Nazi armies into Poland was a powerful reminder that the war in Europe was the prologue to war on the Soviet Union. Accordingly, in the hour when the Polish Government and general staff abandoned their country to its fate; with a promptitude that once more surprised the world Stalin set the Red Army on the march towards the “Curzon Line.” This line, which had been universally recognised as the Russo-Polish boundary until the Poles tore a great area of White Russia and the Ukraine from the Soviets during the intervention wars, meant an advance through territory containing 12,000,000 inhabitants. The banner of revolution was raised, and to the rescue of these twelve million former Soviet subjects the Red Army hastened.

It is often stated by critics that this was done in agreement with the Nazis. I have no evidence of this. However the argument may go, the fact is that Stalin did not send the Red Army into the one-time Polish territory until there was no government left in Poland and the country was wide open for the Nazis to acquire land as far beyond the “Curzon Line” as they chose. That the Germans did not join issue with the Red Army is explainable in terms of their larger strategic plan for the prior conquest of Europe.

Stalin quickly unfolded his strategy for the period of “strict neutrality.” While carefully adhering to the letter of the pact with Germany, he proceeded to move his forces into favourable strategical positions ready for when this period would end.

First, negotiations were opened with the border States, Lithuania, Latvia, and Esthonia, for naval and army bases. Success attended these overtures, culminating in general elections in the countries concerned and their transformation into Republics of the Soviet Union. Similar negotiations were begun with Finland, but here they failed. Stalin was faced with a challenging

situation. Unless the Mannerheim Line was abandoned or destroyed before Hitler turned east, its proximity to Leningrad would prove fatal to the defence of that city and the whole northern part of the Soviet Union; for that the Line would be used in the attack appeared to Stalin obvious. He therefore took the offensive, and in due course the security of the northern front, unobtainable by negotiation, was procured by force.

No event since the outbreak of the war in Europe had been more misrepresented and misunderstood by the general public, the press, and the governments. It almost began to obscure the war against the Nazis. The British and French Governments, ill-prepared as they were for the war against Germany, nevertheless hastened to prepare an expeditionary force to aid the Finns. And so myopic was Britain's Minister for War that he called for war against both Germany and Russia! Fortunately the Red Army shattered the Mannerheim Line and forced the Finns to accept the terms they could have obtained without fighting.

Having secured his northern front, Stalin turned to the southern and forced Rumania to return Bessarabia to the Soviet Union.

After the collapse of France and the completion of the westward drive, Hitler's armies turned east and prepared for their march across the Soviet frontiers. Thereafter the "Strict Neutrality" of Stalin ceases to be so strict. When Yugo-Slavia rose in revolt against her pro-Nazi government Stalin applauded the deed. When Bulgaria gave in to the demands of Nazi Germany he warned her of her danger. When Japan asked for a non-aggression pact he agreed. Unfortunately the British Government was too busy seizing Bolshevik ships and the gold of the Baltic countries that had "gone Bolshevik" to observe the significance of his gradually unfolding anti-Nazi strategy. So profound was British class prejudice that even when Sir Stafford Cripps was sent to "improve relations," Stalin had to refuse him entry into the Soviet Union in order to secure him ambassadorial status!

In May, 1941, a decision was taken by the Supreme Soviet that Stalin should become premier of the Union. At last he stepped publicly before the world as the leading spokesman of the U.S.S.R. with all the reins of government in his hands. What did this mean? It meant he and his colleagues recognised that the great hour of crisis was at hand. He had stretched the "breathing space" to its limit, and the "breathing space" was about to end. There must henceforth be no doubt in the mind of friend or foe as to who captained the Soviet ship.

The "Thesis of 1914" no longer held good. He had been mistaken in thinking that it had. The capitalist world was not a united world standing ready to pounce on the Socialist world. It was divided against itself, and the rival forces were

fighting one another as they had always done since the day when capitalism was born and will do as long as it remains.

As the world drama of clashing social systems led the Soviet Union towards the centre of the stage, at the head of the Union, sombre, confident, superbly trained, Joseph Stalin waited for the German blow. “Hitler,” he said, “asks for a war of annihilation. We will give him one.”

Notes

1. *Leninism*, p. 360.

Stalin and the War

Regiments
pass by
right by my side.

Brave drums
a-beat,
rat
-a-tat-tat.

Stamp
stern
their feet,
heads up
erect.

For defence
they’re arming
that’s the red-star men.

Marching
in fours
feet
beat
in
time:

My
foe
is
yours.

Your
foe
is
mine.

They’re coming?
Very good.
We’ll stop ’em
For good.
VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

No man ever faced more stupendous problems than Joseph Stalin from the moment the Nazi armies swept across the frontiers of the Soviet Union. There is no test so severe as that of war, and this would be the greatest of all wars, more stupendous in its destructive power, more embracing in its range, and more complex in its issues, than any war since man first wielded his primitive club in the battle for existence.

Already almost all the nations of Europe had gone down like ninepins before the might which now surged into the first Socialist State in its bid for world supremacy. Only Britain, with her Empire, remained fighting her battle on the ocean, wholly unready for war by land or air. How unready is seen in the simple

fact that she has required three full years more to prepare for the invasion of the Continent.

The decision of Hitler, so fantastic in the light of the now known unpreparedness of Britain and America in the first months of the war, to turn eastward after the conquest of Europe, will probably go on permanent record as the greatest blunder in military history. Whatever its psychological and political explanation, however, Hitler found himself in a position to concentrate the maximum of his power on the eastern front, with the whole of Europe's industrial resources unmolested in his rear. Two hundred and sixty divisions from Germany and her allies, Rumania, Italy, Hungary, Spain, and Finland, swept eastward. There is nothing in the history of warfare with which to make comparison of the striking-power of these forces against a single country. In the Great War of 1914-18 the Germans and their allies deployed not more than 127 divisions on the eastern front, while a mere five German divisions of to-day have more machine-gun power than 100 divisions in the last war.

Hitler had also all the advantages of initiative and surprise. Without a word of complaint that might have served for warning, and despite Germany's long-existing treaties with the Soviet Union from Rapallo to the Pact of 1939, he struck at 4 o'clock in the morning of June 22nd, 1941, confident that within three months the whole of Eastern Russia, including Leningrad and Moscow, together with the Ukraine to the banks of the Volga and the Caucasus, would be in his hands.

He was not the only misguided statesman at the time. Almost all the military "experts" and political leaders in Britain and the U.S.A. suffered from the same delusion. Neither he nor they believed in the stability and power of the régime of the Soviets. They had listened to the Lindbergs and all the falsifications current about the Soviet-Finnish War. Had not Trotsky, the former Commissar for War, told them that "Stalin was afraid of a great war" and declared that "the Kremlin has lost the confidence of the masses both within the country and abroad?" And those conservative-minded gentry who were not so gullible as to believe all this were almost equally ignorant. Even Mr. Churchill, in his memorable broadcast on the day of Hitler's assault, declaring the alliance of Britain in common struggle with the Soviet Union could do no better than picture Russia as a country of brave peasants who would fight to the last ditch. Here and there in the "democratic" countries were a very few who sounded the note of complete confidence in the invincibility of the Soviet Union—and we were regarded as victims of "wishful thinking."

Was Stalin taken by surprise by the turn of events? In the broader sense, no. All his actions from the day Hitler rose to power provide a complete proof of this. But there still remained in the situation an element of surprise in the sense

that it was not possible to know the precise moment at which the blow would fall. Sir Stafford Cripps, in a speech to the foreign press in Russia in March, 1941, had predicted a date within a week of the correct one. Mr. Churchill had written to Stalin personally a month before, warning him of the coming blow. Nevertheless, despite these warnings and all the other sources of information at Stalin's disposal, the element of surprise could not be wholly eliminated. But it remains true that when Stalin on the fateful morning of June 22nd called all his leading colleagues in the Government and on the General Staff of the Red Army to the Kremlin, he did not call on them to improvise measures to meet an entirely unanticipated situation. Here were Kalinin and Molotov, Voroshilov and Kaganovitch, Zhdanov and Beria and many more who had won fame and prestige in the Bolshevik fight for power and the wars of intervention. How different the scene from the days when the ragged army that grew out of the Red Guards had fought almost exclusively with weapons seized from the enemy invaders. Everyone in the Assembly was at the head of some mighty organisation which he had helped to build and for which he was responsible. He knew its ramifications from one end of the country to the other, its personnel, its problems, and what was expected of it and of him in the crisis that had befallen.

Stalin himself had not rested on his laurels as a military leader of renown in the days of the intervention war. He it was who had brought Michael Frunze into the leadership of the Red Army. Frunze had proved himself, by his conduct in the early days, to be worthy of the title of military genius. As soon as the war had ended he devoted himself to further study of military theory in the light of the first world struggle and the Russian Revolution. He was one of the first to recognise that revolutionary changes were afoot in the technique of modern warfare, that it would be increasingly totalitarian and three-dimensional and no longer in any sense static. In a lecture in 1922 he said:

The stationary front of the imperialist war will have no place in the next war . . . the powerful development of aviation, of chemical and other means of warfare make an unbroken stationary front impossible for any length of time. . . . This war will involve armies of millions. It will be a war to the death . . . our military organisation to-day, in peace-time, must be such as will make it possible at the moment of mobilisation, at the moment of attack, to place in the field millions which the coming war demands . . . mobilisation must embrace all our economy, our education, everything.

Stalin learned much from Frunze, who died in 1925, and anyone taking the trouble to study the strategic lay-out of the Five Year Plans must have observed that Stalin was in fundamental accord with Frunze and applying his ideas diligently day by day. Frunze's writings became the military textbooks of the Military Academy of the Red Army.

But there was another leader of the Red Army who is also not unfittingly described as a military genius. His name is Marshal Boris Michhailovitch Shaposhnikov. Formerly a colonel in the Czar's army, he joined the Red Army at the outset of the Revolution. In 1919 he was one of its outstanding leaders of operations. In 1921 he received the Order of the Red Banner, and in 1929 became Chief of Staff. In addition to his purely military abilities he is also a scientist and mathematician. In 1932 Stalin attended his lectures and studied modern warfare with him. Stalin never "let up" on these studies, but learned to understand thoroughly the theory of "reserves" and "encirclement," the warfare of movement and the total character of modern war.

This meeting with his chiefs was no assembly for speechifying but for making swift decisions and issuing instructions for the operation of decisions already taken. Stalin, in a crisis, acts with the precision of a steel spring. He has no words to waste, no time for polished phrases. Now he and everyone present were filled with the most bitter hatred and anger against the Nazis. All the cynicism and amused contempt for capitalists in general was gone. Anyone who would fight with Russia against the Nazi was a friend, whosoever expressed reservations was an enemy. Within the heart of every citizen of the Soviet Union, Soviet patriotism mingled with a national patriotism destined to falsify every prediction of internal disruption. The meeting of the leaders reflected the tenseness of the situation. None doubted the people. None doubted their power. Molotov and Kalinin were to make the first declarations to the nation. Kaganovitch and the leaders of war industry had at once to begin the evacuation of factory machinery, plant, and workers from Leningrad, Moscow and all the cities and towns of the Ukraine as far down as Rostov on Don, and roll them eastward to prepared centres in the Urals and the interior republics and provinces. Voroshilov had already set in motion the machinery of mobilisation, and armies were hastening to reinforce the garrisons and deal with the oncoming foe.

At 11 a.m. Molotov broadcast the news of the invasion. At once 200,000,000 people became one in purpose, will, and aspiration, aflame with a patriotic ardour that was to astound the world with its daring and capacity for sacrifice. And in this hour they looked to Joseph Stalin, the embodiment of their confidence, hopes, and will. Out of their age-long backwardness he had led them, relentlessly but with great wisdom, up to the level of the twentieth century. He was the unquestioned leader of their multi-national State, and in him and his picked lieutenants they had infinite confidence.

He did not make a broadcast speech to the people until July 3rd, eleven days after the invasion had begun. During these eleven days a vast change had taken place in the relationship between States and nations, classes and institutions, but

nothing could divert him from the practical task of directing the Union's forces. Day and night he was at his post, snatching only the meagrest hours for sleep. He knew all was well with the spirit of the people. On July 3rd every ear was listening for the voice of this man in whom, above all others, they placed their uttermost confidence.

He did not begin with the formal "Ladies and Gentlemen," but with "Comrades, citizens, brothers and sisters, men of our Army and Navy! My words are addressed to you, dear friends!" The language of classless human brotherhood. . . . He proceeded:

The perfidious military attack by Hitlerite Germany on our fatherland, begun on June 22nd, is continuing.

In consequence of this war which has been forced upon us, our country has come to death grips with its bitterest and most cunning enemy—German Fascism. Our troops are fighting heroically against an enemy armed to the teeth with tanks and aircraft. Overcoming numerous difficulties, the Red Army and Red Navy are self-sacrificingly fighting for every inch of Soviet soil. The main forces of the Red Army are coming into action equipped with thousands o£ tanks and planes. . . .

What is required to put an end to the danger imperilling our country and what measures must be taken to smash the enemy?

Above all it is essential that our people, the Soviet People, should appreciate the full immensity of the danger that threatens our country and give up all complacency, casualness and the mentality of peaceful constructive work that was so natural before the war, but which is fatal to-day, when war has radically changed the whole situation. The enemy is cruel and implacable. He is out to seize our lands watered by the sweat of our brows, to seize our grain and oil secured by the labour of our hands. He is out to restore the rule of the landlords, to restore Czarism, to destroy our national culture and the national existence as states of the Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Esthonians, Uzbeks, Tartars, Moldavians, Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanians and the other free peoples of the Soviet Union, to Germanise them, to turn them into the slaves of German princes and barons. Thus the issue is one of life and death for the Soviet State, of life and death for the peoples of the U.S.S.R. . . .

Further, there must be no room in our ranks for whimperers and cowards, for panic-mongers and deserters; our people must know no fear in the fight and must selflessly join our patriotic war of liberation against the Fascist enslavers. Lenin, the great founder of our State, used to say that the chief virtues of Soviet

men and women must be courage, valour, fearlessness in struggle, readiness to fight together with the people against the enemies of our country. These splendid virtues of the Bolshevik must become the virtues of millions and millions of the Red Army, of the Red Navy, of all the peoples of the Soviet Union. All our work must be immediately reorganised on a war footing; everything must be subordinated to the interests of the front and the task of organising the destruction of the enemy. . . .

The Red Army, Red Navy and all citizens of the Soviet Union must defend every inch of Soviet soil, must fight to the last drop of blood for towns and villages, must display daring, initiative and mental alertness that are inherent in our people.

We must organise all-round assistance to the Red Army, ensure powerful reinforcements for its ranks and the supply of everything that it requires. . . .

We must strengthen the Red Army's rear, subordinating all our work to this end. . . .

We must wage a ruthless fight against all disorganisers of the rear, deserters, panic-mongers and rumour-mongers; we must exterminate spies, sabotage agents and enemy parachutists. . . .

In case of a forced retreat of Red Army units, all rolling stock must be evacuated, the enemy must not be left a single engine, a single railway car, not a single pound of grain or gallon of fuel. . . .

In areas occupied by the enemy, guerrilla units, mounted and on foot, must be formed; sabotage groups must be organised to combat enemy units, to foment guerrilla warfare everywhere, blow up bridges and roads, damage telephone and telegraph lines, set fire to forests, stores and transport. . . .

The war with Fascist Germany cannot be considered an ordinary war. It is not only a war between two armies, it is also a great war of the entire Soviet people against the German-Fascist armies. The aim of this national patriotic war in defence of our country against the Fascist oppressors is not only to eliminate the danger hanging over the country, but also to aid all the European peoples groaning under the yoke of German Fascism. In this war of liberation we shall not be alone. In this great war we shall have true allies in the peoples of Europe and America, including the German people which is enslaved by the Hitlerite misrulers. Our war for the freedom of our country will merge with the struggle of the peoples of Europe and America for their independence, for democratic liberties. . . . In this connection the historic utterance of the British Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, regarding aid to the Soviet Union, and the declaration

of the United States Government signifying readiness to render aid to our country, which can evoke a feeling of gratitude in the hearts of the peoples of the Soviet Union, are fully comprehensible and symptomatic.

Comrades, our forces are numberless. The overweening enemy will soon learn this to his cost. Side by side with the Red Army many thousands of workers, collective farmers and intellectuals are rising to fight the enemy aggressor. The masses of our people will rise up in their millions. The working people of Moscow and Leningrad have already begun to form huge People's Guards in support of the Red Army. Such people's Guards must be raised in every city which is in danger of enemy invasion; all the working people must be roused to defend with their lives their freedom, their honour and their country in the patriotic war against German Fascism. . . .

All our forces for the support of our heroic Red Army and our glorious Red Navy!

All the forces of the people for the destruction of the enemy! Forward to victory!

The next four months were the most difficult and terrible in Stalin's life as leader of the Soviet Union. In these months everything was put to the test. Only parts of the Red Army were seasoned in battle. The rest, highly trained as they were, had yet to learn the difference between mock warfare and real, when armies fight in desperation and shoot with hate. Could the Soviet Union and the Red Army withstand the full impact of Germany's armies, hardened by experience, inspired with a sense of invincibility, and spiritually drunk with a series of victories such as the world had never seen?

From the outset the Red Army proved that it would fight with insuperable passion and tenacity, but it was not until the battle for Smolensk that the great test was met—and weathered. Here for the first time since the Nazi Army was formed and its leaders proclaimed to the world their invincible Blitzkrieg, the invincibles were smashed and the Blitzkrieg was countered. Here at Smolensk the German Army was held at bay for thirty days, and when it finally secured the ashes of the city after a fearful carnage, it had won a battle and lost the war. The Blitzkrieg as a theory of war, the myth of Nazi invincibility—both had been shattered by the Red Army.

The losses were enormous on both sides, but the artillery technique of the Red Army had done its work. It took the Nazi leaders six weeks to regroup their forces, and time was flying. The orders issued to the tank corps units at the beginning of the battle for Smolensk, to "march immediately on Moscow," had passed into the realm of historical documents. Everything was already behind

schedule if the German Army was still to take Moscow before the winter. A full six weeks after the fall of Smolensk, Hitler announced, “For the last twenty-four hours operations have been going on which will have a decisive result on the conduct and duration of the war.” Eighty German divisions were engaged in an all-out effort to advance and seize the capital. Ceaselessly the Red Army pounded the oncoming enemy, keeping itself intact as it fought its retreating campaign and accumulated powerful fresh reserves which could be flung in, in overwhelming force, at the moment when the enemy showed exhaustion and the tempo of his advance slackened. The application of this “theory of reserves” demands infinite patience, inexhaustible fighting capacity, and unerring judgement of the decisive moment to launch the counter-offensive.

No leader ever had these qualities in such great supply as he who, day and night, with his general staff, watched and directed the Red Army in this terrific struggle. At the end of November the strength of the German attack began to decline, and throughout the succeeding days continued to fall steadily. On the morning of December 6th, after a night of frost which signalled the approach of winter, Stalin himself gave the order for the great counter-attack, and with dramatic suddenness the huge reserve army he had accumulated behind Moscow, splendidly equipped for winter warfare, swept into battle and hurled the Germans from the gates of Moscow and many other places. The German Army, equipped only for summer warfare, deprived of the warm cover of the cities and the possibility of a spring offensive, was driven back into the wilderness of the Russian winter.

When the history of this second world war is written, the historian will record that, just as the battle for Smolensk shattered the infallibility, of the Blitzkrieg recipe for modern warfare, so the counter-offensive of the Red Army, begun on December 6th, 1941, was the decisive turning point in the war. Try as he might, Hitler would never be able to resume his march on Moscow. He would attempt later on to reach it by enveloping movements of great power through Leningrad and Stalingrad. Twice more the Red Army line would bend, almost to breaking. But the *élite* of the Nazi army had been defeated, battered, exhausted. The replacements would never again equal the prototypes, and the Nazi General Staff had nothing left in its strategical equipment to match the strategy of the man in the Kremlin.

The Battle of Moscow in 1941 occupies a similar position in the second world war to that of the Battle of the Marne in the first. In 1915 this had registered the peak of the German advance against the west. Here, as the sagging French line held until the force behind it had swollen to greater dimensions than the Germans could ever equal, the ultimate defeat of Germany was sealed. Similarly now, behind the sagging line that ran between Petsamo, Leningrad, Moscow,

Stalingrad, the Kuban, there went on ceaselessly the accumulation of men and steel in preparation for the avalanche which would finish what the Battle of Moscow had begun.

In the midst of this titanic warfare, while the Nazis were approaching ever nearer Moscow, an Anglo-American mission headed by Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Averil Harriman arrived in Moscow. Whatever its members may have expected they did not find Stalin either nervous or anxious, fearful of impending disaster or waiting for an "intuition." Mr. Harriman remarked afterwards: "Beaverbrook and I worked principally with Stalin. No man could work more quickly or with greater intensity." Lord Beaverbrook said: "If I am any judge of mankind and if I have any experience in my long life, I put my faith in that man's leadership."

On November 6th, on the eve of the Twenty-fourth Anniversary of the Soviet Revolution, Stalin addressed a celebration meeting of the Moscow Soviet and various Party and public organisations. Once again there was manifest the lucid, unfaltering, scientific analysis which brings the realities to light and gives everyone full understanding of the tasks to be done. He said:

. . . I have already said in one of my public speeches at the beginning of the war that the war had created a dangerous threat to our country. . . . Now after four months of war, I must emphasise that this danger has not only not grown less, but on the contrary, has even increased. . . . The enemy stops at no sacrifice, he does not care one iota for the blood of his soldiers, he throws into action more and more detachments to replace those which have been shattered, and is straining all his efforts to capture Leningrad and Moscow before the advent of winter, for he knows that winter bodes him no good.

In four months of war we have lost 350,000 killed and 378,000 missing, and our wounded number 1,020,000. In the same period the enemy has in killed, wounded, and prisoners, lost more than 4,500,000.

In launching their attack on our country, the German-Fascist invaders thought they would certainly be able to "finish off" the Soviet Union in one and a half or two months, and in this short period would succeed in reaching the Urals. It must be said that the Germans did not conceal this plan of "lightning" victory. . . . Now this mad plan must be regarded as having finally failed.

. . . What did the German-Fascist strategists count on when they asserted that they would finish off the Soviet Union in two months and reach the Urals in this short period?

They seriously calculated in the first place on creating a general coalition

against the U.S.S.R., on enlisting Great Britain and the U.S.A. in this coalition, first having frightened the ruling circles of these countries with the spectre of revolution, and thus completely isolating our country from the other Powers. . . . The notorious Hess was in fact sent to England by the German Fascists precisely in order to persuade the English politicians to join in the general crusade against the U.S.S.R. But the Germans gravely miscalculated. . . . The U.S.S.R. not only was not isolated, but, on the contrary, it acquired new allies in the shape of Great Britain, the United States and other countries occupied by the Germans. . . .

The Germans counted, secondly, on the instability of the Soviet system, and the unreliability of the Soviet rear. . . . But here also the Germans gravely miscalculated . . . they converted the family of peoples of the U.S.S.R. into a single unshakable camp, selflessly supporting its Red Army and Red Navy. . . .

Finally, the Germans invaders counted on the weakness of the Red Army and Red Navy. . . . But here, too, the Germans gravely miscalculated, over-rating their own strength and underrating our army and navy. Of course, our army and navy are still young, they have been fighting for four months in all, they have not yet succeeded in becoming thoroughly seasoned, whereas they are confronted by the seasoned army and navy of the Germans, who have been fighting for two years.

. . . There are a number of factors unfavourable to the Red Army, as a result of which our army is suffering temporary reverses. . . . What are these unfavourable factors?

. . . One of the reasons for the reverses of the Red Army is the absence of a second front in Europe against the German-Fascist troops. The fact of the matter is that at the present time there are still no armies of Great Britain or the United States of America on the European continent to wage war against the German-Fascist troops. . . . There is no doubt that the absence of a second front in Europe against the Germans considerably eases the position of the German army. But neither can there be any doubt that the appearance of a second front on the European continent—and it must unquestionably appear in the near future—will essentially ease the situation of our army to the detriment of the German army.

The other reason for the temporary reverses of our army is our lack of an adequate number of tanks and, partly, of aircraft. . . .

There is only one way of nullifying the Germans' superiority in tanks and thus radically improving the position of our army. This way is, not only to increase the output of tanks in our country several times over but also sharply to increase the production of anti-tank aircraft, anti-tank rifles and guns, and and anti-tank grenades and mortars, and to construct more anti-tank trenches and every other

kind of anti-tank obstacle.

Herein lies our present task.

He then proceeded to set out their definite aims.

In contradistinction to Hitlerite Germany, the Soviet Union and its allies are waging a war of liberation, a just war, for the purpose of liberating the enslaved peoples of Europe and the U.S.S.R. from Hitler's tyranny. That is why all honest people must support the armies of the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the other allies, as armies of liberation.

We have not, and cannot have, such war aims as the seizure of foreign territories of Europe, or the peoples and territories of Asia, including Iran. Our first aim is to liberate our territories and our peoples from the German-Fascist yoke.

We have not, and cannot have, any such war aim as that of imposing our will and our régime upon the Slavonic or other enslaved nations of Europe, who are expecting our help. Our aim is to help these nations in their struggle for liberation against Hitler's tyranny and then leave it to them quite freely to organise their life on their lands as they think fit. No interference in the internal affairs of other nations! . . .

The references in this speech to the "absence of a second front" were taken by many people less as a simple statement of fact than as an implied criticism of Britain and the U.S.A. I do not think that at this stage it had entered Stalin's mind to criticise on this point, although in view of the rapidity with which an expeditionary force had been prepared to go to the aid of the Finns, and of the boasting of the Cabinet Minister who had wanted us to "take on Germany and Russia together," it must have been difficult for him to appreciate the appalling state of Britain's military unpreparedness.

However, soon the question of the "Second Front in Europe" did become a cause of deterioration in the relations between the Soviet and British Governments, the rift increasing in breadth until Mr. Churchill visited Moscow in the autumn of 1942. This was a memorable meeting. Two warriors, two men of sterling character, each in his own way the embodiment of the social system he represented, each fighting in his own manner for all he held dear, met for the first time at the greatest epoch in the life of either. They had much in common. Both, although they had served in different kinds of army and for widely different ends, are soldiers of rich and varied experience. Both are politicians accustomed to leadership. Both are "practical men," both have a rich sense of humour. There was irony in their meeting, too. Not so many years had rolled by

since they had apostrophised one another with scorching words while they opposed one another with armies. But with the tremendous challenge of the present before them, both men were too big to waste time in fruitless recrimination about the past.

Nevertheless, there was an evening, lengthening into a night, when these giant protagonists had an "off the record" talk, when behind pipe and cigar they livened the shadows of that Kremlin room with sparkling clash of views, with reminiscence and with not a little laughter. Only those who were present can render to the world an account of that conversation in which rival philosophies of life vied with each other and yet brought the two men closer together in common purpose. Did they travel over the history of the Revolution, the war of intervention, Anglo-Soviet relations? Did they discuss military strategy, the war's potentialities, the outcome of the anti-Nazi struggle, the future of the British Empire, the Soviet Union, and the world at large? We can only guess. But one thing is certain—each learned to know the other better and parted with a deeper respect, confident that they could travel a long way together through this war and beyond it.

In the "official meetings," and no doubt in the "unofficial," the "Second Front" was the subject of much discussion. Indeed, one of the purposes of Mr. Churchill's visit to Moscow was to "explain why there could be no Second Front" for some time to come.

He arrived there at the beginning of the great German battle for Stalingrad, when the Red Army was subject to the greatest pressure since the Battle of Moscow. The 2,000-mile battle-line had been engaging the Soviet forces for over a year, during which they had also had to conduct the greatest evacuation of people and equipment in the history of the nations. Stalin had repeatedly emphasised that the Red Army was bearing the brunt of the war, and had asked for relief action on the part of her ally in the West. Mr. Churchill has repeatedly explained, even as late as in March, 1944, that Stalin and his colleagues found it difficult to appreciate what was involved in massive amphibious operations.

It is quite clear that while having to accept these technical explanations, Stalin never agreed that they were sufficient answers to his appeal. It is said that on receiving Mr. Churchill's detailed explanation, he remarked composedly, "We carry on. No recriminations." Mr. Churchill has said that "Stalin is a man without illusions." If the Russian leader had ever held any illusion about Mr. Churchill's point of view he now knew it fully. But behind the contrast of Stalin's demand for a Second Front and the protracted preparation of the Allies, lies also the profound difference of outlook between himself and Mr. Churchill. The request was not made because Stalin feared the Red Army would become exhausted unless it received relief from the tremendous pressure. He wanted it

for other reasons—primarily because he knew that once the moment came again for the Red Army's reserves to launch a mighty counter-offensive against the strained and tired forces of the German armies, a simultaneous attack in the West, strong enough to compel the Germans to withdraw considerable forces from the East precisely when they needed additional strength there, would be disastrous to them.

The alternative could only mean that the Germans would have greater powers of resistance concentrated in the East; and the Red Army would therefore be faced with a correspondingly harder and longer task in wearing them down sufficiently to permit the great counter-offensive which, a year and a half after Mr. Churchill's visit, was destined, in the Prime Minister's phrase, "to tear the guts out of the German army" with the Second Front still only in its preliminary "softening up" stage.

The alternative also had another aspect yet more significant. Mr. Churchill and his Government, with our American allies, had based their strategy on Britain and the U.S.A. functioning as auxiliary arsenals for the Soviet Union while they confined their military operations to the defence of their empires on the assumption that the Red Army would keep the Germans fully occupied in eastern Europe until they had accumulated overwhelming might for the kill. This is a fact and not a matter of opinion. It was impossible for Stalin not to see that it imposed tremendous sacrifices on the Soviet people and the Red Army. Their blood would have to flow in greater streams, out of all proportion to that of their allies.

Much more than mere differing appreciation of the tasks involved in "massive amphibious operations" lies behind these two conceptions of the strategy of the war. Behind them lie the separate philosophies of the two men, each with its roots deep in the social system it represents. It is only necessary to consider the now hypothetical question, "What would Britain have done had Germany chosen a two-front war after Dunkirk?" to see these philosophies clearly.

Had such a struggle been thrust upon us there would, unquestionably, have surged throughout the length and breadth of the land a spirit of sacrifice and effort which would have made the sacrificial spirit accompanying Dunkirk a mere curtain-raiser. And in order to defeat the enemy, Mr. Churchill would have answered with a strategic programme based on that sacrificial spirit. What we should have done had we been forced by the enemy to do it, Stalin expected us to do as a part of a greater strategy of victory on our own initiative.

Stalin leads a people whose patriotism is unfettered by millions of private considerations based on financial interest. The private and social interests of the Soviet people are so integrated that those of one are those of all, and the

"Dunkirk spirit" which for a moment in our history overwhelmed all thought of personal interests in a sublime spirit of social sacrifice and service, is the spirit of the Soviet people not merely for one great hour of self-forgetfulness, but always.

Mr. Churchill not only leads a people in whose history Dunkirks are rare and episodic, but his actions are for ever impeded and governed by the claims which the Dunkirks sweep aside. He cannot help it. Born of a class which confuses its own interests with those of the nation, believing throughout his life that the interests of private property are paramount, he cannot do other than pledge Parliament to eschew all discussion which touches this fundamental question, he cannot encourage industry to produce with a higher motive than that of private acquisitiveness. How then can he base his strategy on the all-in sacrificial struggle of a united people, when his people form two nations with patriotism and self-seeking everlastingly haggling across the bargain counters?

Stalin does not "blame" Churchill for being Churchill. He is convinced that of all the leaders produced by the British capitalism of this epoch, Churchill is the one most likely to honour his words with deeds. But he knows that both words and deeds are limited by what Mr. Churchill sincerely conceives to be the interests of the imperial system he serves. Each of the two therefore, knowing what he can expect of the other, has thus established a friendship in which the Bolshevik remains a Bolshevik and the conservative imperialist remains a conservative imperialist.

Stalin saw clearly after their meeting that within the limits set by Churchill's strategy he would receive the maximum of aid, that to those limits he would have to adapt his strategy. But he had not changed his personal attitude to the question, nor did he remain silent about it. On November 6th, 1942, addressing a meeting in celebration of the twenty-fourth anniversary of the Soviet Revolution, he reviewed the situation with that downright thoroughness and clarity which the world has now learned to expect from him, and said:

. . . The activities of our Government and Party organs during the past period proceeded in two directions: in the direction of peaceful construction and the organisation of a strong rear for our front, on the one hand, and in the direction of carrying out defensive and offensive operations by the Red Army, on the other.

The peaceful, constructive work of our directing organs in this period consisted in shifting the base of our industry, both war and civilian, to the eastern regions of our country; in the evacuation and establishment in their new places of the industrial workers and the equipment of the plants; in extending the sown areas and increasing the winter crop area in the east; and lastly in radically

improving the work of our industries producing for the front and strengthening labour discipline in the rear, both in the factories and on the collective and state farms.

. . . It must be admitted that never before has our country had such a strong and well-organised rear. . . .

. . . As regards the military activities of our directing organs in the past year, these consisted in providing for offensive and defective operations by the Red Army against the German-Fascist troops. The military operations on the Soviet-German front in the past year can be divided into two periods:

The first period was chiefly the winter period, when the Red Army, having beaten off the Germans' attack on Moscow, took the initiative into its own hands, passed to the offensive, drove back the German troops and in the space of four months advanced in places, over 250 miles; and the second period was the summer period. . . .

The second period of military operations on the Soviet-German front was marked by a change in favour of the Germans, by the passing of the initiative into the hands of the Germans, by the piercing of our front in the south-western direction, by the advance of the German troops and their reaching the areas of Voronezh, Stalingrad, Novorossisk, Piatigorsk and Mozdok. . . .

How are we to explain the fact that the Germans this year were still able to take the initiative of military operations into their hands and achieve substantial tactical successes on our front? . . . The chief reason . . . is that the absence of a second front in Europe enabled them to hurl on to our front all their available reserves and to create a large superiority of forces in the southwestern direction.

Let us assume that a second front existed in Europe, as it existed in the First World War, and that a second front diverted, let us say, sixty German divisions and twenty divisions of Germany's allies. What would have been the position of the German troops on our front then?

It is not difficult to guess that their position would have been deplorable. More than that, it would have been the beginning of the end of the GermanFascist troops, for in that case the Red Army would not be where it is now, but somewhere near Pskov, Minsk, Zhitomir and Odessa. . . . If that has not occurred, it is because the Germans were saved by the absence of a second front in Europe. . . .

The German invasion of Europe is often compared to Napoleon's invasion of Russia. But the comparison will not bear criticism. Of the 600,000 troops which

began the campaign against Russia, Napoleon scarcely brought 130,000 or 140,000 as far as Borodino. That was all he had at his disposal at Moscow. Well, we now have over 3,000,000 troops facing the front of the Red Army and armed with all the implements of modern warfare. What comparison can there be here?

The German invasion of our country is also sometimes compared with the German invasion of Russia at the time of the First World War. But neither will this comparison bear criticism. Firstly, in the First World War there was a second front in Europe which rendered the Germans' position very difficult, whereas in this war there is no second front in Europe.

Secondly, in this war, twice as many troops are facing our front as in the First World War. Obviously the comparison is not appropriate. You can now conceive how serious and extraordinary are the difficulties confronting the Red Army, and how great is the heroism displayed by the Red Army in its war of liberation against the German-Fascist troops.

I think that no other country and no other army could have withstood such an onslaught of the bestial bands of the German-Fascist brigands and their allies. Only our Soviet country and only our Red Army are capable of withstanding such an onslaught. And not only withstanding it but also overpowering it.

It is often asked: But will there be a second front in Europe after all? Yes, there will be; sooner or later, there will be one. And it will be not only because we need it, but above all because our allies need it no less than we do.

Our allies cannot fail to realise that since France has been put out of action, the absence of a second front against Fascist Germany may end badly for all freedom-loving countries, including the allies themselves. . . .

Did Stalin underestimate the importance of the war in North Africa, which Mr. Churchill thought to be the best means of helping the Red Army? In a letter replying to questions put by Mr. Cassidy of the American News Agency, Associated Press, he wrote:

November 13, 1942
Dear Mr. CASSIDY,—

I am answering your questions which reached me on November 12th.

1. *Question*: What is the Soviet view of the Allied campaign in Africa?

Answer: The Soviet view of the campaign is that it represents an outstanding fact of major importance demonstrating the growing might of the armed forces

of the Allies and opening the prospect of the disintegration of the Italo-German coalition in the nearest future. . . .

2. *Question* How effective has this campaign been in relieving pressure on the Soviet Union, and what further aid does the Soviet Union await?

Answer: It is yet too soon to say to what extent this campaign has been effective in relieving pressure on the Soviet Union, but it may confidently be said that the effect will not be a small one, and that a certain relief in pressure on the Soviet Union will result in the near future.

But that is not the only thing that matters. What matters, first of all, is that, since the campaign in Africa means that the initiative has passed into the hands of our allies, this campaign radically changes the military and political situation in Europe in favour of the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition. It undermines the prestige of Hitlerite Germany as the leading force in the system of Axis powers and demoralises Hitler's allies in Europe. It releases France from her state of lethargy, mobilises the anti-Hitler forces of France and provides a basis for the organisation of an anti-Hitler French army. It creates conditions for putting Italy out of commission and for isolating Hitlerite Germany. Finally, it creates the prerequisites for the organisation of a second front in Europe nearer to Germany's vital centres, which will be of decisive importance for organising victory over the Hitlerite tyranny.

3. *Question*: What possibility is there of the Soviet offensive power in the East joining the Allies in the West to hasten final victory?

Answer: There need be no doubt that the Red Army will fulfil its task with honour, as it has been fulfilling it throughout the whole war.

With respects,
J. STALIN

Nearly four months later, on the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the formation of the Red Army, he sounds the triumphant note of victory. It is February 23rd, 1943. He says:

Three months ago the troops of the Red Army began their offensive at the approaches to Stalingrad. Since then the initiative in military operations hay remained in our hands and the pace and the striking power of the offensive operations of the Red Army have not weakened. To-day, in hard winter conditions, the Red Army is advancing over a front of 950 miles and is achieving successes practically everywhere. In the north near Leningrad, on the Central front, at the approaches to Kharkov, in the Donetz Basin, at Rostov, on

the shores of the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea, the Red Army is striking blow after blow at the Hitlerite troops.

. . . In three months of the Red. Army's offensive in the winter of 1942-3 alone, the Germans lost over 7,000 tanks, 4,000 planes, 17,000 guns and large quantities of other arms.

In defensive and offensive battles, the Red Army, since the beginning of the war has put out of action about 9,000,000 German-Fascist officers and men, of which no less than 4,000,000 were killed on the battlefield. . . .

The German invaders are resisting furiously, are launching counter-attacks, are striving to cling to their defence lines, and may embark on new adventures, That is why there can be no place for complacency, carelessness or conceit in our ranks.

The whole of the Soviet people rejoices in the Red Army's victories. But the Red Army men, commanders and political workers should remember the precepts of our teacher Lenin. "The first thing is not to be carried away by victory and not to get conceited; the second thing is to consolidate one's victory; the third thing is to finish off the enemy. . . ."

From this time forward Stalin's communiqués record triumph on triumph as the Red Army sweeps the Fascist forces out of the Union. In the midst of the great progress he went to Teheran to again meet Mr. Churchill, and for the first time President Roosevelt. What a gathering! Each man reinforced with a galaxy of military, naval, and political talent such as had never before been assembled together, representative of the greatest military and economic combination known to man.

Some day we may know beyond the tobacco they smoked, the wine they drank, the meals they ate and the clothes they wore, all that transpired there. All have affirmed their satisfaction with the decisions at which they arrived. Co-ordination of strategical plans was agreed on. Principles governing post-war political relations were reaffirmed and discussed in some detail. But as to what the plans, the principles, are, the world must learn piece by piece as they are translated into action.

Stalin emerged from this conference, as from previous conferences, with added prestige in the eyes of the world. It was here that Mr. Churchill gave the toast "Stalin the Great," and no man to-day quarrels with the title.

Quickly he returned to Moscow, as much too absorbed now in the making of history to bask long in the sunshine of praise and admiration as he had hitherto

been too absorbed in his task to worry about the abuse of his enemies. For him the Teheran conference had achieved much if by a week or a month it shortened the period of his people's sacrifice and lessened the amount of blood they must lose. Of the approaching victory he had never been in doubt since the first blow struck in the war.

Now, as the majestic avalanche of triumph unrolled itself across the fields and cities of the Ukraine until it reached and passed the western frontiers of the Union, and the Red Army seemed able to pummel and shatter the Nazi armies at will, his confidence in the power of the Revolution was reinforced a thousand-fold. The blackest days of 1941 were gone. The hungriest, most difficult days of 1942 had also gone. Not only had 1943 witnessed the military victories but also the rise of Soviet production above the demands of the war machine. Imperceptibly at first, but no less truly, the standards of social life snatched from the people by the war had begun to creep back. And the date for the storm of steel to be let loose on the enemy from the West had been fixed at last. Already the air forces of Britain and the United States were blasting the productive forces of Germany with unceasing diligence and increasing power. Very soon now the enslaved peoples of Europe would be rising from the depths of their agony and Nazi Germany would go down in catastrophic collapse.

But Stalin is no ordinary man. In the hour of triumph he has the habit of recalling Lenin's dictum, "Don't get conceited, consolidate victories, finish off the enemy." Teheran and the sweeping of the Nazi armies from Soviet territory is not enough. The enemy has to be "liquidated" utterly. Until then there can be no resting on victories won. "Hitler has asked for a war of annihilation. We will give him one." The fulfilinent of that declaration will occupy his attention until the last Nazi surrenders or is dead.

Stalin To-day and To-morrow

The great man is the man who, foreseeing the course that things are taking, gets ahead of them instead of following them, and acts for or against them in advance.—H. BARBUSSE

As I write these words, Joseph Vissarion Djugashvili, known to the world as Marshal Stalin, is in his sixty-fifth year. His moustache and his thick mass of once black hair, brushed back from his forehead, have turned grey. His strong, swarthy face has lines which mark the passing of the years. His shoulders droop a little, but in his Marshal's uniform he walks as one knowing his destination and intent on getting there. His dark brown eyes still look straight at you, perpetually threatening to smile; and when they do, you feel you have met the completely integrated individual serenely making the most of all that life has to give. Here is the man who in his younger days went calmly through the prisons of Czarism and slept while others excitedly exhausted themselves with anxieties he had dismissed. Here is the former "unknown" revolutionary compelling mankind to re-value its hasty judgements of him and of the events with which he has been associated, often primarily responsible.

On September 7th, 1942, after his first visit to Moscow, Mr. Churchill reported to the British House of Commons:

It was an experience of great interest to me to meet Premier Stalin. . . . It is very fortunate for Russia in her agony to have this great rugged chief at her head. He is a man of outstanding personality, suited to the sombre and stormy times in which his life has been cast. He is a man of inexhaustible courage and will-power, a man direct and even blunt in speech. . . . Above all, he is a man with that saving sense of humour which is of high importance to all men and to all nations. Premier Stalin also left upon me an impression of deep cool wisdom and a complete absence of illusions of any kind. . .

This is the judgement of a friend who was once an enemy.

Mr. Wendell Willkie, another war-time visitor to the Soviet Union, recalls in his account of his meeting with Stalin an incident, the characteristicness of which is, perhaps, fully appreciable only to those who have known and worked with him and seen him in his everyday life. Mr. Willkie writes:

As I was leaving him after my first talk, I expressed appreciation of the time he had given me, the honour he conferred upon me in talking so candidly. A little embarrassed, he said: “Mr. Willkie, you know I grew up a Georgian peasant. I am unschooled in pretty talk. All I can say is, I like you very much.”

Mr. Joseph Davies, formerly American ambassador to the Soviet Union, telling his daughter of his meeting with Stalin, says:

He gives the impression of a strong mind which is composed and wise. His brown eye is exceedingly kind and gentle. A child would like to sit on his knee and a dog would sidle up to him. . . . He has a sly humour. He has a very great mentality. It is sharp, shrewd and above all things else, wise, at least so it would appear to me. If you can picture a personality that is exactly opposite to what the most rabid anti-Stalinist anywhere could conceive, then you might picture this man. . . .

Such are the testimonies of men who are fundamentally opposed to Stalin’s political theories and philosophy of life. To quote from his friends would be superfluous, for our vocabularies are too limited to translate the admiration, and I would add, the love of Russia’s millions for “the man at the helm.”

Nearly fifty years have passed since this son of a peasant mother and cobbler father joined Lenin’s party and plunged into the underground world of preparation for the overthrow of Czarism and inauguration of the world revolution. Neither prison nor beatings, nor Siberian exile proved able to turn him from his chosen course or dim his vision of the world when man should no longer exploit his fellow-man. Early in life he had learned that “the only goal worthy of humanity is the greatest possible enlargement of all human capacities,” and had become convinced that humanity could not fully develop its capacities as long as human relations were trammelled by the fetters of private property. From Marx and Lenin he learned to view the struggle with the detachment of the scientist, to measure the forces engaged with the skill of the scientifically equipped warrior, and to fight with the cool passion of the fanatic.

He was forty years of age when for the first time in his life since he had left the poverty-stricken home of his boyhood, he secured rooms in the Kremlin and established a place he could at last call his home. There was nothing lavish about this home then, nor is there to-day, nor ever has been except the warm comradeship of his married life with Nadya Alleluiev, the daughter of his old Georgian workman friend. Of this marriage there were two children, a son, now an officer in the Red Army, and a daughter, now approaching womanhood. The son of his first wife is a prisoner of the Nazis. Nadya, to whom he was devoted, died in 1929. Few were the hours of any day of those terrific years that he could spend with her. The period of famine, civil war, and planning the great social

advance, demanded of the leader of the Russian Revolution unrelenting, tireless activity.

Although, through this period, he lived in a blaze of light in which the people of the Soviet Union could see him clearly, he was still to the outside world, relying on the distorted reports of those who sympathised neither with his aims nor his methods, a mysterious, sombre figure of whom they knew not what to make. To-day, as we trace his course in retrospect, his aims and his path stand out clearly. Convinced that the proletariat must secure political power and become the leading class in society in order to transform it into the classless society of Socialism and Communism, he joined the party of Lenin dedicated to this task. Lenin's party purposed to make allies of other oppressed classes, especially the peasantry, and to conquer Czarism and the landlord, and capitalist classes.

By accomplishing these ends Lenin and Stalin led the way to government in the interests of the working people. The next stage stands out as plainly as the first: to destroy the influence, and finally the organisation, of every political group which stood in the way of the transformation of Russia into a Socialist country; and to reorganise the national economy on Socialist lines, at the same time industrialising the U.S.S.R., collectivising its agriculture, and thus laying the economic foundations of the classless society. In the process the colonial peoples of Czardom would be liberated and set on the march to full nationhood and fraternal unity within the Union.

The methods whereby Lenin, and later Stalin, accomplished these aims likewise stand out as unequivocally as the goal to which they aspired. They were governed by definite principles. Scientifically analysing the structure of society founded on private ownership of the means of production, they concluded that it is characterised by a condition of class warfare, is governed by the interests of the paramount economic classes, and must ever remain so until the means of production are socialised. Nevertheless, they rejected the theory that society develops everywhere under the same conditions and at the same tempo. They were convinced that while the class conflict was universal, it was also variable, and the working-class of each country or group of countries must conquer power separately in its own time and fashion and under its own leaders. They were also convinced that the conditions of the Russian Empire were such that the Russian working-class would be the first to succeed. Having conquered, the Russian workers would have to face the universal disapproval and hatred of the capitalist States and defend the Socialist State to the uttermost.

And so it all proved in the event. Lenin died before all but the first part of the task had been accomplished. Stalin was in command in the period of economic and social transformation. To-day he stands at the apex of a transformed society.

He is the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Premier of the Soviet Union, leading Marshal of the greatest army the world has seen. He guides a State harmoniously built of many nations, the world's leading military Power, second only to the United States of America in industrial potential and within measurable distance of surpassing it. No leader of our time can look back with greater satisfaction on the course he has travelled, look forward with greater confidence to the future. Stalin has tested his philosophy and principles in the fire of experience, and seen his dreams come true. His critics may like neither his philosophy nor his principles nor his dreams. Their likes and dislikes are immaterial. What matters is the existence of the Soviet Union, a multi-national State, in which all nations are free self-governing working peoples building a Socialist civilisation and defending it with unsurpassed enthusiasm and will to victory. There are no economic classes to practise exploitation, no racial and national enmity. Men and women have equal political, economic, and social rights, and the Constitution which unites the peoples in common association represents the nearest approach yet made by society anywhere to the fulfilment of Lincoln's famous "government of the people, by the people, for the people." And these things have been achieved under Stalin's leadership.

Were they all, his record would still remain unsurpassed. But they are not all. It must be recognised that he has transformed the primitive struggle of man against man for the basic means of livelihood into a mighty war of science versus ignorance, superstition, and all unsocial conduct. Patriotism, once the distorted mirror of the propertied classes, has been transformed into the expression of love for the country or Socialism. Nationalism has been stripped of its stupid narrowness and become a cultural variation for the enrichment of life. Rank, once the outward manifestation of class, wealth and power, has become the symbol of service and honour, the mark of ability and responsibility in the common service of society. Science, freed from the fetters of private property considerations, plans the country's economic life, serves industry, agriculture, and—not least—health, on an unparalleled scale, and is at the general service of every man, woman, and child.

It may then be asked, does all this mean that Stalin also has been transformed from a pioneer of World Revolution into a great national statesman? Has he ceased to regard the Russian Revolution as the prologue to World Revolution? If these questions were put to him personally he could reply, "Not at all. The Russian Revolution did begin the World Revolution. The latter is still proceeding and the Soviet is still leading it. You must not confuse World Revolution with the task of leading the working-class in each country to the conquest of political power within that country. Such conquest of power is a national, not an international task, and each people must do it in its own time

and way. I think the way will usually be the same as that which we took in November, 1917, but this particular task in the World Revolution is not ours. It is true that at one time I did think, with Lenin, that the whole process of World Revolution could be led by a centralised international Communist party—the Communist International. Experience, however, has proved that this is not possible. Hence the dissolution of the Communist International and the decision that each Communist Party must pursue its own aims and tasks independently, guided by the teachings of Marx and Lenin and the experiences of the Comintern.

"Nevertheless, this does not mean that the Soviet Union will do, or is doing, nothing to aid the World Revolution. It could not adopt such a negative policy even if it so desired. It could not live in a vacuum sealed off from the rest of the world. To-day it is a world Power. It is also a Socialist Power. Its triumphs are known to all, and its liberating influence in the minds of the millions throughout the nations cannot be measured.

"The Soviet State must perforce enter into relations with the outside world, although this world is still capitalist. What then shall govern our political relations with the capitalist States? The Soviet State is not an imperialist Power seeking territorial conquests. Therefore our policy is one of peaceful, friendly, and commercial relations with all, which will aid us to rehabilitate that part of the Soviet Union devastated by war and will speed up the economic and social development of our country.

"Shall we attempt to force our social system on another country? No, we shall recognise whatever government has authority so long as it is peacefully inclined towards the Soviet Union. Naturally, should other States become Socialist States the degree of aid we can render each other becomes greater, especially when such countries are geographically near to us. We assisted Spanish democracy, which had not yet become Socialist. We assisted China in her struggle against Japanese imperialism, although China is not yet a Socialist country. We shall support all democratic developments which give scope for the working people to increase their power and fulfil their rightful mission.

"At present our principal, our paramount task is to unite with every anti-Nazi force for the destruction of Nazism. When it has been destroyed and we have liberated the people of Germany and the nations held in Hitler's bondage, it must be obvious that the restoration of the states destroyed by Nazism will be the first problem to be solved. A proletarian Socialist revolution is not likely to precede the national and democratic revolution which Nazism will have engendered. Moreover, the working-class of Germany and other countries will need a "breathing space" in which to reorganise their forces, while time will also be needed for the redevelopment of their revolutionary leadership.

“The World Revolution is not our creation. We only showed how to lead it and make a success of it in the interests of the great majority of humanity. We shall continue to do our duty.”

Here we leave Joseph Stalin working in the Kremlin, the great human power-house of the changing world. No statesman of any country has emerged from this war with such gigantic achievements and such assured prospects to set before his people. When Nazism has been shattered there will be no European country in a position to challenge or endanger the U.S.S.R.; and in the Orient the destruction of Japanese imperialism will leave her eastern boundaries as unthreatened as her western. It will not be for Stalin to warn his people that great economic and political crises lie ahead in which everybody will have to work harder and be poorer. He can confidently face his people with frontiers secure and an era of economic and social expansion ahead such as the world has never known. The full power of the country’s vast productive machinery and resources will be turned to healing the wounds of war and enriching the social well-being of every man, woman, and child in the Union.

Thus the new world, born on November 7th, 1917, will grow from strength to strength, and all men will testify that in its creation and development Joseph Stalin has earned his title of “the Great.” But he himself will continue to prefer being known as a “disciple of Lenin.”