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RUSSIA

BY

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EDITORIAL PREFACE

MANKIND has been making history very rapidly in the last thirty years. Since the World War, particularly, social developments and political revolutions have been so numerous as to be almost bewildering. The intelligent public, naturally, has a great interest in these things, as it has also an imperative need to be reliably informed about them.

It is always difficult for the public to obtain an accurate bird's-eye view of the individual States which make up the world. The existing standard histories are long, and for the most part deal with events and movements which already belong almost to the remote past. On the other hand, many admirable books dealing with current developments are apt to ignore, or to treat too scantily, the previous development, which may have been continuous for a thousand years.

The object of the present series is to present, in a reasonably moderate compass, the complete story of the development of the States of the world, from their origin to the present day. While, however, due attention is given to origins and to the continuity of the life of each people and of each State, it is recognized that the interest of the public is, quite reasonably, in the present epoch and in the last thirty or forty years. These volumes, therefore, emphasize recent history, but always in relation to the historic tradition and development of the past. The books are each written by an authority, among the younger historians for the most part, who is or has been in intimate touch with the subject or with the people with which he deals. The general editor is not responsible for particular views or opinions that may be put forward.

R. B. MOWAT.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I WISH to express my gratitude to my brother, MR. HERBERT BOX, of University College, Hull, and to OR. FULMER MOOD for reading the proofs of this book and for assisting me with valuable suggestions.

October, 1933.

P. H. B.

" A FABLE very widely known in Russia tells how a Tsar, suspecting his wife of infidelity, shut her and her son in a barrel, then had the barrel sealed up and thrown into the sea.

" For many years the barrel floated on the sea. Meanwhile, the Tsarevitch grew not by days but by hours, and his feet and his head began to press against the ends of the barrel. At last he said to his mother : ' Queen-mother, let me stretch in freedom.' ' My darling Tsarevitch,' answered the mother, ' you must not stretch, the barrel will burst and you will drown in the salt water!'

" The Tsarevitch thought in silence for a while, then he said : ' I will stretch, mother ; better stretch for once in freedom and die I'

" That fable, sir, contains our whole history."

Open letter of Alexander Herzen to
J. Michelet, 1851. Herzen, *My Past
and Thoughts*, vol. vi., pp. 246-247.

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IMPORTANT DATES IN RUSSIAN HISTORY

- A.D.
- 862 Traditional date of arrival of Rurik in Novgorod.
- c. 880 Oleg, King of Novgorod, conquers Kiev.
- 988 Acceptance of Christianity by Vladimir.
- 1068 Cumans cut the Dniepr line.
- 1238-40 The Tatar invasions.
- 1325-41 Ivan I Kalita.
- 1380 Dmitri Donskoi (1359-89) defeats Tatars at Kulikovo.
- 1480 Ivan III (1462-1505) repudiates Tatar supremacy.
- 1547 Ivan IV the Terrible (1530-84) assumes the title of Tsar.
- 1552 Conquest of Kazan.
- 1556 Conquest of Astrakhan.
- 1565 Ivan IV proclaims the *Oprichnina*.
- 1604-13. The Time of Troubles.
- 1613 Election of Michael Romanov (1613-45).
- 1649 Code of Alexis (1645-76).
- 1667 Conquest of the Ukraine.
- 1670 Rebellion of Stenka Razin.
- 1682-1725 Peter I, the Great.
- 1685 Persecution of the Old Ritualists.
- 1698 Establishment of the Secret Chancellery.
- 1700-21 The Northern War.
- 1703 Foundation of St. Petersburg.
- 1721 Establishment of the Holy Synod.
- 1722 Law of Succession gives Tsar right to nominate his successor.
- 1757 Foundation of the University of Moscow.
- 1762 Manifesto of "Liberty of the Nobility."
Guards depose Peter III and proclaim Catherine II (1762-96).
- 1764 Confiscation of the estates of the Church.
- 1773 Rebellion of Pugachev.
- 1797 Fundamental Law on the succession to the Throne.
- 1825 December 26th. Rising of the "Decembrists."
- 1854-56 The Crimean War.
- 1861 The Emancipation of the Serfs.
- 1877-78 **War** with Turkey.
- 1879-87 Activities of Narodnaya Volya.
- 1881 March 13th. Assassination of Alexander II.
- 1898 Formation of Russian Social Democratic **Workers' Party**.
- 1899-1901 Formation of Social Revolutionary Party.**

X IMPORTANT DATES IN RUSSIAN HISTORY

- 1903 Social Democratic Workers' Party splits into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.
- 1904-5 War with Japan.
- 1905 January 22nd. Massacre at the Winter Palace.
October 23rd. General Strike.
October 30th. Tsar's manifesto promising a constitution.
December 19th. Workers' rising in Moscow.
- 1906 May 10th. Meeting of the First Duma.
July. Stolypin appointed Minister President.
July 21st. First Duma dissolved.
- 1911 September 14th. Assassination of Stolypin.
- 1914 August 1st. War with Germany.
- 1916 December 29th. Assassination of Rasputin.
March 8th—13th. Revolution in Petrograd.
April 16th. Return of Lenin from exile.
- 1917 November 7th. Bolshevik Revolution. Lenin Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars.
March 3rd. Peace with the Central Powers signed at Brest-Litovsk.
- 1918 May 14th. Breach with the Czechoslovaks.
June 28th. General nationalization decree.
July 6th. Rising at Jaroslav. Civil War begins.
August 1st. Allied occupation of Archangel.
August 30th. Attempt on the life of Lenin.
- 1919 March. Foundation Congress of Third International at Moscow.
- 1920 April 26th. Poland invades Russia.
November. End of Civil War.
- 1921 March. The New Economic Policy inaugurated.
- 1922 March. Stalin made General Secretary to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party.
December. Formation of the U.S.S.R.
- 1924 January 21st. Death of Lenin.
February 1st. British Government recognizes the U.S.S.R. *de jure*.
1928. January 17. Exile of Trotsky.
October—1933 January. First Five Year Plan completed in four years and three months.
- 1933 April. The trial of British engineers and others accused of wrecking activities at the Power Stations in the Soviet Union before the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R.
July. Litvinov represents the U.S.S.R. at the World Economic Conference and negotiates non-aggression pacts.

PART I

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

"The boyars made it easy for themselves and ill
for the lesser ones."

The Russian Chronicle, thirteenth century.

RUSSIA

PART I

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

THE theatre of Russian history is the vast Eurasian plain which stretches from the Baltic coast and the Carpathians to the mountains of Eastern Siberia and from the Arctic Ocean to the highlands of Central Asia. In this ocean of land there is no important natural barrier. The Ural mountains, since the nineteenth century the official boundary between Europe and Asia, do not constitute an obstacle. The range is narrow and is easily crossed at levels of 1,500 or 2,000 feet, and between the end of the Urals and the Caspian Sea is a wide gap. The Urals do not act even as a meteorological boundary. Save in European Russia the rivers do not break the unity of the great plain, and it is possible to ride from the Ural-Caspian gap to the mountains of Mongolia without fording a single river. The great plain falls into four zones marked off from each other not by geographical but by climatic and vegetative differences—the frozen desert of the North, the forest region, the arable *step* and the parched desert of the South-East.

The Arctic *tundra* has a growing season of only six or eight weeks. Its soil, consisting of a thin organic deposit on a clay basis, further prevents the development of any considerable vegetation. Vast areas are occupied by

swamps. Arctic moss serves as the chief food of the reindeer on which the human inhabitants mainly depend. The *tundra* offers resources for a semi-nomadic life of hunting, fishing and reindeer-herding, but it has never been the centre of an advanced culture.

The open *tundra* slowly merges to the south into the forest and park land which occupies more than half of the Eurasian plain. It is in general suitable for agriculture. The soil varies, but is usually either clayey or sandy. To the south again lies the treeless *step*, the third great zone. For centuries the line where the forest fades into the open was the boundary between two different types of human life—that of the farmer-hunter of the forest and the pastoral nomad of the grasslands. Even after the extension of agriculture into the arable *step* the farm life of the plain was, and still is, very different from that of the forest zone. The "black earth" is one of the most fertile soils in the world, but the great oscillations in rainfall make much of it subject to periodical famines, the latest and most disastrous of which was in 1921. The peasant of the forest may expect a regular, if limited, return from his land. The peasant of the *step* has fat years and lean years and famines.

The "black soil" *step* fades with the diminishing moisture into the Southern desert. This extends from the lower Volga through the Central Asiatic plain to the highlands of Persia, Afghanistan and Chinese Turkestan. The soil is sandy and the rainfall slight. In the spring the plain is covered with grass which is burnt up by June. The nomadic inhabitants then drive their flocks north to fresh pastures and return in the autumn. Some of the valleys of the desert zone are very fertile when irrigated, and these regions support the complex and highly-developed civilization of Bokhara and Khiva, absorbed by Russia only ill recent times. "As far as written history is concerned, Russian colonization has no beginning, and as yet no end: no beginning, because

long before they learned to make any adequate record of their doings the Slavs entered upon their great Eastward Movement across the Eurasian plain: no end, because from year to year the stream of Slavonic colonization moves on with the persistence of some force of inanimate nature."¹ The movement began when certain Slavonic tribes began a movement to the East from their former homes near the Carpathians, or perhaps from the Pripet marshes on the frontier of what are now Poland and Russia.

The first travellers who visited the early Russians were Arabs, whose reports have been preserved by the Arab geographers. The earliest was Ibn Dasta, who wrote in the first half of the tenth century and used much earlier sources. He describes the Russians as a forest people who lived by bee-keeping, swine-raising and nomadic agriculture. As soon as they had exhausted the soil of a given area they moved on to another. Hunting was a subordinate occupation. Before the beginning of the tenth century they were trading in marten pelts with their neighbours. Their social organization was a primitive form of collective landholding. Originally the individual community, sometimes scores of workers of both sexes, lived together under one roof in an enormous two-storied "hut." The whole community cultivated the land as a common possession, and all enjoyed the products of their joint labours. The members of the community were a family, workers in one economy, soldiers in one detachment, worshippers of the same family gods. War was chronic among the various communities until economic interests wider than the clan-family appeared, which could form the basis of a larger unity. The key position in the community was occupied by the father. He had the power of life or death and was an autocrat over every member of the community. Successful war developed his kingly authority.

¹ Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Rtgime*, p. 8.

About the middle of the ninth century the bands of Scandinavian Viking traders who settled along the line of rivers from the Gulf of Finland to the Black Sea established themselves as a ruling class. They opened up trade with Constantinople, and their economic activities linked the Baltic countries with the Levant. These Scandinavian towns, greatest of which was Kiev, were originally fortified posts from which the Vikings made raids on the surrounding country and collected tribute. Though the historical rulers of early Russia were Scandinavians, they themselves had been patriarchal chiefs in their home-land like their Russian contemporaries.

The Scandinavians founded two kingdoms, Kiev and Novgorod. About 880 Oleg, King of Novgorod, drove out the King of Kiev and founded a dynasty which was to endure for eight centuries. Under Vladimir, who reigned from 980 to 1015, Christianity was introduced from Constantinople in 988, and with it Byzantine cultural influences. Historically this was of enormous importance, for it meant that Russia followed the East on the final separation of the Eastern and Western churches in 1054. Thus a barrier was raised between Orthodox Russia and the Catholic West which for many centuries was absolute. The fact that Russia received her Christianity from Constantinople and not from Rome was inevitable in the historical circumstances. Her nearest Western neighbours, the Poles, were still heathen, and on an even lower cultural level than the Russians. The Lithuanians were to remain heathen for four more centuries. Finally, all the economic ties of Kiev were with Constantinople.

The golden age of Kiev was during the reigns of Vladimir and his son Yaroslav, 980-1054. Byzantine influence reached its highest peak in this period, and the Cathedral of St. Sophia at Kiev, built by Yaroslav, is one of the great monuments of Byzantine architecture.

The kingdom finally extended west as far as the Carpathians and almost to the Vistula, north to the Neva, north-east to the Upper Volga. Its economic prosperity depended on keeping open the waterway of the lower Dniepr and therewith its communications with Constantinople. The empire was ruled by the King of Kiev with the aid of his sons. "When a king died, all his sons succeeded him, each according to his seniority receiving a town and district in the order of their reputed importance, the eldest brother becoming Great King of Kiev."¹ At first the junior kings were very movable. Whenever a senior king died there was a general post of junior kings, each of whom desired a more important kingdom. Needless to say, this extraordinary system scarcely ever worked smoothly. Armed struggles were frequent, and with the passage of time various branches of the dynastic family (the members of which multiplied at such a rate that by the middle of the twelfth century it formed a social class by itself) became localized and tended to become less and less interested in the succession at Kiev. The decline of Kiev began in 1068 when the invading Turkish tribe of Cumans defeated the united college of Russian kings and cut the Dniepr line. By the twelfth century the city had ceased to be the economic centre, and its political importance was ended when the King of Suzdal, Andrew Bogolyubsky, sacked it in 1169, assumed the title of Great King, but continued to live at his northern capital of Vladimir.

While the Kievan kingdoms were flourishing along the Graeco-Scandinavian river-routes, Russian settlers were continuing their advance to the East. The men of Old Novgorod, near the Gulf of Finland, had penetrated to the north-western corner of Asia before 1100. During the following century a much greater exodus took place from the old South-West, of which Kiev was the centre. This movement, which completed the depopulation of

¹ Mirsky, *A History of Russia*, p. 9-

Kiev before the destroying Tatar invasions of the thirteenth century, carried the bulk of the Russian people into the forest lands round the Oka and the Upper Volga. " Here in a region, cold, inhospitable and remote, draining not toward Byzantium or the Baltic but toward the ancient East, the Russians lived for more than two centuries under the lax overlordship of the Tatars, and took from Asia some part of that second cultural impress which has helped to mark them off from the Occidental world."¹

The Russians advanced peacefully—slowly pushing out the Finnish settlers whom they met or mingling with them. The social unit was the patriarchal village community. This large family included not only the children and grandchildren of the patriarch, but also relatives by blood and marriage and strangers who had been absorbed into the economic and social organization of the community. From this original unit other families broke off, without, however, leaving the village.

By a complex historical process, one element of which is the Scandinavian overlordship and another the effect of internecine war among the early communities, a system of over-rights was extended over the advancing Russian villages. As late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there were regions where no landholder stood between the peasants and the Tsar. What was to become the state frequently begins as a Scandinavian raid from a neighbouring river trading-post and a levy on the village communities by the pirate-trader-king of so much honey and wax and so many skins. When the raids became regular and customary these levies insensibly changed into taxes levied by an admitted ruler. Sometimes feudal lordships developed out of the patriarchal peasant communities themselves, which were very far from being associations of free and equal workers. In later times it was customary for the sovereign to grant settled lands

¹ Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, p. 9.

as a feudal lordship. Over a mass of small independent communities was set up a large proprietor.

The predatory character of the early towns brought about the disintegration of the Kievan empire even before the Tatar invasions of 1238-40 completed the process. The agricultural expansion we have noted in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was a factor. Early Russian unity was based on commerce organized by a small minority operating from interdependent urban centres. The commodities exported were slaves, furs and hides, wild honey and wax which were collected from the countryside. For agricultural produce there was no external and only a limited internal market. For instance, Novgorod lived on grain brought from Suzdal. The growth of agriculture was due to an increase of consumption on the spot which thus led to a growth of natural economy at the expense of commerce. This increase in consumption was due to the multiplication of kings and royal residences and the rise of an upper non-producing royal and aristocratic class. The resulting decentralization would have dissolved the rather flimsy empire even if there had been no Tatar irruption. With the decline of commerce the towns declined, and with them declined that democratic urban mass of traders and artisans who shared power with the king and the nobles in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and who in the twelfth century, through their assembly, had become a leading social force, deposing unpopular kings and negotiating treaties with foreign powers. Russia became again a rural country, most of the kings sinking to the level of feudal barons. The kings who remained were those who ruled the cities which retained their importance. With the Tatar invasions Russia ceased to be a political unit and broke into two main groups—the North-East, in which was to arise the future Muscovy and the South-West—White Russia and the Ukraine.

The wholesale massacres by the Tatars of the governing

class in large numbers of Russian principalities did not spring merely from their natural love of cruelty. They desired to substitute themselves as the governing class and to take over the lucrative function of taxing the peasants. In the North-East, however, they spared Yaroslav, the Great Prince of Vladimir, one of whose towns was Moscow. He became the vassal of the Tatar power seated at Saray on the Volga, the capital of Kipchak, one of the four states into which the Mongolian Empire of Jenghiz Khan broke in the middle of the thirteenth century. At its greatest extent it stretched from one side to the other of the Southern Eurasian plain. It had united Europe and the Far East; and the "*Pax Mongolica*" was such that merchants could travel in safety from the Ukraine to Peking. Yaroslav's policy of complete submission was continued by his son, the famous St. Alexander Nevsky. He became a national hero through his successful defence of North-East Russia against hordes of German and Swedish Crusaders operating from the Baltic coast, the predatory exponents of Latin Christianity. He crushed the Swedes on the Neva in 1240 and the German Knights in 1242. When he died in 1263 he was canonized as much for his victories over the Catholic West as for the invaluable peace he had bought by submission to the Tatars.

Moscow is first mentioned in 1147 as a manor belonging to the King of Suzdal. In the thirteenth century it became the residence of a separate prince of the house of Vladimir. It owed its rapid development to its favourable situation on the northern trade routes and to the policy of its rulers after the Tatar conquest. Ivan I (1325-41) established the tradition of his house by his steady and totally unscrupulous accumulation of all forms of wealth—hence his nickname, Kalita, or Money Bag. His absolute subservience to the Khan at Saray enabled him and his house to secure the throne of Vladimir and to aggrandize the principality of Moscow at the expense of all his

EARLIEST TIMES TO SEVENTEENTH CENTURY II

Russian neighbours. In 1327 he received Tver from the Khan after co-operating with an army of Tatars in its conquest and devastation. In 1340 he assisted the Khan in devastating the dominions of the Prince of Smolensk, who had refused to pay tribute to the Tatar overlord. Since Ivan's own dominions were always spared, they attracted wealthy refugees from neighbouring principalities. In this work of laying the foundations of the future autocracy Ivan was actively assisted by the church, which was at the height of its social and moral power in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The Tatars were animists who were converted to Islam only in the fourteenth century. Like most heathen peoples they had a superstitious respect for the clergy of all religions—a respect on which the Orthodox Church traded with great effect. The Metropolitan, who about 1300 moved his see from Kiev to Vladimir, secured a charter from the Khan granting the Russian church immunity from the poll-tax (the chief source of Tatar income from conquered peoples) and from all secular jurisdiction. A letter from the Khan addressed to the Metropolitan St. Alexis about 1357 says: "Tsar Jenghiz and the first Tsars, our fathers, rewarded the church folk who prayed for them . . ."¹ During the reign of Ivan Kalita the Metropolitan see was transferred from Vladimir to Moscow. The church steadily supported the dynasty and, during the period following the death of Ivan Kalita, made Moscow the moral leader of the nation. From 1353 to his death in 1378, the whole administration was in the hands of the Metropolitan St. Alexis, "one of the most able statesmen ever produced by Russia."² Dmitri Donskoi (1359-89), encouraged by the church, felt strong enough to defy the Tatar power. In 1380 he inflicted a crushing defeat on the Khan at Kulikovo near the sources

¹ Cited, Pokrovsky, *History of Russia*, p. 99-

² Mirsky, *A History of Russia*, p. 17.

of the Don. Though the Tatars re-asserted their power, the Kipchak state was already beginning to break up, and the hegemony gradually weakened until its successful repudiation by Ivan III (1462-1505) in 1480. Kulikovo made Moscow the unquestioned leader of the nation, and the new status of her Princes is indicated by the assumption of the title " of all Russia."

The church was to play a still greater part in the establishment of the monarchical idea in the later fifteenth and the first part of the sixteenth centuries. The power of the Princes of Moscow had grown up in a feudal society in a characteristically feudal confusion of public and private relations. Political authority might involve the relations of owner and serf or of feudal suzerain and vassal or " free servant." The relations of owner and serf were still limited by custom, but those of suzerain and vassal were defined by contract. The power of the Moscow Prince had grown by the simultaneous extension of his feudal suzerainty over vassals and the accumulation of property and serfs in his own hand. , 'Down to the reign of Ivan III the institutions of Moscow much resembled those of a large private estate—there was little attempt to separate the functions of the Prince as the repository of State power and as the owner of personal property.) Ivan III began the differentiation of State institutions, especially the State Treasury, from the administration of his personal landed property. At the same time the church aided him in the establishment of a theory of the State.

The Metropolitan Jonah desired to separate the Russian Church from dependence on Constantinople, and began to propagate the view that the capture of the city by the Turks in 1453 was the judgment of God on the apostacy of the Greek Church at the Council of Florence in 1439, when, for a brief period, the supremacy of the Papacy had been recognized. If Constantinople, the second Rome, had fallen, clearly Moscow, with her

"pious princes," had been chosen as the Third Rome that should last until the Second Coming. Ivan III accepted this elevated view of the Moscow monarchy, and in 1467, to strengthen his new position, married the Princess Zoe Paleologa, better known as Sophia, daughter of Thomas, Despot of the Morea, who claimed the throne of the Byzantine Empire as the nearest relative of the last Greek Emperor. Through her influence the elaborate ceremonial of the Byzantine court and the imperial double-headed eagle were adopted by the Moscow princes. Naturally the feudal vassals resisted this elevation of the sovereign, but Ivan III maintained his new position, and his work was completed by his grandson, Ivan IV, better known to history as Ivan the Terrible (1530-1584), who took the title and crown of Caesar (Tsar) in 1547. In his reign the conflict which had begun under Ivan III between "the Mongol - Byzantine - Biblical conception of autocracy"¹ and the claims of the nobles to political power was decided in favour of autocracy.

The strange and sinister personality of the great Tsar has obscured the social background of his brilliant reign. It saw the culmination of "a long socio-political process, which had begun long before Ivan the Terrible, which did not end until long after his death, and which by its inexorable, elemental nature makes cogitation over 'characters' and 'mental states' peculiarly idle."² The Grand Prince of Moscow was suzerain over innumerable large and small landowners who held their lands from him. In theory their status was alike: in practice the small "serving people" were wholly dependent on the Great Prince, while the large landed aristocracy constituted a rival power. The various annexations by which Muscovy had grown had been accompanied by wholesale expropriations of local nobles whose lands were distributed

¹ Mirsky, *A History of Russia*, p. 21.

² Pokrovsky, *History of Russia*, p. 112.

on military tenure to small "serving people." They constituted a middle class who, together with the clergy and townsmen, became the chief social foundation of the monarchy.

Simultaneously a profound economic revolution was taking place. The essence of feudal landholding is its self-sufficiency. Money plays a definitely subordinate part. In feudal Russia the Prince needed money only when he was preparing to send his tribute to the Khan at Saray or when he bought cloth, wine or fruits from abroad. In sixteenth-century Russia (as in Western Europe from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries) we find the feudal landholder trying to secure his dues from the peasants in money rather than in kind. This means that the landed estate had lost its self-sufficiency. The former isolated landholder appears in the market as both a buyer and seller. Moscow, in the second half of Ivan the Terrible's reign, numbered 200,000 souls, and must have absorbed a vast quantity of agricultural products. One foreign traveller asserts that 700 to 800 cartloads of grain entered Moscow daily along the Jaroslav road alone.¹ The development of the grain market brought the intensification of agriculture, and with it another change in the relations of landlord and peasant. At the end of the fifteenth century the lord was taking from the peasant the smaller part of the harvest. Now it was to his interest to take everything that was not absolutely necessary for the subsistence of the workers. The lord's arable land was expanded in order to produce for the market, and we find it being worked by bondsmen. But the arable grew more rapidly than the number of hands. The landowner soon hit on the idea of extending the obligations of the free peasants on his lands. The first examples of *barshchina* or obligatory labour are found on church lands. *Barshchina* was not burdensome at first, **but** it was to become the tap-root of serfdom.

¹ Pokrovsky, *History of Russia*, p. 113.

The coming of a money economy led to a boom. " **The** fact that grain became a commodity made the land **that** supplied the grain a commodity. Men who desired this latter commodity were numerous, and seldom in early Rus had land mobilization proceeded more briskly than it did in the first half of the sixteenth century."¹ The sellers of land were the free peasants and the great landlords. The buyers were the owners of small estates. The great landowners were rarely competent or willing to reorganize their estates. The boyar of the sixteenth century was so occupied about the court and in the army that he did not often visit his estates. By tradition he also had to maintain a petty court of his own—a retinue sometimes of several thousand persons. " As long as all these people lived without expense on his peasants' grain, a boyar might not notice the economic burden of his official prestige. But when many things had to **be** purchased for money—money that was ever falling in value from year to year, in proportion to the growth of exchange economy—it became a grievous burden on the shoulders of the great landholder."² On the other hand, the petty vassal had the advantage that he did not have to spend money on his military service but received **it** in the form of a money wage. A small estate was easier to manage than a large one. A small landowner could organize the obligatory work of his peasants and bondsmen in person, while a great one had to act through a steward. It is not difficult to see that in a struggle between large and middling landowners the advantage would rest **with the latter**.

By the middle of the sixteenth century an economic crisis threatened the large estates and whetted **the** appetites of the middling landowners. **The boyars endeavoured to** exploit their administrative and **judicial**

¹ Pokrovsky, *History of Russia*, p. 118.

² *Ibid.*, p. 119.

positions in the towns and so roused against themselves the hostility of the merchant class. They then offered concessions while retaining the keys of power. This period of compromise between the bourgeoisie and the boyars, which lasted roughly from 1550 to 1563, was marked by a number of constitutional reforms. This was, perhaps, the most successful period in Muscovite history. Ivan IV, not yet the Terrible, young and immensely popular, carried out a brilliant foreign policy which was the expression of the needs of the class coalition. In 1552 he conquered Kazan and in 1556 Astrakhan, the key to the Caspian. The "military servitors," the middling landholders whose hard-pressed peasants were beginning to fly from the intensified exploitation of the new agriculture, welcomed the war as a means of exchanging worn-out estates for others in good working order. Such a compromise would keep them from casting greedy eyes on the great estates, "where weak exploitation of the peasants and low dues in kind gave no occasion for emigration."¹ But the great boyars who had to finance military expeditions out of their own pockets were less enthusiastic. They began to oppose the young Tsar's schemes. He later recalled with bitterness "what verbal oppression he suffered" from his great magnates. At the same time the middling landlords were disappointed at the results of the Eastern campaign and cordially supported Ivan in the war he started for the conquest of Livonia from the Teutonic Order. The possession of Livonia would open up great prospects of trade with the West. Besides this the middling landlords, thwarted by the unexpectedly long local resistance in Kazan, dreamed of dividing the prosperous estates of the German Knights who were model farmers. The Livonian War began well, but the intervention of Lithuania and Poland soon brought a serious check. The prospect of the whole South-East Baltic coast passing into the hands of Russia

¹ Pokrovsky, *History of Russia*, p. 138.

roused all Eastern Europe. " What Russian commercial capital was seeking to grasp was equally coveted by Polish capital, and the latter's military resources were infinitely superior to those of the Muscovite Rus of Ivan the Terrible, whose military organization was still purely feudal."¹ The boyars, who were opposed to the war, now began to suffer unexpected reverses. The best of the boyar generals, Prince Kurbsky, at the head of 15,000 men, was defeated by an army of 4,000. The Tsar and the " military servitors," again thwarted in their fight for new land, began to smell treason. The " happy times " of Ivan IV were at an end.

This is the background of the revolution of the *Oprichnina*, proclaimed by the Tsar in January, 1565, and the subsequent reign of terror. Just as the previous reforms had been the work of a coalition of the bourgeoisie and the boyars, so this revolution " was carried out by a coalition of the townsmen and the petty vassals."² So far as Ivan was concerned, it was an attempt made one hundred and fifty years before Peter the Great to found a personal autocracy like the Petrine monarchy. The attempt was premature, but it could never have been made without the active support of the petty vassals and the merchant bourgeoisie. The revolution was the expression of their class power. The essential act of the revolution was the wholesale confiscation of the estates of the great nobles, which were re-distributed in military tenure to the petty vassals who were the most faithful servants of the Tsar. This was the *Oprichnina*. From among their number he constituted a special armed force of 1,000 knights, each of whom brought several armed bondsmen. Ivan thus established an independent fighting force of about 12,000 men devoted entirely to himself. No great landowner could have raised such a retinue.

¹ Pokrovsky, *History of Russia*, p. 140.

² *Ibid.*, p. 145.

Even a combination of the greatest of them would have had difficulty in gathering such an army. Those of the dispossessed owners whom Ivan did not exile or execute received new estates, also in conditional tenure. The most valuable lands in the Muscovite State, together with the chief commercial and industrial centres, were included in the *Oprichnina* and became the direct appanage of the sovereign. Here, unhampered by the old boyars whose feudal power was shattered, the new governing class of petty vassals and merchants began to rule. Soon after the revolution we find merchants acting as Ivan's diplomatic agents in Constantinople, Antwerp and England. The result of the whole revolution was the practical destruction of the old feudal class, who became merged in the petty vassals, the "serving people" who did the military and administrative work. The richer merchants became government officials. The whole of society was mobilized for the service of the State. Needless to say, this strengthening of the power of the State in the person of the Tsar was accompanied by the strengthening of the economic and social power over their dependents of those classes who supported the monarchy. "A compromise of interests was effected, and upon this basis there was gradually built up a political and military organization powerful enough to control, by force, both the land and the labour of the country . . . even more conspicuous than the extension of the Tsar's power over the landlords was the extension of the landlords' power over the peasantry. . . . But unlike their lords, the peasants could not shift the burden ; upon them, by and large, there fell the final incidence of autocracy."¹

The new system was far from stable. Ivan's Polish neighbour, Sigizmund Augustus, was well aware that the revolution of the *Oprichnina* had divided Russia against herself, and that the number of disaffected nobles not

¹ Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Rigime*, p. 15.

included in the *Oprichnina* was large enough to start a civil war if aided from without. This is the explanation of the reign of terror Ivan inaugurated in the later 'sixties, culminating in the sack of that great western city, Novgorod, which was most likely to be the centre of Polish intrigues. Choosing to believe a story that the notables of Novgorod had invited Sigizmund Augustus to intervene, he set out in December 1569, accompanied by a large force of *Oprichnina* warriors, on a punitive expedition which lives in the history of great crimes. The towns and villages on the way were devastated. On January 2nd, 1570, he reached Novgorod and spent some days preparing his vengeance on the city. On January 9th he announced his judgment. Every day some thousand of the inhabitants were to be brought before him and tortured to death. " It is recorded these mass tortures and executions lasted five weeks. They were accompanied by the looting of all the property of the citizens."¹ The Tsar then swept like some fearful beast of prey through all the neighbouring towns and villages. The horror is unparalleled in the history of Europe. Some say 60,000 were executed. No one really knows. At dawn on February 12th, 1570, Ivan the Terrible called the trembling survivors together to hear his proclamation : " People of Novgorod still living," he said, " pray God to bless our rule as Tsar ; pray for the Christ-loving army that it may conquer all its enemies both seen and unseen. . . . May the wailing and crying cease in the city ! Forget your wrongs ! Live and prosper I . . . Go now in peace to your homes ! "

He left Novgorod and set out for Pskov, another frontier city suspected of disloyalty. When he arrived the inhabitants gave themselves up for lost. The Tsar spent the night in a monastery outside the city, but no one slept in Pskov that night. The agony of spirit of the people found expression in a gesture marvellous in

¹ Graham, *Ivan the Terrible*, p. 211.

its pathos. " At midnight all the bells of the city began to toll. The Tsar was awakened. . . . 'They are all praying to be saved from the Tsar's wrath,' he murmured, and the thought flattered him. He was touched : he decided they should be spared. The next morning the whole population of Pskov received the Tsar kneeling."¹ He felt the *Oprichnina* had looted enough to keep them loyal. Such was Ivan the Terrible, and such the class who made him the organ of their power and the express image of their innumerable exploitations.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries most of the peasant communities were still able to pay the obligations laid upon them by the expanding system of overlordships. They were therefore free men, able to move from place to place as they chose. But by the end of the sixteenth century their obligations had been increased and therewith their freedom restricted to the point that they were already serfs in fact if not in formal law.

On the private estates there were two types of worker—the landless bondsman who worked for the most part in the domestic service of the lord, and the peasant who lived on the land conditionally allotted to him and rendered dues and services to the lord. With the coming of the seventeenth century the general tendency among landlords was to endow the bondsmen with land under obligations resembling those of the peasants. A double process now set in. As the bondsman slowly rose to the status of a peasant the increasing burdens placed on the peasant slowly depressed him towards the level of a slave. In the long run this process was to end in the assimilation of the whole rural population before the law to that halfway position between the status of slaves and that of independent peasants—the dead level of serfdom.

This process was finally established after the period

¹ Graham, *Ivan the Terrible*, pp. 211-12.

known as "The Time of Troubles" at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. Like the great landowners earlier, the middling landlords were overtaken by an agrarian crisis at the end of the century—a crisis which coincided with the extinction of the dynasty. The *Oprichnina* settlement, which had been far from complete, collapsed, largely owing to the rapacity of the middling landlords, who in a frantic pursuit of money carried the exploitation of their peasants to the point when mass flights left the central districts of Muscovy almost depopulated.

In less than the hundred years of the sixteenth century the value of money in Russia fell 75 per cent. In Western Europe it fell during the same period 80 per cent. Thus the discovery of America and its gold and silver mines was reflected in the economic crisis of sixteenth-century Russia. Further, such a mass of land was thrown on the market owing to the compulsory liquidation of the large feudal estates that land values fell by almost a third. "By the end of the sixteenth century predatory economy, ever tending to liquidate and convert into money as quickly as possible both stock and buildings, and even the peasants themselves . . . was confronted with its own inevitable consequence—a shortage of labour on the land. The peasantry, stampeded by the new order, scattered from the centre like chaff before the wind."¹

The agrarian question came to a head with the famine of 1602-4, the combined result of the grain speculations of the nobles, the depopulation and the destruction of the harvest by bad weather. The immediate results were beneficial to the nobles. There was an enormous rise in grain prices and simultaneously an extraordinary fall in wages. "Men went into bondage gratuitously, for bread alone. These cheap bondsmen their masters did not even deign to feed the year round; keeping them until field

¹ Pokrovsky, *History of Russia*, p. 157.

labours were over, they then drove them out to the four winds, with complete confidence that the spring would find abundant workers still cheaper."¹ In fact the famine sharpened the crisis by creating a huge wandering army of homeless workers, ready material for a revolutionary movement.

When the peasants began to migrate after 1556 to the region of the newly-conquered Tatar Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan, the Russians began for the first time to emerge in large numbers from the forest region and to enter the open step. In this belt of marvellously fertile land the peasant should have prospered. In fact he declined more rapidly into a condition of serfdom. Not only were the lords of the central provinces driven by fear of losing their labour supply into placing greater and greater restrictions on the movements of the free peasants, but the emigrants found a swarm of landlords who had been granted estates by the Tsar in the new regions waiting for colonists to till the soil for them and armed with all the coercive power of the State. But beyond the last line of the steadily advancing fortified frontier " was a no-man's-land that drew out to itself many a freehearted peasant who had no taste for the obligations of the serf. Here, with an admixture of Tatar nomads, these adventurers formed the wild self-governing communities of the Don, the Dniepr and the Volga, and attacked with almost equally good will the manorial estates to the northward and the Tatar towns on the south."² After the famine, when the first pretender to the throne appeared, armies of these Cossacks, peasants and desperate men, flocked to his banner. After the failure of this pretender the movement became more revolutionary. An ex-slave named Bolotnikov called on the peasants to slay their masters and advanced with

¹ Pokrovsky, *History of Russia*, p. 179.

² Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, p. 17.

a devastating horde from the southern frontier to the gates of Moscow. Shortly afterwards a Cossack peasant army under a new pretender to the throne, the "Thief of Tushino," established a vast entrenched camp outside the walls of the capital. In desperation some of the nobles called in the Swedes and Poles, and a Polish army occupied Moscow. "Everywhere 'good,' opulent citizens said," reports a contemporary, "that it were better to serve the son of the (Polish) King than to be murdered by their own slaves, or to suffer in perpetual bondage to them,"¹ This added the horrors of foreign to the fury of civil war. Finally the nobles and the church succeeded in re-establishing the State with the election of the Romanov dynasty in 1613.

What remained of the old nobility (and many had survived the *Oprichnina*) had been destroyed, but the accession of the first Romanov Tsar, Michael, (1613-1645) was a restoration. It was marked by the progressive degradation of the peasants into the status of serfdom which bound them to the estates and by the consolidation of the ruling class. Immediately after the Troubles "there began a regular orgy of great distributions of land, a sort of restoration of what the *Oprichnina* had annihilated." To take one out of many similar examples, in 1619-1620 the whole of the lands occupied by the free peasantry of Galich were distributed. By the end of the seventeenth century between 3,700,000 and 5,000,000 acres of court land had been distributed among a few persons. "Thus the nobles definitely seated themselves in the place of the boyars; and out of their midst arose a new feudal aristocracy that made possible the flowering of the 'new feudalism' of the eighteenth century."² The Code of 1649 promulgated under Alexis (1645-1676), the second Tsar of the Romanov dynasty and the father of

¹ Cited, Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, p. 19

² Pokrovsky, *History of Russia*, p. 240.

Peter the Great, sanctioned the binding of the peasant to the land and the extension of the lord's authority by giving him the right to separate peasants without their consent from the land on which they had been settled. The right of the landlord to take action for the arrest of a runaway peasant, a right which had previously been limited to a certain time after the flight, was now made absolute.

In the middle of the century the Patriarch of Moscow, supported by the church council, the nobles and the Tsar, promulgated a reformed system of ritual designed to eliminate differences between the rites of the Russian Church and those of other churches of the Eastern Orthodox communion. The opposition to the reforms of those who came to be known as " Old Ritualists " had its main support among the peasants. The " Old Ritualists " were the champions of ecclesiastical nationalism. They maintained that the Russian Church was the only true Orthodox Church. Where its usages differed from those of the Greeks, the Greeks, who were the slaves of the infidel Turks, were wrong. In 1666 the schismatics were excommunicated, and in 1685 active persecution, which included torture and burning, was undertaken by the State. The vital point to notice is that " Old Ritualism " in the rural districts was a peasant movement. Whether the perennial protest of the peasants against the governing class which was enslaving them now took the form of refusing to accept *any* change which had the support of that class, or whether the movement had other origins, it is certain that this split inside the conservative and religious heart of the nation further sharpened the hostility of master and man. The schism shattered the foundations of the Russian Church.

The struggle of the peasants was now directed against the *extension* of servile agriculture as we have seen it formerly directed against the *intensive* development of this institution. With every extension of the frontier

into the European *step*, private land-holding and serfdom advanced. The colonists in Siberia were able to retain their status of State peasants, as grants were not made to private owners in that region. On the serf estates, however, it was already "a common thing for a peasant to run away, with as much of his master's goods as he could get his hands on—and perhaps then be pursued with hunting dogs and dragged home again."¹ The "wild fields" beyond the frontier were still a refuge, but the outposts of the State near the mouths of the Dniepr, the Don and the Volga were beginning to hamper the trading and raiding movements of the Cossacks. It was among these frontiersmen that the sparks which lighted another conflagration were struck. In 1670 a certain Stenka Razin, who had already won great renown by his raids into Persia, at the head of an army of Cossacks took and sacked Astrakhan. He then sailed up the Volga with 200 barges loaded with troops and summoned the peasants of the estates along the great river to rise against the nobles. The revolt spread 800 miles along the Volga from Astrakhan to Nizhni Novgorod. Razin proclaimed his programme to be the overthrow of the entire Muscovite social system, the rooting out of boyars, nobles and officials, the levelling of all ranks and dignities and the establishment of absolute equality throughout Russia. For months the issue hung in the balance. Eight battles were fought before the great *Jacquerie* showed signs of weakening. It was not finally suppressed until 1672, six months after the death of Razin. He was captured in his last fortress, carried to Moscow, and after unspeakable torments which he endured heroically, was quartered alive in the Red Square on June 6th, 1671. His memory passed into the folk-lore and legend of the Russian people. In 1926, when the dynasty and the social system against which he fought had been at last annihilated in all their roots and branches, an opera composed in his

¹ Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, p. 22.

honour was performed for the first time in a theatre which stands not far from where he died.

In this century, under the first Romanovs, commercial capitalism, which had been growing in Russia, was consolidating its influence. The sovereign was becoming less dependent on the natural obligations of his vassals. The *Zemsky Sobor*, or assembly of the estates of the realm, had been first convoked by Ivan the Terrible in 1566 immediately after the revolution of the *Oprichnina*. Under the first Romanovs the monarchy needed the support of the classes that had restored it. Whereas in the sixteenth century we know of only two Sobors, between 1612 and 1653 there were ten, and from 1613 to 1622 the Sobor met annually. The final triumph of a money economy is usually fatal to institutions which represent the rights and liberties of a feudal nobility. Power tends to pass to the class which has the money, to the commercial bourgeoisie. They provide the sovereign with the means of purchasing services instead of begging for them. In this way the Russian "Parliament" quietly fades out of history in the second half of the seventeenth century. The historic stage was set for the reforms of Peter the Great.

PART II

FROM THE REFORMS OF PETER THE GREAT
TO THE CRIMEAN WAR

" Our young men gathered
On the steep hill—
Our young men defied
The lord-6aWn :
' Seignior, author of evil,
We will not be soldiers for you ;
The beautiful girls
Shall not be your servants,
The young mothers
Shall not nurse your children,
And the fathers and mothers
Shall labour for you no more,' "

Russian folk-song, cited Robinson,
Rural Russia under the Old Regime, p. 48.

*' Feverish, irresistible terror took possession of every one
who sat on Peter's bloodstained throne."

ALEXANDER HERZEN.

PART II

FROM THE REFORMS OF PETER THE GREAT TO THE CRIMEAN WAR

THE reign of Peter the Great used to be represented as marking a break in the organic development of Russia. The gigantic and savage personality of "the Reformer" who loved beheading men and birching women with his own hand, dominated the historical scene. He was represented as cudgelling "Holy Russia" into Western ways. Modern historians have, however, reduced the riddle of the great Tsar by showing him as the representative of forces long at work in Russia. Under Peter the commercial classes attempted to displace the nobility in the control of the State. The attempt, reflecting the growing importance of commercial capitalism, was a failure, and the nobility rapidly recovered their position after Peter's death—a position which he had succeeded in shaking but not seriously weakening.

Until the conquest of the Ukraine in 1667 Russian foreign policy was interested chiefly in the South. Peter's famous struggle for the Baltic coast against Sweden in the Northern War of 1700-1721 was due mainly to the interests of Russia's foreign trade. The traditional route to the West by way of Archangel was reducing the profits of the merchants at least by half. Russia needed an outlet to a "free" Baltic — for this purpose the Swedish monopoly must be annihilated. Hence the foundation of St. Petersburg in 1703 on the site of a captured Swedish fortress and the opening of the "window to the West."

In the seventeenth century Russian industry was organized on the small-scale handicraft basis. Russian hand-workers were very skilful, and their work was much admired in the West, where it occupied the place now taken by Oriental handicraft products. Only in the field of foreign trade, especially leather exports, did commercial capitalism dominate Russian handicraft. This first stage in the establishment of a capitalist economy came to Russia from Western Europe, and the first commercial contacts were with the Dutch by the northern route to the Pechenga Monastery on the Murman Coast, later to Archangel, which owes its foundation to this trade with the Dutch. So important did the Dutch regard their Russian trade in the seventeenth century that in 1630 - 31 they endeavoured to "conquer" Russia economically by securing a monopoly of her grain and timber markets, which were to be linked to the industrial Netherlands in a kind of colonial relationship. The Muscovite diplomats were too shrewd to be tempted by the grandiose figures of possible exports the Dutch laid before them. Western commercial capitalism gave rise to Russian commercial capitalism. The prospects of profit stimulated the Russian Government to make the grain trade into a monopoly of the Tsar in an effort to capture advantages of which the Dutch offered only a share. This was not the only State monopoly. "The Tsar is the first merchant of the realm," wrote Collins, the English physician of Alexis. For instance, the Dutch secured the monopoly of the export of caviar, the collection of which was in the hands of the Tsar's agents. Another important monopoly in the Tsar's hands was the trade in furs. Down to the beginning of the seventeenth century only articles **of luxury** were imported into Russia. After this date imports as well as exports begin to assume mass proportions. In 1671, among other imports, 2,477 ^{tons} of herrings, 683,000 needles, 5 tons of dyestuffs, 809 kegs

of indigo, 28,454 reams of paper, and 1,957 bars of Swedish iron were imported into Russia through Archangel. Twenty years before Peter we find iron works operating in Russia with a considerable output.¹ The Tsar's many monopolies laid the foundation for native commercial capitalism.

Thus at the end of the seventeenth century all the conditions requisite for the development of large-scale production were present in Russia. "There was capital (though in part foreign); there was a domestic market; there were working hands. These factors are more than sufficient to prevent comparison of Peter's factories with artificially-forced hothouse plants,"² The comparative failure of Peter's industrialization policy was due to his attempt to compel capital to flow into industries he wanted developed. He was too impatient merely to create favourable conditions for capitalist enterprise and then wait for results. He must needs issue a decree the moment a new idea crossed his mind. Some foreign merchants happened to mention to him that Russian linen cloth was very narrow and therefore sold for a low price abroad. Peter immediately forbade the weaving of narrow linens. But the huts of Russian domestic workers were too small to contain broad looms. Consequently large numbers of persons were ruined. This attack on domestic weaving was intended to stimulate large-scale capitalist undertakings. But like so many of Peter's economic decrees, this one, while powerful for destruction, was ineffective on the constructive side. The essence of his policy was the building up of the military and naval power of Russia. For this purpose he needed industrial development. As a result of his measures we find the iron industry turning out cannon and small arms on an adequate scale while the country starved for frying pans.

One evil social consequence of Peter's irruption into

¹ Pokrovsky, *History of Russia*, p. 273.

² *Ibid.*, p. 283.

developing Russian capitalism was the beginning of the bondage factory. The superiority of free labour was fully admitted. " But when it was a matter of putting a hundred enterprises into operation all at once, including some very large ones . . . the small number of free workers available could not be sufficient."¹ The monopolist entrepreneur did not bother about quality just because he was a monopolist. An edict of 1721 permitted merchants to buy whole villages for factories and workshops. Now that the bourgeois factory owner could work his business with the labour of serfs, nothing prevented the owner of serfs setting up a factory. In the course of the eighteenth century the noble landlords defeated the bourgeois merchants with the very weapon designed to foster their growth. This was not due to a " mistake " of Peter the Great. " Brought up on the Tsar's monopolies and surrounded by the conditions of handicraft production, Russian commercial capitalism was very ill-adapted to the wide field of action on which it found itself at the beginning of the eighteenth century, not led thither by its own sweet will so much as driven thither by the pressure of Western European capital."² The Russian merchants were few in number and Peter's activities, far from increasing the power of the bourgeoisie, fostered the development of the "supreme lords"—the new feudal aristocracy of Peter's favourites and friends constituting the foremost members of the land-holding class. In alliance with the bourgeoisie they were the social foundation on which the Petrine reforms were built. When the "supreme lords " had no further use for their bourgeois allies the latter lost political influence. But by themselves the " supreme lords " were unable to hold their own against the nobility. " Coming face to face with the nobility, which had been pushed into the

¹ Pokrovsky, *History of Russia*, p. 287.

² *Ibid.*, p. 288.

background, they rapidly had to give way to it, and the nobles again steadied themselves in the saddle, this time for almost two centuries."¹

Peter's reforms were lasting only in the sphere of military and naval organization. The numerous commissions and administrative boards he instituted did not long survive him. Throughout his reign the opposition to the reforms was bitter and continuous. It derived in part from conservative sentiment, but to a far greater degree from the unrest caused by the burden of taxes and unpaid labour for the State. To combat this unrest a "secret chancellery" was established in 1698 which maintained a reign of terror until the Reformer's death. Its most famous victim was the Tsar's eldest son and heir, the Tsarevitch Alexis. Its humbler victims were innumerable. Finding that the Church constituted the chief organized opposition, Peter decided to crush it. In 1700 he abolished the patriarchate and in 1721 established a "Most Holy Synod" as the supreme organ of church government. This reduced the church to the level of an administrative department of the State, under the control of "a reliable field officer" with the title of Procurator.

In spite of Peter's attempt to stimulate commercial capitalism, Russia remained a predominantly agricultural country with an economic system based on serfdom. On estates inhabited by serfs the arable land was divided between the lord's land and the peasants' holdings. The landlord's land was worked by *barshchina*, that is, with the unpaid labour, livestock and equipment of serfs who derived their means of subsistence and paid their taxes out of the produce of their own holdings. As the majority of the landlords produced for the market, Russian serfdom was a far heavier burden on the peasant than had been mediaeval serfdom, which was generally limited to the capacity of the stomach. "This made the Russian serf more akin to the American or West Indian slave than to

¹ Pokrovsky, *History of Russia*, p. 290.

the mediaeval villein."¹ The *barshchina* system prevailed in the black-earth belt and in the flax and hemp regions. In the forest belt the dominant system was the *obrok*, under which the serfs paid the lord cash instead of labour services. The size of the payment depended on the will of the lord. A vital feature of Russian serfdom was the absence of a customary law capable of restraining the arbitrary impulses of the master.

As we have seen, Peter the Great introduced serfdom into industry. This policy was continued by his successors. Serfs were very numerous in the mines and foundries of the Urals. As an inevitable result of the low technical level of servile labour, Russian industry was completely out-distanced by the West between 1800 and 1860. The old industries which were not State-owned passed into the hands of the nobles. The merchant bourgeoisie built up home industries, such as hardware, ikon-painting, pottery and boot-making, by advancing raw materials to free peasants and *obrok* serfs of the Central and Northern Provinces and buying back the worked-up products at very low prices. In this way whole districts became industrialized and attained a national importance in the economic life of the country. The rise of bourgeois capitalism on the basis of free labour, especially in the field of the cotton industry, was a powerful force working towards the ultimate abolition of serfdom in 1861.

Under Peter the service of the State was made obligatory on all nobles, but at the same time he had recognized the tenure of their serf estates as invariably hereditary. "In law and in fact the noble landlord was at once an hereditary serf-master, and an hereditary State-servant, and the double process of enserfing the peasantry and consolidating the ruling class appeared complete."² What in fact happened was that in the

¹ Mirsky, *Russia : A Social History*, p. 195.

² Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, p. 26.

period between the death of Peter the Great and the appointment to the throne of Catherine II in 1762 the nobles emancipated themselves from their obligations while consolidating their grip upon the State and upon their privileges. Operating through the brigade of Guards, most of the privates in which were nobles, they imposed the will of their class upon successive sovereigns. By an edict of 1722 Peter had proclaimed the right of the Tsar to nominate his successor. This was the logical result of his judicial murder of his son, the reactionary and romantic Tsarevitch Alexis, in 1718. Peter had thus guarded against an orthodox reaction against his policy of Europeanizing the governing class. His own superstitious failure to nominate his successor placed all power in the hands of the Guards, who proceeded to proclaim as Empress Peter's widow, Catherine I. The Russian autocracy continued to preserve this curious semi-elective, semi-nominative character until 1797. It was thus at a date far too late to be convincing that the Petrine Tsardom adopted hereditary divine right as its principle and became the parvenu defender of mystical legitimacy in Europe. Their history was a sufficiently palpable refutation of the claims of the Romanovs. The form of election had been observed on the accession of the early Tsars of the dynasty. Peter the Great was himself "elected" in 1682 ; but in all previous cases the ceremony was a form, and the heir to the throne was known and recognized. The profound innovation after the death of Peter was the election of a person who had no claims to the throne.

In 1762 the Guards deposed and afterwards assassinated Peter III, who had been Duke of Holstein before he succeeded to the Russian throne. He had made himself unpopular with them as a rude martinet and as the patron of foreigners. In a vain attempt to conciliate **them** he issued in 1762 the famous manifesto of "Liberty to **the** Nobles," which declared that henceforth the nobles,

save in cases of public emergency, were free to serve the State or not as they might choose. The nobles received the new privileges as obvious and overdue. But they were not conciliated, and in the same year the Guards placed on the throne Peter III's German wife, Catherine of Anhalt-Zerbst, who happened at that time to be the mistress of an important Guards' officer. This eminently astute politician served the interests of the governing class so well that she achieved the title of "the Great." Needless to say, her reign from 1762 to 1796 was the golden age of the serf owners.

Catherine II prided herself on her European culture and her intellectual enlightenment. She set much store by cultured European opinion of her and succeeded in winning the praise of Voltaire. Her first important measure was worthy of the age of enlightenment. She confiscated the estates of the church in 1764 and converted the serfs on them into State peasants. Only one prelate, Arseni Matsievich, Archbishop of Rostov, ventured to protest. He expiated his crime in solitary confinement for life. Thus the church, reduced to political impotence by Peter the Great, ceased to exist as an independent social factor. Henceforth it remained the cowed and degraded slave of the State. The secularization of the church lands involved the transfer of some 2,000,000 serfs of both sexes to the status of State peasants with an accompanying substitution of money dues for labour. This advantage was, however, offset by the enormous gifts of inhabited State lands with which Catherine II and Paul I endowed their favourites. As a result of these lavish gifts more than 1,300,000 State peasants were transferred to private bondage. Probably the number of State peasants of both sexes who were transferred to private bondage during the eighteenth century was about 2,000,000.

The golden age of the Russian nobility, when their supreme desire was to become as French and philosophical

as possible, was the dark age of the peasant. For all practical purposes the serf was in person and property the chattel of his master. The few rights the laws gave him were not observed. He could be flogged or tortured to death by his master, and history abounds with stories of the hideous cruelty of the landlords. In 1767 the greatest proprietor owned 44,561 male "souls" and perhaps as many women. But even if he owned a score the lord was the ruler of a little kingdom. "The central government utilized him as its viceroy, or (in the phrase of the Emperor Paul) its 'gratuitous chief-of-police.'"¹ The luxurious expenditure of the landlords during this period was all directed to transforming themselves into imitation French nobles. They even came to despise the Russian language, which they hardly ever spoke, and in every way made themselves foreigners among their own people. They began to build colonnaded mansions, complete with chapels, theatres, gardens, lakes and parks, veritable miniatures of Versailles. Only in the development of the theatre was this expenditure something better culturally than mere ostentatious luxury. The private theatre of Count Sheremetev was the best in Moscow. A foreign visitor who witnessed a performance there noted with astonishment that "the poet and the musician who wrote the opera, the architect who constructed the theatre, the painter who decorated it, the actors and actresses who played in the piece, the members of the ballet and the musicians of the orchestra, were all serfs of Count Sheremetev."²

The eighteenth century also saw the extension of serfdom into the lands along the southern frontier and the penetration by State authority of that *step* region which for so many centuries had been the city of refuge of the runaway peasant. The process of assimilating the

¹ Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, p. 29.

² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

Cossacks of the Eastern Ukraine had been going on since the risings of the seventeenth century. The Cossack "elders" were becoming Russian landlords while the rank and file were sinking into serfdom. But further to the east where the Cossacks had the *step* behind them the establishment of the Muscovite system was a slower process. During the first half of the eighteenth century peasant resistance culminated in a number of local disturbances, and outbreaks also occurred among the serf workers ascribed to the metal-works in the Urals. "As before, whole droves of peasants ran away to the *step*, where detachments of soldiery hunted them like wild game."¹ The extension of State authority and the establishment of fortified posts at such places as Orenburg and Iletsk, south of the Urals, finally precipitated the last great Cossack rising in which the peasants took part as allies.

In 1773 an illiterate Cossack of the Don named Pugachev appeared among the Cossack communities of the Urals, claiming to be Peter III. He assembled a considerable force which was reinforced by numbers of Asiatic tribesmen and serfs from the mines and metal works of the Urals. Many of the troops in the first imperial expeditionary forces sent against him deserted to his banner. In 1774 he gathered an army of peasants from the estates along the Volga, at the head of which he captured and burned the important city of Kazan. As Tsar, Pugachev ordered the peasants to seize the estates and execute the nobles as "opponents of our power, traitors to the empire, despoilers of the peasants." A fearful *Jacquerie* swept through the length of Eastern European Russia. The landlords fled headlong to the cities. Their mansions were committed to the flames, and hundreds were hanged by the peasants on gibbets that arose everywhere. The realities of the perennial class war were illuminated by massacre, arson, torture

¹ Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, p. 31.

and universal pillage. In some cases the families of **the** landlords were exterminated so thoroughly that the Government officials were unable to find "next-of-kin" to whom the estates could legally pass.

Herzen tells a grimly humorous story which illuminates the feelings of the peasants. Pugachev came to the farm of an old lady, a landowner of the steppes : " Well, what sort of a mistress has she been to you, good Christians ? " the Tsar-Cossack asked the peasants. " We will not take a sin on our souls, Your Majesty ; we have always been satisfied with our mistress, she has been a mother to us." Pugachev congratulated the old lady and stayed to dinner with her. When he took leave of her and came out to his sledge he found the peasants waiting for him with glum faces. " If you have some favour to ask, speak boldly," said Pugachev. " Well, Your Royal Majesty, how is it left then for us ? " " What do you mean ? " " Why, here, you see, Sire, you were at such a place and there you hanged the master and his children too, and at the other village, too . . . and how about us ? " " Why, you say yourselves your old woman is a very good one." " That is so, Your Majesty, she is a good woman, but, still, perhaps it would be better to do for her." " Well, brothers, if you want to—as you like, we can do for her." " It is a pity, it is a pity, but there is no help for it," said the peasants, going to fetch the old lady, who was calmly clearing away the plates and dishes, delighted at having been spared by the Tsar, and to her great surprise they hanged her from the crossbeam.¹

The fury of revolt was followed by the fury of repression " with breaking-wheels, gibbets and gallows erected around the rebellious villages."² Pugachev was carried to Moscow in an iron cage and publicly quartered. Serfdom **was** restored to the estates, and the Cossacks

¹ Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts*, vol. v., p. 310.

² Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Rìgime*, p. 32.

were forced into service as a frontier guard, their loyalty being bought by special privileges. It looked as if with the organization of the *step* region and with the series of decrees that abolished the freedom of movement of the peasants through the new lands of the South from the Dniepr to the Caucasus, "the wind from the *step* would carry no more firebrands into the villages farther north ; the fire had been put out at its source,"¹ At the end of the century about 19,500,000 persons stood in bondage to the landlords, while the rather less heavily burdened State peasants numbered about 14,500,000—altogether some 34,000,000 in a total population of 36,000,000. But social peace has never yet been bought in terms of privilege, repression and exploitation. In spite of rivers of blood and endless defeats the peasants, with the relentless persistence of a natural force, continued the struggle.

" From that time forward the Government dared not hold out a hand to the peasants in any way. The nobles lost all sense of civic courage in face of the Government, and all feeling of moral shame in regard to the peasants. The two Russias completely ceased to recognize each other as human beings. There was no human tie, neither compassion nor justice between them. Their morality was different, what they held sacred was different. . . . The landowner, who shed genuine tears over the novels of Marmontel, flogged the peasant in his stable for arrears with perfect equanimity; the peasant with untroubled conscience deceived the landowner and the judge. 'Are you a gentleman?' an old woman would say in the coach-house to Mitka or Kuzka, 'that you eat meat in Lent? As for the master, it's not expected of him, but why don't you keep the law of God?' The division could be no wider."²

¹ Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, p. 32.

² Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts*, vol. v., p. 311.

The foreign policy of Catherine II was the pride of the ruling class. In the course of the reign all the Russian and Lithuanian provinces of Poland except Galicia, together with the Black Sea coast and the Crimea, were annexed to the empire. The full consequences of this expansion became clear in the following century when the wheat-growing South superseded the flax-growing North as the economic centre of gravity.

The reign of Peter III's and Catherine II's son, Paul I (1797-1801), marks the transition from the irregular autocracy of the eighteenth century to the "legitimate" absolutism of the nineteenth. The substitution of a monarchy claiming to be above classes for the eighteenth-century executive organ of the nobility was accompanied by the growth of an enormous and powerful bureaucracy. The nobility had been the chief executors of all Catherine II's administrative reforms. After the Pugachev rebellion the country was divided into a number of provinces under bureaucratic and noble administration, provinces which were sub-divided into districts, each of which was under an officer elected by the local nobles. With the new century and the new conception of monarchy defined by the Fundamental Law of 1797, which regulated the succession to the throne, the nobility did not cease to be the class through and on behalf of which the State was governed, but increasingly it had to share power with the bureaucracy, which, as in other countries, disguised the class structure of the State.

Paul I was murdered by the Guards not only as a tyrant and a madman but because his hostility to England injured the economic interests of the serf-owners, who saw a valuable market closed to them. Alexander I was permitted to carry out a pro-French policy, associated with the name of the great bureaucrat Speransky, after the peace of Tilsit in 1807 only because Russia needed time to recover from the defeats Napoleon had inflicted on her in the campaigns of 1805 and 1806-1807. After

1815 Alexander's early liberalism faded into a gloomy mysticism associated with the reactionary administration of Araktcheyev. The army became the main interest of the Government. The army and navy were recruited by a conscription which was one of the heaviest burdens on the people, since the men selected had to serve no less than twenty-five years. Before the reign of Paul I it was rather loose in organization, and the soldiers had a good deal of liberty. Commanders who were nobles courted popularity with all ranks. The Prussian influence imported by Paul and his successors led to the cult of a senseless and mechanical discipline enforced by savage punishments. "The private soldier became the most oppressed and voiceless of Russian subjects, while the Russian army surpassed the Prussian for its clockwork evolutions. An extreme expression of this militarist spirit was the establishment of "military settlements," under which several hundred thousand crown peasants were turned into hereditary soldiers, submitted in every detail of their life to a brutal and meticulous discipline."¹ This parade perfection was not accompanied by any adequate attempt to keep pace with the military technique of the West. As a result Russia paid in the Crimean War for the negligence of her military and naval martinets. By 1853 there were only two railways: from St. Petersburg to Moscow and from Warsaw to the Austrian frontier. Good roads were few, and in the South and East non-existent. The superb fighting qualities of the rank and file could not make up for the imperial neglect in introducing ironclads, steam and rifles.

The bureaucracy of the administration under Alexander I alienated the younger generation of the nobles, who found it difficult to win the place in the State justified by their class power. Increasingly the melancholy emperor let the State fall into the hands of

¹ Mirsky, *Russia : A Social History*, pp. 203-204.

" old dotards, dark fanatics and illiterate drill-masters."¹ Their fathers had supported the autocracy as the best defender of their class supremacy. The younger generation for the same reason began to dream of a constitutional government. An influential section of the Guards' officers organized a conspiracy which came to a head at St. Petersburg on December 26th, 1825. The rising was distinctively a movement of the young class-conscious nobility. Among their chief grievances was the fact that the subject Finns and Poles had recently been granted constitutions, while the dominant race was ruled by Araktcheyev and a bureaucracy of Germans. The nationalist feeling of the nobles had been offended by the cloudy cosmopolitan idealism of Alexander I, which had shown itself in a marked preference for foreign advisers and favourites. True to the European orientation of the emperors after Peter the Great, the expansion of Russia was mainly to the West. After the annexation of the Crimea the main acquisition to the South was the Caucasus, conquered between 1800 and 1864. Catherine II and Alexander I went so far as to invite German and Swiss settlers into the virgin lands of the South-West, " granting them a first choice of land, large holdings, complete communal autonomy, exemption from taxes for long periods and even, in some cases, permanent exemption from military service."²

The new Tsar, Nicholas I (1825-1855), whose succession to the throne of his brother Alexander had given the signal to the conspirators, had no difficulty in crushing the movement. Five of the " Decembrists " were hanged, the rest were exiled to Siberia. The advanced ideas and noble idealism of many of these aristocratic conspirators against the autocracy have caused their memory to be cherished as the pioneers of the politically-conscious

¹ Mirsky, *A History of Russia*, p. 54.

² *Ibid.*, p. 59.

revolutionary movement which in 1825 began the long process of providing an adequate leadership for the formless struggles of the peasants and workers. The effect of the conspiracy was to shake the confidence of the Government in the nobility and to make it rely more exclusively on the bureaucracy. A new body of secret police, "The Third Section of His Majesty's Own Chancellery," organized by Benckendorff, a man of great organizing ability, became the most efficient and least corrupt part of the State apparatus. The secrecy with which the administration worked after 1825 introduced all the diseases to which bureaucracy unchecked by public opinion is heir—irresponsibility, procrastination, speculation and bribery. Nicholas I, although a narrow-minded tyrant, was a conscientious worker and an honest man. But his efforts to supervise the whole immense machine were inevitably doomed to failure. An absolute censorship of books and papers strangled independent thought, and perhaps the most corrupt institutions in the land were the law courts.

The new bureaucratic monarchy made the nationalism of Karamzin its official doctrine. He was the mouthpiece of the conservative body of opinion which had been alienated by the Europe of Voltaire and the French Revolution, but had no idea of rejecting Western civilization. The official doctrine placed Russia above Europe because she had been faithful to the old virtues of faith and obedience to the monarchy. The Orthodox Church was now received again into official favour as the guardian of the national conservatism and the "Russian idea" formulated under Nicholas I as "Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality." Naturally German influence now replaced French. To the Tsar Germany was the land of absolutism, militarism and bureaucracy. But Germany was also the home of idealistic philosophy. Among the intellectuals German philosophy gave rise to two opposing doctrines, Slavo-

philism and Westernism, the focus of which was the University of Moscow. They were united in demanding the abolition of serfdom, the liberty of the Press and a modification of the autocracy. But the Slavophiles, who had their roots among the nobility, idealized the Russian cultural heritage (especially the *mir*, the much misunderstood peasant commune) and regarded its freedom from European individualism and rationalism as precious. They preached a return to "pre-Peter Russia," which they pictured as a romantic kingdom of justice and truth. The Westerners, on the contrary, glorified Peter as the great civilizer of Russia after the barbarism of Muscovy. They held that the Russian monarchy had betrayed the work of Peter. He was the first in time of Europe's "enlightened despots." Thanks to his work, which had been continued by Catherine II, eighteenth-century Russia had modelled herself on eighteenth-century Europe. The governing class had had no difficulty in accepting the civilization of an aristocratic and absolutist Europe. But since the days of Peter and Catherine two great forces had been at work in Europe, the industrial revolution and the French Revolution. The new Europe was no longer acceptable to the Russian ruling class, and in any case the new European techniques, which presupposed the end of the old regime, could not be introduced into a land where serfdom kept labour ignorant and oppressed. "The Westerners were the principal mouthpieces of the demand that nineteenth-century Russia should model herself on nineteenth-century Europe."¹

The first step was taken towards that readjustment when social and political forces already active were reinforced by the disasters of the Crimean War. The peasants translated their aspirations into rumours and legends which were themselves a potent force. Shortly after Russia acquired from Persia the region of Mount

¹ Mirsky, *Russia : A Social History*, p. 209.

Ararat in 1828, a rumour circulated among peasant sectarians that Christ would return to establish "the thousand years of glory " at the foot of the mountain. Thousands of serfs from various provinces dressed in their Sunday clothes started to march to this New Jerusalem. In 1847 a general exodus of some 10,000 peasants from the province of Vitebsk was preceded by a rumour that the peasants of Great Russia had already been emancipated and that all who desired freedom should hurry thither to receive it. Troops had to be dispatched to round up the fugitives, and some 4,000 were sentenced to a beating with rods. During the Crimean War there were rumours among the serfs that freedom had been promised to all volunteers, and again that the English and French armies would liberate all who fled to their lines. Many expected some sovereign act of liberation from the Emperor, " and once it was told about, that upon the top of a mountain at the Crimean isthmus, the Tsar of All the Russias was sitting in his golden cap, dispensing freedom to all who came promptly to his royal throne."¹ Mass flights affected ten provinces in 1854, seven in 1855, seven in 1857. From two counties in the province of Ekaterinoslav there were 9,000 fugitives in 1856. The slowly but steadily mounting resistance of the peasants clinched the lessons of military deficiency and economic interest. The villages were smouldering, and the smell of smoke was in the air when Alexander II, the Tsar-Liberator, proclaimed the Emancipation of the Serfs in 1861.

¹ Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, p. 50.

PART III

FROM THE EMANCIPATION OF THE SERFS TO THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION

" Unselfish devotion to the revolution and the appeal to the people with a revolutionary faith are not in vain, even when many scores of years divide the sowing from the harvest."

LENIN.

" The heavy-hanging chains will fall,
The walls will crumble at the word ;
And Freedom greet you with the light,
And brothers give you back the sword."

Pushkin, " *Message to Siberia*,"

translated by MAX EASTMAN.

" It is only in an order of things in which there will be no longer classes or class antagonism that *social evolutions* will cease to be *political revolutions*. Until then, on the eve of each general reconstruction of society, the last word of social science will ever be:—

" Le combat ou la mort; la lutte sanguinaire ou le ndant.
C'est ainsi que la question est invinciblement posee."

KARL MARX.

PART III

FROM THE EMANCIPATION OF THE SERFS TO THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION

FROM the eighteenth century onwards the economic position of the landlords had become steadily worse. In 1754 a State loan bank had been established in order to provide cheap credits for the nobility. But their situation had not improved, and at the time of the emancipation no less than two-thirds of all the private serfs had been mortgaged by their masters to State institutions for loans which totalled half the market value of the serfs at current prices. Naturally this crisis provoked a vigorous discussion as to the causes of the landlords' plight. The economists pointed out what the more advanced landlords had already discovered in practice, that free hired labour was more productive than the forced labour of unwilling serfs. In non-agricultural production " free " labour had already become predominant. In 1754 a legal decision gave the right to own serfs exclusively to the nobility, but non-noble factory owners could hire serfs for forced labour until they lost this right in 1816. After that date the nobility were free to use serf labour in factories in which they were interested as well as on their estates. Yet between 1830 and 1850, when industry was rapidly expanding, the number of factories owned by nobles steadily declined. By 1860 middle class ownership and free labour dominated in industry, though industry did not bulk very large in the national economy, and the bourgeoisie was far below the nobility in social and political influence.

The economic superiority of free labour had thus been demonstrated at a time when the nobles were being driven by increasing insolvency to consider the possibilities of change. But social fear also urged them along the same road. The peasants were restless ; an alarming number of tumults and an occasional murder made the landlords anxious. The terrible upheaval in Austria-Hungary in 1848 led to a rumour among the nobles of Smolensk Province: " Not far away the peasants are slaughtering the landlords, and it's not at all impossible that they'll soon be doing the same right here."¹ In the eighteenth century Catherine II, who had a shrewd eye for the weaknesses of institutions which she thought it prudent not to touch, had observed that if the system of serfdom were not modified the serfs would take the law into their own hands. Nicholas I had repeated the same opinion, and in 1856 Alexander II formulated it in the famous words : " It were better that the emancipation came from above than from below,"

The disasters of the Crimean War, which revealed the extent of peasant discontent and the social contradictions in the State, made the governing class more willing to make concessions. Liberal ideas were beginning to penetrate sections of this class with the spread of European education. But it is important to bear in mind that this liberalism was spurred on by economic self-interest and concrete fears of future retribution.

The chief characteristics of the Emancipation Laws were complexity and self-contradiction. They were " so verbose, so full of variables, so loaded down with qualifications and exceptions, and in general so astonishingly involved and complicated, that it is difficult to understand how any serf could ever by any possibility have known what rights might be hidden

¹ Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Rdgime*, p. 60.

in this legislative haystack."¹ Under the Statutes of Emancipation the former serf was required to accept an allotment. The greatest difficulties were placed in the way of his disposing of this endowment or even of his abandoning it. The purpose of this curious provision was to bolster up the two characteristic features of peasant life, the household and the commune. The landowners were paid by the State for the allotments they made to their former serfs out of their estates. For this purpose the land handed over to the peasants was over-valued. The State then collected this sum in annual redemption dues from the peasants. The household and the commune were jointly responsible for taxes and the redemption dues. It was, therefore, of great importance to the governing class to keep the peasant fixed in these two institutions and therefore tied to the village, though no longer a bondsman. The "courtyard people" became, for the most part, landless men and drifted to the industrial centres to become the reserve army of the factories. The Cossacks were given separate and far more generous treatment. In return for their larger allotments they were required to give twenty years' military service and to provide their own horses and equipment. Thus the former scourge of the landlords became a loyal instrument of Tsarism and the terror of rebellious peasants.

The careful preservation of the village commune with its assembly was not only an administrative convenience to the government. It was an invaluable training-ground of peasant self-consciousness. It fostered co-operation at a period when the peasants were still marked off from the rest of the population by a special code of laws. In those communes where a periodical re-partition of land among the households was the custom the village assembly was an institution of immense importance, even though its freedom of action

¹ Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, p. 65.

could at any moment be restricted and its decisions over-ridden by the intervention of the local bureaucrat, the official representative of the central government.

The reforming impulse which had started after the Crimean War did not end with the Emancipation. In 1864, by a law which was gradually extended but never completely applied to the whole country, assemblies representative of all classes, known as *zemstvos*, were set up in each county and province, endowed with extensive rights of taxation. The peasant communes, the individual landlords and the richer townsmen were represented in proportion not to their numbers, but to the extent of their land holdings or their urban property. Municipal government was reformed and extended, and conscription, hitherto one of the exclusive burdens of workers and peasants, was extended to all classes as a formal recognition of equality before the law. Within a year of the Emancipation the more active forms of peasant discontent with the limited character of the reforms had been suppressed. During the four months following the Emancipation the Ministry of the Interior reported 647 cases of rioting in the villages which in 499 cases had ended only with the intervention of the military and the consequent killing, wounding and flogging of the villagers. One of the deepest and most lasting grievances was the fact that the landlord nearly always kept the best land for himself and usually retained all woodlands and pastures. These he proceeded to let out to the peasants at high rates, in this way adding to the already heavy burden of the redemption dues and taxes. Thus the Great Reform left " the former serfs with diminished lands and exorbitant obligations, the former State peasants with more generous allotments, but with burdens heavier than before, and all alike with their historic forms of organization unbroken, but with severe restrictions upon the dispositions of their persons and their property. The conditions were not altogether

favourable to good morale, and some of the observers who looked on, in those not-very-distant decades, must have recalled that more than once before this peasant army had been in mutiny—not a reassuring recollection."¹

The fact that the allotments were inadequate forced masses of peasants to eke out a subsistence by part-time work as hired labourers on the landlord's estate. This necessity of working for wages prevented the bulk of the peasantry from acquiring the typically conservative outlook of farmers, and kept them in the condition of a potential revolutionary force. Few of the nobles took the advice of Nicholas I and invested capital in the improvement of their estates. As a result they had to lease large areas to the peasants. As the fecundity of the peasants was prodigious, the demand for land was practically unlimited and rents were accordingly very high. Between 1860 and 1897 the peasant population of the fifty provinces of European Russia increased from 50,000,000 to 79,000,000 and a real land-hunger developed. Emigration to Siberia, the conquest of which was completed in the last years of Nicholas I with the annexation of the Amur Valley and the Ussuri coast of the Pacific, at first forbidden by the Government on the ground that it would drain the central provinces of cheap labour, had to be tolerated as a necessity. Finally it received State aid. But nothing appeased the land-hunger of the peasants. Throughout their long and painful history they had never for a moment recognized the legitimacy of the lord's ownership of the land. As the century wore on they became more and more restless with the results of the Emancipation. Slowly they began to lose their cultural isolation. The proletarian of the towns who had come from the village became an increasingly important link between rural and urban life. The spread of elementary education was another

¹ Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, pp. 92-93-

force at work, breaking down the isolation of the peasant. The *zemstvos* devoted considerable effort to the reduction of illiteracy. A new class of rural schoolmasters, accountants, clerks, medical assistants, grew up from the ranks of the peasants and constituted another contact between town and country. The influence of the Church, and the conservatism inculcated by established religions, began to wane with the advance of education. On the other hand, religious radicalism, as represented by the Baptists and other Protestants made notable advances. But the peasant's sense of his distinctness from other classes and his native suspicion kept him from conscious political activity for a long time. Not until the first years of the twentieth century did his unrest translate itself into activity as a conscious element of the revolutionary movement.

After the great reforms certain important changes took place in the composition of the governing class. The social character of the monarchy degenerated. Catherine II, Alexander I and Nicholas I had been considerable figures not only politically but culturally. The standard of taste and the intellectual level of the Russian Court sank steadily under their successors to the pitiful imbecility of Nicholas II and his entourage. The cultural level of the monarchy sank with its increasing dependence on a decaying nobility and a mechanical bureaucracy. The landlords, who had their supreme opportunity with the enormous sums they realized at the Emancipation, were unsuccessful in passing from primitive to capitalistic farming. They formed a parasitic class who utilized their political power to secure bounties and special treatment. Even on the large estates the level of agriculture was below that of an average farmer in England or France. In the reign of Alexander III (1881-1894) the nobles were at once the most backward economic and the most powerful political force in the country. Consequently they were the backbone of the

EMANCIPATI

extreme reaction of that reign. A section of the smaller landowners who had ceased to rely on their land became an important element in the formation of a liberal intelligentsia.

The bourgeoisie fell into two groups : " On the one side were the bankers, the railway promoters and the heavy industrialists, who were closely associated with the ruling class and with the bureaucratic machine, had easy access to official support—guarantee and subsidy—were given 'ranks' and orders and were consequently 'gentlemen.' The railway and other engineers, the most consciously bourgeois group of the intelligentsia, were socially closely connected with this section of the bourgeoisie."¹ The merchants, on the other hand—wholesale dealers, grain brokers, mill and river-steamship owners and the textile magnates—were usually of peasant origin with large economic but few social ambitions. Only at the end of the century did this section of the bourgeoisie aspire to cultural laurels. The greatest political figure produced by the more advanced bourgeois group was Count Witte.

The most characteristic form taken by the political consciousness of the governing classes was nationalism. This had its rise in the Slavophil movement. After the Polish rebellion of 1863 Nationalism became more than ever an article of the official creed, the others being Orthodoxy and Autocracy. The nationalists were very vocal, and so had no difficulty in constituting themselves what was regarded abroad as Russian public opinion. It was this nationalist bourgeoisie who forced the hands of Alexander II and involved Russia in the technically victorious, but militarily and diplomatically disastrous war with Turkey in 1877. The distinguished Foreign Minister, Gortschakov, had been vehemently opposed to the war. This fact and the failure of Russian diplomacy at the Congress of Berlin—a failure largely due to the

¹ Mirsky, *Russia ; A Social History*, p. 257.

inability of the country, after two desperate campaigns in which the Turks came near to victory, to run the risk of war with England and Austria over the Balkan settlement—enabled the nationalists to assert that Russia had been betrayed by her own representatives. The resulting alienation of the Government from this fanatical " public opinion " had some effect in preparing the way for that revolutionary activity which culminated in the assassination of Alexander II on 13th March, 1881.

The Socialist and revolutionary intelligentsia was recruited from both democratic and aristocratic social groups. The democratic element came from the people, which in Russia meant, for the most part, the peasants. The masses were throwing up a class of leaders who would take the place of the old educated class once the incubus of Tsarism could be thrown off. The other section was made up of " conscience-stricken nobles," among them such great figures as Alexander Herzen and Michael Bakunin, the romantic founder of European Anarchism and the rival of Karl Marx for the leadership of the First International. These nobles realized that they came from an oppressing class and were driven on by a sense of guilt and an altruism and capacity for self-sacrifice that have justly won them the highest honour. As was natural in view of their class affiliations, the " conscience-stricken nobles" tended to Utopian Socialism. The democrats, having their feet, like all workers, on a hard unyielding soil of fact, were more realist in their outlook, though not less disinterested than their romantic comrades.

These early Russian Socialists, known as *narodniki* or " populists," pinned their hopes on the Russian peasant and especially on the peasant commune. They held that the peasant in virtue of this institution was a natural Communist. If this were so, it should be possible to pass from autocracy to socialism without going through the phase of bourgeois capitalist democracy. " Constitutional

reform was undesirable ; it would only strengthen the bourgeoisie, and this was not (as it is in Marxian theory) an inevitable stage on the way to Socialism."¹ Between 1856 and 1866 Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov and Pisarov conducted a brilliant propaganda in the pages of the censored Russian Press and trained a " young generation " of radicals and agrarian Socialists. The first systematic activity began in the early seventies when great numbers of " conscience-stricken " young intellectuals " went to the people." " Enthusiastic young men and women went into the villages to preach Socialism to the peasants, or rather to bring the ' innate Communism ' of the people to clear consciousness," But the peasants were unresponsive and suspicious. Their very class-consciousness made them unwilling to listen to propagandists from the governing class. The Emancipation, though it had failed absolutely to satisfy them, was for a long time regarded as a first instalment and had revived their conservative loyalty to the monarchy. They received the crusaders with indifference and sometimes thought it wise to hand them over to the police. The authorities soon rounded up the disillusioned young campaigners and staged several mass trials which " revealed to the general public men and women who, whatever their political wisdom, were unquestionably the ethical pick of their generation,"²

The Socialists came to the conclusion, as the result of this failure, that no progress was possible so long as the autocracy existed. In 1879, at a secret conference at Voronezh, a fighting organization was founded, known as Narodnaya Volya—The People's Will—which began a terrorist attack on the Government. Many officials were assassinated. The Government opened a counter-attack of extermination while conciliating the liberal bourgeoisie

¹ Mirsky, *Russia : A Social History*, p. 260.

² *Ibid.*, p. 261.

by holding out prospects of constitutional reform. The success of the terrorists in finally striking down Alexander II ended the idea of a "constitutional plan," and the reign of Alexander III was one of universal reaction and repression. All sections of the propertied class, thoroughly frightened by the activities of the terrorists, rallied to the support of the bureaucratic police State. The Narodnaya Volya struggled on until 1887, when the last serious terrorist conspiracy was discovered. An attempt was to have been made to assassinate Alexander III on 13th March. The leading conspirators were arrested and ultimately executed—among them was Alexander Ulyanov, the elder brother of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, better known to history as Xenin. One lasting effect of the activities of these early terrorists may be noted. Before 1881 the Tsars had always shown themselves freely to the people. In St. Petersburg they lived in almost personal relations with the citizens. After 13th March they lived in their palaces as in prisons and never went out without elaborate precautions. "The effect of this change was a slackening of the ties of personal loyalty, and a fall in the general interest in the Tsar."¹

The atmosphere in which unmitigated reaction could take the place of the liberal hopes of the 'sixties and the epoch of the "Great Reforms" was due primarily to the political inadequacy of the industrial bourgeoisie. Their aspirations had been satisfied by the reforms, and they were too dependent for economic favours on the Government to be willing to advance the demand for a constitutional and liberal transformation of the State. This failure is the measure of their weakness as a class, which made them incapable of playing in Russia the tremendous role of the capitalist bourgeoisie in the West. The cause of this weakness must be sought in the circumstances under which industrialism grew up in

¹ Mirsky, *A History of Russia*, p. 64.

Russia. Russian industrial development may be said to date from the 'sixties, although the textile industry had been strongly established round St. Petersburg and Moscow in the 'forties and 'fifties. The speed of industrial expansion was astonishing. To take an example, there was a 600 per cent, increase in the production of cast iron between 1888 and 1900. The expansion of the towns offers another example of headlong industrial growth. Between 1885 and 1897 there was an increase in the town population of 33 per cent. The significance of this remarkable advance becomes obvious when it is realized that this is a rate of increase over twice as high as that of the entire population, which during the same period advanced at the rate of only 15-2 per cent. This sudden and catastrophic development of industrialism in Russia was deliberately fostered by the Government, which exerted itself to make the country the paradise of entrepreneurs. More than half of the capital on which the new industries depended was foreign. One consequence of the favours lavished on industrial enterprise was that the capitalists, while attaining great economic, never aspired to a corresponding political power. The industrial bourgeoisie was, as a result, singularly timid in its attitude to the autocracy. Since it depended on the State both for economic favours and for protection against a sweated working class, it was not in a position to dictate to Tsarism.

Another consequence of the headlong growth of Russian industry was the creation of huge factories where vast aggregates of men, women and children worked under conditions resembling those of the earlier phase of the industrial revolution in Great Britain characterized by the ruthless exploitation of the workers. In St. Petersburg alone in 1914 there were more factories employing more than 5,000 workers each than in the whole of Germany. Of the industrial workers of Russia 43-8 per cent, worked in factories of over 1,000 hands'

while only 20·5 per cent, of the industrial population of the United States worked in factories of like size.¹

Such vast concentrations of labour under conditions so depressed naturally afforded fruitful soil for the sowing of revolutionary ideas. The proletariat became intensely class-conscious in the great Russian factories. There it acquired in a terrible school a sense of its own solidarity, and there it passed from economic hostility and wage disputes with employers to a fierce political opposition to the regime on which the capitalists had to depend more and more for necessary support against the exploited masses. As a result, at the head and forefront of the attack on the autocracy stood the industrial proletariat, largely recruited from the floating population of the villages. This notable feature of Russian conditions, that not the bourgeoisie but the proletariat constituted the true opposition to the autocracy, cannot be over-emphasized. It justified the prophecy of Plekhanov, the founder of Russian Marxism, which he made in the early 'nineties: "The Russian Revolution will succeed as a proletarian revolution, or never succeed at all." For this reason Russian Liberalism never had any solidity. The liberal intellectuals could only trade on the Government's fear of the workers and peasants among whom they had themselves little or no hearing. The voice of the Liberals rose to a shriek or sank to a whisper with the rise and fall of the revolutionary wave in the masses. Their own class basis was too narrow to win them influence with the autocracy.

Towards the end of the century there was a recrudescence of organized revolutionary activities, and two major parties emerged. Between 1899 and 1901

¹ In 1914 there were over three times as many industrial workers in the United States as in Russia. Yet the number of workers in factories employing over 1,000 hands was about equal—1,255,000 such workers in U.S.A., while in Russia there were 1,300,000, exclusive of the miners.—See Farbman, *Bolshevism in Retreat*, pp. 19-20.

several socialist groups fused to form the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries. This party was the inheritor of the traditions of the revolutionary movement of the 'sixties and 'seventies. It represented that tradition in the two most notable characteristics of belief in the peasantry as a revolutionary force and reliance on political terrorism as the method of struggle against the autocracy. The Socialist Revolutionaries pinned their hopes neither on the proletarians of the cities nor on the landless peasants, but precisely on that important section of the peasant population which held land in the repartitional commune, that form of village organization under which the land of the community was redistributed in allotments to the members of the commune at fixed intervals. This repartitional commune was, in the view of the Socialist Revolutionaries, the corner-stone of a future Socialist Russia. Socialism could be attained without the preliminary stage of a capitalist agriculture and the dissolution of the commune. If the commune were preserved and developed by the general abolition of private property in land it might become the cell for collectivist cultivation. The resolution of the rural population into agricultural capitalists and landless proletarians would thus be averted without any sacrifice of the grand objective of a Socialist reconstruction of society. Side by side with these peasant communes collective groups of industrial workers would be organized in the towns. All these economic communities would be loosely federated in a democratic State.

In 1898 a congress of left wing Marxist groups who wanted action in addition to theoretical discussions was held in Minsk, and resulted in the formation of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party. Plekhanov, a former Narodnik, founded the first Marxist Group soon after 1881. In 1890 Marxism was the accepted political creed of most of the younger generation of the radical intellectuals. The Congress of 1898 issued a manifesto in which it

, declared that Social Democracy " consciously desires to be and to remain the class-movement of the organized mass of working men," Like the Social Revolutionaries, the Social Democrats postulated the overthrow of Tsarism as the immediate task. Their agreement between the two revolutionary parties ended. They represented two opposing views of the universe because they were the protagonists of two distinct social classes, the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat, who, though sometimes uneasy allies, are ultimately irreconcilably opposed. The Social Revolutionaries were romantic Utopians, and their glorification of " the deed " and over-estimation of man's freedom to change the course of history by taking thought only of his own desires and dreams, are characteristics of the petty bourgeoisie and the intellectuals. The proletarian with his direct experience of the intractable and contradictory nature of social reality has a more realist outlook. In scientific Socialism and the dialectical materialism of Marx he finds " the logic of his unformulated desires " and the sober method by which thought and life, theory and practice, the human will and the external universe, man and society, can be harmonized within an active, creative and changing reality. The conflict is between the dreamer, who uses his dreams as wings of escape to a world of fantasy, and the engineer, between a priest of the ideal and a master builder. " In thought and feeling there was never even an approximate reconciliation ; in practical affairs, the doubtful periods of joint action were forgotten, ultimately, in an open war, with firing-squads to end the argument." ^x

The Social Democrats were at once proscribed by the Government, and the next congress was held in Brussels and London in 1903. At this congress Lenin, who had been in exile in Siberia in 1898, stood forward as the leader of a "section which secured a small majority. Hence the accidental names of Bolsheviks or " majority-

¹ Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, p. 141.

men," led by Lenin, and Mensheviks or "minority-men," led by L. Martov. These 'Hame"rstucf, 'lir^aifc of""fEeTact"that at tKe'congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers¹ Party held at Stockholm the Mensheviks had a large majority. The struggle was over organization and discipline. Lenin was an uncompromising exponent of extreme centralization and a party of dedicated workers for the cause. He had no room for subscribers and passengers. The dispute rapidly led to fundamental differences of principle, and from 1903 the two factions fought one another so bitterly that it was usually impossible for the party to present a united front on any question. Not until 1911, however, did the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks formally become separate parties.

The Social Democrats (whether Bolshevik or Menshevik) had great difficulty in formulating a peasant policy. Here the Social Revolutionaries with their emphasis on the existing peasant commune had a certain advantage. Many Social Democrats feared the peasant agrarian revolution with its multiplication of small proprietors as likely to prove an insuperable obstacle to the socialist re-organization of society. A doubtful compromise was adopted at the 1903 Congress by which the party called for the transfer to the peasants of only a portion of the estates of the landlords. It was necessary to make some approaches to the peasants, whose aid against the landlords might be decisive at any moment when the proletariat was engaged in an attack on the Government.¹ Probably the Social Revolutionaries made

¹ Lenin, however, had already disposed of the romantic view that the peasants are a homogeneous class in his work on *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, published in 1899. There he had demonstrated that the peasantry under the influence of developing capitalism have been clearly differentiated into classes. The agricultural policy of Soviet Russia is based on this fact. The poorest peasants and a section of the "middling" peasants constitute the social foundation of the collective and State farms. The "Kulak" or rich peasant is the replica of the urban bourgeois and, like his fellow, has been expropriated.

more progress among the peasants before 1905 than did the Social Democrats. The truth is that neither party had much success in the villages. The chief influences to which the peasant was exposed were the Church, the School and the conscript Army—all three agents of the autocracy. If in spite of these conservative influences he was becoming more and more revolutionary, the cause of this psychological state must be sought not in revolutionary propaganda, which was slight so far as the mass of the peasantry was concerned, but in the great impersonal forces which shape the ends of men. The peasant was making a direct response to the economic and political conditions of his life. We have the revealing testimony of one who was brought before a magistrate after the peasant movements of 1902 : " No rumours came to me about any little books," he said, " I think that if we lived better, the little books would not be important, no matter what was written in them. What's terrible is not the little books, but this : that there isn't anything to eat."¹

The turn of the century found the peasantry once again smouldering. The spontaneous revolution began to burst out sporadically all over European Russia. Between 1899 and 1904 there were several hundred agrarian disturbances including certain cases of arson and some murders of landowners. The movement came to a head in the provinces of Kharkov and Poltava in 1902, and the disorders amounted to a minor revolution. More than 160 villages were involved, and 80 estates were attacked by the peasants in the course of a few days. Usually the raiders confined themselves to seizing the landlord's grain with which to feed themselves and their animals. The police and military were called in and rapidly suppressed the movement. Wholesale floggings were ordered and 800 persons were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. To guard against

¹ Cited Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, p. 144.

similar outbreaks rural guards were established in fifteen of the most disturbed provinces. The Government was seriously alarmed by the position, and various enquiries were set on foot. The worst outbreaks had been in the provinces where the repartitional commune was the prevailing agricultural institution. A lively discussion broke out in the governing class on the merits and demerits of the peasant commune, the preservation of which had recently been a commonplace of conservative opinion and was the foundation of the Emancipation settlement.

In the same period a strike wave in 1903 involved more than 5 per cent, of the workers in manufacturing industry. In these circumstances the regime blundered into the war with Japan in 1904. As in 1854, 1877 and again in 1914-1917, foreign war revealed the technical weakness and administrative inefficiency of Tsarism and, by shaking the self-confidence of the propertied classes, opened the door to revolution. The Liberals rallied to the support of the Government, but the revolutionists continued their activity, and in the summer of that year V. K. Pleve, the Minister of the Interior, and one of the pillars of reaction, was assassinated by a Socialist Revolutionary. In the meantime the war in Manchuria was drifting from defeat to defeat. The Government accordingly showed signs in December, 1904, of embarking on a policy of moderate reform. A series of disasters followed in rapid succession. On January 2nd, 1905, Port Arthur "the most nearly impregnable fortress in the world" surrendered to the Japanese. On January 22nd a vast throng of working-men with their wives and children, led by the priest George Gapon, marched in columns with banners and ikons to present a petition to the Tsar in the Winter Palace. Nicholas II had withdrawn to Tsarkoe Selo when the processions flowed into the huge Winter Palace Square. A great force of police and troops was waiting for the petitioners,

who refused to disperse and knelt in the snow, so certain were they that the Head of the State, the Little Father, would listen to them. Then followed one of the most hideous scenes in modern history. The troops poured volley after volley into the defenceless crowds; cavalry in successive charges cut down the helpless and trapped multitudes. When the carnage was over hundreds of those who had naively trusted the Tsar were lying dead in the snow, and thousands were wounded. The first volley brought down the children who had climbed a line of trees to overlook the gathering ; they fell like wounded birds from the branches where they had gaily perched themselves. The horror and cruelty of this deed of blood roused the nation to a fury of resistance. The strikes multiplied. During January more than 400,000 industrial workers were out on political or economic strikes—as many strikes in one month as had been recorded during the previous ten years. The war culminated in February and May in the disastrous defeat at Mukden and the destruction of the Russian Baltic Fleet at Tsushima. All through the spring and summer the peasants were waging their formless war on the landlords, usually by illicit timber-cutting and pasturing, and rent and labour strikes, rather than by direct attack and pillage. The movement affected one-sixth of the counties of European Russia. At midsummer a general strike of agricultural workers gripped a quarter of the area of the Baltic provinces, where the landlords were generally German and the labourers Latvian or Esthonian.

The whole movement culminated in the great General Strike of October 23rd, 1905, which followed shortly after the conclusion of the war with Japan by the Treaty of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Without any preparation the strike began among the railway workers on one of the Moscow lines and spread rapidly. Two-sevenths of the industrial workers of the whole country were on strike in October. Most of the railways ceased

running and all communications with the provinces were suspended. The telegraphs were paralysed. The small retail shops closed, and the children of the primary schools went on strike. On October 27th a Soviet of workmen's delegates was formed in St. Petersburg, the Vice-Chairman of which was Leon Trotsky. The Tsar, who found himself totally isolated in his summer residence at Peterhof, was meditating abdication when Witte returned from his remarkably successful negotiations with the Japanese as the hope of the moderates. His advice could not be ignored, and he forced the reluctant Tsar, for whom he had the deepest contempt, to sign the famous manifesto of October 30th. Nicholas had again and again refused to grant a free constitution. Now he promised inviolability of person, liberty of conscience, speech, assembly and association, an extension of the franchise for the State Duma far beyond that already promised and a Duma no longer a mere consultative assembly but a Parliament without the consent of which no laws should be passed. Finally, this Parliament was to have a share in the supervision and administration of the laws. The Tsar reserved to himself only the power of veto on proposed legislation. In a word, the manifesto seemed to promise Russia the end of the autocracy and a real if conservative constitution. On November 16th, 1905, Witte, who had become Prime Minister, followed up this stroke by extracting from the Tsar a manifesto to the peasants promising that the Peasant's Bank would begin to extend larger credits for the purchase of land, reducing the redemption dues for 1906 by one-half, and cancelling all such payments as were still due after that date.

It remained to be seen whether Witte's leap in the dark would save the situation for the governing class. The first effect was the end of the General Strike which held the Government prisoner, but strikes on a great scale continued throughout 1906, and the peasants were

not immediately pacified. But the two manifestoes had sufficiently deflected the main drive of the workers and peasants to enable the reaction to pass from retreat to advance. The army on its return from the Far East was found to be generally trustworthy and politically unawakened. It was used with great effect in terrible punitive expeditions against the revolutionary villages. In Moscow a general strike, led by the Bolsheviks on December 19th, 1905, passed rapidly into an armed rising, which for a few days controlled the city. Its suppression by the army showed the autocracy that the tide had turned. The Government's position was further strengthened by the fact that the newly-formed Constitutional Democratic Party (the Kadets), representative of the Liberal bourgeoisie which had supported the general strike in October, rallied to the defence of the Tsar after the manifestoes. In addition, the workers' rising in Moscow seriously alarmed bourgeois circles.

The first three months of 1906 enabled the reaction to take the offensive. The return of the army had saved the situation. Witte now concluded an agreement for an immense international loan of 2,250,000,000 francs, which he claimed was the "largest foreign loan in the history of modern nations."¹ International capital was more than willing to shore up the autocracy. It is not surprising that the Russian Socialist parties publicly declared that when their day came they would never repay the blood money of Tsarism. To meet the agrarian problem Witte finally laid down a policy which was followed by his more reactionary successors; it consisted of heavy repression of all disorder on the one hand and the break-up of the repartitional commune on the other. The peasant was to receive his land in absolute ownership. This would, it was hoped, facilitate the rise of a new class of independent conservative farmers "with a stake in the country."

¹ *The Memoirs of Count Witte*, pp. 297, 307.

The second part of the programme could be carried out only after the Duma had been put in its place and the manifesto of October 30th suitably interpreted. Witte was dropped as soon as he had floated the great international loan. Even before the meeting of the First Duma on May 10th, 1906, the Tsar had re-affirmed his determination to preserve the autocracy " unchanged as it had been of old." A few days before the Duma met, the Government published by imperial decree a code of Fundamental Laws designed to paralyse the new legislature and constituting a calculated challenge to Russian constitutionalists. The Liberals and the peasants concentrated on the Duma, and their representatives dominated the new assembly. They at once demanded a radical agrarian reform, and three projects were introduced, all of which involved the greater or less expropriation of the landlords with or without compensation. The Government, feeling itself more secure with every week that passed, refused to consider any measures requiring expropriation of private property, and on July 21st, 1906, suddenly dissolved the First Duma. The Social Democrats called for a general strike without much effect. Industrial unrest continued, but it was much less extensive than during the previous year. Two mutinies among soldiers and sailors were easily suppressed. The Government, while announcing new elections, pressed on with the campaign of repression. Before the end of the summer of 1906 almost all the provinces of the Empire were under various degrees of martial law. Special military courts were established for the trial of persons accused of revolutionary activities. The number of civilians executed by the new special courts in the latter part of 1906 was 683. The number of civilians executed by ordinary courts-martial was 10 in 1905, 144 in 1906, 456 in 1907 and 825 in 1908. These figures do not include persons executed by administrative order without trial. These were estimated at 376 in 1905, 864 in 1906,

59 in 1907, and 32 for the first ten months of 1908. The total number of executions during this period, therefore, exceeded 3,400. These figures take account only of formal executions under official auspices. Needless to say, an unknown multitude of people were shot down in engagements with the punitive expeditions.¹ Masses were exiled to Siberia.

In 1906 Witte received a telegram from the Governor-General of Reval asking him to exert a moderating influence on the leader of a punitive expedition, a certain Captain Richter, "who was executing people indiscriminately without the least semblance of legality." Witte submitted the report to the Tsar, who wrote opposite Richter's name: "Fine! A capital fellow!"² At the same time the Tsar encouraged and approved of the hideous anti-Jewish pogroms which broke out about this time, led by the party of "True Russians," as reactionary groups of terrorists known as the "Black Hundreds" called themselves. "The first pogroms took place in the late 'seventies and were at first spontaneous manifestations of the lower bourgeoisie against Jewish competition. But very soon they began to be encouraged by the police, as a safety-valve for the anti-bourgeois feeling of the lower classes of the towns."² Nicholas II inherited his father's prejudices and policy, and in his attitude to the Jews, as in all other respects, his ideals were those of the Black Hundreds. The participation of secret service agents in the organization of anti-Jewish outbreaks was established by Witte's enquiries, but he was never able to persuade the Tsar to take a step against the outrages which made Russia a byword among the civilized nations:

¹ Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Rdginte*, p. 198.

² *The Memoirs of Count Witte*, p. 189,

³ Mirsky, *Russia: A Social History*, p. 282. The first important anti-Jewish measures in Russia were taken by Ivan the Terrible.

" The anti-Jewish current flowed not from below upward but in the opposite direction."¹

The Second Duma, which met in January, 1907, was more radical than the first, but the Government was feeling much more confident than at the time when it dissolved the previous assembly. The Social Democrats advanced their representation from 18 members to 65. The Kadets on the other hand had fallen in numbers from 150 to 91. The peasant Labour group held its own. The Socialist Revolutionaries, who, like the Social Democrats, had largely boycotted the elections to the First Duma, returned to the Second with 36 members. In a house of 500 these were the chief organized groups. It was not likely that such an assembly could co-operate with a reactionary Government flushed with victory. After three months of acrimonious debate the Second Duma was suddenly dissolved. In the manifesto of dissolution the Emperor declared : " The Tsarist Power over Our people was committed to Us by the Lord God. Before His Throne We shall answer for the fate of the Russian Empire." On June 16th, 1907, in direct violation of the Fundamental Statutes, a new electoral law was promulgated. The first two Dumas, said the manifesto, had not been truly representative of the people. To remedy this defect the people of Central Asia were disfranchised and the representation of Poland and the Caucasus was greatly reduced. Only 7 of the 25 cities formerly separately represented retained this right. Within the cities the voting power of the propertied elements was greatly increased at the expense of the unpropertied. In the rural districts there were drastic alterations of representation in favour of the landlords. The large landed proprietors were to send more delegates to the electoral colleges (the Dumas were elected indirectly) than the combined number of all the other classes. Altogether out of 442 deputies the rural proprietors

¹ *The Memoirs of Count Witte*, p. 190.

elected 255. " Inasmuch as the larger landed proprietors were for the most part nobles, the new election law was essentially a confirmation of the old alliance between monarchy and nobility—an alliance which might be expected to act in the name of Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Nationality—and now as before in the name also of one other cause : Landed Property."¹ 1,'

Stolypin, who became Minister President in July, 1906, defined the constructive side of the Government's policy in a speech to the Third Duma (1907-1912), elected under the new electoral laws and eminently satisfactory to the regime. He said : " The Government has placed its wager, not on the needy and the drunken, but on the sturdy and the strong — on the sturdy individual proprietor who is called upon to play a part in the reconstruction of our Tsardom on strong monarchical foundations."² By a decree of October, 1906, the joint responsibility of the commune for public obligations was finally abrogated. The communal assemblies were deprived of the power of condemning a peasant to forced labour if he failed in his public obligations, and of the right of granting or withholding passports. The peasant was free to leave the commune when he liked. Land Organization Commissions were set up in 1906 to hear and determine the cases of those peasants who wished to withdraw from the repartitional commune and establish a negotiable title to a consolidated piece of land equal to the scattered strips they had formerly held. Before 1915 some 2,000,000 applications for separation from the commune had been granted. The stages in the break-up of the commune were rapid. By the decree of November 22nd, 1906, on the demand of a two-thirds majority of the communal assembly, the scattered lands of each household held by hereditary right could be consolidated into a single

¹ Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, p. 202.

² Cited, Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

farm. The law of June 27th, 1910, reduced the necessary vote to a simple majority, and that of June nth, 1911, provided for the permanent division, by a similar vote, of the woods and pastures which had never been held separately. In the case of the communes where the holdings were periodically redistributed, the law of 1906 gave any householder the right to demand at the next repartition his holding in the form of a consolidated plot. The laws of 1910 and 1911 went farther, and obliged the commune to grant a consolidated plot to the householder at any time he demanded it, provided the local Land Organization Commission agreed. Thus the Land Organization Commission, not the commune, was the final arbiter, and if the commune found it especially difficult to allot a consolidated plot, it was obliged by the law of 1911 to give the householder a money indemnity, the amount of which was to be decided by the Commission in case of dispute. By 1917, among all the allotments in existence in the fifty provinces, about one-tenth had been consolidated.

Obviously, even this brief formulation of an immensely complicated process reveals that fundamental forces were at work in the Russian countryside between 1906 and 1917. The ultimate motive of the changes inaugurated by Stolypin was the belief of the governing class that the creation of secure titles for a large class of prosperous peasants would cure the land hunger which threatened the landlords with a grand expropriation. In an address to the Tsar the Congress of Nobles' Societies had stressed this point: "The strengthening of property-rights among the peasants . . . will increase their attachment to that which is their own, and their respect for that which belongs to others." In other words "the communal property-right of the peasants must be abolished, in order that the private property-right of the landlords will not have to be."¹ It is impossible

¹ Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old R4gime* p. 183.

to attempt more than a guess as to what would have happened if Stolypin's policy had been given a long run. Perhaps to some slight extent the likelihood of an ultimate agrarian revolution had been diminished by 1914. Between 1910 and 1914 the industrial strike movement mounted steadily ; during the same period the peasant disturbances recorded annually declined. We shall never know, for in 1914 the autocracy plunged into its last mad gamble to escape the vengeance that was already following hard after. Liberal speculations about a possible peaceful evolution seem characteristically vain when one bears in mind the deep corruption of the regime which was conducting the reforms. Stolypin's unscrupulous terrorism demoralized the State, and he fell a victim on September 14th, 1911, to the bullets of one of his own secret agents. In the words of the greatest of living Liberal statesmen, whose sense of reality has never yet been dimmed by his ideals : " The Tsarist Sodom and Gomorrah had to be destroyed with fire and brimstone."¹

Tsarist Russia entered the Imperialist War of 1914 for the same reason that she had in the latter half of the nineteenth century undertaken to industrialize herself at breathless speed. She was a Great Power and had to take part in the scramble. She was no more an independent factor than any other participant in the world slaughter, but a link in a system. Russia had a two-fold character. She was a Great Power, and so had to pay for her right to exploit her more backward neighbours such as Turkey and Persia. She was also a subordinate partner of the Leviathans of the West, and so had to pay for the right to import foreign capital and pay interest on it. Her position is illuminated by her provincial war aims—the Straits, Armenia, Galicia—which had to wait on the convenience of the senior partners. The emancipation of the serfs and the

² T. G. Masaryk, *The Making of a State*, London, 1927, p. 140.

introduction of universal military service had modernized the army only to the extent that the country had been modernized. On paper the army was modelled on the most approved Western lines. In other words, the autocracy was attempting the self-contradictory task of making an army which, to be equal to its pattern, required the same cultural background, while forcibly preventing that national transformation which could alone bring Russia into line with the most advanced countries. Tsarism had set itself a task which required, as the condition of success, its own destruction. "There was no correspondence between the cultural level of the peasant-soldier and modern military technique. In the commanding staff, the ignorance, light-mindedness, and thievery of the ruling classes found their expression,"¹

The political reaction of 1906-1914 was accompanied by what came to be known as the "Stolypin Boom." The Ukraine, the Northern Caucasus and Western Siberia were the centres of a new capitalistic agricultural expansion. In order to relieve the pressure of the peasants and to provide land, assisted emigration to Western Siberia was organized on a huge scale. Turkestan became a great cotton-producing region. The boom had the effect of conciliating the industrial propertied classes and the intelligentsia to the monarchy. The Liberals began to expound imperialistic doctrines—doctrines which were warmly seconded by the new bourgeoisie of the Northern Caucasus and Western Siberia, who were strong exponents of the advance into Persia and Mongolia. The boom was assisted by the influx of foreign capital. The financial ties with France were particularly strong. The great loan that defeated the revolution of 1905 was largely French. After 1906 the Russian banks were largely under foreign control, and by 1914 Russia was well on the way to becoming a semi-colonial possession of European capital. The fact that French, Belgian and English

¹ Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. i., p. 37-

investments amounted to 70 per cent, of the total foreign capital was one of the reasons for the attachment of the Russian governing class to England and France. It is worth noting that "the growth of imperialistic aggressiveness proceeded parallel to the loss of national independence."¹ The forward policy of Izvolsky and Sazonov in the Balkans—a policy disguised as support for Balkan Orthodox Christians against the Moslem oppressor Turkey, but designed to give Russia Constantinople and the Straits, and so access to the Mediterranean—had the unqualified support of the Liberal bourgeoisie headed by Miliukov. 'Expanding Russian capitalism was now the ally of the autocracy in the conquest of new markets and lines of communication to old.) The representatives of the industrial bourgeoisie and the Liberals in the Duma were constantly attacking the Government for its neglect of Russian armaments.

Nicholas II had a secret craving for a victorious war." Hence the criminal levity with which he allowed Russia to drift into the struggle with Japan. Hence his approval of Sazonov's irresponsible policy in the Balkans. When the catastrophe was on him he wavered as he had wavered in 1904. But the fact that he cancelled the first order for the Russian general mobilization in 1914 does not acquit him of responsibility. Even with this delay Russia was the first of the Great Powers to order the general mobilization which made a world war inevitable. The only Russian statesman who was capable of divining the future was Count Witte, but in 1914 he had long been out of office. In a conversation with the French Ambassador he expressed himself with great frankness: "What can we hope to get? An increase of territory. Great Heavens! Isn't His Majesty's empire big enough already? Haven't we in Siberia, Turkestan, the Caucasus,

¹ Mirsky, *Russia : A Social History*, p. 269.

² *The Memoirs of Count Witte*, p. 186.

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Russia itself, enormous areas which have not yet been opened up ? . . . Then what are the conquests they dangle before our eyes ? East Prussia ? Hasn't the Emperor too many Germans among his subjects already ? . . . What else have we to hope for ? Constantinople, the Cross on Santa Sophia, the Bosphorus, the Dardanelles ? It's too mad a notion to be worth a moment's consideration I And even if we assume a complete victory for our coalition . . . it means not only the end of German domination, but the proclamation of republics throughout Central Europe. That means the simultaneous end of Tsarism ! I prefer to remain silent as to what we may expect on the hypothesis of our defeat. . . . My practical conclusion is that we must liquidate this stupid adventure as soon as possible."¹

In 1914 Russia was better prepared than in 1904 or at the outbreak of any of her preceding wars, but the enemy was correspondingly more formidable. The very first days brought the first defeats, which by 1915 had become the catastrophic general retreat during which the incompetent generals avenged their reverses on the population by laying waste enormous tracts of their own country. At a Cabinet meeting held on August 17th, 1915, the War Minister, Polivanov, answered the questions of his agitated colleagues with the words: "I place my trust in the impenetrable spaces, impassable mud, and the mercy of Saint Nicholas Mirlikisky, Protector of Holy Russia." The one idea of Chiefs of the General Staff like Yanushkevich and Alexeiev was the mobilization of larger and larger masses of men. Every deficiency at the front was met by a fresh levy in the rear. Altogether about 15,000,000 men were mobilized—all barracks, depdts., transit points were filled to overflowing with men who fell over one another, and grew bitter with the senseless muddle in which they lived. At the front these hordes were a negligible military factor, since those

¹ Pateologue, *An Ambassador's Memoirs*, vol. i., pp. 122-123.

whom the groaning transport system managed to convey were no better equipped than their unhappy comrades, called to meet German massed artillery with clubs when there were not enough rifles to go round ! Inevitably these vast and angry accumulations of men became a very real factor of destruction in the rear. But the ministers were able to console themselves and the Allies with the fabulous tallies of these human multitudes. Beef and pork were handled with infinitely more economy. The Russian losses were unbelievable. About 5,500,000 men were accounted dead, wounded and captives, and desertions multiplied on a gigantic scale. The Russian army lost in the whole war more men than any army in human history—2,500,000 dead or 40 per cent, of all the losses of the Allies. The autocracy was totally incapable of dealing with the problem of organization, and gradually everything sank into inextricable confusion. " From the bloody mash of people and things emerged a generalized word: ' the mess,' which in the, soldiers' jargon was replaced by a still juicier term."¹

The governing class began to look round for scapegoats—the Jews were accused of being German spies ; the Allies were blamed. A favourite joke which soon seeped into the trenches was that the French and English would fight to the last drop of Russian blood. Profiteering in industry rose to incredible heights. The Moscow textile company of the Riabushinskys showed a net profit of 75 per cent.; the Tver Company, 111 per cent.; the copper works of Kolchugin made 12 million roubles on a basic capital of 10 million. Speculation on the Stock Exchange became a frenzy. Society bathed in the shower of gold raining from the demoralized State. The winter season of 1915-1916 was one of the most brilliant in the history of Russian high society. The gowns were incomparable, and jewellers announced they had never sold so many diamonds. The more far-sighted of the

¹ Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. i., p. 40.

Liberals hoped that the Tsar, under the pressure of defeat, would grant constitutional reforms and take them into partnership against the rising tide of indignation sweeping the masses. For hunger had begun to appear among the workers in the towns, and the pick of the nation was slowly bleeding to death along the 800-mile front. But no sign came from the sovereign, who spent days discussing with his ministers whether the bones of the Orthodox saints should be moved from Kiev in the event of a threatened German occupation. On the whole, he felt that the bones should not be disturbed, for if the Germans touched them, "so much the worse for the Germans." On November 12th, 1916, the Director of the Police Department wrote in a report of "the weariness of war to be observed everywhere, and the longing for a swift peace, regardless of the conditions upon which it is concluded." He was referring especially to the workers and peasants.

Even the Grand Dukes became alarmed, and their indignation fastened on the Court favourite Rasputin, the sinister monk whose considerable personality and hypnotic powers had won the superstitious reverence of the nervous and unbalanced Empress. Her influence over her husband was unbounded. A conspiracy to assassinate Rasputin was hatched in the patriotic circles close to the imperial family, and the crime was carried out at Prince Yussupov's maisonette at Petrograd, on the night of December 29th-30th, 1916, amid circumstances of horror throwing an evil light on the circles which were to provide officers for the White Armies in the coming civil war.¹ The murder was greeted as an act of salvation, but instead of ending it sharpened the crisis of the regime. Driven by the blindness of revenge the Tsar began to promote all the most hated members of the Rasputin clique. The same group that had staged the murder of

¹ Youssouppoff, *Rasputin : His Malignant Influence and His Assassination*, London, 1927.

Rasputin now played with the thought of a palace revolution by which the Tsar would be forced to abdicate and a responsible Government established, as the only possible alternative to the mass revolution. But the conspirators never made any serious preparations, and their hesitations were overtaken by events.

On March 8th, 1917, disorders broke out in Petrograd, beginning with the food queues. Soon great processions paraded down the main streets shouting "Bread and Peace." For five days the human flood mounted. On March nth the enormous garrison began to go over to the people. By March 13th all resistance was at an end, and two new authorities were coming into being, the Provisional Government and the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. The movement arose spontaneously, but once it had started the active revolutionists, most of them conscious workers trained by the party of Lenin, took the lead and gave direction and discipline to the elemental strivings of the people.

On March 14th, when his fate was already sealed, the Tsar, who was returning from the front to Petrograd, telegraphed to the Empress at Tsarskoe Selo: "Wonderful weather. Hope you are well and calm. Many troops sent from the front. With tender love. Niki." The autocrat's train was held up and turned back. Now, when it was too late, he decided to appoint a responsible cabinet, reserving, however, the ministries of foreign affairs, war and marine to himself! In the early hours of March 15th he at last, after infinite coaxing, decided without reservations to appoint a responsible ministry. Finally it became clear that nothing would satisfy the revolutionary power but his abdication. He decided to review his chances of successfully crushing the movement that had taken him and his Government completely by surprise.

On the night of March 14th-15th General Alexeiev, the Chief of the General Staff, conducted a telegraphic

plebiscite among the commanders at the front. Anxious to conciliate the new power and filled with fear of their own troops, the Generals were unanimous in advising the Tsar to surrender. He thereupon decided to abdicate the throne in favour of his son, the boy Alexei, under the regency of his brother the Grand Duke Mikhail. Hearing that the Duma Deputies Guchkov and Shulgin were coming from the capital to Pskov, where he had paused on his retreat to Headquarters at Moghilev, he held up the abdication in the hope that the new power would offer better terms. He received the two deputies at midnight on March 15th-16th. The miracle did not happen, and the issues could no longer be evaded. He now, to the general surprise, decided to abdicate both for himself and his son in favour of his brother. At the same time edicts were signed appointing Prince Lvov President of the Council of Ministers and the Grand Duke Nicholas Commander-in-Chief. The monarchy was thus allowed to retire from the scene in style. In order to preserve the appearance of freedom the abdication was dated at 3 p.m. on the afternoon of March 15th, 1917. However, the Grand Duke Mikhail was himself persuaded to abdicate on March 16th, and the Grand Duke Nicholas was shortly afterwards peacefully deprived of the supreme command.

The monarchy had, in fact, collapsed into a complete moral vacuum. In the hour of need it could not find a single friend to strike a blow for it in Holy Russia. Thus it was with a certain justice that the faithless Emperor wrote in his diary after his abdication : " At one o'clock in the morning I left Pskov with heavy feelings ; around me treason, cowardice, deceit." By the time he arrived at Headquarters in Moghilev he had again changed his mind. He handed General Alexeiev a message for transmission to Petrograd in which he gave his consent to the accession of his son Alexei. But this change was also too late. The new Provisional Government might

have been able to accept it the day before. The abdication in favour of the impossible Mikhail had ended the dynasty. Tsarism had fallen.

The Five Days had produced two separate centres of authority—the Soviet and the Provisional Government. The Duma was dissolved by the Tsar on March 8th. The deputies accepted the situation without the slightest ripple of revolutionary indignation. The progressives were characteristically constitutional, and like all contemporary Liberals, showed that they had long forgotten how to resist. Only later, when the Revolution had triumphed, did they remember their history and endeavour to dress for the tableau of the Tennis Court Oath. They allowed the legend to grow up that the Duma had refused to accept its dissolution. Nothing could be farther from the truth. On the morning of March 12th the deputies who assembled not only found that they had been dissolved, but that the Revolution was now in full flood.

Out of the hurried consultations of those feverish hours emerged the Provisional Committee of Members of the Duma. In the meantime, in the same Tauride Palace another organization had suddenly appeared—the Provisional Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. This body, composed in part of released political prisoners, of Mensheviks, deputies of the Duma, Social Revolutionaries, even a few Bolsheviks reinforced by leaders of the Trade Union and Co-operative movements, was the first creation of the Revolution. Clearly the lessons of 1905 had been well learnt so far as the workers were concerned. This Executive Committee proceeded to order elections for the mass organ of the Revolution—the Soviet—and to issue decrees which clearly revealed that it was in fact a Government. The Soviet actually met at nine o'clock in the evening of March 12th, ratified the composition of the Executive Committee, and decided to unite the garrison with the

workers in a general Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. But the last representative of constituted authority, the Provisional Committee of the Members of the Duma, was coming into being in these same hours, after the Executive Committee had begun its work. The masses were demonstrating outside the Tauride Palace, and it was not possible even for a Liberal to pretend that the Revolution was not a fact. Who was to have the power? The answer was obvious. Power was in the hands of the revolutionary masses and their organ the Executive Committee. But though in fact it had the power and was compelled to exercise it, through sheer pressure of circumstances, every day, the Executive Committee shrank from the heavy responsibility. The Socialist\$ who stood at the head of the Executive Committee took it for granted that power ought to pass to the bourgeoisie, that Russia must go through the period of bourgeois democracy before she could qualify for Socialism and the rule of the workers. The fact that the Revolution had been made by the workers and peasants and that power should therefore pass to the executive organ of those workers and peasants did not occur to them. Like all moderates they were in search of a ruler to whom they could look up. Accordingly, the bourgeoisie did not have to seize power—power was thrust upon it by the Executive Committee. The leaders of the Executive Committee, to whom the Revolution had given the reality of power, appeared before the "Provisional Committee of Members of the Duma" and insistently demanded that it take the power that had fallen from the hands of the Imperial Government.

On March 14th, 1917, the Provisional Committee, after a period of hesitation, undertook the formation of a Provisional Government. The new Government was welcomed, as far better than could have been expected, by the Allies, by the industrialists and by

large elements of the petty bourgeoisie, in other words, by that tiny fraction which constituted the possessing classes and their retainers. The workers and soldiers who had made the revolution were amazed and irritated by this assorted bourgeois Government presented to them by their own Executive Committee.

Yet, in spite of everything, the Socialist Compromisers could hand over only the trappings of power, not the reality itself. The broad masses refused to take the Provisional Government seriously. The Soviet was the organ of the revolution, and to the Soviet they flowed in overwhelming numbers. In spite of itself the Soviet had to exercise the governmental powers it had vainly tried to hand over to the bourgeois parties. And so arose that extraordinary regime known as the dual power—the Provisional Government and the Soviet, the expression of the concealed double sovereignty of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. So long as reformist Socialists were at the head of the Soviet, men who distrusted while they led the proletariat and desired nothing so much as to avoid the responsibilities of power, the two authorities could co-exist uneasily. The moment the Bolsheviks displaced the Compromisers in the Soviet, and the organ of the proletariat and its allies was controlled by a proletarian party, the concealed class war became patent, and only a second revolution could decide the question of who had the power and so unify the divided sovereignty of Russia. The explanation of the fact that Socialist Revolutionaries and Mensheviks were found immediately after the March revolution supporting a purely bourgeois Provisional Government can be sought only in the distribution of class forces. It is necessary to look beyond programmes and "ideals" to the social foundations. The Social Revolutionaries claimed to be a peasant party. But the heart of the party, the guardian of its "half-baked" romanticism, the people who controlled the party machine and took

service with the State as bureaucrats and ministers, were far more closely identified with liberal and radical circles in the cities than with the peasants in the villages. These people were horrified when the peasants took their phrases seriously, just as the Mensheviks, who were their twin brothers, trembled when they saw the workers preparing to assault the capitalist system, a system the Mensheviks had often enough attacked with Marxian formulae. The Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks wished the peasants and workers well so long as they did nothing, contented themselves with demanding reforms which the existing organization of society prevented from ever becoming realities and, above all, refrained from laying dirty hands on the innermost shrine of the bourgeois State, its property relations. Most of these people came from that pre-revolutionary intelligentsia who were always willing to teach the masses but never to learn from them. Nearly all had rallied to the support of the Government in the imperialist war and were therefore too compromised to act as revolutionary leaders. The leaders of the Soviet, therefore, preferred to huddle round the Provisional Government of Prince Lvov and his successor Kerensky, and concoct revolutionary phrases as a substitute for revolutionary deeds.

On April 16th, 1917, Lenin returned from exile and resumed the direct leadership of the Bolshevik party. He at once formulated the policy that was to carry him to power on the crest of a mass movement less than seven months later. That policy consisted of the clear proclamation of the inner meaning of the revolution. The peasants wanted peace as soldiers, land as peasants. The proletariat wanted Socialism. By refusing to collaborate in any way with the Provisional Government and by relentlessly exposing its debility the Bolsheviks steadily increased their influence. The Provisional Government, representative of the weak petty bourgeois

elements, was organically incapable of developing a policy of its own. It was unable, as we have seen, to separate itself from the industrialists, bankers and landowners for the decisive reason that its social basis was too narrow. It could not even end the war, which all candid observers knew was hopelessly lost. The war was necessary to the bourgeoisie not only because they depended financially on the Allies. The war enabled the governing class to retain for a short time longer some control over the masses. On a realist analysis two steps had to be taken if capitalism was to be saved in Russia. The war must be ended and the landed estates confiscated and distributed to the peasants. Had the industrial bourgeoisie been stronger it might have sacrificed its feudal allies. But it had neither the strength nor the vision for independent leadership. As Lenin had foreseen, the mass movement swung steadily to the only party which offered to carry out the demands for which the workers, peasants and soldiers had made the revolution. The Soviets passed more and more under the influence of the Bolsheviks as the result of the elections after the summer. With the attempted counter-revolution of General Kornilov in September, 1917, it became clear to all that the real issue lay between the revolution as represented by Lenin and a monarchical reaction. As a result the Bolsheviks were able to seize power on November 7th almost unopposed. They at once ratified the agrarian revolution which had been growing steadily for months; only so could a general peasants' revolt be averted. The form under which this was accomplished, by which all land formally became the property of the nation and was administered by peasant Soviets, did not alarm the victorious villagers. The idea that the State might become a rival did not cross their minds. They knew only that the masters were expropriated. The first phase of the revolution had ended with a final reckoning between lord and peasant.

Thus only could the dictatorship of the proletariat achieve a broad social basis and rally to its support the overwhelming majority of the nation. The further development of the revolution would now revolve around the varying relations of peasant and proletarian.

PART IV

SOVIET RUSSIA, 1917-1933

" One can only work upon men by seeing their dreams more clearly than they see them themselves."

ALEXANDER HERZEN.

" Try, make mistakes, learn how to govern. . . . Laws are important, not by virtue of their being written on paper, but by virtue of the kind of people that put them into practice."

LENIN.

PART IV

SOVIET RUSSIA, 1917-1933

THE first task of the new Government was to secure peace. About the all-pervading desire of the nation and the army for peace there could be no doubt. The peasant soldiers, determined to be home in time for the distribution of the landlord's estates, simply left the front and walked home by divisions. As Lenin dryly observed, the army had voted for peace in the most decisive possible way, "with its legs." On November 21st, 1917, Trotsky, as Commissar for Foreign Affairs, forwarded a note to the Allied Ambassadors in Petrograd, and to all the belligerent countries, inviting them to conclude an armistice on all fronts and, as soon as possible, open peace negotiations. The Commander-in-Chief, Dukhonin, was ordered to conclude an armistice with the enemy on all the Russian fronts. On his refusal, he was at once dismissed, and an appeal was made by wireless over his head direct to all the army units. Krylenko, the new Commander-in-Chief, and a member of the Bolshevik party, was unable to save Dukhonin from being lynched by soldiers infuriated by the General's opposition to an armistice.

The attitude of the Allied Governments was one of uncompromising hostility. The Ambassadors remained at their posts in Petrograd, but maintained only unofficial relations with the Bolsheviks. Clearly, if the Russians could bring about a general conference they had far better chances of securing favourable terms than if they negotiated separately with the Central Powers. On the other hand, if the Allies refused to take part in the peace

negotiations, the Bolsheviks would have no choice but to go forward alone. Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador, had a clear vision of the situation. On November 27th he telegraphed to his Government: "I share the view . . . that the situation here has become desperate, that we must reconsider our attitude. In my opinion, the only safe course left to us is to give Russia back her word, and tell her people that,, realizing how worn out they are by the war and the disorganization inseparable from a great revolution, we leave it to them to decide whether they will purchase peace on Germany's terms or fight on with the Allies. . . . For us to hold to our pound of flesh . . . is to play Germany's game. Every day we keep Russia in the war against her will does but embitter her people against us." The Allies returned no answer to the Russian overtures; the Germans accepted, and negotiations for an armistice began on December 2nd.

The peace conference opened at Brest-Litovsk on December 22nd, 1917, and, on the insistence of the Russian delegates, the proceedings were public and verbatim reports were issued daily. The conference is, perhaps, the most extraordinary in the annals of diplomacy. The essence of Bolshevik strategy consisted in a sustained and continuous appeal to the public opinion of the world in general and of the workers in particular. All the material force was on the side of the Central Powers, but as Ludendorff himself was to complain, the Bolsheviks behaved as if they were the plenipotentiaries of a victorious power. They succeeded completely in unmasking the Central Powers as predatory imperialists greedy for territory and indemnities, in spite of all their lip-service to principles such as "the self-determination of nations." Good German Liberals were in despair at the way the militarists allowed Trotsky to tear the decent veils of idealism from the brutal Moloch of Hohenzollern Germany. The acid test came

on December 28th, 1917. The Germans had already accepted the principle of self-determination as one that should be applied to the frontier provinces of Russia then in their occupation. But they maintained that Poland, Lithuania, Kurland and Livonia had already expressed, through their elected representatives, their will to separate from Russia. These elected representatives were *ad hoc* bodies assembled by order of the German military authorities.

The Russians had no difficulty in exposing this pretence. They announced that they had no objection to the separation of these territories from Russia if they voted for such separation. They challenged the Central Powers to evacuate these lands and abide by free elections. General Hoffmann, the most straightforward and vigorous personality among the German delegates, answered that Germany would not evacuate a millimetre. The German militarists who now dominated the civil power were quite indifferent to the desire of Liberals to cover the nakedness of modern imperialism. They were after results, and especially the opening up of the wheat fields of the Ukraine to German foraging parties.

The Allies were not slow to see the possibilities of the situation. They dropped, for the time being, the cry that the Bolsheviki were German agents and began to sympathize with Russia lying bound and helpless at the feet of "the natural foe to liberty." Certain influential circles in England and Germany were already revolving the possibility of a general peace at Russia's expense. Germany might make concessions to the Allies in the West in return for a free hand against Bolshevism in the East. The diplomatic successes of Trotsky at Brest-Litovsk temporarily dislocated these schemes. President Wilson came to the rescue with his Fourteen Points, and the Allies were drawn into a series of liberal protestations which, if skilfully exploited by a competent German statesman, might after all have led to a general peace.

But the soldiers were to have the last word. As soon as it became clear to the Bolshevik Government that a reasonable settlement with the Central Powers was impossible, their whole effort was concentrated on gaining time for the outbreak of revolution in Germany and in the West. They endeavoured to advance the day of its coming by every device of propaganda and incitement. Definite answers to the Bolshevik summons began to come in the form of strike movements in Germany and Austria-Hungary.

On January 9th, 1918, a delegation from the Ukrainian Government appeared at Brest-Litovsk in answer to Trotsky's appeal for the participation in the conference of all belligerent countries, and the Bolsheviks recognized the right of this delegation to speak in the name of the Ukrainian peoples. The bourgeois regime in the Ukraine, already tottering to its fall, hastened to establish cordial relations with Germany and Austria-Hungary. The food situation in Austria was now almost desperate. The way was thus opened up for an agreement between the bourgeois Ukrainian Government and the Central Powers. In return for military assistance against the Ukrainian Communist movement the Ukrainian bourgeoisie would open their granaries to the former enemy.

It soon became evident that the German terms were going to be frankly predatory and the question of whether to accept them, in the last resort unconditionally, or resume the war became urgent. There were three parties in the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party—one headed by Lenin favoured unconditional acceptance of the German terms, the second favoured a revolutionary war, the third, headed by Trotsky, desired to declare the war at an end but to refuse to sign a humiliating peace. At first Lenin was in a minority. He called Trotsky's compromise a gesture Russia could not afford to make. If the Germans

rejected it and began to advance the peace would still have to be accepted, probably under worse conditions. For Lenin, the supreme task was to save the revolution. His attitude was not based on patriotic nationalism. Had it been a question of saving the German proletarian revolution by sacrificing the Russian then it would be their duty as Socialists to make that sacrifice, since the German revolution was more important than the Russian. But this was not the position: "Germany so far was only big with revolution, while in Russia a perfectly healthy child had been born—a Socialist Republic—and it was screaming with all its might."¹ Trotsky's policy was finally adopted.

Meanwhile a Bolshevik revolution had triumphed in the Ukraine and the bourgeois Government, whose delegates were at Brest-Litovsk, had fled from Kiev. In these circumstances it determined to sell itself to Germany and, though deprived of any right to speak for the Ukraine, it signed a separate peace with the Central Powers on February 9th, 1918, and hastened to invite the Germans to rescue it from the Bolsheviks. This they proceeded to do; a German occupation of the Ukraine followed rapidly, which resolved itself into an immense foraging expedition. In nine months they collected 113,421 tons of flour and 172,349,556 kilograms of such articles- as fats, cheese, fish, eggs, horses, sugar, etc. In all, 24,000 freight cars filled with goods were despatched to the Central Powers and much more was smuggled across the frontier. Though they obtained less than they had hoped for from the granary of Europe, the Central Powers at least secured enough to stave off starvation in Austria-Hungary for some months and 140,000 badly-needed horses for the army.² From the Ukraine the Germans extended their operations into the

¹ Cited, Mirsky, *Lenin*, p. 133.

² Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs*, vol. i., p. 83.
1 kilogram = 2.205 lbs.

Don basin, rich in coal and iron, and into the northern Caucasus in search of petroleum.

Trotsky was able to drag out the proceedings at Brest-Litovsk until February 10th. On the 9th the Germans presented their terms in the form of an ultimatum. The next day Trotsky brought the Conference to an end by declaring that while Russia would not sign the peace she would not continue the war. This was much too indefinite for the Germans, who felt themselves in a position to dictate. They at once declared the armistice at an end and resumed the offensive, seizing enormous quantities of war material on their advance. On February 18th the Central Committee, by a majority of one, rejected Lenin's demand that a telegram be sent off to the Germans accepting their terms and if necessary further conditions. The same day at a further meeting Lenin succeeded in carrying his point, also by a majority of one, and the Germans were informed that the Bolsheviks would sign a dictated peace. The Germans did not halt their offensive, but on the contrary continued to press it vigorously and raised their already crushing terms. On February 23rd the Bolsheviks received three further Draconian conditions to which was attached the ultimatum that they must be accepted within forty-eight hours, and that Russian plenipotentiaries must at once leave for Brest-Litovsk, where the treaty must be signed within three days and ratified within a fortnight. The ultimatum precipitated a desperate crisis in the Soviet Government and the Bolshevik Party. Lenin pressed for the immediate acceptance of terms so staggering that many felt that to yield would ruin the revolution. Lenin, on the contrary, asserted that to refuse would be fatal. The sole circumstance in which he would accept a revolutionary war would be in the event of the Germans demanding the deposition of the Bolshevik Government, for the only object of the peace was to preserve the **Socialist Republic at any cost. A breathing space** was

essential. It must be used to gather strength **and** to concentrate every effort to hasten the revolution in Central Europe which could alone shatter the grip of the militarists. If his policy were not accepted he announced his intention of resigning from the Government and from the Central Committee. The majority in the Central Committee were against him ; but, thanks to the fact that of the eight members of the opposition four headed by Trotsky abstained from voting, he carried the day. The Council of Peoples' Commissars then accepted the treaty, which was signed at Brest-Litovsk on March 3rd by a new delegation which, in order to emphasize the dictated nature of the peace, refused even to discuss the terms in detail. The Central Powers, as the result of this treaty, and of subsequent extensions of the area occupied, became masters of a continuous belt of territory extending from the Gulf of Finland to the sea of Azov, the Northern Caucasus and the Caspian Sea—a belt 400,000 square miles in area and inhabited by 60,000,000 people. " It accounted for much of Russia's export grain, most of her oil, and at least 80 per cent of her coal and iron, as well as most of her sugar and tobacco."¹

It is no matter for wonder that such a catastrophic disaster as the Peace of Brest - Litovsk should have thrown some of the most experienced and well-tried revolutionaries off their balance and filled masses of the rank and file with shame and desperation. It is safe to say that Lenin alone could have secured the acceptance of the treaty, first at the Seventh Party Congress, then its ratification by the special Congress of Soviets on March 15th by 784 Bolshevik votes against those of 261 Left Social Revolutionaries. His fight for peace, which lasted from February 23rd to March 15th, 1918, " is perhaps the most instructive and heroic episode in the life of the great Revolutionary, and the one in which his greatness

¹ Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs*, vol. i., p. 88.

comes out with particular force."¹ He carried the day by making his hearers look at every fact, by hiding nothing, by presenting the stark realities of Russia's prostration, the supreme duty of saving the Revolution. "If you are not able to fit in with circumstances, if you are not prepared to creep on your belly in the mud, you are no Revolutionary but a windbag, because no *jptfier* way is open to us, because history has not been so amiable as to bring revolution to maturity at the same time in all countries."² There were few who did not recognize his wisdom when eight months later the collapse of the Central Powers carried the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk into the limbo of history. The Left Social Revolutionaries, however, refused to accept the decision of the Soviet Congress, resigned from the Government and went into opposition. This was the first stage in their evolution into open enemies of the Soviet Republic. *J*

Meantime, the Allies were endeavouring to formulate a policy towards the Bolshevik revolution. They were united at least in this, that they desired to see the Eastern Front re-established in order to prevent German concentration in the West. But they were divided as to whether this could best be done by co-operating with the Bolsheviks or by fighting them. Japan very early in 1918 began to prepare for her subsequent invasion of Siberia, but she was not in the least interested in the re-establishment of the Eastern Front against Germany. She saw an opportunity of imperialist expansion. Litvinov in London was recognized as the Soviet plenipotentiary, while Kamenev was excluded from France. Some of the allied ambassadors in Russia were inclined to believe co-operation with the Bolsheviks was possible. When in January, 1918, the Soviet Government began the organization of the Red Army,

¹ Mirsky, *Lenin*, p. 137.

² *Ibid.*, p. 139.

the allied military attaches assisted Trotsky in his preliminary work with the knowledge of their Governments. Of course this aid was given in the hope that the Red Army might later be used against the Central Powers. The Allies were also toying with the idea of a military intervention against Germany on the Eastern Front undertaken with the consent of the Bolshevik Government. Clearly such an intervention must be exclusively anti-German. By June, 1918, the other school, who favoured an intervention against both Germans and Bolsheviks, had defeated those who were for co-operation between revolutionary Russia and the Allies against the Germans. This school, who were far more interested in crushing Bolshevism than in re-establishing the Eastern Front against Germany, were able to make skilful use in defeating the moderates of the legend that Lenin was a German agent. They were themselves driven by an acute perception of the power and appeal of the Bolshevik revolution into closer and closer co-operation with White Russian exiles, whose sole idea was the re-establishment of Tsarism and of their own class privileges. On April 5th, 1918, Japan began her attack on Soviet Russia by landing troops at Vladivostok—an operation in which British forces took part. On April 16th, 1918, a counter-revolutionary Government was formed in Peking in which Admiral Kolchak was Minister of War. Clearly the function of this Government would be to take over territory conquered in Siberia by foreign troops. Even so, allied policy was not united. Japan was playing her own hand, while England and the United States still hesitated.

The advocates of an attack on the Revolution were aided in their efforts to convert their Governments by arguments borrowed from the exponents of intervention against the Germans alone. The alleged danger of armed German prisoners in Siberia was much relied on in the official justifications for allied activities in the

far eastern territories of Russia. A plan had been mooted during the war for the creation of a special corps of Czech and Slovak prisoners of war in Russia to fight against Austria-Hungary side by side with the Russian forces, since the Czechoslovaks were hostile as a rule to the Dual Monarchy which denied their national aspirations. The Czech revolutionaries abroad, headed by Dr. T. G. Masaryk, the first and present President of Czechoslovakia, were ardent advocates of the plan. But the Tsarist Government did not encourage the idea. The Czechoslovaks were republicans and Roman Catholics, and Tsarism was not anxious to close the door on a possible separate peace with Austria-Hungary by supporting a movement so dubious from the legitimist point of view. Only after the March revolution was Dr. Masaryk able to organize the famous Czechoslovak Corps of about 50,000 men. As soon as it became certain that Russia was going to make peace Masaryk decided to transport his army to the Western Front through Siberia to Vladivostok, and so to Europe by sea. It was an undertaking magnificent in its audacity, but it was not in the least anti-Russian. On the Germans advancing into the Ukraine at the end of April, 1918, the Czechoslovaks retreated into Siberia along the Trans-Siberian railway.

In the meantime the Allies had begun pressing Masaryk to place his army at their disposal in Russia. The Bolsheviks, by previous agreement with the Czechoslovak leaders, began to disarm the legionaries. At first this operation proceeded peacefully, but on May 14th they began to resist attempts to collect their weapons and to adopt a hostile attitude to the Bolshevik authorities. When the trouble started the Czechoslovak forces were strung out along the whole length of the trunk line and were therefore able to occupy key points. Their advance guards entered Vladivostok on June 28th and deposed the Soviet authorities. Previously other

detachments had occupied Penza and Samara on the Volga on May 30th and June 8th ; Novo-Nikolaevsk, Omsk and Cheliabinsk in Siberia on May 25th. What had happened was that the Allies, who were financing the Czechoslovaks, had decided to keep them in Russia and use them as the armed nucleus round which counter-revolutionary elements might gather. In order to force the hands of the Czech leaders the Allies apparently made the recognition of their national cause and their revolutionary Government dependent on their armed co-operation in the attack on the Bolsheviks. The Czechs, whose general movement had been eastward, now reversed their direction and began to return through Siberia towards the west. During July they captured Ufa, Verkhui-Uralsk, Simbirsk, Yekaterinburg and, early in August, Kazan. From Samara, which they occupied on June 8th, a strong Czechoslovak force began to creep up the Volga in the direction of Moscow, now the heart of the revolution. In March the Soviet Government, in view of the German menace, had left Petrograd and transferred itself to the old capital. It was now certain that the Allies had embarked on a conspiracy to overthrow the revolution at the very moment when their representatives were in constant contact and daily negotiation with the Bolsheviks. On July 1st a British expeditionary force landed on the Murman coast and began the operation which ended in the allied occupation of Archangel on August 1st, 1918.

This was the zero hour of the revolution. The Bolsheviks were entirely hemmed in ; only Moscow and a relatively small area around it were controlled by the Soviet Government. The Czechoslovaks held Vladivostok and the Urals, the White General Krasnov was operating on the lower Volga; the Germans held the Caucasus, the Crimea, the Ukraine and Finland. They had invaded Finland at the invitation of the Finnish counter-revolutionaries under General Mannerheim. The

Communist Government of Finland, which had been established by the workers and peasants, was overthrown in May, 1918, and one of the bloodiest white terrors in modern history was inaugurated with the connivance of the German army of occupation. The Finnish frontier city of Viborg is but a short journey from Petrograd. The counter-revolutionary General Denikin was in the Kuban region. The British were at Archangel. If Moscow could be taken the Soviet regime would be at an end. The plan was to utilize elements hostile to the Soviet Government in Moscow to bring about a *coup d'etat* which was to coincide with a blow struck from without. The two wings of the Social Revolutionary Party served the purposes of the conspirators. The Left Social Revolutionaries had resigned from the Soviet Government rather than accept the peace of Brest-Litovsk. They now passed from opposition to rebellion. On July 6th two Left Social Revolutionaries assassinated Count Mirbach, the German Ambassador. The object of the crime was to precipitate a rupture between Bolshevik Russia and Germany, a plan in which they would undoubtedly have succeeded had not Germany been so heavily engaged on the Western Front. The next day the Left Social Revolutionaries staged a very poorly organized rising in Moscow, during which they occupied the Central Post Office and got control of a section of the city. The rising was, however, suppressed by the Bolsheviks in the course of a few hours.

Meanwhile, Boris Savinkov and the Right Social Revolutionaries had organized an anti-Bolshevik rising in Jaroslav with the close co-operation of the French Ambassador, Noulens, who, with the other Allied Ambassadors, was at Vologda. The rising began at Jaroslav on July 6th, and was followed by other risings at Murom, Ribinsk and Arzamas on July 9th. " It is almost a straight north-south line from Archangel to Mospow. The only important towns on the route are

Vologda and Jaroslav. Ribinsk is near Jaroslav. It is almost a straight east-west line from Kazan to Moscow. The only important towns on the route are Arzamas and Murom. If all these points fell into the hands of the Allies or their Russian supporters, Moscow, and with it the Bolshevik regime, were doomed. So the schemers reckoned. The roads were to be cleared by the Russian Whites. They would open the Archangel-Moscow line for the Anglo-Americans ; they would open the Kazan-Moscow line for the Czechoslovaks. Then the Anglo-Americans would come down from Archangel and, simultaneously, the Czechoslovaks in Kazan would advance on Moscow,"¹

The struggle for Jaroslav lasted twelve days, at the end of which time the historic old town was in ruins. Savinkov attacked with artillery, tanks and aeroplanes, but his plans miscarried, and the Bolshevik forces held the town. Savinkov's failure at Jaroslav is of decisive historic importance, for it ended the high hopes of the Allies of overthrowing Bolshevism before it had consolidated its position. Later struggles were more spectacular, but never again did world reaction approach so near to destroying the workers' revolution.

The Right Social Revolutionaries rapidly passed from rebellion to the opening of a campaign of individual terrorism against the Bolsheviks. Savinkov had already built up a world-wide reputation by his terrorist activities under Tsarism. On August 30th, 1918, the prominent Bolshevik Uritzky was assassinated at Petrograd, and an attempt was made on the life of Lenin at Moscow by a woman, Fanny Kaplan. The attack was nearly successful—one bullet lodged in his lungs, another passed through his neck and grazed the spinal column. For some days his life hung in the balance and though he made a good recovery, these wounds were probably of grave significance in his fatal illness. These staggering

¹ Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs*, vol. i., pp. 117-118,
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blows roused the Communists and the workers **and** peasants who supported the Soviet to a fury of hatred against the counter-revolutionaries, which found its expression in the inauguration of the Red Terror.* At the same time the passionate devotion and affection for their great leader which this attempt called forth began the formation of that unique loyalty and enthusiasm of which Lenin became and remains the object.

At first there was an element of democratic opposition in the resistance to the Bolsheviks. The Constituent Assembly which met in January was almost immediately dissolved by the Soviet Government. Lenin had been opposed to allowing it even to meet. He held that the revolution of November 7th, 1917, had rendered the Constituent Assembly a superfluous anachronism. The grand areopagus of a liberal revolution had been overtaken by the march of historic events. He was over-ruled. The Assembly was allowed to meet, but when it began to develop opposition to the new power it was at once dissolved. This decisive action inevitably gave the Constituent Assembly an altogether unmerited prestige among those Liberals who in all countries judge reality by appearance. These institutional fetishists have never ceased to bewail the Assembly, yet not a dog barked at its going. A number of members escaped to Omsk and the protection of the Czechoslovaks. Here a government was formed, which embraced various Moderate Socialist and Liberal elements. In September, 1918, Admiral Kolchak, under the auspices of the French **and** British, arrived in Omsk and became Minister of War. He was not long in consolidating his position.

¹ No statistics in the slightest degree reliable are yet available on the basis of which the number of those executed under the Red Terror, which lasted in its acute form from the middle of 1918 to the end of 1920, can be estimated. Current " estimates " range from 17,000 to the " two million—the lowest estimate of those who know the facts and wish to speak the truth—or a much larger total," favoured by Dean Inge.—See his *England*, Benn, 1926, p. 137.

On the night of November 18th, 1918, he arrested the leading members of the Omsk Government and proclaimed himself "Supreme Ruler of Russia." The day after the coup the American representative promised the new dictator the support of the United States. The only fly in the ointment was Japan, who had her own Russian proteg  the Ataman Semenov. Since Japan desired to annex large portions of Russian Siberia she could not look with approval on Kolchak who stood for the reconstitution of all the former territories of the Tsar. The United States had no intention of allowing this Japanese expansion in the Far East. Thus a rift, as yet concealed, divided the Allies from the first. They were united in one thing—their whole-hearted support of reaction. "With the rise of Kolchak, even the slightest pretence of democratic opposition to the Bolsheviks disappeared. All the generals in the Ukraine, the Don, the Kuban and the Caucasus, whether pro-German or pro-Entente, were frankly reactionary and autocratic, and, for the most part, enthusiastically monarchist.

In November, 1918, therefore, the civil war in Russia became a clear-cut struggle between Red revolution and Black reaction, between Communists and Monarchists, between Bolshevik enemies of bourgeois democracy and Czarist enemies of all democracy. The Allies sided with the latter."¹

The final test as to whether or not the Bolshevik Revolution of November, 1917, was a genuine expression of the will of the overwhelming majority of the people had now come. Throughout 1919 Russia was completely isolated. The whole diplomatic corps, including the Germans, who broke off relations in November, 1918, had left Moscow. Socialist Germany in its attitude to Socialist Russia ratified the last act of the Empire. Even the representatives of the Red Cross abandoned what they considered a doomed capital. The Red Army,

¹ Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs*, vol. i., p. 138.

however, continued to grow. It numbered 435,000 men in December, 1917, 1,500,000 in the middle of 1919, 5,300,000 in 1920. This growth indicates in part the progress of the political education of the peasants. While the proletariat was almost unanimously in favour of the Soviet Government, which had the support of the majority of the peasants, there still remained a mass of peasants comparatively indifferent. Their final attitude was one of crucial importance. Having secured the land and peace, all they wanted was to be left alone. This was what the Whites in the nature of things could not do. They relied on the city bourgeoisie, the clergy and the former landowners. There were no other elements on which the avowed enemies of the revolution could base themselves. If the Bolsheviks annoyed the peasants by requisitioning grain for the army, the Whites made it clear that they intended to restore the landlords. Denikin began to return the confiscated estates to the former landowners. Kolchak endeavoured to keep the peasants quiet by promising that the land question should be solved by the Constituent Assembly. Such a "promise" implied a refusal to recognize and accept the fact that the peasants had actually seized the land. Kolchak was accordingly ruined by peasant risings in his rear at the moment when his forces were called upon to face the main attack of the Red Army. In the same way Denikin was pulled down by peasant risings on the line of his communications at the crisis of his advance on Moscow in 1919.

Similarly, the Whites were entirely unable to solve the problem of nationalities. In their attack on Moscow they had to advance from bases in the border regions of Russia, inhabited by a majority of non-Russians. The policy of the Whites towards these peoples was thus of vital importance for the success of their military operations. Here again they inherited from the Tsarism they were bent on restoring an invincible Great Russian

imperialism on the national question. Since they were unable to conciliate the former subject nationalities, these peoples, like the peasants, threw their weight behind the Bolsheviks. When Denikin occupied the Ukraine in 1919, not only were the peasants alienated, but a determined assault was made on the Ukrainian national movement in the name of Russian nationalism. Throughout these campaigns the Whites were split by faction and personal intrigue, and it is certain that they would have been able to make no impression at all, much less threaten the existence of the Soviet State, had not the Allies furnished them with money, supplies and a limited military aid. Doubtless, had the Allies undertaken the task with their own forces they might have seized Moscow. But the occupation of Moscow by foreign armies would not necessarily have ended the Russian revolution. In any event, the Western democracies were in no fit condition for another gigantic war of conquest. The social soil of Western Europe was quaking beneath the feet of the peacemakers of Versailles. They could and did injure Russia by inflicting a further period of terrible suffering upon her, but their instruments broke in their hands. Like their White Russian prot6g6s, they were divided among themselves. There was a Japanese-American and an Anglo-French political struggle going on throughout the entire period of intervention.

By the end of 1919 Denikin, who had advanced to within 245 miles of Moscow, was driven back and the remnants of his army pinned in the Crimea. At the same time Kolchak was decisively defeated and driven from the Urals. His troops deserted in masses, and the Red Army captured 100,000 prisoners and the archives of the counter-revolution. Kolchak fled to Irkutsk, where he resigned his command and surrendered to General Janin, the French officer in charge of the Allied forces in Siberia. In order to save his corps from destruction, General Janin handed over the protege of the Allies to

the Bolsheviks. Kolchak was tried before a Revolutionary Tribunal, found guilty and shot on February 7th, 1920. Shortly before this General Yudenich, operating from Esthonia in co-operation with British naval forces, penetrated as far as the suburbs of Petrograd before he was decisively defeated by the Red Army under the direct command of Trotsky, the ubiquitous Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs and Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council, who for two and a half years lived in a train flying from front to front organizing victory.

The final struggle was with Poland. Throughout the whole of 1919 the Poles, who resolutely refused during prolonged negotiations to define their eastern frontier with Russia, pushed into Soviet territory. On the other hand, Marshal Pilsudski, the all-powerful dictator, had no intention of co-operating with the Whites. He watched their liquidation at the hands of the Bolsheviks with perfect equanimity, since he knew that a restored Tsarism would never recognize Polish independence. He preferred to settle his differences with Soviet Russia unaided. The Bolsheviks succeeded in safeguarding their flanks by securing treaties of peace with Finland, Latvia and Lithuania at the very moment when the Polish menace materialized. Behind Poland stood France, working for an anti-Soviet alliance of Poland, Hungary and Roumania. Although Roumania and Russia were bitterly divided as the result of the Roumanian seizure of the Russian frontier province of Bessarabia, this promising combination was wrecked on the even deeper antagonisms of Roumania and Hungary. Marshal Pilsudski, however, counting on France and the chastened remnants of the Denikin armies in the Crimea under Baron Wrangel, opened the offensive on April 26th, 1920, without a declaration of war. On May 8th, the Poles occupied Kiev. Russian nationalism was aroused, and all classes rallied to the Soviet. General Brussilov accepted an

appointment on the Red staff and appealed to Tsarist officers to volunteer. On June 13th the Poles were driven out of Kiev, and the Red cavalry under Budenny raided far into Poland. Soon the retreat had become a rout, and panic seized the Polish Government when it appeared probable that the main Soviet army of 150,000 men under the 27-year-old General Tukhachevsky would succeed in taking the capital, Warsaw. The prospect of a Red revolution faced Pilsudski and the Western statesmen who had encouraged him in his adventure.

For Lenin and the Communists the war was not for the liberation of Russian provinces, but for the overthrow of the Polish bourgeoisie and for the opening up of Germany and Central Europe to the direct revolutionary influences of Soviet Russia. For this reason Lenin felt justified in playing for the highest stakes. Poland, if successful, might occupy some Russian frontier districts. She could not endanger the Russian revolution: in fact, Pilsudski had deliberately waited for the defeat of the main White armies before launching his attack. A Soviet victory, on the other hand, would have incalculable consequences for the cause of world revolution. For these reasons Lenin rejected the advice of the military experts who wanted to halt on the frontiers of ethnographic Poland and ordered the advance on Warsaw to continue. But the Red Army was infected with the nationalism which Pilsudski's wanton and unprovoked aggression had called forth. It behaved like a conquering Russian army and accordingly provoked a counter-wave of nationalism among the Polish peasants and a section of the Polish proletariat, again called upon to meet an invasion of the old enemy. This contradiction, the faulty strategy of the Red Commanders and the arrival in Warsaw of a group of French experts headed by General Weygand, Marshal Foch's Chief-of-Staff, turned the tide, and the Russian forces were driven back when they had succeeded in penetrating to the very suburbs of Warsaw.

Once the campaign was lost Lenin realized that to continue the war would be defensible only on nationalist grounds. Accordingly he insisted on opening negotiations with Poland and concluding a settlement very favourable to Marshal Pilsudski's ambitions. The treaty of Riga set the Red Army free for the attack on Wrangel, the last of the White generals, who was driven from the Crimea by brilliant tactics and heavy fighting in November, 1920. The civil war was thus liquidated with the annihilation of the last serious counter-revolutionary army. Isolated bands continued to operate for a time in Siberia, but were all rounded up or dispersed in the course of the following year.

In the Polish war Lenin, whose influence was nearly always decisive, saw simply a problem in the strategy of world revolution. Ever since August, 1914, he had consciously worked for the reconstitution of the Socialist International in view of the pitiable collapse of the national socialist parties of Western Europe. Committed by many formal declarations and manifestoes to revolutionary opposition to imperialist war, the major socialist parties of Germany, Great Britain, Austria-Hungary and France fell from one moral capitulation to another; from specious rationalizations of patriotism such as "the war to make the world safe for democracy" and the "war to end war," to the most vulgar and jingo chauvinism. The collapse of Germany in 1918 and the end of the war created a revolutionary situation in Western Europe. The disillusioned masses were instinctively opposed to the opportunism and moral cowardice of their official leaders and instinctively favourable to the Soviet Republic. It represented to them "the logic of their unformulated desires." Clearly the moment had come to give the mass movement direction. In March, 1919, a Congress of revolutionary Socialists met in Moscow and founded the Communist or Third International. The new organization was called to formulate revolutionary

Socialism and to wage uncompromising war against the "reformism" of the 1914 brand. The problems of the new international were closely connected with the question of nationalities inside the Soviet Union. Under Lenin's leadership the Soviet Republic and the International re-affirmed the absolute right of nations to self-determination. Lenin resisted the tendency to extreme centralization as a relic of Tsarism and the demand of some Communists that "such a right could only belong to the working classes of every nationality." He saw that this might lead to the recognition of the right of the proletariat of one nationality to oppress the bourgeoisie of another, which would be only a grotesquely inverted form of imperialism. "The class struggle must be carried on inside each nationality. The workmen of a formerly Imperialist nation could only intervene as the allies of the working masses of the formerly oppressed nationality, but never as foreign conquerors—which would make of them the successors of the Imperialist classes they had overthrown at home."¹ This brilliant policy solved two problems—it checked the rise of a Soviet imperialism in place of a Tsarist imperialism, and it cut the ground from under the feet of bourgeois nationalists and patriotic Liberals whose thought is in essence a belated survival of the ideology generated by the great nationalist struggles of the nineteenth century. As a result, all the formerly-oppressed nationalities of the Russian Empire have adhered to the Soviet cause, and the final success of the policy was marked by the formation of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics in December, 1922. It is important to realize that there is now no official language in Russia—all education and all government and official business are conducted in the language of the nationality concerned, however "primitive" that language may be. Absolute cultural autonomy has now been proved compatible with the

¹ Mirsky, *Lenin*, p. 169.

existence of a powerful modern state. The dictatorship in each national republic of the working class of that nation and the leadership of the proletariat by the party of the proletariat provide the Soviet Union with a cohesive force at once more powerful and more flexible than the formal unity achieved by bureaucratic oppression and denial of national and cultural differences.

The end of the civil war confronted the Soviet Government with the great problem of economic reconstruction. The seizure of power in November, 1917, was not followed, as is frequently supposed, by the immediate nationalization of industry. Lenin, while inflexible as to the goal of Socialism, jealous of the uttermost jot of class power, was not only willing but anxious to proceed step by step and experimentally in the working out of concrete details. The State Bank was at once taken over, and the remaining banks were nationalized on December 13th, 1917. In the same month the Supreme Council of National Economy was established in Moscow as an economic general staff to co-ordinate the activities of the factory committees and to work out detailed plans for nationalization. It was constituted of representatives of the trade unions, factory committees and the Government, together with economic experts. The merchant fleet and corn depôts were nationalized in February, 1918. Not until May and June, 1918, were two whole industries, sugar and oil, nationalized. In the course of the spring of 1918 certain trades were made State monopolies, such as matches, spices, yarn and foreign trade.¹ All these steps had been taken under pressure of the political situation, and the general nationalization decree of June 28th, 1918, declaring all firms with capital of over one million roubles national property, was issued to forestall an attempt by the Germans to claim exemption for factories that

¹ Dobb, " *Russian Economic Development since the Revolution*, p. 32.

had been nominally made over by their White owners to German firms. Up to this date Lenin was meeting considerable opposition from a Left wing group headed by Bukharin and Radek, who wanted a far more sweeping and doctrinaire policy. They wanted nationalization of *all* private enterprise for its own sake and as a matter of principle. They were indignant that Lenin in the early months of 1918 was holding conversations with prominent industrialists for the formation of mixed companies in which foreign capital should participate. The opposition also especially resented Lenin's efforts to keep the services of specialists and experts who were frequently pushed aside by the Workers' Factory Committees with anything but satisfactory results. It was against the doctrinaire opposition that Lenin directed his sharpest attacks. "When workers' delegations came to me with complaints against the factory owners," he said, "I always said to them : ' You want your factory nationalized. Well and good ! We have the decree ready and can sign it in a moment. But tell me : Can you take the organization into your own hands ? Do you know how and what you produce ? And do you know the relations between your production and the Russian and the international market ?' And inevitably it transpired that they knew nothing. There was nothing written about such matters in the Bolshevik text-books, or even in those of the Mensheviks."¹

The decree of June 28th, 1918, seemed a complete surrender to the Left and the abandonment of all attempt to establish an economic transition stage in the form of State capitalism. The number of industries administered by the State went up to 1,000 by the beginning of 1919 and 3,000 by January, 1920. The extreme point of nationalization was reached on November 29th, 1920, when the Supreme Council of National Economy took **over all** enterprises employing more than five workers

¹ Cited, Farbman, *After Lenin*, p. 43.

with the use of machines and those employing more than ten workers without the use of machines. The whole of this development grew out of the necessities of the civil war which began in the late summer of 1918 with the intervention of the Allies. The only possible reply was the inauguration of the Red Terror and the subordination of the whole national economy to the needs of the army. In 1920 the Red Army consumed 25 per cent, of the flour, 60 per cent, of the fish, 60 per cent, of the meat, 40 per cent, of the fats, 100 per cent, of the tobacco, 90 per cent. of the men's shoes and 40 per cent, of the cotton goods of the entire country.¹ The period of "War Communism," when the State, in the desperate effort to save itself from destruction at the hands of the invaders, seized everything and gripped the life of the country in an iron vice, was one of continuous and catastrophic economic decline. By 1920 the number of workers employed in industry was less than one half that of the pre-war period, while the average productivity of the worker had fallen to 30-35 per cent., and the total output of industry to 14.5 per cent, of the pre-war figures. The same picture of amazing ruin was presented by agriculture. The peasants, menaced by inflation and by the total inability of industry to supply their needs, had begun to meet the State requisitions by reducing the wheat areas. By 1920 the area sown in Siberia was half, and in parts of the Volga regions and the Caucasus a quarter, of what it had been before the war. Shortage of food and raw material produced a disastrous fall in industrial productivity. "Starvation or semi-starvation grievously lowered the intensity of work and the efficiency of the individual worker, increased absenteeism and encouraged petty theft and speculation as means of supplementing starvation rations."² War Communism was in its inception an

¹ Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs*, vol. i., pp. 189-190.

² Dobb, *Russian Economic Development since the Revolution*, p. 95.

obvious military necessity. But in the eyes of the Communists a system which Lenin had been driven to accept with reluctance and under the pressure of desperate civil war had become by 1920 an essential stage in the development of Socialism. They were at least right in this, that " War Communism " had uprooted the capitalists as a class and it would be difficult for them to regain their lost positions. But that was a negative advantage. The problem at the end of the civil war was to restore industry, and at first there was no intention of abandoning " War Communism." Trotsky, for instance, had become so enamoured of military methods that he favoured the conscription of labour armies. He wished to see the Trade Unions transformed into organs of the State dictatorially governed from above. Lenin, on the other hand, was determined to preserve the independence of the Trade Unions as a democratic check to the growing bureaucratic tendencies of the State.

To some extent the problem hinged on the international situation. If history should, to use Lenin's phrase, prove " amiable " and precipitate a revolution in the great industrial countries of the West in the near future, then " War Communism " was the obvious policy for Soviet Russia. She would have to hold on for a short time only, and then the transformed industrial powers of Europe would make good her economic shortcomings and enable her to retain the advanced State organization which was beyond her normal capacity, and had been hastily pieced together in the midst of a civil war which threw the economic life of Russia into a disorder which only dictatorial measures could even alleviate. If, on the other hand, the world revolution was going to be long delayed (the failure of the Communists in Hungary and Germany in 1919 and the defeat before Warsaw in 1920 pointed to this) then the task of building a Socialist order **in** Russia must be undertaken in terms of the social and **economic** situation in a Russia at length delivered from

foreign and domestic foes and in a position to rebuild her shattered life.

The great change from War Communism to what is known as the New Economic Policy was the response of the Communist Party under Lenin's leadership to the growing resistance of the peasants to the hardships and restrictions of War Communism. Serious peasant disturbances broke out in several provinces, especially in Tambov, and the agitation soon extended to the industrial workers. In March, 1921, the garrison of Kronstadt, "the pride and glory" of the Revolution, mutinied to the cry of "Soviets but no Communists." During the winter half of the garrison had gone home on leave. "Their return to the villages enabled them to grasp the real hardships of the requisitioning policy as well as the methods of violence and coercion by which it was carried out. The result was that they were converted to the views of the peasants on the subject."¹ On their return the sailors began to agitate for concessions to the peasants, for instance the abolition of food picketing on the roads and the right to possess as many cattle as they could keep without employing hired labour. The government agents had often requisitioned not only a part of a harvest but nearly all of it. As a result the rich peasants, the kulaks, had taken to lending grain to their poorer neighbours instead of handing it over to the collectors. In this way they were securing economic and social control over the villages as public benefactors and leading a united front of rich and poor peasants against a Government that presented itself in the guise of a highway robber. Whether through panic or bureaucratic vanity the authorities bungled the Kronstadt problem, and what might have been settled in a few days by tactful concessions was converted into a first-class mutiny. Trotsky crushed

¹ Farbman, *Bolshevism in Retreat*, p. 276,

the rising with artillery, but it proved a decisive turning point in the history of Soviet Russia.

As D. S. Mirsky admirably points out, Lenin, like all great revolutionary leaders, was an optimist. At the same time his political insight was far more profound than that of any of his comrades. He was the first to see the necessity for a retreat and the last to insist on it. He only acted at the last possible moment when it was a question of giving up any of the gains of the Revolution, but, though he delayed, he was never too late. Brest-Litovsk was a hair-breadth escape. He saw with absolute clarity the necessity for surrender, but as long as there was the faintest chance that Trotsky might avert this, he did not insist. Only when it was clear that the Revolution itself was in danger did he exert the full force of his mighty authority. Similarly in 1918 he had fought to establish a system essentially the same as that actually inaugurated by the New Economic Policy of 1921. His hands were forced by the outbreak of the Civil War. Once War Communism was established, Lenin was the last to abandon so great an advance as long as there was the least chance of curing the economic disorder of Russia by a more intensive and systematic application of a system which had saved her during the civil war and might yet be adapted to the problems of peace. "Only the immediate menace of a general peasant rebellion made Lenin advance the New Policy."¹ "Don't let us make any mistake," he said in a speech before the Tenth Party Congress in March, 1921, "the peasants are dissatisfied with their present relationship to the State, and so it cannot continue. That is certain. The mind of the peasants is now made up. It is the mind of the overwhelming number of the toiling masses." The new policy began by the substitution of a graduated tax levied in kind on agricultural products for the

¹ Mirsky, *Lenin*, p. 181.

long as the proletariat retains the administrative power, the means of transport and large-scale industry."¹ But before the benefits of the New Economic Policy could be felt on a large scale the country had to pass through the terrible famine on the Volga at the end of 1921, the worst in Russia for thirty years. The famine of 1891 had affected 17,000,000 persons, that of 1911 27,000,000. The famine of 1921 involved no less than 43,000,000 persons in 27 provinces. Of these 13,000,000 were reduced to complete destitution, and the death rate, both among human beings and cattle, was appalling. But the tide was turning.

In spite of the clarity and candour of Lenin's defence of the New Economic Policy the spectacle of the revolution apparently rolling back on itself, the rise of the new bourgeois, infinitely more grasping and vulgar than the old because aware that he was operating in a hostile atmosphere, all this was profoundly disquieting to the most idealistic of the Communists. Some even committed suicide in their disappointment that the party accepted the new line. At the Eleventh Party Congress in March, 1922, Lenin delivered one of his greatest speeches. The New Economic Policy, he said, must be applied steadily over a long period. This called for " the introduction of a business-like spirit into the State enterprises, which must become able to learn from and compete with capitalist enterprises." " By our side a Capitalist is busy, he acts as a robber, he grabs profits, but he knows his job. And you—you are trying new methods : you make no profits. Communist principles, excellent ideals, are written large on you, you are holy men, fit to go alive to paradise, but do you know your business ? " " We must understand this simple thing—that in a new and unusually difficult task we must learn to begin anew again and again. If one start has led you into a blind alley, begin again, re-do the work ten times; but attain

¹ See text of speech, *The Labour Monthly*, vol. i., pp. 18-34.

your end, don't be self-important, don't pride yourself on being a Communist and no such thing as that non-party commercial clerk; he may be a White (there is even no doubt he is a White), but he knows his job . . . and you do not." Every period had its key-note. In 1917 it was peace. Then it was victory in the Civil War. Now it was the duty of keeping steady and preserving order on a retreat to a secure position from which once more to advance. "In the masses of the people we are as a drop in the sea and we can govern only if we adequately express what the people feels. . . . All the Revolutionary parties that have hitherto fallen have fallen because they became proud and unable to see where their strength lay, and were afraid to speak of their weakness. We shall not fall because we are not afraid to speak of our weakness and will learn to overcome our weakness,"¹¹ This was the last speech delivered by Lenin in the full exercise of his energies. In May occurred the first stroke, and he lost the use of his right arm and leg. Between July and October he made a good recovery and was allowed to resume work by his doctors in October. Between October, 1922, and March, 1923, he was active, though his work after December, when the second stroke came, had to be constantly reduced. He continued to write, but had to delegate most of his administrative work. His last article, "On Co-operation," discussed the peasant problem and foreshadowed the collectivization that was to transform the Russian countryside under the first Five Year Plan. On March 9th, 1923, a third stroke totally incapacitated him. Hopes were entertained of his recovery, but on January 21st, 1924, the end came suddenly with the fourth stroke.^a

The death of Lenin revealed the extent to which his mighty personality had won the love of the Russian people. The overwhelming sense of loss the nation

¹ Cited, Mirsky, *Lenin*, pp. 185-86.

² Fox, *Lenin*, pp. 302-3, 311-12.

demonstrated came as a revelation even to the Communist Party. " It was a kind of post-mortem vote of confidence." The Soviet Government was strengthened by this unique ratification of the legitimacy of its authority. This was all the more important in view of the serious struggles within the party that had already begun.

During the greater part of 1922 and throughout 1923 a struggle for power had been going on in the inner circles of the party between Stalin, the General Secretary, and Trotsky. It will be necessary here to indicate the main structure of the Communist Party of Russia at this time, since the party dominates the State, and no other party is permitted to exist. This monopoly is a logical result of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Communist view is that parties are the political expression of classes. With the sharpening of the class war in the modern world, itself the expression of the economic crisis, the increasing tendency is for the realities of class power to express themselves in the exclusive supremacy of a party. The democratic state of the nineteenth century is breaking up. On the one hand the dictatorship of the proletariat is expressed in the Soviet Union by the exclusive dominance of the Communist Party, on the other the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is expressed in Germany and Italy by the exclusive dominance of the Nazi and Fascist parties. Other countries, such as Poland, Hungary and Austria, present variations of the bourgeois dictatorship. The fundamental difference between the two types of dictatorship lies in the fact that the dictatorship of the proletariat by definition has to work for the establishment of Socialism, that is, in briefest formulation, the classless society. The achievement of a classless society would end the dictatorship of the proletariat and the proletarian coercive State. Since the State, in the Communist analysis, is the expression of the coercive power of a governing class over an exploited class, it can

continue to exist only so long as the exploitation of man by man continues. This fundamental difference shatters the superficial attempt of some publicists to condemn in the same breath, as equally hostile to the liberal idea, the two types of dictatorship into which the democratic State is decomposing. The one is consciously working to achieve a re-birth of liberty, the other its final destruction. These considerations are germane to the analysis of the struggle between Trotsky and Stalin.

The Russian Communist Party was ruled by a Central Committee of sixty members elected by the annual party congress. The Central Committee met once in three months. In the intervals its powers were exercised by three committees in permanent session: the Political Bureau, the Organizing Bureau and the Control Commission. The Political Bureau consisted in 1924 of seven members: Stalin, Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsy. The Political Bureau, of which Lenin was always the Chairman, controlled the political line of action of the party and therefore of the Government. The Organizing Bureau consisted of Stalin, Tomsy and Kuybyshev, and was responsible for all the official appointments made in the party and therefore in the Government. The Central Control Commission supervised the political and moral behaviour of party members and conducted the periodical reviews of the membership known as "cleansings," which result in the wholesale expulsions of unsatisfactory Communists and the admission of new blood. Since 1922 Stalin had been General Secretary to the Central Committee of the party, the body which appointed these three Committees. He was, as we have seen, a member of the two most important of the committees, and in one way and another he had accumulated enormous power in his hands.

Stalin's power grew with the growth of the Communist party machine. As a machine politician he had few equals. His practicality, his efficiency, and his will-

power made him impatient of anything that could not produce immediate results. Hence his inveterate belief in a well-disciplined bureaucracy, a belief which involved him in conflict with Lenin in the last months of the political life of the founder of Bolshevism. Lenin was an ardent exponent of workers' democracy. He desired passionately to see the bureaucracy checked from below. The dictatorship of the proletariat was the framework within which the political education of the workers and peasants should be completed by workers' democracy. The ideal is difficult but not at all impossible to achieve provided a candid and patient leadership of the State and the party guarantees the prerequisites. But the modern state is bureaucratic by nature, and as the years passed the Soviet bureaucracy grew steadily.

Lenin accused Stalin of strengthening the development of bureaucracy and entered into a combination with Trotsky to check the growth of Stalin's influence. At the same time, on December 25th, 1922, he committed to writing his reflections on the position in the governing circles of the party, which he handed to his wife. Realizing that his illness might have a fatal termination at any moment, he instructed her to communicate this message to the Central Committee and to the party in the event of his death. The document, which has come to be known as the Testament of Lenin, is remarkable in many ways. It consists of very searching personal assessments of the leading members of the Central Committee. It is dominated by the fear of a split due to the conflict of the two most powerful personalities in the Central Committee—Stalin and Trotsky. In view of its extreme importance the Testament deserves quotation: . . . " Our party rests upon two classes, and for that reason its instability is possible, and if there cannot exist an agreement between these classes its fall is inevitable. . . . 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. . . . Comrade Stalin, having become General Secretary, 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 . . . 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 . . .” The document then concludes with some penetrating comments on Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin and Piatakov. On January 4th, 1923, Lenin added the following postscript: " Stalin is too rude, and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us Communists, becomes insupportable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore, I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint to it another man who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority—namely, more patient, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc. This circumstance may seem an insignificant trifle, but I think that from the point of view of preventing a split and from the point of view of the relation between Stalin and Trotsky, it is not a trifle, or it is such a trifle as may acquire a decisive significance."¹

N. K. Krupskaya, his wife, did not read this letter at the party Congress of April, 1923, because the doctors still gave her hopes of Lenin's recovery. Had she done

¹ Trotsky, *The Real Situation in Russia*, pp. 320-23.

so there is little doubt that Trotsky would have been able to drive his great opponent from power. A few days before the next Congress in May, 1924, she presented the letter to the Central Committee, but by this time Stalin had a sufficient majority to order the testament to be withheld from the party.¹

By 1924 the New Economic Policy had justified itself in the economic recovery of the country. The general confidence of the external world that Russia was returning to a "normal" condition by way of a modified capitalism was reflected in the rapid succession of recognitions extended to the Soviet Government by foreign powers in the course of 1924 and 1925, followed by the re-establishment of full diplomatic relations. This general improvement in the economic condition of the country was accompanied by the rise of a new bourgeoisie of "Nepmen," as they were called, in the towns, and of "kulaks," or rich peasants, in the country. The Communist Party had never accepted the New Economic Policy as more than a retreat to a base from which the advance to Socialism might be resumed. Lenin had made this abundantly clear from the first moment of the new line. The economic recovery and the experience gained by the State Trusts warranted a change. Communist opinion demanded it, but the leaders inevitably split into a right and left wing over the application of a concrete policy. During the first half of 1924 the Nepmen and the new private enterprises in the towns were loaded with taxation intended to crush them out of existence. The Nepmen were generally unpopular, and the State Trusts were able to take their place easily, but these successes caused the left wing led by Trotsky to demand an attack on the village bourgeoisie or kulaks. But as the towns were still dependent on the grain surplus produced by the rich peasants for food, and the State for export, the majority at the Fourteenth Party Congress, in

¹ Eastman, *Since Lenin Died*, p. 92.

December, 1925, headed by Stalin, opposed the repression of the kulaks on the ground that at the moment they could not be replaced. A good harvest in 1926 further encouraged the left wing. Trotsky was joined by Zinoviev, President of the Third International, and Kamenev—both of whom had supported Stalin against Trotsky in 1924.

At the Fourteenth Party Congress Stalin had announced that policy of industrialization which later found its embodiment in the first Five Year Plan fulfilled in the four years 1928-1932. "The choice which at some period vexes all agrarian countries now lay before Russia. Should she remain primarily an agrarian country, exporting agricultural produce and importing industrial goods from abroad? In such a case her chief interest lay in foreign trade and in free trade, and her need of capital, except for transport development, was not very great. Or should she transform herself into an industrial country by accumulating capital and developing her manufacture so as to supply needs which formerly had been satisfied by import from abroad, and to find an internal market for raw material which had formerly been exported?"¹ Stalin pointed out that in a world of actual and potential enemies it was highly undesirable for Russia to remain dependent on her neighbours for longer than was absolutely necessary. The failure of the revolution to materialize in the West made the task doubly urgent. The problem of the financing of industrialization became the major issue. "If factories were to be built, irrigation schemes and power stations and railway extension undertaken, which would yield their fruit only after a period of years, somebody in the present would have to lack the cloth trousers or linen tunics, the leather boots or sandals, the food products or metal wares which might have been available, had

¹ Dobb, *Russian Economic Development since the Revolution*, P- 319.

not labour and materials been diverted to constructional work. To finance the import of constructional material by foreign capital was for Russia in existing circumstances virtually impossible on any considerable scale."¹ In the autumn of 1927 the Central Committee of the Party issued a preliminary Five Year Plan.

The opposition received the preliminary plan with the criticism that the kulak was still to lord it in the villages and that the new bourgeoisie was growing stronger and stronger. All through the year the struggle had been growing more embittered. In the last platform of the opposition submitted to the Political Bureau in September, 1927, the dominance of the machine over the party and of Stalin over the machine was directly attacked. " Within the party there is taking place . . . an extremely significant process of pushing out the old party men, who lived through the underground period, or at least through the Civil War, and are independent and capable of defending their views. They are being replaced by new elements, distinguished chiefly by their unquestioning obedience. This obedience cultivated from above under the name of revolutionary discipline has really nothing whatever to do with revolutionary discipline. . . . The real rights of one member of the party at the top are many times greater than the real rights of a hundred members at the bottom. . . . The dying out of inner party democracy leads to a dying out of workers' democracy in general—in the trade unions and in all other party mass organizations. . . . Every word of criticism against the . . . mistakes of Stalin is described as a struggle against the party. . . . It has become entirely customary to expel oppositionists for speaking at the meetings of their locals, for making sharp exclamations, for attempting to read the testament of Lenin. . . . In the organizational sphere, the actual subjection of the Political Bureau to the secretariat

and the secretariat to the secretary-general has long ago become an accomplished fact."¹ The Central Committee declared the document an attack on the party and suppressed it. When the opposition started printing and distributing it secretly, Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the party. In December, 1927, at the Fifteenth Party Congress the same penalty was meted out to seventy-five leaders, among them Kamenev, Radek, Rakovsky and Piatakov. The latter had been mentioned in Lenin's testament as among the ablest of the younger members of the party. Some fifteen hundred lesser oppositionists were expelled at the same time. The Political Police, the famous O.G.P.U., had for some time been used against the opposition. Now the whole weight of the greatest defensive force ever established by a revolution was directed to the destruction of a part of the revolutionary party. Trotsky was exiled to Siberia in 1928, whence, in 1929, he was expelled to Turkey by arrangement with the Turkish Government.

From that time onward the O.G.P.U. has been ruthlessly stamping out the "Trotskyists" and other varieties of opposition to the great party machine of which Stalin is the undisputed head. Unity and discipline had always been the characteristics of the party founded by Lenin. Stalin has maintained this tradition, but at the price of sweeping off the political stage the vast majority of the old companions of Lenin. That he has succeeded is due not only to his great gifts as a politician, but to organic changes within the Communist party and the proletariat of Russia. Increasingly they have settled down to the vast task of reconstructing Russia. Their revolutionary vision has been at once narrowed and intensified. To Trotsky this is the process of "bureaucratic ossification." It is difficult to accept this as an adequate account of that mighty outpouring of energy known as the Five Year Plan. Stalin alone of

¹ Trotsky, *The Real Situation in Russia*, pp. 116-121.

the old companions of Lenin is the embodiment of the new spirit—a spirit at once creative, empirical, definitive and hard. He is a loyal servant of the Russian Revolution. The World Revolution, say the opposition, is remembered by him only as apostolic poverty is remembered by the church. In fact, the struggle between Trotsky and Stalin involved questions of international policy to a greater extent than is sometimes realized.

The problem of the Chinese Revolution divided the factions in 1926-1927. The Stalinist policy of alliance with the bourgeois nationalist Kuomintang party was fiercely assailed by Trotsky as a betrayal of the Chinese proletariat and peasantry. The opposition contended that "the defeat of the Italian workers in 1920-1921, of the German proletariat in 1921-1923, the defeat of the great strike in England in 1926, and the defeat of the Chinese proletariat in 1927, whatever may have been their causes, have themselves become the cause of a temporary depression of the revolutionary wave in the upper levels of the proletariat."¹ This depression was reflected in the Stalinist policy, according to the opposition, in an increasing damping down of the activity of the Third International, of which Stalin has been a member of the Executive Committee since 1927. It was also reflected in Stalin's doctrine of the possibility of "building Socialism in one country," which he put forward first at the end of 1924 and which has been the guiding inspiration of the Five Year Plan. Trotsky had no difficulty in proving in an elaborately documented study appended to the final volume of his history of the revolution that the possibility of achieving socialism in one country had not occurred to any Bolshevik thinker while Lenin was alive. Lenin vehemently repudiated the idea. "The dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia was for the Bolsheviks a bridge to a revolution in the west. The problem of a Socialist

¹ Trotsky, *The Real Situation in Russia*, p. 164.

transformation of society was proclaimed to be in its very essence international,"¹ The new line might have been discussed in a candid and creative way had Stalin been as willing as Lenin to admit that a change of policy is a change and not a continuation of a former policy now abandoned. On the contrary, under the present leadership in Russia and the Third International, history is constantly being re-written from the beginning in order to endow current policy with complete consistency. "In 1926 the Communist International officially condemned the non-acceptance of the theory of Socialism in a separate country, extending this condemnation to the whole past, beginning with the year 1905."² The most disturbing facts about the present leadership of the Russian Revolution are its frequent disregard of historical truth and its general unwillingness either to admit mistakes or to acknowledge changes of policy.⁸ As a simple illustration of this tendency, which can be verified by anyone who is willing to look up dates and compare references, it should have been possible to exile Trotsky in 1928 without entirely re-writing in a depreciatory sense his role in the revolution of November, 1917.

There is no doubt whatever that the driving force behind the Five Year Plan, which was in fact completed at the beginning of 1933 in a little over four years, was the tenacious and heroic struggle of the Russian proletariat to use its political power in order to re-build the economic life of the Soviet Union and to found it upon a basis at once too strong to be attacked from without and from which an advance might be made to the full establishment of Socialism and the classless society. This sustained effort has no parallel in European history in times of peace. A revolution in the economic foundations involves a transformation in the superstructure. The

¹ Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. hi., p. 371.

² *Ibid.*, p. 372.

⁸ The implied comparison is, of course, solely with the traditions of the party under Lenin's leadership.

Russian Revolution has penetrated farther into that Holy of Holies of the old regime, private property, and therefore the changes wrought in all other aspects of the national life have been correspondingly profound. Since the whole fabric of human life is built upon economic foundations, only that change can be called a revolution which involves a relaying of those foundations. Changes in the superstructure are never of fundamental importance, for only those changes can be made which are compatible with the existing foundation. When the foundations themselves are moved, then only can thought, art, the spiritual life itself be re-born.

Not long after finally disposing of the opposition, Stalin took over its policy with regard to the kulaks, that peasant bourgeoisie that had been flourishing under the New Economic Policy, and began the attack, partly economic and partly administrative, which concluded with their liquidation as a class.» Characteristically this attack did not derive only from theoretical considerations, but grew out of the objective requirements of the industrial plan. The revolution in its first phase had reduced the productivity of agriculture, multiplying small peasant agricultural holdings by the break-up of the estates of the expropriated nobility. The rise of capitalist agriculture under the New Economic Policy and the development of State farms had failed to make up the deficiency sufficiently to meet the enormous expansion of basic heavy industry required by the Five Year Plan for the industrial independence of the U.S.S.R. It became essential to raise the productivity of agriculture. This could be done most efficiently, and, at the same time, the kulak could be wiped out by collectivization which was the agricultural counterpart of industrialization. The predominating type of collective farm is the Kolhoz, which is a producer's agricultural co-operative society large enough to apply capital to the land in the form of machinery and scientific treatment, and so raise

productivity. These co-operative farms are usually members of a local association known as a Union of Collective Farms. Each Collective Farm "makes a contract by which it receives certain credit advances or the supply of certain materials and machinery in kind, and in return undertakes to deliver a certain *quota* of produce to the association. It is on the basis of these contracts that the annual Plan for agriculture is made."¹ The following tables illuminate the extent of the social revolution, carried to completion by the agricultural collectivization, under the Five Year Plan :—

Population figures.

(In millions at end of year.)

			1913	1928	1932
1. Total Population	..	..	139.3	154.2	165.7
Of which :					
(a) Urban	..	..	24.7	27.6	38.7
(b) Rural	..	..	114.6	126.6	127.0
2. Percentage of Urban Population to total	..	..	17.7	17.9	23.3

Change in composition of population, 1928-32.

(Average figure for year.)

				1928	1932
1. Non-agricultural population (in millions)				32.4	47.4
Percentage to total population	..	..		21.3	28.8
2. Agricultural population, including those employed in forestry and fishing (in millions)	..	..	..	119.9	117.2
Percentage to total population	..	..		78.7	71.2
Collective farm population (in millions)	..			2.0	66.7
Percentage of collective farmers in rural non-proletarian population	..	..		1.7	61.6

¹ Dobb, *Soviet Russia and the World*, p. 70.

¹ *Report of the State Planning Commission*, p. 269.

Proportion (of total) and average size of agricultural units by sectors (types of farming.)

		1928		1932	
		Percentage of total sowing area.	Average area per unit in hectares.	Percentage of total sowing area.	Average area per unit in hectares.
Individual Peasants		97.3	4.5	22.0	3.15
Collective Farms	..	1.2	42.0	68.0	434.0
State Farms	..	1.5	544.0	10.0	2,303.0 ¹

These astounding figures illuminate the scope of the resumed social revolution. The Five Year Plan marks the completion of the work begun in 1917. The truth of Lenin's description of the New Economic Policy as a retreat to positions from which the offensive against capitalism could in due course be again undertaken has been demonstrated. If the international scope of the revolution has been narrowed, it has been immensely deepened in the U.S.S.R.

There can be little doubt that a large proportion of the peasants have entered the collective farms with reluctance. The success of the Government in overcoming their resistance has revealed that the capacity of the peasants to defeat the policy of a resolute Government has been over-estimated. The whole of Russian history shows that the peasants are an immensely important negative force but "are quite incapable of working out any constructive programme, or of effectively fighting for such a programme by themselves, if such were actually in existence."² In the whole great operation the Government relied chiefly on the poorest peasants, who alone actively supported the new agrarian revolution. Undoubtedly the policy has strained the alliance between the peasant mass and the proletariat, but the Government

¹ *Report of the State Planning Commission*, p. 147. 1 hectare = 2.471 acres.

² Hoover, *The Economic Life of Soviet Russia*, p. 69.

has the solid support of the politically conscious elements and relies on the obvious superiority of large scale agriculture over small holdings to convert the uncertain and the doubtful in the near future. The realisation that the peasant is a negatively important political factor has tended to sharpen the anxieties of the Government with regard to a possible foreign intervention when, as during the Civil War, the attitude of the peasant would become of vital positive importance. This anxiety is reflected in such State trials as that of the British engineers and others in April, 1933. It is clear that the pre-occupation of the Government with a possible foreign danger intensified fears aroused by the discoveries of the O.G.P.U. as to the extent of the opposition organized by disaffected social groups in collaboration with foreign technicians.

In order to summarize the results of the first Five Year Plan in briefest compass, it will be sufficient to indicate the place now occupied by the U.S.S.R. in regard to the basic industries of the world compared with the position in 1913 and 1928 :—

	1913	1928	1932	
	World.	World.	World.	Europe
Electric power	15	10	6	4
Coal	6	6	4	3
Pig Iron	5	6	2	
General Machine Building	4	4	2	
Oil	2	3	2	
Agricultural Machinery	—	4	1	
Tractors	—	4	1	
Peat	—	—	1	1
	—	12	6	4
Total Industrial Production	—	5	2	1 ¹

The cultural revolution is expressed in the statistics of literacy and of the educational provisions for the people of the Soviet Union. In 1913 the number of

¹ *Report of the State Planning Commission, p. 33.*

people able to read and write in Russia constituted 33 per cent, of the total population. The following table presents the position at the conclusion of the first Five Year Plan :—

	1914	1927-28	1932
A. Literacy Level (percentage of population between 8 and 50 years) :			
General		58-4	90-0
Urban		78 '5	97 -0
Rural		48 3	88-0
B. Number of pupils in elementary and secondary schools	7,800,000	11,279,000	23,113,000
Of which			
Elementary schools	7,235,000	9,870,000	18,754,000
Secondary schools	565,000	1,409,000	4,359,000
Children of 8 to 11 years in elementary schools in percentage to total	—	51 4	98 0
C. Children in pre-school institutions	—	308,000	5,232,000
Percentage of children of 3 to 7 years in pre-school institutions	—	1-6	23 '7 ¹

The immense and complex system of social insurance established and the unique provision of a minimum fifteen day holiday with full pay for every worker in addition to the usual rest days and national holidays have had a marked effect on national health. The decline in mortality has been accompanied by an increase in the expectation of life. In Tsarist Russia the average life **span of** a man in 1907-1910 was 31 years ; in the Soviet Union the average had risen to 41 years as early as **1926-27**. The average life of a woman was 33 years in **1907-1910** and 46 years in 1926-1927. One of **the**

¹ *Report of the State Planning Commission, p. 296.*

greatest gains of the revolution has been the absolute economic as well as legal equality of the sexes—in itself a major social revolution. Finally, the greatest scourge of working class life, unemployment, has been eliminated since the end of the first year of the First Five Year Plan. There is no apparent reason why a planned economy which is aiming consciously at a steady rise in the standard of living of the whole nation, and under which the more production there is the more there is available for distribution, should ever suffer from anything worse than slight technical unemployment due from time to time to the re-direction of the main industrial effort—an unemployment guarded by the most complete maintenance of standards of living. The task of struggling against the *vis inertiae* of the human spirit, against the age-long legacy of tradition and superstition, is immensely heavy. The achievement of Soviet Russia has been stupendous. But much remains to be done: "The dictatorship of the proletariat," wrote Lenin, "is a resolute, persistent struggle, sanguinary and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, pedagogic and administrative, against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit of the millions and tens of millions is a formidable force."¹

There can be no doubt that at the present moment the prestige of the Soviet Union stands higher than at any moment since 1918. A consistently pacific foreign policy based upon the creative organization of peace by means of non-aggression pacts with all powers willing to sign them, a courageous and definitive lead in the cause of disarmament, have secured for Russia a high standing with all the progressive forces of the world and, at the same time, have made much more difficult the task of those reactionary elements that have long worked for a coalition against her. In spite of continuous provocations on the part of Japan since her seizure of Manchuria in September,

¹ Cited, Hook, *Towards the Understanding of Kari Marx*, p. 258.

1931, the attitude of the Soviet Union has surprised the most hostile critics by its resolute moderation.

The greatest danger at the present moment arises from the situation created by the reactionary and militarist counter-revolution in Germany. The foreign policy of the Hitler Government now in dictatorial control is based firmly on the idea that it will be possible to win the consent of the Western democracies to the re-arming of Germany only in terms of a general coalition against the U.S.S.R. The conquest of the Ukraine would be the means of reconciling Poland to the surrender of the " Corridor " and the adjustment in favour of Germany of her Western frontier. The fact that this plan has won no immediate acceptance does not reduce the significance of the fact that it has appeared in Nazi formulations of foreign policy from the beginning of the movement, and was re-affirmed in veiled but sufficiently definite terms by Hitler in his famous " conciliatory " speech on foreign policy to the Reichstag on May 17th, 1933.

The Communist idea has assumed, in spite of persecution, a world-wide significance. " Unlike most gospels, it makes an appeal simultaneously to the East and to the West. Its creed of national self-determination, as counter to Imperialism, sounds an echo in Asia and Africa among rising nationalities and subject races. Its call to lay the axe at the root of class exploitation sounds a clarion to the proletariat of the West. . . . The ideas of 1789 set the constitutions of old Europe tottering and started a ferment which was to dominate the course of the nineteenth century. The ideas of 1917 already dominate our twentieth-century stage."¹

It is certain that only a supremely great nation could find the resources within itself to become the vehicle of world ideas in the very act of rising from the ruins of an unparalleled defeat. " A heavy hammer smashes glass, but forges steel. The hammer of the revolution is forging

¹ Dobb, *Soviet Russia and the World*, pp. 174-75.

the steel of the people's character."¹ The remarkable training in self-government the peoples of the U.S.S.R. are receiving through the local and functional Soviets and the Trade Unions has steadily strengthened the State since the revolution. Every detail of the Five Year Plan was discussed and amended, not once but several times, in the factory Soviets which had to carry it out. That great undertaking was not dictated from above, but was the fruit of a co-operative effort in which every worker felt he had a personal part. In this way the Russian Revolution has demonstrated that an economic system in which the motives of private enterprise and personal profit have little or no part can work sufficiently well to rivet the attention of the world. The fact that as a result of the Five Year Plan the private ownership of the means of production has been abolished in Russia is one of capital importance to the world. Already it is possible to detect the rise of a new human type for whom the problems of life under a capitalist regime have no meaning. Only Utopians dream of final solutions. In human life problems are solved by reformulating them. It is impossible to deny that such a reformulation has been and is being made in Russia.²

The secret of the power which this "great monument of the human will" exerts lies in the confident assurance that man can become the master of his destiny and is the sole creator of values. Once he ceases to be the slave of his own inventions and superstitions, a slavery that finds its expression in an exploitation of man by man which is justified as the will of God or the laws of economics, there is no problem which he cannot essay to solve. It is this sustained self-confidence on the part of the Russian Communists which has arrested the imagination of a world struggling in the toils of

¹ Trotsky, *The Russian Revolution: A Speech Delivered at Copenhagen, November 1932*, p. 36.

² There are one hundred million people under twenty-five living in Russia to-day.

multiplying self-contradictions. Not without reason did Lenin assert that the mere existence of the Soviet Union would exert a constantly growing influence on the workers of the world. Though men may not often be moved by formal argument there can be no disputing that they respond in the end to "the logic of their unformulated desires." It is just because the ideas of 1917 have given a voice to the secret or unconscious aspirations of countless millions plunged in the silence of a seeming acquiescence that these ideas constitute a menace and a portent, the unsheathing of yet another sword.

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