



THE  
USSIAN EXPERIMENT

1917-1927

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BY

K. T. SHAH

*Professor of Economics, University of Bombay*

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TO

**Dr. R. N. RANINA**

AND THOSE OTHER EARNEST STUDENTS  
WHO BORE WITH PATIENCE THESE LECTURES.

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## P R E F A C E.

The Lectures here published in bookform were delivered as a course in extension of the usual Lectures on Economic History given to students going up for their M.A. Degree examination in the usual way. A knowledge of the economic development of the principal countries in the world has generally been considered a useful supplement to the study of the economic problems in any country; and though the most gigantic economic experiment of our times,—the Bolshevist regime in Russia,—is difficult to study for want of adequate and unbiassed information, it has a manifest attraction for the student of the subject, which would easily explain the attempt here made at an exposition and understanding of the forces influencing economic life in Russia to-day.

Literature, both official and authoritative, is scarce on the subject, particularly in this country. For the period before the World-War, however, the works of such patient students as Sir Mackenzie Wallace, or the several chapters in the *Cambridge Modern History*, not to mention the further sources indicated in the bibliography there attached, would more than suffice for an elementary study like the one attempted in the first Lecture of this series. For the subsequent Lectures, reliance has been placed, so far as official and authoritative data are concerned, on the *Statesman's Year-Book*, as well as on the recent publication in English called the *Soviet Year-Book*, published by George Allen and Unwin, and

compiled by Santalov and Segal. For an accurate estimate and insight into the men and their motives, the events and their significance, in the general scheme of the Revolution, works such as the **Russian Revolution (1917-26)** by Lancelot Lawton, (Macmillan): or **Russia in the Modern World Series**, by Makeev and O'Hara (Benn), are indispensable. These give a fair summary of the events in historical perspective that make up the Revolution, and even attempt a degree of estimate of the forces actuating the revolutionaries. It is, perhaps, not too much to wish that works like these were free from a bias and prejudice, which is certainly not very obtrusive in the first-named author, but which, obtrusive or not, inevitably affects the utility of the book. The frankly propagandist or polemical publications, like **Bolshevist Russia**, by Anton Karlgren, are preferable, inasmuch as the reader, warned of the dominant prejudice and bias of the writer, is able to make his own discount of the author's statements and estimates, as he goes along. On the other hand, the discursive pamphlets, like **Trotsky's Literature and Revolution**, or **Eastman's Marx, Lenin, and the Science of Revolution**, are decidedly better at giving an insight into the real forces making for the Revolution. The pamphlets written by Lenin, such as **the State and the Revolution**, were not available to the lecturer in English; and the quotations from them given in these Lectures are borrowed from one or the other of the writers already named. Such pronouncements of the real author of the Revolution would be invaluable, if one could read them in the original. Descriptive works, like the little book



by Mr. and Mrs., MacWilliams, called **Russia in 1926**, (J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.), are highly suggestive and informative, their only fault, perhaps, being that they are, after all, the impressions of individual observers. Could they always be safely relied on for a complete, faithful, picture of the Revolution, and of the New Russia under the Revolution? The best work in this regard that has come to the notice of the lecturer, is **the Mind and Face of Bolshevism**, by Rene Fülöp-Miller (Putnam). Mr. Fülöp-Miller deals with the collective phenomenon of Bolshevism in a spirit of sympathetic criticism, which however, cannot help regretting certain aspects of the phenomenon, like its great emphasis on mechanisation of life in all its departments, or the utterly materialistic viewpoint of the revolutionaries.

On this material these Lectures are based. The line of argument here followed is that of an objective analysis, study, and appreciation. The Lecturer has kept his own views in the back ground as far as possible. Men and events are left to speak for themselves, wherever possible, in their own words; and where the spirit of the events, or the motive of the men, is elusive, an attempt has been made to bring out the same so far as the available material permits it. A common thread, running through the whole scheme of Lectures presenting the phenomenon in its entirety, naturally performs this function; though the extreme complexity of the phenomenon makes it very difficult to say if all the aspects and facts have been grasped, if all the undercurrents understood. The reader, however, will not find much difficulty, the

Lecturer hopes, in grasping the elements of the problem, if he reads carefully the material placed before him.

The Lecturer, having drawn considerably on the sources of information mentioned above, has, finally, to acknowledge his gratitude to the authors or compilers thereof, as also to those earnest seekers after truth, who know or acknowledge no frontiers or boundaries in their search for truth. In one so blessed as the present writer with a number of friends,—earnest, thoughtful, and even daring, inquirers,—it would, perhaps, be invidious to select any single individual for special mention. Without naming any one in particular, however, the reflection may still be indulged in that the very fact that one finds such a large number of earnest students, in matters that do not immediately concern them, is a hopeful sign of the growing volume of serious, thoughtful, earnest studentship the absence of which is often particularly emphasised by detractors of India of the Miss Mayo type. The Lecturer's labour would not have been in vain if this little pamphlet helps to deepen the interest and facilitate the studies of such earnest inquirers.

UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS  
AND SOCIOLOGY,  
*Bombay, 1st November, 1927.*

K. T. S.

# THE RUSSIAN EXPERIMENT, (1917-1927). LECTURE I.

## EVOLUTION OF THE REVOLUTION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have to start this series with an apology. I do not know the Russian tongue, and have never travelled in that country, even before the War. I cannot, therefore, speak with any first hand knowledge of the subject. This is a grave disadvantage; but, without in the least minimising it, may I point out that even to this cloud there is a slight silver lining? It is, you must have often realised yourselves, not always they who attend a great public meeting, or are present at great convulsions, who get the best and the most accurate idea of the happenings there. The trees are apt to crowd out the forest altogether from the picture. Those, however, who view it from the serenity of a comfortable easy chair, aided and abetted with the accounts in a newspaper, may get a much clearer idea, without the crush and the fuss of personal attendance. It may be that there is such a thing as a secret syndicate of the newspaper reporters, who, unknown to the editors, are agreed among themselves to pool their notes and to share out the substance, whether at any public function any given reporter has himself attended or not. But even a syndicated report, touched up with the artistic pen of some rewrite-man on the staff, is often better than the personal impressions of a weak and unpushing sort of a person attending

himself. Personal impressions of individuals, in a land like the Soviet Russia of to-day, are bound to be coloured, not merely by the version of the official cicerones that show the traveller round from place to place, but even more by the traveller's own sympathies or antipathies as the case may be. And this quite apart from the further fact that travelling in Russia was never easy, and things have not changed much in this respect since the Revolution. The Passport difficulties, and the C. I. D. observation of the Tsarist regime, are rivalled by the activities of the Cheka to-day in almost every particular, except that they now watch and worry different sort of people from those in the days of the Tsar. It is, and was, more difficult to get into Russia than into heaven. St. Peter stands at the gate only to examine the credentials for admission among the elect and the faithful; but the Russian edition of St. Peter follows you round all the while you are in Russia; and, may be, a good while afterwards; so that the impressions of travellers, however painstaking and extensive, are by no means reliable for any serious historical work. And the published official information in the daily news of the world, or in official pamphlets, is equally untrustworthy. The Russian is the black beast of the capitalist regime all over the rest of the world. Certain that they would get no fairplay, the Russians are seeking to turn the tables on their opponents, by telling bigger lies about themselves and their doings than their opponents can dream of. You all know the Indian tale of the

Spear and the Stable. When two soldiers fond of drawing the long bow, met together, one of them began to brag of the prowess of his father; and illustrated it by referring to the vast stable they used to have, one end of which was lost in the south and the other in the north end of the universe. The other agreed, and mentioned, by way of corroboration, the tremendous Spear of his own father, one end of which reached up to heaven, and the other down to hell. The first thereupon became incredulous, and wanted to know where such a thing could be housed. "In your father's stable," was the quiet reply. You understand the point of the tale. The Russians are retorting with "Your Father's stable" all this while, and so we have no reliable source of information. While the capitalist press of the world was fed on somewhat monotonous tales, about the death of Lenin, or the dissensions among his cabinet, with the implied conclusion of the downfall of the revolutionaries, the Russian artists in embroidery have habilitated the doings of the Bolshevik regime in colours that must certainly make them look like angels. Neither of these sources is reliable; and, if one wishes to be fair and accurate, as far as it is possible, one will have to pick one's way very carefully, indeed, through the mass and tangle of the lies that cover the path. Even the accounts of official delegates,—like the Labour Party representatives visiting Russia some three years ago,—are not entirely dependable, though they make by far the best material for such a subject as this. It is not the

fault of their observation, but rather of their information, and of their sympathies, if their account, and particularly their conclusions, are not absolutely dependable.

I have sought to collate all these sources, and to present the result in my own way as arrived at after a careful study of such available material, and with the necessary discount of the special weakness of the source or kind. I hope the effort will not be altogether wasted. The Russian is too great an experiment not to be interesting and important to any student of economics. For us in India there is a special significance below the surface of events, which ought also not to be missed. We have not merely the same circumstances of inequalities of wealth and oppressive class distinctions. We have the much more positive though hidden factor of innate affinity. Again and again have Western observers complained of their inability to pierce through the crust of veneer of the European civilisation amongst the upper classes into the real soul of Russia. That, I venture to suggest, is probably because, Russia is not of the West. If there is such a thing as a people's soul, I think we of the East are better able intuitively, instinctively, to know the real meaning of the happenings in Russia, in the last ten years, than could be gathered by all the trained psychologists of Europe and America. For Russia is the link, both geographically and temperamentally, between the East and the West, facing, under the present regime, definitely to the East ; and so mak-

ing it possible for us in this country to understand the Russian Experiment even better than they do in the West.

To understand the Russia of the Bolsheviks, it is indispensable to have a glance at the Russia of the Tsars. Until the days of Napoleon, Russia was almost as unknown to the rest of Europe as the India of the Mughals. Alexander I had fallen under the fascinating influence of the Corsican adventurer, and tried, in his own loutish way, to introduce into the Russia of his day, the ideals of the French under the Empire. A dreamer and idealist by temperament, he was, however, easily frightened from his course by the excesses,—or what he deemed to be such,—of the Liberals in practice; and so he turned reactionary. His successor Nicholas deserved the title of the Terrible even better than his predecessor Ivan. Every one of the notions connected with the French Revolution was to him anathema; and though it was in his reign (1825-1855) that the great immortals of the Russian literature began their work, he looked upon writers and writing as hardly better than Belzebub and his imps. The Censorship of the Press, established in 1828, was carried to the most ridiculous, extravagant excess under his regime. The most harmless statement made in a book; the most innocent book found in your possession, if it did not meet with the approval of the ignorant officials of the Tsar, would suffice to send the offender to Siberia for life,—or rather for a cruel, lingering death. Take a sample or two of the

havoc played by this censorship. "In 1840" says the Cambridge Modern History, "anatomical and physiological works were forbidden to include anything which might hurt the instinct of modesty." What do you think are the anatomical and physiological works to contain, if not something that would shock our accepted notions of middle class modesty? Nicholas was, of course, not the only one in this his solicitude to preserve the morals of his people. I have heard of people in sober England who were anxious to drape the masterpieces of a Phidias or a Praxiteles, simply because these statues happened to be nude, and so offended against the sense of modesty of these worthy people. But to those who are temperamentally immodest, even the Virgin and the Babe would be shocking! In 1848, Nicholas forbade newspapers to commend any mechanical invention, until they were pronounced to be sound according to the rules of science,—forgetting to say by whom the pronouncement was to be made. In 1850, metaphysics and moral philosophy were withdrawn from the curricula of the Russian Universities, on the unexceptionable, orthodox ground, that tuition in moral philosophy was useless to those who were already acquainted with the teachings of Christ! Poor Kha if Omar has been defamed by indiscriminate historians for the destruction of the Alexandrian library on the ground that if the books contained therein were in agreement with the Koran, they were superfluous; and if they were not in agreement, then they were pernicious. Q. E. D. But though



with Omar it may have been only a myth inspired by the malice of his detractors, with Nicholas it was a dead earnest fact recorded gloatingly by his court historiographer. He was totally blind to the spirit of his time, or definitely hostile to it. And so when he breathed his last, a sigh of relief went up from every Russian soul, official or not. The Tsar Liberator, Alexander II. had promised much; but lived to incur such an enmity of the extremists, that he died the death of violence. His reign opened with substantial preparations for the liberation of the Serfs. Serfdom was a survival from medieval Europe, which in Russia was carried to the most bitter, the most cruel and revolting extreme. The serfs were slaves attached to the soil, and landowners were by law entitled to sell them, pledge them, present them to their mistresses, or offer them in payment of their gambling debts, break up their families, ruin their souls, and play the very deuce with them in every conceivable and inconceivable manner. If there was one thing on which the Liberal opinion in Russia was unanimous, it was on the liberation of these unfortunates. The Tsar assented; and after six years of preliminary arrangements, the decree liberating the serfs was published in 1861. The freed slaves were given certain portions of the land they were hitherto used to work on, on terms which involved a practical purchase of the land from their erstwhile owners, the payment being spread over a series of years, and the rates being fixed by law. The rates varied from

region to region ; and option was left to make the land over to individual peasants or to peasant communities,—the village as a whole. The freed, land-owning peasants were made liable to the Central as well as the Local taxation ; so that, for a time after the liberation, it was an open question if the serfs were really more happy under their new condition than in their bondage. But a ray of hope was afforded by the growing volume of industry of a mechanical type. Factories began to be opened in the latter half of the century with commendable progressiveness, and the demand for wage-slaves began to grow apace. The enterprising peasant sought work in these factories, and his cash earnings made distinctly a better show than of his relatives and friends tied to the soil. The knowledge of manufacture and the simple processes involved therein, which was gathered during the work at the factory, was also utilised to further the cause of the cottage industry ; and so the lot of the peasant was not absolutely deplorable, at least from the material viewpoint, at the end of the century.

Meanwhile, however, other changes were taking place, not visible on the surface. The creed of Marx had made many converts. The consciousness of economic classes and their mutual antagonism was growing, thanks, in Russia, largely to the arrogance of the possessing classes themselves. The industrialists in Russia were largely of non-Russian origin, so the feeling against them was doubly strengthened. The example of the French Commune

was disastrous, but its memory was retained only to deepen the distrust of the bourgeoisie. The Great Russian writer Tolstoy was the very reverse of the Minister of that ilk, who was oppression and repression personified. Tolstoy's principle of non-resistance to evil was giving birth, unexpectedly, to principles of terrorism that took a heavy toll of the life of those in power, from the Tsar downwards. The Universities and the intelligentsia were seething with discontent at the hopelessly obsolete and reactionary methods of Government adopted in the panic following the murder of Alexander II. The short reign of his successor, the third of that name, was exhausted in futile measures for repression; and the early years of his son were occupied by the growing importance of Russian ambitions in the world. The traditional policy of a century was reversed at the end, and alliance with Germany was replaced by an entente with France. Russia also came forward to defend the smaller Slav nationalities against the imperialism of Austria; and took upon itself the championship of the Cross in the Near East against the decaying might of the Sublime Porte. The threat of universal warfare was sought to be staved off by a Peace Conference at the Hague; but the early years of the twentieth century saw Russia in the throes of one of the most disastrous wars she ever waged. Japan had much to be proud of in the successes she gained in Korea and Manchuria against the Russians; but Russia had more reason to feel humiliated, and that without any fault of Rus-

sian bravery, or of the Russian transport system. Corruption from above was the root curse of the system of irresponsible and absolute autocracy. The reverses of the Russo-Japanese war, due as they were to preventible causes, led the people at home to be more than ever disaffected; and the demands for some advance in the principle of governance put forward from all parties in the State, were reinforced by the logic of events. The Nihilist outrages of the Nineteenth Century were an expression of utter despair of the Russian people; those of the early twentieth century were rather the earnest of revolt and bitterness which were beginning to characterise the peasant mass. One recalls unconsciously the History of a Peasant, as told by Erckmann-Chatrian while depicting the progress of the French Revolution, and seems to see before one's eyes the unfolding of the same drama scene by scene a hundred and thirty years later. The Tsar ceased to be regarded reverently and affectionately as the Little Father, and came, even without the activities of the Social Democrats and the Revolutionaries, to be considered the embodiment of reaction and repression. The Bolshevik split from the Menshevist was completed in 1903; and the centre of gravity of revolutionary activity was, for a time, transferred to foreign lands, what time reaction was running mad in Holy Russia. At last the Tsar was forced to yield to the universal entreaties of his people, and a Parliament,—the Duma,—was granted in 1905. The first two Dumas were ehort-lived; but the third lasted out its statory life

of five years. It did nothing useful beyond showing the temper of the opposing principles of government, conflicting ideals of society, rival notions of the rights of men and of citizens. It is difficult to say if the Revolution would have actually taken place earlier, had the European War not come in good time to offer a reprieve to the Tsar and his entourage. But the star of the Romanoffs was declining. The War did not deflect attention from the misdeeds of the court and the higher officialdom. It brought only the same old tale of disaster due to dishonesty and incompetence rather than to any deficiency in bravery or man-power of Russia. Discontent grew apace, and at last fathered Revolution. In March 1917, the Duma carried out a *coup d'état*, and appointed a constitutional government, with high-sounding principles of universal suffrage and responsible ministries. The Tsar abdicated in favour of a more liberal brother; but the days of the monarchical principle were numbered. The Grand Duke had to go the way of the incompetent Tsar, and his constitutional ministry had to yield at first to the Kerensky regime, and eventually to the Bolshevists,—the militant wing of the most advanced Socialists, eager to realise in everyday life the gospel of Karl Marx. The Revolution was completed in November 1917; its Government under the Communist regime was declared permanent in December; peace negotiations, started at the same time, brought an end of the War, as far as Russia was concerned, in February, 1918; and Russia may be said thereafter to have started on the most.

astounding experiment our time has witnessed, —the socialisation of all the resources of the nation, of all the means of production, distribution and exchange of a people.

Let us call a brief halt at this stage and view the picture of Russia as it must have been in or about the time the War ended for the rest of the world. The Revolution had been achieved,—at a cost in blood and money impossible to estimate. Perhaps it is unnecessary to estimate it either. For we all know revolutions are not made in kid gloves, or in drawing rooms, either, with your beloved at the piano murmuring the softest music of some impassioned but ineffectual poet, and your rival turning the pages with one hand leaning on a tempting white shoulder, yourself employing all the heavy batteries of your knitted brows to annihilate, if glances can, your rival. The Russian Revolution was bloody and violent, though it was accomplished in the name of universal brotherhood. The tactics of the Bolshevist did not lack in candour, even brutal candour. Said Lenin, the arch-priest of the Revolution, in his pamphlet on *The State and Revolution*: “The working class must shatter, break, blow up the whole State machine.” For it was a ruthless, bloodless monster, incapable of sympathy, and impossible of understanding of the objects that it helped to crush. It was, in the Bolshevist eye, merely a weapon for oppressing one class, which had not got charge of it, by another which had. The Bolshevists, therefore, had from the outset, no desire to coquette with forms of constitutional Government

They had no use for the bourgeois regulations of society, and of its means of support and maintenance, in its unrighteous exclusiveness, such as the Army and the Navy. Hence one of the first symptoms of revolution were the mutinies in the armed forces. The mutiny was sanctified by success ; and the Bolshevist regime made its debut by announcing, in a decree of the People's Commissars of November 15, 1917, "Soldiers and Sailors are delivered from the power of autocratic generals, because from henceforth all generals will be elected, and can be changed." A story was told of Lenin by one of his closest co-workers early in 1918 in a public speech, in which the proletarian Dictator was asked advice by some serious minded workers desiring to work in and through the constitutional machinery of the Duma. I am tempted to, but will not, suggest a similarity of circumstances nearer home. Lenin laughed long and loud at this, and when they asked him the reason of his levity, he replied : " My dear men, what do you want a budget, an amendment, a bill for? You are workmen, and the Duma exists for the ruling classes. You just step forward, and tell all Russia in simple language about the life and toil of the working classes. Describe the horrors of capitalist rule, summon the workers to make a revolution, and fling in the face of the reactionary Duma that its members are scoundrels and exploiters. Tell them you had better introduce a bill stating that in three years time we shall take you all, landlords and capitalists, and hang you on the lamp-posts. That would be a real bill."

Coming to power after years of exile and oppression, in this temper of no quarter to be shown to any capitalistic association, it is no wonder that the Bolsheviks began their regime with wholesale expropriation. Having declared their form of Government to be the permanent or accepted form in the country, in January 1918, they started drafting a constitution for the people which would be an embodiment of the ideals and principles they had lived and suffered for. Private ownership of land was abolished by a decree dated December 10, 1917; and just two months thereafter another decree cancelled the obligations arising out of all state loans, internal or foreign, contracted by previous governments, as they had been incurred without the consent of the Russian people and against their interest. All maritime enterprises: all banks and the entire region of foreign trade were confiscated and nationalised by still another decree (April 23, 1918), even before the constitution of the Soviet Republic was officially adopted. These were the beginnings, the foundation-stone, of the new regime. Its constitution had to be erected on this basis.

The constitution of the new state is therefore interesting, if only as a paradox. It was finally adopted in July, 1918. To this modifications have been made by subsequent Congresses of all Russia Soviets while a treaty of union, signed at the end of 1922, brought all the neighbouring states of allied peoples, who had once formed part of the Tsarist Empire, closer together into a Union of Socialist Sovietic Repub-



lic. The constitution of this Union was finally ratified by the Union Congress of Soviets in January-February, 1924. The Government of the Union is vested in a Union Central Executive Committee and a Union Council of Peoples' Commissaries. The former is elected annually by the Union Congress of Soviets, which is the supreme sovereign authority in the Union. Between the sessions of the Congress, the Executive Committee is the supreme legislative, administrative, and judicial authority in the Union. It meets every three months for a fortnight's session, and consists of two chambers, the Union Council of 414 members elected on the basis of proportional representation of the six constituent unions, and the Council of Nationalities,—somewhat like the American Senate,—of 100 members elected on the basis of 5 members for every autonomous republic, and 1 for every autonomous region. In addition there is a Standing Committee to transact current business, and made up of 27 members, of whom 9 are elected each by the two Chambers, and the remaining 9 elected by the two chambers sitting together. The Council of Peoples' Commissaries is a subordinate body made up of the heads of departments, for the transaction of current administrative work; but the supreme decision on all vital matters—like declaration of war or signing peace-rests with the Union Central Executive Committee. In Russia proper, which is one part of the Union, the same principles are repeated in framing the constitution of the State, which, despite all the sayings and

doings of Lenin, is far from being destroyed even in Soviet Russia.

Each of the six constituent states of the Union of Soviet Republics,—viz. R. S. F. S. R., Ukraine, White Russia, Transcaucasia, Uzbek and Turcoman,—retains its own Central Executive Committee, and Council of peoples Commissaries. The division of powers between the Federal and the State governments is made by reserving certain departments, for the federal Government, while others are worked in common by the Union and the State Governments, e.g. the Economic Council, or the Labour Bureau. Others, again, like Education, Justice or Health departments, are exclusive to the constituent states.

Under the present constitution freedom of conscience, of opinion, and of the press are guaranteed as constitutional, indefeasible rights of citizenship, though in practice this freedom does occasionally prove illusory—at least to the anticommunists. The highest authority is the congress of all Russian Soviets, which consists of town soviets having one delegate for every 25,000 inhabitants, and of provincial soviets with one delegate for every 1,25,000 of inhabitants. This Congress elects the Central Executive committee of 386 members, which is the highest legislative, administrative, and controlling authority, as already remarked.

To this Revolutionary Government, the allegiance of the people of Russia of all classes is not equally sincere. Officially, Russia is a republic of the Soviets of workers, soldiers

and peasants' deputies. But apart from the communist workers' and the soldiers of the Red Army, it is open to question if the rest of Russia is enthusiastically for the Soviet Regime. The intelligentsia,—the author and founder of the revolutionary ideas,—students of the Universities and even professors who had once led the vanguard of revolutionary ideas; the merchants and professional men of liberal sympathies; have either been antagonised by the Communist excesses, as they felt they to be; or are merely passively acquiescent in the Bolshevist regime. The bulk, if not all, of the aristocracy and proprietors of land are, of course, naturally against the new order of things in Russia. But even if we dismiss them as relatively a very small and insignificant proportion of the total population, the majority of the people can scarcely be said to have accepted, without demur or enthusiastically, the communist creed. The peasants are ineradicably anti-communist, from all accounts that we have had so far. The proprietary rights acquired by the ex-serfs, by the terms of the decree of emancipation, and by the arrangements made thereunder the peasants are by no means anxious to forego at the bidding of the Bolsheviks. Their passive opposition means the antagonism of nearly three-fourths of the people, if not more. Out of a total population of over 130 million in the Soviet Russia, nearly 100 million are such peasants. They are quite content to see the old order, which to them meant the knout and Siberia, disappear; and they are by no means averse to revelling in the palaces

of their ex-exploiters. But when it comes to a touch on their own pocket, they make no secret of their antipathy to the new gods of the Bolshevist. Themistocles told the Adrians that he had brought two new gods with him: *Viz.* Persuasion and Force. Lenin and his colleagues might have used the same imagery when they got hold of power; but to them, as to Themistocles two thousand years before, the people might well answer "We also have two gods on our side: *Viz.*, Poverty and Despair". In so far as the new rulers offer oblations to these gods of the people, they would be allowed to worship their vain delusions of Force and of Persuasion. But unless and until this poverty and Despair are remedied, there can be no building of a stable structure on such shifting foundations.

We shall see in later Lectures how far the Bolshevik objective of undiluted communism has been attained and maintained in practice: where they had to yield, and how they went about making the concessions that the force of circumstances compelled them to make. Let us here consider the spirit and peculiarity of the Russian Revolution at its inception. One distinctive mark of all previous revolutions known to history is that they were all political. A revolution is generally accompanied by a transfer of effective power in the State from one class to another. Leaving aside classical revolutions in Greece or Rome, the English Revolution as well as the much more intense French Revolution definitely and distinctly were aimed

at effecting such a transfer of power; and, to the extent that they were successful, the transfer was in fact made. It may be observed in passing at this stage that not necessarily every revolution is violent, or bloody, or even sudden. The great changes in the electoral system of Britain in the XIX C. were veritable revolutions, which, however, have never been regarded as such by any historian. A revolution is but one of the processes of evolution; and, apart from its accompaniments, it is absurd to condemn it in the abstract. In Russia, too, the Revolutionaries professed to make the transfer of power from the privileged classes to the oppressed masses, from the owner and exploiter to the worker and the exploited. The proletarian dictatorship was the creation of a postulate of universal suffrage. In effect, however, the the Bolshevik ideal has shaped remarkably differently. Under the law as it stands in Russia to-day, the franchise is enjoyed by every citizen of 18 years and over, irrespective of religion, sex, nationality or residence, provided he or she earns the livelihood by productive labour. But from this qualification the soldiers and sailors have to be necessarily excluded, and yet they cannot be disfranchised. They are, therefore, treated as exceptions. A much more striking disqualification is made against those who employ others for profit; or who live on unearned income; or are monks or priests of any denomination; or the agents and employees of the former police and secret service under the Tsars Idiots, and imbeciles, and Princes of the blood, and minors, and those de-

prived of civil rights by criminal courts are likewise excluded. All these classes are specifically deprived of the right to vote. This is a transfer of power, no doubt, and with a vengeance; since before the Revolution it was precisely these classes which had all effective power in governing Russia, except the minors and the imbeciles. But the transfer is in effect very much short of the ideals of democracy, or even of universal franchise. Effective power in the Russia of to-day still remains in the hands of a very small minority, according to all accounts; for it is only those who are officially communists that count in regard to effective power in government. And these number hardly 5 millions at the most, counting the tiniest children. This is not democracy—at least as commonly understood. All that can be said in extenuation of the present regime, from the point of view of an enthusiast in the matter of working democracy, is that the present is only a stage preparatory to the real and final accomplishment of the aim.

Another feature of equal importance in the Russian Revolution is that it is not entirely destructive. The leaders of the Revolution certainly started with the cry of "Down with the capitalist State"; and, as far as that is concerned, they have succeeded in accomplishing their objective to a considerable extent. In appearance, if not in reality, all the essentials of the ancient state have been destroyed along with the Tsar and his family. Creature of a despair-born anarchy, the Revolution could not but vent its fury upon the ancient institutions, whose

memory was in every instance connected with cruelty and oppression and intolerable exploitation. The Church with its altars and its priests had to go with the Tsar and his nobles and his bureaucracy. But still it is not an entirely destructive phenomenon. The Bolsheviks have a constructive purpose, even though the mist of misrepresentation deliberately created by them or their opponents prevents one from piercing through to the real surface. They have created or intensified class consciousness to a white heat. They have utilised that consciousness to uproot everything that stood for ignorance, oppression, exploitation. The Throne and the Altar have been subverted. Christ has been replaced by Marx-cum-Lenin. And under the guise of a ceaseless, relentless, war upon all that recalls the old order of things, the Bolsheviks have been pursuing their purpose of achieving in real work-a-day, life, and securing to all according to their need, after obtaining from each according to his ability.

The Bolshevik Revolution is thus predominantly, if not entirely, economic in its character. It has been facilitated not only by the criminal disregard of their duty to the people by the ancient rulers of the land, but also by some of the achievements of those very detested rulers, strange to say. They had permitted land to be held in common when they enfranchised the serfs : and had even a good many of the first factories of the new industries owned by the State. The phenomenon of collective ownership and opera-

tion of the means of production is, therefore, by no means so strange in Russian eyes as it might be in countries where the principle of individualism has been carried to extreme. Even the ideal of the Tsarist regime,—of a paternal, benevolent despotism, however much broken in practice, helps the Bolshevik when he sets up his own autocracy. Professing to dislike the State and its machinery as an engine of oppression, the Communist must nevertheless seek the achievement of his ideal through the unremitting instrumentality of the State, though, of course, in a form remodelled to his own fancy. And it is in this that the Russian Revolution differs most markedly from the French Commune of 1870-71, its nearest prototype. Both are the creations of a foreign war, and the products of the Marxian philosophy. Both are violent and aiming at an ideal of society, which is remarkable for its intense sympathy with the underdog. But due to historical accidents, or perhaps on account of the absence *ab initio* of a clearly defined purpose, the French Commune could not aim at that wholesale socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange, which the Russian heirs of the Commune have never abandoned, in spite of all reverses and seeming submission. And in this connection, as explaining the Russian viewpoint, in contrast with the European, the following remark of a Russian writer, Merezhkovsky, written in 1908, will be most interesting and illuminating. "What is happening now in Russia," he said, "is a dangerous game, not only for Russians but for all Euro-



peans. You Europeans look intently upon us. You follow the Russian revolution with anxiety, but not closely enough. What is happening among us is more terrible than it seems to you. We are burning, there is no doubt about it; but shall we burn alone? . . . Europe sees the moving body, but not the soul of the Russian revolution. The soul of the Russian people and the Russian revolution remains for Europe an eternal enigma. What you have got, we have got, but on the reverse side. What Kant would call your phenomenon is our transcendentalism. Nietzsche would say you are Apollo, we are Dionysius. The measure of your genius is limited, ours is limitless. . . . You preserve the soul, we search for something for which we can lose it." This is highly significant, and not merely for the quaint turn of its expression. The Russian Revolution is necessarily in open war with all that made up the old order of things, and hence with the rest of the self-styled civilised humanity. In Russia itself, it has taken the shape of replacing the orthodox Church by an official atheism that the new State tries its hardest to make universal, with what success I shall endeavour to show in another lecture. It has substituted the autocracy of a hereditary Tsar by that of an elected proletarian. It has been urged against the leaders of the Russian revolution that they were all foreigners, Jews, professional mischief-mongers. Cold facts do not support any such libel of a people, whose faults were certainly not a few; but whose one outstanding merit,— a fervent zeal almost reaching the sublimity of

fanaticism,—for their ideals, it is both unjust and futile to deny.

Let me, then, sum up the chief characteristics of the Russian Revolution. It was from the outset violent,—and bound to be. The degree of violence and its real necessity might be open to question; though, in judging of such matters, one should not forget the circumstances in which revolutions take their birth. Nor need we omit from the calculation the provocation in the past as well as in the years when the revolutionaries got into power. The memories of the Tsarist oppression would have been perhaps forgotten, had not the White Terror of adventurers like Kolchak, Denikin, or Wrangel, supported by foreign gold, made their utmost to keep afresh those memories. In repressing those attempts to undo their achievements, as well as in consolidating their position, the creature of violence had necessarily to keep up the terrorist tactics; and occasionally to employ them in real earnest in a manner that would certainly shock the unconcerned outsider, who had no such memories to avenge. Another equally necessary and prominent characteristic of the Bolshevik regime is its relentlessly propagandist administration. It is doubtful to say if the mass of the Russian revolutionaries have realised as yet the absolute need of persuading the rest of the world to see the justice and equity of their scheme of things. Tacticians, however, like Lenin and Trotsky, cannot be ignorant of the fact that movements like theirs must be balanced by support at home as well as abroad if they are ever to succeed-

Like bimetallism, bolshevism, or communism, must be universal, if it is to function at all. Any single nation, however large and populous, is bound to be defeated, if it endeavours to maintain the system off its own bat. Hence the need for a ceaseless, almost virulent propaganda, that provokes and prejudices the rest of the world, which has not yet reached the communist stage of sympathy with their fellow mortals. Finally, the aim and object of the propaganda is to make the new order of things universal. Without the entire civilised humanity co-operating, the communist scheme of society cannot be maintained. The whole world is, however, much too sophisticated to accept the Russian dictation. For one's amour propre, if for nothing else, one is driven to decline, with or without thanks, the Russian invitation to a world revolution. Hence the feeling of universal distrust of Russia abroad.

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# THE RUSSIAN EXPERIMENT 1917-27.

## LECTURE II.

### THE IDEAL AND THE ACTUAL.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In the present Lecture I propose to examine the work before the Bolshevists, and the way they set about accomplishing it. To have a fairly accurate idea of the Bolshevist task and their actual achievements, let us cast a glance, by way of commencement, at the magnitude of the problem they had shouldered. It was a vast land and a large population they had to deal with. The population of the Russian Empire in the last days of Tsardom was estimated at 182 million souls, with an area of 8,417,118 sq. miles. After the treaty of Brest Litovsk, which ended the Russian participation in the world war; and after allowing for the loss of territory due to the dismemberment of the old Tsarist Empire, leading to the separation of Finland, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Esthonia, the area was reduced by 3.8% and the population by 17.1%. The population of the present territory making up the United Socialist Sovietique Republics was, in 1914, 138½ million; to-day it is, according to the Census figures of 1926 (preliminary) 144,805,000; while the area covered by the U.S.S.R. is 8,186,144 sq. miles. If we allow for the old rate of growth of population in this area, 1.69% p. a., the population in 1926 ought to have been 167.75 million. This means a net reduction of the population,

rather than an increase, under the Soviet regime. Still it is a very large figure both in area and population. These the Bolsheviks wanted to convert at a stroke to a thorough-going communism in every phase of the economic life of the country. They could not expect to convert such a mass to the principles of communism in a day, in a year, even perhaps in a decade; and their own numbers, at the time the Bolsheviks took charge of the ship of state, were barely  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million, or less than 1% of the total population. They had, in addition, to keep up a constant war on all fronts simultaneously,—at home to establish and maintain their power and the principles of revolutionary Government, and abroad to check the enemies of the Revolution. It is a marvel how, despite all the efforts of the White Terror by the counter-revolutionary adventurers, the Bolsheviks maintained order in their own ranks, and loyalty even to their somewhat drastic programme in the mass of the Russian people. The fight against the counter-revolution need not detain us here, as it is only one of a several factors making up the immense difficulties of the Bolsheviks in the task before them. The legacy of the Tsarist Russia, the war with Germany, was, however, another matter altogether. The Bolsheviks signalled their advent to power by hastening peace with Germany; but that did not by any means lighten their task. For it gave the Tsarist allies of Russia the right to complain of a betrayal, and deprived the new Government of the sympathy, or even neutra-

lity, of very powerful units in the family of nations, in their struggles to achieve the revolution. Germany was really as anxious as Russia for a peace which would raise the blockade that was strangling the life out of her. But it would not do to show anxiety. Hence the delays caused by the German General Staff. The treaty of peace with Germany was, moreover, a burden in itself, and a terrible miscalculation so far as the Bolshevist programme was concerned. For not only did the terms of the Treaty impose fearful obligations by way of loss of territory and an indemnity of 6,000 million gold roubles,—£600 million,—but it failed the Bolshevists in their fondest expectations. They had agreed to all the terms insisted on by Germany, not because Lenin and his friends had any love for the Kaiser and his coterie of war-lords, but because they hoped and believed that the peace with Germany will be followed by a Revolution similar to theirs in the Fatherland. They were never more hopelessly, more tragically, out in their calculations. Their expectation to obtain an easy liquidation of the indemnity from the fraternal government of republican socialists in Germany was never realised. Germany had her Revolution, no doubt; but it was far different from what had been expected by the Bolshevists, and surprised or disappointed others besides the ardent Communists of Russia.

Greater by far than all these difficulties was the divergence of interests or ideals within the Soviet Republic itself. As already remarked,

at the time of seizing the Government the Bolshevik strength in its aggregate numbered a few hundred thousands,—to cope with and convert or govern as many hundred millions, perhaps. In the latter mass, the bulk of the people had certainly no love for the absolutist regime of the Tsar; nor were they infatuated admirers of the liberal bourgeois regime of the Kerensky days. But it was a far cry from the mild professions of lip-loyalty to the socialist principles, characteristic of the Kerensky regime, to the out-and-out communism of the Bolsheviks. Lenin, in a pamphlet entitled, "Shall the Bolsheviks be able to maintain power," published on the eve of the Revolution, (1st October, 1917) did, indeed, declare that with their handful they would be quite able to take charge of and hold the Government against all comers. But neither he nor those who differed from or supported him were aware of the serious divergence of views and ideals, which actuated the several categories of the people acquiescing in the Bolshevik *coup-d'état*. The industrial workers had a plan of action, or expectations of life, not at all shared in or even understood by the peasants; and the same want of identity of purpose is noticeable as between the civil population and the soldiers and sailors. The first sign of the Bolshevik advent was given by the refusal of a Petrograd regiment to go to the front and continue the war. Thence forward soldiers and sailors were aided and abetted in their disaffection towards the old order; and so they naturally

came to entertain exaggerated notions of their own importance in the Revolution. When they came to power the Bolshevik thoroughly rehabilitated their army of defence. The genius of Trotsky has succeeded in converting it, in a miraculously short time, into one of the most efficient machines of its type in the world. But still the difference in viewpoint between the soldier and the civilian is even now not extinct. The governing minority of a few energetic communists, themselves able, eager, enthusiastic, and not inefficient, is under no illusion about its position in the country, with the rest of their compatriots and comrades. In the course of time, as I shall endeavour to show in the subsequent lectures, a great many of these difficulties have been smoothed or remedied. I mention them here, however, to give a truer and fuller picture of the tremendous task before the Bolshevik Government when it first took office.

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF BOLSHEVISM.

That these few men could act as they did is a fact of historical psychology well worth some consideration. What were the motive forces that actuated the leaders of the Revolution? What were the theories or ideals, underlying their acts? What was their philosophy of life? The philosophy of the Bolsheviks is utterly, aggressively materialistic, whose one redeeming feature even their bitterest enemy will have to recognise, viz. the utter absence of any illusion. They held firmly to the faith of their founder that "Everything can be explained by natural laws,



or, in a narrower sense, by physiology." (Rene Fülöp-miller's *Mind and face of Bolshevism*). On this view the Bolshevik philosopher necessarily condemned religion, and the Bolshevik statesman destroyed, or disestablished, the Church. The Christian church had long since lost the pure essence of the teaching of Christ. It had made itself the ally of autocracy and a weapon of oppression. Christ, we see everyday, is daily crucified more cruelly by the soi-disant Christians than Pilate ever could do. Philosophers, said Marx, "have merely interpreted the world in various ways; the really important thing is to change it." His practically minded Bolshevik followers started making the change, and they began their changes with proposing to recast the very mould of philosophical doctrine or ideas that had hitherto influenced, in a subtle, imperceptible way, the thought and life of countless generations. Lenin recognised fully the importance of the background of philosophy in effecting such changes as he was intent upon; and so he not only declared the creed of Bolshevism to be unmitigated, undiluted materialism, but also insisted upon its official and universal adoption, like a Constantine or Asoka insisting upon his subjects adopting the creed of the ruler. Philosophical belief, he held, was no merely private concern of each individual, irresponsible to any one; nor even of a class of thinkers specially trained or appointed to the task. Belief in a creed was one of the strongest levers, he felt, wherewith the world could be moved; and so he and his colleagues set about getting their

philosophy of absolute materialism to permeate through and through the society they were about to reconstruct. They declared a ruthless and relentless war upon all idealistic philosophy as tending to mislead mankind into all those superstitions and dogma, which were afterwards made into organised religions or churches by the astute and the interested for their own benefit; and which have helped, in the hands of the sacerdotal class, to exploit in no small degree mankind for the benefit of the priesthood and their champions. In their view, the Bolsheviks have no doubt everything and every phenomenon, individual or social, can be explained, fully and finally, by natural laws, by the physical sciences, by even physiology in the narrower sense; and whatever cannot be thus explained either needs no explanation, or will, in course of time, and with the advance of science, obtain such explanation. Bukharin, who has systematised and popularised the Bolshevik philosophy, says :—

“ All idealistic considerations lead in the end to a kind of conception of Divinity, and are, therefore, pure nonsense in the eyes of Marxists. Even Hegel saw in God the concrete form of everything good and reasonable that rules the world; the idealist theory must put everything on the shoulders of this unfortunate greybeard, who, according to the teaching of his worshippers, is perfect, and who, in addition to Adam, created fleas and harlots, murders and lepers, hunger and misery, plague and vodka, in order to punish the sinners whom he himself had created, and who sin in accordance with his will . . . From the scientific standpoint this theory leads to absurdity. The only scientific explanation of all the phenomena of the world is supplied by absolute materialism.

On this view, the Bolshevik rearranged the order of evolution in their new gospel of genesis ; In the beginning Nature; from it life; and from life, thought and all the manifestations we call mental or moral phenomena. There is no such thing as Soul, and Mind is nothing but a function of matter, organised in a particular way. Every expression of the human mind and soul, every emotion or thought-expression, every creation of art and science, of religion and philosophy, every phenomenon of social life, is caused in the ultimate analysis by purely material and even mechanical causes. Culture, refinement, intellectual life and being, are unintelligible to the Bolsheviks, except as conditioned or created by the economic premis. And because they consider all forms of art and culture as the product merely of economic relations, they have no hesitation in holding that art can be used to socialise emotion, or, as as Tolstoi put it, "as a means to the emotionalinfection ofhumanity." Mr. Upton Sinclair of America has written a most interesting work called *Mammonart*, whose central thesis is that all artistic creations,-poetry and drama; scupture and painting,-of the greatest masters all the world over, are nothing but conscious or unconscious propaganda for a class. This thesis, whether accepted or not, does not deal with the problem of the origin of the artistic impulse. The Bolsheviks, however, are quite convinced of the materialistic, and even mechanical, origin of that impulse; and have therefore felt themselves fully justified in putting such creations to the use of further-

ing materialism. If music can serve to infuse in a vast audience a common sentiment or rather sensation; if an excellent painting, a perfect theatrical performance, a stirring poem, can give rise to emotions of the type intended by the author, why should not such works be used for strengthening the bonds of the new order of things the Bolshevists had set themselves to establish in Russia, and from Russia throughout the world.? I shall have occasion to show in a later lecture how they have actually succeeded in mechanising the theatre and other productions, which we call artistic. Here it is enough to draw attention to this dominating idea of the Bolshevik philosophy, which they seek to realise in everyday life and all social relations or phenomenon, to the utmost of their ability.

Starting with this axiom, the Communist regime in Russia endeavoured, in the first flush of their coming into power, so to arrange the conditions of material life for every one in the country as to enable each individual to be equally fitted to give expression, or at least to appreciate the products of human activity in every department to the utmost. The practical manifestation of the Bolshevik creed is crystalised in the maxim: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." To achieve this in daily life, they had first to expropriate the expropriators, to take up all means of production, denying in them any exclusive individual property, and working them collectively for the common good. In theory, it is, of course, quite easy to show that this process

must result in such an increase of the total products at the disposal of mankind that want and misery must be for ever banished; and that, the wastage due to the present starvation or under-feeding of a certain section of modern individualist society being avoided, the productive capacity of all will also increase in geometric progression.\* But whether this unquestionably desirable and laudable end can be accomplished while any considerable section in the community is unconvinced of its central truth is a consideration the Bolsheviks do not seem to have troubled themselves very much about. They held, indeed, that power must belong to the community as a whole, and be exercised through the proletarian dictatorship for the benefit of the entire community. But in the actual use of that power, the Bolsheviks were in a very small minority, and are so still. Their aim of accomplishing the perfection of the machine-age, in a country so backward and deficient in machinery as Russia; and their hope of speeding up production by the aid of universal and intensive mechanisation of the American type, is, if not impossible, at least extremely difficult of accomplishment in the country they have to work in. As a side-issue, though to the founders of Russian communism it was no side-issue, they hoped to benefit from the parallel revolutions of their own model in other more industrialised or mechanised countries; so that the surplus of the more advanced communities may be utilised to make up for the deficit, or the time

being, of the more backward. Other countries, however, were either not prepared for, or not quite convinced of the wisdom of, the Bolshevik Revolution being reproduced in their own midst; and so their indirect help and moral support was lost. But in the country of extreme, if not excessive mechanisation, in America; and in the eyes of those who have themselves planned and achieved complete mechanisation, the experience does not seem to be tempting, to those at any rate, who have been brought up to long for self-expression in work itself. Sosnovsky, the Bolshevik apologist, advocated, in the first years of triumphant Bolshevism, that a few Russians be bred up 'Americans' systematically every year, some what, may I say, in the manner in which we make a fetish in this country of our "England-trained" men. These "Russian—Americans" Sosnovsky wanted to be specially protected, and suggested that everybody else must be made to model themselves on these hybrids. In five years' time, according to the computation of this fond dreamer, "these Russian Americans will declare a war of extinction on all Russian boobies," and presumably succeed in Americanising Russia, if not in annihilating Russians. Henry Ford seems to be the model of these American maniacs in Russia; but Ford himself declares: "It would be a ghastly thought to me; I simply could not do the same thing day in day out." And Dr. Rathenau, who organised and perfected the centralised management of industry in war-time in Germany, was by no means content

to pin the faith of humanity to the star which now seems to guide the Russian effort, even though he was the first to realise the triumphs of mechanised industry and trade on a nation-wide scale. The tendencies of excessive mechanisation were, in his eye, towards a "spirit of abstract utility and systematically futile thought, without wonder and without humour, of the greatest complexity and at the same time of deadly uniformity." And so the ideals and philosophy of the Bolsheviks do not seem yet to be meeting with enthusiastic support in the world at large.

#### PERSONALITIES OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION.

How and by whom were these ideas realised? The personalities of the Russian Revolution make as fascinating a study as any in history, not only because of the mightiness of their task but also by a certain something in themselves, despite their own professions to the contrary, which transcended the merely material sphere they professed to act in. The Russian Revolution is no more the creation of a single man than any other phenomenon of like dimensions has been or can be. It is the creation of a number of people co-operating, not necessarily consciously or even willingly, or with the same end in view,—with the result that events have happened and situations created wherein their ideas have had a chance to germinate and fructify. Without the havoc of the Tsarist regime preceding; without the intense misery of the huge masses of the Russian people, which made them fall

in rank despair ready and eager for anything that had the slightest promise of a relief from their intolerable miseries ; without the blunders and errors of the Court and the Army and the Bureaucracy and the higher Bourgeoisie that had brought the old order of things into thorough disrepute ; without the teaching of men like Tolstoi, which had soaked through and saturated the spirit of the Russian masses, and the denunciations of men like the Bolshevist leaders ; —the inflammable material the Bolshevists found ready to their hand would never have come into being ; and so the match they applied would never have caused the conflagration that has actually resulted. Even without Lenin and his friends, the Tsarist autocracy was doomed. Even without Marx, capitalism was doomed. Even without the extremism of social or revolutionary democracy, the day of merely parliamentary institutions of the British type, with a new lease of life to the propertied and exploiting classes, was not to be thought of in the Russia of 1917. The new Russian consciousness, such as it was, was definitely against the privileged-class-government of any kind, whether the privilege was the outcome of birth, or wealth, or even of individual merit of the more academic kind. On the other hand, mere anarchy whether of the common-or-garden variety confused with terrorism, or the more philosophical, sophisticated brand, was not to be thought of, until the indispensable minimum of life and enjoyment had been secured to each individual from the collective or aggregate pro-



duction of all working to the same end. Democracy, with the set purpose of destroying privileged classes with their legal right to exploit their fellow-beings for their own private exclusive advantage, could have been foretold, even in the early days of the Russian Revolution, to be the most likely programme adopted by the revolutionaries. That they had to be violent and radical; that they were in a mortal haste to realise, at least in name, the ideals they had been so long preaching the moment they came into power, without waiting to consider if the soil was at all ready for the seed, must be ascribed to the circumstances that gave birth to the Revolution, and the conditions under which the Revolutionaries had to work. They had, accordingly, to do much in the first flush of their triumphant advent to power, which they had afterwards to modify, if not to undo,—not because their faith had wavered or changed in the least; nor even because their determination to accomplish the end at any cost had weakened, but because they were free to recognise the absence of the indispensable conditions, without having to pay the forfeit of unjustified experiments.

The men who had thus the courage of their convictions, both positively and negatively, in going full-speed ahead or applying four-wheel brakes, were great dynamic forces. They had suffered much, pondered much, hoped much. They were by no means agreed, even among themselves, as to the ways and means, and the exact psychological moment for carrying out

their ideas in practice. Lenin and Trotsky, the two greatest personalities and makers of the Russian Revolution, were as wide apart in their views as the poles, when the Revolution was in gestation. They had not by any means spared each other when the revolution was still to be achieved. Here are some choice flowers offered by Lenin to Trotsky: "A shuffler, . . . . a man of no views, . . . . a poor hero of phrasology, a diplomatist of the meanest description . . . . an intellectual opportunist". And Trotsky was in no way behind hand with his choice collection of bouquets for his future leader: Lenin, he declared was "a professional exploiter of every backwardness in the Russian workers' movement". Even before the proletarian dictatorship was an accomplished fact, Trotsky taunted Lenin with having an insatiate greed for power, and being a candidate for the post of the Dictator! He came late into the innermost councils of the militant revolutionaries, and had hoped, until the very last, to avert some of the steps his colleagues were contemplating. From the moment the worldwar had begun, Lenin was a declared defeatist, who saw in the defeat of the nationalist Tsarist armies and the bourgeoisie the surest road to proletarian supremacy. Before that supremacy was conceded by the large and small bourgeois, civil war and a reign of terror would have to come inevitably. But Lenin was in no way frightened by these gaunt spectres that scare away many a less determined person. He positively welcomed them, and

actually prepared for them, as the only means of accomplishing the Bolshevist ends. Trotsky was European in Russia, though a Russian in Europe. Trotsky was against the War as much as Lenin, but he could not at a stroke discard all the nationalist pride. He would rather end the war by diplomacy than by a crushing defeat, and pave the way for proletarian supremacy by a bloody Civil War. It is not even certain if, left to themselves, Trotsky and some of the more moderate among the Bolshevists, like Zinoviev, Kamenev or Rykov, would not have welcomed some kind of a compromise with the more radical, more chastened, more far-seeing of the Bourgeoisie.

But the towering personality of Lenin would not leave them alone, would not permit any other course of action, but what this long-suffering exile from Russia had determined upon. On the first news of a Revolution in Russia, Lenin hastened from his retreat in Switzerland, helped in his passage by the German Government who saw in his sudden entrance on the Russian stage the earnest of their own success. When the bourgeois revolutionary Government had succeeded the Tsar's, the Soviets of soldiers, peasants and workers were organised to bring pressure upon the Government, and effects such a redistribution of wealth as had long since been the ideal of social democracy. The more moderate of the Bolshevists were content to await the consummation of the Bourgeois Revolution, and its peaceful surrender of power, in the fullness of time, to the Bolshe-

vists. But Lenin thought otherwise. He considered that the mere fact that the *coup-d'etat* had been planned and carried out by the bourgeoisie against the feudal aristocracy and the Tsarist absolutism was enough to prove that the first step was ended. The bourgeois had done his work. Remained for the social democrat to come into his own. In the first days, however, when he was taking stock of the situation, he was by no means so positive as he became later. He himself was in favour, in April (21) 1917, of stopping all street demonstrations against the existing Government. So also in the June following, when the Congress of Soviets was in session at Petrograd, and when the leaders were yet unready to lead an armed revolt against the new government. But the latter played into the hands of Lenin. In July there was a spontaneous rising of the Petrograd workers and soldiers, who cried "Down with the capitalist Ministers"; and "all power to the Soviets". The Bolsheviks were identified with this; but, for the moment, the Government was strong enough to suppress the rising; and Lenin had to flee once again the country. Then came General Kornilov playing Napoleon on the Russian Stage. This drove the Social Revolutionaries of all shades together to war against the common peril. Kornilov was frustrated; but Lenin pointed out the inconsistency or discrepancy between fighting a Kornilov and supporting a Government like that of Kerensky. He was, even in July, not averse, indeed, to consider the possibility of a compromise;

and himself suggested terms on which a more peaceful revolution could be accomplished. But his proposals from Finland were rejected, because the Soviets had not yet learnt to distrust Kerensky. Dissatisfied by the tactics of the leaders, a few of the more ardent Bolsheviks agitated among the rank and file, and prepared them for a bloody fight against the established authority. A majority in the Petrograd Soviet was won over, and Trotsky was elected their chairman. Power was within their grasp at long last, and their opponents almost drove them to take it by the forelock, by their untimely, insensible taunts. Lenin asked, in an immortal and sensational pamphlet called "*Will the Bolsheviks maintain Power?*" published at the most psychological moment (Oct. 1, 1917); and answered that if 130,000 land owners could hold the Government after 1905, why should not ten times their number of the Bolsheviks succeed in doing so. This his declaration, on the eve of the Bolshevik advent to power, was closely parallel to that in another pamphlet from the same master-mind, issued earlier in the year, and entitled *the State and the Revolution*; but differed in one essential particular that seemed to lend a tone of chastened, sobered responsibility, taught by a first-hand acquaintance with governing power, its pitfalls, and responsibilities. In *the State and Revolution* the future Dictator had advocated the immediate socialisation of the means of production; but in the later declaration he held that the most vital issue before the Russian people

was not the confiscation of capitalist enterprise, but rather the universal, comprehensive, un-exceptioned control of workers over the capitalists and their sympathisers. To persuade the hesitating and to convince the waverers, he added :—

“ We shall readily substitute for confiscation the collection of just taxation, if only we can thereby exclude the possibility of any sort of evasion of account-rendering, concealing the truth, and eluding the law . . . . At the same time,” he added, “ extra obstinate and non-submissive capitalists will have to be punished by the confiscation of the whole of their wealth, and by imprisonment.”

Feeling certain that the apparatus created by capitalist enterprise and ingenuity would serve the socialist turn, needing only a degree of supervision, Lenin had no compunction about the fate of industry under the regime he proposed ; and therefore no fears about the success of the Bolshevists in maintaining control of the Governmental machine.

Against this attitude and tactics of the Bolshevists, the Kerensky regime was endeavouring to steal a march by the convocation of a National constituent Assembly. The Bolshevist leaders, including Lenin at first, were agreed upon taking part in the Conference ; but within a few days Lenin was converted into believing that the participation would be a mistake. Without waiting for the meeting of the Soviet Congress on the 23rd October, Lenin proposed (Oct. 10) to prepare for an insurrection. The fate of the Party, and of the Russian Revolution, was staked on a single throw—an im-

mediate armed rising. Kamenev and Zinoviev had doubted the wisdom of such a bold step; but they were cowed into submission by the irresistible magnetism of Lenin, who had returned from his exile in Finland. A timely blunder of Kerensky, ordering a war-weary regiment to go to the front, betrayed the Government into the hands of the revolutionaries, and started the armed revolution. Even then, many, including the foremost figures in the Revolution, like Trotsky himself, doubted the justice and prudence of ignoring the All-Russia Soviet Congress about to meet. But Lenin urged, in the true spirit of Danton, "Action, Action. Power first; discussion afterwards". He stormed them, taunted them, manouevered them into fixing the 15th October for the fateful day; and though the actual insurrection took place on the 23rd, when the Congress of Soviets met, on the 25th, the Government was already in the hands of the Bolsheviks. The waverers still continued to waver; but Lenin was fixed and adamant, and the "deserters" had to desert themselves, and throw in their lot with Lenin. Boldness is contagious. Audacity, *toujours de l'audace, encore de l'audace*, is the soul of success in revolution. Proletarian dictatorship was announced; preparations were made for concluding peace with Germany, and the masses won over by the decree of immediate nationalisation of land, and the confiscation of all forms of property. The Congress of Soviets had a few feeble speeches of ineffective protest from doubters and opponents; but they were silenced and helpless before the logic of the *fait accompli*.

This was Lenin, the author and embodiment of the Russian Revolution. The man's greatness is unquestioned, though we, his contemporaries, may not see it in its proper perspective and true proportions. His colleagues and critics are alike agreed on the intense personal magnetism of the man,—all the more surprising in the Russia of to-day, where rampant materialism is so universal and through-going. Lenin is inexplicable, on the strict materialistic creed. His colleagues regard him as an "appliance" to achieve the Bolshevist creed. But we, who are not gifted with the higher insight of these adepts; we who cannot quite overlook the inconsistencies in the Lenin legend, cannot but think of him as a phenomenon transcending a mere "appliance". Born in 1870, Lenin came of a stock of petty nobility in Russia, but was early entangled in the revolutionary movement that dated from the days of Alexander II. A brother of his was involved in an anarchist attempt on the life of Alexander III; and was sentenced to be hanged. He himself was accused of some such activities as did not find favour with the Tsarist regime, and had his share of the revolutionary's suffering in the old regime. Thereafter he was an exile, and did not return to the land of his fathers, except when the regime of Tsardom was over; and then, too, with the help of the foe of his fatherland. But Lenin had no such frailties as a belief in misplaced patriotism,—a passion for a land which specialised in persecuting and terrorising the best and noblest of her sons. He was from the outset of



the war a defeatist, and openly gloated in the chances of defeat of the Tsarist armies, as the surest means to accomplish the revolution he had hungered for. He was, by nature, poorly gifted. "As an orator he lacked the fire of Kerensky, the erudition of Miliukov, the all-redeeming sincerity of Tsoretelli, the flashing brilliance of Trotski." As a writer, he was commonplace to the verge of dullness; but that was perhaps his best passport to the heart of his countrymen. He was extremely well educated, but not in the sense familiar to us in this country, or common in all the bourgeois civilisations of the West. He was intolerant of opposition in debate, and was wont to brush aside his opponent by the curt remark "If you don't understand this much, you understand nothing." But he had the insight, the perception, and boldness that achieved the Revolution, and kept the revolutionaries in the saddle, despite unheard of unbelievable difficulties. He alone among the Bolshevik leaders was able to perceive that the mass of the people would be with them in their violent bid for power, even though the constituted authorities and assemblies might appear to be against them. He had the magic of all great personalities, and so an entree into the hearts of his *vis-a-vis* in a manner that none less great can realise. A Russian socialist, and an enemy of Lenin personally, has recorded the testimony of an unknown workman received in audience by the Dictator in the midst of the most absorbing public business. The workman was moved to the foundation of his being.

“This is a man” he repeated over and over again “for whom I would give my life . . . With him a new life begins for me. Ah, if we only had had a Tsar like him!” Asked what the Dictator had said to him, the workman more soberly replied, “Everything belongs to you ‘he told me.’ take everything. The world belongs to the proletariat. But believe no one but us. The workers have no other friends.” This was the usual stock in trade of demagogues, which the workman must have heard a thousand times before, without any impression, except perhaps of insufferable boredom. And yet, when said by Lenin, these commonplace could move such a stolid mass as this ordinary workman. Trotsky, who was by no means an unsophisticated, infatuated admirer of Lenin, said, immediately after an attempt on the life of the Dictator, “When we think that Lenin may die, our whole life seems useless, and we cease to want to live.”! Zenoviev, another of Lenin’s principal co-workers, not always seeing eye to eye with the Dictator, remarks, speaking on the days when pourparlers for peace with the Central Powers were going on: “It is doubtful what would have happened to our Revolution, if Comrade Lenin had not been present in those bitter moments and stirring days.” These testimonials from colleagues and co-workers, not always able to say ditto in everything to Lenin, must be ample evidence of the man’s real greatness. He was not only alone in perceiving the real bond of sympathy between his and the mass mind in Russia, in the stirring

days of expectant revolution, and experimenting socialism. He was greater and surer still, when, turned back from the jubilant note of the early years of triumphant Revolution, he retraced his steps to inaugurate what has been called the New Economic Policy. I am not sure if Comrade Zenoviev's tribute I quoted a moment ago is merely an expression of a passing depression or is rooted firmly in fact, as regards the service rendered by Lenin to the cause of the Revolution in the days when pourparlers for peace were going on. But I am perfectly certain no one but Lenin could have dared to make the confession, which the new economic policy implied, of an utter failure, if only temporarily, of the vast expectations with which communism had been started in practice. And so it is that we have to confess Lenin to be even a greater man than Marx his teacher, or Trotsky his more brilliant, more energetic co-adjutor. Lenin made Marxism possible, he actually was able to realise it in practice, if only for a short while. Fitly, therefore, has Lenin's achievement come to be known as Leninism in contradistinction to Marxism, which, warring against idealism, was itself able to go no further than idle speculation. Fitly, too, has he come to be regarded as the saint and saviour, the guardian angel and champion knight, of the Russian proletarian Revolution, or what remains of it, in a land, where they have abolished all angels and banished all saints. The Lenin mausoleum in the Red Square of Moscow has become a place of pilgrimage for the thirst-

ing communist from all over Russia, if not from all over the world ; and the man who was responsible for so many changes, so much bloodshed and so great terror, lies resting now in his final home, as the greatest embodiment of the rights of suffering humanity.

I have glanced in passing, in the foregoing sketch of Lenin's personality and achievements, at some of his co-workers like Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rykov etc. They are second class stars, who have, indeed, their own light ; but they pale before the overwhelming effulgence of the premier luminary. They have their own views about the Revolution, its scope and nature, its ways and means ; and their activities in that regard are not yet over. Lenin we can attempt to estimate, now that he has ceased to be an active force ; but these others his partners in the great task are yet alive and working ; and so it would be premature, if not impossible, to attempt to estimate their contribution to the Revolution, or their character. Let us, however, see them in their doings, in the first acts of the Revolution they helped to achieve. The first decrees of the Bolsheviks aimed at expropriation,—expropriation wholesale, expropriation universal,—without, however, any definite plan as to continuing the work in the expropriated establishments. The factories, they declared, were nationalised. The workers, however, understood the decree of nationalisation in their own way. They thought that by decreeing the nationalisation of the factories, they were entitled to take charge of the establishments.

And so they forthwith did, amidst congratulations and felicitations of their fellows. But what was to be done after that? How were the nationalised factories to be run? What was to be the place of these factories and their output in the general scheme of the life of the people? On these, neither they themselves nor their leaders had any very clear notions. The workers had, of course, hoped that the moment the nationalisation was accomplished, the factory would go on producing; and, as there would be no longer any profiteering exploiters in the shape of proprietors to be satisfied, they would stand to get all the increased surplus. But a sad disillusionment was in store for them on this point. They had been too thoroughly demoralised to be putting out their best energy to work; and, now that discipline was understood to be only a species of tyranny, there was no means of making them work. The ideal was to secure work for all; the actual gave work soon to none. The factories could not get raw material, or fuel, or workmen of itself; and the machines could not run by themselves. There was no produce; therefore nothing to exchange with in order to obtain food and other requirements of living. There was a growing shortage of food, not only because the army consumed a great quantity; not only because there was famine; but also because the peasants were by no means overflowing with sympathy for communism in practice. I shall speak of the events on land and concerning the peasants in a minute. For the moment let me

note that the products of industry having come to an end after a while ; and the industrial establishments having come to a dead stop, there was no means of obtaining the wherewithal for the city people and factory workers to live on, not to mention the soldiers and sailors that were guarding the Revolution. The rulers tried to rectify the initial error of uncoordinated nationalisation by instituting a central department for the purpose, (June 25, 1918). Trotsky even spoke of the militarisation, or conscription, of labour,—he who only a few months before had spoken of the Bolshevist achievements in enthusiastic laudation. “ We started our economic policy ” he said, “ by a definite and irrevocable break with the bourgeois past. Before, there was a market—it was abolished. There was free trade—it was abolished. Competition and commercial speculation were abolished. What took the place of all these ? The centralised, supreme, most sacred economic council which orders and organises and supervises everything, sees to the procuring of raw material, machinery, &c., and to the disposing of manufactured goods. From one centre this council through its various dependent organs decides everything”. But there was utterly nothing to decide about. The old managers of industry struggled to go on working. But they were unable to keep up with the deliberate depreciation of the medium of exchange, and the consequent fluctuations of a most violent kind in prices and wages. They therefore closed down, and there was no one among the workers to take their place at

once,—not even the central economic council of comrade Trotsky. When the accumulated stocks of the war-time were used up, there was no means of keeping the factories going. Workers began to flee to the land, and to intensify the struggle of existence in that direction also. In January, 1918, there were  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million industrial workers; in 1919, half that figure, and the year following only  $\frac{3}{4}$  million, of which real workers were only 400,000. Production had fallen to less than one-seventh the pre-war standard in industry as a whole, in particular cases the fall being even more considerable. Cottage industries, and those free from the policy of nationalisation and workers' control, escaped, in a measure, from this wave of intense depression. But as trade was also nationalised, there was no means even for such saved industries to exchange their produce without smuggling on an extensive scale, in which the peasants joined with a vim. The situation at last became so intolerable that a revolt in the armed forces of the Government was imminent; and as that would have undone all the work of the Revolution, Lenin promptly turned over a new leaf, and inaugurated the New Economic Policy.

Of this development I shall speak in the next lecture. Here let me complete the picture by adding a word about agriculture. How fared the peasant under the Revolution? The Russian peasant is called a moujik—and reminds me, quite unreasonably, of our own word 'Mocji.' The peasant mentality is not materially different in any part of the world. He is accustomed to

think in terms of his own holding ; his horizon is bounded by his own hedges. He has an attachment to the soil of his family, which great thinkers and mighty philosophers rarely understand ; and so he is ready to take up arms in the defence of his land and fight with a vim, that cannot but amaze them who are themselves strangers to such attachment to the soil. But the peasant-even the educated peasant-cannot take a broad philosophical view. He welcomed, indeed, the Bolsheviks, with their promise to expropriate the landed properties. But when the expropriation of landlords was decreed, the peasants did not interpret the decree to mean their own expropriation as well. They had no desire to cultivate their land, for the benefit of the idlers and officials at Moscow! The decree of October 1917 had expropriated all landlords, including the Church lands and Crown or state lands; and these were made over to local land committees, or soviets. But the decree had not prescribed the forms for effecting this change. The fundamental law of February 1918 had abolished the principle of private property in all land, including the peasants' properties, forests and mineral resources. But even this did no more than legalise what was going on in the country. The Government was much too busy strengthening its hold on the towns, and straightening out the tangle that had occurred in the nationalised industry to be able to devote much time and attention to the agricultural problem. The villages were left to themselves, and the peasants carried out the



expropriation, in the manner they understood it. And the peasants did it very peaceably and fairly creditably, through their immemorial village organisation, the Mir. The confiscated lands were decreed to be divided equally; the peasants divided them—mostly amongst the descendants of exserfs, so as to rectify the injustice that had been rankling for two generations. Hence, when the Government was free, at the end of 1918, to devote their attention to the peasants, they already found a strongly entrenched class, not materially different in their sympathies and prejudices from the petty-bourgeois class they were familiar with in the towns. These revolution born proprietors were against the Revolution, in so far as it was against their rights of property. The attempt to introduce class warfare in the village by organising and pitting the poorer peasants against the richer ones. But these organisations, though they did create some trouble locally, brought no advantage to the government or relief in their main troubles. The attempt at farming huge blocks of land directly by the State, jointly by the town worker and the peasant, (but with the compulsory labour of the latter), also failed; and Government were rather anxious in 1921 to liquidate these huge latifundia, or what remained of them, in the hands of the state. The peasant economy thus remained master of the situation, only disturbed by the policy of government in regard to ensuring an adequate supply of food for the civil and military population in their charge. A Food

Dictatorship was established by a decree of May, 1918, which was empowered to requisition all foodstuffs beyond the immediate requirements of the cultivator and seed. In practice, the department and its resultant Food Campaign almost brought the Revolution to the brink of failure. In theory they were supposed to make their demands—their assessment—on statistical data. But what statistics could they have in those distant Council halls of Moscow? The demands of the Food Dictator became veritable exactions that left the peasant not enough food for himself and family, let alone seed. The peasants refused to submit tamely to these exactions of the commissariat and its underlings from Moscow. The country population rose in rebellion; and when that failed, they organised passive resistance. They refused to grow more food than what was needed for their own consumption and seed for the next crop. They cut down the area of cultivation, and reduced the yield of crops. This meant the almost complete cessation of any cultivation of the raw materials of industry like flax or cotton; and, therefore, a total stoppage of the already famishing industry. The rear under cultivation was reduced by more than half, and the yield per acre fell in proportion. The reaction was instant and indisputable. Food shortage was chronic and intense; and factories were starved for want of material. Lenin feared for the very life of the Revolution, and though a nominal power was taken in 1920-21 to define in advance the area

to be sewed in, and the compulsion of the peasant to cultivate as per plan, the measure was a dead letter from the start. The end of 1920 marks the end, therefore, of this communistic experimentation with the peasants in Russia.

On the whole, then, judged in the test-tube of results, the policy of active and all round communism in trade, industry, and agriculture must be pronounced to have been a failure. The failure may have been due,—I think it really was due,—to a combination of circumstances, which need not be regarded as ever recurring; and which, being overcome or removed, might permit of a hope of future success. For the moment, however, the failure was complete and ghastly and undeniable, even though the experimenting had been on immature ground, and not under ideal conditions. The authors of the Revolution, however, had the sense to perceive their failure, courage to admit it, and the enterprise to set about remedying the disaster. How they did it, and what has since become of the economic life in Russia, must be reserved for another lecture.

## LECTURE III

### A CHANGE OF FRONT: THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

From the wholesale and militant communism of the first years of the Revolution to the more restrained and orthodox regime called the New Economic Policy, there was a wide gulf. The gulf had to be bridged adroitly, if the leaders and authors of the Revolution were not to forfeit the sympathy of that small but active class that had supported them in first bringing it about.

In examining how they set about bridging the gulf, I shall have unavoidably to go over the same ground, in part at least, that I have covered in the last lecture. I shall make the repetition as brief as I can manage; and such as it is, such as I am obliged to make it, I shall do from a new point of view altogether. I shall consider the outlook of the different classes on the Revolution, and what promise it had for them; and in doing so I shall notice what each of these classes were expecting when they severally desired a change from the absolute, undiluted, universal communism of Marx-cum-Lenin. This will supply us with a key, not only to the understanding of the changes introduced by the New Economic Policy, but also enable us to perceive where, if at all, there are still hidden seeds of further modifications of absolute communism.

The need for a change was first forced upon the attention of the authorities by the revolt on March 6-7, 1921, of the Cronstadt garrison of sailors, who had been styled the "Pride and Beauty of the Revolution". These were the immediate authors of the advent of Bolshevism into power. If they were dissatisfied with the state of affairs, it must surely need modifying. Their rising was in sympathy with the similar risings of peasants all along the Volga, in Siberia, in the famous Black Land of Russia, and even in Petrograd-now called Leningrad-itself. The revolt as revolt was indeed crushed; but the demand of the revolted for a freedom of trade for and with the peasantry was undeniable. Lenin and his most prominent co-workers had the courage to admit failure in their first designs; and the daring to propose an orientation which would be a negation of the principles and policy they had hitherto followed. Trotsky declared, "We have failed in our plan. Why? Because we were not sufficiently prepared for it." And Lenin himself declared before the Communist Conference of 1922:—

"We must show the peasants by our deeds that we know how to help them, . . . or they will send us to the devil. The majority of them still think, 'well, if you don't know how to help us, perhaps you will learn'. But their patience is not inexhaustible, and the moment will come, when, to use a commercial expression, they will refuse us further credit, and ask for cash. They will say 'Dear rulers, after so many years of postponement have you found the right way of keeping us out of poverty, starvation, and ruin. Do you know how to do it? The capitalists knew how to organise supply. They did it badly, they plundered and offended us. But they knew how to do it; you do not.'

On this analysis of their position, the Bolshevik leaders decided to placate the peasantry, who held the key to the economic situation in their command of food-supply and raw materials for industry.

The opposition of the peasant was not so much to the government of the Bolsheviks, but rather to their preventing them enriching themselves. They knew quite well that the confiscations from the Church, State and land-lord estates had been the foundations of their new riches, which no other but the Bolshevik Government would recognise. Hence they desired, not to oust the communist Government by a counter-revolution, but rather to compel them to grant the peasants' point of view, as regards the use of agricultural land.

If the peasant forced the retreat from the undiluted Communism of the early days, the rest of the population was no whit behind hand in reinforcing, willy nilly, the demand for a new economic policy. The working or wage-earning class was certainly more socialistic, having suffered much more, and been educated also better, than the peasants to appreciate the advantage to them of a socialistic regime. The new Government looked upon them with special affection; and they were also able to share more effectively in the power of government. They had, therefore, less reason than the peasants to feel discontented. To the peasant the undiluted communism of the early years appeared in a light, in which the new governing power, with

its demand for the confiscation of all surplus produce, took the place of the old, as exploiters ; while they themselves remained a prey to exploitation as before. As a daring peasant is reported to have put the situation publicly, as he and his kind found it : “ While the land is ours, the crop is yours ; while the meadow is ours, the hay is yours ; while the forest is ours, the timber is yours.” All the fruits of land and its cultivation went, the peasants felt, to the Government, theirs being only the old, old, task of slaving, as before, for the benefit of others. Where, then, was the Revolution ? The industrial worker, particularly in the principal cities and at the headquarters of Government, did not feel the injustice of the new arrangement as the peasant did. But he, too, found neither food nor the wherewithal to get food, thanks to the attitude of the peasant. Hence his submission to the logic of circumstances. Here was a new class war—in a sense undreamt of by Marx, and unrealised fully even by Lenin. It was a case of town against country, artisan against agriculture—though both were equally poor. The workers felt that they had been betrayed by the peasants ; and the latter imagined the former were intent on exploiting the simplicity and ignorance of their countrymen. Their leaders and spokesmen were excellent people, so far as declamation of the benefits of communism went. But when it came to organising a factory, and carrying out the requirements of trade, they were the merest tyros. Their inexperience in economic organisation, and failure

to grasp the mightiness of the problem before them, were responsible in no small measure for the change of front forced on them. Trotsky had been from the beginning, and still seems to be, somewhat doubtful about the wisdom of excessive centralisation of effective power in the hands of a very small clique. And when at the critical moment came the death of Lenin,—the one mastermind that had kept all the heterogeneous forces together,—the plight of the Revolutionary Government was precarious in the extreme. They had been fondly hoping, ever since they signed the Treaty of Brest-Litvsk with Germany, that the working classes, the proletariat in the other European countries, would rise in a revolution similar to theirs, and complete the world socialist revolution; so that their task would be facilitated at home. But the world Revolution came not, neither in the new Germany, nor in the old Great Britain. And so the Bolsheviks were left to fight their difficulties single-handed, and without the aid of the ally they had most counted upon.

No wonder, then, that the Bolsheviks failed. The wonder rather is that they had the courage to admit failure, the daring to set about remedying it, the luck to accomplish it, without giving up their main ideal. The ultimate factor responsible for the failure, in many eyes, was human nature. This is a vague, convenient, term to shoulder all the blame, which it would be inconvenient for any individuals to assume. It is, however, im-



possible to say that by its very formation, man's nature is selfish rather than social. I am inclined to think that man of all animals, is more social than selfish. I do not deny a dash of selfishness in all of us ; but I hold that there is the other side also. By common consent, as also by the course of his evolution through the ages, man has come to look with approval and admiration, not upon the manifestations of human selfishness *in excelsis*, so much as upon the display of sacrificing traits in us individually. If men are to live in society, in some kind of organised grouping, they must needs have and encourage these self-sacrificing tendencies, or foster them by education in everyway they can, lest the group be weakened, or destroyed, or immolated by the individual. But this training or education, sufficient in degree to reach the height of enjoying all the factors of material well-being in common, must needs be slow; especially after the training or tendency of some generations had emphasised the opposite, and by no means yet extinct or insignificant, tendency to be selfish, as the age following the industrial revolution has done. The Russian Revolution, on the other hand,—or rather the Russian revolutionaries—wanted to carry out their programme of revolution with dramatic suddenness. And there they were opposed, not merely by *vis inertia*, but by the determined might of all the instincts of capitalistic greed, on a ground where they had never dreamt of meeting such a general, determined, resourceful opposition. They were themselves unprepared

and inexperienced; they had no working alternatives ready to take the place of the capitalistic organisation satisfactorily; they had other problems of international complications to attend to. And so when the results showed failure, or want of correspondence between the expectations and the actual, they turned down their policy, and blamed human nature for the failure!

How was this change accomplished? Let us begin with agriculture, and see how the change was brought about. The hostility of the peasants to the new system was intensified by a famine in 1921, which affected some 23 million people. The Government exactions of food surplus having exhausted all the accumulated reserves; and the peasants having deliberately reduced the crop by restricting the area of cultivation, the intensity of the shortage in any given area could not be localised. Starvation became universal. Misery and want and disease stalked the land as grim spectres. But for the vigorous and energetic relief measures adopted by foreign governments, like the American and the English, the plight of the Russian people would have been incredibly terrible, and the fate of the Revolution would have been sealed. Wiser, however, by these experiences, and recognising in time their failure, the leaders of the Revolution enunciated a new policy with reference to the ownership and cultivation of the land, and the disposal of its produce. The ultimate property in all land in the country was reserved for the people communistically or socially. But the existing conditions of pos-

sessory ownership were definitely recognised, and the peasants were left at complete liberty to cultivate their land either communally or individually as they pleased. In stead of confiscating all the surplus produce grown on land after the needs of the cultivator and his family had been satisfied, they now introduced a form of taxation of land—the Single Agricultural Tax which has commended itself to the peasants. The cultivator moreover, got the right to employ hired labour for wages, without forfeiting his civic right to vote at national or communal elections; and, in addition, obtained what to him was the more valued benefit, the freedom to trade his surplus goods wherever and however he liked. As the nationalisation of trade was simultaneously relaxed, and as the medium of exchange was also rehabilitated about this time, the permission to trade the surplus in a relatively free market was no empty concession. For the rest, Government realised their inability to maintain themselves in power and to carry on their revolution, without the support of the huge agricultural masses; and so they sought to win over the peasantry to their programme by other means. They formulated their policy of intense encouragement of agriculture by every means. To this end they have instituted model farms, where the most economical methods of land cultivation are on view; and facilities are offered to the peasants to avail themselves of these new methods of raising the greatest produce with the utmost economy. The peasant is not averse to avail himself of

every material advantage offered to him. But he still stands rooted in his prejudices as much as ever. Since 1925, leases of land are granted for 3 crop rotation-land, and for not more than 12 years in other. In 1926 further steps were taken to provide funds by the State to settle on land the poorer peasants to encourage still more the area under cultivation. The settlers are freed from taxation for a number of years, and the transport of their belongings and family is carried out at specially reduced rates. To village communities collectively, the Council of the People's Commissaries has decided to grant credit for a period of 8 years for work in connection with the amelioration of land. In the general organisation of education, also, a great deal of attention is paid to the needs of the agriculturists and the scientific cultivation of land.

It must be admitted, however, that the Russian peasant is as conservative as the peasant class all over the world; and does not, therefore, seem to have welcomed the new overtures to revolutionise his methods of cultivation that the Government is now holding out to him. He feels the arrogance of his age old experience and opposes it to all the, to him, spectacular achievements of science. He has not moreover forgotten or forgiven the communist officials' excesses during the three or four years that unrestricted communism was the order of the day. And hence he still looks with a degree of distrust, if not suspicion, upon the new proposals of the Communists.

As a result of the concessions, however, agricultural production has picked up wonderfully under the new regime. The total agricultural production in 1913, in the present Soviet territory, was valued at 12,380 million roubles, which fell during the period of anarchy to less than half that figure.\* Since 1921-22, however, it is creeping up steadily, till in 1925-26 the total agricultural

\* The gross production of agriculture, which in the year 1921-22 was 50 per cent of pre-war production, reached 73.9 per cent. of pre-war in 1924-25, and 92 per cent in 1925-26.

**Agricultural Production in million Roubles at Pre-war. Prices.**

Year	Production (million roubles)	100 per cent.
1913	12,380	100
1921-22	6,260	50.6
1922-23	8,700	70.3
1923-24	9,140	73.8
1924-25	9,150	73.9
1925-26	11,300	91.3

The area under cultivation and the gross yields of particular products are shown in the following table:—

	1924—25	1925—26
	(In 1,000 hectares)	
Total area under cultivation	102,281	107,172
Of this under grain	85,686	90,819
"    "    "    flax	1,578	1,584
"    "    "    cotton	653	687
	(In thousand quintals)	
The gross yields of the chief products		
Grain	696,003	743,309
Flax (seed)	6,031	6,586
Flax (fibre)	2,710	2,905
Hemp	3,818	4,510
Cotton	1,584	1,485
Sugar beet	76,125	66,089

The area of land under cultivation in 1925-26 comprises 92.3 per cent of the area in 1913, and it is anticipated that in 1926-27 the pre-war dimensions will be exceeded.

production was valued, pre-war prices, at 11,300 roubles, or 91.3 per cent. of the pre-war maximum. 65 per cent. of this total is made up of produce from arable and garden land and pasture; 25 per cent. in the form of live-stock; timber and forest produce make 8 per cent. while fishery and hunting supply the balance. According to the Soviet Official Year Book, in 1926-27, the area under cultivation was estimated to reach the pre-war standard, if not to exceed it. Of this agricultural produce proper, the marketable surplus, after satisfying the requirements of the rural population and for seeds, is also steadily rising, being nil in the years 1918-21: 1,209.4 million roubles in 1923-24; and 1930 million roubles in 1926-27. In the production of industrial raw material, like cotton and flax and tobacco or sugar beets, the same steady improvement is visible: so that the basic condition for the prosperity of industry is also being assured. The shortage in cattle and horses is fast disappearing by new production in this branch of agricultural economy.

*Continued from page 67.*

The quantity of live-stock is increasing year by year, as the following figures show:—

(In thousands).				
Animal.	1922-23	1923-24	1924-25	1925-26
Horses	20,906	22,444	24,082	25,763
Cattle	40,447	46,692	50,240	51,983
Sheep and goats	57,667	69,204	79,320	81,938
Pigs	9,118	16,829	16,437	15,599

On the whole, then, there is no need to take a tragic view of the situation ; though, of course, it would be equally inaccurate to hold that the millennium has been reached in Russia. The opposition or hostility of the peasants was strong enough to compel the Bolshevists to modify their exaggerated socialism ; and the peasant tactics since 1921-22 have secured a victory for them on smaller issues as well. But those who are still in power have not entirely abandoned the ideals with which they got into their present position. The Government is doing its best to *industrialise* or *mechanise* agriculture, *a l'amerique* even as the peasant had done their best to "peasantise" the Revolution. Says the latest issue of the Soviet Year Book :—

" In order to ensure the further development of agriculture, the Soviet Government is carrying out a number of radical measures ; the industrialisation of agriculture, which consists in the development of industries concerned with the preparation for market of agricultural produce, the construction of refrigerators, elevators, cold stores, bacon, starch and molasses, oil-extracting and other factories ; the industrialisation of land cultivation by means of tractors and other improved agricultural implements. At

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• *Continued from page 68.*

The marketed surplus of agricultural production, that is the part of it which goes to the home and foreign markets after the needs of the rural population have been supplied, is also increasing year by year. In 1923-24, the marketed surplus of agricultural production, exclusive of forestry fishing and trapping amounted to 1,209.4 million roubles ; in 1924-25, to 1,334.6 million roubles ; in 1925-1926 to 1,675.8 million roubles. It is expected that in 1926-27 the value of the marketed surplus will reach the sum of 1,930 million roubles.

the present time, the Soviet Union possesses 11,000 tractors, whereas before the war there were no tractors at all in Russia. The Soviet Government has decided to build a big new works at Stalingrad with an output capacity of 12,000 tractors per annum”.

All this makes excellent reading; and perhaps it is a good indication of the viewpoint and expectations of the people running the present Russian Government. But the peasant has not yet parted with his ages old superstitions in regard to land cultivation; nor is he educated out of the beliefs and ways of his ancestors. What the new generation of peasantry in Russia will do, especially under the influence of intensive training as given under the Soviet system of education, it is too much to say at this moment. But, for the moment, it may be noted that the peasant has come to possess 97% of the arable land in Russia, only 3% remaining to the State for the use of factories, workers' organisation, &c., and also Soviet estates in land. With this lever in his hand, it is unlikely that the peasant will depart from the vantage ground he has attained to, or forego the share of governing power which he has at last obtained in the councils of Soviet Russia. The sympathy of the peasants is thus assured for the revolutionary form of Government, not because the peasants love its principles or are convinced of their verity, but because any other form, any conceivable alternative, would cost the peasants all that they have obtained under the present Government. They have imposed upon the Government their own ideas, and have secured a



measure of freedom for themselves to live according to their own ideals. These may, indeed, be abandoned by their children now being brought up as fierce and ardent communists; and even amongst the older people there are those to-day who have seen in Germany, while they were there as prisoners of war, methods of land cultivation which cannot but conflict with their ancient and weakening prejudices. Hence on the side of the peasantry the Government have not, I think, much to fear. Their critics are tireless in pointing out that this increasing production of agriculture in Russia is no cause for jubilation; because after all the pre-war standard was nothing to boast of. Nor is it, they further add, anything in comparison to the immense resources still awaiting exploitation in Russia. But to this the Russian would only reply that they have not done so badly, after all, if they have reached the pre-war standard in 5 years, which the Tsarist Government had taken 50 years to attain to! And, it be admitted that Russia has still immense untried resources, then that is so much to the good for the Russian Government as it will thus have vast reserves to fall back on in their programme of intensive development.

### III. INDUSTRIAL FRONT.

As regards Industry, the early years had opened with a great parade of wholesale nationalisation of all industrial resources and of all industrial establishments, without, however providing at the same time any plan for the ac-

tual conduct of the establishments taken over. When, therefore, the inevitable breakdown occurred; when the accumulated stocks were used up, and yet the factories were not working, and there was no industrial production to feed the workers, the Bolshevik Government had to retrace their policy of absolute socialisation. Here, too, in a manner of speaking, it was the peasants who forced their hands: but they realised in time that the motives which had appealed to the peasants might appeal to the industrial population, the proletariat proper, and so unsettle their whole revolution before even it had asserted itself. They, therefore, beat a strategic retreat in good time, leaving the workers not quite free from the impression that they were defrauded of their just rights by the obstinacy of the peasants. The Decree of June 28, 1918, had nationalised all industrial and commercial establishments, which, together with all their capital, were declared state property. In 1923, however, by a fresh decree dated April 10, they announced their intention to conduct the industrial enterprise in the future on an economic or, as we would say, on a commercial basis. To this end they proposed to constitute Trusts or Syndicates, in a sense not entirely the same as that in which these terms are used in Germany or the United States. The Russian Trusts are collective organisations of the State for the nation-wide control of any given industry; though it may be that in a particular industry, e.g. coal-mining, there might be more than one Trust;

and several distinct branches of industry might also come to be combined in one and the same Trust. According to the Statesman's Year Book of 1927 :—

“The Trusts in the large scale and middle sized State industries number over 500 ; but there are only a score or so of big Trusts; and these cover about 75 per cent. of the total State industries. A small number of Trusts called the Monopoly Trusts, combine all the enterprises of a given branch of industry in the whole Union. Such are, for instance, the Rubber Trust, Silk Trust, Tea Trust, Urals Asbestos Trust &c. In some industries there are several Trusts. Thus the Electrical, Oil, Cement and a few other industries have four Trusts each ; but in the vast majority of industries in the Soviet Union there are a number of separate Trusts in the several parts of the Union ”.

The guidance of the entire industrial policy of the Union, again, is vested in the Supreme Economic Council of the U.S.S. R. whose controlling activities embrace all industries irrespective of their ownership, whether owned and conducted by the State, by private individuals, by communal bodies, by co-operative Associations, by interstate federations, &c. This control is exercised through regulations published for the guidance of these bodies by the S.E.C. as well as by the general and specific supervision of industrial establishments, and by the formulation of the fiscal or industrial policy of the Union. The same body issues instructions for the guidance of the industries in the other Republics allied with the Soviet Government. The internal conduct of business in each Trust is facilitated by a clear and complete division between the actual work of

directing or conducting enterprises immediately under state control and ownership, from the other business of a general direction or policy governing the industry. On the administrative side there is the Central Administration of State Industry (Tsugprom), while for a general policy of direction there is the Chief Economic Administration, the so-called GEU. At the head of the former is a Board of Directors, each of whom issues directions to managing and inspecting committees in the branch of industry for which he is particularly responsible. From this jurisdiction the factories producing war material are excluded. These are run as part of the War Commissariat. There is, in addition, a special department for industrial planning, as also another for the supervision of local industry. So far as the "Commanding Heights" or key positions were concerned, e. g., means of transport or the basic industries, the principle of complete State-ownership has been retained in tact. But these, too, have been organised in the form of Trusts, to be conducted on the analogy of commercial undertakings as in a capitalistic society. In the smaller industries, and those made over to private enterprise, the New Economic Policy relaxed the principle of socialisation, and permitted private, profit-making initiative to assert itself. Even in the nationalised industry now trustified, the real operators are drawn from the classes which had under the old regime conducted such industry as salaried managers &c., and these set themselves, with the help or otherwise of a few communist "Economists," to reorganise the

devastated industry of the country into such as it was before the War. They had, of course, to work under the general industrial policy which still remained more than coloured with a dash of socialism, particularly in its sympathies for Labour, and its tendency to interfere at inopportune moments under the pretext of fixing prices or wages. But, allowing for these, there was still a field for individual initiative; and the directors have used their new power so to reduce supernumerary staff as to place the industry on what in commercial language would be called a paying foundation. The number of working days has been increased, and piece work is also encouraged, though the very nature of a Communist Government prevents the Russian governing authorities from ignoring altogether the rights of labour. As regards capital, it may be remarked in passing, these new Trusts conducting state industry were very much handicapped from the start. They had only such capital as was sunk already in the establishments by the previous owners thereof. At the very commencement of the enterprise, however, after the Economic Policy of the Soviet Government had been changed, the freed industry needed considerable spoon-feeding. Buildings were out of repair; machinery had rusted, plant become antiquated. Raw material and fuel were costly to procure, and stocks of finished goods often unsaleable. Industry thus needed subsidy, and it is said the deficit on the whole field of industry was, in 1922-23, 178 million roubles. This deficit has been steadily diminishing,

being reduced in 1923-24 to 112, and in 1924-25 to 78 million roubles. I am not able to discover quite precisely, from the latest figures of the Soviet Year-Book, if the condition in the latest year is equally progressive and satisfactory; but I shall shortly place before you some figures which will enable you to judge for yourselves on the matter.

So far, however, as the main problem of the success, as measured in terms familiar to commercial communities, is concerned, you must bear in mind that these state establishments and Trusts have to pay nothing by way of interest on the capital originally sunk in these industries by their dispossessed or expropriated proprietors; that in the event of deficit, which could by some argument be shown to be due to the Government's fiat for an increase in wages &c., there is always the Government subsidy to fall back upon; and that the provision for the depreciation of assets and plant, though not unknown, is such as it may well be questioned from the point of adequacy. But this last point should not be pressed too far beyond its legitimate dimensions; for it is one of the most ticklish cases wherein even in capitalistic societies room is left for, shall we say, the individual discretion of the managing agents, and is as such liable to mistakes.

† On the whole, then, it may fairly be claimed by the apologists of the Soviet regime that industry in Russia has recovered since the darkest days of all-round disorganisation. The State industry still dominates the field, being over 71.5% in

1925-26; while co-operative industry accounts for another 4.6%. Smaller, and local &c., establishments account for 21.2%, while entirely private enterprise does not exceed 2.7%, having been 3.5 in 1923-24. It is clear from these figures that the Government still intends or aims at keeping the most important and considerable branches of industry to itself. The subjoined table of the relative proportions of large and small state industries, co-operative work, and private or concession industry were:—

(In Million Roubles at pre-war prices.)

<b>I.</b>	State Industry .. ..	1922-23	1924-25	1925-26
	1. Large .. ..	2,383	3,740	5,309
	2. Small and Handicraft	17	21	24
<b>II.</b>	Co-operative Ind.			
	1. Large .. ..	108	151	247
	2. Small and Handicraft	61	79	91
<b>III.</b>	Private and Concession			
	1. Large .. ..	136	167	241
	2. Small .. ..	706	879	1011
<b>TOTAL OF ALL INDUSTRIES.</b>				
	Large .. ..	2,627	4,061	5,797
	Small & Handicrafts ..	787	979	1,126
	<b>Grand Total ..</b>	<b>3,414</b>	<b>5,040</b>	<b>6,923</b>

At pre-war prices the value of this production was 92% of the prewar standard of production. Says the Soviet Year Book for 1927, "The Council of Peoples' Commissaries and the Council of Labour and Defence of the Soviet Union decided to increase industrial production in 1927 by 20% as compared with the previous year. Industrial production will thus considerably increase the pre-war standard. As compared with 1925-26, the coal industry will have increased by 31%, the metal industry by 23%, and the textile industry by 18.5%."\*

\* As compared with 1925-26, the coal industry will have increased by 31 per cent., the metal industry by 23 per cent., the textile industry by 18.5 per cent.

The increase of industrial output as regards particular branches of industry is shown below :—

(In 1,000 tons).

Industry.	1922-23	1923-24	1924-25	1925-26
Coal .. .. .	11,681	16,053	16,169	24,431
Oil .. .. .	5,275	6,070	7,116	8,461
Pig Iron .. .. .	300	653	1,289	2,197
Open hearth steel .. .. .	590	991	1,868	2,892
Rolled metal .. .. .	457	688	1,359	2,090
Cement .. .. .	180	354	720	1,257
Cotton fabrics, in million metres.. .. .	560	832	1,485	1,981
Wool fabrics, in million metres.. .. .	21.9	28.9	48.8	63.1
Linen fabrics, in million square metres	77.1	106.1	134.3	170.0

The number of workers has also increased from about 15 lakhs in 1924-25 to over 32 lakhs in 1926-27. and their wages have grown with the productivity of the industry. The productivity per labourer is still below the pre-war par, but the annual average wage has risen from 180 roubles in 1922-23 to about 570 roubles in 1926-27. The following remarks of a Canadian Professor and his wife are on this point most interesting.

“In respect to internal management the leaders were emphatic in stating that there is “severe discipline” in the factories, and that men who will not work are dismissed, though only after every effort has been made to make them see that they are injuring their own cause. In



respect of wages it is abundantly clear that the Communist principle has been completely abandoned. Sixty per cent of the workers in factories are paid by piece work. Wages earned run from about 45 roubles a month for beginners to an average of about 130 and to a normal maximum of 225, at which rate men selected for superintendents are paid, but specially skilled men and technical experts make up to and even over 300 roubles a month. With such differences in pay, it is obvious that equality is already a thing of the past, much more any idea of payment "according to need"; apparently human nature is not yet ripe for Communist idealism."

The crying need, however, of industry in Soviet Russia is fresh capital. Industrial resources they have in plenty both in labour and raw material. Even skilled labour they can easily get from across the frontier in Germany, with whom their relations and friendliness are rapidly growing. But thanks to the Bolshevist repudiation of all Tsarist debts, no one will now trust his capital in Russia. They are trying to attract it by means of *concessions* and *Leases* to get foreigners to invest in Russia; but the following critique of the policy of leases and concessions seems to me to be on the whole still true, though passed in 1925.

"The efforts of the Government to attract Russian and foreign capital in industry were almost in vain. A regular list was drawn up of

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\* Russia in 1926 by Mac. William.

undertakings to be offered on lease, undertakings which the State had failed to turn into going concerns. Lessees were looked for ready to invest sufficient working capital, and to hand over a certain percentage, from 10 per cent. to 15 per cent of their profits to the State. They were able to abide by the decisions of the Government with regard to labour regulations. The Government could exercise, through specially appointed officials, a certain control over these under-takings, so as to prevent their being used for objects which might be considered as not being in harmony with the general economic policy of the State. Moreover, it had the right of examining all books and accounts, of "revision" at any time, and of enforcing the terms of contract.

A special concessions board was created, under the Supreme Council of National Economy, to look after the framing and execution of contracts for concessions, which were to be submitted for approval and confirmation to the Soviet of People's Commissars. The original plan was to grant only agricultural, timber, mining concessions on huge tracts of territory. But soon their scope was enlarged to include trading, banking, transport, oil, and hunting (for furs, etc.) rights. The form of these concessions were of the most varied kinds and subject to special agreement in every case. In general, the Government insisted on the investment of large amounts of working capital, on being given credits abroad, and on receiving from 5 per cent to 20 per cent of production or output in kind. A peculiar

form of concession was to be found in the so-called "mixed-companies", where half the shares belonged to the Government, which would appoint half of the members of the board of directors. But the great efforts made to attract capital in these ventures gave very limited results. Of the eleven concessions granted to foreigners, which were put through in 1923-4, seven had to do with industry, and four with trading. The largest of these concessions granted to the well-known German firm of Otto Wolff was cancelled within one year, from the German side. The results obtained from leasing out enterprises were equally insignificant. The total number of such "leases" up to March, 1924, was less than 6,500, of which only a portion were in active operation. 1,362 of these were cancelled through the inability of the lessees to discharge obligations. 3,626 were regularly worked, half of these being of the handicraft type. The output of privately operated industry did not exceed 5 per cent of the total. Such, according to official records, were the results achieved in industry and trade by the N.E.P.

As Trotski aptly remarked: "Industry with one wing tries to lean on the peasant market—this is the smaller industry. With the other wing it leans on the State budget. But our budget is mostly drawn from the same peasant source. If we don't maintain a proper balance there, if industrially we don't satisfy the peasant and establish an economic entente with him, if we press him too much with taxation and upset the balance—the industry may slip from

one of its bases and tumble down, and with it something else." We shall see later on how the Soviet Government succeeded in maintaining this balance. (*Russia: Makeev and O'Hara.*)

In 1920 the Soviet Union entered the foreign market for the first time; and at the present time it is trading with almost every country in the world. Exports across both the European and Asiatic frontiers rose from 370,805,000 roubles at pre-war prices in 1924-25, to 464,499,000 roubles in 1925-26. At present day prices, the advance was from 575,244,000 roubles to 667,824,000 roubles. Imports across both the European and Asiatic frontiers rose, from 411,379,000 roubles at pre-war prices in 1924-25, to 464,527,000 roubles in 1925-26. At present day prices the rise has been from 709,411,000 roubles to 755,577,000 roubles.

The turnover of the Goods Exchanges is an indication of the trade which the Soviet Union transacts at home. The turnover is marked by a continuous and intensive advance. The following figures show the progress made during the past two years. The trade turnover of seventy provincial goods exchanges in 1924-25 amounted to 3,402.2 million roubles; and in 1925-26 the trade turnover amounted to 4,478.2 million roubles. The turnover of the Moscow Central Goods Exchange amounted in 1924-25 to 2,919.5 million roubles, and in 1925-26 to 3,801.1 million roubles. The total turnover of the internal trade of the Soviet Union, in respect of goods values, amounted to 9,751 million roubles in 1923-24; to 13,692 million roubles in

1924-25, and to 20,468 million roubles in 1925-26 !

On the basis of the recovering national economy, the increasing trade turnover in particular, at the commencement of 1924 the soviet Union was able to adopt a stable currency in place of the paper currency which had been deliberately depreciated during the civil war. The volume of money in circulation is increasing from year to year. In 1924-25 the average for the year equalled 798.6 million roubles; in 1925-26, 1,241.6 million roubles. Side by side with the improvement in budget finance and the circulation of currency, improvement and development have also occurred in the banking and credit system.

The entire process of reconstruction and economic advance referred to above has taken place, and is taking place, with very little aid in the form of credits from foreign Powers. Moreover, the dimensions of the future development of the economy of the Soviet Union have been calculated on the basis of internal resources. In the event of the influx of foreign capital in the form of loans, concessions, or in any other shape, the rate of development will be greatly increased. There are numerous enterprises in the Soviet Union in which foreign capital can be invested with great advantage. Concessions can be granted for the working of rich mineral resources, and loans may be issued abroad for the purpose of crediting to industry, transport, electrical construction, etc.

The above figures should prove conclusively that the national economy of the Soviet Union is rapidly recovering, and is developing in all directions. Production is increasing; the wages of workers are rising; the productivity of labour is higher; transport is developing; and the people are becoming more prosperous. At the same time, the basic capital of the national economy is also growing. This increase of basic capital, coupled with the possession of vast natural resources, a progressive population, wide-spread education, and a system of economy organised in the interests of the proletariat, provide immense possibilities for the development of the productive forces of the Union. And with the extension of production as at present planned, the Soviet Union is certain to become an even greater factor in the world economy than it is at present.

## SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS.

### LECTURE IV.

LADIES & GENTLEMEN,

The effect of all the changes I noticed last time is most clearly evident in the Soviet Budget. The Budget of the Soviet Government was, when they first assumed charge, in a veritable chaos. The income consisted mostly of confiscations and expropriations of existing stocks and properties. While they lasted, these were used for all the revenue needs of Government; and when they failed, Government resorted to an indiscriminate, unlimited, use of multiplying the paper money. That, however, soon resulted in dislocating the whole financial system of Russia—its entire economic organisation. Not merely was the expedient never able to keep pace with the revenue requirements; but as fast as the paper money was issued, it was discredited, and the entire economy of the country upset. The expedients of confiscating the surplus produce of the peasants and of industry, also, did not satisfy the needs of the spending departments, which included, besides the military forces necessary for fighting counter-revolutionary agitation, the subsidies to be paid for making industry keep up its balance-sheet. With the retreat from the communist position in 1921, reform was also effected in the financial and currency arrangement. Taxation, direct as well as indirect, took the place of the confiscated surplus produce, and helped to make

good the deficit left by the profits of State enterprise and trading, that still continue to form no insignificant proportion of the Soviet Budget. The monetary system was also reformed by the creation of a new unit of currency, the chervonetz, to be put into circulation by the new State Bank organised on an orthodox pattern. The huge and recurring deficit of 1917-21 was slowly reduced, until the two sides of the national profit and loss account have at last come to balance, and even leave a certain surplus for further economic development.

At the present time the administration of finance in the U.S.S.R. is directed by the People's Commissariat for Finance. The Commissariat consists of a number of departments. e.g.

1. The Budget Department for preparing the Budget;
2. The State Revenues Department and Taxation Department, for looking to the revenues from all sources ;
3. The Finance Control Department to do the audit and inspection work;
4. The Local Finance Department looks after the finances of local bodies, which are quite distinct, while the Department of currency looks after money, banking and exchange.

The Budget of the Soviet Union, unlike that of other countries, is of great importance to the State economy, thanks to the intimate connec-



tion between the State and industry and the exploitation of national resources of all kinds. It is, therefore, but fair that it be taken as an index to show the economic position of the country.

The Soviet Union's budget is composed of the State budget of the Union, as well as of the budgets of the constituent republics. The People's Commissariat for Finance, first draws up a single budget for the Union, which comprises the budget of the central financial administration, as well as the financial administration of the separate Republics. The State Planning Commission next considers the budget from the point of view of the economic prospects for the corresponding financial year. Then the budget passes on, with all the modifications introduced by the State Planning Commission, to the Council of People's Commissaries of the Union for further consideration. Any differences which may arise in respect of the budgets between separate Republics are resolved by the Council of People's Commissariat; and the collective and separate budgets are finally ratified by the Central Executive Committee of the Union. It is put into operation in accordance with the distribution of the amounts allotted among the various departments, the distribution being in the hands only of the heads of the respective departments. Budgetary rules and accounts procedure seems to be very exacting in Russia; for every expenditure must correspond to the amount allotted and to the decision of the legislative organisation. Any departure in this respect is regarded by Soviet Law as a criminal offence. All

revenues must be paid into a single treasury, except the Posts and Communications Departments, which are run as separate commercial concerns. All expenditure, similarly, is to be met from this common purse.

Taking, next, the details of the Soviet Budget, we may remark a great contrast with the Tsarist time. In the old regime, over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the revenue came from taxation, while less than a fourth was derived from State domain and enterprise. Of taxes, nearly 80% consisted of taxes on articles of everyday and universal consumption, like salt or tobacco. The total revenues in 1913 amounted to 3,483 million roubles. At the present time, with somewhat higher prices, and smaller territory and population, it has balanced at about 5,000 million roubles, or £500 million! It consists, on the revenue side, of tax receipts, both direct and indirect, and profits or surplus of state enterprise and property. In the U.S.S.R. the State owns and directly controls the biggest branches of the national economy. The revenue derived from this economy plays an ever-growing part in the State budget.

The main non-taxation revenues of the State are derived from the following sources :

1. Land, or the Soviet Estates, a very small proportion of the total.
2. Forests, entirely reserved to the State.
3. Mining.
4. Fisheries, etc.
5. Industry and Trade.
6. Transport and Communications.
7. Credit and State Insurance Organisations

In the year before the New Economic Policy came into vogue, the Budget was thoroughly demoralised ; but after the reforms had had time to assert themselves, the deficit fell, as also the expenditure ; while the revenue rose from 1,056 million roubles in 1922-23, by easy stages, to 5,002 million roubles in 1926-27. Again, while the 1921 Budget was almost wholly in kind, the 1926 Budget is wholly in money.

The budget for 1926-27 has been ratified by the Third Session of the Central Executive Committee. The revenue side amounts to 5,002·4 million roubles, and the expenditure side of it amounts to 4,902·4 million roubles. The difference between revenue and expenditure, amounting to 100 million roubles, should constitute a State reserve fund. The budget is composed of 2,333·4 million roubles of taxation revenue, of 2,448·6 million roubles non-taxation revenue, and 220 million roubles extraordinary revenue.

#### BUDGET REVENUE FOR 1926-27.

SOURCE.	Amount in Million Roubles.
1. Direct Taxes .. .. .	773.1
2. Indirect Taxes .. .. .	1,386.9
3. Customs and Excise .. .. .	173.0
<b>Total Revenue from Taxes</b> ..	<b>2,333.0</b>
4. Posts and Telegraphs .. .. .	162.0
5. Transport .. .. .	1,628.6
6. State Property and Industry .. .. .	550.0
7. State Fund Sales .. .. .	22.0
8. Other .. .. .	55.4

**BUDGET REVENUE FOR 1926-27.**

SOURCE.	Amount in Million Rouble.
Total of Non-Taxation Revenue ..	2,417.4
9. Credit Operations .. .. .	220.0
10. Balance of Revenue of previous years ..	32.0
	<hr/>
Grand Total .. .	5,002.4
	<hr/>

**BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR 1926-27.**

	Amount in Million Roubles.	Per cent.
Commissariats and Institutions other than Transport, Com- munications and Defence ..	101.1	2.1
Commissariat for War ..	692.5	14.1
Post and Telegraph Commissariat	159.0	3.3
Commissariat for Transport ..	1,695.2	34.6
Departments and Institutions of the U. S. S. R. . . . .	57.9	1.2
Departments and Institutions of the Union Republics .. ..	538.6	10.9
State Loans and Funds .. ..	315.2	6.4
Financing National Economy ..	900.3	18.4
State-revenue deductions for local budget purposes .. ..	442.4	9.0
Currency Reserve .. ..	100.2	..
	<hr/>	
Total ..	5,002.4	100.0

State Revenues for the last three Financial Years in  
Million Roubles.

	Percentage of			Percentage of	
	1923-24	1924-25	1925-26	1924-25 to 1923-24	1925-26. to 1924-25.
1. Customs and Excise ..	788.5	1314.6	1778.3	166.8	135.3
2. State Property and Enterprises ..	935.3	1354.9	1947.9	143.8	143.7
3. Extraordinary Resources, including ..	574.4	203.1	151.7	35.4	74.7
1. Internal Loans ..	183.6	123.1	136.7	65.0	111.1
2. Paper Currency Emission	126.3	..	..	..	..
3. Metal Currency, Emission, etc. ..	*233.9	80.0	15.0	33.3	18.8
Total ..	2298.2	2872.6	3877.1	124.9	135.0

When the system of direct taxation was first restored in the Soviet Union, taxes were levied partly in cash and partly in kind. The first form held good in relation to town populations, and the second applied to the peasants. In 1922 taxes levied in cash began to preponderate over those in kind. At the present time taxes are levied in money only. The following are the direct taxes which are now levied.

(1) The Industrial Tax, (2) The Income Tax, (3) The Single Agricultural Tax, (4) The Rent Tax, (5) Stamp Duty and other dues, (6) The Inheritance Tax.

\*In the revenues from emissions in 1923-24 is included the issue of paper money to the amount of 126 million roubles which went to cover the deficit of the budget, but in subsequent years the budget was made to balance.

The Industrial tax was introduced on July 26, 1921, and amended by the laws of February, 1922, January 18, 1925, and September 26, 1926. This tax is paid by trades, industries, and crafts, even if they are managed by only one person, and consists of : 1, Licence Duty ; and 2. Trade Turnover Adjustment Levy.

In the autumn of 1926 a purely progressive Income Tax was introduced instead of the per capita tax in operation up to 1923, and the property tax which replaced it from 1923 to 1926. The new legislation fixed three tables of rates of income tax. In the first table are included the taxes levied on the income of workers, employees, etc., who work or who are employed on hire; also the income of State pensioners, and of persons engaged in literary pursuits, and so on. In the second are given the taxes levied on incomes of persons who do not work on hire, the incomes of those who are engaged in home industry and handicraft, who employ not more than three hired workers ; also incomes derived from letting buildings on lease, both in towns as well as outside of towns. In the third table are included taxes levied on incomes derived from taking part in trade and industrial enterprises, in the capacity of proprietor or part proprietor, or shareholder, and so on; also incomes from engaging as middleman in trading and similar operations ; also incomes from money investments, capital, and rent. The rate of progression on higher incomes is very high ; but then there are in Soviet Russia not many such incomes.

The Single Agricultural Tax has been introduced in place of all the local taxes to which the peasants were liable, and replaced the tax in kind which the peasants were paying. From December 11, 1923, the tax in kind was abolished, and at present it is levied in the usual way, and in cash, by the fiscal organisations.

All the people engaged in the pursuit of agriculture are subject to the Single Agricultural Tax, including the agricultural communes and State agricultural organisations. The Single Agricultural Tax is assessed and levied on each separate holding, in respect of the extent of land used (farm land included) and the number of big horned and draft cattle. Newly planted orchards, vine nurseries, unsuitable and newly meliorated land, are exempt from the tax, as also all holdings which are without cattle, or which have less than a standard amount of land.

The rent tax was established by law on November 12, 1923. It is levied on land within bounds of urban settlements, and on land used for the purposes of transport and communications. The form which the rent tax assumes in the first instance is that of an assessment on a "fundamental Rent."

Indirect taxation in the Soviet Union is composed of Customs and Excise duties. Excise duties are in force at present on the following:— (1) Tobacco and Cigarette Papers, (2) Sugar, (3) Salt, (4) Oil Products, (5) Textile Fabrics, (6) Spirits and Liquers, etc.

## CHANGES IN TAXATION.

The agricultural tax has this year been somewhat increased, namely from 245 million roubles to 300 million roubles, owing largely to an increase in the direct taxation of the richer peasants. The industrial tax has been raised to 290 million roubles, as against 220 million roubles of actual receipts in 1925-26, by increasing the cost of trade licence and raising the turnover tax. Of the various forms of indirect taxation, the duty on tobacco and beer has been raised ; and the duty on essential articles like salt, etc. has been reduced.

Non-taxation revenue has been increased chiefly by raising the railway tariffs.

Expenditure is distributed among the various items, according to the allocation, in the following manner, in per centage of the total :—

	1924—25	1925—26	1926—27.
I. Administration ..	27.2	27.0	20.6
II. State Defence ..	15.3	15.4	14.3
III. Transport & Communications ..	34.7	37.5	37.8
IV. Financing National Economy ..	13.6	13.7	18.2
V. Grants to Local Budgets ..	7.8	6.4	9.1
VI. Others ..	1.4	—	—

Administrative expenditure shows an increase of 0.8 per cent in comparison with 1925-26. Expenditure for education and cultural purposes which is included in the total amount of admi-



nistrative expenditure, is increased by 22 per cent., and has risen to 290 million roubles. Expenditure for defensive purposes amounts to 692 million roubles, and shows a comparative reduction in the budget. The reduction of this item of expenditure is due to the application of a regime of strict economy of the State administration. A big increase is noticeable in the expenditure for the financing of national economy, namely from 563.5 million roubles in 1925-26, to 900.3 million roubles in 1926-27, which means 13.7 per cent., of budget expenditure in 1925-26, and 18.2 per cent. in 1926-27.

The expenditure part in the 1926-27 budget is of a predominantly productive nature, because of the increase in the expenditure for financing national economy. Another striking feature is the increased expenditure for education and cultural purposes.

The Currency reform was begun in 1922 by a decree of October 11, giving the right of Paper money issue only to the State Bank.

The essential regulations for the emission of notes by the State Bank are as follows :—

- (a) The State Bank is allowed to issue notes for the purpose of loans to the Treasury only, when such notes are covered by precious metals to the amount of not less than 50 per cent.
- (b) Bank notes are issued in denominations of 1,3,5,10,25, and 50 chervontzi. The chervonetz is equal to 1 solotnik, 78.24 dolyas pure gold. The commencement of the exchange

of bank notes with gold will be established at a future date by a special Government decree.

- (c) Bank notes are covered to the extent of not less than 25 per cent. by precious metals, and by stable foreign currency at its exchange rate in gold. The remaining 75 per cent. is covered by easily realisable commodities, short-term bills, and other term bonds.
- (d) Bank notes are accepted at their nominal value in payment of State dues and taxes.
- (e) The State Bank has the right to say that obligations expressed in bank notes should also be met in bank notes.

In addition to these, there are the Treasury Bills-or rather Government Currency Notes, which are by law made legal tender, (1924), on condition that the total volume of such notes issued shall never be in excess of half the volume of the Bank-notes in circulation.

In February 1927, there were in round terms 1357½ million roubles of total currency in circulation, of which 782½ million were Chervonetzi, 401½ Treasury Notes, 162 million Silver coin and 10 million copper coins. The parity of this reformed currency has been regularly maintained.

## LIFE IN RUSSIA.

We have now considered, in some detail, the the causes and nature of the great experiment they are carrying on in Russia. This experiment is wholly economic in character, and we have examined the principal aspects, and considered the measure of success or failure attending in each case. Let us now have a summary of results, not merely in the economic field, but as viewed in life in Russia generally.

Society in Russia to-day is divided into two main classes, the well-to do, and the abjectly poor. Absolute equality has not been achieved; and even without the experience of the Russian Revolution in these ten years, it may be questioned if absolute equality is attainable in all things that make up the life of a people. But the glaring inequalities which are the cause of so much heartburning, so much discontent, so much waste, have been abolished in Russia. You can look upon it in two ways, and pronounce according to your differing standpoint a different judgment. You might consider all such attempts from the high idealistic standpoint, and consider them justified if all are equally enriched, if all have a perceptible rise in their standard of living; or you might regard these experiments as resulting in universal pauperisation, and therefore equality in destitution, and so condemnable. On the former basis, Russia certainly does not seem to have succeeded; though, before you condemn the achievements of the Revolution in Russia,

as resulting in universal pauperisation, I would like you to remember that universal enrichment, or levelling up, is not possible without the heartiest co-operation of all to that common end; and that the Russian peasantry has, up to date, not co-operated quite so willingly to that end. Besides, I do not think it likely that the process of levelling upwards, even if it is going on, is likely to be noticed or admitted quite so easily as the process of pauperisation, given our existing prejudices. If the figures I have placed before you are reliable, and personally I do not see any reason for questioning them, the volume of material production is slowly growing. It has passed the point of maximum productivity in Tsarist Russia; and as the population is somewhat reduced, and the volume of material wealth increasing, it is possible to argue that the general standard of living has improved. The improvement may be very slight and inconsiderable; but it is there, and may safely be taken to be the earnest of further increments rising in geometric progression, if only the process is not arrested prematurely. The process of production is always under a handicap as compared to the process of consumption, for while humanity in its totality is a consumer, only a part, and at that a very small part of it, is really productive. The production-energy in mankind is not even a tenth of its consumption-energy; for every child from the moment of its birth, if not earlier still, is a consumer, while only a full-grown man is a producer, for less than one-third of the year, and in certain occupa-

tions only. The deficit has to be made up by the ceaseless improvements in the means and organisation of production. Advance in material sciences is achieving great improvement in our means of production; and the reconstruction of society somewhat on the Russian model will achieve also the betterment of the organisation, so as the more fully to utilise the means of production. There is, on this view of the Russian situation, a great promise of further achievement, which will be frustrated, if the Revolution is defeated by any reason of internal disruption or external attack. I am not suggesting that there are no forces leading towards an undoing of the Revolution, either from within or from without; but I think, judging from the results of the last ten years, they are consolidating their position much too fully at home to be liable to any serious successful attack from within; while from without, even if they have to guard against the greed and hostility of the exploiting and imperialistic nations, they may take some consolation from the fact that their example is attracting attention in the proletariat of all nations.

There is thus only one class in Russia, for all practical purposes, from an economic standpoint. Gone are the nobles and the clerics of assured and exploiting privileges; gone are also the bureaucrats, who did more than the landowners and the churchmen to bring the old regime into hatred; gone are also the splendours of the foreign capitalists and their native imitators, which did so much to intensify the class hatred.

There is no section of the Russian people to-day, worth the name, which would willingly vote for a restoration of any of these. There is, instead, a distinction between the official-or professing-communists, and the rest of the people. The communist party is the governing party, but it is in a sad minority. Including the children or the future communists of all ages, the total strength of the party is not much in excess of 3 million, if even so much as that, or roughly one in every forty-five Russians. But this is not surprising, since communists do nothing, overtly at least, to attract members. Says one of a pair of Canadian professorial travellers in Russia last year :

“It has always been a matter of wonder to me why the Communist party, being the dominant group, did not increase its membership faster. It has still in its senior organisation only about a million members, and, including all its juniors, does not include two millions, out of the 140 millions in Soviet Russia. Now we find that there is no open, still less an urgent, invitation to become a Communist in Russia. You must prove yourself, and then having joined the party, you must live up to its standard of a decent life. You must not drink or gamble to excess. You must not be seen in a Christian Church. The criminal code sets down more severe penalties for the Communist than it does for the ordinary man. In case of embezzlement, for instance, the penalty for a Communist, after the sum embezzled has reached a certain amount, is death ; for another it is imprisonment. Sala-

ries are lower for members of the party than they are for other people, even in its diplomatic, consular, and commercial services. But the hardest of all to believe, though I do not believe it, is that each member of the party is under obligation not to draw, however much he may earn, more than 225 roubles a month. If he earns more than this, it goes half to the institution for which he is working for its welfare work, and half to the party funds. None of the members of the party in Russia, we are told, not even the people's Commissars, are drawing more than that much money. True, the Commissars are having motors, and travelling expenses, but we are told these are not more than the usual business arrangements. This sum which the Communists draw is not an absolute sum. Not so far back it was 190 roubles a month. It will be changed as the cost of living changes. It is, so designed as to be that sum upon which a man can live in utmost simplicity, but decently."\*

Small as it is in number, the Communist Party practically monopolises the government of Soviet Russia. For all important posts, no other than communist candidates are put up, and the communist deputies rise in proportion as we rise from the local assembly to the district, provincial, and federal legislative bodies. The voting at these conventions or conferences is anything but free; the chairman only puts the question "Those against? And as few dare to question the choice of the

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\* *Russia in 1926.*

party caucus, there is none "against." The explanation of the fewness of the numbers, and of the predominance of that small section, lies partly in the unwillingness of the large masses, mainly of peasantry, to shoulder any responsibility, particularly in a regime where they do not see eye-to-eye with the persons hitherto dominant, and yet are unwilling to forego the advantages that they have conferred on the masses; and partly also in the strict discipline and adroit manœuvring of the leaders. There have been attempts at democratisation of the party, i.e., of its numerical increase; and, when led by Trotsky, one did succeed in adding at a stroke 200,000 members. But there is in such ad hoc increases the danger of attracting undesirable elements that may afterwards have to be purged out of the party, if the integrity of the party is to be maintained. On the other hand, attempts, like the recent one of Zenoviev, to add at once all the poorer workers and landless peasants are viewed askance by the present party, as they might lead to internal disunion, owing to the want of harmony in aims and objectives between the authors of the Revolution and such a crude mass added ad hoc.

As regards the Laws of Russia, these are the creations of the party in power, a minority. Says Mr. Lancelot Lawton in his *Russian Revolution*, 1917-26, "The laws of Russia are the laws of a state at war, not at peace with itself." The State in Russia, in stead of being destroyed, shattered and blown up to bits as Lenin had at first advocated, stands to-day,



paramount and supreme above everyone and everything, more sovereign than the most powerful sovereign in the most compact empires of the world. The State is above law, and all its agents and emblems, like the Red Flag, have to be unquestioningly venerated and respected. Any contract made and completed by the state may be annulled, if it deems the contract to be against the interests of the social economy of the state. Offences against the State are punishable by death, the only category for such penalty. Even murder is not punishable by death, but only imprisonment; and that, too, is much reduced if the offender is a worker or peasant. Laws concerning the safety of the state are very several

In matters of public morality, the Soviet leaders have had many detractors, who, however, seem to have failed to realise the radically different basis of their legislation. The law-making authority is not confined to the formally constituted legislature; but extends even to the executive committee of the Peoples' Commissars, in the form of decrees, and also to the local councils. And all these bodies are intent upon maintaining in tact the new government; hence the extreme severity of the laws concerning the safety of the State—which means the supremacy of the party in power. The activities of the G.P.U.—or the present day prototype of the old Secret Service—are as great and frightful as ever before; while even the Katorga, or the collection of the old-time instruments of torture and punishment, remain practically un-

affected—except as to the parties. The Bolshevik theory of crime and its punishment is still the old theory ; for the existence of property is not yet dispensed with, and so the offences against person and property have yet to be taken notice of. The view of punishment as an organised, though somewhat ineffective, revenge of society on the transgressors is still in vogue ; and the outlook on crime and criminality, as a species of disease that must be treated and not punished, has yet to be born. The judicial administration is carried on by the Peoples' Courts which are universal, and are presided over by Judges with 2 assessors each—all three being communists. In the higher courts of Appeal, the Judges are also jurists, though even there active connection with the party is not unknown. Procedure is nearly the same as in England. On the whole, then the administration of justice may be said to be easy, inexpensive, and expeditious.

The war on Religion is intense and relentless. Offences have been introduced in the penal code which would punish any attempt the least bit savouring of prosetitising. Church lands and tributes have been confiscated, church holidays and ceremonies abolished, the very fabrics of the church destroyed or converted to popular uses, to demonstrate the might of modern material science. An intense and active propaganda against the orthodox religion is the order of the day, the hostility of the Government penetrating even to the minutest concerns of personal life, from birth to death. Thus even

the choice of the name for a new-born infant has been made a collective affair. A worker to whom a son has been born summons the works council of the factory; they elect a chairman, and a regular function then ensues corresponding to the baptismal ceremony of the Church, only twisted so as to suit their new ideas. The external ceremonies of a "red baptism" are naturally entirely different from those of the Church. They take place usually in one of the Party headquarters; and the secretary who conducts the service fills the office of the priest, while the works council of the factory in which the father is employed supplies the godparents. The names selected are names glorifying the Revolution e. g. Octobrina; Revolutzia; or Ninel, which is Lenin spelt backwards, reminding one of the Puritan Revolution in England, when they selected such names as Praise-God Barebone, or Charity, or Prudence. These are the new saints in the Soviet calendar, and hence the choice of names comes from them.

But the hostility to anything reminiscent of the Church and its ways does not stop here. A number of decrees have been issued against the universal custom of celebrating birthdays, which is declared to be counter-revolutionary, because in the old-time these commemorated a canonized saint. The belief in miracles performed by the relics of holy men and saints is sought to be undermined by the scientific exhibitions of petrified mummies of the worst criminals and the lowest animals along with those of the saints. An intense press Campaign, par

ticularly by means of ruthless caricature, completes the work, in which the School and the University readily join.

### III. FAMILY LIFE AND HOUSING.

Family life of the old type is being destroyed deliberately by attacking it at every point it is vulnerable. With the reduction of property, and the very strict limitation of inheritance, together with its heavy taxation, the great cohesive element is destroyed. The relations of parents over children are attempted to be revolutionised, by weakening the authority of the parents, and by Government or its institutions always taking the side of children against parents. The children of revolutionary Russia, those under 10 years to-day, have no personal recollection of the hateful or horrible past. The present is for them as pleasant as Government could make it, while the future is pregnant with infinite promise wherein they hope to gratify every human desire. The distinction most common in bourgeois societies between legitimate and illegitimate children is abolished. The child is taken as a fact—no matter where or how or of whom it is born. The Soviet is yet far from the ideal of a complete nationalisation of children, and the wholesale destruction of the family: but if it has made really considerable progress, in any department it is in regard to its care of the children and the orphans of the Revolution, who are, for the first time in history, freed from cruelty, abuse and oppression, that went for century in the name of parental authority.

The Marriage and Divorce laws of modern Russia are another case of attack on the integrity of family life. By the Soviet law, a marriage means nothing more than an announcement of the fact to the competent authorities, a mere registration. No church ceremony or any other need follow. A divorce is treated as a dissolution of a bargain. It takes, say the Russians, two to make a marriage, but only one to break it! The same simple formality suffices for both marriage and divorce. If a couple decide to get married, they have nothing to do but to sign a document, attested by two witnesses, showing that neither of the parties is already married. Then the registrar, with no further formality, declares that the couple are henceforward to be regarded as joined in matrimony. This cold, formal arrangement offered little opportunity for the display of splendour and festivity; and so the authorities have contrived to give it a more friendly spirit by introducing at the marriage ceremony dances and a splendid banquet. These festivities are now always arranged in connection with a marriage ceremony; often, indeed, the visit to the police authorities is dispensed with, as some couples regard it as an unnecessary and irksome formality. In marriage there is no community of property, nor any obligation on the wife to bear the husband's name. Divorce may take place at the wish of any party; and, if there are any children, the husband is bound to provide for them to the extent of a third of his income. But this third must suffice, no matter how many children there

are, and from how many marriages of one man. The institution itself is regarded with a certain degree of contempt, being considered to be only a bourgeois prejudice merely productive of deceit and dishonesty. Sexual relations are extremely lax, though I would not like to assert that they are in reality, and taken collectively, any worse than in other parts of the world. Only, the Russians make no pretence about their practices; and it may even be that their cheap and easy forms of granting divorce helps to reduce temptation, and so prevent occasions for infidelity. Statistics seem to suggest that the rate of divorces has of late been falling; and, for the moment, it is by no means excessive for a population of 150 million. The question of Sex relations is regarded, one must admit, however, with a certain degree of cynicism.

“In one of the Bolshevik publications (a sober review) I read an article on the subject which began in this way: Women have made themselves altogether too cheap. There is no longer any mystery about them. Since they bobbed their hair they have revealed the fact that their heads are small, illshaped, and flat at the back; no longer have we any illusions about. Certainly it is not necessary to have them always with us.”

Notwithstanding the studied absence of any idealisation of womanhood, any abservance of what we call chivalry, on the whole in Soviet Russia woman has been placed on a footing of complete equality with man in all spheres of public life and labour, eligible to all offices, capable of exercising all rights, and working in all cases as man's equal. Russia to-day is a veritable

paradise of women, fulfilling the greatest dreams of the most ardent feminist." The Communists in the very first year of the Revolution enlisted all available female assistance. They appointed women as heads of departments, and even cabinet ministers; and entrusted them with responsible posts. One of them was made an Ambassador, and others have worked in increasing numbers in the various departments. The bulk of them still remain, however, as minor martinetts, being only secretaries, typists and the like. The enlisting of women for military service in unprecedented numbers was a peculiarly novel venture of the Soviet Republic, which serves to demonstrate the futility of the man-made fable that woman is weak. As Bernard Shaw says, "No man is ever a match for a woman, except with a pair of tongs,-- and not always then either." In Russia they have given a good account of themselves in educational work chiefly, leaving it an open question in point of organisation, originality, or intellectual strength woman can ever be equal to man. But the Revolution and its incidents reveal in woman generally a great talent for organization, and in this regard Russian women contrast favourably with the French women during the French Revolution. The freedom of woman from the absorbing cares of the family is emphasised by the permission and official facilities for bringing about abortions on women, who for reasons of work, health, or economy do not wish to bear children.

"Perhaps the most remarkable feature of

the Bolshevik social organisation is the practice of abortions by State doctors in State hospitals. The number of such operations is enormous and is increasing, in many places it equals the total births. In Moscow the number of abortions registered annually reaches 10,000. One province sent a recommendation to the Central Administration that abortion should be practised on all women who had produced or were likely to produce children undesirable for the State." (Lawton: *Russian Revolution*). These operations are also performed in America to the tune of a million every year. But there they are called operations for appendicitis!

As citizens or political units, women in Russia are by no means an insignificant quantity. They take their full share of work, responsibility, and and also suffering. Among the curious causes which may break up the Russian marriage is officially recognized the difference in political opinion. If a husband forbids his wife to attend communist meetings, she can divorce him, rather than give up her political work. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that increasing numbers of communists are refusing to marry Party comrades, and prefer to marry women outside the Party, who will remain at home, cook food, look after the baby, and arrange the household furniture.

The Revolution has not, however, produced any very great women. Mme. Lenin is interested in education and social welfare; Mme. Kamenev look after the child orphans of the Revolution; and Mme. Trotsky is responsible



for the care of the nation's art treasures, and every one speaks well of her. But none of these—and of all the Bolshevik women they are the most capable—has attained to the eminence of her husband.

The shortage of housing accommodation, at least in the cities, was among the most serious difficulties of the Soviet Government in the early years ; and is not over even now. They were obliged to ration houses on the most rigorous and economic basis, allotting only a hundred square feet of surface for each individual for every purpose of living and working. Incidentally, they so distributed the available house-room among the several claimants as to favour the workers at the expense of the middle classes, deliberately to war on the prejudices of the latter as to the habits of living in social intercourse. Everything that we understand by good breeding and politeness was to the Bolshevik so much superstition, if not worse ; and so they made no bones about housing in one and the same building the most refined with the most brutal, the most depraved, the most filthy, in the hope and belief that the inevitable intercourse and mixing between these very different classes of society would lead to a breach in the barriers between them, and so promote the object of communist life and society they were aiming at. In the result, however, it is difficult to say if the object aimed at has been attained. The Bourgeoisie is too stubborn to part with its " prejudices " quite so easily. Rather than live and work as comrades with the " great un-

washed," they prefer to keep to themselves, attracting, in the process, an amount of criticism and abuse to which they have in sheer self-defence become impervious. The barrack-house in Moscow or Leningrad does give extra space to certain categories of individuals, notably workers, whether with the hand or with the brain; and to invalids, particularly those suffering from communicable diseases. But on the whole the conditions of living are such that what the middle classes call morality must suffer, and does suffer. It is, therefore, impossible to say if the system of barracking the people has broken down class prejudices after ten years; and it may be questioned even if that were so, whether the Russian people as such are the gainers by the achievement. The other object the Bolsheviks aimed at attaining from the shortage of housing in Soviet Russia was of a cognate description. They sought to indemnify the people for the shortage of living quarters by the institution of communal kitchens and restaurants. The intelligentsia, or rather the bourgeoisie again, were averse to dining in these common kitchens, in spite of their obvious advantages; but in course of time they seem to have yielded on this point, if only because their very straitened circumstances forbid them any other amusement, except what can be had in these cafes and restaurants.

#### IV. ART AND CULTURE IN RUSSIA.

But these and allied measures reacted on the life of the family inevitably, as was perhaps not

unintended by the authors of the measures that they should. On the artistic side, also, the Revolutionaries had their new ideals and ambitions to take the place of the old conventions. Incidentally, let us observe that the Bolshevists are very solicitous about preserving the Art treasures of Russia; and nothing from the old regime is so well attended to as these museums and picture galleries containing immense artistic treasures. The cultural side of social life is by no means unattended to by them even in their daily administration. Music and poetry, two of the most ancient and honoured arts, have their place in the communist scheme of life as anywhere else; only, the utilitarian motive seems to prevail here as in other departments of intellectual and spiritual activities; and so music is regarded rather as an instrument of infecting the people with enthusiasm for the communist scheme of life, than as a source of enjoyment in itself. Art for its own sake seem to have few votaries among the Russians of to-day, probably because they claim to have shed all illusions that still cloud the outlook of the other nations of the world. In poetry, again, from all that I have read on the point, it seems the modern Russian poets are attempting a wholesale mechanisation, which will not commend itself to those of us educated in the prevailing beliefs as to what constitutes poetic beauty. To the communist in Russia, however, this conception is as much erroneous as the belief in poetic justice, which, it must be admitted, does not take place in real life quite so often as we would wish for.

But the greatest achievement of the Bolsheviks is in regard to the drama—and, still more, with respect to the theatre. They have perceived the propagandising value—the educative possibility—of the theatre; and so they seem to have concentrated on the drama and the theatre more than on any other department of artistic life. They use the stage to organize the mass collectively, just as the press and the poster had been used earlier. The “principles of the theatre in present-day Russia are in entire conformity with those of Marxism, because they try to emphasize the elements which make prominent what is common to all men, the individual.” Everything which is specially theatrical, which does not react on daily life in a propagandist fashion, must be banished from the new theatre; while everything that can convey and emphasise the watch-words of the Revolution is specially attended to. Realism in the theatre under the Tsar had gone so far that one of the greatest producers, Stanilavsky, had aimed at the most perfect exactness in the reproduction of every phase of life. With this view he sought to train his players to be willing “instruments of psychological representation.” He demanded of them the most strenuous spiritual exercises, almost more strict than those imposed by any religious order on its members. If he wanted them to act on the stage loneliness to perfection, he would compel them to remain for weeks and months together in the most remote parts, so as to saturate them with the feeling by this long and arduous psychologic training.

Under the innovations, however, introduced by his pupils, the illusion of the play has melted into reality, and reality into play; and no one could draw the line where reality actually ended and the play began.

In the existing theatre, the Communist pursues an entirely original plan in producing drama. From the wings to the subsidiary stage accessories, everything is ruthlessly banished which might have an imaginative effect. The play and the performance are reduced to the "dynamic function." From the idea which is supposed to be bound up with this watchword Mayerhold hopes for a quicker tempo, which is considered necessary to-day. The theatre of the present-day is for him the art of a time which will have no patience with dreams, with flights into the realms of fancy, or with anything imaginative. It demands only incitement to action, and thus the dynamic influencing of the spectator. If you object that this banishing of objectivity includes jugs, tables, and chairs, but not motors, cannon, and aeroplanes, you receive the explanation that the last are taken from present day revolutionary Russia, and that their presence on the stage creates a pure and healthy atmosphere of reality and of the present.

Nor does the moderate reform leave the costumes alone. The actor in the Mayerhold theatre wears the so-called "working garment," which is particularly appropriate to his occupation; and is as truly proper for the actor as the leather coat for the chauffeur, or the safety helmet for the airman. All the players wear the blue garment,

the overall, which is almost identical for men and women. The object of this is easily understandable. "It extinguishes the individual and aims at a total collectivist effect."

The education of the people, mental as well as hygienic, is likewise sought to be achieved by the drama. By the introduction of great mass performances, they have converted the streets themselves into the arena for dramatic events, and to link up parades, processions, as well as great festivals, like the Mayday, so as to form an ordered and systematically organized total effect. The position of labour and industry is also explained effectively and objectively by remarkable masquerades, in which all the industries try to symbolize the nature of their products allegorically. I might recall to your minds, in this connection, the remarkable procession in our own street organised last year by the Medical Colleges in aid of the Hospital Fund. On one occasion the Russian aeroplane factory, "Aika," fitted up a large aeroplane on a platform erected on the roofs of motor-cars, in which the representatives of the various nationalities of Russia sat in their variegated costumes to express the readiness of all the Federated States to develop the air fleet of the Union, and at the same time to give objective exhibition of aeronautics, which no amount of the old type theatre-camouflage would have given. Similarly, hygienic enlightenment is supplied in sanitary matters by means of dramatic representations. While in other countries they fight syphilis, tuberculosis, and other diseases, by means of pamphlets and

broadsheets, in Russia theatrical performances are given specially for this purpose. Often great trials are held in the public, with real judges and prosecutors, even if faked accusers and accused, to impress upon the public graphically, unforgettably, evils which Brieux's classic *Damaged Goods*, or Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* gives a very vague idea of. Political purpose is also served most effectively by the theatre. The "*Burial of the Massacred Books*," was one such representation the most extraordinary of its kind. A little while before, the counter-revolutionary troops had forced their way right up to the gates of the city, and in their advance had everywhere confiscated the libraries left behind by the communists and destroyed the greatest part of the books. When the rebellion was quelled, the Bolshevik authorities were faced with the melancholy remnants of these burnt and torn writings. They had these carefully collected and used them as the occasion for a national festival.\*

## V. EDUCATION CAMPAIGN.

In all these cultural activities, however, the first objective of the Bolshevists is the child. They see in the child the rising generation, the future soldiers of Communism, the custodians of all that the present leaders achieve, and the authors of further advance on every front not touched upon to-day. In all these grand proces-

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\* In This last section the Lecturer is particularly indebted to Mr. Fülöp Miller's *Mind and Face of Bolshevism*.

sions or festivals theatricalising life, the Government reserve particular place to the little ones of the Revolution, who are definitely and deliberately encouraged to think for themselves on all matters that interest the new state, and are freed from all those restraints and constraints which make the life of a child in Bourgeois society often a living hell. True, the spectacle is often witnessed in present-day Russia of the children turning the tables wholly upon their parents and elders, by summoning a meeting of the parents to listen to preachings by their own children ; and the older a parent is and the more-rooted in old-world prejudices, the more uncomfortable he becomes in this twisting of the position. School and other state authorities dealing with children are instructed or inclined to take the part of the children in any event of a difference between them and their parents. Though the ideal of the self governing school is not yet accomplished so far as to permit the children to appoint their own teachers, and to dictate to them the subjects they would teach and the manner those subjects should be taught in, they are encouraged to learn the art of self-government from their tenderest years by being permitted and expected to manage their own affairs, at least in the boarding schools. The schools of this description have their student councils and their student presidents and secretaries ; and it is not too much to say, gorgesque as it may sound, that the little ones seem to have made as much a success of the powers entrusted to them as their elders anywhere in the world seem



to have done at any time in history. Verily, there is nothing like self-government to teach the art of self-government!

The Bolshevik programme of education does not however consist in such spectacular attempts at revolutionising every day life and its accepted conventions. From the day they assumed power, the Bolsheviks have declared their fixed resolve to abolish illiteracy in the land within the space of less than 10 years. Lenin emphasised the need for a universal, national system of education as the *sine qua non* of political advancement in a proletarian State. They have, therefore, concentrated on this, and created many fighting organisations, e.g., "Down with Illiteracy," and the "Friends of the Proletarian Students,"-mostly on the initiative of factory workers. The aim of these organisations is to further popular education by all means, not merely among the children, but amongst the adults of all ages and classes, and of both sexes. Their first experiment was with the Red Army, which has become so great a success that by May 1922, according to official reports, every red soldier was able to write a letter and read an easy book. In contrast to this, it may be pointed out that the Tsarist regime had strictly forbidden any progressive newspapers or books to be brought into the barracks. Emboldened by these results, the Government are hoping that the "liquidation" of illiteracy among the urban workers will be complete before 1927, while the total abolition of this universal curse of ignorance is programmed to end by the tenth.

anniversary of the foundation of the soviet republic, i.e., by the end of October 1927.

The educational effort of the Revolutionary Government was, however, not confined only to the abolition of illiteracy. In the case of the children's schools, besides the three R's. they have from the beginning aimed at rousing the children's interest in machines, and in their party. For those above the stage of primary schools, vocational schools, and institutes for agricultural training, along with model factories, were also established, and have led to excellent results, in a relatively short space of time.

Given their philosophy and outlook on life, it would be absurd to expect the Bolshevist Government to worry their heads about what we call moral or religious instruction. In fact, what endeavour there seems to be in this connection is frankly negative, or destructive. The children, at least, suffer in consequence, at least according to the rather dim vision of an old-fashioned professor. Freed from all restraints, the boys and girls are revelling to their heart's content in whatever they may happen to crave, from smoking to sex experiences at an incredibly early age. Many a mother is found in present-day Russia in school-girls; and the hospitals are not unfamiliar with the spectacle of self-contracted venereal disease amongst children of the tenderest age. In manners, too, the bourgeois onlooker will hardly find the Russian child of to-day the model he is accustomed to think of. But, while the Government is indifferent if not hostile to moral education, they

are most particular for the physical training, as well as political, of the new generation. Gymnastic exercises are provided for both before and after school hours every day, and are insisted upon almost rigorously, care being taken to adapt the exercises to the special conditions of the schoolwork, so as to exercise just those muscles which cannot be exercised during the school work. The training of the hand, and practical activity in general, is another such special concern of the new regime. The political enlightenment of the children is attended to in all those institutions of autonomy, which might invite your risibility, but which in Russia are taken with the utmost seriousness.

The case is somewhat different with regard to higher or University education. This seems to be viewed with a certain amount of distrust, as being the stronghold or breeding place of bourgeois prejudices. Hence the Universities are denied that measure of autonomy which the school-children are specially encouraged in. The Universities are under subjection to the political authorities which have used their power, first to dispense with all those faculties which we would call "Liberal" *e. g.*, history, philosophy, theology, and jurisprudence or law; and their place was taken by the faculties dealing with the social sciences, particularly Economics and Sociology. But these must conform to the Marxist creed, and the professors denying it had to go.

For the special advantage and benefit of the working classes, the Government have established a Labour Faculty, which ranks inter-

mediate between the elementary schools and the Universities. It is from these that they hope to create a new intelligentsia duly inoculated against Bourgeois prejudices, and expected to serve the new state faithfully. For this purpose they are given a smattering of the humanities; while the more ambitious are provided with facilities for University training. In the Universities they are indirectly, though intentionally, preferred to the old classes frequenting the Universities. They have also established special communist Universities for the training of the Bolshevist specialists, which would in course of time serve to replenish the ranks of the present leaders of the proletariat. On the whole, the judgment of a critic, by no means wholly sympathetic to the Revolutionaries, may be repeated here that: "The Bolshevists have now so organised national education that no one may exceed the officially permissible allowance of knowledge and education, so that the subjects of the the proletarian state may never run the risk of being stimulated to speculation by an improper amount of knowledge and of becoming subversive elements in the State."

## VI. SUMMARY OF RESULTS.

On a review, then, of all the activities and achievements of the revolutionary regime in Russia, it would not be incorrect or inaccurate to say that the Revolution has come to stay, in all its main aspects and principles. This means that the old class distinctions must be taken to

have died, never to be reborn. Despotism of the old autocratic type, and bureaucratic terrorism, may likewise be said to have become a thing of a vanished and for ever impossible past. The new principles of social organisation and economy have yet had very little time to be judged of; and, besides, the Bolshevists have made substantial modifications, so that what success there is might fairly be ascribed, not to the original principle, but to its modified operation. Production is growing, no doubt, but equality in distribution has still to be achieved, and may, unless good care is taken in advance, be defeated by the "Nepmen"—a new class not always in sympathy with the communist ideals. The greatest achievement, on the positive side, is in regard to education, though perhaps to old fashioned peoples it may seem that too much attention is paid to the material and utilitarian aspect. The individual is given a new freedom whose full possibilities remain still unexploited; while Society is placed on a new basis.

## LECTURE V.

### RUSSIA AND THE WORLD.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

The outline sketch I have tried to place before you in the preceding Lectures has, I trust, convinced you that it is a mistake to look upon the Russian Revolution as though it were a mere ebullition, a local experiment pure and simple, and that of a single sided character. It is, indeed, the most gigantic economic experiment the world has ever known of, both in regard to the vast mass of people concerned, and in regard to the unknown and untried, but not for that reason unexisting resources of a mighty stretch of territory. But the economic aspect is only one side of the phenomenon ; and, at that, perhaps, not the most important, essentially. Those who have had the conduct of the Revolution in their hands entertain far more ambitious ideas of revolutionising, through economic pressure, life and its entire scheme of values. All that the accumulated prejudice and preconceptions of civilised humanity has hitherto regarded as sacrosanct, the Russian Revolutionary not only challenges merely dialectically, but endeavours to show the futility of in practical, everyday life. The basis and structure of modern commercial society, with all its fetish and totem and taboo of the idols of the

market-place, seem, on the Russian viewpoint, to be utterly erroneously conceived and planned ; and so the Russian has declared a relentless war to the bitter end on everything the rest of the world, including old Russia, has been considering the perfection of human advance and the acme of social civilisation. The Russians are as far as any other people in the world in knowing the meaning and mystery of life, its end and purpose, its place and significance in the scheme of the universe. But they are trying to approach the problem from a wholly new direction, and so holding a promise—no greater indeed than that of a new Columbus setting out to voyage in uncharted, unknown seas, and against the weight of the accepted notions of the day as regards the very configuration of those unknown seas, but nevertheless a promise, which in its sheer daring and novelty takes away our breath, and makes us, despite ourselves, interested spectators of the solution or otherwise as it gradually unfolds itself from the preliminary groping in the dark. In philosophy, in Religion, just as much in Politics, Economics or Sociology, they are seeking new paths ; and while it may be too much to predict that their new pioneering will prove more successful than the old, it would be less than just to condemn the attempt merely because it is unusual, or repugnant to our accepted prejudices.

The world at large is interested in the Russian experiment for its own sake. But lest the world

should overlook the fact, the Russian has no objection to oblige, and hold up his achievements to the lime-light. Whatever happens in Russia is no longer the concern of the Russians only, whether it is a purely local matter or an international affair. It is the privilege as well as the penalty of the propagandist and the proselytiser, that he must seek the rest of the world to be interested vitally in his doings ; and the Russians have fully realised this implicit condition of their attempted experiment. Reduced to its lowest common denominator, the Russian Experiment has, first of all, to give us a solution for reconciling the conflicting claims of the individual and the society. The growth of individual consciousness, and the self-assertion of individual personality in matters public, has led to the discovery of the device of democracy, which, reduced to its simplest elements, and tried at all honestly, must mean anarchy. On the other hand, the claims of organisation and co-operation for living together in civilised society, and productive, helpful, useful intercourse, demands expedients totally nugatory of "democracy." Man is essentially the weakest and most helpless of all animals, and yet the most presumptuous. His very structure and constitution is such that he cannot live without the constant co-operation of all his fellows, though often in ways and under pretexts not at all suggestive of the real nature of the co-operation. They have started in Russia with the catchwords without which they would never have been able to mobilise and enlist in their favour the weight of public



opinion, sufficient to enable them to overcome such opposition from the vested interests they were out to disestablish as was inevitable under the circumstances. The slogan of proletarian State and Dictatorship suggested to most ears, accustomed to the ordinary idiom of the political world of our time, the completest democracy, especially as the war-cry was raised against the radically opposite ideal of the Tsarist autocracy. But the moment they came down to hard realities of everyday life; the moment they left behind them the effervescent enthusiasm of the early revolutionary days, they found that the ideal and reality were miles apart. Working democracy was a contradiction in terms, at least in so far as matters common or social were concerned, *e. g.* the government of a factory, the management even the administration of a school, of the State itself. Forms and devices may, indeed, be invented and perfected, whereby, while the common cant about those old notions goes on unchecked, the reality would be permitted to be wholly different. Their proletarian Dictatorship, therefore, became truly a dictatorship, and remained proletarian in name and purpose, but not in structure or operation. It is the same all the world over, and more particularly in countries which are reputed to be the most democratic; but the Russians have less of such transparent fraud upon the public-mankind at large, and so they no longer pretend about the democratic, or even popular, character of their regime, except in the sense that the people of Russia can

find no other more acceptable regime, now that they have tasted the changes made by the Bolshevists. It is, indeed, inexplicable why the mistaken notion should have got abroad that communism, or even the mildest form of socialism in practice, as distinguished from what it is pointed to be in text-books, could be at all democratic in the usually accepted sense of the term. Man has to fight against the handicap imposed upon him by the niggardliness of nature, since his productive capacity is so inferior to his consumption needs, and since, in order to remedy this deficit, he must organise and co-operate ceaselessly. If he is to organise successfully, for productive purposes at any rate, he must appoint directors, superintendents, foremen to superintend, control and direct, to command the organised movement, so as to achieve the desired end with the maximum of effect and minimum of effort. As a sort of a tribute to their calf-love, the Bolsheviki began with democratic forms in the government of the factories they confiscated, just as much as in the ordering of the army and the navy that had become disaffected to the Tsarist autocracy. But they soon discovered that that way lay only failure and disaster. So they have retraced their steps, as I pointed out in the previous Lectures, and with results, not at all disappointing.

But because in the organisation for production, just as much as for defence, the need for effective concerted action requires a certain sinking of the ego of each individual for the attainment of the common good, it does not

follow that the individual has no scope at all for self-expression. In matters of the mind or the soul, to use terms current and familiar amongst us though discarded and discredited by the Bolsheviks, where the individual reactions on the rest of the society are either negligible or innocuous; and where yet the right of self-expression and assertion matters most to the individual for his or her personal happiness, the Russian conception of the relative importance of the community and the individual leaves the fullest freedom to the individual. They have realised that there is no danger in this freedom; and so they have freed the individual from the spiritual tyranny of an accepted and official orthodox religion, just as much as they have endeavoured to devise laws whereby in personal relations, of man to man may have the greatest freedom.

In the rest of the modern civilised world, this is all radically different. Outside Russia they give the greatest scope to man's cupidity and inefficiency his individualism and exclusiveness, in matters where mutual co-operation over a vast field is the *sine qua non* of successful execution of an enterprise, and one of the indispensable conditions of the enterprise is a certain merging or sinking of the self in the interest of the mass; while with equal emphasis they deny him the liberty to think for himself as to the culture he would adopt, and the gods he would worship, and even the individuals he must marry and live with.

This is, therefore, the first and the most import-

ant cause of a conflict, or at least a challenge of Russia to the rest of the civilised world. Leaders of thought in other countries may be slow to pierce through the miasma of prejudice that still envelopes the greater portion of the Russian experiment; but leaders of action have no illusions now as to what Russia stands for, what the Russian experiment means to the rest of humanity. By the very law of its being, the Russian State has to be propagandist; for it has realised that the real disparity between the production energy and the consumption needs of mankind cannot be overcome, except by the completest possible organisation and drilling and marching in step and acting in unison of the entire humanity, in and outside Russia. The socialist scheme will never succeed fully and completely, unless the whole world adopts it; though, of course, that is no reason why some one should not begin before the rest. Hence the incessant Russian propaganda, which is not allowed to be all that it wants to be, and which, such as it is, is generally misrepresented by the other states, who would have no Russian finger in their private pie. Because Russia must propagandise, she is a constant danger-signal for the other countries. It is, therefore, a most piquant feature of the international situation to-day, that the politicians of the world seem to be impaled on the horns of a most trying dilemma. They cannot very well treat Russia as a pariah for all eternity; nor can they ignore the growing sympathy with some, if not all, of the principles and ideals, for which the Russian re-

gime of the Bolsheviks stands to-day in their own midst. The resources, moreover, of Russia are too vast and precious to be left undeveloped. Russia perhaps cannot develop them satisfactorily entirely off her own bat. But even if she could and did, she would be none the less a menace to the rest of mankind, if the rest persists in treating her as an outcaste. On the other hand, Russian propaganda is relentless, and passes all bounds of the conventions established in international relations. To the Russians, of course, those conventions are meaningless, since they prevent the propagation of the New Gospel a la Lenin. Their methods, however, often rub their sympathisers even the wrong way up, so that not only the more conservative among the labour leaders in England, but the entire Trade Union organisation have decided to have nothing whatever to do with Russia and the Russians, until at least they learn the rudiments of international amenities. This is understandable and excusable; but it nonetheless creates a serious problem. Russia has obtained recognition from the principal Western powers, only to embitter the relations by an ill-timed exhibition of propagandising zeal. The world is thus not a whit nearer solution of the tangle in 1927, ten years after the Soviet regime was established in Russia by force of arms as well as by the consent of the Russian people, than we were ten years ago.

I told you on a previous occasion that one of the most effective explanations of the relative failure of the Bolshevik attempts at communism is

the non-emergence of the expected class-war on the Marxian model in the other proletariats of the world. The working classes of the western industrialised countries are not a whit less eager or less intelligent than the Russians ; but generations of fairly reasonable, though not really just, conditions of work, have made them more sober and calculating as to the real chances of enduring success for a working class revolution of the Russian type. They have therefore not followed eagerly and enthusiastically in the Russian track ; and their defection, at least as the Russians conceive this attitude, appears to the Bolshevik communist the real explanation of the relative failure in Russia itself. The Russians are, thus, dealing with the western powers in an atmosphere of mutual distrust and dissatisfaction. France, for example, is reported to be chafing at the Russian repudiation of the Tsarist debts, which has a most vital bearing on the credit of France itself ; and what little stability the new regime has achieved in Russia, what signs of progress there seem to be developing in that country, would all disappear if on this point the present Government yields. If they acknowledge one creditor, they must acknowledge the claims of all others ; and if they acknowledge the claims of foreign creditors, the basis of their doings regarding property at home will not fail to be questioned. Hitherto, indeed, the powers that be in Russia have made seeming concessions, which, however, did not obscure or even jeopardise the basic principles of their regime ; but on this point there can be no

concession by them without risking the entire existence of their Revolution. The only solution lies in an imitation of the German model, where the rapid and wholesale depreciation of the local currency has led to a complete cancellation of the domestic indebtedness; or rather indebtedness in terms of the German mark, whether helped by foreigners or nationals. Thanks to their desire to honour, to the utmost of their ability, their bonds, the Germans have managed to convince the world, even of their critics, of their sincerity to cooperate in a scheme of universal reconstruction, without any violent break with the past, but also with due regard to the needs and demands of the present and the future. Germany has thus obtained a relaxation of her foreign obligations, which were, indeed, inevitable if Germany and the German people were not to be swept out of existence; but which have preserved appearances in a manner that the Russian intransigence has prevented the rest of the world from even suggesting. Everybody realises, indeed, that the rigorous insistence on the bond, signed during and even before the War, in perfect imitation of Shylock, will not help to reconstruct the world; and so even England has sought and obtained, without a blush or a demur, relaxation of the original terms of her indebtedness to the United States, a relaxation, which she has declared her perfect willingness to pass on to those of her debtors who will come to terms. All the terms of all the several settlements of war-debts are based on this dominant

note, which is made to approximate to the ability of the payer, and not to the size of the debt. Russia is yet alone in her insistence on an utter, absolute, uncompromising repudiation of the previous debts. This is more a political than a strictly economic plank in the programme. For real, effective socialisation of industry and the distribution of the products of human industry will not be achieved without the simultaneous consent of the peoples of all countries. In securing their consent, it would surely be an important ingredient to see that the inevitable injustice in any scheme of reconstruction is confined to the minimum proportions, and is more than counterbalanced by the resulting substantial justice and equity. If the Russians realise this condition, and if the vested interests of the world at large suffer the Russians to make an honourable retreat, without endangering their fundamental position at home, I think there would be no difficulty in reconstructing the family of nations that for the moment seems to be disrupted.

A connected question may also be disposed of at this stage. Is Russia a menace to the peace of the world? The active and intense propaganda that the Russians are obliged to carry on by the very law of their being to-day seems to indicate a mentality, not far removed from those senseless ambitions and rivalries which thirteen years ago plunged the world into mourning. And yet, paradoxical as it may sound, I do not believe the Russians either mean, or are ready for, war of the modern type. No country in the



world to-day is really ready and eager for drawing the sword, despite the monkeyings and attitudinising of a Mossolini, or a Churchill. These are would-be Napolcons, who are never happy unless they are somehow showing off their latest tricks. The more sober and intelligent people have learnt, I verily believe, to look upon these mountebanks as pathological phenomena, rather than as political prodigies, and much less than as prophets. The tales of preparation for a war of revenge will, indeed, always be there ; and always feed a certain type of imagination, which is never satisfied without stirring up some tamasha somehow and somewhere. But anybody, who takes the trouble seriously to consider the economic position of any likely belligerents, must perforce come to the conclusion that they cannot mean war, even if they go on talking war, *namkevaste*. In offering this prognostic, I am by no means unaware of the similar opinions and beliefs held in the best informed quarters, or at least the most thoughtful, in the days immediately preceding the world-war ; nor am I unmindful of the possibility of a ready *dementi* to writers and thinkers of the Norman Angel School, which the struggle, when it did actually break out, provided. There were reasons and forces at work, however, before the last War came to be, which made one a little cautious in making such prophesies based only on an examination of the seeming economic factors, and without allowing sufficiently for the psychological factor. To-day, either those forces are non-existent ; or they are kept in

good check by the more insistent and exacting economic factors. To this may also be added the growing consciousness in the mass of the people as to the real meaning of wars, their true causes, and the actual mystery of their management the real gain and loss resulting therefrom and so on, with the result that, the mass of humanity will have to say something very serious before the world is again permitted to be plunged into a war of the dimensions of the last one. And all this applies with tenfold emphasis to Russia, despite all the symptoms to the contrary as reported in the press. Russia, I repeat, is anxious and energetic in the cause of propagandising the central ideas of her new regime. Russia, no more than any other country in the world, is not anxious to remain always an outsider, for ever banished from the society of nations as a leper and a pariah. So she may be making alliances with her neighbours, which there is no need, in my opinion, to interpret in an alarmist spirit. Russia, further, is obliged to rely on her nearest and best qualified neighbour to resuscitate her industry and the entire productive organisation, in this age of growing mechanisation. That, too, is no portent threatening the peace of the world. The basis of Russian organisation to-day is fundamentally inconsistent with ambitious warfare for aggrandising purposes, quite apart from the fact that Russia has little to aggrandise herself in. She is certainly at war,—with the idea of oppression and exploitation, of one class by another, of one country by another, of one individual by another,. . . But that will not

lead her, I venture to think, into an active war for the vindication of these principles in the abstract, though, for defensive purposes, they will be as strenuous as the most intensely nationalistic and patriotic people in the world.

The problem and the challenge of Russia, therefore, does not seem to me to be utterly unanswerable on the political and economic side. Nor is it there quite so radical despite the fanfare the Russians themselves make about it. The rest of the industrialised world, and the proletariat thereof, is forcing the vested interests slowly to readjust the scheme of social relations and opportunities, as well as to assure the fundamental rights of man; so that the economic change demanded by Russia is not impossible of an early attainment. Class-war is, in my opinion, as futile as any other war; and I, for my part, believe that it is not utterly impossible for us to avoid it, particularly if we do not miss the lessons of our day, wherever the experiments may be taking place. Where, however, the Russian challenge seems to me the most important, and even disquieting, is in the view of human nature that this experiment involves. Taking the most pessimistic view of man and his capability, I am yet by no means convinced that man will for ever consent to be content with a universal and intense mechanisation of life. The experimenters in Russia are, of course, right in their emphasis on a material readjustment, as the *sine qua non* of any other development of man and his possibili

ties in aspects other than strictly material. And for that end, their insistence on wholesale mechanisation of even poetry and the drama may be considered as simply a passing phase during the interval—the transition stage,—of active propaganda. It is a nice point to determine what is the strength, in the composition of the average man, of the herd instinct; and how far, in obedience to that instinct, he would suffer himself to be dragooned into a dull level of unrelieved uniformity, mediocrity, equality. The absolute conscription of the mass for work, without chance of individual aberration or eccentricity which the rigorous realisation of the communist scheme of life would involve, would soon prove, I think, unpalatable to the majority of the people, particularly after they have once been liberated from the barriers and limitations that have governed their life so far. The human mind is still in the making; and we are yet not even on the threshold of the infinite possibilities of knowledge, which means power over the forces and mysteries of nature. But no matter when we may at last attain to that consummation, this much may safely be conceded that no such end would be attained, if we continue to revel in the exclusions and limitations and distinctions that now vitiate our social structure. The Russians have made a bold step forward, though it must be recognised that theirs is by no means the first venture, in the essence and the spirit of their achievement, whatever it might appear in its actual proportions for the moment. Every effort at revolt

in the past against authority, whether secular or sacerdotal; every attempt at securing for the masses equal advantages from the advance of man in knowledge and power; every step to popularise knowledge and to liberate the individual from the shackles of caste and creed for at least his material or economic activities, must be taken to have held the germ of what the Russians have attempted on a much grander theatre, and on far more numerous fronts simultaneously. Admitting this debt to the sentiment of Liberalism in the past, we are free to acknowledge the Russian experiment to be something wonderful, colossal, inspiring. The exact position to-day of that experiment should not blind us to the ultimate promise held out by it. I consider the problem before the Russians, and before mankind at large, to consist in a reconciling between the conflicting demands of social organisation and co-operative effort for the sustenance of bodily life; and the individual aberrations and aspirations for independence, if not for domination, which our existing experience seems to show is rooted in the very nature of man. It may even be questioned if perfect equality on all hands is feasible; and, if feasible, whether it would be desired and desirable. I would not dogmatise where I do not know the elements of the problem. Confining one-self only to the Russian experiment and its lessons, it is safe to assert that the present process of exacting disciplining for material purposes, which seems to deny the individual the right to make of himself a failure, and of his community a futility, is a

transitional stage, to accustom mankind to the need for universal effort for rapid progress on a most extensive scale. But when the goal is attained, when the inequalities which now offend the eye have become a nightmare of the past; when the tyrannies and the exploitations and the restrictions which now disfigure human society, and cripple and handicap the individual, have vanished from the world; whether there would then be the same need for such an intensive disciplining, it is too much to forecast. Perhaps, the growth of the habit to work, and the absence of any stimulus to exploit others for personal gain, and to be a mere drone, would render the question, in the society of the future, superfluous. The Russians have sought to free their countrymen from the superstition of ages, by the disestablishment at one stroke of religion and all religious beliefs. They are endeavouring to introduce a system of education which could render unnecessary any such organised frauds upon mankind. They are accustoming their contemporaries to a scheme of existence, in which, if only the normal, competent, adult individual provides his quota to the total produce at the disposal of mankind, there would be no other restrictions whatsoever upon his self-expression in any other department he chooses. I wonder if you grasp the full significance of these remarks. I have told you of the intense, almost childlike, faith the present leaders of the Russian Government have in modern machinery. Do you now perceive the reason why this belief? It is to simplify

man's task in production; to enable him to obtain the necessaries of life with the minimum of effort; and then to leave him free for fuller development in all those fields which we are accustomed to contrast with the material sphere, to the prejudice of the latter. In any event, in this their experiment the Russians are still, in the first step, securing to the individual that indispensable requisite of normal, regular, healthful conditions without which no other advance is possible. What other steps there will be, and when and how and by whom they will be taken, I cannot say.

On the whole, then, I do not think sanely, soberly, considered, the Russian experiment holds out any threat to the peace of mind of any but the extreme russo-phobes. To regard it as anything more than an experiment would be to fall in the opposite error. Pending achievement, I am by no means certain that the Russians will not have to make further readjustment, and still more ample modifications, or at least redraftings, of their initial programme of fanatical communism. I am confident the future lies with some scheme of a more humane, more brotherly, more socialistic character! Perhaps the Russian is one instance of the possible many types of the ultimate evolution, which might be adopted by different peoples to suit their different conditions. That they have a guarantee of success, a promise of achievement at least, would be evident to any one who casts a glance at a map of the world, and considers

the barren regions still awaiting development by man's toil and man's ingenuity, if only the habit of selfish aggrandisement is not allowed to keep out the most suitable elements from carrying out the programme of development. Australia insists on a policy of white exclusiveness, forgetting that the tropical portions of that island-continent, if they are to be properly developed, must have labour suited by constitution to tropical conditions. America legislates to keep out the Japanese and the Chinese and the Indian immigration, lest its standard of living be undermined, forgetting that not a tenth of the real resources of America are yet developed, and that there is ample field still awaiting development, sufficient to guarantee to double the present population of the States a standard of living six times superior to, and more comfortable than, that common for the millions upon millions of Asiatics and Africans. The world has enough to feed and clothe and house mankind, and make every individual able to seek a channel for self-expression and self-realisation. But the man-power of the world is most uneconomically distributed, to the incalculable loss of mankind in the world. For while in some regions of the world there are as many as 250, or even 500, people per square mile, there are others, by no means inconsiderable either in extent or in initial natural endowment, where the pressure of population is not even one per every square mile of territory. If we could only agree to regard the whole world as



the collective heritage of mankind ; if we would give up our stupid, senseless, suicidal prejudices of exclusiveness and racial arrogance, and national jealousies, we could indeed convert this world in a very short space of time into a veritable paradise.

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