

*Vanguard Studies
of Soviet Russia*

LIBERTY UNDER THE SOVIETS

ROGER N. BALDWIN



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VANGUARD STUDIES OF SOVIET RUSSIA

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Liberty Under the Soviets

By ROGER N. BALDWIN

"While the State exists there can be no freedom.
When there is freedom there will be no State."—*Lenin*



NEW YORK
VANGUARD PRESS

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VANGUARD PRINTINGS
First—November, 1928

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



*To the sincere revolutionists of Russia who, despite
prison, exile, and death, burned out their
lives trying to attain freedom, peace,
and brotherhood for the
common people.*

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

ROGER N. BALDWIN has been identified with the fight for civil liberty in the United States from the early days of the World War. He came into it after ten years' experience in municipal reform, social work, and university teaching in St. Louis, where he had gone from his home in Boston following his graduation from Harvard in 1905.

As a pacifist and libertarian he opposed the war, organizing the Civil Liberties Bureau (later the American Civil Liberties Union) to help defend conscientious objectors to military service and persons prosecuted under the war laws. He served a year's prison term himself for refusing to obey the draft act.

On his release he worked as a manual laborer in the great steel and coal strikes of 1919 in order to get first-hand knowledge of working conditions. He then expanded the civil liberties work into the present Civil Liberties Union, which he has since directed.

Mr. Baldwin is active in many libertarian, radical, and pacifist movements. Among others, he is chairman of the International Committee for Political Prisoners, which organizes American aid and protests against political persecution in other countries. He has been identified with Russian-American enterprises—notably with the Kuzbas Colony in Siberia and with the Russian-American Reconstruction Farms.

He spent the year 1927 in Europe, studying political and economic conflict. Part of that time he was in Russia gathering material for this book.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE RUSSIAN Revolution startled a war-diseased world and ushered in the most daring political and economic experiment of the twentieth century. Considering the vast territory affected, the radical changes inaugurated, and the influence which has been and still is being exerted on international relations, there is probably no greater event in modern history, whether for good or evil. Most Americans forget that a decade has already passed since Lenin and his Communistic followers assumed power. The period of rapid revolutionary change has gone. Russia is painstakingly, step by step, building something different, something unique, something whose final destination is unpredictable.

America has been a land of discovery from its foundation. Not only in the realm of scientific invention, but in first attaining the coveted North Pole and in exploring other unknown areas of the world, Americans have given generously of life and treasure. Today we are uninformed about a great nation covering one-sixth of the land surface of the world. Russia is cut off by an Atlantic Ocean of prejudice, misunderstanding, and propaganda. We still maintain a rigid official quarantine about the Soviet Government. The result is ignorance frankly admitted by one "of the highest authorities in our Government," who declares this inevitable "in the absence of diplomatic relations." The late Judge Gary corroborated this verdict, "Like many other Americans, I am ignorant in regard to many of the

conditions which exist in Russia at the present time." *

Every scientist realizes that ignorance is one of the most dangerous forces in the world today. No matter how good or how bad the Soviet system, we should know all about it. Instead we have been ruled by propaganda and hearsay.

The fact is that for the past ten years the Bolshevik government has been operated on, dissected, and laid in its coffin amidst loud applause and rejoicing by distinguished orators in all parts of the world; yet today it is stronger, more stable, than ever before in its history, and its leaders have been longer in power than any other ruling cabinet in the world. It is high time that we appraise this government as scientifically and impartially as possible, without indulging in violent epithets or questionable and controversial dogmas. Surely the world is not so abysmally ignorant that after ten years of the rule of the Soviet we cannot discover a common core of truth about Russia.

Whether the Communists are thought to be "dangerous enemies of society" or the "saviors of humanity," the facts should be known before judgment is pronounced. No matter what our conviction we have to admit that the Bolsheviks are hammering out a startling new mechanism in the field of political control. Their experiment deserves scientific study, not hostile armies; intelligent criticism, not damning epithets.

In the past, America has been flooded with propaganda of all shades. Dr. E. A. Ross dedicates his last volume on Russia "To my fellow-Americans who have become weary of being fed lies and propaganda about Russia." In his chapter on the "Poison Gas Attack"

* *Current History*, February, 1926.

he lists forty-nine stories broadcast throughout America which have been proved totally false. Other writers have pointed out similar facts. Walter Lippman, Editor-in-Chief of *The New York World*, in his illuminating study of all Russian news which appeared in *The New York Times* in the early period of the Revolution, has proved the stupidity, inaccuracy, and falsehood of the "facts and fabrications" which have passed as news. Even those articles and books which have tried to deal honestly with the subject have usually been inadequate. They have either been too general or they have been specific but too brief to be of more than passing value. In all too many cases they are based on only a few weeks of observation in Russia by someone who did not know the native language.

The present series is designed to meet the need for reliable, accurate information on the major aspects of present-day Russia. We have tried to make it as scientifically accurate as is possible in the treatment of contemporary phenomena. It has been our aim in selecting each author to choose someone who because of previous experience and training was peculiarly well qualified as an authority on the particular subject to which he was assigned. In every case we have chosen those who either have made a prolonged stay in Russia, actually writing their volumes while in the country, or those who have made a special trip to Russia to secure the facts about which they write. We have tried to make the series inclusive, covering the more important aspects of the many-sided developments in Russia. Each volume is devoted to one major subject alone. People want detailed, accurate facts in readable form. Here they can be found, ranging all the way from an

analysis of the governmental machinery to the school system. Within this series some repetition has been inevitable. The editor believes that this is distinctly desirable since each author expounds his subject in his own way, with an emphasis original to him and in the light of his own data. No effort has been made to eliminate contradictions, yet they are surprisingly few. Where the testimony of all is unanimous, the conclusions reached are overwhelmingly strong. Where differences exist, they should stimulate the reader to weigh the evidence even more carefully.

It is probably too much to hope that propaganda organizations will not endeavor to discredit any such genuine effort to arrive at the truth. Perhaps it is sufficient to say in refutation that no similar attempt to secure the facts about Russia from trained experts has yet been made in America or elsewhere, so far as the writer is aware. There is scant ground for intelligent criticism unless similar scientific studies have been made with conflicting results; even then time alone can proclaim the final truth. No sincere and unprejudiced scientist will deplore an effort to study and describe what has happened in the first experiment the world has ever seen in applied communism, even if mistakes have been made in the analysis.

These volumes on the whole not only contain the most valuable data so far available, but they will probably remain of permanent worth. In the future no real historian endeavoring to master the facts about the great political upheaval in Russia will care to ignore them. Is Russia the most tyrannical dictatorship of bloody despots that the world has ever seen? Is Russia the first step in the building of a new world order whose keynote will be industrial democracy? We do

not pretend to give here the final judgment of history, but we do claim to have made a sincere effort to portray the facts.

Roger Baldwin has written a unique contribution to this series. It is doubtful whether there is any other fighter for liberty in America who could have more faithfully ferreted out the truth. The author's interest and outlook are well known; they make his treatment the more significant. His interpretation of the facts will not entirely please either friend or foe of Communism—which is in some measure an indication of fairness.

The treatment is particularly thought-provoking for Americans. Does Russia have more economic liberty for the masses of workers and peasants than the United States? Is there more genuine democracy for workers under the Soviet dictatorship than in America? Is Russia pioneering in her treatment of nationalities and in her newly established legal equality for women? Is Russian education "unequaled for its drive or its experimental daring"? What lessons do the experiments of the Russian revolution offer us in the United States? How far is the rigid political control within Russia justified in a revolutionary epoch? If it is not justified in Russia, then how can we lightly pass over similar control in our own country during the World War, for instance.

If we read this volume thoughtfully, it may help us to catch fleeting glimpses of our own liberties and repressions. If we disapprove of the abridgement of civil liberty in Russia, do we oppose it here also? Do we champion freedom of speech for strikers? Do we oppose injunctions which deny freedom of assembly to union men? Are we willing to grant liberty of speech, of

press, and of assemblage to the I. W. W. and the Communists in our home towns?

If there are still those who do not know the facts about the violation of freedom in America they have only to ask the author of this book. Roger Baldwin knows at first hand of the denial of civil liberties. His courageous record for freedom through the instrumentality of the American Civil Liberties Union is well known. Will the readers of this volume who condemn the repressive methods of Communists in Russia protest against similar methods here? Americans who are incensed at the monopoly of one political party in Russia, rarely express similar feeling toward the disfranchisement of the American Negro in the South or the monopoly control of American politics by moneyed interests.

If this book can help us better to understand the meaning of liberty under the Soviets or if it can make us pause to analyze the meaning of liberty under our own political democracy, it will have rendered a distinct service.

The reader who wishes to pursue further the particular subjects treated in Part One of this book would do well to turn to the volumes of this series previously issued.

Thanks are due to the authors who have so painstakingly sought to present the truth as they found it, to the publishers for their assistance in making this a notable and usable series, and to all those whose labor, whether by hand or brain, has helped to give these volumes to the American public.

JEROME DAVIS,
Yale University.

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LIBERTY UNDER THE SOVIETS

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

A FEW years ago two American workers who went to join the Kuzbas colony in Siberia wrote me their impressions and feelings about Soviet Russia. They wrote on the same day at the same table—and yet the letters might have come from two different continents, so oppositely did they view the Russian scene. One said he never worked anywhere under better conditions. "A country in which the workers are nearer free than anywhere on earth." The other said he never lived under such a regime of repression, graft and espionage. "If you could see how the peasants and workers really feel about it, you would know it keeps power only by force." Both men had gone to Russia pro-Soviet, but their temperaments led them to see and emphasize wholly different aspects.

Personal reactions color most of what is written about Soviet Russia. Where one puts one's emphasis is a matter of feeling and opinion. Anyone who writes of Russia owes it at the start to confess his personal bias; and on Russia everybody has a bias, conscious or not. Life under the Soviets is so packed with contrasts and contradictions, that anyone can prove almost any case

his bias dictates—and prove a case against them, if he likes, out of the mouths of the Bolsheviks themselves.

The central difficulty in any fair treatment of the Soviet experiment is to get and convey a rounded view of all the facts, showing which are temporary and incidental, and which are main tendencies and principles. Above all, anyone trying to understand Russia must bear in mind the human and historical background on which the Communists are tackling the colossal problems of reorganizing life in revolutionary terms.

On no subject is it more difficult to convey a fair view than on the issues of liberty and repression, because viewpoints and facts are both so contradictory. Communists everywhere see Soviet Russia as the greatest hope for the freedom of the masses. Their opponents see it as just another iron dictatorship of a small, ruling bureaucracy, disciplining and regimenting life in the pattern of a fanatical Marxism. The objective truth, which must appraise both views, is hard to get in focus even with agreed facts. And even the facts are hard to state fairly, as witness the violent disagreement on them between the Communist majority and the Trotsky Opposition. The difficulty is not so much that facts are disputed, as that they are so diverse you can take your pick to suit your contentions.

My own prejudices are amply conveyed by the title of this book. Though over half of it is devoted to a description of the controls by the Soviet state, I have chosen to call it *Liberty Under the Soviets* because I see as far more significant the basic economic freedom of workers and peasants and the abolition of privileged classes based on wealth; and only less important, the release of the non-Russian minorities to develop their national cultures, the new freedom of women, the revo-

lution in education—and, if one counts it as significant, liberty for religion—and anti-religion.

Against these liberties stand the facts of universal censorship of all means of communication and the complete suppression of any organized opposition to the dictatorship or its program. No civil liberty as we understand it in the West exists in Russia for opponents of the regime—no organized freedom of speech or assemblage, nor of the press. No political liberty is permitted. The Communist Party enjoys an exclusive monopoly.

Nevertheless I emphasize by title and the arrangement of this book the outstanding relation, as I see it, between the dictatorship's controls and the new liberties. For although I am an advocate of unrestricted civil liberty as a means to effecting even revolutionary changes in society with a minimum of violence, I know that such liberty is always dependent on the possession of economic power. Economic liberty underlies all others. In any society civil liberties are freely exercised only by classes with economic power—or if by other classes, only at times when the controlling class is too secure to fear opposition.

In Soviet Russia, despite the rigid controls and suppression of opposition, the regime itself is dominated by the economic needs of workers and peasants. Their economic power, even where unorganized, is the force behind it. Their liberties won by the Revolution are the ultimate dictators of Soviet policy. In this lies the chief justification for the hope that, with the increasing share by the masses in all activities of life, the rigors of centralized dictatorship will be lessened and all creative forces be given free rein. Peasants and workers are keenly aware of their new liberties won by the Revo-

lution. Anywhere you can hear voiced their belief, whatever their criticism and discontent, that they are "free." And they constitute over ninety percent of the Russian people.

Such an attitude as I express toward the relation of economic to civil liberty may easily be construed as condoning in Russia repressions which I condemn in capitalist countries. It is true that I feel differently about them, because I regard them as unlike. Repressions in western democracies are violations of professed constitutional liberties, and I condemn them as such. Repressions in Soviet Russia are weapons of struggle in a transition period to socialism. The society the Communists seek to create will be freed of class struggle—if achieved—and therefore of repression.

I see no chance for freedom from the repressions which mark the whole western world of political democracy save through abolishing economic class struggle. I recognize fully the dangers in the extreme measures of control in effect in Russia today. I deplore them for their unnecessary cruelties; even more for their threat to the development of the popular forces which the Communists themselves profess to encourage. Far more liberty could be permitted in Russia today with safety to the regime and benefit to its purposes. As for the future, no society seems to me permanently tolerable without unrestricted civil liberty as the means toward its continuing growth.

The fairest test by which to judge the Soviet experiment in relation to "liberty" is not by Western standards of political or civil liberties, but by the effects of the dictatorship's controls and repression on its own avowed object of creating a "free and classless society," with the state abolished. I quote on the title page Lenin's

pithy comment as testimony to the Communist view that no real freedom is possible so long as the necessity exists for maintaining the compulsory controls of the state.

Or if one is not speculatively minded about revolutionary progress, the next fairest test by which to judge liberty in Russia is to compare it with what liberty the Russian people enjoyed under czarism. And on that basis it is clear that the Russian people enjoy more of essential liberties than at any time in their history, and more of some sorts than any people in the world—as this book shows.

Despite my personal prejudices in favor of the economic achievements and purposes of the Russian Revolution, I have tried throughout this study to state the bad along with the good, and to keep a fair perspective—not always successfully, I fear, in covering so wide a range of subjects on which evidence is so often conflicting. I have treated all the darker side—the repression, the unnecessary severity against all opponents, the narrow intolerance of the censorship—even more fully than the liberties, because they are issues commonly colored by misinformation and heated controversy, set forth usually only in terms of partisan feeling.

Anyone who tries to see both the good and bad in Russia is constantly divided between depression and hope, friendliness and criticism. Among depressing factors which strike visitors on every hand, but which characterized czarist Russia as well, are the primitive economy of an eastern peasant country, its poverty, dirt and disease, illiteracy and superstition, drunkenness and easy-going theft, red tape and bureaucratic habits.

On the other hand, one is struck by the vigor and youthful quality of Russian life, its responsiveness to

new ideas, its capacity for team-work. On this background of life, almost ninety percent peasant, the little Communist minority—only one out of a hundred people you meet is a Communist—tackles with immense faith and courage the enormously difficult problems of converting a primitive peasant land to a modern industrial state run without private profit. It is heartening to see so many devoted young men and women laboring with such faith on every conceivable task of social advance—health, education, the welfare of women and children, recreation—with a drive unmatched by any political movement in the world. Whatever one's discouragement with such a primitive peasant country, it is encouraging to those democratically-minded not to see anywhere evidences of a privileged class based on wealth. Stimulating, too, is contact with those departments of the government which are scientifically planning the whole progress of Soviet Russia for years ahead.

From the beginning of the Russian Revolution, my personal attitude, like that of many others, has been divided between warm support of the economic experiment and opposition to the dictatorship's severity to all opponents—even to those whose ideas of working out the revolution differ from the Communist Party majority. Like so many other Americans, I have aided enterprises organized in the United States to help Soviet industry and agriculture, and to gain recognition for Russia. At the same time, I have protested with many of them against the Soviet's policy of exile and imprisonment of opponents solely for their political opinions and activities. As chairman of a committee dealing with political prisoners abroad, I aided in publishing the facts in a book of *Letters From Russian Prisons*, giving the experience of Socialist and anarchist exiles and prisoners.

After a first-hand inquiry in Russia my general feeling remains unchanged on both issues—of economic liberty and political repression. But first-hand contact has strengthened my hopes for the effects of economic liberty, and diminished my fears for the effects of political repression.

The material for this book was gathered in a two months' trip to Russia in 1927, covering the Soviet Union from Georgia to Leningrad, through the North Caucasus, the Crimea and the Ukraine. I happened to arrive at the worst possible time to gain a favorable impression, just after the break with England and the murder of the Soviet Ambassador at Warsaw, with the threat of war in the air. Hundreds of persons were being arrested. The political prisons were crowded. The government was nervous, though away from Moscow the tension was slight. And I arrived in the worst part of the Soviet Union in which to gain a favorable impression—Georgia—obviously held in the Union against the desire of its people for independence.

Despite all this, I found inquiry easier than in any country of Europe. Traveling mostly alone, armed only with a journalist's credentials and a general letter of introduction from American friends working in Russia, I was able to meet practically any officials I chose and to inspect any institution, with the sole exceptions of the chiefs of the political police and the political prisons in Moscow, inaccessible to almost all visitors because of the nervousness over the break with England and alleged counter-revolutionary plots.

My inquiries were made entirely on my personal initiative. Nowhere was I under official chaperonage.

I used all sorts of interpreters, official and anti-Soviet, even some monarchists. Indeed, most of my interpreters, except my American friends, were unsympathetic to the regime. Where I found Russians who spoke German or French or English, as many do, I was able to converse directly and privately.

Despite the delicate nature of my inquiries into the secret police and the methods of political control, I was not conscious at any time of being under police surveillance. Since most of my initial contacts were with officials, my interests were, of course, known. Only in Tiflis were the political police evidently curious about me, but their inquiry was most discreetly made. A young man rapped at my hotel room at eight in the morning, offering in excellent French to sell me maps of the country. My amusement at such an offer at such an hour let him know I understood his mission. I obligingly told him I did not need maps as I was leaving in two days, and did not intend to stir from Tiflis. On no other occasion was any question asked as to my interests, activities or movements.

Nor did any opponents of the regime whom I interviewed have to undergo any police investigation after my departure, so far as I could learn. But some of them were fearful of my activities. One, an ex-prince, who occupied an apartment with me in Moscow, left for the country when he learned the nature of my interests, fearing to be interrogated by the police. A high-school boy, son of a deceased czarist official, who did some translating for me, quit after a few days in fear of exile, saying that two of his classmates were already in Siberia for "connections abroad." But this attitude of the old aristocracy reflects the feeling of only a small minority in Russia.

The general ease of inquiry which every foreigner experiences in Russia is due to the desire both of Communist and non-Communist officials to show off their new experiments, plans and achievements. Conscious of being the objects of lively curiosity, they are anxious to know what foreigners think of them. Everywhere one's opinion is asked. In all institutions you are invited to write your comment in the guestbook before leaving. And if you are critical, the officials will explain their difficulties and ask you at least to mention all favorable points.

I met scores of opponents of the regime—in and out of prison—who talked frankly: anarchists, Socialists, Georgians, Tolstoians and ex-aristocrats. In Moscow I lived for a month keeping house in an apartment among Russian neighbors, many quite hostile to the regime.

I found private conversation fairly free, once critics were assured of the discretion of the persons with whom they talked. Though I found a few opponents who were fearful of speaking out, and many cautioned me not to quote them, I found nowhere such universal fear as marks opponents of the dictatorships in Italy or Hungary. Among workers and peasants, who on the whole support the regime, discontent is freely and vigorously voiced—upon high prices, bureaucratism, unemployment, low wages, taxes and shortage of goods. Speech is fairly free everywhere in Russia. What the authorities land on is any attempt at organized opposition.

Two weeks of my time were spent in villages in different parts of Russia with American friends who had long lived in them. Through them I talked with many peasants in their homes, in the fields, on the roads, in

cooperative colonies, and in both Russian and German villages.

Everywhere I attempted to get at the thought and feeling of common people as a background for my inquiries of officials. Among the officials I sought out those who dealt most directly with the people, and who were yet in responsible enough positions to talk freely. In the dozen prisons I visited, I had no difficulty in seeing any prisoners except in one, and I was allowed to talk even privately with those who spoke French, German or English (one, indeed, was an American woman, a teacher of languages rounded up in the wholesale arrests in Tiflis and held for investigation).

What I learned in Russia first-hand was supplemented by contact in Berlin and Paris with emigrés and exiles, especially with members of the anarchist and Socialist committees abroad. While I got from them considerable enlightening comment and some documents unobtainable in Russia; on the whole they only reinforced what I had got in Russia itself.

On all subjects in Russia, with the sole exception of the number of exiles and political prisoners and the methods of execution, information is not difficult to get. But it is always difficult to appraise fairly. Hardly a generalization can be made which cannot be qualified by a dozen exceptions. An inquirer is obliged constantly to check up on statements from any source to get the whole picture of anything. To piece together varying aspects and interpretations is a delicate task. But so would be a similar job by a foreigner visiting the United States.

I added to my inquiries in Russia voluminous reading of documents, both official and of the opposition—from the party Opposition as well as from emigrés

abroad. I have read practically all the books available in English and French on the issues of political control and the experience of prisoners with the political police. All of them, with a few exceptions, are too personal or too partisan to throw much light on the general aspects of the problems I deal with.

I do not claim that my investigations, though as thorough as I could make them, equip me to portray fairly all the facts on so many aspects of Soviet life, let alone interpret them with fine balance of judgment. Only long residence in Russia and complete familiarity with the language would enable a foreigner to do that. But I have checked my observations and study with a score of Russians of varying view.

To avoid errors in quoting official policies, the entire first draft of this book was very kindly read by a Soviet official qualified to give exact information. Parts of the draft were also very generously read by officials in Moscow in the departments affected. Parts have been read and suggestions made by exiles and emigrés, who of course disagreed with my general attitude. As one of them well said, "You have stated all the facts. But your estimate of what is important and what is unimportant is directly contrary to mine. I see the balance of adverse facts as weighing heavier against the regime than the favorable. I therefore oppose it. You see the contrary. You therefore support it."

It would be an easy matter to take the material of this book and rewrite it as an indictment of the Soviet regime. Readers so disposed can bring that indictment themselves if my interpretations fail to move them to sympathetic understanding.

I fully appreciate that if I were a Russian living in Russia today, my views and attitude, although largely

sympathetic to the regime, would probably lead to my exile. Despite my recognition of that probability, my feeling of the overwhelming importance of the Soviet economic experiment is unaffected. Nor is my attitude affected by the equally clear probability that no such book as this could be published under the present Soviet censorship.

PART I
LIBERTIES

LIBERTIES

LIBERTY in any sense is a relative term. The liberties in Soviet Russia described in this section are by no means unrestricted, but they are significant enough to go by that name. They represent efforts toward increased freedom in which the forces of liberation are stronger than the social and political controls that accompany them. All of them represent activities of life far freer from control than under the czars, and some freer than elsewhere in the world.

Wherever these liberties are limited by the dictatorship or by the Communist program, those limitations are noted with an eye to gauging their effect in checking natural tendencies to expression in utterance or in organization.

Throughout all these freer phases of Soviet life there runs the insistent effort of the regime to mold the whole social structure in the shape of the Communist program. But by far the greater part of that effort consists in education and propaganda rather than in arbitrary control. This is necessarily so, for the success of the Communist program depends chiefly on developing greater participation by the masses in all the organized group activities of life—in peasants' and workers' associations, in the local soviets, in the larger activity of women, in the education of children.

The inclusion of the chapter on Soviet democracy among the liberties rests on shakier ground than the

others, for the political control of that "democracy" by the Communist Party is complete. Yet the soviet system in itself, aside from that control, is so far in advance of western parliamentary democracy through basing representation on work and occupation, through excluding the trading and exploiting classes (Nepmen and Kulaks)—and so comparatively free in the village soviets—that it deserves inclusion here rather than under the later section on political control.

CHAPTER II

THE COMMUNIST IDEA OF DICTATORSHIP AND LIBERTY *

EVEN if Russia were a land in which bourgeois western ideas of civil liberty had taken root in political life, the Communist revolutionary dictatorship would have destroyed them. The attitude of the Soviet dictatorship towards civil liberty is to be explained not by factors peculiarly Russian, but by the inherent principles of Communism, intensified by the isolation of revolutionary Russia in a hostile world.

In the Communist philosophy, from the days of Karl Marx to the present, there is no room for the ideas of freedom of speech, press and assemblage, or liberty of individual conscience, except as they represent liberties for the working class and the poor peasants. To Communists, all liberties are class liberties. Individual rights, they hold, cannot exist in fact until classes based on economic exploitation are destroyed.

According to the Communist view, the liberties of individuals and groups to speak, print and meet without interference are, politically speaking, bourgeois ideas which arose as political issues in the western struggle of private capitalist enterprise against feudalism. They took root conspicuously only in western Europe, es-

* For a more detailed study of this, see *How the Soviets Work*, of this series, by H. N. Brailsford.

pecially in England and France, and in America—notably with the French and American revolutions. As popular concepts they developed only with the growth of individual capitalist enterprise, which demanded the utmost freedom from governmental restraint. With freedom in business went freedom to agitate freely, at least for the increasingly powerful business class. Thus this concept of civil liberty became embedded in constitutions and legal codes of the bourgeois western democracies. Parliamentary government, universal suffrage, civil liberty went hand in hand as the political ideas of capitalism.

That civil liberties, generally speaking, have not existed in fact for any classes except those with economic or political power is usually ignored by those who proclaim their validity as social principles. And equally ignored in popular western comment is the fact of their recent class origin. Though voiced for centuries by philosophers, they never became a political principle of any civilization until a growing capitalism revolted against feudalism and a rebel Protestantism against the Church of Rome. Though oppressed classes all through history have, in revolting, struggled to talk and meet without interference, they were unable until recent generations to assert those liberties as political rights, or to appeal, as do Communists today in capitalist countries, to the rules of the game laid down in the forms of government they seek to destroy.

To Communists there is no inconsistency in denying civil liberties to all opponents in Soviet Russia, while demanding these liberties for their movement in capitalist countries. If they believed in freedom for everybody—an abstraction never yet practically realized anywhere—their position would be untenable. But they do

not. They believe in economic power for the workers and poor peasants and in such liberty as is necessary to achieve that power in capitalist countries, or to maintain it in Russia—under the Party's leadership.

So Communists aid the workers and poor peasants in capitalist countries to the fullest possible expression of their class demands, while suppressing in Russia what they conceive to be forces opposed to the workers' and peasants' interests. It is incidental to their main attitude that sometimes this suppressed opposition in Russia comes from sections of the working class itself, differing with the Communist Party leadership, composed mainly of intellectuals, as to what constitutes the class interests of the workers. Incidental, too, is the repression of opposition within the Communist Party itself—a repression based upon the very real fear of destroying the unity of the dictatorship and throwing the country into a state leading to bourgeois democracy and to an inevitable retreat from the road to socialism.

Lenin put the whole case as the Communists see the issue of suppression. In his *State and Revolution*, he said:

“The dictatorship of the proletariat—that is, the organization of the advance guard of the oppressed as a ruling class for the purpose of crushing the oppressors—cannot produce merely an expansion of democracy. Together with an immense expansion of democracy—for the first time becoming democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the rich—the dictatorship of the proletariat will produce a series of restrictions of liberty in the case of the oppressors, exploiters, and capitalists. We must crush them in

order to free humanity from wage slavery; their resistance must be broken by force. It is clear that where there is suppression there must also be violence, and there cannot be liberty or democracy. . . .

"Only in Communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has finally been broken, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no longer any classes (that is, when there is no difference between the members of society in respect to their social means of production), only then does the State disappear, and can one speak of freedom. Only then will be possible, and will be realized, a really full democracy, a democracy without any exceptions. And only then will democracy itself begin to wither away by virtue of the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery . . . people will gradually become accustomed to the observance of the elementary rules of social life, known for centuries, repeated for thousands of years in all sermons. They will become accustomed to their observance without force, without constraint, without subjection, without the special apparatus of compulsion which is called the State."

No approach to understanding the conception of liberty in Russia can be made without constantly bearing in mind this fundamental outlook on the nature of the state as an instrument of class domination, and on the program for abolishing that state by abolishing classes.

Liberty in Russia cannot be fairly examined, as is usually attempted, on the basis of western ideas of bourgeois "rights," of Socialist Party conceptions of parliamentary democracy as the chief instrumentality for

achieving socialism, or of the anarchist program for the immediate revolutionary abolition of the state and the free cooperation of workers and peasants. It must be examined primarily in the light of what Communists are attempting to do to create a society in which liberty will be a reality when economic class conflict is abolished. Only through that process, according to the Communist view of progress, will liberty and democracy come to mean something other than the freedom of the propertied classes.

Bukharin clearly stated the issue in relation to the Socialist criticism—akin to the liberal bourgeois view. Speaking before the Congress of the Friends of the Soviet Union during the Tenth Anniversary Celebrations in November, 1927, he said:

“When the Social Democrats speak of democracy and dictatorship in regard to our country, they intentionally pass over in silence the circumstance that the dictatorship in our country is a proletarian democracy, which creates for the development of the activity of the workers and peasants a sphere of action more extensive than can or could exist in any so-called democratic country. It is ridiculous to compare an abstract democracy, which never existed and never will exist, with an abstract dictatorship, which never existed and never will exist. There are various democracies and various dictatorships. The dictatorship of the proletariat is at the same time the broadest democracy, namely, the proletarian democracy.

“But is it true that we employ completely ‘specific’ Asiatic-Russian methods, not applicable in West-European countries? Is it true that we

have a theory which is not practicable in the West? I dispute and deny this thesis in toto. Our Communist Party and its leaders—since the very commencement of our Party—were, on the contrary, followers of German Communism, disciples of Karl Marx. Is it not true that our theory of State is a Marxian theory which was and will remain the theory of Marx, and that the Social-Democratic parties revised everything that Marx wrote on this question?

“It is absurd to assume that the forms of our State and of our Party policy would be as they are at present if we were not surrounded by world imperialism. You must never forget that every force within our country which tries to disorganize our ranks and our affairs immediately receives the support of the whole bourgeois world. And just because up to the present we have stood alone our position is specially difficult. The strong iron fist of the proletarian dictatorship is necessary in the fight against our various difficulties.”

In Soviet Russia the dictatorship is frankly justified as the means to the end: freedom. There is no discrepancy between theory and practice, no pretension to liberty save for the working and peasant classes, and for them only as the dictatorship interprets that liberty. [The basic justification for adopting means so wholly out of harmony with ends lies in the purpose gradually to destroy the means—dictatorship—as the end—a classless freedom—is realized. The Communists accept both in practice and theory the doctrine that the end justifies the means. But they endeavor scientifically to develop means in harmony with their end, because as a

practical matter such means alone get results. They seek, for instance, a constant increase in the participation of the masses in elections, in running the trade unions and cooperatives, as a means of breaking down bureaucracy and thus decreasing the power of the governmental apparatus.

The two practical bases for the hope of any such result as the Communists aim at—which must for a long time yet remain in the realm of faith and speculation—are: first, the fact that political institutions tend always to change with the distribution of economic power, which in Russia will probably increasingly be in the hands of workers and poorer peasants; and second, the inevitable political effect of the amazing stimulation of education throughout the Union—which will doubtless diminish the dictatorship through wider participation of the masses in all social activity.

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC LIBERTY *

THE most significant of all liberties under the Soviets is economic. It stands out big above the universal political control as chiefly justifying the claims to liberty in Russia. To the bourgeois mind, little concerned with the freedom from exploitation of workers in their jobs and peasants on the land, economic liberty means little in comparison with political liberty to agitate ideas and to exercise "individual rights."

Such minds do not consider the significance of the freeing of a whole land from the domination of privileged classes living by exploitation off the labor of workers and peasants—a freedom vastly more real to the average worker than shadowy intellectual liberties. It lays the necessary foundation for the social and political freedoms which will loosen the bonds of dictatorship by a little political party. And despite even state control of economic development in Russia, which ties the trade unions and cooperatives into the scheme of Communist-directed national economy, the liberties of peasants and workers compared with those in other lands stand out in refreshing contrast.

What are these economic liberties? For the peasants—over eighty percent of the people—they are primarily the right to the land they use, the control of its allotment,

* For a more detailed study of this, see *The Economic Organization of the Soviet Union*, by Scott Nearing and Jack Hardy; and *Soviet Trade Unions*, by Robert Dunn, both of this series.

freedom from landlords, the right to buy and sell goods freely—and the power to run their village business with little or no outside interference. Those liberties, bourgeois in the sense of recognizing private property, are the foundation of peasant life, for which they would defend the Soviet regime against foreign attack or counter-revolution. Bolshevik politics, Communist propaganda, the long-range schemes for building socialism, mean little to them. But the regime's encouragement of cooperatives, of machine farming, of the poorer peasants against the well-to-do, of improved agriculture, of education, of recreation, mean a new life, to which the villages, for centuries static under the old regime, are slowly responding as the new generation grows up. No one who has seen the new life in Russian villages can doubt the feeling of liberty, of released effort and of hope which marks the active peasants—save for the ambitious well-to-do class (the *Kulaks*) who resist the new order because it restricts their freedom to hire labor and rent land.

I talked with dozens of peasants all over Russia—from the Caucasus to the north, in the fields, in their homes, poor and well-to-do, Russians and non-Russians. In general their attitude to the regime was critically favorable. All but the *Kulaks* and the German colonists in the Caucasus said they were better off than under the czar. Both *Kulaks* and colonists lost land in the Revolution. Some few were afraid to talk out too critically to foreigners, but most of them showed no hesitation in pointing out the shortcomings of the Soviet regime, even when they supported it. The men in responsible positions in the local soviets were all warmly for the regime, showing an amazing grasp of its problems at home and abroad. The peas-

ants as a whole realize that any possible alternative regime would bring back the landlords and the police, just as the White Regime brought them back in the civil wars—and for that basic reason, however critical they may be of shortcomings, support the Soviets. The more alert of the peasants support it, too, for the infusion of new life and methods into the old village ways. Only a very few accept the Communist philosophy and join the Party.

The Communist regime has not willingly conceded the liberties which the peasants took with the Revolution, for they are not the liberties that go to build socialism. They are the jealously guarded rights of private property, insured through an intricate system of village cooperation—on which the peasants insisted with the overwhelming pressure of passive resistance to the earlier Communist efforts to change them. The regime has retreated from its early restrictions on land tenure, on free village elections, and, with the new economic policy, on buying and selling goods. Russian peasants are today freer than those of any other country in the world—freer in a bourgeois, not a Communist, sense. Indeed, to the building of Communism they constitute the most serious of all obstacles, for only with painful slowness do the old individualist habits of peasant life yield to cooperative enterprise. And that cooperative enterprise, the hope of building socialism among the peasants, will succeed only as it brings to peasants the certainty that through it they will gain a better living, lighter labor, more leisure, and a richer social life. But in that process the liberties they now possess are not to be sacrificed. They are to be gradually transformed by cooperative agriculture into a common sharing in production and consumption, so that these liberties will

be those of groups acting and sharing together rather than those of families struggling to live and profit on their own little pieces of land.

Restrictions are put on the well-to-do by limiting the amount of land leased and the number of workers a man may hire if he wishes to keep his right to vote. And they all want to vote! The poorer peasants are aided to form cooperatives for collective farming, to secure education and medical service, and to organize their political interests against the well-to-do—in order to free them from dependence on their richer neighbors. The difference between poor and well-to-do peasants is not as great as these distinctions indicate. The well-to-do may have two horses instead of one—or none—a better house, more livestock. But the differences, though small, are sufficient to create class interests and attitudes.

Stalin, secretary of the Communist Party, in answer to an inquiry on this central question of transforming agriculture into collective enterprise, said to the American Labor Delegation of 1927:

“We intend to bring about collectivism in the peasant question gradually by measures of an economic, financial, cultural, and political nature. I think that the most interesting question is that of the economic measures. In this matter our measures aim in three main directions, first of all to the organization of individual peasant farms into cooperative unions. Secondly, towards the organization of peasant farms, chiefly the farms of the poor peasants, into productive cooperatives, and thirdly and lastly towards the inclusion of peasant agriculture in the systematic economic system of the controlling and regulating State organs, both with

regard to the placing of agricultural products and to the supply of the peasantry with the necessary industrial products. . . .

"I believe that we have already entered that state of development in agriculture where the State can sufficiently finance a new social order. It is a fact that the socialist industry has already become the leading factor in the national economic system and that it is leading agriculture. This fact is the most certain guarantee that peasant agriculture will continue to advance along the road to collectivism."

For the city workers, landless and propertyless, the liberties achieved by the Revolution, but developed only significantly after the abandonment of military Communism, are their active share in controlling the conditions of their employment and, in less degree, their wages, and their participation in the control of industry at every point where their interests are involved. Even more important than these liberties is the fact that they labor not for the private profit of employers (save for the small proportion employed in private industry), but for the profit of the whole community. State industries, like private, must show a profit to keep going, but the public use of that profit robs it of the driving force of exploitation.

The liberties enjoyed by workers in Russia, whether or not in unions (less than ten percent are outside), go far beyond those of workers in other countries, not only in their participation in controlling working conditions and wages, but in the privileges they get as a class. The eight-hour day is universal in practice, alone of all countries in the world, with a six-hour day in dangerous oc-

cupations like mining. Reduction of the eight-hour day to seven hours is already planned for all industries. Every worker gets a two weeks' vacation with pay, while office workers and workers in dangerous trades, get a month. No worker can be dismissed from his job without the consent of his union. His rent, his admission to places of entertainment or education, his transportation—all these he gets at lower prices than others. When unemployed he gets a small allowance from his union, free rent, free transportation, and free admission to places of entertainment and instruction. Education and medical aid are free to all workers—or for small fees—extensive services being especially organized for and by them.

These privileges of the workers and poor peasants make up the foundation of economic freedom in Russia—a freedom to promote their interests without control by any privileged class living on profits, interest and rents. There is in Russia no privileged class based on wealth. Practically all rents for land or buildings are paid to the state or to cooperatives; only a little of it goes to line private pockets. Money may be loaned at simple interest, the rate being limited. Money deposited with the state earns a rate of interest even higher than in capitalist countries. But nobody is getting rich off the interest on his savings and loans, for all incomes are both limited at their source, and, when much above the average, are heavily taxed. Persons with higher incomes are also obliged to pay higher prices for some necessities—especially rent. Inheritance of property is now theoretically unlimited, but so heavily taxed as in effect to destroy all above a moderate amount.

The new bourgeoisie, which has grown up with the new economic policy—private traders, richer peasants,

government specialists (not Communists, whose incomes are limited)—is too small to constitute a noteworthy exception to the general absence of a wealthy class. And they are being increasingly restricted, despite the assertions to the contrary by the Communist Opposition and others. The statistics of private versus public enterprises show it. Earnings and incomes throughout Soviet Russia vary from the minimum of bare subsistence, fifteen or twenty roubles a month, to ten or fifteen times that amount. Few incomes run above that figure (three hundred roubles a month, \$150), the highest in all Russia being those of a few concessionaires and foreign specialists on salaries (10,000—20,000 roubles a year maximum; \$5,000—\$10,000; a few higher). Even the few traders and concessionaires who have gotten rich are unable to invest money productively in Russia, except in state loans. None can be invested for exploitation. There is practically no chance for anyone to get rich under the Soviet system except a comparatively few traders, concessionaires or the winners of some of the big state lotteries—and it is hard for any of them to stay rich under the heavy taxation.

Wealth and the appearance of it is everywhere discouraged. The few persons in Russia who have gotten rich dare not show it. The attitude of the whole country is so firmly based on work and on an effort toward equality, that counter-tendencies toward personal privilege have no chance to gain headway. Even to tourists in Russia the absence of any moneyed class is at once apparent—and to those with sympathy for the objects of the Revolution, refreshing, despite the universal poverty. No fine shops, no gay restaurants, no private motors—none of the trappings of wealth that lend color and variety to the life of bourgeois countries. Instead,

a somewhat monotonous drabness and shabbiness, more than compensated for by the thought of its significance to the masses.

The liberties of the peasants on the land and of the workers in their unions constitute the basic achievements of the Russian Revolution, however restricted those liberties are by the dictatorship of the Communist Party, the growth of a new bourgeoisie of well-to-do peasants, private traders, and well-paid state specialists, and by the poverty of a country shattered by war and revolution.

Much can be said to qualify the liberties that go with the workers' share in the control of their jobs, and the peasants' right to their land. The right to work is restricted by the impossibility of one-fifth of all wage-workers—chiefly new unskilled village laborers—getting any work at all in the face of present economic maladjustments. The right to form unions is limited by the monopoly of the officially-controlled bodies. The right to control the conditions of labor in the shop is somewhat weakened by the dominance of the Communist shop "cells," which may tend to discourage the workers' active participation in shop elections and meetings. As concerns the peasants, their right to control the land and village affairs is somewhat limited by the Communist regime—but more in theory than in fact.

The chapters that follow describe in detail the limitations, political and economic, on peasants and workers, and their relation to the dictatorship. But over and above its many controls, the masses of the Russian workers and peasants stand as the ultimate masters of Soviet Russia, in whose interest the regime must act to continue in power. Their economic problems domi-

nate the regime's policy; their needs guide it. To speak of liberty in Russia is to recognize this central fact as the foundation of all liberty in that land—often hidden from sight by the more dramatic spectacles of political conflict and by the stern measures of dictatorial control.

CHAPTER IV

SOVIET DEMOCRACY *

ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL POWER

THE Russian Constitution declares its principal object to be "for the present period of transition, the establishment of the dictatorship of the urban and rural workers, combined with the poorer peasantry, to secure the complete suppression of the bourgeoisie, the abolition of the exploitation of man by man, and the establishment of socialism, under which neither class divisions nor state coercion arising therefrom will any longer exist. All authority is vested in the entire working population of the country, organized in the urban and rural Soviets."

This general statement of the source of political authority has been qualified from the first by the provision that the city population has five times the voting power of the rural. This insures a control by the city workers in all the representative bodies above the village and township Soviets. It constitutes the base of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The top is the Communist Party.

It should be noted that the preponderance of the city population is not in fact as great as the legal ratio of five country votes to one city vote, because the count in cities is based on the voting population while in the

* For further details see *How the Soviets Work*, by H. N. Brailsford.

country all inhabitants are counted. This reduces the actual proportion to about three to one instead of five to one.

Political control, thus narrowed to the town and city workers, who constitute less than ten percent of the population, is further restricted by the prohibition of any political organization outside the Communist Party. Non-partisans may be nominated for office and be elected, but they can have no organization and therefore no real political power. All the Soviets above the village and the township show a Communist majority, and all the higher bodies of government, both federal and in each republic, are composed overwhelmingly of Communists. Even in the far oriental parts of the Union, where Communists are few, the local governments are in their hands, partly by the system of election, and partly through manipulation from Moscow, whose representatives practically direct the work of the local Communists.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is therefore in fact a dictatorship by the Communist Party machine. The political system controlled by the dictatorship is commonly referred to by Communists as "Soviet democracy." What they mean by democracy is not only the participation of the masses of the workers and peasants in electing their representatives, but especially the class character of the regime in the interests of the masses with all present or past exploiting classes wholly disfranchised. The control by the Communist Party is regarded as incidental to the Soviet system, and as necessary only to lead the struggle for socialism during the "transition period"—that is, until all capitalistic forces are overcome and collective industry without private profit established.

Lenin called this Russian proletarian democracy "a million times more democratic than any bourgeois democracy." Looking at the Soviet structure, not at the Party dictatorship, this is doubtless true—allowing for pardonable exaggeration. And to any one who accepts the view of social action as a struggle of classes, the political democracy of capitalist countries is only an instrument for the rule in the last analysis of a comparatively small class—the big property owners. Bourgeois political democracy is unlikely to yield control to any other class except by revolutionary means, while Soviet democracy is to evolve, according to the Communist program, with freedom both from Party control and any centralized state power. Its final objective is the creation of a democracy of producers and consumers without a state, which, as class conflict diminishes, will, according to the classic Communist view, gradually "wither away."

With these theoretical considerations it is not necessary to be concerned beyond thus stating the Communist view of the nature and purpose of Soviet political institutions. How they work in the lives of the Russian people today is our concern.

In practice Soviet democracy is obviously far short of a real democracy, that is, one in which all political functions are controlled by a majority of the persons participating in them. But such a democracy has rarely existed anywhere. That conception, however, offers a fair test by which to determine the democratic features of any system. Tested by it, the Soviet system clearly represents the interests of the overwhelming majority of the population—the workers and peasants—as opposed to propertied classes, and they alone par-

ticipate in such democracy as the dictatorship permits. The trading class, richer peasants (Kulaks) and former czarist officials are alone disfranchised. All others over eighteen years of age have the right to vote. The franchise has been extended (1925) to peasants employing not more than three hired men; formerly a peasant hiring any labor was disfranchised.

In the villages, the Soviets are free of direct Communist control, though Communists are active in most village elections in putting up a ticket (composed mostly of non-Communists, since peasant Communists are rare), which may or may not be accepted. No other ticket is allowed, but individuals may be nominated by anyone at the election—and the Communist ticket is often voted down. In many of the smaller and remote villages there is no Communist ticket because there is no Communist there to put one up. The Party officials at the country seats, however, try to send an agent into such villages to arrange a ticket, but often cannot.

Above the villages and townships and in the towns and cities, the Communist Party has a majority in the Soviets. All voting is in open meetings by show of hands, which is not calculated, of course, to stimulate independent voting. About half the total number of persons qualified to vote exercise the privilege—the same proportion as in the United States. The proportion in Russia has been steadily increasing. That increase is doubtless due to the changed policy of the Party in encouraging non-Party elements in order to increase the political participation of the masses. According to a resolution of the 1926 Party congress, "the elections of soviets in 1926 were the first . . . on the basis of a wide and open election campaign. . . . Taking into consideration the strong line taken by the Party in favor of a

greater participation of non-Party workers and peasants, the percentage of Communists in the soviets has inevitably been lowered."

Freedom to discuss the merits of candidates, even of the tickets put up by the Communist Party, has doubtless increased, though there is, of course, considerable hesitation to oppose the powers-that-be. No campaign meetings can be held in favor of candidates other than those nominated by the Communists. All the discussion is done privately in groups, or at the election itself. The Communists are usually careful to pick popular candidates, and to play up the interests of the poorer classes against the well-to-do, and their tickets therefore are generally supported. If unsatisfactory candidates are elected, they may be recalled at any time by majority vote of the body which elected them—the voters in village, factory or town precinct, or, above the local soviets, by the soviet electing the delegate to the next body higher. A proposal to recall may be made at any time by petition of ten or more voters, and a new election held. Or the Soviets themselves may submit to the voters the recall of any member who fails to attend to his duties or who "conducts himself in a discreditable manner." Recourse to the recall is, however, rare in any soviet body.

In the cities and towns, where the voting takes place in shop and factory meeting, or by precinct meetings for workers not in industries, and for housewives, the Communist Party cells propose candidates, usually after a pretty careful canvass of personalities—selecting those who are sympathetic and who show qualities of popular leadership. There is thus a responsiveness in the party itself which modifies its dictatorship. The Party tends now to listen and respond rather than impose an arbi-

trary control. Most observers have been impressed in recent years with the growing political sensitiveness and astuteness of the Party in local elections, on which the whole upper structure rests.

That upper structure is recruited entirely from the lower—in an ascending pyramid, each electing from its own members the representatives to the body above it. Each body above covers a wider area, from the village and town soviets at the bottom to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets at the top. In each body the elections take place openly by a show of hands; in each the Communist Party puts up a ticket. Elections are clearly under more direct Communist control than in the village and town Soviets. The percentage of Communists increases in the higher organs to one hundred percent in the small responsible directing bodies—the presidium of the Central Executive Committee, and the Council of People's Commissars.

The peasants, while generally accepting the Soviet regime, occasionally reflect their natural objection to domination by city workers. Attempts have been made from time to time to form a peasant party in order to get more representation in the higher bodies, but they are fewer now than formerly, because the peasants are getting what they want. The feeling in the villages against the Communists was bitter in the early days, due to the grain requisitions, the pressure for village reforms, and, in some places, to the anti-religious campaign. Those days have gone. The Communists now listen to the peasants and cater to their needs, though always with an eye to strengthening the poorer classes against the well-to-do. If there were freedom to form opposition political parties, the well-to-do peasants would certainly organize one at once. But peasant

sentiment as a whole supports the Soviet regime for the simple reason that the peasants know any other possible regime would bring back the landlords—just as did the White regime in the civil wars. No anti-Soviet movement could gain headway against that feeling.

It is, of course, a difficult task for a system of government controlled from the top by a party exercising a supreme dictatorship, to enlist, as the Party urgently desires, the active participation of the non-party masses. Only as they see some promise of realizing their desires can they be drawn into participation. The process is so new—it was first openly encouraged in 1926—that its results are not yet apparent.

Trotsky, who ought to know something about democracy in the light of his own experience in the Party, said to the American Labor Delegation in 1927:

“Whether or not one calls Soviet Russia a land of democracy depends upon the significance one attaches to the conception of democracy. I can quite understand that from the standpoint of existing American democracy our Soviet Union can be denied the right to call itself a democracy, but I reserve the right to deny from our standpoint that the United States constitutes a democracy.”

Answering a question as to whether dissatisfaction could find expression under the Soviet system, Trotsky said:

“We assert that in spite of all the shortcomings of the Soviet system, it affords the working masses, through the medium of our Party, incomparably more complete and immediate possibilities for the

expression of feelings and interests than the utterly artificial and deceitful system of bourgeois democracy. . . . You must admit that our workers do not resort to such methods [insurrections] of expressing their opinions."

Answering the delegation's question as to whether Russia could not allow freedom of opinion to opponents of the government's policy, Trotsky said:

"We would sign such an undertaking today if those here present would sign a parallel undertaking to the effect that our enemies throughout the world . . . would not interfere in our internal life for the purpose of helping the exploiting classes to overthrow the Soviet system and bring the country back into the path of capitalism. . . . It is not a question of abstract freedom; it is a question of whether this country shall be socialist or capitalist. . . . If people in America say that we violate freedom, we answer that in doing so we resemble the actual fathers of American freedom. . . . If, however, our friends would promise to do away with the domination of banks, trusts, armies, dreadnaughts, and aeroplanes, on the same day we would promise to grant complete and unrestricted freedom to all parties."

Even more significant than Trotsky's comment on Soviet democracy is Stalin's answer to a question by the American Labor Delegation of 1927 as to whether the "opinions of the working class and the peasantry can find legal expression." Stalin said:

"Is there any conflict of opinion among the workers and the toiling masses of the peasantry at

the present time? Undoubtedly there is. It is impossible for millions of workers and peasants to think all alike. This never happens. First of all, there is a great difference between the workers and peasants relative to their economic position and in their views concerning various questions. Secondly, there is some difference in outlook among various sections of the working class. . . . All this leads to a conflict of opinion among the workers and the toiling masses of the peasantry which finds legal expression at meetings, in trade unions, in co-operative societies, during elections to the Soviets, etc.

"But there is a radical difference between the conflict of opinion now, under the proletarian dictatorship, and conflict of opinion in the past, prior to the October Revolution. In the past, the conflict of opinion among the workers and the toiling peasantry was concentrated mainly on questions concerning the overthrow of the landlords, of czarism, of the bourgeoisie and of the break-up of the whole capitalist system. Now, however, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, conflict of opinion does not revolve around questions concerning the overthrow of the Soviet government, or the break-up of the Soviet system, but around questions concerning the improvement of the organs of the Soviet government and improvement of their work. This makes a radical difference. . . .

"It is not difficult to understand that conflict of opinion under the dictatorship of the proletariat, which has for its aim not the break-up of the existing Soviet system but its improvement and consolidation, provides no nourishment for the ex-

istence of several parties among the workers and the toiling masses in the rural districts. That is why the legality of a single party, the Communist Party, and the monopoly enjoyed by that party, not only raises no objection among the workers and toiling peasants, but on the contrary is accepted by them as something necessary and desirable."

This last statement may be characterized psychologically as rationalization. Stalin and most Communists doubtless believe it. But it loses considerable force in the light of the universal censorship and G.P.U. (the State Political Department) control of all opposition, which make it impossible to voice any collective objection to the Party monopoly.

So much for the relation of the Russian people to their government through elections. A factor almost as important to an examination of "democracy" in a union of so many diverse nationalities is the relation of the central Federal government at Moscow to the autonomous republics and to the local provincial and county governments. Each nationality constitutes a separate republic—a scheme useful not only in federating the non-Russian peoples, but in offering a future method of extending the Soviet Union outside Russia.

The distribution of the functions of government in relation to central control leaves to the republics the activities most intimately connected with their cultural life. Remembering the long history of suppression under the czars, these are of supreme importance to them. The main functions of the Soviet dictatorship are centered in Moscow—defense, foreign affairs, foreign and

internal trade, taxation and budget apportionment over the whole Union, the political police control of all opposition activity, besides the administration of all means of transport and communication. These are the usual functions of a central government, save for the control of local taxes and the economic and industrial activities of a socialist state.

Some functions are handled jointly by Moscow and the separate republics: labor, the censorship, the service of inspection for efficiency in all governmental bodies, and the management of industry, but the real control is at Moscow. The functions entrusted exclusively to the separate republics are education, health, agriculture, the non-political police ("militia" they are called), and the administration of the civil and criminal law (except in federal and political cases). Even in these departments Moscow exercises a very considerable influence by Party pronouncements and by the suggestion of standards and programs under a constitutional provision for "laying down general principles."

The political liberty exercised by the separate republics and local governments is therefore limited to social welfare, agriculture, and the maintenance of order—and to those only in part. In all the essentials of politics, trade, industry, taxation, and defense, the control centers in Moscow.

Within the republics the functions are distributed between local governments about as they are in other countries. The county is the chief unit of administration—for health, schools, roads, local transportation. The village soviets, freer of Party control than the soviets above them, handle only village affairs.

The structure of the federal government exercising these nation-wide functions is divided into four bodies,

each with control over the next below it. The highest is the Union Congress of Soviets, a large and unwieldy body, meeting only once every two years (formerly every year) to elect the Central Executive Committee (the parliament), to make changes in the Constitution (over which it alone has the authority), and to pass in a general way on major policies.

Next is the Central Executive Committee, meeting several times a year, composed of two separate houses, one of four hundred members elected by the Union Congress from its own membership, and the other the Council of Nationalities of one hundred and thirty-one members, elected five from each of the autonomous republics and one from each autonomous area, subject to approval of the elections by the Union Congress. It is devised to give the separate republics an authoritative voice in shaping federal law and thus to help hold their loyalty to the central power.

The third of the four bodies is the Praesidium of the Central Executive Committee, composed of twenty-one members elected by both houses to represent them between their meetings. It is in practically continuous session in Moscow and has both legislative and executive power. It is, in fact, the controlling arm of government in the daily affairs of the Union.

Fourth is the Council of People's Commissars, like the cabinets of other countries, elected by the Central Executive Committee and responsible to it and its Praesidium. It issues decrees to carry out the laws, coordinating and developing the whole federal machinery. It is an administrative body without wide discretion.

Communists constitute a large majority in the Union Congress and in the Central Executive Committee.

Communists alone make up the Praesidium and the Council of People's Commissars, which do the daily business of the government. The law, of course, says nothing about the relation of the Party to the government, but the real government is the Party. It decides in Party meetings what policies the government will follow. The system is analogous to political party caucuses in other countries.

BUREAUCRACY

In only one activity does a function of the Party officially parallel that of the government—the Party's disciplinary control of its members, and the government's efficiency, investigating, and control system of its employees. The Party attends only to disciplining its own members through its Central Control Commission. The Workers' and Peasants' Inspection attends to disciplining or removing any government employee. The same men control both. Whomever the Central Control Commission elects as its heads become automatically the committee in charge of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection.

It is a service of the utmost importance in the fight against bureaucratism, an evil both of the old Russia and the new, described frequently on posters as "the cancer on the body politic." Bureaucratism is not only red tape, delays, check and counter-check, endless papers and clerks; it is also an attitude of public officials to their jobs and the public; to take things easy and to treat with indifference or officiousness the people they are charged to serve. While this is a great evil in Soviet Russia, it is common to many European countries, and apparently no worse there than in France or Poland.

The Workers' and Peasants' Inspection fights all forms of bureaucracy, as well as graft, bribery, inefficiency, lack of coordination, irregular financial methods, inadequate accounting. Its agents have summary powers, and yet bureaucratism does not yield—not much. Many in a position to know, say it has grown with the increased activity of the government. No government in the world controls such a vast range of enterprises and activities as the Soviet, and none has perhaps a worse heritage of bureaucratic habits with which to start. It is still a slow and painful task for the average citizen to deal with most government departments. Fear of taking responsibility tends to make officials refer everything to committees or higher officials for decision. Delays are therefore exasperating. The checks and balances of the control system require endless papers. Every transaction, every move, is accompanied by its document. Even among plain citizens there is magic in words on a piece of paper.

Such a condition, difficult to realize if one hasn't lived under it, creates not only obstacles to the government's program, but arouses resentment among the masses who cannot get relief or redress when they need it, or who find officials difficult to reach and unwilling to assume responsibility. The Communist Party has launched one campaign after another against bureaucratism and is making heroic efforts to overcome it, chiefly by drawing the workers and peasants more actively into all public functions, and by cutting out red tape. But the Party is small and officials are many; the state machinery is enormous; and old official habits of czarist days persist.

At the 1927 congress of the Communist Party of the Union a report of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection

said, quoting Lenin on the description of the state apparatus as "corresponding to its present state":

"Conditions in our State apparatus are so wretched, not to say revolting, that we must devote ourselves with renewed energy to the question of how we are best to combat its effects. Here we must always remember that these effects originated in the past, and that this past, although dislodged from its position, has not been fully overcome. . . ."

The Congress resolution added:

"The apparatus of the proletarian state, composed for the most part . . . of the old officials, and supplemented to a great extent by the intelligentsia of the period preceding the revolution, proves . . . inadequate for the accomplishment of the new tasks set by the reconstruction of national economy and by the 'cultural' revolution. An intolerable hindrance is imposed by such elements of bureaucratic degeneration of the state apparatus as, for instance, excessive centralism . . . , the high costs of the apparatus, and the bureaucratic behavior of various elements of the apparatus in intercourse with simple workers and peasants."

The Congress quoted Lenin as follows:

"The most important task of today and of the next few years—the most important task of all—is the systematic diminution and cheapening of the Soviet apparatus by means of retrenchment, of more perfected organization, of the introduction

of prompt working methods and the abolition of bureaucracy, and of the reduction of unproductive expenditure."

And the Congress adds:

"Under the present circumstances the improvement and reorganization of the whole Soviet system has become the main and most important task of the Party.

"It is necessary that the workers and peasants should be aroused to intolerance against these bureaucratic excrescences, and should be made capable of fighting against every separate case of bureaucratic red tape. . . . The Joint Plenum commissions the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection to prosecute and punish all persons and organs guilty of repressive measures against those criticizing the faults of bureaucratic methods, however energetic this criticism may be. . . . At the same time the activity of the courts in the struggle against bureaucracy must be extended . . . which must not admit of any possibility of a mild sentence . . . on account of 'worker or peasant origin' or 'former services' . . .

". . . Our task does not consist merely in the organization of a smoothly running, cheap state machine, but in the constant preparation of the preliminary conditions for the removal of the state apparatus and its amalgamation with the masses."

This issue of bureaucracy is important to an estimate of Soviet democracy because of the relation of the dic-

tatorship to citizens. It is not so bad in attitude as it is in method; and its methods, after all, are not far from the current business and private practice of Russia. It slows up the Party's program. It prevents cooperation of the masses. With the drive of private profit out of most of economic life, it is of paramount importance to the success of the Communist program that the drive of the Party and related forces get the clearest possible right of way—and in the closest possible cooperation with the organizations of producers and consumers.

DEMOCRACY IN THE PARTY

Far more important than the formal relation of Party to government in this single function of discipline and efficiency is the unofficial union of the two structures at the top, both in the federal government and in the republics. The identity between them decreases in the lower local governments. All the influential positions at the top are held by Party leaders, tested through the years of revolutionary struggle.

But the Party is more than the government. It is the leader of the world-wide Communist revolutionary movement. It controls both the Russian government, and, indirectly, the Third International by being the largest party in it. It is outside the government, in the sense that Tammany Hall is outside the government of New York City. Its relation is not dissimilar. The secretary of the Party, like the leader of Tammany Hall, holding no official position in the government, wields enormous power through the Party machinery, particularly through influencing the election and removal of local secretaries. These secretaries are the most active

Party agents, strictly disciplined, responsive as one man to orders from the center. They are the power behind the local governments. They arrange the slates for the local elections, they organize or attend all meetings in their districts or shops, they stimulate officials, report derelictions or neglect of duty or opposition activity. It is they who push the Party program, who carry out orders, who try to keep the road clear.

The Party Congress, meeting annually, is the supreme Party authority. It is composed of delegates elected directly from each Party cell in shop, village, and school. But the chief policies are thought out and urged on the Party by a much smaller body, the most influential organ in Russia, the Political Bureau. It, in turn, gets much of its stimulus from the initiative and suggestions of Party sections all over the Union. It is composed of only nine members—with seven alternates who attend like the others—selected by and subordinate to the Central Committee of the Party, its executive body, and to the Central Control Commission (whose sole function is the discipline and expulsion of members). But while that is its technical subordination, it is, in fact, with the secretary, the active planning power of the Party. The *Politbureau* includes only very influential Communists. It is regarded as the Party leadership. The fact that it is a small and intimate group with wide jurisdiction in recommending action gives it its directing force.

Party direction in recent years, however, has tended to be even narrower than the *Politbureau*. It is centered largely in the secretary, Joseph Stalin, not so much because of the inherent powers of his office—which are very great—but because of his personality and purposes.

As long ago as 1923, Lenin, just before he died, warned in his famous testament that

“... Comrade Stalin, having become general secretary, has concentrated an enormous power in his hands; and I am not sure that he knows how to use that power with sufficient caution.”

Within the Party a struggle has gone on concerning the issues of the tendency to narrow power, dividing the Party into the leadership and an Opposition. Beginning in 1923 the opposition raised, among other issues, “democracy in the Party,” demanding freer elections and less central control in order to give younger men and women a chance to rise to positions of leadership as against the “old Bolsheviks.” This struggle of the Party Opposition against the leaders, and particularly against the secretary, became complicated with many other issues, enlisting divergent elements in the Party united only in opposing the leadership. The issue of Party democracy became secondary to more pressing questions of national and international policies, on which the Opposition regarded itself as more revolutionary than the Party leaders, whom they charged with surrender to the well-to-do peasants and with compromise toward private capital. But while the direct issue of Party democracy was disguised, it continued to be involved in the right of an opposition to exist.

The Party leaders took the position that the Opposition must conduct its agitation solely in regular Party meetings and in the Party press, and only on issues not already decided. The Opposition complained that it could not get a fair hearing in Party meetings or in the

Party press, and finally resorted to illegal meetings and an illegal press to get its views before Party members. It further claimed the right to raise issues already decided if later events had changed their aspects.

The upshot of the struggle was the expulsion of the Opposition leaders from the Party, discharge from their government posts, and later the exile of the most conspicuous "offenders." Back of this drastic action against fellow Party members lay the nervous fear of the break-up of the Communist Party by the formation of a second political party. Rykov, chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, put it thus:

"The struggle of factions within the Party is but the first step to the organization of various parties in the country and to bourgeois parliamentarianism. . . . There can, of course, be differences of political opinion. If one is to be persecuted for that then inner Party democracy will be an empty phrase. Measures of organization pressure are necessary only in cases . . . where the threat of a split is created."

That time clearly came. Within the Party the feeling had become so bitter, the division so hopeless, that both sides agreed that no counsels of tolerance could hold them together in the same organization. Personal feeling became so bitter that the leaders of the two sides did not even speak to one another. The situation was not dissimilar in spirit to that of the Wisconsin Progressives in the Republican Party in the United States—who were at various times kept out of party caucuses, and whose expulsion from the party was often proposed. And that occurred on issues not nearly so profound, and in

a professedly democratic country without disciplined parties.

The issues between Party leaders and the opposition so clearly involve the whole question of Soviet democracy and especially democracy in the governing party, that the case of both sides demands careful statement.

The issue of Party control takes on added importance in the absence of the possibility of any organized opposition outside the Party. The critical function of an opposition within the Party is of obviously basic value in subjecting policies to the fullest possible examination and discussion.

The Opposition charged, in a document signed by fifteen leaders (1927) that—

“... The liquidation of inner-Party democracy, and, at the same time, of the proletarian democracy in 1923, was merely a pretext for the development of the peasant and large peasant democracy.”

The Opposition took the position that neither the Party nor the Soviet State was any longer carrying out a revolutionary program, but had surrendered to the rich peasants and traders. Trotsky elaborated the Opposition's stand at the Party Congress of 1927 in saying:

“The whole policy of the Party finds its expression in the Party regime. This policy has in the last years shifted its class course from the Left to the Right: from the proletariat to the petty bourgeoisie, from the worker to the specialist, from the ordinary Party member to the ‘*apparatchnik*’ [higher Party official], from the agricultural worker and poor peasant to the kulak [well-to-do peas-

ant], from the Shanghai worker to Chiang-Kai-Shek, from the Chinese peasant to the bourgeois officer, from the English proletarian to Purcell, Hicks, the members of the General Council, etc., without end. Therein consists the actual nature of Stalinism. . . .

"The Party regime results from the whole policy of the leadership. Behind the extreme apparatchniki there stands the bourgeoisie at home which is awaking to life. Behind the back of the latter there stands the world bourgeoisie. All these forces are exerting a pressure upon the proletarian advance-guard by not allowing it to raise its head or open its mouth. The further the policy of the Central Committee deviates from the class line, the more it must force this policy upon the proletarian advance-guard from above with methods of compulsion. Therein lie the roots of the present revolting Party regime."

Trotsky, again, speaking at the same Party meeting in 1927, said of the conflict between the Party leaders and the Opposition:

"Many people were guillotined during the great French Revolution. We, too, have shot not a few people. But in the French Revolution there were two chapters, one going up and one going down. . . . When the chapter went up, the French Jacobins, the Bolsheviki of that time, guillotined the White Guardists. . . . We, too, have experienced such a chapter, during which we, the Oppositionals, were the executioners.

"Then another chapter followed in France . . .

and the . . . Right Jacobins began to guillotine the Left Jacobins, the Bolshiviki of that time. . . . When we shot our enemies we knew perfectly well the chapter justifying us, but do you . . . comprehend clearly the chapter according to which you intend to shoot us (at present in the form of organizational measures)?"

Bukharin, commenting upon the tactics of the Opposition in relation to maintaining Party discipline, the issue on which the Opposition lost most support, said:

"Everybody can understand that differences of opinion regarding tactics are differences of opinion which presume a certain common language. I can, for example, be of a different opinion from my Party comrades regarding the numerical estimation of those mistakes which exist with us; I can be of another opinion regarding the estimation of this or that method of combating these mistakes. If, however, I have a difference of opinion with a partner, with whom I fought together for many years, regarding the estimation of whether our Party is the Party of the revolutionary proletariat or whether it is a degenerated Party which must be swept away, and that, the quicker the better, then there exists nothing in common between us; then we are enemies, who from this fact must draw our conclusions. . . .

"From all that I have already said there arise the tactics which the Oppositionals are pursuing. I shall not deal here again with these questions and not relate the story again, beginning with the 'forest brothers' and ending with all their country

houses, the seizure of possession of the Moscow Technical High School, etc. You have learnt all this from the newspapers, and I only wish to say that in general we already have to do here with all forms of fighting, with a single exception, namely, that of armed revolt. We have illegal work and illegal printing offices. We know how Rakovsky organized a semi-strike in Kharkov. That proves to you already that they would not stop short at going over to the strike struggle. Further, we have street demonstrations. It is not the fault of the Oppositionals that they led only a mere handful of people on the streets and that nothing resulted from it. What is important is that they have gone over to the street fight. When, however, we already have the attempt at a street demonstration, when we have already an attempt to organize a street fight, then there follows only one thing: the armed revolt.

"After this there are no intermediate forms. Illegal fight, mobilizing of their own forces, agitation, propaganda, mass actions, strike plus demonstrations. Thereupon follows only demonstration plus revolt. One cannot go farther.

"Of course the Opposition only had before their eyes the prospect of capturing the leadership of the Party. They believed that they enjoyed such a tremendous authority in the country that this would be easy to carry out; that they would succeed in convincing everybody, and that the elementary upheaval would proceed painlessly. Trotsky would show himself, two high school pupils would shout out: 'Long live the leader of the Red Army!' and then everything would be finished.

All the workers were therefore only waiting for this upheaval to take place. Everybody was only awaiting the arrival of the Oppositional 'saviors.' As soon as they appeared on the steps of their sanctuary, everything would happen without pain, without any bloody collision, without any civil war. That is what they had hoped for."

Much of the bitterness between the Party leaders and the Opposition, intensifying the struggle, was due to the fact that anti-Soviet elements favored the Opposition because they knew a split would weaken the Party. At the August Party congress a resolution on the Opposition said that they had—

"... become objectively the center around which anti-Soviet forces are gathering and upon whose disintegrating activities counter-revolution both at home and abroad is already calculating at the present time."

Stalin, in answer to a delegation's question in November, 1927, as to the support of the Opposition, said:

"I think that the Opposition chiefly supports itself on non-proletarian circles. . . . The Opposition is the reflection of this dissatisfaction [of non-proletarian sections]."

I was in Russia in the months of 1927 when the issue was raging in the press and conversation. Seeing something of the former aristocrats, I got the impression of their interest in the conflict. Many of them welcomed the Trotsky opposition as the hope of destroying the dictatorship.

The Opposition all along has contended that it did

not want to form a second party, and condemned "a disruptive policy." But the gulf became too wide for so highly disciplined and centralized a party to keep within its membership an opposition which resisted not only policies but the whole Party leadership itself.

How far the expulsion of the Opposition has weakened the Communist Party by depriving it of its most active critical force only time will tell. That it has resulted already in decreasing democracy and narrowing power within the Party is apparent. To speak of it, however, as a victory of Stalin over Trotsky is incorrect. They only personified the issues. Both represented policies with wide support. Trotsky's immense personal popularity—(his picture, with Lenin's, adorned more office walls at the time of my visit than any other)—gave his policies prestige. But Trotsky's disruptive tactics finally alienated all but a small support.

On the leading issue, the Stalin majority was doubtless nearer right, for the policies of Trotsky, directed to more rapid industrialization by heavier taxes on the well-to-do peasants would have—according to all I could gather—aroused either resistance or refusal to plant crops beyond peasant needs. While the Stalin machine is firmly entrenched it has the apparent support of a majority of the Party, and represents both policies and a control far from personal. It steers a middle course between right and left extremes. As an offset to narrow direction, the Party exhibits an amazing capacity for self-criticism and courageous changes of policy.

The Russian Communist Party is said to be more democratic than it was. Some members call it "the most democratic political party in the world," meaning

that its rank and file participate actively in its control and may rise to leadership. But the facts are against the description of the Party as democratic. It is a highly disciplined party, controlled from the top through the prestige of its leaders, through the great influence of its secretary, and through its power to suppress opposition to its leaders' policies. The formal structure is democratic enough; members have equal rights to participate in meetings and may rise to leadership, but there is always pressure on the younger men and women from the older generation who made the Revolution.

The question is often raised as to whether or not Party members occupy a privileged position in Russia as compared with ordinary citizens. The answer to that must recognize first the fact that Party membership carries responsibilities far greater than those of an ordinary citizen. A member's life is controlled by the Party. His job, salary, outside activities, are all subject to orders like a soldier in an army. Members can be counted on for service as outsiders cannot. So they naturally get jobs when others are out of work, and they get better public jobs, sometimes by more competence, sometimes by political pull. But their salaries are limited to a maximum below that of many public employees, though their general salary level is higher than the average wage-workers. In certain public offices they may get some privileges through Party connections—such as cheaper and better lodgings, occasional use of the department automobiles, and sometimes wholesale rates on purchases.

But the picture so often painted of a ruling political class above and over the people of Russia, enjoying the privileges of greater wealth and position, is pure invention, originating probably in a comparatively few ex-

ceptions, some of them, it is true, flagrant enough to arouse public scandal. But the Party is severe on all those who seek personal privilege in goods or position out of office or Party membership. The Party constantly cleanses its membership by expulsion, getting rid of those who are not devoted, or who try to use the Party for their private interests, or whose "ideology" is not Communist. The Communist Party is hard to get into and easy to get out of.

The scores of Communists I met all over Russia, from secretaries in the small towns and villages to the heads of departments in Moscow, struck me with few exceptions as extraordinarily able and astute men—on the whole abler, more alert and more devoted than any official class I ever met. This youth, enthusiasm and faith in what they are doing stand out in marked contrast to the routiners so common in most government service.

It should be noted that the Party, unlike political parties in other countries, is not subject to any outside economic pressure or control. Every other dictatorship depends for its support on some propertied class—in most cases on the great landlords, as in Poland, Italy, Hungary. The Russian Communist Party has no master, no class propping it up. Its policies are directed in the last analysis by the class interests of peasants and workers, a control sufficient to keep it eternally watching its step in a maze of problems. The Party's freedom from the outside dictation of a propertied class practically eliminates the corruption and big graft which marked the czar's regime, and which, let Americans bear in mind, mark politics in the United States. Such graft as exists in Soviet Russia is petty—and the Party is exceedingly severe on offenders. The Party is young;

it is immensely vigorous; its members are devoted workers; and it is training a new generation through the Communist youth organization. If democracy is lacking now, if critical opinion is repressed by its leaders, it seems far too alive, too dynamic, too youthful, not to break those bonds.

THE CITIZEN AND THE LAW

Any examination of democracy must include not only the political machinery, but the relation of the citizen to the criminal law. What is legal justice in Soviet Russia? What rights has a defendant?

The Constitution contains no guarantee of rights to individuals. That western conception, developed particularly in Anglo-Saxon law, never reached so primitive a peasant country. It developed with bourgeois institutions in the struggle against feudalism. In Soviet Russia class rights are the basis of the system of justice. A worker or a poor peasant has a better standing in the courts than a tradesman or a well-to-do peasant. He gets the benefit of any doubt. The courts will incline justice to him—the frankly class justice of the Soviet state. It must be noted, however, that the class distinctions in the administration of justice have been tempered as the regime has become more secure—and that in ordinary cases not involving the safety of the state or the “interests of the proletariat,” the courts act with increasing impartiality.

The Communists point out that in so-called democratic countries, while justice pretends to be impartial as between all citizens, and to guarantee individuals certain declared rights, in practice the propertied classes get the benefit of any doubt; private property has a superior claim. The Soviet state’s justice is an open,

instead of a masked class justice, primarily for the benefit of the working and poor peasant classes.

The class policy of the Soviet government in dealing with both ordinary and political crimes, is well set forth by Krylenko, Assistant Attorney General of the Russian Republic.

“From the point of view of the Soviet criminal law, crime is always caused by the antagonisms of a society divided into classes; it is always the result of a bad social organization. The Soviet state works to eliminate the primary causes of criminality; it is attempting to rebuild society upon a Communist basis where crime will no longer be produced. Starting with that purpose, it considers the criminal of working-class or peasant origin as an individual not responsible for his crime, and who can and should be always reformed. . . .

“Until recently our law provided that it was necessary to punish with more rigor crimes committed by individuals belonging to the bourgeois class. Now it no longer demands that; it declares that there is no reason to treat with particular severity a criminal because of the simple fact that he belongs to the bourgeoisie, that he has been a business man or a capitalist, or that he is engaged now in business or in managing a private enterprise authorized by law. Severity is required only against him whose acts are directed against the State and the interests of the workers. In these cases the law is implacable.

“A remark added to Article 6 makes it clear that the proletarian courts do not necessarily apply

measures of social defense to every act formally described in the Code as against the social order. If the act does not in fact present any real danger to the established order, or if the offender, in spite of the act, cannot be considered as a really dangerous social element, the court cannot and should not, without absolute necessity, apply measures of social defense in the case. . . . It might happen that an individual who committed a criminal act, who, for example, had participated in a counter-revolutionary uprising in 1918-19, has become at the time of his trial . . . some years later, let us say 1927, a loyal worker in the service of the Soviets. . . . In such cases the law declares that there is no necessity of applying measures of social defense. . . .

"But, they tell me, you also shoot; you claim that the measures taken by Soviet law cannot have, physical suffering as their object, and nevertheless everybody knows that your courts condemn certain individuals to death. That is true; but this punishment is applied to those who offer no hope of reform, to the class enemies of the Revolution whose whole activity has been directed against this revolution, or to those who have so far broken with working-class society that it is impossible to adjust them to it. But according to our law the death penalty is a temporary measure against the gravest crimes, against those who menace the very basis of Soviet power and of the proletarian state; and it is applied only as a measure of exceptional defense pending its complete abolition. . . ."

The court system is simple. There are no juries, no elaborate formalities. Ninety percent of all cases in Russia, civil and criminal, are tried by the people's courts, corresponding to our police and magistrate's courts, each composed of a judge appointed for a year's term by the Ministry of Justice from nominees of the local soviet, and two "assessors," who correspond to jurymen. They come straight from the shops or farms, serving only for a week each. They are selected by the judge from a list made up by the local soviet. All three have equal powers; a majority opinion decides the case. Judgments can be appealed in the form usual in courts everywhere.

In important cases a prosecutor appears, appointed by the Minister of Justice. Defendants may hire lawyers, but usually do not. The procedure and atmosphere are like domestic relations and children's courts in the United States—informal, intimate, free of police and officious clerks and sheriffs. Cases are very carefully heard and written judgments are usually rendered—a pleasing contrast to the usual slapdash, fine-and-costs method of the American police court.

In the higher local courts which handle serious criminal cases and civil cases involving larger issues, the procedure is slightly more formal, almost invariably with prosecutors and defense lawyers. Where defendants do not or cannot hire lawyers, the court appoints them. The higher courts are composed in the same way as the lower. All political cases which go to trial (a small percentage of the total) are tried in these higher courts. The famous special revolutionary tribunal which tried most of the political cases in the earlier years was abolished in 1925. Defendants in political

and other cases in the higher courts have all the rights usual in other countries, including appeal to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court itself may sit as a trial court in cases involving two or more of the republics,—as it did in the famous “Shackta” trial of 1928.

During and before trial in all courts in Russia persons may be released on bail by the trial court. In serious cases—and most political cases are regarded as serious—bail is not usually allowed. It consists simply in a signed statement by the defendant and two responsible citizens, guaranteeing the defendant’s appearance in court—a system similar to the English. No penalty is attached to bondsmen for failure of defendants to appear.

The courts inflict only the penalties customary elsewhere. But no persons are jailed for non-payment of fines, as in the United States. Those able to pay and who do not, may have their wages attached up to twenty-five percent.

Sentences to prison are limited to ten years, even for the most serious offenses, including murder. Up to 1921 the maximum was only five years. In practice, time off for good conduct cuts the ten-year sentence to five or six. The theory of this limited prison sentence is that Soviet prisons are intended to reform, not punish, and that if a man can’t be reformed in ten years, he can’t be reformed at all. The death penalty, applied to a long list of crimes and rather commonly resorted to up to 1927, was abolished on the tenth anniversary of the Revolution for all cases except political crimes and armed robbery. Armed robbery was excepted because it has grown to be a menace in parts of the Union, and the government evidently regards the reform of highwaymen as impossible. But it must be remembered

that even in czarist days the death penalty did not exist except under military law, which was commonly applied in times and places of revolutionary disturbance or terrorist acts.

To sum up the significance of Soviet democracy "a million times more democratic than bourgeois democracy," it is evident that it is a political system in which the democratic principle is embedded in the structure to a degree unparalleled elsewhere, but limited in practice by the dictatorship during what is regarded as a temporary period of transition to socialism. Those limitations lie primarily in the political domination of the town and city workers over the peasants and of the Communist Party over the whole—artificial measures imposed on the system for "transition" purposes. Political democracy exists with comparatively little control in Russian villages, and to a less extent in township governments. It exists too in the town and city soviets, but with more Party control. It passes from these comparative freedoms in its lower reaches to complete Communist Party control in the upper. Its severest limitation everywhere is the legal existence of only one political party. That political party is not in fact democratic, though its form of organization is. Control of the Party has been narrowed with the expulsion of its opposition—the only openly critical political force in Russia.

Democracy in political life is obviously limited by a press wholly under government control and without the opportunity for free discussion of the merits of candidates. Voting by a show of hands without a secret ballot imposes another serious limitation—incidental, however, to the one Party control. Two unique fea-

tures of the Soviet system contribute to the extension of the democratic principle: occupational representation, expressing far more vital group interests than the purely geographical divisions of bourgeois countries, and the election of all higher bodies of government from the lower.

Since the fairest comparison is with what Russians enjoyed under the czar's regime, it is clear that even under the dictatorship, they enjoy a far greater voice in political life—and in the villages, which constitute over eighty percent of Russia, almost unrestricted control of local government. Considering the great illiteracy and backwardness of her peasant population, village democracy is doubtless greater than in any other peasant country.

CHAPTER V

LIBERTY OF NATIONALITIES *

ANYONE who travels in Russia must be impressed at once with the extraordinary diversity of the peoples of the Soviet Union, and with the intensity of national feeling among the non-Russians. And if you dig under the surface to the policies of the regime you are struck at once by a newly released freedom of their cultures so striking that it bulks large among the achievements of the Revolution.

The Soviet Union covers a sixth of the world's land surface and a tenth of its population. Over a hundred nationalities, each with its own language and customs, make up the Union. The Russians number less than two-thirds of its one hundred and forty-five millions. The others are Ukrainians, White Russians, Tartars, Turks, Georgians, Armenians, Kurds, German colonists—to mention only the larger nationalities.

Under the czarist empire, which by conquest over centuries brought all these peoples under the dynasty, the territories were larger in the west and the nationalities even more numerous, including the Poles, Finns, Bessarabians, Letts, Lithuanians, and Esthonians. The czarist policy toward them all was marked by the brutal suppression and persecution of their languages, schools

* For a special study of this subject see *The Jews and Other Minor Nationalities under the Soviets* of this series, by Avrahm Yarmolinsky.

and religions, resulting in universal hostility to Russia among all the subject nationalities.

The revolution of October, 1917, freed them all. Most of them declared their independence and set up national states, some under reactionary nationalist control, some under soviets, and some under Social-Democratic governments. Those under reactionary control broke away wholly from the new Soviet state, and some even fought it. All these have retained their independence—Poland, Finland, and the Baltic states. The soviet states allied themselves with the new Russian Republic in a legally informal federation which in practice centered the direction of their chief activities at Moscow. The Social-Democratic states of Transcaucasia remained independent until local soviet forces—aided by Moscow—succeeded in uniting them to Russia.

No formal federal government was established between the new states until December, 1922, when the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was created by a compact between Russia proper (including all of Siberia), the Ukraine, White Russia, and Transcaucasia. These four republics, to which were later added Turk-
estan and Uzbekistan, beyond the Caspian Sea, now constitute the Soviet Union. Smaller subsidiary autonomous republics operate under the Russian republic and Transcaucasia, and one under the Ukraine.

The object of the Union, to which any "socialist state" may be admitted at any time, is declared to be "a common front of the Soviet republics against the surrounding capitalist world. The very structure of the Soviet power, which is international in its class character, calls the toiling masses of the Soviet republics toward a unity of one socialist family." The Union is described as "the voluntary association of these sov-

foreign nations on a basis of equality, each republic reserving to itself the right of free withdrawal from the Union."

To the federal government at Moscow is delegated the handling of all foreign affairs, defense, foreign and internal trade, transportation, finance, currency, and the general principles governing land and natural resources, the courts, labor, education and health. The federal government settles all controversies arising between the republics. Federal citizenship replaces citizenship of the republics. The federal government is also given the right to veto all laws of the republics held to be in violation of the new constitution, which is a sure check upon any independence of action greater than that, for instance, exercised by the states in the United States. The sovereignty of each of the republics is guaranteed except as to the matters delegated to the federal government.

The arrangement is, in principle, similar to that between the federal government and the states in America, though in Russia federal control is much stronger, the republics being under the direction of the federal government in all important matters. The functions exercised by it are also greater, since it controls all industry, transport, and trade. The sovereignty of the republics, therefore, is largely theoretical, restricted to carrying out either the general principles laid down by the Soviet Union or the explicit directions of the federal government in all matters which concern the Union as a whole.

The republics have administrative control, under the guidance of "general principles" only, of the courts, the schools, health, social welfare, and agriculture. Their autonomy is also further restricted by the control of

each of them by the Communist Party, which acts as a unit throughout the Union. No other form of "socialist republic" than one under Communist Party control is or would be admitted.

But as an offset to this federal control the republics themselves share in the government of the Soviet Union through the Council of Nationalities, which is one of the two houses of the Union parliament (the Central Executive Committee), subordinate only to the Union Congress of Soviets, the supreme authority of the whole Union. The Congress, however, controls the Council by passing on the selection of members of the Council elected by each republic. Each republic has equal representation, regardless of population. The system is not unlike state representation in the two houses of the American Congress, the Council of Nationalities being elected like our Senate by equal state representation, and the other body, like our House, according to population. The powers and relations of the two bodies in the Soviet parliament are also similar.

The right of withdrawal from the Union set forth in the constitution is largely illusory, since in practice it means that no republic can withdraw unless its controlling Communist Party so desires—a situation at present unthinkable. All efforts for independence have been regarded as counter-revolutionary—as in fact many of them have been. They are all, of course, anti-Communist. But except in Georgia the Soviet government has been cautious in its methods of combatting independence movements in order not to stimulate them further.

This description of the formal machinery of political control by no means pictures the policy of the Soviet

Union toward these national minorities organized in separate republics. Behind the machinery lies an active policy of the utmost possible encouragement of their cultural life, their feeling of national unity, their languages and social institutions. In the political and economic field they are integral parts of the Union, bound to it by a thousand ties. In cultural life they have a freedom unparalleled by national minorities anywhere in the world. It is a policy precisely opposite to the hostile suppression of nationalities by the czarist government, and is based both upon the need of creating a feeling of unity in carrying out the purposes of the Revolution and that of securing to a central regime the loyalty of an amazing diversity of peoples. It also has an eye to the future through its appeal to other suppressed nationalities to turn Soviet and join the Union. For instance, a little republic has been created in the Ukraine composed of Moldavians who live across the river from Bessarabia, doubtless with a view to the effect of their autonomy on the Moldavians in Roumanian Bessarabia, with hopes for their future incorporation into the Union.

The intensity of the released nationalism of these peoples, so long suppressed under the czars, has been expressed in an almost feverish growth of their literature and cultural institutions, and in some places in an intolerance against even the use of the Russian language. In the Ukraine the laws requiring the use of Ukrainian in all public proceedings had to be changed to permit Russian also to be used, as it was a great inconvenience to the thousands of Russian workers resident in the cities. Even in Georgia, which is forcibly kept in the Union against the desire of the overwhelming mass of

its people for independence, the freedom of its cultural life is complete, in language, religion, schools. Though I heard more complaints of the Soviet regime in a few days in Georgia than I heard in all the rest of my stay in Russia, not one of them concerned their cultural freedom. To them political liberty overshadowed all else, but even those most bitter on that score conceded the regime's liberal policy in regard to their culture.

The administration of affairs in all the republics is overwhelmingly in the hands of their own people—their Communist people of course. Very few Russians figure in public offices except those directly representing the central government. Even in such positions the tendency is to appoint local nationals. In the very new and backward oriental Soviet republics, Turkestan and Uzbekistan, the local officials are under the tutelage of Russians from the center, who do not, however, appear in public positions of authority, but who in effect direct from behind the scenes. One of the officials from Turkestan who explained this policy to me asked me, however, to keep my source of information confidential, as the government does not officially admit this infringement of local authority. These republics are so new to Soviet methods that there was not even a distribution of land to the peasants—the underlying motive of the rural Revolution—until 1926. Some sections of the peasantry in these countries are so backward that they did not even have a written language until the Soviet regime devised alphabets for them.

The Soviet officials are particularly careful not to disturb the ancient customs of oriental peoples, in order not to arouse antagonism. The policy is dictated in part by the general pro-Asiatic outlook of the Union as

against western capitalism, and partly by the Communist policy of friendship to all colonial nationalist movements as forces against imperialism.

As against Russian influence in the republics, the national minority races exercise considerable influence in the federal government. Not only are they represented in the Council of Nationalities, but some of the most influential officials both of the government and of the Party are Georgians, Ukrainians, and White Russians.

The cultural life of the peoples is constantly stimulated from Moscow by the publication of books through the State Publishing Department, by special sections of the Departments of Education devoted to their development, and by financial help to the weaker and poorer republics. The most backward races get the most attention. An active propaganda of encouragement of their cultures is carried on among them. Help is given also in the development of industries in the republics, sometimes with a political eye to offsetting tendencies to separation. This, doubtlessly, is a partial explanation, though not officially admitted, of the costly hydro-electric enterprises in Georgia and the Ukraine.

The general Communist campaign against religion, vigorous in central Russia and the Ukraine, treads very lightly in the oriental parts of the Union in order not to offend old sensibilities long hostile to interference from Moscow. Of all religions in the Union, the Mohammedan church alone is granted the right of religious instruction of children as young as fourteen. Practically not even a beginning has been made in tackling anti-religious propaganda among Mohammedans and Buddhists. There are few Communists among them anyway, and none qualified for so complicated and difficult a

task. When one speaks of the Communist anti-religious campaign it must be confined in fact, as yet, to work among Christians and Jews.

RACE PREJUDICE

Racial prejudice or discrimination of any sort on account of race is fought by law and propaganda. The Constitution "declares it contrary to the fundamental laws . . . to institute or tolerate privileges . . . founded on such grounds, or to repress national minorities, or in any way to limit their rights." The criminal code severely penalizes stirring up religious or racial strife. Freedom from race prejudice is probably greater in Russia than in any country of mixed population in the world. It is imbedded in the Communist political philosophy, and it is expressed practically in their political institutions. The constant effort is to aid the poorest and most disadvantaged classes, who, in mixed populations, have historically been the victims of race prejudice.

But this does not, of course, guarantee freedom from age-old race hostility. There is still considerable race antagonism, chiefly to Jews and, in a limited area of the South, to Tartars. Anti-Semitism exists in many parts of Russia, even pretty strongly in Moscow. The Jews number about three million in all of the Union, living chiefly in the cities of the West. As the one racial group with intellectual ability in which the Revolution found many supporters, its members have occupied high posts in the government, both federal and local. But the percentage of Jews in the Communist Party is only slightly higher than their percentage in the population. In the Soviet Parliament of five hundred and thirty-one

members, there were only twenty Jews in 1927. Feeling against them as "responsible" for the Soviet regime has aroused anti-Semitism or kept it hot among anti-Communists; but this is also shared by many who accept the regime. It is, however, only slightly reflected in the Communist Party, and there, is more apparent than real because complicated by the issue of the Opposition. The comment frequently made that the hostility of the Party leaders to the Opposition minority was partly due to the fact that most of the Opposition leaders are Jews is unjustified on grounds of race prejudice. The fact that so many Jews were in a Left Opposition may perhaps be explained rather by their generally more internationalist outlook, though too many other factors enter the situation to admit of any single explanation.

Jews are not discriminated against in public employment, and most employment is public. Anti-Semitism is expressed rather in social slights, sometimes in open insults. But offenders may be, and are, arrested and tried in the courts, which universally penalize them.

A controversy among the Jews themselves over the use of the Hebrew language has resulted in frequent charges abroad that the Soviet regime persecutes the use of Hebrew. Of course, Hebrew is regarded as the language of the old orthodox conservatives, and it is connected in official minds with the nationalist movement of Zionism. It is said on apparently good authority that some persons who insisted on speaking Hebrew in assemblages of Jews were arrested, and a few exiled. That intolerance, however, represents not an official attitude of the Soviet regime, controlled by Gentiles, but the use of their official positions of power by Jewish Communists against those whom they regard as their

bourgeois enemies in the ranks of the Jews. The Gentile leaders of the government do, of course, respond to pressure from the Jewish section of the Communist Party, but I gathered in Moscow that they were thoroughly weary of the factional controversy among the Jews, regarding it as of no particular significance to the interests of the Soviet state.

Reference is occasionally made to the arrest and exile of Zionists as an expression of anti-Semitism in Russia. Numbers of Zionists have been exiled, it is true, but only in political cases involving either Zionist Socialists opposed to the Communist regime, or Zionists alleged to have connections with bourgeois agencies or individuals abroad. Since the Zionist movement is essentially bourgeois, and dependent on friendly relations with Great Britain as the power controlling Palestine, those connections have been inevitable. But as in the case of other political offenses in Russia; the judgments of the G.P.U. in such cases often rest on very slight evidence or mere suspicion.

The Zionist movement is legally free to agitate its case in Russia proper, but not elsewhere in the Union, and particularly not in the Ukraine where the Jewish population is much larger than in Russia proper. The reason for making Zionist propaganda illegal in the Ukraine is because the Communists feel that it would stimulate the Ukrainian nationalist movement for separation from the Soviet Union, which the regime of course combats in every possible way. It is obvious that the two movements have no real connection, but the Soviet regime takes no chances on the expression of any form of anti-Soviet nationalism. An added reason is

doubtless the large Jewish population in the Ukraine.

Even in Russia proper, the Zionist movement does not have an easy road. Though it is legal, obstacles are put in its way. I gathered in my talks with leaders in Moscow that they could not afford to be frank in revealing the whole situation. Indeed I learned more from what they did not tell me than from what they did.

The Communist Party is officially opposed to Zionism, and no Communist may be a Zionist. The Zionist movement itself reveals differing attitudes to the regime, anti and pro. Even among Zionist Socialists these attitudes are revealed. Those known to be opposed to it naturally suffer discrimination more than those who favor it.

THE CASE OF GEORGIA

Any discussion of the freedom of nationalities in Russia must take into account the national independence movements in Georgia and the Ukraine, and formerly in Karelia, a little province on the Finnish border inhabited by a branch of the Finnish people. Of these, Georgia as an issue is by far the most important, both because of the circumstances by which it came into the Union and because of the strife since. In both the Ukraine and Karelia the sentiment for independence is strong among the richer peasants and the old bourgeois class. In the Ukraine it is stimulated by anti-Soviet elements in Poland and Roumania. In Karelia, where the agitation has died down, it was encouraged formerly by Finland, where a majority of the Karelians live.

Nowhere else in the Union is there an appreciable sentiment for separation, for that which did exist in

Turkestan, Armenia, and Azerbaijan is now apparently slight. In Armenia the question of independence is largely academic. It is only an issue as to whether the country belongs to Turkey or to Russia, and between the two, Russia, of course, is preferred. In Azerbaijan, unlike Georgia, there is a very small intellectual or bourgeois class, and the working class in the great oil-fields of Baku is pro-Soviet as it is all over the Union.

Communist officials in Moscow were quite frank in admitting the strength of the nationalist movement in the Ukraine although attributing it to bourgeois and foreign influences. But it is said that the increase in the feeling for independence has been marked amongst peasants who, rightly or wrongly, think their economic conditions would be improved by separation from the Soviet Union. The working class throughout the Ukraine, which is numerically small, is pro-Soviet as are the many Russians in the cities of eastern Ukraine. The regime attempts to check this independence sentiment by the utmost encouragement of Ukrainian culture, by building up its economic life, particularly through the hydro-electric developments, and by constant propaganda. I was unable to learn, and no publication reveals it, how far active measures of repression have been taken against Ukrainian independence advocates.

The Georgian issue is complicated by the activities of the refugee Socialist heads of the Georgian republic who fled to Paris when the Soviet government took over the country in 1921, after its three years under a Social-Democratic government. These refugees are still recognized by France and other countries as the legal government of Georgia, their representative occupying

a place in the diplomatic corps along with the Soviet ambassador. The government they claim to represent had been recognized in 1921 before the Soviet occupation, and that recognition has not been withdrawn. Indeed, Soviet Russia itself had recognized the independence of Georgia, and so is in no position to protest its continued recognition by other governments. This emigré government has pleaded its case throughout the world, securing support of its position not only by the Socialist movement naturally enough, but also by a highly questionable array of business interests in the United States, France and England, most of them related to the oil industry. Through the center of Georgia runs one of the most valuable oil pipe-lines in the world—from the oil-fields of Baku to the port of Batum on the Black Sea. It offers an explanation for the concern of American business interests for Georgian "independence," voiced in hearings before Congress on a resolution for recognition. Almost all the active anti-Soviet forces joined in supporting it, including President Green of the American Federation of Labor.

But aside from the activities of the emigré "government," the case of Georgia is alleged to be so clear a violation of the Soviet Union's declared principles of the "self-determination of national minorities" that it deserves a careful statement. Its story is bound up with those of its Trans-Caucasian neighbors, Moslem Azerbaijan and Christian Armenia. It is a little country of less than two million people, located at the foot of the Caucasus mountains on the highway between Asia and Europe, with an ancient language and culture, and an independent Christian state church. For centuries it has struggled against one conqueror after another, achieving only comparatively brief periods of complete inde-

pendence. It came under the Russian Empire by military conquest in 1801.

The Russian Revolution freed Georgia as it did its neighbors, Azerbaijan and Armenia, which had been occupied by Russia during the war. All three of the countries tried a union which shortly broke up because of religious and racial hostilities. They then each proclaimed their independence early in 1918, before the World War was over. Georgia was later occupied by both British and German troops and Azerbaijan by the British. The great oil fields of Baku with the pipe-line running through Georgia were, of course, the special concern of both the British and German forces. Armenia was let alone—except for the Turks.

The three little republics, despite the presence of British troops in two of them, each formed a Social-Democratic government. The British troops were withdrawn in 1919, chiefly because of pressure on the government by the Labor Party, and Armenia and Azerbaijan promptly went to war. Russia then stepped in to make peace between the warring little nations, and recognized the autonomy of all three. Each country was torn politically with dissension—Georgia least—and in each the Communist movement grew, seeking a means of union with Soviet Russia. Azerbaijan went over first through a Bolshevik revolt against the Social-Democratic government, and the Russians were invited in. They promptly responded. It became a Soviet republic under Russian "protection" in 1920.

Shortly after that Russia formally recognized the independence of Georgia; but within a month Red soldiers from Azerbaijan were marching through Georgia. Repulsed, peace was made and Georgia was let alone for some nine months.

Armenia went over to the Soviet republics next. This happened late in 1920, after a disastrous little war with Turkey, who was supported by her Moslem-Tartar sympathizers in Azerbaijan. Russia settled the war with Turkey, surrendering to her most of Armenia. The Armenian Communists then turned out the Social-Democratic government in the remaining free territory and united their new Soviet republic to Russia.

Georgia was thus surrounded by Soviet states, and the Georgian Communists were carrying on active propaganda to overthrow the Social-Democratic government and declare a Soviet republic united with Russia. Things came to a head early in 1921—as it happened, within a month after the recognition of Georgia by the Allies—when a military attack was made on the Social-Democratic government by Soviet troops recruited in Azerbaijan and Armenia and among Georgian Communists both inside and outside the country.

Whether they were aided also by Russian Soviet troops has been long disputed. Soviet Russia denied its participation, alleging that the Red Army soldiers in the fighting were refugee Georgians who procured Russian uniforms. But a document issued by the Comintern on the tenth anniversary of the Revolution cites, among examples of Russian aid to oppressed peoples, the "military support given to the workers of Georgia in their uprising against the Social-Democratic government, which was in the service of British imperialism."

A confidential Communist document published in Tiflis in 1924 is quoted by the Social-Democrats as making perfectly clear the military occupation by the Soviet troops. The document, signed by the secretary of the Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party, says:

"Our revolution [in Georgia] had to begin in 1921 by the conquest of Georgia by the bayonets of the Red Army, that army which Georgian patriots regarded as a foreign force. The Soviet revolution assumed the form of an occupation of Georgia by the Russian troops. It is in consequence of this circumstance that for nearly two years the Menshevists have found their chief support in humiliated national feelings, not only among possessing classes, but also among the masses of the Georgian workers."

The fighting lasted only a month. The Social-Democratic government was driven from Tiflis and fled to Paris. A Soviet government was proclaimed and united with Russia.

This history of the acquisition by Soviet Russia of the three little republics across the Caucasus mountains in Asia follows two quite different lines of action: one, Russia's natural support of local Communists striving for power and union with the Soviet republic, and the other her interest in preventing the rich oil fields of Baku and the pipe-line through Georgia from falling into the hands of one of the great powers either by conquest or concession.

In Georgia alone of the three small republics the Social-Democratic movement was strong, and the feeling of independence bred by centuries of struggle against conquerors was intense. Social-Democracy had represented the only independence Georgia had enjoyed in over a century, and its cause became one with independence. Azerbaijan was a comparatively new Tartar-Mohammedan country without old national traditions;

Soviet Armenia was glad enough to be free of the Turks. So in Georgia alone active resistance to the Soviet regime persisted.

The Soviet authorities were at first mild, and the Social-Democrats were permitted to maintain their party as an opposition. But restrictions grew rapidly, due, according to the Communists, to the threatened resort to armed struggle by the Socialists, a charge which the Socialists deny.

Russia proceeded to consolidate the Trans-Caucasian republics by the formation, a year later (1922), of the Trans-Caucasian Federation, to unify their economy and administration. Its headquarters were located at Tiflis, Georgia, increasing the power of Russian control. To meet the continued resistance of the Georgians, the Soviet government adopted further measures of repression. The newly formed Georgian Tcheka, which possessed summary powers, became exceedingly active, continuing in Georgia for two years after it was formally abolished elsewhere and replaced by the G.P.U., with powers somewhat limited.

The Georgian nationalists allege that the Soviet repression began as a result of provocative acts charged to the Social-Democrats. A bomb was thrown at a Communist official in a small town a few months after the Soviet occupation, and for this the Socialists were blamed. It was used at once to justify wholesale arrests and the seizure of the Socialist party offices and press. In the first year of the Soviet regime all the Georgian Socialist leaders were arrested. Protests by workers against the persecutions resulted in the arrest of a petitioning group, followed at once by a general strike in Tiflis. The resistance of the Socialist unions, strongest among the railway workers, was overcome by

methods resembling conscription of labor. Some thousands of Georgian workers were transferred to Russia, and Russian workers were imported in their places. The nationalist movement among the peasants was combatted by quartering Soviet troops among them. The troops were guilty of such excesses that even Communist officials protested.

By the end of 1922, almost two years after the occupation, over thirty thousand political arrests had been made, according to the Georgian Socialists, who allege that four-fifths of them were Social-Democrats. The Communists deny any such figure. But nationalist feeling continued to run deep and strong. It persisted even among the Georgian Communists, who protested vigorously against the annexation of Georgia with the rest of the Trans-Caucasus to the Soviet Union in 1922, alleging that it was done without consulting them.

Lenin himself disapproved the tactics of force used especially at the instance of Stalin, himself a Georgian, and then Commissar of Nationalities, and by Dzerjinsky, head of the Tcheka. In a letter to the Central Committee of the Party (December 30, 1922), published later through the Opposition, he advised "extreme care and a spirit of kindness and conciliation" in dealing with the Georgians, and protested against their "truly Great Russian" campaign. "Needless to say," said he, "that the freedom of withdrawal from the Union which we bring forward as a justification remains but a scrap of paper, unable to protect the natives against the invasion of the 'true Russian.' . . . Has one really taken sufficient measures to guarantee to the non-Russian an effective protection against the 'true Russian' police officials?"

But Lenin's words of caution and advice had no prac-

tical effect. Zinoviev went into Georgia in 1923, and finding resistance still strong, took steps to increase the severity of the regime. New officials replaced the old, and war was declared on "brigands and bandits." The resulting strife claimed scores of natives by execution. The Tcheka itself in 1923 gave out lists of executions totaling two hundred and sixty-eight, but ceased publishing the names when results showed that it did not stop the resistance.

The Social-Democratic party, finding it impossible to continue its activity, finally decided to liquidate, the action being taken at a congress in Tiflis in 1923, which the Tcheka permitted solely for that purpose. A minority decided, however, to carry on a constitutional opposition, but legal activity became increasingly impossible.

Resistance came to a head in 1924, encouraged, no doubt, by the refugee Georgian Social-Democratic "government" in Paris. It broke out in armed uprisings, chiefly among the peasants, but with many workers participating. They were put down in ten days' time with great severity, resulting in loss of life estimated by the Socialists at between 3,000 and 4,000, including several hundred executed afterwards for their participation. Many were tried in the courts and sentenced to the maximum ten-year prison term. It is reliably estimated that 2,000 were exiled. The British Labor Delegation of 1924, which visited Georgia immediately afterwards, says in its report, which is markedly sympathetic to the Bolshevik regime:

"The insurrection probably had the sympathy of a majority of Georgians and would have had their support if it succeeded."

Estimates of the shootings by the Tcheka after the revolt run into the hundreds. Eighty-seven Social-Democratic leaders arrested weeks before the insurrection were shot just after, though they could have had no part in it. Among them were seventeen held as hostages for the good conduct of their party. In one county alone three hundred were estimated to have been shot, and 4,000 imprisoned.

Since 1924 there has been no open revolt, but the sentiment for independence is undiminished. No one with an eye to the political landscape can visit Georgia without sensing it. The fear of the G.P.U. is universal. It is and has been headed continuously by a Russian, one of the two high officials who were not Georgians. Russian troops in obviously large numbers are quartered in Georgia, "on account of the delicate frontier," as the Communist officials told me.

Any non-Communist Georgian who dares to talk freely to a foreigner will express his nationalist sentiment and his resentment at what he regards as a "Soviet Russian occupation." I found I could talk pretty freely with Georgians, once they were assured of privacy and of my disinterestedness—that is, to those who spoke a language I could understand (many of the educated Georgians speak French). All of them voiced the same resentment, the same hopelessness of any change, but the same undying devotion to their ancient ideal of independence. Many frankly recognized their weakness in the face of the struggle of imperialist powers for oil. Some preferred Russia as master to any imperialist western power. The Socialists I saw in prison in Tiflis were more outspoken. When I remarked to one who made a passionate speech to me in a room crowded with his

approving fellow-prisoners, that, contrary to all reports, there seemed to be plenty of free speech in Georgia, he said, "Yes, but only in here."

Communists who know the situation in Georgia privately admit the strength of the nationalist movement, some not denying that if the issue were submitted to a vote, the population would be overwhelmingly for withdrawal from the Soviet Union. Communists in official positions maintain that the independence sentiment in Georgia now is chiefly bourgeois, stimulated from abroad. Some will admit quite frankly that Georgia is held despite this wish for independence because of Russia's imperative need of controlling the oil fields and the pipe-line as against almost certain control by one of the great powers through concessions.

Some Communists regretfully acknowledge that the Soviet policy of "self-protection" in Georgia smacks of imperialist reasoning and violates the professed freedom of national minorities. But they point out as a great gain from union with Soviet Russia the cessation of the petty wars which marked the three years of independence of the Trans-Caucasian states.

As against the Social-Democratic propaganda for independence, the Communists quote Georgian officials who in the earlier years formed an alliance with Great Britain. And they quote British officials who tried to line up Georgia with Denikin in the struggle against the Soviets.

In contrast to this complete political control of Georgia, the Soviet regime is making a strong showing in its economic achievements, as it is in all the Trans-Caucasus. They have already gone far toward building up a shattered economy; hydro-electric stations are being constructed, the oil industry put on its feet, factories

introduced. It is said by Georgians that these energetic measures are being taken to popularize the Soviet regime and to offset the nationalist sentiment—a consideration not officially admitted, but most likely true.

As for the political situation, the Communist Party is growing with a proportion of members in Georgia higher than the average for the whole Soviet Union (which was 135 per 10,000 of the adult population in January, 1926; in Georgia it was 183). Many of the new members are recruited from former Social-Democrats, some thousands of whom form a probationary Communist organization. They are not becoming Communists so much from conviction as from necessity, realizing that no other regime is possible in Georgia at the present time. Their leaders, whom I met, impressed me as a set of men of fine intelligence and bearing, but saddened and subdued. They seemed reconciled to the Soviet regime quite genuinely as the best of bad alternatives, and were even anxious to go to Paris to convince their comrades of the emigré government. But France had refused them visas.

A small illegal organization of Social-Democrats still exists (1928) in Georgia in contact with Paris emigrés. Occasional illegal manifestos are discovered, either printed outside and sent in, or occasionally mimeographed inside. Occasional couriers engaged in making contacts with the refugees abroad are caught, tried, and imprisoned. Several have been shot.

The Social-Democrats in Paris keep up a constant propaganda for independence, especially in cooperation with the Socialist International. They are, of course, anti-Communist as well as pro-independence, but declare that in a war between Soviet Russia and a capitalist state they would throw their influence on the side of

Russia, and advise their Georgian friends to fight for the Union. The sincerity of such professions is challenged by Communists, who cite evidence in recent trials of Georgian independence "conspirators" showing assistance from sources hostile to Soviet Russia, and private statements by the refugee Georgian officials in Paris favoring Russia's enemies in event of war.

The repression in Georgia today is undoubtedly more severe than on any national minority in the Union. Indeed, no comparable situation exists elsewhere in Russia. And it is a repression undoubtedly far more severe than is necessary to keep Georgia in the Union or to hold down independence sentiment. It thus probably aggravates rather than heals the ancient hostility of Georgia to Russia. It is the one exception in the Union to an otherwise more complete freedom for nationalities than exists in any country of mixed population in the world.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND CONTROL *

THE Russian Revolution broke the bonds between the State and the old Orthodox Church, in which the Church had been a political servant of the Czar, helping to hold the masses in ignorance and subjection. As the State church it enjoyed a practical monopoly of religious freedom, and from that vantage point encouraged the persecution of all other creeds.

The Revolution swept away at once all connection between Church and State. It nationalized all Church property, with all other private property publicly used, including all monasteries. The constitutional provision on Church and State runs:

“To ensure for the workers genuine liberty of conscience, the Church is separated from the State and the schools from the Church; and freedom of religious and anti-religious propaganda is assured every citizen.”

The Communist philosophy is vigorously anti-religious, based upon a materialistic, scientific conception of life opposed to mysticism and theology. Though there is now no state church, there is an anti-church state. The weight of official influence is and has been

* For a special study of this subject see *Religion under the Soviets* of this series, by Julius F. Hecker.

continuously against the church as an institution and against religion as a force opposed to the Communist conception of scientific social progress.

To understand the significance of that attitude in Russia, one must bear in mind the primitive superstitions of the peasant masses, the former domination of the priests over the peasants, the priests' support of landlords and police, and the still childlike belief of the peasants in miracles and rites to bring them good fortune and good crops. The Soviet anti-religious attitude in practice is primarily a crusade to abolish peasant superstition by education in science and by practical demonstrations of the power of scientific farming as against prayer. In a time of drought, for instance, when the priests head a procession into the fields carrying ikons to bring rain, the Communists will put up posters showing dry-farming methods and the wisdom of deeper ploughing to save the grain.

Far less important are the efforts so well-advertised abroad: the exposure of fake miracles, and the propaganda of lectures and periodicals against religious ideas of life, death, and deity. The anti-religious crusade is still a very small current, though vigorous, in a sea of old superstitions, faiths, and practices, which it will take years to change or destroy. It sometimes flares up in tighter restrictions on organized religion, especially where religious ideas seem to be obstacles to the Communist program. Conditions vary with localities and changing officials.

To help diminish the power of religion, children under eighteen years of age are prohibited from attending religious schools. They may be instructed only by their parents in their own homes, and not even there in the cases of those youngsters who object to it, and who com-

plain to the authorities, as many are said to have done. The Mohammedans, however, as we have noted, are allowed to admit to religious schools children as young as fourteen, a concession to the Oriental peoples, whose antagonism the Soviet regime is careful not to arouse.

Religious worship goes on almost unrestricted. The churches throughout Russia are practically all in active use and well-filled—by women more than by men, as with us. New churches are now allowed to be built, though formerly they were not. Many were taken over in the early days for sport clubs and theatres but that caused so much resentment that it was stopped. Only in Tiflis, Georgia, where the cathedral on the main street was turned into an athletic club, did I hear resentment still bitterly expressed. But Georgia is generally resentful of the regime.

The pulpit is free for sermons on any subject except politics, and even in the Orthodox Church, which was not historically a teaching church, sermons have been widely added to the services. As religious discussion has always been popular in Russia, public debates on religious topics were up to 1925 or 1926 freely permitted. They have since been discouraged, doubtless because they were not successful in developing the anti-religious campaign.

Religious organizations are required, like all other private organizations, to register with the authorities in order to conduct their activities. Information, reports, and supervision are similar to those affecting incorporated societies in other countries, but are more detailed and more strict. No church is allowed to own real estate or other income-producing property. It may rent church buildings for use, and must be supported wholly by voluntary contributions. All religious organizations which have applied for registration have long been le-

galized except the old Orthodox Church, with which the government conducted a bitter political struggle up to the summer of 1927, due to the church's resistance to the Soviet regime. The struggle ended with the surrender of the church's claims, its affirmations of loyalty to the Soviet regime, and its final legalization (1927) which permits resumption of its central organization and its press.

All licensed religious organizations are permitted to publish censored journals. The religious press, however, has a difficult road. All copy has to run the gauntlet of hostile censors, who often hold it up unreasonable lengths of time in order to embarrass the editors. The censorship in its early years cut out only articles with political color, but it has tended in recent years, at least in Moscow, to cut out all vivid and timely articles, in order, apparently, to make religion as dull as possible. Away from Moscow, the censorship is less rigorous—in some parts even easy-going. Even when permission to publish is given, difficulties still remain. The Ukrainian national church (Orthodox) finally got permission in 1927 to publish a journal, but number one alone was issued. The others were held up without explanation.

The publication of religious books is even more difficult. The Bible was not allowed to be printed in Russia after the Revolution. An edition printed outside Russia in the old alphabet, regarded as czarist and therefore anti-Soviet, was confiscated. In 1926, however, the government permitted 25,000 Bibles in the new shortened alphabet to be printed in Russia from plates furnished by the American Bible Society. Copy for all religious books or pamphlets is very carefully scrutinized by the censorship. Authors and church officials complain of protracted delays and unreasonable dis-

crimination. Religious books have also quite generally either been removed from public and school libraries or placed on reserved shelves not easily accessible to the public.

The separation of the church from the state has removed all religious ceremonies from public functions, all oaths from the courts, all chapels and services from prisons and public institutions, and all religious preferences or requirements from public appointments. It has, however, put anti-religious preference into selection for public offices. Public officials who continued to attend the old church have in many instances been dismissed; others who are believers dare not go for fear of losing their jobs. The preference for non-believers in the public service is reinforced by the Communist Party regulation that no believer can join the Party.

Since the settlement of the political struggle with the old church, the government has conducted a more active campaign against liberal religion, evidently believing it a possible rival to the Communist program. The 1927 Party congress called for an "intensification of the anti-religious campaign," and it has been waged with vigor. Its method has not been that of propaganda but of repression. Scores of religious leaders have been arrested and exiled. All attempts at church unity have been blocked, and general religious conferences prohibited. The clergy has been restricted to preaching in their own communities, unless given a special permit to preach elsewhere.

The pro-Soviet attitude of the liberal Living Church and of many of the sects and evangelicals has not spared them from these restrictions. Indeed they are the chief target of the new campaign, while the reactionary old church, already well chastened, is evidently not regarded

as offering anything to offset the Party program. The conflict is basic, transcending any issue of loyalty to the Soviet state,—since all branches of Christianity have pledged that, at least nominally.

This, in brief, is the extent of freedom and control of religious expression and worship under the Soviets. As to its net result, religious leaders in Russia all report a phenomenal growth in religious interest, activity, and feeling, for two reasons. First, because the sects outside the old church have been free to develop, as they were not under the czar; and second, because of the necessity for voluntary support of the institutions by church members. The anti-religious campaigns of the Communist Party, especially in the early years of trial and error—mostly error, according to the Communists themselves—have also undoubtedly had the effect of rallying the believers to an institution under attack.

With the freedom established by the Revolution, the sects outside the old Orthodox church have grown rapidly, especially among the peasants, doubling or trebling their membership at the expense of the old church, which is estimated at about one-third of its pre-revolution membership. The Baptists alone are said to have more than trebled in the villages. Furthermore, the old church has split into liberal and conservative wings. The new pro-Soviet section, the Living Church, formed in 1922, has become strong chiefly in the cities. It is, however, much smaller than the old conservative section carrying on the orthodox tradition.

Religious life has grown in variety, if not in total

numbers, as never before in Russia. Yet all the while an official anti-religious campaign has directed against it the most vigorous movement of its sort in history. Even so, the propaganda stacks up as small and weak as against the strength of religious life. A perfect commentary on the relation of church and anti-religion is the spectacle at the Iberian gate to the Red Square in Moscow: below, a shrine crowded all day with devout worshippers; up in the wall, quite modestly tucked away, is the famous little tablet quoting Marx—"Religion is the opiate of the people."

One well-known religious teacher in Moscow calls religion "the freest thing in Russia." Even to a tourist there is substance to that statement, if it be judged only by the pandemonium of church bells at all hours of the day and night. They are so frequent and so noisy, I couldn't resist the conclusion that there is a little propaganda in them. The right to worship as one chooses, the legalization of all sects (except the old Orthodox Church up to 1927), complete separation of church and state—these mark obvious freedoms incomparably greater than under the czar.

The attitude of the Soviet government to foreign religious groups working in Russia is one of disapproval and discouragement, however practical their social service. Opposition rests both on political grounds—the fear of introducing foreign bourgeois influence and connections—and on the general anti-religious policy of the regime. The Y. M. C. A., which operated in Russia under the czar and under the Kerensky regime, was practically closed up in 1918 by confiscation of its property and the arrest of the American secretary—due, apparently, to the connection of the Y with relief work

among soldiers on anti-Bolshevik fronts. It has not since been officially readmitted to Russia, though some of its secretaries have been permitted to work in other capacities.

The American Quakers were admitted to help in the famine relief work and medical aid. They have not met interference by the government, despite their bourgeois character, as they have carried on a strictly humanitarian work without either political connections or religious teaching.

This picture of religion under the Soviets covers freedom of worship and activity. More important from the viewpoint of dramatic conflict has been the relation of the church to counter-revolution. The bitterest struggle has been waged with the old Orthodox Church, which has been dominated by counter-revolutionary forces in its clergy and laity, both in Russia and among the emigrés abroad. This struggle, acute from the beginning of the Revolution until 1927, has been marked by the execution of several score bishops and priests, the exile or imprisonment of one-third of the hierarchy, and the steadfast refusal of the government to permit the Church to function like other religious organizations. It has gone on as best it could without a central direction, with only local congregational control.

The well-founded fears of continuous counter-revolutionary activity by the Church led the Soviet government not only to prevent any centralized church administration, but to encourage all the other Christian sects, in order to weaken the grip of the powerful old church. The pro-Soviet Living Church schism has been encouraged for the same reason, though the Soviet

regime is as hostile to it in principle as to all other religions. It is merely a means to fight a greater evil.

The counter-revolutionary attitude of the old church was made evident at once after the Revolution, when it officially excommunicated the Bolsheviki, and declared its loyalty to the old regime. Its bishops and priests were active politically during the civil wars, and the Tcheka arrested and exiled hundreds of them. The struggle came to a head in the seizure of the Church treasures for famine relief in 1922—a measure resisted by the head of the Church and by many priests. Resistance was met by the severest penalties. The Metropolitan Benjamin in Leningrad was shot, several priests were executed in Moscow, and all over the country many were imprisoned. Some are still in prison (1928). The Patriarch Tikhon, head of the Church, was put under house arrest and later imprisoned.

This struggle over the confiscation of Church treasure for famine relief resulted in a split in the Church, out of which the Living Church was formed in 1922, by the wing ready to accept the Soviet regime and opposed to the anti-Soviet and authoritarian policies of the old hierarchy. Composed of the younger and more liberal priests, it sought an expression of freer, more democratic religious life in relation to their congregations. Attempts made to reconcile the two groups after the split failed. Illustrative of the extent to which the government would go to keep the Church divided was an incident at a meeting called in Moscow to help effect reconciliation. One of the principal speakers was called off the platform just before his address and invited over to G.P.U. headquarters, where he was kept under interrogation until the meeting was over. The G.P.U.

was taking no chances on the success of reconciliation—which was very small anyhow.

The old church was split still further by dissension. The government encouraged the Living Church and other dissenters, allowing them privileges of meeting and of carrying on organization denied to the old church group around Tikhon, in order further to weaken it. It went on until the peace compact late in 1927 without central administration except in name, and without the right of bishops to reside in their dioceses or to perform their essential functions—and with the acting Patriarch and half the bishops either imprisoned or exiled. Even as late as the summer of 1927 just before peace was made, one-third of the bishops were on the Solovetski Islands and scores of priests were in exile or prison.

Everywhere I went in Russian prisons I found long-haired, long-bearded priests still wearing their robes—some in for common crimes, most for political offences dating chiefly from the time of the seizures of church treasures. In the detention prison in Leningrad, where I asked to be shown the cell which Lenin occupied for a while in 1896, the door opened on a startling sight—a patriarchal archbishop in the yellow silk robes of his office. He informed me in fluent French that he was “quite loyal to the Soviet regime,” but was held, he knew not for what, on account of the government’s hostility to the church. For good measure—for the prison was crowded—he shared the historic cell with a Finnish spy and a speculator.

The church’s difficulties in Russia have been intensified by the counter-revolutionary activity of the emigrant Church, which is under the jurisdiction of the

Moscow Patriarch. All efforts of the Russian Church to come to an understanding with the government have been met with conditions requiring the Church either to get from its emigrant section a pledge of loyalty to the Soviet regime or to cut it loose. Negotiations solved that problem in 1927 when the church accepted these conditions. The old church thus secured for the first time the right to a legalized life with a central and diocesan administration and the resumption of its press. The old church leaders have at last and reluctantly come to accept the fact of the Soviet regime and to work under it like other churches.

While the government no longer fears its political activity in Russia, it will doubtless continue to prevent the creation of any strongly centralized church power, as a potential source of opposition. Even now priests who achieve popularity and thus become potentially an anti-Soviet influence, are said to be sometimes arrested and exiled, for no apparent offense. Communists deny that popularity alone has been the cause of exile of any priest, but several instances in which no other cause was known were reported to me on excellent authority—an authority sympathetic to the regime. The slightest suspicion of anti-Soviet activity or of connections abroad is sufficient for the arrest of an Orthodox priest.

This political struggle has affected only slightly the other churches in Russia, most of which have accepted their new freedom either in a spirit of loyalty to the regime or of political neutrality. A few sections of some of the sects have reflected anti-Soviet influences, the sects dividing roughly along lines of economic in-

terests—the well-to-do peasants being anti-Soviet. (The sects are composed overwhelmingly of peasants.) In cases of doubtful loyalty, the G.P.U., it is commonly said, has engineered pledges of allegiance in return for the privilege of holding religious conventions. Such pressure has undoubtedly been brought to bear on several sects to get them officially in line. And this has been true notably in relation to religious opposition to military service, the facts of which are covered in Chapter XVIII. No political issue has arisen with non-Christian religions among the national minorities, the Communists taking particular pains to leave them alone in order to encourage their support of the regime.

One noteworthy exception to the comparative freedom among the non-Orthodox churches is the Roman Catholic, the only church under foreign control in Russia. It is small, confined almost exclusively to the population along the Polish border, and therefore has been subject to anti-Soviet influences in Poland. Its connection with anti-Soviet plots was proved at the time of the trial and execution of Archbishop Budkiewicz in 1923. Its leaders' activities have been until recently under constant surveillance by the political police. With the decrease in Polish anti-Soviet activity, and following negotiations between papal representatives and Moscow (1926-27), relations are greatly improved, and the Roman Catholic church now enjoys practically the same liberties as other religions.

The whole political conflict involving the church has been waged without really touching the masses of churchgoers, for the churches have always been open and the congregations free to worship and to follow the religious customs of baptism, marriage, and funeral rites. Indeed, the congregations themselves took over

the leadership in religious life all over Christian Russia after the break-up of the old hierarchy. What happened to the higher church administrations or to remote bishops or to church property did not touch their immediate interests and so did not rouse popular opposition. The early tactless anti-religious campaign—largely on paper—and the former taking over of churches for sport clubs and theatres no doubt aroused more resentment among the people than the entire political struggle with the church leaders.

To sum up, it is evident that religious liberty under the Soviets is vastly greater than it was under the czar, despite the fact that the czar was for religion and the Soviets are against it. Freedom for anti-religion is naturally much greater than anywhere else in the world, since it is officially encouraged and directed as part of the Communist program—although it is still a weak force except as it opposes scientific agriculture to peasant superstition.

The sectarians, evangelicals, and the non-Christian oriental religions enjoy about as much freedom as in other countries, and more than in most with a state church. The old Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches alone suffered severe restrictions, primarily due to their anti-Soviet political activity. Such restrictions on general religious activity as exist, are not aimed at religious freedom. They are the restrictions common to the licensing of all private organizations and the censorship of all journals and books in the interest of promoting the Communist program.

On the other hand, the State is freer of religious influence than in any other country in the world—which is something to be said even in comparison with the United

States, where the legal separation of church and state does not prevent the interference of sectarian interests in education—for instance through the prohibition of teaching evolution and through the compulsory reading of the Protestant Bible in public schools, to say nothing of the power of religious prejudice in elections.

CHAPTER VII

WOMEN'S RIGHTS *

SOVIET law, in general, accords to women all the rights granted to men. The Constitution makes no distinction between men and women throughout the Union in the right to vote and to be elected to the Soviets. The codes of the various republics dealing with relations in marriage give them equal status with men in property, control of children, and right to divorce. The economic code requires equal pay for equal work. In addition to equal rights, employed women becoming mothers have the privilege of freedom from work for two months before and two months after childbirth, with full pay and expenses.

But like so many other provisions of a revolutionary code in a primitive country, these are rather standards to be achieved than the actual relations of daily life. In the cities of European Russia, practice comes closer to principle; in the villages and throughout the oriental parts of the Union, the ancient subordination of women gives way with painful slowness. In some of the remoter parts the new standards are barely known.

The Soviet Union, despite its advanced codes for women, is still a man's country, like the rest of the world. The participation of women in politics, government, industry, and social life is as yet vigorous only

* For a special study of this subject see *Woman in Soviet Russia* of this series, by Jessica Smith.

in European Russia, where their improved status in marriage and the family is fairly general. It is in the field of domestic relations that the new freedom is most significant. In politics and industry it is weak. Even in the Communist movement, according to women in the Party, men are inclined to regard women as less capable and to discriminate against them.

In the villages peasant wives are still often looked upon merely as economic assets to the men—a form of cheap and necessary labor—though the courts are handling increasing numbers of complaints from peasant women against chattel conditions. I asked one woman judge of a people's court at a county seat about the status of peasant women. "Well," said she, "a good many men still beat their wives, but a lot more women come to court about it. They are learning their rights. We put the men under orders of court to let them alone—and it works." Peasant women do not often seek divorce to remedy their lot.

In Russia the new standards of women's freedom and equality came all at one time and suddenly with the Revolution, without the years of struggle by women which in other countries helped fit them for the rights they won. In old Russia the women of the upper classes alone enjoyed a position of social equality with the men—sharing, too, in active political movements, but not with the right to vote or hold office. In all the other classes women were definitely inferior to men in law and custom. They had progressed only from being chattels of their fathers or husbands to a recognized but inferior status in the family.

Soviet Russia today represents standards in law even beyond countries where women enjoy the most advanced

status. Russia has no features in her new code which are out of line with the advanced programs of women in other countries. In practice these standards have already given women in parts of Russia a freedom not enjoyed elsewhere. But the mass of Russian women, almost nine-tenths peasant, have still far to go, either to realize their status in law or the relations to men and to public life which in practice—whatever the law—mark the western countries where women's position is more advanced.

A. Lunacharsky, Commissar of Education, speaking at a women's conference in 1927, said:

“Lenin pointed out with a note of grief that the legal emancipation of women does not yet mean actual liberty and equality. The proper working of the law is hindered in actual life by three formidable forces: the economic dependence of women, social prejudices, and the cultural backwardness of women. . . .

“While the proletarian woman directly employed in production has benefited much from legislation, the effect is considerably less in the case of the housewife, even if she is the wife of a worker. Lenin minced no words in denouncing the slavery of the private kitchen, the menial toil of the washboard, the lack of rational organization in taking care of children. We know quite well that the only complete deliverance from this slavery will come as the result of the organization of model dwellings for the workers, large public dining-rooms, steam laundries, well-equipped children's homes. . . .

“Our equitable marriage laws do not preclude

the possibility of the man frequently being the tyrant in regard to the woman, or of unscrupulous men taking advantage of the weakness of women and girls, destroying their lives in the pursuit of carnal lust. The situation is particularly bad among the nationalities, where the woman is still considered an inferior being, and is treated as a captive and a slave. It is with tremendous difficulty that the new Soviet views on sex equality find their way through the thick layer of these prejudices, frequently sanctified by religion.

“Finally, it is necessary to make the working woman equal to the man in all respects, to make them equal in regard to earnings . . . to let her understand in what way she can protect herself against abuse and oppression, to extend to her the wide possibility of taking part in the whole political life of the country. . . . Not in vain were uttered those famous words of Lenin that ‘every cook should learn how to govern the State.’”

The purposes of the Soviet codes are: first, to give women complete equality with men in political and economic life; second, to make man and woman equal in the marriage relationship and to avoid interference with marriage, divorce, and the rearing of children except when the parties cannot agree; and third, to narrow the family as an institution to its essentials—mother, father, and children—in order more easily to absorb it into larger social groupings and interests. The old patriarchal family, subordinating its women, stretched out to a clan institution of immense social and political power. That family has almost completely disappeared in Russia; as it is disappearing everywhere. But in

Russia it is gone with the conscious purpose of building in its place a richer, freer, more natural social life of world-wide horizons and broad individual interests.

Just what are the new freedoms of women and how do they actually work?

In political life every woman over eighteen years of age (like every man) has the right to vote. Since all voting takes place by a show of hands in meetings, women must arrange to go to the elections. For employed women that is, of course, simple—in shop, or factory, or store. For peasant women in the villages it is equally simple; they go to the general election meeting. Since there are few scattered farm houses in Russia, and all peasants live in villages, that covers the whole country population, over eighty percent of the total. For housewives in the cities and towns voting takes place at special meetings arranged for them in each precinct, as it does for workers not employed in industries—such as cabmen and peddlers. The only women disfranchised in Russia are those not engaged in productive work (housework is “productive”) and those who “live on income not arising from their own labor.” These provisions apply both to men and women; most other provisions for disfranchisement could affect only men.

No statistics are available as to the number of women who vote. About half the qualified voters in the Union voted in 1926, the first year of “free elections”—an increase over previous years—and women were recorded as participating pretty generally. The proportion is, however, according to all reports, much smaller than among the men. There is no special “women’s movement” in Russian politics, though the women’s section of the

Communist Party is a live propaganda agency for educating women to use their rights.

Even less than participation in voting is the participation of women in public office. The Soviets in the larger towns and cities usually show a fair sprinkling of women, averaging about twenty percent in 1927, but they are only half as numerous in the village soviets (eleven percent). In the highest legislative bodies they are even fewer. In the Central Executive Committee, the parliament of the Union, there were only sixty-eight women out of 531 members in 1927 (twelve and a half percent). In the parliaments of the republics they figure usually less—and in the Oriental republics very little—though some soviets in far Turkestan show a ten percent membership of women. But in all the Soviets from top to bottom the percentage of women has been slowly and steadily increasing.

In administrative positions women are fairly numerous, though none of the high officials of the Union have been women, and only a few hold office in the republics. But a considerable number of bureau heads are women, especially in the fields of education and social welfare. Women judges, usually not lawyers, are numerous in the people's courts—the lowest branch of the court system—which handle ninety percent of the criminal and civil cases. Conspicuous among women in Russian state service is the only woman ambassador in the world, and the only woman among high ranking military officers—corresponding to a general. This general, whom I met in Moscow, is a very pretty and charming young mother—under thirty—married to one of her subordinate officers. She is engaged in military tactics, not in the command of troops, which she thinks hardly appropriate for a woman.

In the Communist Party the leadership is almost exclusively in men's hands; women constitute only a small proportion of the membership, from ten to fifteen percent. No woman figures prominently as a Party leader anywhere in the Union, with the possible exception of Lenin's wife, Krupskaya, whose prestige is not, of course, wholly personal.

In the trade unions and cooperatives women rarely occupy high administrative positions. Their numbers are smaller than those of the men (about twenty-five percent in the unions in 1925), and their active participation is less than their numbers. Only one union is composed wholly of women—the Housewives' Union, affiliated with the Central Federation—but they constitute the majority of workers in the textile and clothing industries. Although women are the chief patrons and members of the consumers' cooperatives, it is a man's business, in whose administration women share disproportionately. About a quarter of the cooperative officials or committee members are women; the active managers are almost all men.

In the professions women are occupying a growing influence as elsewhere, although it is still small. The universities and higher schools show an increasing proportion of women, averaging about a third of the students in 1926. Of these, half were workers not fitting themselves for professions.

Reporting to a conference of women from all over the Soviet Union, in 1927, a leading woman said of women's public and economic activity:

“Above all, it should be pointed out that among many of our economists the tendency still prevails to look upon women's labor as of smaller value and

as less remunerative. . . . In spite of the special legislative protection of women's labor, it is not more expensive than men's labor. Thus we have to contend with prejudices which must be overcome.

"Another very important point in connection with drawing women into industry is the low qualification of woman labor power. . . . Even in Moscow, the main industrial center, qualified women working can be literally counted on the fingers of one hand. . . .

"Women workers constitute twenty-eight percent of the total number of workers in industry, and women shop delegates twenty-one percent of the total number of delegates, so that in regard to participation in minor trade union work women workers keep pace with men workers. Matters are less satisfactory in regard to the higher trade union organs. . . .

Thus it is evident that in the political and economic fields, while women enjoy full equality on paper, they are far short of it in practice—due to a variety of causes: absorption in household tasks, economic dependence, men's opposition, lack of interest and training, and chiefly, I judge, the ancient unconscious assumption of their inferiority, shared by many women with most men.

But in the family relation in Russia women enjoy far more than a paper equality. While old customs of men's domination persist, they have given way generally in the cities, and are beginning to go in the villages of European Russia. The new tendencies have only slightly

touched Asiatic Russia, though their impact has caused a stir all out of proportion to their effect. Just the single fact of some Mohammedan women taking off their veils as a symbol of their new status has caused riots and bloodshed.

In marriage, which is recognized only as a civil function, as in many countries, women have equal rights with their husbands to property, name, domicile, nationality, and control of children. Marriage takes place before a local registrar of deeds—very much like getting a license in the United States—and a license without any further ceremony constitutes the marriage. Even unregistered marriages have a legal status, like common-law marriage in Anglo-Saxon countries. Women may marry at sixteen, men at eighteen. At the time of getting the license the man and wife indicate the name under which they will live, either his or hers or their joint names—or they may keep their own names separately. The usual custom everywhere is, as in the rest of the world, to take the husband's name and to give it to the children.

If the nationality of the wife is different from the husband's, she can keep it or not as she likes. She is not obliged to accept his domicile. Neither one has the right to the other's property or earnings, but in case of either's inability to work the other is required to give support. Women in such cases are as liable for the support of their husbands as are husbands for the support of their wives. Both have equal authority over their children. In case of disagreement on any of these matters, the issue can be taken by either party to a local authority—usually the people's court, or in case of non-support to the social insurance bureau.

Divorce is a simple matter where both husband and

wife want it—indeed when either wants it, for no divorce can be contested. The state concerns itself only with provisions for the support of dependent husbands and wives or children—and no other issue can be taken to court. Divorce in cases where no such issue arises is accomplished by merely filing a declaration with the local registrar of deeds indicating what names the divorced man and woman will henceforth take. Men and women seeking divorce usually arrange matters of support, and so divorce cases taken to court are far fewer than those by declaration. Divorce does not relieve either party of obligation to support the other, if incapable of earning, while that party remains unmarried. The same obligation rests on each to support their children. Where unwillingness to pay support ordered by the courts is evident, deductions are ordered directly from wages.

Marriage and divorce are therefore far easier under the Soviet system than elsewhere, but are surrounded by provisions for protection of both partners and children. Marriages are prohibited or annulled for much the same reasons as elsewhere—close kinship (between parents and children or brothers and sisters only), another marriage already in effect, or with a person under age or so mentally unfit as to be incapable of giving consent. Marriage may be annulled also because of the use of fraud or force in obtaining consent. Bigamy is an offense as elsewhere, though lightly punished.

A woman getting on in years has a right to her husband's support at an earlier age than a dependent husband has the right to a working wife's support: fifty for women, fifty-five for men. They both have a right to their children's support after these ages, or before that in case of their incapacity. On the death of either,

the other shares equally with the parents and children of the deceased in handling any property left, with an equal claim to support from it. In case of dispute as to support, the local courts settle the issue on the basis of whose need is the greatest. Inheritance under the Soviet system is unlimited, but the inheritance taxes are so high (except for the first thousand roubles) as to confiscate practically all property over a modest living standard for dependents.

Despite the new provisions for marriage in Russia, the overwhelming majority of marriages still take place in church, especially among the peasants. The church marriage is not recognized by the state, and vice versa, as in many other countries, so that people are in fact married twice, since they all get a State certificate. Peasant boys and girls usually marry in their teens. Divorce is uncommon, though it is growing in the villages. The old village standards of chastity—especially for the girl—and of the man's domination of the home, with the wife working in house and field, are still the rule.

Mothers have privileges as well as a wife's rights, and unmarried mothers share precisely the same privileges as the married. A mother has the right to the father's support if she chooses, as motherhood is regarded as incapacitating a woman for wage labor. If she chooses to work, or has to work to supplement her husband's wage, the industry takes care of her on full pay for two months before childbirth and two months after (for slightly less time in light industries and office work).

Since illegitimacy is not recognized, the law's only effort in the case of an unmarried mother is to help es-

tablish the child's paternity for the purpose of support. To do so a pregnant woman may file notice with the registrar of deeds three months before expected delivery, naming the father. The alleged father is given two weeks to respond. If he does not, his responsibility is assumed, and an order is made requiring him to pay the expenses of confinement and to share the child's support. If he denies his responsibility the registrar proceeds to hold an inquiry, making a finding which has the force of a court order. If several men had relations with the mother at about the same time, each is liable to share in the expense and support. A man's wages may be attached to one-third their total amount for the support of any natural child.

The Soviet attitude to marriage is obviously one of attaching serious responsibility to the marriage relation and to parenthood, without subscribing to the idea of "marriage as a sacrament" or to divorces based on charges of misconduct of one partner against the other. Though divorce is easy, marriage in Russia is stable—more so than in the United States. It is the universal testimony that in the villages it has changed even too little; that women still put up with conditions for which divorce is the only effective remedy. Peasant men are said not infrequently to have taken advantage of the new laws by marrying a husky wife in the spring and divorcing her after the harvest. But on the whole, family relations in Russia are sound, and less restless than in the United States.

The reports of wholesale immorality among young people, of frequent change of partners with or without marriage, are due rather to fear of liberal measures and to the behavior of small groups in the cities than to the

facts. Young people from other countries living in Russia told me that sex relations are far more wholesome, honest, open, and natural than in most countries of Europe. The Communist youth organization—in some places, at least—tends to be almost Puritanical toward irresponsible sex relations; it has even expelled members who either devote excessive attention to sex or who treat their partners unfairly. In other places the young Communists have caused public scandals by their behavior, severely dealt with by the Party. Sex relations outside of marriage are of course not infrequent, as everywhere, but in a country where divorce and marriage are easy, the occasion for such relations is less. In the villages, social control of sex relations by attitude and custom is strong, as are the old religious standards. The stability of marriage and the family has on the whole been little affected. But forced alliances—men and women held together by law or the force of opinion against their desires—together with the ancient subjection of women, are being destroyed.

In matters of sex offenses the Soviet regime is strict. Prostitution is vigorously and "scientifically" fought as an offense against the workers' state. It is in evidence only in a very few places in the larger cities, and very quietly at that. Russian cities have no gay night resorts and very few immoral houses. Men and women are equally liable to arrest for prostitution, but in practice men are rarely arrested. Women are charged more frequently with spreading disease or conducting houses of prostitution—offenses for which men are less liable. The women, who are for the most part unemployed girls from the country, are usually put in institutions for trade training. Their lives on the streets are short.

In the villages prostitution is practically unknown;

and chastity is the ancient standard for all girls. Village boys are therefore chaste—not by standards so much as by lack of opportunity. Such sex relations as some boys have before marriage are said to be chiefly with older women.

Birth control is legal throughout Russia, but not encouraged as an official policy. Abortions are legal also, but may be performed legally only in hospitals or by qualified physicians upon permits issued by local commissions to whom women apply. This, however, does not prevent illegal abortions by practitioners to whom women may go when refused permission by the commission. Birth control not being generally understood and abortions being controlled, women are not yet freed from unwilling child-bearing, though the regime is extending its efforts to aid them.

Such are the freedoms of women under the Soviets today, on paper and in practice. On paper they are an advance over the status of women elsewhere in the world, pushing to their logical end what are only tendencies in other lands. In practice they are a great advance over the very limited position of women before the Revolution. They are constantly expanding and growing. Russia will long remain like the rest of the world, a man's country. It offers no paradise to feminists. But it is a land of encouragement to women, not primarily to push "sex emancipation" programs, but to share in building with men on an equal basis the structure of the new world for which the Soviets fight.

CHAPTER VIII

FREEDOM IN EDUCATION *

ALL foreign inquirers in Russia are impressed with the vigor of educational experiment, and with the passion for learning among large sections of the youth.

As I visited Russia in the summer months, the schools were not in session, except for summer courses in technical schools and universities. Though I had no chance to see other schools in session, I talked with a number of teachers and professors, and with a few students. In Paris among the emigrés, I met some former teachers who had continued teaching under the Soviet regime until they were displaced in the "cleansing" of the universities. I therefore got their critical view as well as the official view in Russia, though I found the critical comment of teachers in Russia quite as frank as that of the emigrés. The difference between them was one of attitude—the teachers in Russia helpfully critical, the emigrés critically hostile. But they agreed on the main facts.

Like all other developments of the new Russia, education is conceived in terms of class interests. The constitution specifies only "the workers and poorer peasants" as the objects of a "complete, universal, and free education." The children of traders and the old bourgeoisie are excluded by implication. The whole edu-

* For a more detailed study of this see *The New Schools of New Russia* of this series, by Lucy R. W. Wilson.

cational system is designed to give the children of workers and peasants training for their practical work in shop and farm, and a conception of their class interests in relation to the world. The Communists point out that all education elsewhere is colored by class bias, that freedom of education in the sense of teaching without propaganda, conscious or unconscious, does not exist anywhere.

The old czarist school system was one of upper class culture. The masses were deliberately kept in ignorance. The few poor public schools were run by the Church. The cultural life of the non-Russian people was suppressed and the Russian language universally imposed. The numerous private schools existed only for the children of the upper classes. In the universities students had considerable freedom. Even revolutionary ideas found a following there, though no workers or peasants attended them. It was in those universities that so many of the present leaders of Soviet Russia were educated—intellectual rebels from the middle class, not peasants or workers.

Only under the Soviet regime, and for the first time in any country, has public education from children to adults not only been opened to the masses of workers and peasants, but organized especially in their interests. To rise from the old Russia of an eighty-five percent illiteracy, suppressed national cultures and priest-ridden schools, to a modern educational system, is a colossal task. The Soviet regime has undertaken it in the spirit of the most advanced educational theories and experiments—with learning by doing, scientific instead of classical education, student self-government, education for adult workers.

But the basic problems still are the abolition of il-

literacy and the building of enough schools to accommodate all children. Great strides have been made in the campaign against illiteracy, but still at the end of 1926 it was high, about sixty percent (averaging men and women). Over a fourth of all children in Russia, chiefly in the villages, were without any school accommodations whatever, because the country is too poor to build and maintain all at once the large number needed. Under the czar over sixty percent of the children never got into a school. The Soviet regime has steadily cut this out-of-school percentage, and expects by 1933 to have buildings enough for all children in elementary schools.

Wherever selection has had to be made, as it has had to be from primary school to university, workers' and peasants' children have first chance. Most children of traders and of the old bourgeoisie either get little higher schooling or are privately instructed. Thousands of bourgeois students were thrown out of the universities in 1924, when the schools were "cleansed" to make way for young Communists and workers. Many of them were even exiled for their bourgeois connections and activities. Recently (1927), the regulations barring non-proletarian students have been modified in order to enlist intelligent children from bourgeois families who are willing to cooperate in the Soviet regime. It is said that the authorities have found children from such families better material because of their intellectual home backgrounds. Children who cannot get into the public schools may be taught at home or may go to private schools, of which there are a few, all under the supervision of the State authorities.

Of course compulsory school attendance under present conditions is impossible—though it is calculated as

practicable in 1933. It exists, however, in the Ukraine, but lack of schools prevents its enforcement in the rural districts. School accommodations in towns and cities throughout the Union are on the whole adequate, although many schools operate in several shifts. The child labor law keeps city children out of wage-work until fourteen, and most of them go to school until then.

In city schools throughout Russia fees are charged to parents. The official publication of the Department of Education (1926) says:

“Fees for tuition have been introduced only since 1922, on account of the difficult economic circumstances of the Republic. Payment for tuition concerns only city schools, leaving education in rural schools free of charge. Free tuition is still awarded to the children of the unemployed, of cripples, of those on the lists of the Red Army, of parents employed in educational work, as well as to orphans. The members of trade unions are not charged for the education of their children over five percent of their income. For the children of the bourgeoisie several grades of fees are established, with reference to the income of the parents. The number of places free of charge in every school must be not less than twenty-five percent.”

What kind of an education does the youth get, and what is its goal? How far does Communist propaganda color it?

Soviet education is marked by an experimental attitude to methods, but by a fixed idea as to its underlying object. That object is the creation of a scientific outlook on life in terms of Marxist philosophy in which

the class interests of the producers are the central concern. To impress this outlook on children, the system is practical, not theoretical—for theoretical Marxism is too much even for most adults. Nature study, for instance, is related to the ways in which people get their livings, and getting their livings to their economic, political and social institutions, and to the meaning of capitalism in the lives of workers and peasants. With that as a base, children will grow up to look on the world in a spirit sympathetic to Communism, with a consciousness of class and of the significance of the Russian revolution.

But this underlying concept does not by any means color all of education. It determines the emphasis on science and nature study, on the teaching of history and geography. But the methods of developing a child's interest are legion, and the subjects not lending themselves to direct or indirect propaganda are numerous.

The new system is marked by excellent experimental schools, by a large discretion among teachers as to methods—which robs the school of that regimentation so deadening elsewhere—and by so much self-government among children that it is objected to in places as developing little autocratic cliques of youngsters who boss the schools.

The objectives of the Soviet educational system are thus detailed in an official publication of the Department of Education (1926):

“The system of public education aims at the solution of three cardinal problems: (1) the development of the public economy with reference to the problems of socialist reconstruction in general, and more particularly to the methods of in-

creasing the efficiency of labor; (2) the political and social development of the population in the spirit of Communism; (3) the development of national culture among the peoples of the R. S. F. S. R. as an essential part of general culture. . . .

"The fundamental sections of public education are: social education, vocational education, and political educational work. . . . The fundamental branches of political educational work are: abolition of illiteracy, schools for adults, libraries, clubs, and cottage reading rooms, propaganda work, promotion of self-education, artistic work and the cinema. . . . The propaganda work is grouped around various campaigns . . . as, for example, famine relief, the improvement of rural economy, the anti-religious struggle, the abolition of destitution among children, etc. . . ."

The feverish efforts to modernize education have inspired so many programs that teachers are often bewildered; but the wide discretion they have in town and rural schools enables good teachers to select those best adapted to their needs and personalities. Education is therefore spotty everywhere outside the cities, depending on the individual teacher. As a whole, teachers are poorly paid—considerably less than factory workers—and are over-worked. They are under constant pressure to take on tasks outside school duties, being expected to help organize all the intellectual life of their towns and villages. Many of them are insufficiently trained.

The teachers are organized in unions which have considerable influence on educational policy. Through their journals they exchange ideas and voice complaints. These

complaints are numerous: against unnecessary bureaucratism, against too wide and diversified a program and too many subjects, which tend to make education superficial, against too much shifting about of teachers, and, as elsewhere, against low pay.

Complaint is often made of the unsatisfactory working of student self-government, either on the ground that little cliques run the school, or that the little cells of the Young Pioneers, in training for Communism, assume too much authority, or that the self-government group becomes a bureaucratic little body without influence on the school. These are the familiar old complaints of the difficulties of democratic management even among adults.

A resolution of the Moscow Educational Committee (1927), calling attention to the methods of pupil self-government in the schools, deplors the "exceedingly heterogeneous character" of self-government, and recommends fixing uniform methods through group committees, pupil committees, and commissions, dealing with the whole life of the schools—"cultural and political activity, sanitary and educational activity, administrative and economic activity, teaching." It adds: "It is necessary to fight for the participation of the children in the entire teaching work of the schools," and especially "to assure the participation of school children in the work of the teachers' committees." But they caution that the children sent as representatives to the teachers' committees "must not be under twelve years of age."

Less open than these objections to student government is the feeling, apparently general among teachers, that the school program is too much subordinated to Communist Party interests and propaganda—an objection

quite natural in view of the fact that not one teacher in ten is a Party member.

Political education is directed by a special branch of the educational departments, in alliance with the Communist Party. It is in reality a Party promotional body, reaching through the Party network from top to bottom of the system, controlling social education. Its governing body is composed of representatives of the Department of Education of each republic, and of the Communist youth organization. It supervises not only social education in the regular schools, but the village reading rooms, professional education and the Party schools. Fifteen percent of the local education budgets are allocated to its work, besides special promotion funds from the Union budget.

No religious instruction is permitted in schools, and no priests or pastors may be teachers. Anti-religious teaching is encouraged, chiefly by means of scientific instruction. Children can receive religious instruction only in their own homes from their parents, not from priests, pastors, or tutors. Cases happen not infrequently in which children imbued with the new ideas complain that their parents are attempting to force religious instruction on them; and the authorities in such cases stop it. Children have the right at any age to be free from religious instruction if they so desire. At fourteen they may select their own religion or none. Up to that age their parents have the right to control their church attendance and instruction, unless children object. Religious schools may admit only "children" over eighteen years of age; but Mohammedan schools, privileged for the present in order not to an-

tagonize the Oriental minorities, may admit them at fourteen.

Parents may send their children away for education to the few private schools, or have teachers instruct them at home; or they may send them from the country to live in a home in the city for the advantages of city schools.

The theory of the Soviet state concerning parents and children is that all children are wards of the State, and parents are merely guardians during their competency to look after them. This theory is not unique in Russia. It is the basis of the juvenile court's jurisdiction in the United States. The legal theory and practice in Russia are both almost identical with those of the United States. Children are rarely taken from parents, and when they are, parents are still liable for their support.

The Soviet practice in dealing with child offenders illustrates the advanced ideas which the educational system has adopted. The system is indeed ahead of that in the United States, the pioneer country in juvenile courts, in dealing with delinquent children almost exclusively by educational methods. No child under fourteen is taken to a court. Special committees of the educational department deal with them in an endeavor to apply the best available educational influences, rarely sending them away from home to institutions. The committees are composed of a physician, a teacher, and a layman. Over fourteen and up to sixteen children may be sent to the courts, but only on the certificate of one of these committees that it cannot deal adequately with them. About ten percent of the children go to the People's Courts, where they may be placed on pro-

bation to volunteers (there being no paid probation officers in Russia because of lack of funds) or sent to children's institutions. The resort to institutions, however, is less frequent than in the United States—in only about fifteen percent of the cases.

One of the great child problems in Russia is to provide for the thousands of waifs made homeless by the wars and famine. Two million orphans are under state care as the heritage of those years. Many thousands of homeless boys have acquired habits of vagrancy, living by begging and stealing, and will not stay in the institutions to which they usually return for the cold winter months. The drab and poverty-stricken life in these "homes" is far less alluring to them than adventurous life on the road, especially in the warmer months. They constitute a serious and difficult problem in educational control, by no means solved, despite heroic efforts and the expenditure of large sums. But the number of those taking to the road has been greatly reduced. That it is a problem of boys with the habits of vagrancy is apparent from the fact that girls are rarely seen. Among hundreds whom I saw all over Russia there was only one girl tramp.

In the higher schools and universities teaching is less free than in the lower, and the students are more definitely a class-conscious part of the Soviet system. They show a passion for learning probably unparalleled elsewhere in the world. They crowd the schools; they run student life and control its discipline; they participate actively in the educational process. Here even more than in the lower schools the Communist youth cells tend to dominate the student organs of government. Non-Communist teachers find the regime difficult un-

less their subjects are so far removed from social significance as to leave them free from interference.

In all the social sciences the teachers and professors are Communists or sympathizers. Only Marxian social interpretations are tolerated. Hundreds of non-Communist professors have either been discharged or have resigned, especially since 1922, when the universities and higher schools were "proletarianized."

The professors are somewhat protected by their unions, which, however, tend to be dominated by their Communist cells. They prepare the resolutions to be voted and the officers to be elected. Members who have opposed them have frequently found themselves out of a job, or demoted. The system tends to make professors timid and servile to the regime—like American university control by trustees representing wealth—and to cripple independent teaching, even in subjects not directly related to Communism. In addition, the censorship of their writing and the restrictions on research, particularly in history, economics, politics, and government, constantly check their freedom of thought and activity.

Despite all these restrictions and control, education all over Soviet Russia, from top to bottom, has taken on a vigor probably unequalled for its drive or its experimental daring anywhere in the world. Still young and spotty and woefully short of its own standards and needs, it is plowing ahead against the major obstacles of illiteracy, untrained teachers, and utterly inadequate funds and equipment.

Above it stands an educational planning commission, correlating, examining, and looking ahead far into the future—building on a ten years' program an education

that will reach every child in the Union, equipping him for taking his part in the new life of Russia.

It is on this base of Soviet activity, conceived in a spirit of freedom despite its subordination to a political theory, that the chief hope rests of diminishing—and ultimately abolishing—the centralized dictatorship that marks this period of transition. Diminishing it by decentralizing its control through more capable local activity; by making it work from bottom to top, instead of, as at present, from top to bottom; by arousing the activity of the people in all public functions, so that bureaucracy will no longer be possible; by creating the habits of participating in the control of a society without personal profit or privilege.

PART II
POLITICAL CONTROL

POLITICAL CONTROL

THE chapters in this section all deal either with the suppression of political opposition to the Soviet regime or with the control of all organized means of expression for the purpose of building up socialism according to the Communist program. Within the main structure of these controls some liberties exist, even for non-Communists, but mighty few for anti-Communists, whether bourgeois or belonging to other revolutionary schools.

As conceived by Communists these controls do not mean a denial of liberty; on the contrary, they are regarded as the only assurance of the class liberties of workers and poorer peasants, through suppressing their enemies and keeping the road open for their advance to socialism.

But from the standpoint of the compulsions of the State—the use of its police power—all these controls must be regarded as repressive forces, denying freedom of expression to some sections of the people, even among the workers and peasants themselves. They go far beyond the protection of the State from the danger of violent overthrow. The issue around which these controls center is not only the simple primary conflict between revolution and counter-revolution, between proletarian and bourgeois ideas: it is complicated by far narrower issues—by the domination of the Communist

Party over the direction of the workers' and peasants' state; by the leadership of that party by a comparatively small number of intellectuals anxious to hold power; and by the evils and dangers of narrow and intolerant authority inherent in all systems of censorship and unchecked control. The history of conflict in the Communist Party itself bears eloquent testimony to the fact that the issue of control is not solely one of disinterested protection of the Revolution.

These chapters deal in more detail with the denial of liberties as conceived in the bourgeois world than do the preceding chapters on "liberties." This more detailed treatment is due to the fact: first, that these phases of the dictatorship are subjects of universal controversy and criticism outside Russia, and need careful statement; second, that they are important to an understanding of just how much and what sort of liberty does exist in Soviet Russia; and third, that their relation to the Communist conception of class liberties for the workers and peasants is of primary importance in understanding just what those liberties mean.

A Communist writing on these controls would doubtless describe them all as guarantees of workers' and peasants' liberty, showing how the suppression of opposition and the directing force of the censorship fits into the scheme of building a free society. I am concerned, however, only with stating the facts as fairly as possible, at the same time giving to the Soviet regime the benefit of comparisons with the czarist regime and with other dictatorships—for such comparisons in most cases are in its favor. However drastic their repression and control, they are no more to be condemned than the similar practices of any government which feels its power threatened.

CHAPTER IX

THE CONTROL OF THE PRESS AND OF PRINTING

THE most important of the controls exercised by the dictatorship is that on all sources of information: the press and publications. It far outweighs in its effects the more dramatic police activities of the G.P.U., for it concerns not the minority of active opponents but the whole population of Russia.

The Soviet Constitution insures to the workers "effective liberty of opinion" by putting "an end to the dependence of the press upon capital; transferring to the working class and the peasants all the technical and material resources necessary for the publication of newspapers, books, pamphlets, and other printed matter."

This is a guarantee, not for the freedom of the press, but for its control in the interests of the workers and peasants. Stalin, answering a question by foreign delegates to the Tenth Anniversary Celebration, put the case as the Communists see it in saying:

"Freedom for the bourgeois press does not exist in the Soviet Union. . . . There is no other country in the world where such an all-embracing press freedom for the proletariat exists as in the Soviet Union."

But in practice this declaration of the general principle is limited by a universal censorship of the printed

word, not only to control the bourgeois opposition, but all tendencies out of harmony with the Communist Party's program. Freedom of the press exists only as the governing party interprets it in the interests of the Revolution. The censorship constitutes a control more complete and more thorough than has been achieved under any other dictatorship. It is far more comprehensive than the system in effect under the czar.

Established in 1922 following the looser controls of earlier years, it has continued in essentially the same form. Through this censorship, not only is all news matter and all editorial comment subject to direction, but also all literature, all scientific writing, and the theatre, cinema, and radio as well.

Such a censorship is justified by the Communists on two grounds: the protection of the dictatorship from counter-revolutionary forces, and the development of the Communist program and a working-class culture without the interference of bourgeois ideas in literature, art, and the social sciences. Arising first from the necessity for protection from counter-revolution, it has extended the usual powers of censorship to insure the unimpeded carrying out of the socialist reconstruction of the Union. In that positive function it differs from all other censorships in the world, for every other censorship is devoted only to upholding the status quo—or the status quo ante. How far such a control by the governing party leaves open the way to the functions of criticism, or how far it discourages creative art or scientific thinking, may be gathered from a description of the system.

The Bolsheviks are perfectly frank in their attitude to the "freedom of the press." There is no dispute as

to the facts, nor as to the political and social basis on which they rest their justification.

Even Trotsky, whose Party minority suffered from the censorship imposed upon them, told the American Labor Delegation in 1927:

“Everybody has the right to fly, but if one has not an aeroplane one will hardly succeed in making use of this right. . . . In America freedom of the press for the working class amounts to the right to buy for two cents a newspaper produced by bourgeois journalists in the interests of capitalists. . . . We have taken away from the bourgeoisie the printing works, the supplies of paper, and the paper factories. . . . We have therefore made a tremendous advance from the regime of bourgeois democracy, which gives people the right to fly, but deprives them of aeroplanes.”

As long as the dictatorship lasts in Russia, this universal censorship of the printed word will remain as one of its essential features, modified only as the achievements of the Communist program make possible a relaxation of its rigor. In the field of literature, science, and art, modifications may well be made before, for in those fields political pressure is least and enforced conformity more resisted.

The system of control is exercised in practice by five departments of the government:

First and most extensively by the *Glavlit*, a general censorship bureau under the department of education in each republic;

Second, by the Foreign Office, which controls the handling of foreign news and comments on foreign affairs, as well as the foreign correspondents in Russia;

Third, by the State telegraph news agency, which has a monopoly on all news, both into Russia from abroad and within the Union as well;

Fourth, by the G.P.U., which is represented on the Glavlit censorship board, and which has in addition extensive powers of arrest of violators of the laws and regulations, and of confiscation of printed matter after it is officially censored, if it is found to be prejudicial to the public interest;

And fifth, by the committees in each republic controlling dramatic, musical, and film productions.

In addition, the Post Office exercises a censorship over the mails under general directions from the Glavlit and the G.P.U., confiscating or returning prohibited matter received from abroad. Lists of prohibited books and magazines are kept at the post offices where mail is examined. Incoming first-class mail is also subject to inspection, though this is not officially admitted. It is a practice similar to that in most countries in time of war, without, however, an official censor's stamp upon the letters inspected. Only a small proportion of letters are opened, inspected, and sent on, the selection evidently depending upon the sources of the mail and the persons to whom it is addressed. The fact of inspection can fairly easily be determined by the marks of resealing. Mail going out of Russia is rarely opened. My own experience, which I found verified by others, was that about one out of four letters received bore the marks of resealing. The selection seemed random, save that letters from England, and bulky letters, were usually opened. I know of no letter sent to me which was

not delivered—and none of my letters out of Russia failed of delivery.

The Post Office either destroys or returns all books, pamphlets, and periodicals which are either anti-Soviet or anti-Communist, including anarchist, Socialist, and pacifist publications.

Foreign newspapers coming into Russia by mail are inspected by the Post Office under rules laid down by the Glavlit and the Foreign Office. Lists of fair and hostile papers are kept, and the hostile are destroyed. Papers on the border line are often examined, and, if there is no adverse material, are admitted. This control by the Post Office is a burdensome task, and results in much irregularity in deliveries of papers and journals from abroad. Subscribers in Russia to papers freely admitted cannot count on getting them regularly. Some get sidetracked; others come in bunches.

A story is told of a censor at a Black Sea port who held up for weeks American papers sent to American residents in the district. When they interviewed him he asked what papers they wanted first. They asked for the *Saturday Evening Post*, inquiring why he had held it up. "Why do you want that stuff?" he asked, "it's so silly." Which is a new angle on the sense of censors. But they got their papers then and since.

The laws governing publishers and printers are very strict. No printing press, not even a mimeograph machine, can operate without a permit. No printer can set up type for any copy which does not bear upon it the official approval of a censor in the Glavlit office. No changes can be made from copy, that privilege so dear to authors, without the censor's approval. Private publishers are under constant and strict super-

vision. These universal rules apply throughout the whole Union to all printing except that done officially for the Communist Party and the legislative and executive departments of the government. Even the State Publishing Department is not exempt from the censor's control.

The whole machinery of censorship operates without any fixed rules, so that it is impossible for authors and publishers to know, except in a general way, what matter is prohibited. Party decisions and orders of the higher officials of the government dictate the policy, which is flexible. Its main outlines, of course, persist; within them the censorship boards have considerable discretion.

The whole system is designed to secure unity of policy throughout the Union in handling newspapers, publications, and books, in developing the Party program, and in promoting official propaganda. Approximate uniformity between the republics is secured through control of the Glavlit departments by the Party, and also through the device of putting on their working committees, as active assistant managers, representatives of the G.P.U. and of the War Department, both directed from Moscow. The G.P.U. men keep an eye out for all anti-Soviet and anti-Party tendencies; the War Department men for military protection and the exposure of military secrets. Each Glavlit works as a little committee under the local commissar of education, with a manager heading its staff.

The real control of the Glavlits is in fact not local, but federal, though with considerable autonomy in matters of local interest. Every big political subdivision has a representative of the Glavlit to control local job printing and town newspapers and periodicals. In the Russian republic alone there are almost three hundred employees, of whom about two hundred work

away from the central office at Moscow. The employees who do the vast job of censorship are divided into sections dealing with the press, books, periodicals, cinema, radio, and the theatre.

In some newspaper offices not under a Communist editor an agent of the censorship sits regularly to pass on all copy before it is set up. This is done also in the cases of papers where either the directors are inexperienced or there have been complaints as to the handling of news. Most papers go to press without the censor's intervention, because almost all are edited by Communists; but they are all carefully watched, and warned when they print items or comments out of harmony with the government's policies. They are also watched by the Foreign Office in relation to foreign news and their comment on it. I was told, for example, that the Soviet press is not permitted to caricature the heads of states with which Russia is trying to maintain friendly relations. Therefore, while the Soviet press is full of caricatures of the British Foreign Minister, no such indulgences are tolerated toward Hindenburg, the Shah of Persia or the Emir of Afghanistan.

Despite the precautions to secure uniformity, the Glavlit censorship differs considerably in the different republics. Away from Moscow the control is less rigorous. Much depends on the viewpoint and prejudices of the local managers of the bureaus.

In general, the censorship does not approve any matter which reflects a capitalist viewpoint, or which even indirectly attacks the idea of proletarian dictatorship, or which is critical of the Communist regime, or which suggests other policies than those of the Party or the government, or which is anti-Marxist, or which runs counter to the official policy on religion, racial and mi-

nority freedom, or international relations. No pacifist or anti-militarist material can get by—unless an established classic like Tolstoi's work—nor any fiction or verse which belittles or ridicules Communism or Communists.

Bukharin, speaking of the policy of the censorship (in November, 1927) said:

“We do not go into ecstasies when all kinds of idealistic brochures, idealistic philosophy, books of religious character, etc., are distributed. In this respect we are intolerant. But from all the ideologic treasures which mankind has created up to the present, we take the best as our scientific theories: materialism, Marxism. Armed with these instruments and with these noble weapons we fight against foreign influences and ideologies. In our country it is absolutely impossible to start a case against Darwinism, as was done in the country of bourgeois democracy, the United States. Any judge in our country who came forward against Darwinism would be put into a cage.

“We believe that so long as a united leadership is necessary to the proletariat we must nip in the bud everything that disrupts and poisons the working class. We rely upon Marxism, the ideology of the proletariat. We make of Marxism our theory of State, which we teach in all our schools and universities. We are not inclined to feel ashamed when people tell us that we are ‘one-sided.’ Our one-sidedness consists in our loyalty to the proletarian fight and in hostility towards bourgeois influence.”

The censorship on books bears probably with greater weight than that on other publications because of the constant need of watching authors of diverse political and economic viewpoints, much of whose material is out of harmony with the Soviet program. The selection of material is exceedingly careful. All of it with any social significance must fall within the general Marxist conception. The publishing and distribution of books throughout Russia is therefore almost exclusively in the hands of the government. The State Publishing House output of books is enormous—ten times the number of titles, and many times the number of copies printed, as under the czar's regime. It is the greatest publishing house in the world. Private publishers exist—but with difficulty. Bookshops abound everywhere, and the sale of cheap books has grown enormously. Private bookshops, comparatively few, are licensed and carefully supervised.

The censorship works on an author about as follows, unless he is a Communist or an active sympathizer. First he prepares his manuscript with an eye to what he knows is the censor's policy. He writes with the censor at his elbow. His manuscript completed, he either finds a publisher—a State publisher or one of the few private establishments—or he goes to the censor first. He must get by both to see his work in print.

His manuscript submitted to the censor, he waits—sometimes months in that busy office—for his reply. He gets either a rejection, approval, or suggestions for changes. With a final approval he goes to his publisher. Not a word can thereafter be changed. When printed his publisher submits a copy to the censor—and

waits. A release order finally comes, and the book may go to the bookshops.

In some few cases even at this point the G.P.U. has stepped in to confiscate the whole edition, as it did with two books published by Golos Truda, the anarchist-syndicalist bookshop in Moscow—one on *What the Syndicalists Want*, the other *In Memory of Bakunin*. They were a total loss, and no redress could be secured, nor any explanation as to why the action was taken after the censor had approved them. But the G.P.U. is supreme in matters affecting public safety from counter-revolution—including anarchist ideas—and no explanations are necessary.

Considering the regime's severity to all organized opposition, it is remarkable that anarchists are allowed to publish anything at all, or even to maintain a bookshop—and that, on a main thoroughfare opposite the entrance to the University. Only the one in Moscow is tolerated, presumably because there it is under the eye of the central authorities. It is suggested that the regime capitalizes the existence of this one bookshop as evidence of its tolerance of anarchists—though I did not hear any such claim made by Communists. The G.P.U. takes no chances on the shop's becoming a center for organizing opposition, and every once in a while exiles the manager. But new managers are found to take the risk, and the shop struggles on, harrassed by poverty, and obstacles.

One translator of religious books, typical of many others, told me of his difficulties with the censor in Leningrad. He let through a book on Abelard because it was evident that Abelard was a rebel against the church of his time. But he was so ignorant of literature that when the translator submitted a translation of

Dante he was dealt with as though he were the author. He found difficulty with all his highbrow translations; the censor was interested only in books which workers and peasants could read. Even psychology was considered a dangerous subject because it wasn't Marxist.

The same rules apply to translations of foreign books as do to Russian manuscripts. An amusing illustration of how they work out came to my attention in Moscow. A young man had translated H. G. Wells' *The World of William Clissold*, in which there is an attack on Marxism. He found a publisher, but the censor refused approval. He then rewrote the portion of the novel attacking Marx, omitting the worst of it and changing the rest into an endorsement. With these changes Wells passed the censor.

The feeling throughout Russia among intellectuals who are not Communists is doubtless one of being mentally imprisoned. The political reasons for controlling them are apparent; but the effect is significant in the development of any but a narrow literature conceived in propagandist terms. An anonymous appeal to Western writers from a group of Russian writers in May, 1927, states their case. They say in an appeal published generally in the European press:

"We appeal to you writers of the world. How is it that with all your insight into the human soul and the spirit of epochs in nations you take no heed of us Russians, whose free speech is utterly suppressed. You have been brought up on the works of great masters, some of whom were of our race. How is it, then, that you say nothing when the literature of a great country is being stifled? . . .

"Idealism, which is so characteristic of Russian

literature, is considered a crime. Our classics that have an idealistic tendency are eliminated from public libraries. This fate is shared by the works of historians and philosophers who are opposed to materialism. Modern writers suspected of idealism have no chance of ever seeing their works in print. They are treated as enemies and destroyers of the present social order, are dismissed from every post, and deprived of the means of earning their living."

The official control by the censorship is reinforced by a system less official but equally effective: the selection by agreement among Communists of writers to be encouraged and patronized. The Party's insistence upon developing a proletarian literature confined it for a long time to Party members, to worker and peasant writers, and to those intellectuals who accepted the Revolution in principle. But at the thirteenth congress of the Party in 1926 the favoritism shown to proletarian writers was modified in favor of freer competition. Since the Party's resolutions practically determine the official policy, the essential parts of them bear quotation:

"The general policy [toward writers sympathetic in a general way, but not Communist] should be one of tactful and cautious relations; i.e., an approach which will establish the most promising position for their rapid acceptance of Communist ideology. . . .

"The Party should also oppose every attempt to establish a purely hothouse proletarian literature. . . . Communist criticism should expel from its household the tone of literary command. Only

when it depends on the superiority of its ideas will this criticism have a deep educational significance.

"The Party should express itself as in favor of free competition between the various groups and currents in literature. Any other solution of the question would be an official bureaucratic pseudo-decision. While supporting materially and morally the proletarian and proletarian-peasant literature, and supporting also the sympathizers, the Party cannot present a monopoly to any particular group, not even to the proletariat: this would mean, before all, disaster to proletarian literature.

"The Party should use every means to root out attempts at self-appointed and incompetent administrative meddling in literary affairs. The Party should make a careful selection of persons in those departments which deal with publication, in order to secure a really proper, useful, and tactful guidance of our literature."

Non-Communist writers, commenting on this tendency to liberalize control, are skeptical of the virtues of any control at all. One of the best known of them says:

"The forces of the proletarian dictatorship are insufficient to be realized in culture. . . . In bourgeois forms we have allowed the most mediocre talents, just as in revolutionary. . . . The control of authorship has recently belonged to the censor. Now he has divided this control with the contemporary publisher. The philosophy of drawing lots cooperates with the philosophy of sufferance."

The censorship of news in Russia is in the hands of the Foreign Office. Its function is to watch all news coming into and going out of Russia for two purposes: first, to control the handling of news and comment on foreign affairs by the Russian press; and second, to insure a fair handling of Russian news by foreign correspondents living in Russia. The State telegraph agency, which handles all wire news in and out of Russia, is under control of the Foreign Office.

The control of foreign correspondents is accomplished in two ways: first, through their admission to Russia; and second, through examination of their wire dispatches. Dispatches by mail are not examined, and can be checked up only by reading the foreign press. Control over the admission of correspondents is rigid. Correspondents of hostile papers are not admitted, nor are hostile correspondents of papers whose fair representatives might be admitted. A hostile paper is one which is regarded as systematically misrepresenting conditions in Soviet Russia.

The Bolsheviks do not object to criticism, and even reconcile themselves to foreign journals presenting news from enemy sources, provided the Bolshevik side is also presented. For instance, the *New York Times*, which cannot be regarded as a friend of Russia, has had a correspondent in Moscow ever since the Revolution; but the *Chicago Tribune* and the *London Times* are denied representatives. Even such hostile papers would be permitted to send in representatives, according to the Foreign Office, if they showed over a period of three to six months an intention of dealing fairly with Russian news. British newspapers, unlike the American and German, have had very few correspondents in Russia. Only one was there during my visit in 1927. Some re-⁹

fuse to send correspondents, they say, because of the censorship. Others have been so hostile that their representatives would not be admitted. Only American and German press agencies and leading newspapers are well represented in Russia.

No Socialist paper is permitted to have a representative in Russia, because all of them have been uniformly hostile. Answering an inquiry by foreign labor delegates on the occasion of the tenth anniversary, Stalin said of the Berlin *Vorwaerts* (Socialist):

“The Social-Democratic press abroad, particularly the Berlin *Vorwaerts*, has surpassed the bourgeois press in its unheard-of calumnies and slanders against the Soviet Union. . . . Many bourgeois newspapers behave themselves much more decently and objectively in the struggle against the Soviet Union. . . . If the *Vorwaerts* behaved itself no worse than a normal bourgeois newspaper, then its representative would certainly find a place in the Soviet Union. . . .”

The Soviet government, however, admitted to Russia in 1927 Abraham Cahan, editor of the *New York Daily Forward*, a Jewish Socialist paper long hostile to the Soviet regime. Mr. Cahan was admitted primarily because of his interest in the Jewish colonization project, but doubtless in the hope that a journey to Russia would modify his opposition—a hope justified by Mr. Cahan's reports of his observations.

Control over correspondents' dispatches is in the hands of an official censor in the Foreign Office, to whom correspondents “are invited” to submit their cable dispatches for approval before filing them in the tele-

graph office, which cannot accept unapproved press dispatches. This system is in effect, however, only in Moscow, where practically all the correspondents are located. If a correspondent travels about Russia and wishes to cable from some other place the Foreign Office gives him a document permitting him to file a dispatch at any telegraph office. This, of course, is done only for trusted correspondents. All others must wire their dispatches to Moscow, where they are submitted to the Foreign Office before being cabled.

The Foreign Office maintains that its censorship is solely in the interests of "fairness and accuracy," and that it never censors opinion. According to the correspondents, this general principle is usually observed. They have little complaint of the censorship, which they describe as "the lightest possible." Dispatches are not blue-pencilled. If a change is desired the censor usually telephones the correspondent, asking if he would mind changing a phrase or sentence; or in serious matters he may ask the correspondent to discuss the point in person.

On the censorship of opinion, one incident told me in Moscow will indicate how far it goes. When one correspondent filed a dispatch in the summer of 1927 referring to the red terror, the censor called him up and asked him if he minded putting those words in quotation marks. Another correspondent who had referred to the "war danger," was called up and asked if he minded taking the quotation marks off. The war danger officially existed; the red terror did not.

One correspondent who sent a dispatch on the night of the big police raids in Moscow in June, 1927, following the murder of the Soviet ambassador at Warsaw, alleged that "thousands were being arrested." He was

told that the censor could not approve such an exaggerated statement, but would let him say "over a thousand." Subsequent estimates showed that the censor was nearer right than the correspondent.

The Foreign Office keeps close watch on correspondents through reading the foreign press. It also sizes up their point of view. One type of correspondent, of whom there have been a number in Moscow, is the man who "lies by telling the truth." He selects from the Russian press for his dispatches all the damaging articles he can find, omitting anything favorable to the Soviet regime. The censor cannot call him to account for inaccuracy, but he is warned that if his paper's policy is to print only damaging news his leave to stay will not be renewed. Since the civil war ended in 1921 there have been only two actual expulsions of correspondents from the country—one English, one American. But some have not been readmitted after going out.

What are the liberties of the press under the Soviets? From a western, bourgeois point of view there are, of course, none. But the western view ignores the fact, emphasized by the Bolsheviks, that freedom of the press under capitalism means in effect the overwhelming domination by the property-minded capitalist press. Revolutionary or radical labor papers often suffer persecution by the government or business forces and are usually suppressed or rendered harmless at times of crisis.

They point out further that while the control of the press is absolute in Russia, it is directed in the interests of the masses of the people, the workers and peasants, as an essential part of the program of building socialism. They cannot tolerate, in tackling the enormous difficulties of that job, the distractions and dangers of

either an opposition press or of tendencies varying from the established Party program.

The output of newspapers has enormously increased under the drive to arouse popular interest—their circulation being four times as great as before the Revolution. The press is on the whole lively, interesting, well-written—like the better European papers and quite unlike American papers padded with features and advertising. Foreign news in the Russian press is as complete and about as fairly treated as in other countries, for most of the dispatches are those of the great international news agencies, with which the Russian Telegraph Agency is allied. News out of Russia through the same agency is less free, for the sources are all officially controlled. Foreign correspondents send out their news with very little restriction though they are limited by their sources. Domestic news is highly colored with propaganda, practically all of it from official sources. What is suppressed is more significant of the nature of the censorship than what is printed—and that is difficult to appraise.

But it must not be assumed that the press is barren of criticism of the regime. Indeed it is full of it—from Party meetings and in letters from the thousands of worker and peasant correspondents all over the Union. But it must all be helpful criticism, attacking bad administration or ill-advised regulations, and directed toward the upbuilding of Russia according to the Soviet objectives. No criticism in opposition to the regime itself or its general program is tolerated.

The average Russian, reading only his own language, thus has access to the news of the world, as fairly stated as in capitalist countries, but played up in relation to the workers' struggle; and to his home news consider-

ably colored. Russians reading other languages can get liberal foreign newspapers and periodicals whose policies are not anti-Soviet, or which, if hostile editorially, at least print the Soviet side.

The censorship in general—of press and publications—has obviously gone further than political or cultural necessities dictate. It has at times and in places shown such bureaucratic slowness, such stupidity and narrow intolerance, as to call down the condemnation of higher officials and to arouse Party congresses. But those are evils inherent in any censorship, made particularly acute in a country with none too many persons qualified at best for so difficult a task, and in a time of changing policies and of active struggle with enemies at home and abroad.

It is significant of the effectiveness of the control and of a not too violent opposition that no illegal press exists in Russia—alone of all the dictatorships. Up to 1923 or 1924 illegal political publications kept up a harried existence. Occasionally some opposing group has since gotten out manifestos on a mimeograph. In 1927 some Opposition Communists took the desperate recourse to an illegal printing press because they were unable to get their case into the Party papers.

The censorship is regarded primarily as a measure of social defense in a period of active struggle and threatened war with the enemies of Soviet Russia. There is no chance of its letting up until the regime feels secure from counter-revolution and foreign intervention; and probably not until the advances along the road to socialism give the Communist Party an assured sense of security and success.

CHAPTER X

CONTROL OF THE THEATRE, CINEMA, AND RADIO

ALL public spectacles—theatre, films, music—are under control of a special commission in each republic known as the Repertory Control Commission, composed of three members, one appointed by the Glavlit, one by the political education committee of the Department of Education, one by the Department of the Interior. This combination unifies its policy with that of the censorship and with the political propaganda of the Communist Party. To insure wider participation it is assisted in framing its general policies by a council representing the departments of education, the G.P.U., the political department of the film industry, and the trade union of art workers, thus combining educational purposes, political control, and the interests of the artists and actors.

No public spectacle of any sort may be given without permission of the Repertory Control Commission. Its policy is determined and made known by the publication of lists of works authorized and forbidden for public performance. Even the "method of carrying out the control" is entrusted to the commission, so that in effect no public performance of any sort is free of it. An act in a burlesque show, for instance, must be submitted in advance, including even the words of songs. Supervision of all performances is lodged with the De-

partment of the Interior (which controls the police). It may prevent performances prohibited by the decrees. In the counties and villages the local representatives of the censorship control all public performances. The commission itself has a right to close, through the G.P.U. or action in court, any spectacle violating its decisions.

While some theatres in Russia are under private auspices, all the important theatres are either under governmental auspices—subsidized and controlled—or are enterprises of the trade unions and educational associations. The selection of plays, while subject to the censorship, is responsive to the demands of public interest. The whole atmosphere of the Russian theatre is alive with the social problems of contemporary life, and with the dramatic events of the Revolution—all treated from the view-point of the purposes of the regime. A few plays out of harmony with it have been permitted on the demand of artists—one, a play with counter-revolutionary implications permitted, it is said, on an ultimatum from Stanislavsky of the Moscow Art Theatre to quit if it was not allowed. But the popular demand everywhere, it appears, is for plays on the themes of workers' and peasants' problems—in marked contrast to the themes of sex and individual struggle which mark the theatre of the bourgeois world.

The cinema, immensely popular, is completely under government control. The importation, production, distribution, and export of films is a monopoly of the *Sovkino*, a chartered government corporation like other industrial trusts. Each republic has its own cinema department for the distribution of films, and several for their production. All scenarios before being produced must have the approval of the Glavlit censorship. Ex-

hibition places belong to many different organizations, public and private, which rent films from the local departments of distribution. The film industry has so grown in Russia that over half the films now shown are home-produced—the rest imported, chiefly from America. Russian films are of so high an artistic standard and so dramatic in their appeal that they are increasingly being sold abroad. Interest in the cinema has grown in Russia even more than in other countries, not only because of its cheapness as a form of popular entertainment, but because of its wide use as a means of education and propaganda, as well as for the dissemination of news.

All films, both those produced at home and those imported from abroad, are subject to the Glavlit censorship, whose rules are similar to those in effect for books and periodicals. Pictures of bourgeois life, of vice, and of slapstick comedy are generally prohibited. The authorities have let by some American slapstick farces when they have been exceptionally well made, but the tendency is against the upper-class themes and manners so popular at Hollywood. The general aim is to keep films on a high level of drama and education. The whole direction of the Soviet film industry naturally reflects propaganda for proletarian culture and against bourgeois conceptions of life, of private profit, luxury, and leisure.

Considerable criticism has been voiced against the Sovkino by Communists themselves because of its effort to produce commercially successful films alleged to be, according to a Komsomol journal, "pitiful, falsely-named artistic pictures in the style of Nat Pinkerton; pictures which are imbued with the bourgeois spirit of the western cinemas."

The head of the Sovkino answered these attacks by saying:

“They want to force us to produce only political and educational themes, whereas . . . we are a commercial organization, and are desirous of making profits [to increase the scope of the work]. All political and educational functions must be looked upon as a more distant aim. . . . As for their ideology, let the Repertory Control Commission see to it. . . . If one hundred percent of our pictures are chosen only because they suit a given ideology, and not because of their artistic value or their interest, funds will not be forthcoming. . . . Besides the films of workmen and peasants it is necessary to have a series of pictures of greater interest.”

This struggle between propagandists on the one hand and the producers' commercial problems on the other is characteristic of much of Soviet life, significant chiefly in this field because of the obviously greater public appeal of human interest themes, even bourgeois, than of Communist propaganda.

The control of the radio is as completely in the government's hands as that of the cinema. Though there is nothing to prevent radio listeners from tuning in on bourgeois programs in other countries, broadcasting is exclusively a government monopoly under the Department of Posts and Telegraphs. Some of its cost, which is paid entirely by the government, is made up by the sale of apparatus and by a tax on sets.

The programs are primarily educational and political,

but in other respects do not differ from those in other countries. Public meetings, dramas, operas, and concerts are broadcast,—big events by a hook-up of stations to reach the whole Union. All associations in the Union have the legal right to install microphones to broadcast their meetings, subject, however, to the control of a local committee's decision as to what programs are worth broadcasting. Their decisions follow the usual lines of the censorship, but in the field of music and literature they endeavor to popularize new authors and artists.

The biggest broadcasting stations are under federal control from Moscow, each directed by a committee working under the Department of Posts and Telegraphs. Programs are all approved in advance by a committee composed of representatives of the Department of Education, the State News Agency, the Department of Posts and Telegraphs, and of the censorship. The stations which are not under federal control—about half the total—are censored by committees of the local governments made up in the same way as the federal. The educational and political programs follow the usual lines of Communist Party policy. Party controversies are not allowed over the radio, but the majority uses it to announce Party decisions. The opposition (if any) may then be attacked—not before. No direct anti-religious propaganda, and of course no religious propaganda of any sort, is allowed; but scientific associations may broadcast material used in the general campaign against religious superstition. On such occasions as Christmas, explanations of the pagan origins of the festival are permitted—an indirect form of anti-religious propaganda.

The use of the radio, popular anyhow, has been par-

ticularly stimulated in Russia as part of the educational program. Peasants who cannot read at least can listen. Special efforts have therefore been made to install loudspeakers in the villages, through which news, practical education, political propäganda, and entertainment are all given regularly. The department estimates that there are an average of one hundred peasant listeners for each one of the 46,000 village loud speakers. The growth of the radio in the country has been phenomenal. Of the 300,000 receiving sets in Central Russia alone, one-third are among the peasants, as against somewhat less than one-half among the city workers. The remainder is distributed among other classes and public and private societies.

CHAPTER XI

CONTROL OF ORGANIZATIONS AND MEETINGS

THE Soviet Constitution assures the workers and peasants "complete freedom of meeting" and "liberty of association" by placing at their disposal "all premises convenient for public gatherings" and lending "all its material and moral assistance to help them to unite and organize themselves."

While this guarantee speaks of "complete" freedom of meeting for workers and peasants, that right exists only for organizations approved by the Soviet state through a system of registration. In the earlier years there were no provisions for registration and therefore considerable freedom of meeting existed, subject to the Tcheka's interference and the difficulty of getting meeting places. Up to 1921 the Social Democratic Party and the Social Revolutionists maintained their organizations openly and published their papers, though with great difficulty; but they were suppressed shortly after because many of their members had joined the armed struggle against the Bolsheviki.

After intervention and civil war ended in 1921, and when the regime could settle down into more stable methods, a carefully organized control was established over all associations and meetings as well as the censorship over printing and publications. None but an approved organization could continue to exist. No

public meetings but those officially approved in advance could be held. The private routine meetings of members of registered organizations are, of course, held without restriction. That control, established in 1922, has continued practically without change. The only organizations exempt from its provisions are the trade unions affiliated with the all-Russian Federation, and the Communist Party. Even in the Communist Party control of meetings is strict. None is legal unless called by authorized officials. Thus the meetings of the Opposition in the Party, called by members, have been illegal, and some of them for that reason as secret as a conspiracy. In all schools and universities registration and permits are required of all students' organizations, but they may hold meetings on the school premises subject only to faculty control.

The machinery by which this expansive control reaches every association and every public meeting in the Soviet Union is run by the Departments of the Interior of each republic, which direct the police, and special agents for this work are located in each department and at most county seats. In order to register, an association must file a detailed statement of its purposes, membership, and form of control, and pay a \$50 fee. If registration is refused, the reasons must be stated so that the organization may appeal to the highest authorities of the republic. When approved, the organization is responsible thereafter for keeping on file with the authorities complete lists of members and officers. No public meetings may be held without advance notice of at least a month, stating the exact program and purpose. When approved, no deviation from the program is permitted, on penalty of revoking the organization's charter. While the G.P.U. has no official relation to the ad-

ministration of these laws, nevertheless under its broad powers it keeps a careful eye on all organizations and meetings.

On paper the law is strict, but its administration is not uniformly so. Away from the big centers it is responsive to local needs. And even in the cities exceptions are often made to arrange meetings more quickly—and rarely, organizations are permitted to exist without registration. One notable example of that is the Vegetarian Society of Moscow, composed of followers of Tolstoi, who have had their application on file since 1922. They existed under the old regime—and have continued during the new. They are neither approved nor prohibited, and carry on their activities without interference. They do not notify the authorities of their meetings, at which they discuss freely such subjects as anti-militarism and pacifism. But these meetings are, of course, private and confined to their members and friends. I was invited to speak to them on "Militarism in the United States"—a safe subject—and found the audience as free as any in the United States in asking questions even on political issues with obvious anti-Soviet bias. One asked, with the evident approval of the audience, if I did not think a working-class dictatorship could be just as tyrannical as a capitalist dictatorship!

The only disadvantage of non-registration is lack of legal standing for making contracts, and a feeling of insecurity as to the future. The anarchists in Moscow were permitted to hold a public meeting in 1926 in which some plain speaking was indulged in without interference or penalty, and small discussion meetings of anarchists have been held regularly in the Kropotkin Museum in Moscow without permit. As in all coun-

tries with similarly centralized control, exceptions are more generally made or tolerated at the center than elsewhere. The higher authorities know what is going on and can appraise it, while petty officials would fear to take the risk.

This universal control of meetings and organizations might be presumed to put a damper on the formation of private associations. It has, of course, had that effect on all anti-Soviet organizations or those out of harmony with the regime's program, except the religious organizations—which have little political significance. But within the general structure of Soviet life, an amazing number of exceedingly large and vigorous associations has grown up. Most of them of general character, like MOPR, the society for the relief of political prisoners (in capitalist countries), and the society for homeless children, are inspired and led by Communists. Others of special character are workers' and peasants' unions, cooperatives, *artels*,* and relief organizations, and the associations to develop the cultural life of the national minorities.

The network of organizations is vastly greater than in the days of the czar, and the total membership in proportion to the population is far greater than in any other peasant country. In most countries private associations make the blood and energy of the social body, but their chief driving power in capitalist countries is private property. In Russia the central driving power is the Communist Party, working through the state machinery and semi-private organizations. But the peasants and workers are taking an increasing share in the direction of their own organizations, especially lo-

* A simple form of producers' cooperative.

cally. The Communists recognize that only by means of greater participation in control of their organizations can the resources of personal initiative and group energy be successfully aroused. But the Communists control at the top.

A large portion of the membership of the big organizations is inactive, as it is everywhere. Many join the general organizations such as MOPR, because their neighbors do, or from sentiment, or from fear of losing jobs or being suspected as opponents, or because their boss suggests it, or in some cases because they are inscribed anyhow and their dues deducted from their pay. The compulsion of the Communist regime in forcing dues-paying is doubtless fairly extensive, but this is recognized as an artificial makeshift which defeats the ends in view, and is therefore discouraged. Indeed the practice is admitted only with reluctance.

Private organizations differ in their relations to the State's active control. Some of them, like the religious, are almost free of it, except as to registration; some are directed by Communists as part of the regime but are not under State control; while all Party organizations are virtually arms of the State. Of the organizations free of State direction, the religious are the most numerous and important, the cultural associations of national minorities next. Others less numerous are recreation clubs, theatrical companies, and private companies engaged in trade or manufacture—concessionaires and Nepmen.

Those which are part of the general Soviet scheme, effectively directed by the Communists in their higher central organs, but not under direct State control, are the trade unions, the cooperatives, the great societies of MOPR, the Mutual Aid for relief work by the peasants

for the sick, aged, infirm, and destitute, the Homeless Children's Aid Society, and the association raising funds for air defense. These latter general organizations are but a few of the largest, running up into hundreds of thousands of members each.

The Party organizations relate to the carrying out of the Communist-State program. They are all headed by Communists, and composed of Communists or Communists-to-be. Chief among them are the Komsomols, or Communist youth; the Pioneers, their juniors; and the anti-religious society for carrying on the campaign against clericalism, superstitions, and all religious concepts.

How free are the associations not under direct State control? How free are the trade unions and cooperatives, the chief economic organizations of the workers and peasants? What rights and liberties do these associations enjoy, and what liberties do individual members have within them?

These are crucial questions in a state based on workers' and peasants' power. They are not so crucial for the non-economic organizations whose rôle does not affect political and industrial progress. Their freedom is significant only as it affects the results they strive for, as it enlists energy and participation. On the whole they are free enough to achieve these purposes.

The unions and cooperatives are central to the building up of socialism. Under military Communism (1918-1921) they were arms of the State under central bureaucratic direction. Their activities became perfunctory; initiative was killed. In 1922 under the new economic policy they became nominally independent, but continued under Communist direction. In the pe-

riod of their recovery as semi-independent organizations, they received subsidies from the State. Since 1923 they have financed themselves by voluntary dues. Their memberships have greatly increased, the trade unions numbering among their members in 1928 over nine-tenths of all workers. Their relation to the State is close. They are directed at the top by Communists. Functionally they are free, the unions to protect their members against employers, whether State or private, the cooperatives to buy and sell.

The Russian trade unions have all the rights and functions of trade unions elsewhere, with the exceedingly important difference that they maintain a relation to State industry roughly analogous to that of certain company unions to employers in the United States. They share in responsibility for increased production, because they, too, are part of a workers' state. They accept State policies in all political and economic matters because they are the basis of the workers' state, and any conflict between them would weaken the State. In return they influence the State machine by participation in it at all points affecting workers' interests. But it must be remembered that all the unions are official, members of a single federation. No independent unions would be tolerated, and there is probably little desire for any. Workers are not compelled to join them as they were during the period of military Communism, but it is exceedingly difficult to get a job without joining a union.

In addition to rights and privileges, the Russian unions enjoy a far greater control of working conditions than they do in other countries. They play a dominant part. In all industrial matters they are consulted. Their

relation to the State as expressed by Tomskey, the head of the trade unions, is one of "interdependence." Says he:

"The nature of this relationship is such that . . . the activity of the unions reacts as much on the State as it does on the unions themselves."

But it must also be remembered that, as Tomskey put it:

". . . The trade union movement has been, is, and will be directed by the Communist Party in the most centralized fashion."

That, however, does not mean that the union members are robbed of initiative; indeed they are exceedingly active, particularly in their local shop interests.

Such a system necessarily subordinates the unions in larger issues of policy to the State and the Party. It tends also to deprive them of that militancy in protecting workers' interests which marks unions which have nothing in common with their employers. Consequently some dissatisfaction has arisen in certain sections of the unions, voiced in a vague demand for "free unions," for less sacrifice of workers' wage interests to increased production, and for a more liberal exercise of the right to strike.

The right to strike exists in law, but it is considerably limited in practice by provisions for arbitration—binding on the employer only. No strike is legal without the approval of the central authority of the union. An independent shop strike is therefore against the union constitution. The strike is looked upon as a weapon of last resort which should not be used if any other form of pressure will achieve results. Strikes in

private industry are, of course, more frequent and easier than in State industry.

Inside the unions the activity of members in a shop revolves around two separate groups: the shop committee, which is the active unit on which the unions are built, and the Communist cell, composed of the Party members of the shop. One or more of the Party cell members are almost invariably on the shop committee, and tend to lead it. Questions in the shop are usually considered by both groups, the cell first, which endeavors to impress its views and decisions on the shop committee. Decisions of the Communist Party affecting the unions are carried to the local by the cells, who endeavor to secure approval by the non-Communist members. It must be borne in mind that Communists in the shops, as in all other organizations in Russia, are in a small minority. Of the ten million workers in unions, not more than seven to eight percent are Communists (three quarters of a million—two-thirds of the Party membership in 1927).

Individual members of unions have about the same rights and duties as in other countries. They are, however, better protected in holding their jobs, and cannot be discharged except with the consent of their union officials. Criticism of the management of the union, of industry, and of government policies affecting unions is free and vigorous, though in times past it has sometimes met with expulsion or attentions from the G.P.U. Members are not, of course, free to advocate other forms of unions, or to champion syndicalist or Socialist ideas of tactics. In some cases where they have done so, union members have been arrested and exiled.

I met one young syndicalist workingman, now exiled abroad and living in Paris, whose sole offense was dis-

tributing mimeographed circulars near factories in Moscow, advocating independent trade unions in order to free the workers from Communist pressure for greater production and from restrictions on agitation for increased wages. He was arrested, imprisoned in an isolator, and later permitted to go abroad on the plea of foreign labor delegates. He knew of a number of other workingmen imprisoned for similar activities, including several of his own group.

Former Mensheviks or Social Revolutionists, still numerous in the unions, are now not expelled even when critical. But their criticism must be "constructive,"—intended to remedy the evils and defects of the accepted system and program, not to attack its purposes. Such hostile criticism, futile as it is, is treated as obstruction, and workers persisting in it are either blacklisted so that employment is hard to get, or expelled from the union in more serious cases, or, in aggravated and rare cases, even exiled or imprisoned.

But the general policy is to encourage "helpful" criticism and the fullest rank and file participation in solving industrial problems, a process not altogether easy in view of the relations of the unions to the State.

Admission to the unions is on the same basis as in other countries, but it is difficult for young people wanting to learn a trade, especially in times of unemployment. It is particularly difficult for the children of bourgeois parents to get into the unions. Though discrimination is not officially admitted, it is practiced—naturally enough in view of the general policy. Without union membership jobs are hard to get—for all industries give preference to union members—and without a trade a union card is hard to get. This difficulty will be remedied only as unemployment decreases.

The cooperatives, not exercising so vital a function in the Soviet State, are freer to act than the unions. Their strength lies in the villages and small towns, where they controlled in 1927 between one-third and one-half of the trade. Communist cells operate in them as they do in the unions, as an activating force. An authoritative Communist book on cooperation says that:

“. . . it is necessary to aim toward a situation when the fundamental sections of the cooperative movement in a given region will be headed by members of the Party committees.”

It warns, however, that

“the Party faction must not replace the managing board, the non-Party members of which must take a most active part in the work.”

The higher cooperative organs show a larger proportion of Communists than the lower. Control of the major decisions on trade policies lies with the State, which exercises a monopoly over all import and export trade. Under general regulations the central cooperative organization exercises wide functions in buying and selling both abroad and inside the Union.

The cooperatives, therefore, are far freer to act in conducting their business than any private business associations. They occupy a privileged position in the Soviet scheme. They are, however, less free than cooperatives in other countries, a loss more than offset by the constant stimulus of the regime to their growth and success as an integral part of the national economy.

CHAPTER XII

FREEDOM OF TRAVEL AND OF RESIDENCE

TRAVEL in the Soviet Union, whether by Russians or foreigners, is under restrictions similar to those in force in many European countries. Every person in Russia is registered at his home-town, and those desiring to travel within the Union must carry some card of identification. Any document serves the purpose: birth certificate or trade union or other membership card. No traveler may legally remain longer than two days in any place without registering with the local Soviet. This provision applies to all citizens and foreigners without exception, including officials of the government. While this regulation is comprehensive enough on the books, it is lax in practice. It is strictly enforced in the case of travelers stopping at hotels, but those going to private houses are not checked up.

This system of control is designed to keep track more easily of political activity, of missing persons, and of mail deliveries, and to help control crime. Under the czar, the similar system was more exacting in requiring every citizen to carry a domestic passport.

In controlling the travel of Russian citizens abroad and of foreigners to Russia, however, the regulations are much more strict than those of other countries, and considerably tighter than under the czar. This is due to the struggle between the Soviet Union and its ene-

mies abroad, which has kept in continuous effect regulations similar to those of a state of war. Their severity has been decreasing constantly, and a tourist business is now being encouraged. For the first time since the Revolution, the trans-Siberian railroad was opened in 1928 to a general tourist travel to and from western Europe.

For Russian citizens other than persons going abroad on official business, passports for foreign travel are difficult to get and their cost is high—from 50 to 300 roubles (\$25 to \$150) according to one's class. The old bourgeoisie, private traders and high-salaried experts pay the largest fees.

Russian citizens who emigrated in the years of revolution and civil war and who wish to return are admitted only on condition of their pledging loyalty to the Soviet regime, and those whose loyalty is doubtful are not, of course, admitted. Most Russian emigrés left without Soviet passports and are outside the protection of the Soviet government—a protection most of them would spurn anyhow. They carry Nansen passports, furnished by the League of Nations to emigrés from certain countries which refuse passports to them.

Foreigners who apply for a Russian visa are referred to Moscow for approval unless personally known to ambassadors abroad and vouched for by them. The exercise of this discretion by ambassadors is, however, rare. In Moscow applications are referred to the department related to the purpose of the applicant's trip, the decision to admit or refuse resting largely with its official head. Members of delegations and tourist parties visiting Russia under official authorization are not required to go through the usual formalities, though their names are usually submitted to Moscow in advance.

The proceedings for getting visas usually require from two to six weeks, depending upon the distance from Moscow. After a visa is granted, travelers to Russia have no more difficulty with formalities of inspection and registration than in many other countries, with the exception of the examination of all printed matter and papers taken over the frontier, coming in or going out. Even under that general rule, the experience of travelers varies with the place of entry, the mood of the inspector, or the political situation. I entered the port of Batum with a brief-case full of papers which were not even looked at when I explained I was an American journalist, though I arrived at a time of political tension over the rupture with England. Even my camera and typewriter got by without question—though against the regulations—as tools of my profession. On going out I was required to get all my papers wrapped up and sealed by the G.P.U. to avoid inspection and possible seizure at the frontier. But the Poles unwrapped them and looked them over!

All travelers are required to secure exit visas to leave Russia, and are charged the same fee as for entry. Through this control, the authorities can check up on visitors' debts, if complaint has been made; on their papers, if counter-revolutionary activities have been reported—and more important, on the fact of their departure. Exit visas are a nuisance to travelers because of the red tape. Sometimes they can be got in a day, sometimes it takes a week or two. Usually in Russia when you have to get action promptly you can get it by some fuss and pressure.

Foreigners remaining in Russia for extended periods are required to get periodic renewals of their leave to stay, unless they are working in industries under con-

tract with the Soviet government. Those who work may exercise the rights of Russian citizens. Foreigners who show an anti-Soviet attitude may have their leaves to stay canceled, and in serious cases may be expelled. That is at present rare, however. Far commoner is the refusal to grant visas for the return of foreigners who have been in Russia and who have shown an attitude displeasing to the authorities.

A provision of the Russian constitution "grants the right of asylum to all foreigners persecuted for political and religious (!) offenses." Such refugees are freely admitted, even without passports, visas, and fees, whenever the fact of their persecution is established. Several thousand such refugees have found asylum in Russia, chiefly from the dictatorships of Europe and from the Orient, with a few from the United States and Latin America. All but a few of them are Communists or Communist sympathizers. A special house is maintained in Moscow for their accommodation, and efforts are made to find them work.

In the detention prison in Leningrad I happened upon a group of young Germans and some stray youths from the Baltic provinces who had been picked up after crossing the border without passports. They all claimed to be Communists, some escaping from persecution, others come to live in the Communist fatherland. They were held for investigation. The officials said that if their claims were genuine they would be turned loose in the country and aided to find work and homes.

Another provision of the constitution confers on all "foreigners working within Russia all political rights enjoyed by Russian citizens," provided that they belong to the "working class or to the peasantry working without paid labor." Local soviets are authorized to confer

Russian citizenship upon such foreigners. Several American citizens now living and working in Russia have been elected members of their local soviets, exercising all the rights of Russian citizens while retaining American citizenship.

Russia is the only country in the world with such a common-sense qualification for exercising political rights. It is, furthermore, the only large country—with the somewhat qualified exception of France—in which the right of political asylum is still a reality for revolutionists.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CONTROL OF OPPOSITION: THE G.P.U.

THE function of dealing with all opposition, political and economic, is entrusted to the State Political Department, commonly known as the "G.P.U." (pronounced Gay Pay Oo, from its Russian initials). One of the most powerful arms of the central government, it is composed of an army of over 100,000 uniformed men and a secret service staff of some thousands more. The troops are assigned to this service from the Red Army by the Council of Labor and Defense.

Its jurisdiction as a police agency covers the entire range of offenses regarded as politically or economically subversive of the Soviet regime: counter-revolution, espionage, sabotage, brigandage, counterfeiting, smuggling, illegal speculating and profiteering, bribing officials and graft. It also polices the railroads and the border. Its representatives sit on the committees censoring all publications in each republic and on the bench of the Supreme Court at Moscow. It is assisted in its activities by thousands of informers not directly in its employ, particularly by the members of the Communist Party and their active sympathizers. It is a criminal offense for any citizen who knows of any counter-revolutionary activity or economic crime not to report it.

All the visible activities of the uniformed G.P.U. men are the functions of a state police anywhere. Its

political activities, usually in the hands of non-uniformed men, are practically invisible. No ordinary tourist in Russia would detect them except at rare moments of political excitement—such as I happened upon in the summer of 1927. Russia is not a police-ridden country—like Fascist Italy, for example. Its political control, though immensely efficient, works behind the scenes.

The powers of the G.P.U. not only include arrest, but exile and imprisonment without trial in the courts through the simple method of administrative order, made after an inquiry but not a trial, and checked only by the law officer (procurer) of the G.P.U., who may carry a disputed order to the Central Executive Committee. It has also the right to condemn to death and carry out the sentence without a trial in court, subject only to the approval of the Central Executive Committee of the Union. In addition it carries out all executions ordered by the civil courts in either political or criminal cases. Executions ordered by military courts are handled by the army.

The G.P.U. is most active and most in evidence in the cities and larger towns, along the railroads, and on the border. It has a headquarters in the capital of each republic, and local sub-headquarters in every province of the Union, and usually at county seats. Its uniformed agents do not appear in the villages except in event of political disturbance—rare since 1922. Among the peasants constituting the great mass of the Russian people it is therefore not active and not feared. As a matter of policy the government now keeps political police out of the villages in order not to antagonize the peasants, having learned from experience with the Tcheka, the G.P.U.'s predecessor. Numerous cases arose in those days

of the murder of Tcheka agents by the peasants, who regarded them as instruments of oppression, particularly at the time of the grain seizures. The G.P.U. connects with the villages through its offices in the larger towns to which Communists and sympathizers in the villages report.

I happened upon a village meeting way out in Moscow province, called to receive the tax bills for the year brought over by a messenger from the county seat. For two hours I listened to as bitter and excited a denunciation of the government as I ever heard anywhere. The regime was roundly scored as a robber of peasants. There was not the slightest fear or limitation in speaking out. It even looked for a while as if the young messenger were to be mobbed. When they calmed down, with the appointment of a committee to take up their grievances, they found enough hope for village solvency to vote money for new fire apparatus and a new village bull. The meeting was convincing evidence of the lack of any fear of the government or of the police, and of a healthy resistance to what was to them injustice.

The offenses which the G.P.U. controls have little relation to peasant life. I speak of that at the start to make it clear that the terrorism charged to the G.P.U. does not exist for the masses of the Russian people. The political control of the peasantry is achieved by other means, chiefly by the domination of the city workers led by the Party in all the bodies of the government above the village and township soviets, and by Communist leadership in election campaigns in the larger villages.

Nor does the G.P.U. interfere often in the life of the city working classes, which through their unions are directed politically by the Communist Party, and so are subject to the political control of the State. The State, being a dictatorship of city workers through the Com-

munist Party, is pledged to represent their interests, and the interference of the G.P.U., the agency to control counter-revolution, would therefore be anomalous. But in the earlier days of the Revolution the struggle of the Communist Party to be exclusive representative of the workers occasioned resort to the Tcheka to suppress opposing tendencies, especially those toward the formation of independent unions or of unions allied at least in thought with the Socialist or syndicalist unions abroad. Such cases of activity are now rare, because that opposition has been "liquidated." Practically all the active opponents of the Communist policy in the trade unions have been exiled. When any Menshevik or syndicalist tendencies appear in any organized form they are reported to the G.P.U. by Communist union officials, and handled thereafter without any official relation of the G.P.U. to the union leaders.

The activity of the G.P.U., therefore, is now connected only slightly with either the peasants or workers, the classes in the overwhelming majority. And particular care is taken not to arrest workers or peasants even in times of excitement over counter-revolutionary plots.

Despite this general fact, there are instances of intervention where political opposition arose among the peasants, and illegal strikes among workers. They doubtless would intervene in such circumstances at any time. Many leaders of such disturbances—now rare—are said to have been exiled or imprisoned. Indeed, the charge is made by some of the emigré anarchist and socialist opponents of the Bolshevik regime that *most* of the political exiles and prisoners are workers and peasants—a charge which seems without basis in the light of much dispassionate evidence given me in Russia. It is doubt-

less true that peasants are the largest group among the several hundred Left Social Revolutionist exiles and prisoners, and workers among some hundreds of anarchists. But in the total of exiles and prisoners peasants and workers constitute a small number among the thousands, mostly from the old bourgeoisie.

The classes against which the G.P.U. directs its chief efforts are the anti-Soviet elements among the old aristocracy, the intellectuals, the students, the private traders, and the conservative priests of the old church. The remnants of anti-Soviet elements from the old Socialist parties and the anarchists are also the objects of its attentions, as are active national independence advocates, particularly in Georgia. In the recent years of a well-developed opposition wing in the Communist Party, the G.P.U. has dealt with what it considers the illegal activities of some of its members. A memorandum signed by fifteen Opposition leaders in 1927 said:

“Even the work of the G.P.U., which had to fulfill a decisive task in the struggle against counter-revolution and has accomplished this task excellently, is now leaving the path of defense of the proletarian revolution and succumbing to the general atmosphere of bureaucratism. Instead of fighting political and economic counter-revolution, it is beginning to devote its energies more and more to combatting the justified dissatisfaction of the workers, caused by bureaucratic and petty-bourgeois aberrations, and even to combatting the inner-Party opposition.”

Stalin described the G.P.U.'s functions as the Communist Party sees them, in response to an inquiry put to him by a visiting delegation in 1927. He said:

→ "The State Political Administration is a punitive organ. It is more or less analogous to the Committee of Public Safety that was formed during the Great French Revolution. It punishes chiefly spies, conspirators, terrorists, bandits, speculators and forgers. It is a sort of political court martial formed for the purpose of protecting the interests of the Revolution against the attacks of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and its agents. . . .

"One must recognize that the State Political Administration hits the enemies of the Revolution with severe and certain blows. This character it has retained, by the way, down to this very day. Since then the State Political Administration is the terror of the bourgeoisie, the protector of the Revolution and the bare sword of the proletariat. For this reason it is no wonder that the bourgeoisie of all countries have an animal hatred for the State Political Administration. All thinkable fairy tales and slanders about the State Political Administration are fabricated. The workers, however, respect the State Political Administration.

"People preach mildness and propose to abolish the State Political Administration. But can anyone give us the guarantee that when we abolish the State Political Administration the capitalists of all countries will cease to organize and finance the conspirators, terrorists, incendiaries, and bomb throwers? To disarm the Revolution without the guarantee that the enemies of the Revolution are also disarmed, would that not be madness? Would that not be a crime against the working class? No, comrades, we do not want to fall into the same error as the Parisian Communards fell into. They

were all too mild towards the Versailles, and Karl Marx has accused them of this since.

"Do you, comrades, think that the Russian bourgeoisie and landowners are less bloodthirsty than the Versailles bourgeoisie of France? In any case we know how they treated the workers when, thanks to the intervention of France, Great Britain, Japan, and the United States, they occupied Siberia, the Ukraine, and the North Caucasus.

"From the internal standpoint the situation of the Revolution is so absolutely firm and unshakable that we could easily do without the State Political Administration, but what internal enemies do exist are not isolated individuals, they are connected with the capitalists abroad by a thousand threads, and the latter support them with all means. We are a state surrounded by capitalist states. The internal enemies of our revolution are the agents of the capitalists in all countries. The capitalist states form the basis and the rear guard for the internal enemy; we are also warring against the counter-revolutionary elements in all countries. We do not want to repeat the mistakes of the Parisian Communards. The State Political Administration is necessary for the Revolution and will continue to exist to the terror of the enemies of the proletariat."

In an article published on the tenth anniversary of the Revolution, J. Yaroslavsky, chairman of the Central Control Commission of the Party, wrote of the G.P.U.:

"The importance of the G.P.U. for the Soviet Union, which is surrounded by capitalist states,

will last so long as the danger of external and internal counter-revolution exists. This is the reason why the Social Democrats utter pacifist wails about the terror of the G.P.U. Those complaints are, taking everything into account, nothing more nor less than a disguise of the forces of that external and internal counter-revolution which is prepared to mask itself with a democratic cloak in order to disarm the proletariat and to deprive it of the possibility of settling things with all the enemies of the proletarian dictatorship, of the proletarian revolution, in a 'plebeian manner.'

"So long as it is urgent to steer clear of the dangers threatening the existence of the Soviet state, to brush away the refuse with an iron broom, to remove the pus which has affected a few parts of the Soviet organism, the Soviet state cannot renounce the help of the G.P.U. The existence of the G.P.U. in itself is, in the present period, a guarantee that such diseased parts will become more rare, that the development of organizations which are so harmful to the proletarian dictatorship will be impossible in the future. . . .

"In recent times the G.P.U. has been the object of extremely malevolent attacks on the part of the Trotzkyites and of the Saprnov Opposition. Those attacks roused the sympathy of all the class enemies of the Soviet state; the foreign White Guardist and Social Democratic press maliciously snatched up those attacks. Is not that a proof that the Opposition is actually taking up counter-revolutionary positions? Is not that the best evidence of the fact that, in its struggle against the illegal printing works and against other actions

hostile to the Soviets, which are covered up with the flag of the Opposition, the G.P.U. is fulfilling its fundamental task, the task of combatting counter-revolution, of combatting any organization which is endeavoring to shake the proletarian dictatorship?

“. . . This is the reason why the Party has always devoted its earnest attention to that organ of the proletarian dictatorship which ensures to it a firm control exercised by the Party. This is the reason why the Party should continue to concern itself with the thorough political training of the members of the G.P.U. and with selecting them carefully from the political point of view. This is the reason why, on the tenth anniversary, the Party proudly greets all the collaborators in the G.P.U. who are carrying on their shoulders the burden of the struggle against counter-revolution.”

Against all the elements which the G.P.U. regards as counter-revolutionary, it conducts what is commonly characterized as a regime of terror. That terror consists in inspiring the fear of summary arrest, exile, or imprisonment for the slightest anti-Soviet activity or suspicion of it. I saw something of the old aristocracy in Moscow—indeed I kept house among them—and they constantly reflected their fear and their bitterness. One boy refused to work for me after a few days when he learned of my interests, for fear of being sent to Siberia—as had been some of his high-school classmates, he said. A former prince who lived in my apartment was always startled when I arrived home late, thinking the G.P.U. had come for him. When I reported to a high

Communist official my concern over these harmless people, saying that they were virtually terrorized, his only comment was "Thank God they are!"

There is no doubt that the G.P.U. is looked upon with fear by considerable sections of the Russian people outside the peasants: a fear aroused by its methods, its extensive powers, and the secrecy surrounding its political operations. It is rarely discussed in official Party or Soviet congresses; its activities are seldom reported in the press; its orders of exile are mentioned usually only when some prisoner recants and swears loyalty to the Soviets. Even Party members of the majority or the Opposition are reluctant to discuss it with non-members.

The heads of the G.P.U. rarely grant interviews to foreign correspondents or to visiting delegations, or make statements for home publication. It is the one department of the government about which frank comment cannot be secured by inquirers—which accounts both for the unduly favorable reports made about it by several visiting labor delegations from abroad and for the lurid exaggerations of the anti-Soviet press.

It was impossible for me to get an interview with the head of the G.P.U. in Moscow. Even the American Labor Delegation, privileged to interview all high officials, could not get to him until they had made a formal request of Stalin—and then only under extraordinary restrictions. The procurer-general of the G.P.U., however, was accessible, and communicative; indeed he was the frankest man I met on this subject. Away from Moscow the local heads were accessible and fairly outspoken, but other than officials directly concerned either were reluctant to talk or were not well informed. Ru-

mors and wild stories were common enough among non-Communists, but exact information was rare because of the secrecy surrounding G.P.U. activities.

This atmosphere of secrecy and mystery is heightened by the G.P.U.'s tactics in making its arrests and handling its prisoners. Arrests usually take place late at night—one or two o'clock in the morning is the favorite hour—when the persons wanted will almost certainly be found at home in bed. Neighbors are thus aroused, as the job is not done quietly. Usually several uniformed soldiers armed with rifles, together with an agent in plain clothes, make the arrest—almost invariably with a proper warrant for both arrest and search. The person arrested disappears, to be heard of, if exiled, only by reports from his family, who are commonly informed of his fate.

Dragnet arrests of all suspects in times of excitement over some counter-revolutionary plot of course increase the sense of terror among the classes affected, even though most of the suspects are released after examination. Fear is further aroused by the practice of setting traps on the premises of persons arrested, that is, stationing G.P.U. agents there for several days to take into custody all suspicious visitors.

Reports of conditions in G.P.U. temporary prisons, where prisoners are isolated from all outside contact, often in solitary cells, subject to grilling inquiry—frequently in the middle of the night—and worse, to uncertainty as to their fate, also heighten fear. Reports of brutality by the G.P.U., particularly of beating and third degree methods are current, but the evidence to sustain them seems mostly to date back to the days of the Tcheka. I have talked with many ex-prisoners in Russia and abroad, and have read also all the published

accounts of the prison experiences of others, and from all of them I gathered that police brutality such as we know it in America is now rare in Russia. Long-continued grillings, isolation, and wretched physical conditions are the worst of the evils of preliminary detention. Only in Tiflis did I hear, from what seemed credible sources, of beatings to extort information. One G.P.U. practice, frequently noted because so public, lends color to charges of brutality: the transfer of groups of prisoners on foot through the streets under soldier guard with fixed bayonets. To Americans it should be said that the brutality appears to be insignificant compared with the routine cruelties of the third degree practised daily by every sizeable police department in the United States.

The G.P.U. is an exceedingly efficient organization, probably the best organized political police department in the world, and therefore the most effective in discovering and arresting the offenders under its jurisdiction. It has the advantage of adding to the already highly developed system of the czar's Okhrana the knowledge of underground tactics gained by the Bolsheviks in the years when they were an illegal conspiracy. Many of the technical methods of the Okhrana, together with some of its old specialists, have been taken over and incorporated into the new system, which has larger powers and a greater personnel.

The G.P.U. is the successor to the Tcheka (the Extraordinary Revolutionary Commission), formed to fight the counter-revolution which developed shortly after the Bolshevik seizure of power, and abolished by decree early in 1922 after the civil wars and foreign intervention were over. The Tcheka was the agency of the "Red Terror," with unrestricted powers of arrest,

imprisonment, and execution. The G.P.U., established in its place, taking over its machinery, buildings, and prisons, was restricted, first, by having the legality of all its orders of exile and imprisonment subjected to the review and joint control of a special Attorney-General, and second, by taking away the power of summary execution and requiring approval in advance by the Central Executive Committee.

Although these changes represent real modifications of the unchecked severity of the old Tcheka—a veritable state within a state—the G.P.U. in times of fear of counter-revolutionary plots becomes so similar that the differences are hard to detect. The higher political authorities at such times are inclined to accept its judgment of what constitutes effective measures of public safety. For example, its list of twenty men to be executed in reprisal for the murder of the Soviet ambassador at Warsaw in June, 1927, was approved without question, and its action warmly defended by the heads of the state against protests from abroad. Some of those executed were arrested only a few hours before their execution, without a chance for any sort of proceeding—though the records against them were said to have been thoroughly prepared. Although the G.P.U. is under the control of the Central Executive Committee, its orders are rarely reversed on pleas of prisoners for clemency, except where some political effect may be attained by leniency or where some persuasive personal influence is brought to bear on behalf of the prisoners.

The head of the G.P.U.—president, he is called—appointed by the Central Executive Committee, sits as a member of the Union Council of People's Commissars, the highest executive body of the Union, and his deputies, heads of the G.P.U. in each republic, sit in

the highest councils of the republic, without, however, the right to vote. But voting is unimportant for the representatives of so powerful a department.

The committee which, with the president, runs the department, is composed of the heads of sections dealing with the varied activities of the G.P.U., six altogether: (1) operative section, which is the general management, directing the location of troops and the activity of all sub-departments; (2) foreign, dealing with counter-revolutionary activity and economic espionage abroad and connection of persons in Russia with them; (3) economic, dealing with smuggling, counterfeiting, speculating, sabotage, and economic espionage, defined as securing information about industry for counter-revolutionary purposes; (4) transportation, dealing with offenses committed on trains, steamers, stations, and docks, and with inspecting travelers' passports; (5) military, confined to subversive influences in the army; (6) secret service, dealing with counter-revolutionary activities and tendencies anywhere in Russia. Under the secret service section there are branches dealing with each type of activity followed: monarchist, anarchist, socialist, religious, etc., to insure handling by specialists.

A sub-committee of the directing collegium at Moscow, assisted by a procurer (corresponding to an attorney-general in the United States) appointed by the Central Executive Committee, is in charge of administrative exile. This procurer is one of only three Soviet law officers with jurisdiction over the whole Union. The other two are the procurers of the military courts and of the Supreme Court. He has his office separate from the G.P.U.—indeed half way across the city in Moscow—and deals with all the cases taken up by the G.P.U. for exile, imprisonment or execution everywhere

in the Union. His duty is to see that the prisoner is dealt with according to law, and thus to act as a check on possible illegal acts. Disagreements between procurer and committee are automatically appealed to the Central Executive Committee for final decision, though such cases are uncommon.

This describes the central G.P.U. machinery at Moscow for the whole Union. The machinery in each republic is practically identical, all directed from Moscow, with the sole local check in the hands of a procurer appointed by the republic's highest governing body. But in case of disagreement with the local procurer the local G.P.U. can appeal through Moscow headquarters to the Central Executive Committee of the Union, in whom the final authority centers.

Inside each republic the local offices in the provincial capitals are managed in the same way. For instance, in Odessa, the local G.P.U. has a head, a collegium, special sections, an exile committee, with a procurer to control the legality of its acts—just like its superior body in Kharkov, capital of the Ukraine, which in turn is just like its superior body in Moscow. If, for instance, the head of the monarchist section of the G.P.U. in Odessa gets track of suspected activities, he recommends to the collegium the arrest and examination of the persons involved. Upon approval, the order is issued, the arrests made, examinations conducted, and orders recommended to the collegium. When approved, the orders are sent to Kharkov either by mail or in very important cases by a G.P.U. representative in person. Reports of all action taken are made to Moscow headquarters, which has final power to change any order. None is effective without its concurrence.

Ultimate power to mitigate any sentence of the G.P.U. rests with the highest authority, the Central Executive Committee.

Persons arrested by the G.P.U. may, however, be sent to the courts for trial, instead of being disposed of by administrative order. The decision to do so depends on the nature of the offense, or, in important political cases, on the desirability of some effect obtainable by an open trial reported in the press. The exercise of discretion as to turning prisoners over for court trials rests with the procurer-general of the G.P.U. in the first instance, and ultimately, in cases of doubt or disagreement, with the Central Executive Committee. Most political cases are handled administratively by exile or imprisonment, trials in court being comparatively few, while most serious economic cases—such as smuggling, sabotage, counterfeiting, brigandage and the like—are turned over to the courts. The less important economic offenses do not go to court. They are dealt with through administrative exile. Since the less serious economic offenses handled by the G.P.U. are more common than purely political offenses, the G.P.U. exiles more petty economic offenders than political.

Counting all offenders handled by the G.P.U., by far the greater proportion is disposed of through administrative order; only a small proportion is sent to the courts. Many cases it disposes of without hearings or formalities. In the case of petty offenses on railroads or at railway stations its agents have the right to collect fines on the spot! For instance, I was taken into custody by a G.P.U. officer at a railway station for putting my baggage out the window, and was saved from a

\$1.50 fine through the intervention of a Russian fellow-traveler who explained I had just arrived and didn't know the rules.

The political police system is the most centrally controlled of any arm of the federal government which reaches out into the local life of the Union. It touches more functions of the government than any single department. It has a representative on the censorship committee in every republic, controlling all literature, newspapers, theatres, and cinemas. It appoints a representative on the Supreme Court of the Union and one on the Supreme Court of each republic. The special Revolutionary Tribunal handling all serious political cases in the earlier years of the regime, which was virtually an arm of the Tcheka and G.P.U., was abolished in 1925.

The G.P.U. also reaches out through its informants into practically all activities in Russia, in order to be aware of all possible opposition and ready to suppress it. The bulk of the informants are members of the Party and its sympathizers. It is not only the political duty of Party members to report any offenses or suspected activity; it is a criminal offense for any citizen not to. More active than the Party agents and sympathizers are persons especially designated by the G.P.U. to make reports from strategic positions. These persons are sometimes paid, sometimes not. A surprising number of them are women. It is a common experience for travelers in Russia to be advised that so-and-so is a G.P.U. agent: the clerk at the hotel, your interpreter, the engaging young man in the Cultural Relations Society office. Undoubtedly such persons in a position to know what foreigners are doing are commissioned to report regularly to the G.P.U. In addition, persons arrested

for political reasons are not infrequently induced by the promise of freedom to agree to act as informants for the G.P.U. Some are even alleged to have been spared execution on that condition. Stories are told on credible authority of persons whose death sentences were publicly announced, seen later on the streets. Other such instances are reported of men moving to other cities under assumed names—in the service of the G.P.U.

The administration of the G.P.U. is remarkably uniform throughout the Union, though it is said to be more cautious in its activity in the oriental republics of the southeast, in order not to arouse hostility. In Georgia, however, it is certainly more rigorous than elsewhere in the Union, due to the unrest caused by the widespread independence sentiment. In Georgia alone the old Tcheka with its summary powers held on two years after its abolition in the rest of the Union—until 1924—and the G.P.U. is still popularly referred to as the Tcheka. It is more generally feared in Georgia than elsewhere, and its activities seem to justify that fear. Even Americans connected with the Harriman concession living in Tiflis spoke of it to me in hushed voices. No one is allowed to walk on the sidewalk in front of its headquarters, which are guarded day and night by armed sentries. This is due to the fact that the building is too open to public view at close range.

The personnel of the G.P.U. is similar to that of other departments of the government, with, however, a larger proportion of Party members on its staffs. Its officers have a military rather than a police atmosphere—and a rather smart efficiency and intensity usually lacking in police departments. The heads are men of keen intelligence and great zeal. The rank and file are the usual run of soldiers and clerks, detectives and little

bureaucrats. Some of them, especially in the provinces, have grossly abused their great powers, either for personal profit or for the vanity of authority, creating scandals which have wound up in court with stiff sentences of prison and exile, even of execution.

As police forces go, the G.P.U. keeps pretty well within the bounds of law—which could not for a moment be said of the old Tcheka, a law unto itself. In any police system with such wide discretion, operating often in a state of nervousness over real or imagined opposition, arbitrary and lawless acts occur, and many innocent persons are inevitably victimized. But it is said by those who have dealt constantly with the G.P.U. in behalf of prisoners, that the heads, when they can be reached, are solicitous to correct the injustices or abuses of their subordinates. Even Dzerjinsky, head of the old Tcheka, was scrupulous in such cases, though severe—and he was fairly accessible. His successor, the present head, is said to be less solicitous and far less approachable.

While the G.P.U. is the strong arm of the Soviet state for the protection of the Revolution and to keep the way clear of obstructions to the State's program, it is essentially an organ of the Communist Party under the control of the Central Committee, as its creator, Dzerjinsky, insisted it should be. It does not get out of hand, as do the secret services in some other countries—as, for instance, in the United States under the Daugherty-Burns regime.

To the minds of opponents of the Soviet regime the G.P.U. bulks big. It is to them the Red Terror, supreme, lawless, all-powerful, ruthless, shooting at will on suspicion. But to any sober student of the political

phenomena of Soviet Russia the G.P.U. must appear as an exceedingly well-organized and efficient military police, with the function of combating all opposition, but working within definite bounds under the central political authority—to all appearances quietly, almost invisibly. Its activity is negative, clearing away obstructions, real or imagined, checking any organized tendencies outside the official program.

Its activities have doubtless gone far beyond what sober judgment would dictate as the State's need of protection. But sober judgment does not control periods of conflict, uncertainty, and the frequent nervous fear of opposition. The tendency since the abolition of the Tcheka has, however, been toward restricted powers and activity—a tendency broken now and then by the pressure of some foreign threat of attack on the Soviet regime, or some internal crisis. Like all political police, the G.P.U. tends to exaggerate the dangers confronting the State in order to magnify its own importance and to retain its power.

Compared with the czar's regime, the G.P.U. is doubtless a more powerful agency of control than the notorious old Okhrana, for its functions are wider, its military forces larger, and its administrative powers of exile and imprisonment greater. But even its huge powers are regarded by the Communist Party only as an unhappily necessary arm of the regime in a period of trouble. The transition to a more secure regime should see the gradual diminution of its functions and powers. The sense of a securer regime is largely dependent on the decrease of hostility abroad to Soviet Russia. The terror in Russia is and has been almost directly in proportion to hostile foreign movements against the Soviet state. Fear of intervention from without or of coun-

ter-revolutionary activity within have dictated its severity.

Of course it may fairly be said that no dictatorship of less than one percent of a people can govern without a political police, however enlightened its policy in the interests of the masses, and that from that viewpoint the G.P.U. would function regardless of foreign hostility. That is doubtless true. But it is most probable also that terrorism by the Soviet political police would in the absence of foreign pressure have been vastly reduced—certainly to a point at which the word “terror” could not fairly be applied.

CHAPTER XIV

PROSECUTIONS FOR POLITICAL OFFENSES

PROCEEDINGS against persons charged with political or economic offenses differ from those in all other countries except Italy in being commonly administrative—that is, secret, without public trial in the courts, and without the right to employ counsel or to call witnesses. A small proportion of the cases, usually those with large political significance, in which conviction is pretty certain, are turned over to the courts for public trial.

This administrative procedure, exclusively in the hands of the G.P.U., consists of an interrogation of the defendant by one or more G.P.U. agents or a prosecutor, followed by a decision of the collegium, the governing body, approved by the attorney general for the G.P.U. For this function the G.P.U. is often referred to as a "court."

In practice, contrary to provisions of law, the prisoner is sometimes not questioned at all; often he does not even know the charge against him until he gets an order of exile or imprisonment. I was told repeatedly of such cases, both by prisoners, by their friends outside, and by some of those exiled abroad. He never appears before the committee which disposes of him; he can only write them. Orders are sometimes changed on prisoners' representations. One ex-prisoner told me that he received an order of exile for some counter-revolutionary activity, and he wrote across its face

“ridiculous” and returned it to the official who gave it. A day or two later he got a revised order of exile which described another offense—not so ridiculous, apparently—and to a better exile location.

Defendants have the right to appeal for clemency to the highest political authority, the Central Executive Committee. Such appeals are considered by a special amnesty committee of the praesidium of the Central Executive Committee. The prisoner makes his plea through a letter sent through the G.P.U.—often, it appears, a very uncertain method of getting anyone else’s attention. His statement may be supported by the personal intervention of friends with the amnesty committee, which is ordinarily the only means through which clemency is extended. I heard of many exiles and prisoners whose pleas were said never to have reached the amnesty committee. This is undoubtedly true of many cases of persons without influential friends, where the G.P.U. figures that the amnesty committee in any event would sustain their order. Where influential friends can reach the amnesty committee in time—even by a telephone appeal, which is all that is required—orders are often changed where injustice or undue severity can be shown. Numerous instances of that sort were told me—and the G.P.U. officials affirmed the fact. It is inevitable that in a procedure with such wide discretion, with no attorneys and no right to get into the courts, prisoners’ rights should be largely fictitious.

This administrative procedure is marked not only by these broad powers of arrest, prosecution, and judgment, but by the range of its penalties. The G.P.U. may exile or imprison up to a three-year term (a purely formal maximum, made in fact indefinite by renewal)

or condemn to death with the approval of the Central Executive Committee.

This administrative procedure, developed under the czars for political offenses only, and unique in Russia—except for Fascist Italy's recent adoption of the exile system for political offenders—has been extended under the Soviets to many economic offenses as well. Certain of them are regarded as counter-revolutionary, that is, as opposed to the interests of the regime, even when counter-revolutionary motives are absent. Such are, for example, speculation, smuggling, and dealing in foreign currencies. The system has the advantage of being much swifter than the courts, much cheaper, much more certain of conviction, and entirely secret, thus not arousing any open issue, and increasing the fear of opponents by the mystery of its operations. So little is said of it in the Russian press that the foreign press has carried the news of exile orders against well-known opponents when Russians could learn nothing from their own. This was notably the case in the exile of Trotsky and the Opposition leaders, announced in the Soviet press some days after it appeared abroad.

The important cases which go to the courts are selected by the prosecutors or the Central Executive Committee usually for the political effect of an open trial. In many, if not most such cases, execution is likely to be the penalty, often commuted to imprisonment also for the political effect of a "generous" gesture. No figures are given out as to the proportion of political and economic cases tried in the courts, but various estimates fix it at about ten percent of those judged by the G.P.U. (not a percentage of persons arrested, but of those penalized).

Political offenses are recognized in Soviet law as far more serious than ordinary crimes, and for that reason a distinction is made in fixing penalties. For all political offenses a minimum penalty is prescribed; for all ordinary crimes a maximum. The crimes classified as political and economic are numerous. Chief among them, under which the overwhelming number of convictions have occurred, are counter-revolution, espionage, economic espionage and sabotage, speculation, graft, and bribery. Since criminal laws in Russia are passed by the separate republics, not by the Soviet Union as such, the definitions of these crimes vary slightly. They follow, however, the model of the Russian Republic. They are elastic offenses, as are everywhere measures for the protection of the State.

In order to insure the "carrying out of a common line of action in its punitive policy" throughout the Union, "the praesidium of the Central Executive Committee has the right in urgent cases to indicate to the component republics the various kinds of crimes" to be dealt with. Where the law does not happen to cover all "socially dangerous acts," the courts are authorized to "determine by analogy with those articles of the criminal code which anticipate most similar cases . . . the basis and limits of responsibility as well as the measures of social defense."

Counter-revolution, in the 1927 code of the Russian Republic, is defined as "any act directed toward overthrowing, breaking down, or weakening the workers' and peasants soviets, or the government of the U. S. S. R. or its component and autonomous republics . . . or the breaking down or weakening of the internal safety of the U. S. S. R. and of the fundamental politi-

cal and national conquests of the proletarian revolution." And it adds a paragraph looking to the future by penalizing such actions "when they are directed against any other government of workers, even if it does not form part of the U. S. S. R."

Under this general definition specific crimes are set forth: "armed revolt and invasion; relations with a foreign state for counter-revolutionary purposes, giving aid to the international bourgeoisie . . . as well as to those social groups and organizations which are under its influence," propaganda and agitation which includes an appeal "to the overthrowing, undermining, or weakening of Soviet power . . . as well as the distribution or preparation or hiding of literature of the same content." To these crimes are added "the same acts in cases of mass restlessness, or by exploiting religious or national prejudices of masses," and "failure to report any counter-revolutionary crime in preparation or committed and actually known."

Espionage is defined as "the transmission, theft, or collection of data which are by their context a secret especially kept by the State from foreign states, counter-revolutionary organizations, or private individuals." Economic espionage refers specifically to stealing or collecting economic data which are not "special secrets for the defense of the State, but are not to be made public; either by direct prohibition by law, or by order of chiefs of departments." Undermining state industry and credit with counter-revolutionary aims, or in the interests of former proprietors or of private capitalists, by "counteracting their normal activities" is designated as one of the most serious economic-political offenses. So, too, is "counter-revolutionary sabotage, which is

the conscious neglect of any determined duties with a special purpose of weakening the power of the government and the activity of the State machine."

These, in brief, are the chief offenses, couched in broad and elastic language. To them may be added "offensive disrespect shown to the R. F. S. F. R., taking the form of abuse of the State coat of arms, flag, monuments of the Revolution," and "public offensive conduct toward various representatives of authority while performing their duties," or "any appeal for non-execution of or resistance to the orders of the national or local authority." Failure to report any of the offenses listed, when known, is also itself an offense.

This singularly complete code for the protection of the revolutionary regime is obviously phrased in a language inclusive enough to cover every possible activity construed to be in opposition, whether or not committed with such a motive. Mere suspicion of such activity has frequently been the occasion for exile.

The penalties attached to these offenses vary from a few months' imprisonment to banishment from Russia "forever" or to execution. The specific "measures of social defense of a corrective character" set forth by law for the whole Union are: (1) "proclamation as an enemy of the workers, forfeiture of citizenship, and deportation beyond the frontiers of the U. S. S. R. forever" (the word 'forever' was omitted in the 1927 code); (2) "loss of freedom with or without strict isolation"; (3) "hard labor without loss of freedom"; (4) "loss of rights"; (5) "expulsion from the limits of the Union for a fixed time"; (6) "expulsion from the limits of a component republic or outside a fixed locality, with the right to live in fixed places . . ."; (7) "dismissal

from office"; (8) "prohibition against taking up this or that activity or trade"; (9) "public censure"; (10) "confiscation of property"; (11) "fine"; and (12) "warning."

Capital punishment, which is not mentioned among these "corrective measures," was abolished in all criminal cases except "robbery under arms" by decree on the tenth anniversary of the Revolution. It is specifically retained for all crimes against the State.

The maximum prison sentence in Russia for any offense, criminal or political, is ten years. The theory as applied to criminals is that if they cannot be reformed in that period they cannot be reformed at all, and so a longer time is useless. In political cases ten years is evidently regarded as long enough for any offense not punished by death. The ten years is, in practice, often reduced to six or seven by good behavior.

Most political and economic offenses carry the whole range of penalties, applied according to the seriousness of the case, the motives of the offender, or the needs of the State at a particular moment. Menjinski, the head of the G.P.U., writing in June, 1927, of the policies of his predecessor, Dzerjinsky, said:

"The same counter-revolutionary act which under one condition of the Union demanded execution by shooting was considered by him a few months later as not even calling for arrest."

The entire administration of these laws is frankly political, in the interests of the class justice of the Soviet state for its own protection. Dzerjinsky constantly emphasized that—

". . . the Tcheka must be the organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party; otherwise it

is harmful; it changes into the Okhrana, or into an organ of the counter-revolution."

These policies of the former Tcheka head have continued to guide the activity of the G.P.U. in applying the laws. They account chiefly for what would under a less political administration be gross discriminations and injustices. But the Communists point out that in all countries such laws are applied politically, though less frankly so than in Russia. And though the codes in other countries are less specifically inclusive, the same ends are accomplished by general laws for "public safety" and by the declaration of martial law, which, by the way, has been almost unknown under the Soviets since the civil wars.

The severity of Soviet policy toward its opponents is part of the "iron discipline" of both the State and the Party inherent in the fact of the dictatorship, intensified by its emergence from the World War and the armed struggle with counter-revolution, and sustained by the continued active hostility of capitalist states. That severity is directed against all opponents, whether from the old bourgeoisie or from the revolutionary parties opposed to the Bolsheviks: the Mensheviks (Social-Democrats), the Social Revolutionists, and the anarchists—and recently the Communist Opposition.

Of the revolutionary parties which struggled against the Bolsheviks in the early days of the Revolution, some made common cause with the old bourgeoisie, others took up arms independently or indulged in terroristic acts. Some merely conducted propaganda. Members of all the Socialist parties—the Left Social Revolutionists least—were involved in armed conflict with the Bolshe-

viks. The anarchists did not join it except as the military anti-Bolshevik movement of Makhno in the Ukraine may be regarded as anarchist because of his own anarchist views. But it was not supported by the anarchists as an expression of their purposes.

The Bolsheviks acted against all these opponents just as they did against the bourgeoisie, imprisoning and exiling them by the hundreds. Their press and their organizations, which had existed openly during the early years of the Revolution, were destroyed. They led, for a little while, an underground illegal existence which was soon rooted out. No illegal press or political organization of Socialists or anarchists has existed since 1922. All the active anti-Bolshevik Socialist and anarchist leaders are either in prison or exiled to Siberia or abroad. Many who renounced their struggle are free in Russia, some even actively in the service of the Soviet regime. The official feeling toward these former fellow-revolutionists under the czar is clear.

Said Bukharin in 1927:

"And it is intelligible that the position with us is such that there are indeed various parties, but that only one party has its hand on the helm, whilst the others are under lock and key. This will continue to be so in the future."

Tomsky, head of the trade unions, humorously repeated the point (also 1927):

"Certainly, two, three, or four parties may exist under the conditions of working-class dictatorship, but only provided that one party is in power and all the rest in prison."

When Stalin was asked in November, 1927, by foreign delegates why the Social-Democratic Party was not tolerated in the Soviet Union, he dismissed that party as counter-revolutionary. He said:

"We tolerate no Social-Democratic Party in the Soviet Union for the same reason that we tolerate no counter-revolutionary parties. It is certainly fairly well known that in Russia the Social-Democrats fought in the Civil War against the Soviet Union on the side of the Kolchaks and Denikins. The Social-Democratic Party is at present the party of the re-establishment of capitalism and the abolition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. . . . When the revolutionary proletariat seizes power the social democracy becomes a party of the open counter-revolution."

When asked why the Social-Democrats were not released he said:

"It is true that the active Mensheviki are not released before they have served their terms. But what is there to be astonished at? Why were the Bolsheviki held in prison in the months of July, August, September, and October, 1917? Why was Lenin compelled to remain in hiding from July to October, 1917, when the Mensheviki and the Social Revolutionists had the power?

"In the Soviet Union the social democracy is a counter-revolutionary party. That, of course, does not mean that the proletarian revolution could not carry on without the arrest of these leaders of the counter-revolutionary party. The arrest of the

Mensheviki is only the logical continuation of the policy of the October revolution which overthrew the parties of the Second International. If one is permitted to overthrow them, why should one not also arrest them when they openly go over into the ranks of the bourgeois counter-revolution? Do you think that the overthrow of the Mensheviki and the Social Revolutionists was a less energetic measure than their arrest?

During the years of the Tcheka—1918 to 1922—when civil war and strife was at its height, the government leaned heavily upon the red terror for its protection. Thousands were shot, imprisoned, or exiled in these years. Since 1922, the number proceeded against, though large, declined up to 1927, when there was a sharp rise due to the rupture with Great Britain, the murder of the Soviet ambassador at Warsaw, counter-revolutionary plots, and the threat of war.

The administration of the laws for the safety of the regime being political, it naturally follows that the international situation is a controlling factor in their application. In times of pressure and consequent nervousness, the G.P.U. acts with speed and severity, arresting suspects by the hundreds. Most of them are released after examination, as under all dictatorships with such a policy. Of some 5,000 persons estimated to have been arrested all over Russia in June, 1927, after the assassination of the Soviet Ambassador to Poland, only about 700 to 800 are calculated by competent observers to have been exiled or imprisoned. The others were all freed after a few days or weeks of examination.

One anarchist youth I met in Moscow, an instructor at the university, had just been released after several

weeks of confinement. He had been taken from his bed at midnight on the day after the assassination, in the general round-up of all suspects on the G.P.U. lists. In prison he was taken out almost daily for an examination, which consisted in trying to convince him that since anarchism and communism have the same ultimate object of abolishing the State, he should support the Soviet regime. When he failed to see the point after three weeks of argument, he was released.

It can be said fairly that a state of terror among opponents of the regime has been maintained continuously since the Revolution, in the sense of inspiring fear of arrest for the slightest activity or suspicion of it, with exile, imprisonment, or, in aggravated cases, execution as the penalty. There is no question but that the whole bourgeoisie left in Russia, numbering over two million persons (a little over one percent of the population) has felt continually terrorized. The constant stories of unjust and to them unreasonable exiles and imprisonments are sufficiently numerous to keep them in a state of apprehension.

To sum up, the whole system of dealing with political opposition in Russia rests on extraordinarily broad foundations—broader than elsewhere in the world. It rests first on the loose and inclusive legal definitions of political offenses, and second on the extraordinary powers of the G.P.U. in arrests, prosecution, "trial," imprisonment, and exile. Both the conception of political crime and the discretion of the political police are wider either than under the czar, or than in other countries. They are analogous to other countries in a state of war, in which Soviet Russia regards herself. But there is no

such atmosphere in Russia, the system working almost invisibly.

Given the conditions out of which this stern discipline of the country grew, together with the inherited habits of government and the continuous struggle against enemies abroad and within, its excesses are understandable. They yield to a far more natural explanation than the romantic interpretation of "Asiatic cruelty" often attached to them. Moralizing about the G.P.U. system does not explain it. Its function in relation to the dictatorship does. It occupies the place of the Communist Party's immediate weapon of defense—swift, decisive, final. The dictatorship in essence is the Party leadership plus the political police.

As it reflects not only the need for defense against counter-revolution, but the Party's policies in dealing with all forms of opposition to its program, the assortment of persons exiled and imprisoned is amazingly varied. No other country touches it for variety—monarchists, democrats, bourgeois intellectuals, priests and bishops of the old church, spies, Tolstoian objectors to military service, peasants in revolt against taxes, workers engaged in illegal strikes or forming illegal unions, speculators, Socialists, anarchists, Communist oppositionists, saboteurs, illegal traders. Their offenses range from active armed conspiracy to just being what they are.

The G.P.U., in fulfilling its prescribed function against political and economic counter-revolution, has far exceeded the bounds of necessary protection. Among Communists there is little complaint of its activity, save in the Opposition, which did not complain until it was hit. Some Party members not in the Opposition regard

the policy of exile of inactive Socialists and anarchists as unfortunate and unnecessary, especially in its effect abroad in alienating Socialists and anarchists from the Soviet regime and from "united front" campaigns. Some favor an amnesty for all exiles not guilty of acts of violence or exiled for mere membership in opposition groups. But they do not raise the issue in Party congresses.

These objections to the G.P.U.'s activity are so few and so timid that they promise no change in its powers or methods. As long as the Soviet Union is faced with actively hostile states and internal conspiracies with foreign enemies, so long will the dictatorship protect itself by stern and summary methods, and so long will opponents of all sorts doubtless remain in prison or exile.

CHAPTER XV

POLITICAL EXECUTIONS

LIKE other operations of the G.P.U., executions are surrounded by mystery in order not to arouse open issues, and to increase fear and "respect." The method of execution is designated in law only as "by shooting" and no official will explain precisely how death sentences are carried out. The names of persons ordered shot are made public only in important cases. The bodies of persons executed are never delivered to relatives.

The facts as to the number of persons executed for political and economic crimes throughout the Soviet Union are impossible to get officially. The nearest approach to an official statement was that made in conversation with members of the American Labor Delegation in 1927, by Menjinski, the head of the G.P.U. for the whole Union. He told them that about 1,500 persons were shot by the G.P.U. in the five years from 1922 to 1927, either on its own order or that of the courts. His figure evidently did not include ordinary criminals ordered shot by the courts; it covered apparently only political and economic offenders dealt with both by the G.P.U. and the courts—of whom the larger number were probably political. He gave no details on the distribution of this number over the five-year period, on the specific nature of the offenses, or on their distribution over the Soviet Union.

Averaging the number over five years, it shows 300

persons shot a year, a high rate of capital punishment for political offenses in any country—though not as high as in some periods under the czar. It can be accounted for only by the struggle in which the Soviet state has been continuously involved with counter-revolutionary efforts at home and abroad, and by the nervousness of the government in the face of its difficult position in a hostile world. The political death-rate is not high compared with many other countries in times of acute political conflict; and it should be pointed out, too, that the murders and lynchings so common in such conflict elsewhere are almost wholly absent in Russia. The government has a monopoly of executions, as of most everything else.

How far the figure given by Menjinski can be relied upon as accurate, nobody is in a position to say. In its favor it can be said that the Bolsheviks are usually frank when they give out information. No other possible source of information exists by which to check it. I venture to guess that the figure does not include the executions of Socialists in Georgia after the 1924 uprising—some hundreds of which were publicly announced and many more known.

By far the greater number of men and women executed have come from the old bourgeoisie. The only other considerable class is the Georgian Socialists. No other Socialists have been executed at any time, save for political crimes of violence. But a few have "disappeared" after arrest without explanation. The emigré officials of the Russian Socialist parties claim that other Socialists have been shot, either for participation in alleged conspiracies with counter-revolutionists, or in prison for riot or attempted escape. They also claim that some of the conspiracies for which persons were

executed—among them Socialists—were organized by provocative agents of the G.P.U. They offer no precise evidence, and such evidence would be obviously almost impossible to get—save from the G.P.U.

Five anarchists were shot in 1922 and 1923, charged with "banditism," some of them for alleged connection with the bombing of a jail in Leningrad. One was a woman well-known in the anarchist movement in the United States. No other anarchists are known to have been shot, but a few of them under arrest some years ago also "disappeared."

Thirty Orthodox bishops, one Roman Catholic archbishop, and an unknown number of priests were shot during the political struggle with the Church, conspicuously at the time of the seizure of the Church treasures for famine relief in 1922. Spies, armed rebels, counter-revolutionists conspiring with enemies abroad, are ordinarily executed, usually after public trial in important cases.

The only persons totally exempted by law from the possibility of execution for any offense are those under eighteen years of age and pregnant women.

In recent years the tendency has been to make public announcements of executions—and always in cases that serve a political purpose. When trials take place in open court the verdicts are, of course, always public. No one knows how many of the executions have taken place by order of the G.P.U. alone without trials in the courts, but according to all accounts they have been decreasing, and are probably now exceptional. The twenty members of the old bourgeoisie shot in June, 1927, in reprisal for the assassination of the Soviet ambassador at Warsaw, were condemned solely by administrative order of the G.P.U., backed up by the Central Executive

Committee. That action, publicly announced for its political effect, was taken in precipitate haste in a moment of nervous excitement, and without giving the condemned a chance to appeal for clemency. Some were arrested only a few hours before they were shot.

Rykov, replying to a protest against the executions sent by George Lansbury, James Maxton, and Fenner Brockway, of the British Independent Labor Party, said:

“The sentence of the G.P.U. is termed in your telegram ‘executions without legal trial.’ This is not the case. According to the law of our State the collegium of the G.P.U. is competent in all cases when it is necessary to take energetic action against the counter-revolution; in these cases it then has all the rights of a revolutionary tribunal. In this case, therefore, the G.P.U. is an extraordinary court which is formally analogous to those extraordinary and exceptional courts which exist in all bourgeois countries.”

The executions had been preceded by a public communiqué of the Soviet government, reading in part:

“The government expects from the G.P.U. that it will take decisive measures to protect the country from foreign spies, incendiaries, and murderers, and their allies the monarchists and White-Guardist criminals.”

In accordance with this authority, the G.P.U. announced the executions a day later, saying:

"Having regard to the fact that monarchist White Guardists in the pay and acting under the instructions of a foreign secret service have commenced an open campaign of terror and destruction against the Soviet, the collegium of the G.P.U. decided at its session of the 9th of June to sentence the following persons to be executed by shooting."

The effect of these summary executions in arousing a storm of protest in the foreign press surprised the Soviet officials. I heard from many Communists in Moscow expressions of regret, not at the procedure, but that the government had acted without counting the cost abroad. Even Russians used to the severity of the regime spoke bitterly of it. But the reaction probably typical of the masses was voiced by the peasant president of a village Soviet way out in Moscow province. When I asked him what he thought of such a proceeding, he said slowly, with a far-away philosophical gaze, "Well, if it is necessary to shoot a thousand of those fellows to save what we've got, I'm for it."

Practically no executions for political or economic offenses now take place without the approval of the Praesidium of the Central Executive Committee, which is the court of last resort to which any prisoner may appeal for clemency. Practically all of them do so in capital cases. No execution is put into effect until seventy-two hours after the court's or the G.P.U.'s decision, in order to give time for such an appeal—unless, as in the case of the twenty in June, the Central Executive Committee had already approved the executions in advance. The procedure in that instance was not typical.

The method of execution is described in the statutes simply as "shooting." In most countries detailed provisions are made by law for carrying out executions, and witnesses are required to be present. In Russia no directions are given in law, and no witnesses are permitted. The usual practice, according to all reports, which officials refuse to confirm, is to shoot in the back of the head with a revolver in the hands of a specially designated prison official, and in a special room of a prison. It is commonly said that it is done as the prisoner walks into the room, and that in many cases he is not aware of what is about to happen. No exact time is fixed for executions. The prisoner knows only that at any time after seventy-two hours following his condemnation he may be taken from his cell and shot. But he may be taken from his cell for other purposes, and he can never be entirely sure when the final call comes. The job is usually done at night in cellar rooms, and the body removed at once to the place of burial, which is kept secret.

This unfamiliar method of execution is more shocking to many people than familiar methods; but if one is to choose among the gruesome methods of deliberate killing it may have advantages over the more spectacular guillotine, gallows, electric chair, or firing squad, with the exact time of death known usually long in advance, and the execution almost a social affair.

The procurer-general of the G.P.U. stated to me that an official of the court or of the prosecutor's office is always present, and that a doctor's certificate of death is required. He also stated that although precise methods differed somewhat in various parts of the Union, he thought that nowhere now was the firing squad used except in the army. Reliable information from other

quarters indicates that executions often take place, at least away from Moscow, without the presence of officials other than the executioner.

In cases where public announcements of the sentence are made, relatives are notified and may, except in unusual cases, see the condemned. Fairly numerous instances, however, are reported in which the relatives were notified only after the execution. The G.P.U. is usually responsive to requests from relatives and friends for the whereabouts of any person in their custody and to the orders made concerning them. But in not a few cases people arrested have disappeared without any satisfactory explanation and relatives and friends have assumed they were shot. None of those of which I heard was in recent years.

This system of executions for political and economic offenses is more inclusive, more severe and more secret than that under the czar. In Imperial Russia during the last century the death penalty, by hanging or shooting, did not exist for either political or criminal offenses except in areas under martial law. It could be imposed only by the military courts, for either political or common crimes. To deal with the revolutionary movement, therefore, martial law was declared, especially wherever and whenever acts of assassination took place, or armed conspiracies were discovered. After the revolution of 1905 all the centers of active revolutionary disturbance were put under martial law, and hangings were common. Exile was, however, the usual means of dealing with all but the most serious cases.

Under the Soviet regime, emerging from revolution and civil war, faced with vastly more opposition and uncertainty of its own power than the czarist regime,

the death penalty has been much more widely used. Its object has been to maintain the Revolution—and the dictatorship. Without the terror, Communists insist their regime could not have survived the attacks of its hosts of enemies. They regard the death penalty itself for any offense as a regrettable necessity, recognizing that it should and will be abolished for all offenses as soon as the State feels itself sufficiently secure. The encouraging move toward that end, made on the tenth anniversary of the Revolution (1927), abolished the death penalty for all criminal offenses except armed robbery, which in parts of the union has grown to be a menace. That will considerably cut the number of executions—although it does not touch offenses against the State, which still carry “the highest measure of social defense” with little prospect for change in policy as long as Soviet Russia continues to feel herself isolated in a world of enemies.

CHAPTER XVI

POLITICAL EXILES

BY FAR the largest number of political opponents of the Soviet regime against whom action is taken are exiled. Comparatively few are shot; more are imprisoned; most exiled—that is, on the basis of counting the great Solovetski "concentration camp" as a place of exile. All orders of exile are made by the collegiums (governing committees) of the G.P.U. in each republic and the special attorney-generals for the G.P.U. acting jointly. All go to the union G.P.U. headquarters at Moscow for approval before being carried out.

Persons may be exiled either abroad (regarded as the severest form by the government, but not by the exiles) or to definite and remote places in Siberia and Turkestan, or to live outside the six largest cities of the Union (Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, Odessa, Kiev, and Rostov). Most of the exiles are sent to remote villages in Siberia and Turkestan far away from the railroads. Next largest in number are those given the exile order commonly called the "minus 6," a prohibition from living in the six big cities. Smallest is the number of exiles sent abroad—only about 200 in all up to 1928.

Nobody except the G.P.U. knows how many exiles there are, and the G.P.U. does not tell. In all the years since the Revolution, not the slightest indication of the number has come from any official source. It is said

that the former head of the G.P.U., its founder, had planned to make the facts public, believing that rumor and exaggeration did more harm than good. But his successor, the present head, has been tight-mouthed on all except routine phases of the G.P.U., and almost inaccessible to inquiries.

Estimates run from 5,000 exiles of the old bourgeois classes and 1,000 Socialists and anarchists to ten or fifteen times that number: 60,000 to 75,000. The amazingly high maximum figures are seriously set forth as estimates by reasonably sober people among emigrés who ought to have some notion of affairs in Russia. They present no evidence, however, and since their only sources of information from Russia are letters from exile or prison, it is impossible for them to give any. I heard nothing in Russia from any source to bear them out. Inquiries of the officials of emigré radical parties (socialists and anarchists) show about a thousand in exile known by name and their lists are, of course, incomplete. The monarchist and bourgeois emigrés name hundreds and claim thousands.

Though I doubt whether there is any basis for these high estimates, it should be said that they go no higher than the accepted figures of prisoners and exiles under the czar. Indeed, they are far lower. At the time of the first Duma in 1906, the number in prison was estimated to be from 70,000 to 80,000. During 1908 alone, "no less than 70,000 were banished for political offenses, and 782 executed, while the persons in exile numbered no less than 180,000."

But in Russia the lower figures, a total of around 6,000 exiles, are estimated by dispassionate observers as nearer the facts. They come from those who have dealt

with relief for exiles and prisoners, and from journalists with wide contacts who have followed events. These lower figures do not, however, include the economic offenders, nor the political prisoners actually behind walls or at the Solovetski Islands concentration camp in the White Sea. To include them all would add at least another 5,000 to 7,000 of the bourgeois, and 1,500 to 2,000 of the Socialists and anarchists.

There are probably, therefore, at least 12,000 to 15,000 political and economic prisoners and exiles in Russia, of whom over three-fourths are estimated to be of the old bourgeoisie. Probably three-quarters are in exile as against prison. The Solovetski camp is officially called a place of exile, though it is in fact more like a prison. If considered as a prison, the proportion of exiles as against prisoners would be greatly decreased, as Solovetski alone houses some 6,000 to 8,000.

These figures, guess-work at best, show a high rate of persons imprisoned or exiled in proportion to the total population—one of the highest anywhere on earth suffering penalties for political opposition. Accepting the estimated figures, the proportion is not, however, as high as under at least two other dictatorships in Europe, Poland and Bulgaria,—and possibly also Italy. In Poland in 1927 the political prisoners, according to reliable estimates, were actually more numerous than in Russia (not counting Russian exiles) despite Poland's population, a fifth of Russia's. Official figures admitted 2,000; the prisoners' aid committee gave 5,000. Even counting the Russian exiles, the proportion of persons confined would appear to be greater in Poland than in Russia. But with these few exceptions, Russia certainly leads all countries in the proportion of persons confined for po-

litical reasons. This is due to its almost unique system of internal exile, which makes comparisons with other countries difficult and misleading, and to the inclusion of economic offenders with political.

This exile system was inherited from the Czar's regime. It has been retained almost intact, even with many of the identical exile localities in Siberia. It was a wretched system then; it is as bad or worse now. Persons exiled after being held in a city or county jail, are packed off in a prison car, usually on short notice. It is a third-class carriage with barred windows, accommodating thirty or forty. Often exiles do not have a chance to see relatives before leaving, or to get a supply of food, clothing, and money—either because time is so short, or isolation so strict.

This travel on short notice is in sharp contrast with the usually long period before the exile order is made, a period made wretched by interrogations, delays and uncertainty. The law requires that all persons arrested shall receive the charges against them within two weeks, and a judgment within two months. But the prosecutors may extend that time for cause—and it is frequently extended anyhow, prosecutor or not. Such delays are common enough in all countries, but the abuses of the protracted delays in Russia have been one of the most prolific causes of attack on the G.P.U. system.

Those families who can afford to accompany exiles and to live with them are allowed to do so, but not en route in the prison car. The journeys are long and tedious, being broken by stops at prisons on the way—sometimes for two or three weeks under miserable conditions—waiting for exiles from other parts of Russia to join them, so that larger groups can all be shipped together.

The further away from the big centers they get, the worse the prisons tend to be and the more indifferent or brutal the guards. The parties break up as they reach branch railway lines, each little group going off to some remote place. Some set out by wagon, or on foot, or by river boat to the far-away villages where they are to live. Weeks are often consumed in getting to the place of exile, always far enough away to insure isolation from any possible activity. This system of travel by slow stages, developed under the Czar, is known as the *etape*, and has always been a source of bitter complaint.

Many of the exile villages are far north, some inside the Arctic Circle, where the long winters are hard to endure, especially for exiles used to warm climates—southern Russia and the Trans-Caucasus. Others are far away in Turkestan, where the parching summers are almost equally unbearable. There is probably no deliberate intention of making the exiles suffer unduly, but the selection by the Central Executive Committee of these very remote places insuring isolation, has that effect. Little thought is given to exiles' comfort or welfare. The one idea in official minds is to get them out of the way and to keep them there. One slight improvement has been made by abolishing the exile camps which existed up to 1925, where men and women were crowded together under conditions less favorable than the limited freedom of poor little villages. The big Solovetski Islands camp in the White Sea is the only one left.

An exile arriving at the village where he is to spend three years—very few are sentenced to shorter terms—has to rent living quarters and find work if he can. If he has money he can manage to live decently, often comfortably, as village standards go. But most exiles have no money, and the government allowance to them

is only six and one quarter roubles a month—a little over three dollars—while the barest minimum cost of living is between ten and twenty roubles a month. Often the government allowance is delayed or comes irregularly, and sometimes not at all, especially to the bourgeois exiles. Exiles survive by getting work, though a large proportion cannot; by sharing with one another; and by getting food packages and money from relatives and friends through the infrequent mails. Work is especially difficult to get because Soviet enterprises do not want exiles in their employ, regarding them all as counter-revolutionists. And most organized work is State enterprise. The trade unions will not let them in.

Many get work at odd jobs, such as teaching or farm labor. But the peasants are not sympathetic to exiles, regarding them all indiscriminately as counter-revolutionists. Few peasants hire laborers anyhow. Official supervision is such that even if some peasants view exiles sympathetically they find it safer not to be intimate.

Exiles report at regular and frequent intervals, usually twice or three times a week, to the local G.P.U. official if there is one, or if not, to the local soviet. Few exiles escape as so many did in the old days. This is due to the increased supervision under the Soviets, to the unsympathetic attitude of the peasants to persons whom they believe to be counter-revolutionists, and to their greater fear of helping those whom they may come to know are not. Stories are told by exiles who have managed to escape by paying a high price for a long wagon ride to the railroad, and getting off on a train before their absence was discovered. But getting out of Russia across the frontier is much more difficult than in the old days when passport controls were far less rigorous.

One exile who escaped told me his story in Paris. He

was a bourgeois student arrested in Leningrad when the university was cleansed, and exiled with a few score others. He had bribed a peasant in his far-off Siberian village to conceal him in a load and drive him 100 miles to the railroad. Making his way across Russia, he crossed the Latvian border on foot; was arrested and held in a Latvian jail "worse than anything in Russia," escaping a return to Russia only through friends in Paris who secured a French visa.

After the exile's three-year period is up he may be released to return to his home; but he usually is not if his attitude remains hostile to the regime. A new order of exile is made out for another three years, and he either remains in the same place or is transferred to another. Though the G.P.U. is limited by law to imposing a maximum three-year term, it thus makes exile in fact indefinite. All of the leading Socialists and anarchists exiled as long ago as 1920 were thus still in exile in 1927. On rare occasions, the form of exile for some of them is changed to "minus 6"; sometimes locations are changed from far north to far south. Few go home unless they agree loyally to accept the Soviet regime.

The tendency in recent years has been to increase the number of exiles given the more liberal "minus 6," though the number in fixed localities is still much larger. Under that form of exile the person may select the district in which he prefers to live outside the six big cities, but his preferences are subject to official approval. He is never allowed to live anywhere near his home town. Obligated to stay in the place selected, he reports regularly to the authorities until he can arrange with them to select another.

The few differences between the present system and that of czarist days are: First, under the czar the money

allowance was higher (ten roubles a month) and the exiles got it pretty regularly. Second, in many places there was forced labor, often under brutal conditions; now work is hard to get at all. Third, in the czar's day exile was used chiefly for political cases, though criminals were also exiled by the courts after serving prison terms; under the Soviets, with their inclusive conception of offenses against the regime, economic offenders are also exiled: grafters, bribe-takers, speculators, smugglers, those guilty of sabotage, and the like.

Among the politicals, the bourgeois exiles are most numerous, probably five times as many as the Socialists, anarchists, and Communist oppositionists combined, due to the fact that not only do they come from a class far larger than the anti-Bolshevik revolutionary parties, but they have been more vigorously prosecuted. The whole Socialist movement in Russia at its height during the Kerensky regime, including Social Democrats and Social Revolutionists, numbered less than 100,000 altogether. The anarchists, who had no central organization, numbered only a few thousand active followers, with, however, many sympathizers in the trade unions. The old bourgeoisie, on the other hand, ran up into several millions. Almost a million of them are estimated to have fled from Russia, but the bulk of them remain—under constant fear of arrest on the slightest suspicion of anti-Soviet activity, and constantly discriminated against in their employment in all their relations to the regime.

Among the Socialist exiles the numbers as between the several Socialist parties is apparently relative to the parties' former strength, though published lists show a large proportion of Social Democrats in exile. In an annotated but incomplete list of approximately 800 exiles

and prisoners given out in 1927 by the refugee Russian Social-Democratic party from its Berlin headquarters, the Social Democrats (Mensheviks) number over half the total; the Social Revolutionists (right and left groups together), who were the largest socialist party before the Bolshevik revolution, number about a fourth; and the remainder is divided between anarchists and non-partisans, with a sprinkling of Opposition Communists. No conclusive significance attaches to the proportions in a list from Menshevik sources, which naturally shows more of their own party members. The anarchist relief committee abroad has about 150 on its lists, of whom half are in exile and half in prison. The number is quite incomplete, and estimated figures in Russia at least double it. The Left Social Revolutionists claim to have about 300 names on their lists of prisoners and exiles—also incomplete.

The International Federation of Left-Wing Communists alleges that beginning in 1924 various members of the "labor opposition" were arrested and sent either to the political isolators or to exile, and that the cases reported to them totaled between sixty and seventy. Two of those named had been members of the Moscow Soviet.

Many of these anarchists and Socialists are in the six special G.P.U. prisons, "political isolators," reserved exclusively for members of the old revolutionary parties opposed to the Bolsheviks. The proportion of prisoners and exiles shown on the list from Social-Democratic headquarters is about equal, though the secretary states that the prisoners constitute only "a small proportion" of their convicted members. As the Soviet regime has grown more settled, the tendency has been to resort less to the more rigorous restraint of prison. But though

commitments to prison are relatively fewer, the system on the whole has become more severe as it has become settled in routine. It bears harder on prisoners and exiles. In the early years of the Revolution, the treatment of Socialists and anarchists in exile or prison was easier; conditions had not been made so uniform.

A leading emigré of the Social-Democratic party, in constant contact by letter with exiles in Russia, says that since then "conditions in prison and exile have grown progressively worse, more like the czar's regime in its worst periods." It is difficult in Russia itself to get confirmation of such a statement because there is no center of information such as the emigré parties maintain. Judging from what I heard from prisoners themselves and from the "Political Red Cross," the relief work of Mme. Pechkova, it is an exaggeration based on the change from varying conditions—some quite good, and some wretched—to a uniformity somewhere between.

Among the Socialist exiles who suffer most are the many Georgian Social Democrats, probably still numbering over 500, victims of the struggle against the Soviet occupation of their country. The hardships of exile have worked with particular severity on these southerners in a far northern climate. About 100 of them still remain at the Solovetski Islands camp in the White Sea, from which all but a handful of Socialists were removed in 1925, following a vigorous agitation abroad against subjecting political prisoners to the rigors of that remote Arctic region. Why the Georgians were not transferred with the rest is not explained, though it is probably due to the generally more severe treatment visited on them than on others since the 1924 armed uprising.

Another group among the Socialist prisoners—the

Zionists—has aroused vehement attacks abroad upon the Soviet government as an enemy of Zionism. But as there are few Zionist exiles or prisoners who are not also Socialists, it is evident that the attack proceeds from the wrong basis. It is their Socialism, not their Zionism, which caused their exile. The few exceptions are bourgeois Zionists alleged to have connections abroad with anti-Soviet bourgeois groups. A few of them, perhaps in a humorous mood of the G.P.U., were exiled to Palestine—presumably on the universal political principle that “if you don’t like this country you can go back where you came from.”

In the years since 1923, when an opposition wing developed in the Communist Party, some of its minor leaders were exiled for alleged connections with anti-Soviet elements long before the dramatic finale in January, 1928. One, for instance, was exiled for having given to a Socialist a copy of an opposition document which found its way abroad and into the Socialist press.

The political theory on which the G.P.U. operates, as the “agent of the Central Committee of the Party,” according to Dzerjinsky’s policy, makes it obvious that even Communists threatening the safety of the dictatorship by non-Party connections, by illegal meetings, or by illegal publications, would be dealt with—not so severely or promptly as opponents outside the Party, but subject equally to surveillance and to arrest when occasion dictates. The climax of the struggle with the Opposition in November, 1927, when all the leaders, headed by Trotsky, were expelled, brought immediate surveillance by the G.P.U. over their activities—followed almost inevitably by their exile, in accordance with the established habit of dealing with opponents.

While the exile of Trotsky and others with distin-

gushed records of service in the Revolution and in the Party startled many—even some who know Russia well—it was only a new application of the policy always followed toward opponents who threatened the regime's power.

The Soviet press endeavored to make it appear that the orders of exile against the expelled Opposition leaders were in fact "allotments of work" in the provinces. The government's official announcement referred to the "banishment" of Trotsky and others from Moscow as "a necessary minimal measure for the safeguarding of the interests of the proletarian state." The Communist news-sheet, *International Press Correspondence*, referred to the "intention to commission Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev to do work in various big proletarian towns of the Soviet Union." Zinoviev and Kamenev, who renounced the Opposition, were, according to the government's official announcement, "sent by the party organs to carry out other work in the provinces."

Despite these euphemistic phrases, the Opposition leaders were in fact exiled by the G.P.U. precisely like others before them, though apparently to better localities than most and with a monthly allowance of thirty roubles instead of the usual six and a quarter.

Equally difficult as to estimate the number of exiles is to gauge their economic class origins. The socialist and anarchist committees abroad allege that the great majority are workers or peasants. But their incomplete lists do not bear out that contention. My informants in Russia, both officials and others, stated with remarkable unanimity, whatever their political views, that the proportion of factory workers and peasants is small; that

most of the political exiles are ex-aristocrats or intellectuals, students or office employees. It is certainly true that the G.P.U. hesitates to arrest workers and peasants for political offenses, and it deals with them more liberally when they are. They are never tried in court on political charges.

How many are dealt with by the invisible method of administrative order it is impossible to say. It is said on good authority that many workers charged with illegal strikes, and peasants charged with organized resistance have been arrested and sent away at various times. But such instances have apparently decreased to rarity. The best known authentic case of the exile of hundreds of workers was after the revolt in the city of Kronstadt in 1921. Many others were shot and imprisoned after that working-class revolt against the methods of the dictatorship was crushed by the army.

Under the system of secrecy maintained by the G.P.U. it is impossible to answer with evidence the allegation that the majority of the exiles are workers and peasants. But it does not square with the interests of the Soviet regime, nor with what one sees and hears all over Russia. The Socialist and anarchist committees abroad, while asserting the preponderance of workers and peasants, show only a small number of them on their lists. They explain this by saying that the lists do not include the non-party workers and peasants, names unknown, who engaged in unauthorized strikes or revolts against taxes, or in resistance to some measure of the regime. Among the 200 or so anarchists in exile it is estimated by their friends abroad that workers are most numerous, students second, peasants third, and intellectuals fourth. But it must be remembered that in the anar-

chist group, workers would be more likely to predominate, as would peasants in a group of left Social Revolutionists.

There is no disagreement on the proportion of women among political exiles: one out of every four or five, a high figure compared with political prisoners in other countries, but not greater than the proportion of women among exiles under the czar.

Students are also numerous among exiles, due to the "cleansing" of the schools and universities in 1924, when hundreds of bourgeois students were arrested in order to make a case for their expulsion, so as to make room for proletarian students.

Exile abroad, regarded in law as the most severe form, is in effect the lightest, and is of little importance in view of the small number sent out of the country in all the years since the Revolution. The sentence of exile abroad reads "forever," although the word has been omitted from the 1927 code of the R. F. S. F. R. It carries with it deprivation of Russian citizenship, declaring the exile to be "an enemy of the workers." The total of such exiles probably does not run over two hundred, and this method of dealing with opponents is resorted to with decreasing frequency. The G.P.U. officials assert that they would like to use it oftener, but that they cannot get the authorities to issue passports. That refusal is doubtless due to a desire not to send abroad any new propagandists against the Soviet regime. The Czar's government took the same attitude, and rarely ordered opponents exiled outside the country, and for the same reason.

Exile abroad has been applied chiefly to anarchists and a few Socialists. It is an interesting commentary on the

declaration of the code that it is the severest form of exile to note that most of those sent away were persons whose activity in or for the working class put them above suspicion of counter-revolutionary motives, and who therefore got what practically was regarded as lighter treatment. In the early days, before 1922, when foreign anarchists and Socialists were allowed to go to congresses in Russia, a number of imprisoned anarchists and Socialists were released by their intervention on condition that they go abroad. Lenin is said to have remarked once, half humorously, that better than exile at home was to send these troublesome anarchists and Socialists abroad, where they could help make revolution, just as they had helped make it in Russia.

Very few bourgeois opponents of the Soviet regime have been exiled abroad. None in recent years has been able to get an order of internal exile changed to abroad, as some did earlier. Conspicuous among the few bourgeois exiles abroad was a group of twenty professors and scientists, some quite distinguished, who were unable "to adjust themselves to the regime." They were sent away in 1922. Nowadays, members of the old bourgeois class cannot get abroad at all, by exile or passport. Except in rare cases it is assumed they are anti-Soviet. The policy now is to keep the opposition at home, where it can do little or no harm.

Exiles abroad are furnished passports, and visas are secured for the country they elect to go to, if it has diplomatic relations with Russia. Transportation is paid to the border. Any person so exiled who returns to Russia commits an offense punishable by death.

Several amnesties have covered various classes of persons who fled abroad at the times of the Revolution and the civil wars, many of whom even fought in the White

armies, and thousands of them, taking the pledge of loyalty to the Soviet regime, have come back. But no amnesty has yet covered the exiles, and none is likely as long as the regime feels itself insecure in a world of enemies. No change in the system of exile in Russia or abroad or in the policy of exiling all active opponents who are even suspected of organizing resistance can be expected as long as that feeling persists—a feeling still with plenty of justification in fact.

The policy of exiling secretly and for slight causes pays a high price in alienating the affections of thousands throughout the world who would otherwise be friends of Soviet Russia. Among Socialists and anarchists it is the chief cause of bitter criticism and opposition; yet it is to these elements that the Communist movement is constantly appealing for "united front" cooperation against capitalism and imperialism. The failure to get cooperation, save from a scattering few, is due chiefly to the Soviet government's severity in dealing with Socialists and anarchists guilty only of attempting to organize their own groups.

I venture to assert that the policy is as unnecessary to the security of the Soviet state as it is unwise in alienating so many potential friends. Many Communists disapprove it, but their view is in a hopeless minority, and they do not speak out even in Party congresses. It is almost obvious that every Socialist, every anarchist and every Communist oppositionist now in exile could be allowed to return home without the government's incurring the slightest risk of any serious trouble, so complete and powerful is the control by the G.P.U. and the censorship. I would venture even to include in such a conjecture all the bourgeois exiles—most of

them sent away for trivial causes. Such opponents could do nothing, publicly or secretly. They could not print, meet, organize—merely talk in private conversation. Yet the regime is so fearful still of plots, intervention and foreign war that it cannot tolerate them in its midst.

But the Soviet government, like others, does not base its self-defense on reason. It does not calculate long-range effects. Like other governments faced with danger it responds with severity to threats against its own security, even when expressed only in words. It is perhaps too much to expect higher standards of conduct from a Socialist state than from a capitalist when its own protection is imagined to be at stake.

CHAPTER XVII

POLITICAL PRISONERS

INTERMEDIATE between exile and the regular prisons—but nearer the prisons—is the great concentration camp on the Solovetski Islands in the far northern White Sea, a day's sail from Archangel, cut off by ice from the mainland for five months of the year. On the largest island in the Czar's days there was an old monastery, one of the most extensive in Russia, with surrounding villages to which devout members of the Church from all over Russia came in summer. These islands are covered with spruce forests and dotted with lakes, and in summer the climate is pleasant. The prisoners are housed in the old monastery buildings, in new barracks and in the few villages, and are confined to the buildings or yards enclosed by barbed wire, except when at work outside—save those few in the villages on the smaller islands.

The old monastery was transformed to its prison use by the Tcheka back in 1922, when the problem of housing the growing number of political prisoners became acute. To it were sent at first the Socialists, anarchists, Tolstoians, religious objectors to military service, and speculators; and a little later prisoners from the old bourgeoisie, who quickly outnumbered the others. After an incident in 1924, when a number of the Socialist prisoners were shot by guards in a dispute over prison-

ers' rights, and following protests abroad against conditions on the islands, most of the Socialists and anarchists were transferred to prisons on the mainland. All the Georgian Socialists were, however, left behind. Since 1925 the Solovetski camp has been used chiefly for bourgeois prisoners and economic offenders.

Its population averages between 6,000 and 8,000—the greatest single prison concentration in Russia. It is the G.P.U.'s biggest institution, and the only concentration camp left in Russia out of the half dozen improvised in the early days for dealing with opponents of the Soviet state. Commitments to it are made exclusively by the G.P.U., never by the courts. As in the case of exiles to Siberia and Turkestan, sentences are in practice indefinite, though nominally for three years.

Conditions at Solovetski have caused more protest and condemnation abroad than those at any other single place where prisoners are held, due to its isolation, its long icebound winters, inadequate supplies, and the alleged brutality of guards. The regime has doubtless been more difficult to bear than other prisons, though several ex-prisoners, including a woman, who had been in other Russian prisons and places of exile, assured me that there was no reason to single it out for condemnation. Their description of the evils was concerned mainly with petty cruelties by the guards, some of whom were hardboiled G.P.U. agents sent there for misconduct elsewhere. They also complained of the lack of contact, even by mail, with friends or relatives, there being none at all for the five ice bound months of the year.

I did not visit the islands because of the long trip required, and because I could have gained little more

information than I got from ex-prisoners and the published accounts written by prisoners, both while there and after release and escape abroad. Though no foreign visitor has been to the islands—at least none has written of such a visit—I was assured in Moscow that permission to go would be readily granted and that I might talk quite freely with prisoners.

My conversations with ex-prisoners led me to conclude that many of the published charges—certainly the most lurid credited to ex-prisoners—are greatly overdrawn, and do not fairly represent the general conditions today. They are, from all current accounts, no better or worse than in other Russian prisons.

The G.P.U. has exclusive control over the special political prisons of the Union. All the regular prisons are under the departments of the interior of the separate republics, but in those which have sections reserved for political offenders, as do most outside Moscow and Leningrad, the G.P.U. controls those sections.

The special political prison system consists of six institutions politely called "political isolators," all in Russia proper. They are used exclusively for Socialists, anarchists, and some "labor" and Communist oppositionists. These groups alone are recognized as political prisoners as distinguished from "counter-revolutionists" and economic offenders. They serve their sentences only in these special "isolators" unless they have had a regular trial in the courts. But very few Socialists or anarchists have been so tried. In that case they are sent to the regular prisons and are put either in the separate political sections, or, in rare instances, with the criminal population. In Tiflis, for instance, the political section of the prison contains both Socialists and others

-serving sentences, and also those awaiting trial. In Leningrad I met a young anarchist in the big criminal prison who told me he was serving a sentence for taking pay from foreign anti-Soviet agents. The more serious political offenses of that sort are penalized by commitment to the regular criminal prisons.

"Counter-revolutionists" and economic offenders, not recognized as political prisoners, may be sentenced by the courts or the G.P.U. Those condemned to prison by the courts, in contrast to those sentenced by administrative order of the G.P.U., are sent to the ordinary civil prisons along with criminals. They become part of the regular prison population. When sentenced to prison by administrative order they are kept in the separate political sections under G.P.U. control. Thus no person in Russia sentenced by the G.P.U. alone is put with ordinary criminals. Only the courts may do that.

In addition to the six political isolators, the G.P.U. controls two detention prisons in Moscow: the Lubyanka and the Butirki, made famous by ex-prisoners' stories, and two almost as famous in Leningrad: the Gorochovaya and the Spalerna. All four are used chiefly for prisoners awaiting trial or transfer elsewhere. Small jails for detention are located in almost all the larger G.P.U. headquarters throughout the Union, usually consisting of rooms improvised in the basements, with conditions naturally very bad.

The Socialist and anarchist political prisoners in the six G.P.U. political isolators with a total population of 1,500 to 2,000, get the benefit of a special regime, regarded by both the government and the non-political prisoners as a great improvement over the ordinary prison regime. Many of the political prisoners, however, do not so regard it. Its benefits consist of no work—

indeed the privilege of work is denied them; almost unlimited receipt of books and periodicals for those who can afford them or with friends who can; and either separate cells or small rooms with only a few prisoners. Many object to this isolation in the prisons as they do to lack of work. But what one man may regard as better seems worse to another. While an intellectual might find tolerable his life in an isolator with no work, a cell to himself, and plenty of books, such a life would be torture to a worker or peasant used to vigorous activity and the company of his fellows. The food is said to be better than in regular prisons, but the difference, considering the poverty of Russian institutional life, is, at best, slight. These distinctions between political and ordinary regimes follow the tradition of the status of political prisoners in most European countries. The six political isolators are located in small towns in Russia proper, and are either separate buildings of a regular prison, as at Yaroslavl on the Volga, or "reformed" monasteries, as at Suzdal.

The treatment in all these prisons is much the same. It is complained of by the prisoners and their friends because of the enforced inactivity, the restrictions on intermingling inside the prisons, the remoteness of the locations from families and friends, and the ups and downs of food and physical comforts and of the attitude of the prison directors. Frequent hunger strikes have testified to these protests. The regime is calculated to give recognized political prisoners what for generations in Russia have been considered their rights, but which, like all rights, can be secured only by eternal insistence.

In the special prisons for temporary detention in Moscow and Leningrad, and in jails elsewhere, conditions

vary greatly, both between the prisons and at different times, due to overcrowding and unusual severity in times of excitement, and to the personalities of the officials in charge. The preliminary detention prisons in both cities (the Gorochovaya in Leningrad, the Lubianka in Moscow), both attached to the offices of the G.P.U. so as to have prisoners at hand for examination, are adapted to use from structures made for apartments in Leningrad, for offices in Moscow. Physically they are badly adapted for prison use, causing great suffering from lack of air, sanitation and heat, and from vermin and overcrowding, together often with protracted confinement far beyond the purposes of so temporary a shelter. The same evils exist in the temporary detention rooms in most G.P.U. headquarters in the republics and the county seats. The Lubianka at Moscow also causes a nervous strain on prisoners by its reputation as a place of political executions.

Some of the bitterest stories of prison experiences under the Soviets have been written about these preliminary detention prisons. While these stories constitute a fair indictment of certain methods of the G.P.U., they are not a fair basis for judging the Russian political prison system. All such temporary jails the world over tend to be far below the average prison standard.

Even the larger detention prisons in Moscow and Leningrad, the Butirki and the Spalerna, are much better. Indeed, the Spalerna, built as a political prison by the czar, compares favorably with the "world's best jails," though it is often badly overcrowded. I do not recollect seeing a better jail, from a physical standpoint, anywhere in the United States. The regime of the Butirki in Moscow is like that of the usual Russian

prisons of the better type. Part of it is used for prisoners serving long sentences, and therefore has features of settled prison life—work, library, classes, store, theatre.

Outside Moscow and Leningrad conditions in the temporary jails are similar, or worse, especially in the smaller cities and towns, where cells are fitted up often in dark basements. In the larger cities—Tiflis and Kharkov, for example—the temporary quarters are fairly large, as prisoners are often numerous. Much complaint is made of the overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in these makeshifts. Detention sections for politicals in the regular prisons vary but slightly from those for other prisoners, but are presumably better as regards receipt of food, money, and reading matter.

Conditions are sometimes such, however, that the authorities are not anxious to exhibit them or the prisoners. A letter signed by seventeen political prisoners in the Kharkov central prison, dated September, 1926, and addressed to the Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, alleges that the prison authorities refused to let visiting delegations see them, and as a matter of fact concealed the political prisoners. They charged that they were removed by force, after being beaten, to the G.P.U. temporary prison in Kharkov. On the occasion of the visits of a Dutch delegation, of American students, and of a delegation of German workingwomen, the politicals were either kept in their cells or taken for a walk in the yard to prevent their being seen. My own experience in Kharkov was similar. I was not shown the G.P.U. temporary jail nor the political section of the central prison, although my interest in political prisoners was known to my hosts. Indeed, I was led to believe that I had been shown all sections of the prison. Some prisoners in the yard called out to us, but I

could not understand Russian and our guide ignored them. They may well have been politicals "out for a walk." If I had been familiar with the previous incidents, and had insisted, I am confident I could have seen them.

So much for the G.P.U.'s places of detention and of imprisonment. But the G.P.U. does not control the whole prison system for politicals, though it does most of it. All persons sent to prison by the courts—bourgeois political prisoners, conscientious objectors to military service, and economic offenders—go to institutions under control of the departments of the interior of the various republics. The few Socialists and anarchists who have been tried in the courts have also gone to the regular prisons. Practically every prison in Russia holds at least a few bourgeois political and economic offenders, guilty of more serious offenses than the far larger number exiled. In many prisons there are a few conscientious objectors to military service.

These political prisoners live under the same prison regime as ordinary criminals, a regime common to all Soviet prisons. That regime represents so new a spirit in the relation of prisoners to keepers, that while it affects only a small number of political prisoners, it is worth description.

Physically, Russian prisons average a low standard as prisons go in Europe and America; they are dirty, unsanitary, vermin-infested, poorly heated, with beds often mere planks on a frame covered by a straw pallet. They vary from a few, thoroughly modern and clean, to the medieval holes of parts of oriental Russia. Russian prisons differ greatly from American and English, and

most prisons elsewhere, in being very social institutions. Prisoners are not kept apart in single cells. They usually live in large dormitories, where they eat and play games and read as well as sleep. Each man keeps his belongings under his bunk or in a box, and wears his own clothes. There are no prison uniforms.

Low physical standards are intensified by the overcrowded conditions of practically every prison in Russia, whether political or criminal. Overcrowding of criminal prisons is due to the increase in crime in Russia as in other countries after the war; in political prisons to the regime's severity in dealing with opposition. Other contributing causes are the regime's policy against building any new prisons, and the closing up of the worst parts of the old czarist prisons associated with the tortures of revolutionists. Some of these parts have been converted into workshops; others just abandoned; some of the most famous, like that in the fortress of Peter and Paul at Leningrad, are kept open to the public as historic "museums." In Kharkov the warden took me through the old political section, now wholly abandoned, where prisoners were chained to the wall above their narrow iron cots in single cells—remarking that he himself had been chained there for some years as a revolutionist.

I went into about a dozen prisons of all types, from Georgia to Leningrad, and had no difficulty getting in—and out—except for the political isolators and the detention prisons in Moscow, all of which were closed to foreign visitors because of the excitement at the time over the break with England. They differed greatly in cleanliness and arrangement, just as they do in the United States. I saw none worse than some I have seen in the United States, and two were as clean and well

ordered as America's best. The average, however, is lower; but so is the whole Russian standard of living.

In sharp contrast to the generally depressing physical conditions is the prison administration. The whole system of dealing with criminals is conceived for the purpose of reforming prisoners and paving the way to the total abolition of prisons. To characterize the new purposes, the word "prison" has been abolished; they are all "houses of detention," "houses of correction," "isolators," and "farm colonies." No longer is any offender "sentenced," according to the code; he is "deprived of liberty." There are no "punishments"; all sentences are "measures of social defense."

Resolutely the Soviet regime sets itself against building any new prisons, despite the large increase in the number of offenders sentenced. Progress lies in reducing the number of prisons, cutting down police forces, and educating people to live socially without police and prisons. One prison warden said to me, "A long time ahead to that, but we must begin now." The whole system is operated on elastic lines in order to move prisoners about easily from one type of institution to another according to the authorities' judgment of their ability to stand more or less liberty. A prisoner may progress from an isolator—the severest type, where the regime is like that of prisons anywhere—to a house of correction, where he is freer. That freer regime is marked by one of the most amazing privileges of Soviet prisons, a two-weeks' vacation each year with pay for every well-behaved prisoner, and for those whose conduct is not first-class, proportionately less time off. Prisoners may take their two weeks all at one time, or divide it into short periods, or even into "week-ends in town."

Peasant prisoners get three months' vacation in the summer—without prison pay—to help with the crops if their village soviet does not object to their return home. The approval of the home-town soviet is now required in order to avoid trouble with the neighbors, following early incidents in which some prisoners were beaten, even killed, by indignant villagers. The officials say that very few prisoners fail to return from vacation. Those who do not return and who are caught suffer no additions to their sentences, but they get no more vacations and may be sent back to prisons of more restricted liberty. This vacation privilege is not unknown even in the United States, where it is often allowed to farmer prisoners in western county jails. During the war, it was adopted by some state prisons to make up for the shortage of farm labor.

I met some ex-prisoners and prisoners who ridiculed the vacation system, saying that it is more nominal than real, and that for one reason or another half the prisoners entitled to them do not get them. But I discount their comment, because all of them were anti-Soviet, who, I judge, were reflecting discriminations made against them. The authorities would naturally be more strict in applying the rules to them.

In "intermediate" houses of correction located usually in cities, prisoners have still more liberty, as they are free to go to work outside, only coming back to sleep in them. Some work in the shops inside; but even they are allowed to go out. I heard envious comment in Leningrad from unemployed workers who thought these prisoners better off than they—with secure jobs and a comfortable home! Farm colonies, in which liberty is least restricted, are connected with most of the large prisons. One I visited near Leningrad was an old

estate, surrounded by barbed wire in order to check up at the entrances on the comings and goings of prisoners to the fields and forests—and even to the railroad station a mile away, where they were allowed to see off their visitors. The whole atmosphere was natural and unrestrained. The warden and guards played games with the men, and worked and slept out with them in field and forest. Those who prove unfit for this increased liberty of farm colonies are sent back to the more restricted prisons.

Within the prisons the relations between the keepers and inmates are unusually democratic, as prisons go. The prisoners share actively in running prison life, though thorough-going self-government experiments are still in their infancy. The prisoners' share in self-government is so far confined to organizing education and recreation and conducting the prison cooperative stores. The democratic prison regime championed by Thomas Mott Osborne in the United States is understood and approved in Russia, with efforts toward it already significantly under way. But no Russian prison has as yet gone as far in self-government as Sing Sing under Osborne. In a few prisons it is planned to turn the discipline over to a prisoners' court, subject to the director's veto—which is the heart of Osborne's system.

Most of the wardens are former political prisoners themselves, and though that experience does not guarantee that a man in authority will see things from the prisoners' viewpoint, it is bound to help. Most of the wardens struck me as more alert, less officious, and with a closer man-to-man relation to the prisoners, than any wardens I have had the privilege of meeting elsewhere—and I have met a good many, in one capacity or another. I saw no stiff, brass-button formality, and no

servility on the part of prisoners. The fact that all but a few wardens are Communists probably explains their devotion, progressive-mindedness, and comparative lack of bureaucratic habits.

One of the great improvements in Russian prisons is that work is available to almost all prisoners. There is no forced labor, no contract labor, as in the United States. All prisoners are free not to work if they choose. But great inducements to work lie in the payment of wages and in the deduction of one-third time off the sentences of working prisoners. The wages are usually low, but enough to help support the prisoners' families, to take care of their needs for tobacco, sweets, stationery and toilet articles at prison stores, and to give them some money on release. In all but a few prisons there is plenty of work in the shops, making textiles, harness, shoes, furniture, wagons—and in printing. The goods not purchased by a government department are sold on the market, and the profits go to prison maintenance.

In several prisons where the men—common offenders—crowded around me with curiosity as to my mission, I asked for those who had served time also in Czarist prisons. Each time a few spoke up. In response to inquiry as to what improvements they noted, if any, under the Soviets, they usually laughed at the idea of asking such a question. "Of course this regime is better," said one, "we can smoke, we don't have to go to church, we can see the warden any time we ask, and we get pay and vacations."

This new system is in its infancy, but it is growing, and not to the making of "good prisons," which the Russians recognize as futile, but to their gradual abolition by fitting prisoners for liberty. This regime, together with the educational and social reorganization

of Russian life, is expected either to cure most types of offenders or prevent their development. Still far from uniform in its application, it has to contend with discouraging physical plants, lack of money for equipment, and an untrained personnel.

Political prisoners sentenced by the courts live under this regime just like other prisoners. The courts may restrict their privileges in their orders of commitment. "Isolation" may be specified, which means either continuous confinement in an isolator for their full term, or confinement in a separate department of a house of correction. There is, however, no solitary confinement in Russia, except temporarily for offenses committed in prison.

But despite the equality of bourgeois political prisoners and economic offenders with criminals, the regime is doubtless harder on them because of class discrimination by the officials. They find it more difficult to get sympathetic attention to complaints, or the privilege of transfer to freer regimes. Conscientious objectors to military service usually get better treatment, both because most of them are peasants or workers, and because they are usually men of fine character. Officials soon come to recognize that they are not ordinary criminals.

In Russia, as in most of Europe, the authorities, Czarist or Soviet, have always permitted friends and relatives of prisoners to send in money, food, clothes, books, bedding and articles of personal comfort. European prisons in that respect differ from English and American. This tradition permitted even under the Czars the organization of relief for political prisoners and exiles who did not have families or friends able to supply them. Under the Soviets the same system, somewhat more re-

stricted, continues, and a public relief agency serves politicals as it did before. Indeed it is under the direction of the same woman who aided, among others, the present Bolshevik rulers of Russia when they were confined in the Czar's prisons. Only Mme. Pechkova, the first wife of Maxim Gorky, is allowed to carry on this organized work, but solely as a personal enterprise, with a single office in Moscow and with no organized connections in Russia or abroad. Her work is commonly referred to as the "Political Red Cross," though the government recognizes only Mme. Pechkova personally. A committee assists her, raising funds chiefly from the friends and families of the persons arrested. She makes no distinction between persons proceeded against for political offenses, regardless of their views—monarchists, democrats, Socialists, anarchists.

Most of the public aid for Socialists and anarchists comes, however, from their emigré organizations in Berlin and Paris, which collect relief funds sent through by mail or the banks direct to the prisoners and exiles. The anarchists work through a committee of the Syndicalist International at Berlin; the Socialists through the party organizations of their separate sections. Occasionally they have united for relief work, and occasionally resorted to the good offices of Mme. Pechkova. Aid gets through to prisoners and exiles when sent in the names of individuals, not from foreign organizations. In some cases prisoners have been penalized by further exile for getting foreign help, on charges of "receiving aid from abroad." This foreign aid to exiles and prisoners is probably only a fraction of what they get from their families and friends in Russia. Contacts abroad are too difficult to permit satisfactory co-

operation, or even for the facts of exile and imprisonment to be accurately known.

Persons in Russia other than Mme. Pechkova and two individuals in Leningrad and Kharkov permitted very quietly to raise relief funds, are prohibited from collecting funds for relief. Some, even the wives of prisoners, have themselves suffered exile for trying to collect funds, because any such efforts are regarded by the G.P.U. as camouflage for anti-Soviet activity. All aid in Russia for exiles and prisoners other than Mme. Pechkova's must come through friends or relatives directly.

The reason for these restrictions on relief work by the G.P.U. is the fear that it may be made a screen for counter-revolutionary activity. Officials claim to have evidence that in certain instances this has been the fact. Mme. Pechkova alone is trusted for any extensive work—because of her integrity, her long record of service to revolutionists under the Czar's regime, her entire aloofness from political life, and her tact and fairness. And she doubtless enjoys some prestige as the former wife of Maxim Gorky. Her position is also strengthened by her work in behalf of Communist prisoners in Poland—whose release she has often secured in exchange for the release of Polish prisoners in Russia.

In addition to relief she and her staff take up cases with the G.P.U., either to get information of charges or of prisoners' whereabouts—which is invariably given—or to urge modifications of unjustified orders. The higher officials, according to her experience, are usually responsive to appeals to correct injustices done by their subordinates, but they cannot always be reached. Relations with the G.P.U. are satisfactory enough so that most of her appeals get attention—even by telephone.

Mme. Pechkova manages to deal with cases referred to her even from distant parts of the Union, but most of her service is to prisoners and exiles from Moscow and nearby. Persons arrested in the other republics, or the outlying parts of the Russian republics, have only their own relatives and friends, unskilled in the ways of the G.P.U., to intercede for them. Lawyers do not take such cases, as there is no place whatever for them in G.P.U. procedure. Some of the G.P.U. officials told me that they regarded Mme. Pechkova's "political red cross" work as desirable and helpful, because she deals with prisoners' needs in ways which the G.P.U. obviously cannot itself.

But relations with the G.P.U. were not always so easy. They have varied with the personality of the men in charge, and the temper of the regime in times of crisis. Mme. Pechkova's work was closed up entirely by a Tcheka raid in 1922, and kept closed for two months, until she had discarded the formal organization, the Political Red Cross, and agreed to operate solely on her personal responsibility. Even now after more than ten years of it, the work is under close surveillance and confined to pretty narrow limits. It is said on apparently good authority that one of her minor employees is an agent of the G.P.U.—which, if true, would only conform to the usual practices. But she has nothing to conceal. The G.P.U. keeps a close enough eye on such an activity to make her staff reluctant to discuss her work with foreigners. She herself is frank—but discreet.

The Soviet regime, while pursuing its policy of severity toward political or economic opposition, has made marked advances over the Czarist system in abolishing

solitary confinement in single cells, the dungeons of military fortresses and the brutalities of flogging and forced labor. The benefits of the progressive new penology, still in its early stages, affect the political prisons as well as the prisoners sent by the courts to the criminal prisons. While the exile system remains quite as bad, possibly even worse, than under the Czar, the lot of political prisoners, bad as it is, has undoubtedly improved. In comparison with other countries, it is in many respects better—better, for instance, in relation to the lot of ordinary criminals than in the United States, which makes no distinction between political and other offenders, though physically American prisons average higher. But in relation to the standard of living of the people, Russian prisons are on quite as high a level as ours. I have seen far worse political prisons in other parts of Europe where political prisoners are presumed to enjoy a privileged status.

In pointing out such differences, I do not minimize the evils of Russian prisons, nor do I extenuate the regime's policy in locking up so many men and women without trial or hearing, most of them innocent of any real offense.

CHAPTER XVIII

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS AND PACIFIST PROPAGANDA

UNIVERSAL military service is in force throughout the Soviet Union by provision of the Constitution, which declares it "the duty of all its citizens to defend the Soviet fatherland." It adds: "The honor of bearing arms in defense of the Revolution is granted only to the workers. The leisured sections of the population will fulfill other military duties."

This "honor" of citizenship has aroused under the Soviets, just as it did under the Czars, the issue of freedom of conscience both in the non-resistant religious sects and among the few war-resisters on moral grounds outside them. The Soviet regime in its early days undertook to reconcile those scruples with the State's policy by adopting the most liberal exemptions in force in any conscript country. But the years since have seen a constant tightening of the administration of the law. The resultant conflict with conscience has brought about the imprisonment of scores of members of religious sects and of such non-resistant groups as the followers of Tolstoi. No youth is now wholly exempted from some service to the State. Exemption from training in arms is granted only to members of several old established sects recognized by the government.

Pacifist and anti-militarist propaganda is prohibited

throughout the Soviet Union, being regarded by the Soviet government as an attack on the security of the State. The Bolsheviki regard themselves as essentially pacifist and anti-militarist, forced by their enemies to the regrettable necessity of training a defense army by universal military service. Opposed as they are to war, militarism, and armaments, and with the only thorough-going international program for abolishing them, they nevertheless suppress all movements outside the official program, even though they aim at the same ends. Like other governments, they fear the weakening of national defense by non-resistant propaganda and conscientious objection to military service. Pacifism is an official policy; the Party's guidance, they feel, is sufficient to develop it; trespassers must keep off the government reservations.

The issue of freedom of conscience in Russia is now raised chiefly by objectors to military service among the Tolstoians, and two or three little groups outside the old established non-resistant sects. It includes their liberty of propaganda for peace or against militarism. The account of their conflict with the Soviet state falls naturally into two parts: the experience of the men who have resisted military service, and the struggle of the pacifist sects and societies against repression.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

Under the Czar no objectors were exempt from the three-year active military training required of all men arriving at eighteen years of age, with the single exception of the Mennonites, who got exemption by contract when they came into Russia from Germany. Priests and monks were exempt as a privilege of their calling.

All others who refused service were tried as disobedient soldiers and sent to prison for from three to four years, about the same period as that of military service. No non-combatant or alternative service was provided. Sentences were not as a rule repeated for further refusal after release from prison. In the military prisons they served like other prisoners without a political status, under brutal conditions intensified by their attitude.

After the World War and the Revolution, conscription was continued in the civil wars of 1919-21, both by the White and Red armies. Objectors suffered imprisonment or death under both of them. In central Russia, where most of the members of the sects lived, the Soviet authorities at Moscow tried to ease the severity of local officials by transferring objectors to Moscow, where they were given the benefit of a hearing, and of non-combatant alternative service in the army in cases found to be genuine by a council of the religious organizations themselves. In cases of threatened executions in the provinces, the authorities at the Kremlin would telegraph to stop the proceedings and to forward the men to Moscow. But it was impossible to get word of many cases in time; and in others, local military officers, knowing Moscow's attitude, held up telegrams of appeal until too late to stop the executions. About one hundred objectors were known to have been shot in this period on Soviet territory. The authorities in White territory did not spare such men; many were shot, though no estimate of their number has been made.

The early Soviet policy, even during the chaotic period of the civil wars, was to exempt religious objectors found genuine by a council of the religious organizations appointed to advise the government. It had wide powers. Its advice determined official policy. This

council, sponsored personally by Lenin, who called in Tolstoians as well as leaders of established sects, handled between 12,000 and 15,000 men in the two years 1919 and 1920. They turned over to the courts for trial about one-third of them as outside their jurisdiction. Most of the others were given alternative non-combatant service. Only a few were let off from all service, although the right to do so was clear, even in cases of individual objectors who did not belong to religious sects. The few totally exempted were genuine religious objectors who refused all forms of service. The council even let off some men who became objectors during their army service; but they were required to substitute alternative service.

After two years of work the council was broken up by a raid of the Tcheka, acting on the assumption that it was encouraging resistance to military service. All the records were seized and never returned. The council continued to claim a legal existence, but as it had no records and was not allowed to meet, and could not secure a review of the Tcheka's action, it tactfully dissolved a year later.

The handling of objectors was transferred entirely to the People's Courts after the Tcheka raid, and has since remained in their hands, subject to laws qualifying the original Lenin decree of 1920. That decree, adopted by the Council of People's Commissars, and still nominally in force, provides that "persons desiring to apply for exemption from military service on religious grounds must present a declaration to this effect to the provincial court," and specifies:

"... Before deciding the case the court must hear the opinion of experts as to whether the given per-

son really belongs to the religious faith referred to, and exercises it de facto, and whether his religious beliefs are really incompatible with military service of any kind. In exceptional cases, when it is proved that the religious beliefs of the applicant are absolutely incompatible with any form of military service, such an applicant is completely exempted. In other cases the applicant is exempted from carrying arms, and is prescribed other alternative work."

The laws qualifying the original decree have practically eliminated the provision for total exemption, narrowed the sects recognized, and stiffened the penalties for objectors outside the sects. A decision of the Supreme Court in 1924 eliminates the Tolstoians from consideration by declaring that they constitute not a sect, but "a philosophical group alien to religious culture as recognized by the law, and therefore without right to appeal for exemption on religious grounds." The court, like courts elsewhere, could not know what everyone knew—that the Tolstoians were the chief group considered by Lenin in formulating the decree, and that one of Tolstoi's closest friends, Tchertkoff, headed the council of religious organizations for the two years of its existence.

The laws governing military service of Russian youths provide that all boys arriving at eighteen years of age must register for their preliminary training of three weeks a year for three years. This training is given in their home districts. When they arrive at twenty-one years of age, about a third of them are selected for regular military service—two years in the army, three in

the air service, or four in the navy. The other two-thirds are trained in the "territorial army," which takes them away from home for only six weeks a year for five years—and not very far from home at that. Since the regular army cannot use all the boys reaching twenty-one each year, the "territorial system" is devised to give every youth adequate military training with the advantage of disturbing the normal life of the villages as little as possible. This is the military training given to the great mass of Russian youths. It is, of course, greatly preferred to regular army service which takes them far from home for two long years or more.

Youths who are students in universities or higher technical schools are required to put in two months each summer in military training, and to take a course in the "theories and technicalities of war"—women included, by the way, in the courses. Such students are required to put in a total of nine months of summer training before being put among the reserves—about the same length of training as in the territorial army.

These requirements apply to all able-bodied youths in the Soviet Union except those who are denied the "honor of bearing arms"—priests, employers of labor, and private traders. These are not let off, however, from non-combatant military training and service. Priests, for instance, serve in special regiments in war-time, digging trenches and doing commissary work. The only persons in Russia totally exempted from service in case of war are the men who suffered in Czarist prisons for their religious convictions against war—in recognition of their contribution to the struggle against the Czar, certainly not in recognition of their sacrifices for conscience, considering the many men now imprisoned under the Soviets for practically the same reason!

An objector to military training in arms must apply to his provincial court for exemption between one and six months before he is liable to service, that is, before his eighteenth birthday. His case is then heard by the court in the presence of the public prosecutor. The objector must establish that he is among those citizens "who are members by birth and education of families belonging to those sects whose religious teachings forbid them at present and forbade them before 1917 to participate in military service under arms." This establishes not only a corporate but an inherited conscience. Otherwise the objector has no standing in court, and is liable to prosecution for evasion of service under the same law that penalizes wilful evaders and those who attempt to escape service by bribing officials or maiming themselves.

For the purpose of determining the genuineness of the objector the court has the right to "summon experts and to request the opinions of competent institutions and individuals." The objector has the same right. This provision is usually followed only in the larger cities, where the law is carefully administered. Its operation is much more lax in smaller towns and in the country, where objectors who would not be recognized in the cities are often exempted. While I was in Moscow, I learned of two current trials of objectors in which the court summoned as an expert the son of Tchertkoff, Tolstoi's friend, who headed the original council under the Lenin decree. His testimony was known to be accurate and impartial, and the government showed its freedom from prejudice in using him despite the fact that the Tolstoians are not themselves recognized under the law. I attended the trial of one Tolstoian

who appealed from a provincial court. It was a most careful inquiry into his attitude and beliefs, but the court had no choice save to sentence him under the Supreme Court ruling. He got only four months.

An objector may appeal against an adverse decision of the court. But final adverse decision by the appeals court makes him liable to criminal trial if he persists in refusing service. Even if he is exempted, a failure to present the court's decision to the military authorities within a specified time also makes him liable to trial.

An exemption relieves an objector only from training under arms. He becomes technically a soldier, and may be placed either in such non-combatant services as hospital or commissary for training, or be "assigned to work against epidemics or to equivalent social service, such as campaigns against forest fires, epidemic diseases among domestic animals, and trench work," under direction of the Departments of Internal Affairs. In case of war, "citizens who have been exempted from military service on religious grounds are assigned to special battalions for non-combatant service in the front ranks or the rear."

Though the later laws defining the operation of the original Lenin decree make no mention of total exemptions, that issue is largely academic, since all but a few objectors are willing to accept alternative service. Few cases of "absolutists" arise, that is, men refusing all forms of conscripted service. Of the several hundred men serving prison sentences in Russia as conscientious objectors in 1927, most were not outright opponents of all compulsory state service. They were men unable to secure alternative civil service through a legal recognition of their scruples.

The only sects whose members secure exemption from active military training and service are, in the order of their size, the Doukhobors, the Mennonites, the Molokans, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Netovtsi, and the Malevezani. Not all of them are non-resistant sects. Several are divided into two groups, one supporting and the other opposing military service. Some Molokans, for instance, will therefore be found in the army, and some among the exempted objectors doing alternative civil work. This difference of view in those sects which leave to each member's conscience his attitude to military service, opens the way to the courts not to exempt even the non-resistant members; with the result that while some courts exempt, others do not. So Molokans may be found not only in the army and in non-military civil service, but in prison as well.

The only one hundred percent non-resistant sects are the Mennonites, the largest, the Netovtsi, who refuse to "recognize all earthly courts," and the Malevezani in the Ukraine, whose members refuse even to register for military service or to pay taxes. Members of these last two little sects are therefore often in trouble with the government, being commonly exiled or imprisoned for their irreconcilable attitude. The followers of Tolstoi, chiefly among the peasants, are also non-resistants, and, not being recognized as a sect, therefore constitute a large number of the objectors in prison, probably the largest.

It is said on apparently good authority that the G.P.U. a few years ago, in order to reduce the resistance to military service, made a bargain with the leaders of the largest sects to permit them to hold their first national conventions on their agreement to put through resolutions making military service a matter of individ-

ual conscience. Whether or not this is true—and officials denied it to me—it is certain at least that such conventions, long held up, were finally allowed, and that such resolutions were passed, thus removing objectors in those sects from the law's protection.

The Baptists, now one of the largest sects, went even further, declaring it the duty of its members "to serve in the Red Army which defends the system in which the Baptists were first granted religious freedom." They had previously claimed the right to exemption from bearing arms, though non-resistance was not historically part of their doctrine. The Soviet courts had no difficulty in proving that Baptists in other countries took part in war, and refused to exempt them. Their resolution supporting military service therefore accepted only what they could not avoid save at the cost of prison.

No record is kept as to the numbers claiming exemption each year, but those most familiar with the situation say that the number has been steadily declining, both because many know it is useless to try, and because religious feeling of resistance to service has grown markedly less. Those who told me of this decreased resistance were unable to account for it. About fifty to sixty cases a year now come up in Moscow province, the only place where the facts are easily obtainable. Nor are there any figures available from any source as to the number of men serving prison sentences, either of those few who refused all service, or of those others who were unable to get alternative service. The number in prison all over the Union at any one time in recent years is estimated by the Tolstoians at about two hundred and fifty to three hundred. The number has been slowly

declining, chiefly, they say, because of the falling off in this expression of religious feeling.

Objectors are sentenced to various terms, from a few months to three years, and are liable on their release to further prosecution if they again refuse a call to service. A number are known to have served several prison terms, each longer than the one before; a few as many as four. But such cases are growing fewer, due to a recent confidential order of the War Department discouraging the practice of repeated sentences. On the other hand, many men clearly liable to prosecution have never been molested for refusing to register or respond to calls for service, because the officials in their villages or towns know them to be genuine and prefer not to bother with men who would not in any case make good soldiers.

Penalties on those seeking to escape military service—"slackers"—are severe, including imprisonment, fines, confiscation of property, and loss of citizenship, according to the offense. In time of war they may be executed. Among the rights taken away by loss of citizenship is, curiously enough, the right to serve in the army. Among slackers' offenses is listed "pretension of religious convictions," for which a number of genuine objectors, not members of recognized sects, have suffered heavy penalties. On the other hand, the authorities told me of cases of men who refused service in the Soviet army but who fought in the White armies, and of others who belong to sects which in foreign countries accept military service. Such men are regarded as "pretending religious convictions," and sent to prison.

Conscientious objectors are sent to the civil prisons just like ordinary criminals and under the same regime. I was told by some of the men themselves that keepers

usually see that they are unusually intelligent, and recognizing that they are not criminals, put them in higher prison grades and in better jobs.

It is evident from this account that the rights of conscience under the Soviet military system are more clearly recognized on paper than in any country with universal military service. Though much restricted in actual practice, they are an advance over most such countries in providing for the members of a few sects, both non-combatant work in the army and alternative civil service under non-military direction. The restrictions, however, bear more severely than in many conscript countries on men outside those few sects, through the long and repeated prison sentences. The tendency away from a liberal interpretation of the original Lenin decree seems, however, likely to be checked by a wider application of the exemption provision, and by stopping repeated trials and imprisonments for continued refusals of service. The Soviet system compared with that under the Czar is far more liberal, even with all its restrictions.

PACIFIST PROPAGANDA

The policy of the Soviet government towards peace and against militarism is clearly marked by repeated proposals to abolish military establishments and to hasten universal disarmament. But surrounded by enemies and feeling constantly threatened by war, the Soviet government has felt compelled to create a strong military force for its protection. It cannot, however, be said that a spirit of militarism exists in Russia. I saw considerable of the Red Army at a time of excitement over the threat

of war with England, and attended the military maneuvers at Moscow together with the functions of "defense week" (they have "weeks" in Russia, too). Nowhere did I get the impression of a spirit of militarism—that is, the glorification of the army and its obtrusive presence, as I have seen it in other countries.

The Red Army, considerably smaller than the czar's is unique in using military training to organize a broad education in citizenship and in promoting democratic relationships within the army itself. Officers and men are pretty much on the same level. The Red Army is used quite as much as a school for educating unschooled peasants as it is for military training.

But the avowedly pacifist and anti-militarist regime at the same time does not tolerate pacifist and anti-militarist propaganda outside its own official program. No pacifist journals, books or pamphlets can get past the censorship into print; none can be imported from abroad. No circular letters advocating or countenancing non-resistance or conscientious objection may be mailed within Russia or received from abroad. Persons who have sent or received such matter have suffered exile.

Pacifist meetings are not allowed, with the sole exception of the Moscow Vegetarian Society, which is permitted a legally unauthorized existence because of its intimate association with Tolstoi. It is headed by his old friend, Tchertkoff. And vegetarians are presumably regarded as harmless. The Society holds private meetings of its members at which pacifism and anti-militarism are freely discussed. But its very restrained activities in aiding its members and sympathizers who refuse military service resulted in the exile in 1927 of its secretary and two volunteer women assistants sent to Siberia for

three years under a law which punishes "using the religious sentiments of the masses to excite resistance to the laws." Although the president of the Society, Tolstoi's old friend, assumed entire responsibility for the letters which the office staff had sent out, and insisted on being proceeded against in their stead, the G.P.U. ignored him—doubtless because they did not wish to create a furor at home and abroad by arresting a distinguished old idealist regarded as politically harmless. But organized work from an office might develop opposition; and the exile of secretaries breaks it up.

At a meeting of the Society at which I spoke to several hundred members on the safely remote subject of "Militarism in the United States," two men came up to me afterwards and introduced themselves as objectors serving prison sentences. When I inquired how they happened to be at the meeting, they replied that the warden had let them out to hear the lecture on their promise to be back for work Monday! They took the time from their two weeks' vacation from prison allowed to them as to all well-behaved prisoners. Next day they went up to the station to see off for Siberian exile the secretary and two stenographers of their society. The whole incident illustrates strikingly the contradictions of severity and leniency which run through much of Soviet policy.

The followers of Tolstoi, non-resistant and anti-state, who do not support the Soviet regime any more than they do any government, have suffered considerable persecution for their philosophical propaganda, especially in the villages, where the officials, usually less intelligent than those in the cities, are more easily shocked by such heretical views. Furthermore, the personal influence of Tolstoians spreads faster in villages than in

cities, which also accounts for their persecution. Many are therefore in exile.

Tolstoi's books were ordered out of the public libraries in 1925, but on a protest from Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, the order was cancelled. Since then the government has appropriated half a million roubles for a memorial edition of Tolstoi's works—though not at a price to insure popular distribution. The editor selected by the government was Tchertkoff, Tolstoi's old friend, though in 1922 he had been arrested for refusing to sign a paper "recognizing" the Soviet government, and was later ordered exiled abroad. Lenin personally cancelled both proceedings against him. But the contrast between the official publication of Tolstoi's works under his old friend's editorship and the persecution of his non-resistant followers—the editor included—illustrates strikingly the regime's attitude toward several of Russia's revolutionary heroes. It honors their work, but punishes organized propaganda for their philosophy as a danger to the State.

Russian pacifists find it almost impossible to go abroad as delegates to international peace congresses. Visas are either refused outright or held up until too late for them to arrive in time. All non-Communist representation from Russia abroad is difficult, except on wholly non-political matters.

The restrictions on private pacifist and anti-militarist propaganda and activity in Russia are on the whole more severe than under any other government, or than under the czar. The Soviet regime itself has created a state monopoly of pacifism and anti-militarism, and in that field as in so many others will not tolerate divergent efforts to achieve its own professed objects. Those who risk undertaking independent action, or who express too

actively a non-resistant philosophy, will doubtless continue to suffer, as they have, prompt and effective interference, and even removal by exile from the scene of their activities.

IN CONCLUSION

AFTER all I saw and heard in Russia, after all that is set forth in this book, I am confident that far greater liberties than are tolerated are consistent with the maintenance of the Soviet regime, and even with the Party dictatorship. I have indicated those points in the chapters. I do not subscribe to the Communist idea that a party machine, however self-critical it may be, can harness all the wisdom needed to work out its great experiment with a minimum of blunders and waste.

The Soviet state, probably the strongest government in the world, is wholly competent to deal with any armed effort to overthrow it, and to counter any organized opposition that harks back to Czarism. But opposition that looks forward to developing the struggle for Communism is another matter—and its significance could, with some little tolerance, be appraised and used. The Communists feel so strongly that they themselves are alone qualified to lead Russia to Communism that they will tolerate no other counsels than those of the Party majority. While I found myself agreeing with the majority—an unusual state of mind for me—on the issue of the Trotsky Opposition, my sympathies were all with the suppressed Trotsky minority, and my hopes in enough Party democracy to keep it in the Party as a critical force.

The Soviet dictatorship, from a historical point of view, is a natural result of the habits of government before it, as well as of Communist theory. As one of

my friends observes, "revolutions seem to change everything but the form of government." Any possible alternative to it now, according to the Communist view, would probably lead back to capitalism and bourgeois parliamentary democracy. It is any man's guess as to what would be the result of political freedom in Russia now, whether back to monarchism or to capitalism through a peasant republic, or on to a freer Soviet system. Most probably the Bolshevik Party could not last as against the opposition of the Kulaks—far more numerous than the Bolsheviks.

Despite the sweeping political control, the basis of the Soviet dictatorship is wider than any other in Europe, and unlike others, is a moving, progressing organism. All the rest stand still or go backward. As these pages have shown, the organization of Russia is like a pyramid whose wide base is comparatively free for considerable uncontrolled activity, with the top rigidly held together by Party control—but a control responsive to pressure from the forces at its base. The comparison of Russia with Italy, so often made, is superficial. The two dictatorships are utterly unlike. Not only are their objectives diametrically opposed, but their relations to the masses are wholly dissimilar. The Italian regime is a one-man-and-the-police dictatorship, with the overwhelming mass of the Italians against it. The Russian regime is a dictatorship of a whole party and the police, with only a minority against it.

These chapters have shown the system of high-handed political control, partly inherited, partly dictated by Russia's position in a hostile world, partly determined by Communist philosophy. But they have also revealed the growing power of the creative forces in Russian life, and the responsiveness of the dictatorship to them.

Directed by an amazingly devoted if somewhat fanatical little minority, it is doing the most heroic piece of social reorganization in history, and that in a country of primitive economy and culture.

The working out of the great experiment depends in large part on democracy in the Communist Party, and on the Party's ability to respond to criticism and discontent from peasants and workers. While its rigid controls are regarded as temporary war measures, they run the danger of becoming entrenched as a system of government. How far that danger is real depends largely on how free the rest of the world will leave Russia to work out her revolution, which is perhaps—happily or unhappily—too universal in its significance to be let alone by its enemies.