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RUSSIA IS THE WORLD

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RUSSIA AND THE CRISIS

The recent emergency made clearer than ever before the true nature of the crisis of our time:-- that it was not about this or that special problem, nor an issue between one country and another; but that it was world-wide and could be finally resolved only by a transformation of human society.

To recognise this is, indeed, to go to the heart of the matter. Once the general pattern is understood, details fall into their place. A civilisation is being destroyed because it refuses to progress; history travails afresh to bring to birth a new civilisation, to take the place of the one that is dedicated to death. Capitalist nations must decline into the dusty past, and in their place will arise an International of Socialist states-- a necessity of human development which has been rendered apparent by the emergence of the first socialist state. Such a transformation represents the next step towards the achievement of universal community, and Fascism is simply an attempt to stave off the inevitable at the price of chaos, degradation, and an infinitude of human suffering. Nevertheless many members of the capitalist class are willing, to the point of national suicide, to support the Fascist governments of other countries. In the recent emergency it was the fear of Socialism which paralysed the leadership of Great Britain and France, so that they surrendered to German Fascism. This is not surprising; for these countries are ruled by Finance and Big Business, who look to the Fascist states for leadership in their struggle against the socialist movement. While they naturally wish to retain control in their own countries, and fervently hope to maintain their national independence, at the same time they fear nothing more than they fear the U.S.S.R. and the defeat of the Fascist powers at the hands of the socialist state.

The rulers of the unreformed capitalist states are divided against themselves. They would like to think of themselves as the defenders of a Christian culture, while in reality they differ from the Fascists only in lacking the courage of their convictions. Under Fascism, the capitalist system is reformed in such a manner as to enable it to withstand the pressure of a mutinous working-class and to mitigate the most revolting irrationalities of the present system, by introducing such advanced forms of class rule as become possible after the elimination of the idea of a democratic society. This is why the consistent Fascist must necessarily turn against Christianity, the ultimate source of the discovery of the infinite value of the individual (which takes its origin in the discovery of the personal. "Christianity leads to liberalism, liberalism to democracy, democracy to socialism".) But the liberal capitalist wants to have his Christianity and eat it; so he ends up with the reality of capitalism, and the shadow of liberty. The outcome of his hopeless endeavours to maintain both capitalism and democracy is merely reactionary. The Fascist state which aims at maintaining

capitalism in its up-to-date form is necessarily superior to the unreformed Capitalist state, which flounders along in muddle and self-delusion. The capitalist "democracies" cannot stand up against the doctrine of force preached by the Fascist states, though they may realise that acquiescence will mean the surrender of their independent national existence.

At Munich France was made to break her treaty with Czecho-Slovakia, and to deliver her up to dismemberment by Germany and her allies: she has thereby ceased to be a power which can claim to have legitimate interests in the Danube basin and Eastern Europe. Consequently Poland tore up her alliance with France and marched into Czecho-Slovakia. At the Vienna Conference, Italy and Germany set up as arbitrators and re-traced the map of the Danube region according to their own ideas, and what remains of Czecho-Slovakia is like a carcass whose legs and arms have all been amputated by man-eating sharks. Crippled and beaten, France must resign herself at present to an inglorious insignificance. In her dismay and terror she seems to be imitating the pathetic error of the mouse, who, it is said, will sometimes seek to hide beneath the cat from whom she is fleeing.

Great Britain herself is in a more dangerous position than at any time in her history since the defeat of the Armada. Even at the time of Napoleon's greatest military triumphs, she was still an island, which, strategically, she has since ceased to be. Munich means the eclipse of Great Britain as a power that can be trusted when it takes its stand on a moral issue. A British representative was sent to Prague to lure the Czechs into concessions to Germany, which he himself regarded as hardly warranted, and which rendered Czecho-Slovakia the helpless victim to the threat of German military aggression, when Great Britain and France suddenly withdrew and left her in the lurch. In exchange Great Britain gave an assurance to the diminished Czecho-Slovakia against unprovoked aggression. Questioned in the House, the Prime Minister denied what the guarantee referred to the future frontiers of Czecho-Slovakia; and when he was pressed on this point, he was unable to say what exactly had been guaranteed.

It may take some time before the consequences of Munich become apparent to the man in the street. Inevitably they must undermine the existence of Great Britain and France as leading nations in Europe. That role has fallen, for the time being, to Germany. Future historians will regard the agreement of Munich as the end of a comparatively organised polity of nations. "Peace in our time" is no more, and the law of the jungle has become the acknowledged code of Europe. This must mean a smashing blow to the interests of those nations who benefitted from the tradition of international order and were careful to bring their own interests into harmony with such a system: for at Munich not only German power but also German international principles prevailed. It is hardly too much to say that the empires of France and Britain are threatened with the fate of Czecho-Slovakia.

Many people believe that some kind of Four Power Pact was brought into existence at Munich, and opposition speakers have bitterly described Great Britain as a junior partner in such a Pact. But this is to credit Mr. Chamberlain with a success he has never achieved. Fervently as he may have aspired to such a pact, there is little to prove that Hitler, even tacitly, agreed to it. He does not want his hands to be tied by any pact. Munich meant dictation. The invidious task of camouflaging the obvious was left to the British Prime Minister. Historians of the future who prefer patriotism to truth will be confronted with a delicate task.

Thus Hitler reaped the fruits of his consistency: all along he has based his foreign policy on a true appreciation of the significance of Soviet Russia in our present world. He knew that he could rely on the deep-seated aversion of the capitalist governments to siding with Russia in a crisis, and he foresaw that the stronger Soviet Russia grew, the more safely he could count on the class-instinct of the rulers of Capitalist countries to sabotage their own national interests rather than cooperate with the U.S.S.R.

Accordingly, it was from Paris and London that the foolish allegation was disseminated that the U.S.S.R. was failing to implement her treaty obligations to Czechoslovakia. Hitler was only too well aware of the fact that in the Far Eastern Province, the Russians had mercilessly bombed the Japanese invaders out of their positions, and had refused to listen to all requests for a cessation of hostilities until the Japanese had acceded to the full the original Russian claims in respect to the frontier. A special note published in the Bulletin of the Royal Institute of International Affairs contains the details of these negotiations. On August 10th, the eve of the cessation of hostilities, "the Japanese Embassy in London", says the Bulletin, "issued a communique summarising the government's unsuccessful attempts of August 4th and 7th to secure an immediate truce as a preliminary to peaceful readjustment of the disputed frontier, and declared that in order not to aggravate the situation, the Japanese forces had refrained from using offensive types of weapons, and had strictly limited their operations to those of defence." It is not often that an official Japanese document could boast of having expressed, in so unequivocal a fashion, attachment to the cause of peace. They had clearly decided that there was no need to probe further the will of the Russian Army to fight, because both the determination and its ability had been put beyond the shadow of doubt. Hitler was the last person to overlook the significance of the incidents of Chang-koufeng (or Lake Hassan, as the Russians prefer to call it) for these border battles took place well after the 21st of May, i.e. at a time when Germany had begun her preparations for military action. The behaviour of the U.S.S.R. had spoken more eloquently than the most solemn of declarations. It was a demonstration by action itself that her formal assurances of fidelity to her treaties had the backing of an army that was mobilised on a war footing--an army, moreover, which was the largest in the world, and which was proving its quality by inflicting terrible punishment on the units of another army,

modern, efficient, and well-equipped. Hitler is credited with a sensitive ear for the language of cannon. Russian diplomacy had made certain that it would be fully understood.

The policy of the French government up to the eve of Berchtesgaden proved conclusively that they had never entertained the slightest doubt as to the Russian attitude to her treaty obligations in the event of aggression against Czecho-Slovakia. From February to May, month by month, the French government proffered unconditional pledges to Czecho-Slovakia that they also would stand to their obligations in the case of an unprovoked attack. A similar declaration was made as late as the 1st of September. The French would have been far less definite had they had any reason to doubt Russia's assurances that she would come to the aid of the Czechs if France did the same. But the French government had the best of reasons not to entertain any doubts: the Russian pledges bore the seal of Chang-kufeng.

But in order once and for all to fix responsibilities where they belonged, the U.S.S.R. spoke out at Geneva on the 23rd of September with a ruthless clarity. Litvinov revealed that Czecho-Slovakia herself was insisting that Russian help to her should be conditional on help from the French. The Czechs were naturally afraid that France would remain neutral and would try to leave the defence of Czecho-Slovakia to the U.S.S.R., once that country was prepared, in spite of the provisions of the treaties, to act alone. But Litvinov went even further. In accepting the Godesberg ultimatum, Czecho-Slovakia had renounced her treaty with the U.S.S.R., who was therefore and without doubt entitled to regard herself as free of all obligations towards her former ally. Litvinov solemnly declared that Russia would not avail herself of her freedom, and that, in spite of all that had happened, Russia would regard herself as "bound again" by the treaty, if France should come to the assistance of Czecho-Slovakia. This announcement, coming as it did after the publication of the Russo-Rumanian decision not to remain neutral if Czecho-Slovakia were attacked, and after the Russian warning to Poland that Russia would instantly denounce her non-aggression pact with Poland, if that country invaded Czecho-Slovakia, pointed unmistakably to the route that Russian aid might be expected to take. Already on March 17th, Litvinov had warned Germany that if the powers which stood against aggression were determined to act collectively, ways and means would be found to make Russia's military aid effective. The reference to Article 16 of the Covenant was too obvious to be overlooked. Litvinov was now implementing Russia's promise. He left no diplomatic loophole to Chamberlain and Halifax, Daladier and Bonnet. On September 23th, it was, in effect, authoritatively stated in London that if Czecho-Slovakia were attacked, France and Russia would stand by her, thus bringing in Great Britain also. The legend of Russian hesitation in the emergency was subsequently produced in order to cover up the surrender.

Incidentally, it may be worth recalling that it was precisely the National Government which had pressed for the insertion into the

Russian treaties of those conditioning clauses, the existence of which they were now using as a means of throwing doubt on Russia's readiness to come to the help of Czecho-Slovakia. The British government had in 1935 threatened to denounce the treaty of Locarno, unless the French were in a position to assure them that the Franco-Russian-Czech treaty system was subordinated to the Locarno Treaty. Under the treaty of Locarno, Great Britain herself was to be the ultimate judge of whether or not she was bound to render immediate military assistance to France in case of unprovoked German attack. The National Government wanted to be sure that Russia would not act on behalf of Czecho-Slovakia without France, who, again, would be bound by Locarno to concert with Great Britain. British statesmen had lived in fear that Russia might one day bring them help against their will, and thus entangle this country in a struggle against Fascism. Recent events have proved how thoroughly they have guarded against this danger. By subordinating the Russian treaties to Locarno, they effectively prevented Russia from coming to the help of England and thus ensured our defeat at the hands of Germany. If choice there had to be, however, they probably would have always preferred to choose this alternative. There is no cause for surprise that Lord Winterton's lofty diversion against the U.S.S.R. was followed by a spectacular climb-down.

Hitler knew only too well that the U.S.S.R. had done more than survive the difficulties of the last few years; she had emerged from them stronger than ever. One of the greatest political conspiracies ever engineered by an ideological faction of former revolutionaries in league with a foreign power, had failed ignominiously. Hitler for one fully appreciated the lesson of Chang-kufeng. He rightly gauged the significance of the fact that the international situation was merely the outward expression of a universal crisis, which had been precipitated by the establishment of the first socialist state. He persistently contended that the world would turn either to Fascism or to Socialism. But the countries of unreformed capitalism are on the road neither to the one nor the other. They are, as we have said, merely reactionary. The task of socialists is to prepare people's minds for the oncoming of the inevitable crisis, in which the working-class must give the lead. Russia's role in the emergency proved that she remained the keystone of all future socialist construction.

RUSSIA, SOCIALISM, AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

The significance of Russia is the same question as the significance of socialism. If we approach the problem from this point of view, it can easily be shown that socialism, more than ever, offers the one path to lead us out of the present labyrinth.

The actual forms of the material existence of man are those of world-wide interdependence. But for this fact the nations of the world

could decide tomorrow that they would henceforth live peacefully in economic self-sufficiency as independent sovereign states. Passion and prejudice might prevent them from following this course, but, were it not for the economic factor, politically and morally it would be justifiable. The truth is, however that the establishment of the self-sufficiency of all countries would inevitably cause such a sudden and disastrous fall in the material resources of mankind that the population of the world would be greatly reduced: for the enforced return to primitive conditions of production would involve the starvation and death of vast masses of human beings.

It is, of course, true that if the world could be divided among several large empires, there need in the long run be no fall from the present standard of living; but as international economic co-operation would actually increase wealth, any other solution stands condemned, apart from the exploitation and war which are inseparable from rival empires.

If, as we have shown, self-sufficiency offers no real solution, we must attempt to secure at least that measure of international economic co-operation which existed until 1914. Now this cannot be done in the traditional forms of economic co-operation, which have broken down and cannot be restored. New forms of economic co-operation will have to be created, and it is this necessity which compels us to establish new forms of political organisation on an international scale. Precisely in the imperative need for new forms of international life lies the ultimate cause of all the strain, stress, and suffering that mankind is now undergoing, and may yet have to undergo in the future.

It should not be necessary to answer the criticism that the traditional forms of international economic co-operation might be restored. The international gold standard, the international capital and unrestricted commodity markets, have passed away. The system hinged on the gold standard, the true significance of which was not sufficiently realised at the time. It has now become apparent that the closer the interdependence of the nations the greater are the sacrifices needed to keep the system working; for the working of the gold standard implies the adjusting of national to world price-levels. In the past, governments could and would do so. Now they are neither willing nor able. As long as the price-level was rising, governments might agree; but, under the capitalist system, a permanent fall in the price-level means a slowing down of production and a drop in the consumers' wealth produced; it means mass unemployment, a falling off of production, and the consequent threat to the whole social structure. No government can deliberately bring about such a condition of affairs, for no society could maintain itself under such conditions. It is therefore impossible to restore the gold standard and the system of which it was the keystone.

The only alternative is the setting up of new forms of inter-

national economic co-operation, but during the period of transition huge economic sacrifices would have to be made by all the countries concerned. The process of adjustment would cause dislocations; with a heavy toll in human suffering. Under our present economic system no country will voluntarily embark upon the sacrifices which would be involved. The reason is obvious. A genuine community might well resolve to make sacrifices for the sake of a great purpose and persevere in its endeavour until its purpose was achieved; but under our industrial system society is not such a community. The property system divides society into two--those who are responsible for the actual carrying on of industrial production, and those who have no such responsibility. The workers cannot reasonably be expected to shoulder the burden of wage-cuts and unemployment, under a system in which they have no say about the carrying on of industrial production, and in which the sacrifices involved would certainly fall unequally. For this simple reason it is impossible under our present system to make the whole of the population act as a single unit whose economic questions are concerned; and this is the ultimate reason why our states, as at present constituted, are unequal to the task of setting up a new system of economic and, consequently, of political co-operation.

Now since only true communities--communities in deed as well as in word--can generate the political and moral forces necessary to achieve a new system of international co-operation, it follows that in the national sphere too our present economic system will have to be replaced by a real economic commonwealth--in other words, by socialism.

In the period lying before us foreign affairs will continue to dominate over home affairs. The powers who are against international co-operation will force their imperialist wars on other countries; and they will be opposed by those powers, who, for whatever reasons, favour co-operation. But no measure of human suffering will bring us any nearer to the desired international political order except in so far as the nations themselves are transformed during the course of the wars--wars in which victories will be as costly as defeats--into socialist commonwealths.

This socialism which is the one solution of the international problem is not a peculiar kind: it is precisely the same as that socialism which consists of the communal ownership of the means of production, that socialism which alone can solve the problems of social justice and of poverty, which alone can emancipate the working class. Of this socialism Russia is the embodiment; and it is because of this fact that she is, as we have shown in another article, the centre of the crisis of our time. The socialist working-class movement must steer its course by Russia.

WHY THE TRIALS HAVE STRENGTHENED RUSSIA

The international prestige of Russia was weakened during the critical days of 1938 by the repercussions of the Trials. Many people actually believed that the Trials were a frame-up, and they indulged in fantastic explanations of them. To some they seemed to show the workings of a bloodthirsty tyranny; to others they were the result of Stalin's inordinate personal ambition; and to others again they appeared to be "witch-trials", in which wretched innocents had been hypnotised to confess imaginary crimes. Many of those, on the other hand, who admitted the genuineness of the Trials, inferred from this the existence of a widespread underground movement in Russia, or at least of deeply rooted disaffection, of which the Trials were merely the outward symptom.

From both quarters (those who believed the Trials were genuine and those who did not) there was a tendency to regard Russia's military power as completely untrustworthy because of her supposed internal weakness. Although the theory of a frame-up was soon discarded by intelligent observers, and the legend of Russia's latent military weakness was strikingly controverted by the Chang ku-feng incident, the effect of the Trials on the international prestige of the U.S.S.R. was, until recently, much in evidence. Capitalist governments, newspapers and publicists naturally make use of any pretext to disparage Russia. But, more seriously, the admiration and affection of the workers themselves for the U.S.S.R. have been impaired by the effects of the Trials.

Now it is, of course, perfectly true that any attempt to explain these trials in the accepted terms of Western European political morality must necessarily fail. But the tacit assumption that such a failure implies the condemnation of the Trials is quite unwarranted. For, in reality, it simply proves what should have been obvious--that the ethical standards of a great Revolution are far in advance of any our present world can conceive.

I.

The Professional Revolutionary

The only source for the understanding of a great revolution lies in the philosophy of its leaders.

At the Congress of the Social Democratic Workers Party of Russia held in 1903 at Brussels and in London, Article I of the Statutes of the Party, defining the qualifications for membership,

gave the opportunity for a full debate between the two wings of the Social Democratic Party. One wing defined a member as "a person supporting the Party and working under the control of the Party". The other, led by Lenin, pressed for a more stringent test of membership, which, they argued, should consist in "participation in the illegal organisation of the Party" and consequently throwing one's whole personality and existence into Party work. This would imply ~~blind~~ obedience to party discipline of a very strict kind; and the corollary of this view was democratic centralisation inside the Party. It was on this issue that the group led by Lenin secured a narrow majority, and his group was thenceforth termed the Bolsheviks.

The difference between these two conceptions of membership lay partly in the methods used, and partly in the degree of commitment. The organisation of the Communist Party (as the Bolsheviks called themselves after 1918) singles out a group of keen, self-sacrificing revolutionaries from the mass of the proletariat. Such a position can be distinguished from Blanquism-- (i.e. secret preparations by a few revolutionaries for a Putsch, which would capture power for the masses)---only by the acceptance of the principle that revolutions cannot be made: they must be the outcome of an objective process, expressing itself in a genuine mass-movement.

Any "revolutionary" movement--i.e. the use of illegal force in politics--which is not based on a definite understanding of the nature of such a process is merely irresponsible adventurism, and in the same way the use of peaceful means, unless based on such an understanding, must degenerate into opportunism.

Two examples will illustrate the commitment of the professional revolutionary. In 1917 Lenin travelled back to Russia through Germany under the protection of the imperialist government of a country with which his own was at war. He was denounced by Kerensky as a double traitor, to Russia and to the "Russian" revolution. The Bolsheviks did not deny the facts: they merely answered that in acting as they did, they had not been the tools of German militarism, but rather they had used German militarism for their own ends. Their allegiance was not to Russia, nor even to the Russian revolution, but to the world revolution. Their acts would be justified by the result: and Lenin's question "Who will prevail?" was answered by the victory of the Bolsheviks and the eventual overthrow of the German imperialists.

The other example is similar. By the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, signed on March 3rd, 1918, Russian territory was handed over to Germany, and Lenin was once more regarded as a traitor to Russia and to the Russian revolution. Radok and Bucharin were in favour of a "revolutionary war" against Germany; Trotsky's formula was "Neither Peace nor War".

Lenin was more realist than either and stood for surrender. He was perfectly prepared to risk appearing as a traitor to "Russian" interests as long as he was convinced that he was serving those of the world revolution.

In the light of such examples, it is obvious that the professional revolutionary would inevitably develop into a more adventurer if he were not committed in his activities to a doctrine which interprets the objective process in which he acts and of which he is the agent. There follows from this fact the overwhelming importance of doctrine for the Bolshevik. His doctrine is Marxism. Any activity which is not based on this, the only existing scientific theory of human society and of general human development, is nothing less than political and moral self-annihilation. A bolshevik who discovers that his action was not, as he assumed, revolutionary, but, in effect, counter-revolutionary, becomes, in his own eyes as well as in the eyes of others, worse than a criminal: his claim to existence is invalidated; his life is undone.

II.

The Doctrine

There are two points in the Marxian philosophy which have a special relevance to the subject under discussion. Firstly, the road from a feudal to a socialist society leads through capitalism. In socialism, the apparatus of production which has been developed in and by capitalism is taken over and managed by the community. Secondly, while history is made by men, it is not made at the whim of so-called great men. It is impossible to skip necessary stages of industrial development.

In the light of these principles, it was asserted by Lenin's group that the Great War had been caused by imperialist rivalries and was bound to lead to world revolution; that Russia could not take the lead in the establishment of socialism, since such a lead could come only from the working classes of the highly industrialised capitalist states of the West; and that socialism could be established only internationally in the course of a successful world revolution.

Accordingly the main outline of the Leninist or Bolshevik policy in reference to Russia in 1917 can be summarised as follows:

1. To end the war at all costs, and to turn the imperialist war into civil war.
2. To secure the victory of the middle-class revolution in Russia in face of the anticipated attempts at counter-revolution; to prevent the middle class from defrauding their working-class

allies of the fruits of their common victory, as happened in other revolutions; and to carry the revolutionary process as far as possible in order to achieve these aims.

3. Never to lose sight of the limitations which are set to the Russian Revolution by the backward condition of the country, i.e. its primitive agricultural character, its illiteracy, and its lack of industries.

III.

1917: A Socialist Revolution, but not Socialism

It is in the light of these Marxist principles of Lenin and his followers that the main course of the revolution can best be understood.

The industrial and commercial middle class of Russia which had backed the Kerensky revolution of February 1917 was comparatively small in numbers and lacking in cohesion and discipline. The industrial working class with which it was allied, while equally few in number, was mainly concentrated in modern large-scale industry, and had reached a high degree of cohesion and discipline. Russia in effect possessed a greater percentage of modern factory workers among its industrial proletariat than any other country. It very soon became apparent that Kerensky's government could not hope to maintain itself against the determined assaults of the counter-revolutionary Tzarist generals, unless he could rely on the whole-hearted support of the working-class. On the other hand, working-class support inevitably involved under the circumstances the socialist character of the new democracy.

But to the Bolsheviks the socialist character of the new "revolutionary democracy" and socialism itself were two very different things. Even after they had seized power in November 1917, they refused, for a considerable time, to attempt to establish socialism in Russia. This refusal, indeed, was one of the corner-stones of their policy. Not until sabotage by the employers and industrialists forced the government to take over the ownership of the factories did they proceed beyond the introduction of workers' control in them.

In the beginning the strongest support was given to Lenin by Trotsky, who joined the Bolshevik party in 1917. He had been the only Russian socialist who had anticipated a socialist revolution in Russia ever since 1906. His theory of the permanent revolution made two main assertions: firstly, that in our epoch of history, the overthrow of autocracy in Russia could not lead to a democratic republic, but would necessarily lead to a socialist revolution; and, secondly, that such a revolution

could not lead to the establishment of socialism in Russia alone, but that it would be the beginning of a world revolution in the course of which (but not before) Russia herself would overcome the consequences of her own backwardness and achieve socialism. Trotsky's foresight as to the socialist character of the Russian revolution was thus linked with the firm conviction of the impossibility of establishing socialism in one country, especially in a backward country like Russia. At the time, this fact was without further consequences. Trotsky did not drop his theory of the permanent revolution--even when events proved its inadequacy--nor did he expressly accept Lenin's thesis of the necessity of co-operation of the socialist workers with the peasantry in an agricultural country. For at this time the Party was agreed that the survival of a socialist Russia amongst the advanced capitalist states was impossible unless the world revolution could be brought about in time.

IV.

War Communism and the NEP

Owing to foreign intervention and civil war, military necessity compelled the adoption of so-called War Communism, the actual economic system of which implied the requisitioning of grain from the peasants. At the same time some of the Bolsheviks were definitely pressing for the immediate establishment of a communist society. Trotsky and a number of other leaders stood for a general conscription of labour and for a ruthless war against all the peasantry except the poorest. Lenin himself is known not to have favoured War Communism and he certainly refused to justify it on grounds of socialist theory. It was certainly contrary to one of his main political doctrines, which we have already mentioned, that the working-class must, in an agricultural country, take full account of the peasant masses whom they must regard as their allies in the revolution. This alliance should be based above all on the village poor, but should exclude only the well-to-do peasants; and it should try to win over, or at least to neutralise, the bulk of the remainder.

The disastrous consequences of interventions and civil war and the complete collapse of War Communism in the great famine of 1921 led to a strategic retreat known as the NEP, i.e. the return to a free grain market and the end of requisitioning. Lenin suggested that a partial return to capitalist methods in agriculture would provide the revolution with a breathing space, in which it could collect its strength to pursue its main task--the promotion of the world revolution. The Left, under Trotsky, only reluctantly fell in with this line, but Lenin's authority carried weight even with them.

Important economic concessions were offered to foreign capitalists in exchange for loans and other assistance. Lenin was prepared to sacrifice some of the sovereign rights of the soviet-state, if its existence could be safeguarded and the cause of the world revolution advanced only by this means. In view of Russia's primitive economic conditions, the return to capitalist agriculture was regarded by Lenin as a step forward. Without the advent of the world revolution he did not think that working class rule could hope to maintain itself, in the face of the inevitable coalition of capitalist governments. In these circumstances a counter-revolution was regarded as a foregone conclusion, for as Lenin said, "the small peasant farmer oozed capitalism from every pore". It was understood that the NEP could be no more than a breathing space.

V.

The Five Year Plans

When Lenin died the Party lost its authoritative leader. A long period of indecision followed. Stalin steered a middle course between the Right wing under Bucharin, Rykov, and Tomsky and the Left wing under Kamenev and Zinoviev on the one hand, and Trotsky and Pyatakov on the other. At the heart of this long drawn out crisis there was the inevitable break-down of the NEP.

For several years after the death of Lenin the Party had continued on the lines of the NEP. But the world revolution failed to materialise: instead, there was a world wide stabilisation of capitalism. But, as Lenin had foreseen, the NEP inevitably tended to increase the political influence of the peasant proprietor and, as Lenin had equally foreseen, this influence tended towards the restoration of capitalism in Russia itself. On the other hand the measures adopted by the government for the feeding of the urban population and the development of industry necessarily led to continuous interference with the peasants. What was true in Western Europe proved true also in Russia. Liberal economics and popular government, especially if the latter was motivated by the interest of an industrial working class, were mutually incompatible. The NEP became unworkable because the peasants increasingly resisted government interference, and refused to carry on their farms on any other than a profit basis. As a result there was a great decrease in the agricultural raw materials of industry; and, after 1926, a rapid deterioration of the heavy industrial plant became apparent. The economic system of the country was on the verge of collapse.

In this crisis the Right advised a further retreat and a

more complete NEP. Bucharin told the peasants to get rich. There were tendencies towards a closer connection with Western capitalist powers. The Left advised the opposite--a return to the pre-NEP policy, i.e. to the exploitation of the peasants by the workers of the towns and by the use of "administrative" methods or requisitioning. At the same time the policy of world revolution should be intensified at all costs. Stalin and a small group of the Centre took an entirely different line, and one which until then had been regarded as impossible--the policy of socialist construction in Russia irrespective of the course of events outside. This was the policy of the Five Year Plans and Collectivisation. Stalin saw that the line of the Right would mean the end of socialism, and the line of the Left the end of Russia. The Five Year Plans should solve the industrial, the collectivisation the peasant problem. This was a complete break with the traditional line of the Party.

Lenin had been convinced that he was doing what Marx had advised. Actually he was doing only what Marx might have advised under the altered circumstances. Stalin was similarly convinced that he was following in the footsteps of Lenin. In fact he was making an original contribution to politics. The idea of socialism in one country practically amounted to the attempt to make Russia into an industrial country by her own means, without foreign loans and without the help of other countries. In Marxist theory as it was traditionally understood, this was not possible, for the former meant the adjustment of political to economic reality. Stalin's policy was the reversal of this and was carried almost entirely with the help of the younger members of the Party. It is not surprising that almost the whole of the old Party refused to follow this line. Both Right and Left went into opposition, convinced that the ruin of the revolution was inevitable. The Right wing saw in Stalin a traitor to the Russian people, who would necessarily be the victims of so ruinous an undertaking. The Left wing regarded him as a traitor to the world revolution, as his policy meant that Russia would have to postpone it, and perhaps even to slow it down in order to achieve success at home.

The Five Year Plan and Collectivisation were a definite forward move to socialism. The vital interests of a hundred million people were at stake. Russia could not afford to wait any longer. The NEP, conceived by Lenin as a strategic retreat, could not be turned from a transitory into a permanent position. Industry had to be made politically independent of the peasantry if the revolution was to be safe against a reactionary upheaval. The NEP, which was essentially a state of suspension between capitalism and socialism could not last. While in several Central European countries a similar state of suspension resulted in the return to capitalism under a fascist dictatorship, in Russia alone the outcome was the establishment of socialism under the dictatorship of the working-class.

Stalin's programme implied, as we have seen, that socialism could be established in one country, though in this case the country was as large as a continent. After widespread and unavoidable suffering, which seemed for a while almost to justify the predictions of Stalin's opponents, the Five Year Plans were triumphantly successful. Russia, which ten years ago was of no account as an industrialist country, ranks now amongst the very first. Socialism has been established in one country.

VI.

The Trials--and After

The Trials can only be understood in the light of the above knowledge. Without it, they would have been both meaningless and incomprehensible: meaningless, because the executed men had risked their lives for their political convictions, and it was the validity of those convictions that was tested in the Trials; incomprehensible, because their alleged confessions and their actual self-accusations would have been impossible without those same convictions. It is not surprising that the great majority of Western European observers, to whom the background of the Trials was unknown, believed that the confessions had been extorted and that the self-accusations were due to some (still unexplained) devilry of the GPU. Zinoviev and Kamonov seemed to have confessed, lightly and freely, everything that had been laid to their charge; but in the subsequent trials of Radek and Piatakov it became apparent that the former accused had only confessed what was actually proved against them, while withholding all information about those parts of the conspiracy which were still unrevealed. Finally, the trial of Rykov, Bukharin, Rakovsky and the common criminal, Yagoda, showed that the military conspiracy of Tukhachevsky had, by all the accused in the previous trials, been shielded.

That the confessions were spontaneous and voluntary was a legend: not even Radek, who had, though too late, withdrawn from the conspiracy, found it compatible with his honour as a revolutionary to give his former associates away. Others only seemed to confess while in reality dying as conspirators. The behaviour of the accused seems unaccountable only on the complacent assumption of the universal validity of the heroic standards of public morality current in middle class politics. Leaders of a great revolution may be expected to adopt a different standard.

The meaning and purport of the Trials lay almost exclusively in the moral and political field. The real issue was whether or not the accused would publicly stand to their political line,

i.e. whether they would assert that the actual developments had justified the methods of professional revolutionaries, employed by them in their struggle against the Soviet government, or whether they would perhaps contend that though they were belied by the present they would be vindicated by the future. In effect the great majority confessed themselves to have misjudged the situation and refused to die as martyrs to a line in which they no longer believed. Their moral collapse was partly due to the unexpected success of the policy of the Five Year Plans which, on their conviction, should have failed. More often it was due to the belated realisation that they had been blindly led on to shoulder responsibilities, far beyond those they had consciously accepted. In the second trial, Trotsky's methods were exposed: he had forced upon a reluctant staff of subordinate leaders one fateful step after another, while the bulk of the followers did not suspect to what their leaders were committing them.

The leaders themselves had been convinced that they were merely following in the footsteps of Lenin, who had not hesitated to make use of the help of the German reactionaries against the Socialist revolutionaries of Kerensky's Provisional Government, and who had coolly advocated the retreat from War Communism to capitalist forms in agriculture, when the interests of the revolution seemed to demand it. He did not even shrink from offering foreign capitalists valuable concessions in Soviet Russia, even at the expense of its sovereignty. In every case Lenin had been justified by the event. Everything hinged on the assumption that they too would be similarly justified. Should this assumption prove false, moral annihilation was unavoidable. They would have to acknowledge to themselves that they were not revolutionaries but counter-revolutionaries, and their acts of terrorism and sabotage against the innocent population had been not the unavoidable sacrifices of a revolutionary struggle, but heinous crimes against their own most cherished ideals. They would then have forfeited their lives, not only according to the laws of the Soviet state, but by the judgment of their own consciences as revolutionaries. Many of them could have only one wish--the wish of the accused, Shostov, who concluded his last plea with the words:

"Here before you, in the face of the whole working class, in the face of those oppressed by capitalism in all countries, I have to the best of my ability shattered to pieces the ideology which has held me captive for thirteen years. And now I have only one desire: to stand with the same calmness before the firing squad and to wash away with my own blood the stain of traitor to my country".

The recantation of the accused was only possible because the Trials themselves revealed their utter isolation from the masses. The old Bolsheviks who had refused to follow the line of "Socialism in one country", were acting on a purely

theoretical conviction which increasingly failed to find any response from the people. Apart from some dissatisfied groups of middle class nationalists (mainly in the former Bukhara, the Ukraine, and White Russia) they had no following in the country. With no group of students, of Komsomols, of factory workers, of collectives, or of other organisations or strata of the population did the conspirators have a connection. They were acting entirely on their own, and were planning a "palace revolution" or a coup de main, the authorship of which they intended to conceal from the masses. The assassination of Stalin and other leaders of the government was to have been subsequently disowned by the conspirators, who wanted simply to take power without any previous declaration of a political programme of their own. This fact alone would be sufficient to prove the complete absence of any backing from the people.

So the most audacious conspiracy ever engineered by a group of revolutionaries, who refused to accept the inevitable course of events and were prepared to throw the achievements of a great revolution into the melting pot, in order to overthrow its supposedly treacherous leaders, failed; failed just in time to destroy the hopes of foreign enemies to achieve an easy victory, with the help of military treason.

This is why the U.S.S.R. has emerged from the Moscow trials as an even greater military power than she was before. That the conspiracy has been finally liquidated may be seen from the recent developments in Russia. The Communist Party is now allowed much greater freedom of discussion and criticism; and this would be impossible if there were any further danger of conspiracy.

RUSSIA AND THE BRITISH WORKING CLASS

The establishment of the first socialist state in the history of mankind has started a general, international crisis, and at the same time a profound crisis in the ranks of the socialist working-class movement. The first of these developments was foreseen and taken for granted. The other, too, could easily have been foreseen: for just as the capitalist classes everywhere realised instinctively that they were faced with a deadly peril, and reacted to it by turning towards Fascism, the working-class movement also and necessarily had to adjust its whole outlook, policy and methods to the fact of the first and decisive victory of socialism.

Previous articles in this issue have dealt with the international political aspect. They have endeavoured to show that the victory of socialism in Russia was the ultimate

reason of that hardening of the fronts, which, since Munich, has become apparent even to the most unwilling eyes. It is in terms of Fascism versus Socialism that all international problems present themselves in our time. It is in vain that non-socialist statesmen--liberals as well as conservatives--denounce these "ideologies" as specious inventions of the warring Fascist and Communist factions, with whose quarrels they wish to have nothing in common. It is in vain that they cry "A plague on both your houses!" for the ideological struggle is, in reality, as inevitable as the class struggle which it reflects. Failure to comprehend the facts will not do away with the facts themselves.

But the success of socialist construction in Russia is at the root also of much of the confusion in the working-class movement. It is with this aspect that the present article is concerned. As we have said, nothing else could be expected. A revolutionary movement is bound to be faced with a crisis when the first great achievement forces it to recognise that something has been born into the world, which it must cherish and defend at almost any cost. The victory of socialism in one country has inevitably brought the socialist movement in the rest of the world face to face with such a crisis. The question is how it may be overcome.

The answer cannot be given in merely theoretical terms. The international crisis and the crisis in the working-class movement are not two separate crises. At the heart of both, there is one and the same historical fact--the victory of socialism in one country. This must be the starting-point of all our considerations.

For the socialist the outlook is dominated by the inevitable break-up of the present national and international system. The coming emergency will either take the form of war on a world scale or of those incisive social changes which alone could still avert such a war. Whether the emergency arises primarily in the national or in the international field, or, as is most probable, in both, the social system as a whole will be involved. (Cf. p. 5, Russia, Socialism and Self-sufficiency). International socialism will then prove to be the only means by which peace can be restored, and at the same time by which modern industry can be rescued from disintegration; while the working class will be the only group available in society which can save it by the establishment of international socialism. It will have to assume power in order to save itself and mankind from destruction. The fixed point of orientation for the socialist working-class movement in the coming emergency is this assurance of its revolutionary mission. To the task of preparing for the performance of its mission, its policy and methods must be suited; and this can

only be done by building up its socialist consciousness in and through its present activities.

For the working class in Britain, the problem must focus on one question: By what means can this class fit itself now for the part it must play in an emergency which still lies in the future, and of which Spain to-day, Czechoslovakia yesterday, and the whole of Central and Eastern Europe since Munich, are but the symbols? In other words, what attitude will meet the needs of the international situation from the point of view of the working class, and at the same time help to build up its socialist consciousness?

The answer is quite simple. The working class must stand by Russia for the sake of socialism. Both parts of the sentence are of equal importance. To stand for socialism and not for Russia is the betrayal of socialism in its sole existing embodiment. To stand for Russia without mentioning socialism would also be the betrayal of socialism, which alone makes Russia worth fighting for. That is why the working class must stand by Russia in the name of socialism. It is imperative that neither Russia nor socialism should be dropped in this context. Those who believe that they are serving the cause of socialism whilst denying that the U.S.S.R. is socialist, are fostering the idealist delusion that socialism can be achieved without an ego-long struggle, in which the institutions of socialism will have to be evolved in surroundings which are far from ideal. This illusion is on a par with the sentimental idealism of the middle class, so admirably calculated to sanction (Oh, so reluctantly!) the use of force by the ruling classes, while denouncing the same necessity as Calibanesque brutality on the part of the working class. If Russia is not regarded as socialist merely because the introduction of a socialist economy has not finally solved the problems of human life, then socialism is meaningless to all but the incurable idealist; the idealist who believes that the transformation of institutions is the actual fulfilment, rather than a precondition, of a truly human life.

Neither ought the defence of Russia to be mentioned, unless socialism is mentioned too. Those socialists who believe that they are serving the cause of the U.S.S.R., while often omitting to mention that they take this stand for the sake of socialism,--i.e. because the U.S.S.R. is socialist not only in name but also in reality-- are unconsciously playing into the hands of those who deny outright that Russia is a socialist country. The unique significance of Russia to the working classes of the world lies in one thing and one thing alone: namely, that Russia is a socialist country. Take that away, and Russia means no more to them than any other country on the map. The socialist consciousness of the working class

is built up through the defence of Russia, because Russia is a socialist country. For this reason, therefore, and for this reason alone, must the working class stand for Russia; and unless the consciousness of this unique connection is indissolubly linked with the mention of Russia, the defence of Russia must become a merely national concern instead of an international one. If the working classes come to think of Russia in the terms in which they are accustomed to think of other countries, whose interests happen to coincide with those of Great Britain, then the defence of Russia, far from being an internationalist concern becomes in fact a nationalist one; and far from emancipating the working classes from the tutelage of middle-class leadership, must tend to bring them even more completely into the bondage of capitalist interests. The socialist working class movement would thereby be fatally weakened. It need hardly be stressed that socialist Russia could not ultimately be saved at the cost of sacrificing the socialist consciousness of the working classes in other countries. The Western European working class cannot fulfil its socialist mission, not even with regard to Russia, unless it refuses to follow any line of policy which would tend to dim its socialist consciousness.

That is why the British working class should stand for Russia in the name of socialism, linking socialism with Russia, Russia with socialism; refusing to follow a socialist lead that does not expressly include the defence of Russia, and equally refusing to accept a policy of the defence of Russia, unless it is expressly based on socialism. Thus the insistence on the defence of the U.S.S.R. for the sake of socialism contains the two essentials of working class policy to-day. This is not the occasion to discuss such a policy in terms of party alignments. Suffice it to say that the importance attached to such alignments is reduced to its true proportions, and at the same time the question itself is considerably simplified by a clear and determined insistence on these two essentials.

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By K.P.

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Things to Come.

For the socialist the outlook is dominated by the inevitable break-up of the present national and international system. The coming emergency will either take the form of war on a world scale or of those incisive social changes which alone could still avert such a war. Whether the emergency ~~will~~ arises primarily in the national or in the international field, or, as is most probable, in both, the social system as a whole will be involved. (Cf. p. Russia, Socialism and Self-sufficiency). International socialism will then prove to be the only means by which peace

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For the working class in Britain, the problem must focus on one question: Can this class be prepared now, ~~for~~ in the fullest sense of the word, for the part it must play in an emergency which still lies in the future, and of which Spain to-day, Czechoslovakia yesterday, and the whole of Central and Eastern Europe since Munich, are but the symbols? In other words, what attitude will meet the needs of the international situation from the point of view of the working class, and at the same time help to build up its socialist consciousness?

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By KP. 1. 40 12
WHY THE TRIALS HAVE STRENGTHENED RUSSIA
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The international prestige of Russia was weakened during the critical days of 1938 by the repercussions of the Trials. Many people actually believed that the Trials were a frame-up, and they indulged in fantastic explanations of them. To some they seemed to show the workings of a bloodthirsty tyranny; to others they were the result of Stalin's inordinate personal ambition; and to others again they appeared to be "witch-trials", in which wretched innocents had been hypnotised to confess imaginary crimes. Many of those, on the other hand, who admitted the genuineness of the Trials, inferred from this the existence of a widespread underground movement in Russia, or at least of deeply rooted disaffection, of which the Trials were merely the outward symptom.

From both quarters (those who believed the Trials were genuine and those who did not) there was a tendency to regard Russia's military power as completely untrustworthy because of her supposed internal weakness. Although the theory of a frame-up was soon discarded by intelligent observers, and the legend of Russia's latent military weakness was strikingly controverted by the Chang ku-feng incident, the effect of the Trials on the international prestige of the U.S.S.R. was, until recently, much in evidence. Capitalist governments, newspapers and publicists naturally make use of any pretext to disparage Russia. But, more seriously, the admiration and affection of the workers themselves for the U.S.S.R. have been impaired by the effects of the Trials.

Now it is, of course, perfectly true that any attempt to explain these trials in the accepted terms of Western European political morality must necessarily fail. But the tacit assumption that such a failure implies the condemnation of the Trials is quite unwarranted. For, in reality, it simply proves what should have been obvious—that the ethical standards of a great revolution are far in advance of any our present world can conceive.

(I)

The Professional Revolutionary.

The only source for the understanding of a great revolution lies in the philosophy of its leaders.

At the Congress of the Social Democratic Workers Party of Russia held in 1903 at Brussels and in London, Article I of the Statutes of the Party, defining the qualifications for membership, gave the opportunity for a full debate between the Social Democrats and the Revolutionary Socialists. The former defined a member as "a person supporting the Party and working under the control of the Party". The latter, led by Lenin, pressed for a more stringent test of membership, which, they argued, should consist in "participation in the illegal organisation of the Party" and consequently throwing one's whole personality and existence into Party work. This would imply blind obedience to party discipline of a very strict kind; and the corollary of this view was democratic centralisation inside the Party. ~~For this issue Lenin was defeated, but~~

[It was on]

[that he was defeated by]

Two wings
of the

in a vote on another important question he secured a narrow majority, and his party was thenceforth termed the Bolsheviks.)

The difference between these two conceptions of party membership lay partly in the methods used, and partly in the degree of commitment. ~~Lenin and his supporters believed that any methods might be used, legal or illegal, conventional or unconventional, peaceful or violent, and he believed that the commitment was neither to family nor country nor person but to the cause of the world revolution.~~ The organisation of the Communist Party thus singles out a group of keen, self-sacrificing revolutionaries from the mass of the proletariat. Such a position can be distinguished from Blanquism — i.e. secret preparations by a few revolutionaries for a Putsch, which would capture power for the masses — only by the acceptance of the principle that revolutions cannot be made: they must be the outcome of an objective process, expressing itself in a genuine mass-movement.

Any "revolutionary" movement — i.e. the use of illegal force in politics — which is not based on a definite understanding of the nature of such a process is merely irresponsible adventurism, and in the same way the use of peaceful means, unless based on such an understanding, must degenerate into opportunism.

Two examples will illustrate the commitment of the professional revolutionary. In 1917 Lenin travelled back to Russia through Germany under the protection of the government of a country with which his own was at war. He was denounced by Kerensky as a double traitor, to Russia and to the "Russian" revolution. The Bolsheviks did not deny the facts: they merely answered that in acting as they did, they had not been the tools of German militarism, but rather they had used German militarism for their own ends. Their allegiance was not to Russia, nor even to the Russian revolution, but to the world revolution. Their acts would be justified by the result: and Lenin's question "Who will prevail?" was answered by the victory of the Bolsheviks and the overthrow of the German imperialists.

The other example is similar. By the treaty of Brest Litovsk, signed on March 3rd, 1918, Russian territory was handed over to Germany, and Lenin was once more regarded as a traitor to Russia and to the Russian revolution. Radek and Bucharin were in favour of a "revolutionary war"; Trotsky's formula was "Neither peace nor war." *(against Germany)*

(was more realist than either and) Lenin stood for surrender. He was perfectly prepared to *(risk everything)* sacrifice Russian ~~national~~ interests to ~~the~~ of the world revolution.

In the light of such examples, it is obvious that the professional revolutionary would inevitably develop into a mere adventurer if he were not committed in his activities to a doctrine which interprets the objective process in which he acts and the agent. ~~which~~ There follows from this fact the overwhelming importance of doctrine for the Bolshevik. His doctrine is Marxism. Any activity which is not based on this, the only existing scientific theory of human society and of general human development, is nothing less than political and moral self-annihilation. A Bolshevik who discovers that his action was not, as he assumed, revolutionary,

as long as he was convinced that he was serving these

group
to (so the Bolsheviks)
called themselves
after 1918

imperialist

Leninist

as a
traitor to

2
of which
he is

3.

but, in effect, counter-revolutionary, becomes, in his own eyes as well as in the eyes of others, worse than a criminal: his ~~very~~ ^{claim to} existence is invalidated; his life is undone.

(II)
The Doctrine.

There are two points in the Marxian philosophy which have a special relevance to the subject under discussion. Firstly, the road from a feudal to a socialist society leads through capitalism. In socialism, the apparatus of production which has been developed in and by capitalism is taken over and managed by the community. Secondly, while history is made by men, it is not made at the whim of so-called great men. It is impossible to skip necessary stages of industrial development.

In the light of these principles, it was asserted by Lenin's group that the Great War had been caused by imperialist rivalries and was bound to lead to world revolution; that Russia could not take the lead in the establishment of socialism, since such a lead could come only from the working classes of the highly industrialised capitalist states of the West; and that socialism could be established only internationally in the course of a successful world revolution.

Accordingly the main outline of the Leninist or Bolshevik policy in reference to Russia in 1917 can be summarised as follows:

1. To end the war at all costs, and to turn the ~~world~~ ^{imperialist} war into ~~world revolution~~ ^{civil war};
2. To secure the victory of the middle-class revolution in Russia in face of the anticipated attempts at counter-revolution; to prevent the middle class from defrauding their working-class allies of the fruits of their common victory, as happened in other revolutions; and to carry the revolutionary process as far as possible in order to achieve these aims.
3. Never to lose sight of the limitations which are set to the Russian Revolution by the backward condition of the country ^{i.e.} its agricultural character, its illiteracy, and its lack of industrial discipline.

(III)
The History.

It is in the light of these Marxist principles of Lenin and his followers that the main course of the revolution can best be understood.

The industrial and commercial middle class of Russia which had backed the Kerensky revolution of February 1917 was comparatively small in numbers and lacking in cohesion and discipline. The industrial working class with which it was allied was comparatively ~~numerous, and had reached a high degree of cohesion and discipline. Russian industries were mostly centralised in modern factories employing a large number of workers. Russia possessed a greater percentage of modern factory workers among its industrial proletariat than any other country.~~ The weakness of the middle classes and the

while equally few in number, was mainly concentrated in modern large scale industry, and

~~competitive strength of the factory workers determined the course of the Russian revolution~~

It very soon became apparent that Kerensky's government could not hope to maintain itself against the determined assaults of the counter-revolutionary Tsarist generals, unless he could rely on the whole-hearted support of the working-class. On the other hand, working-class support inevitably involved under the circumstances the socialist character of the new ~~dem~~ democracy.

the Bolsheviks
But to ~~Lenin and his followers~~ the socialist character of the new democracy and socialism itself were two very different things. Even after they had seized power in November 1917, ~~the Bolsheviks~~ *they* refused, for a considerable time, to ^{attempt} establish socialism in Russia. This refusal, indeed, was one of the corner-stones of their policy. Not until sabotage by the employers and industrialists forced the government to take over the ownership of the factories did they proceed beyond the introduction of workers' control in them.

*overcome the capitalist and
own the land and
the factories*
In the beginning the strongest support was given to Lenin by Trotsky, who joined the Bolshevik party in 1917. He had been the only Russian socialist who had ^{advocated} a socialist revolution in Russia ever since 1905. His theory of the permanent revolution made two main assertions: firstly, that in our epoch of history, the overthrow of autocracy in Russia could not lead to a democratic republic, but would necessarily lead to a socialist revolution; and, secondly, that such a revolution ~~could~~ not lead to the establishment of socialism in Russia alone, but that it would be the beginning of a world revolution in the course of which (but not before) Russia herself would achieve socialism. Trotsky's foresight as to the socialist character of the Russian revolution was thus linked with the firm conviction of the impossibility of establishing socialism in one country, especially in a backward country like Russia. At the time, this fact was without further consequences. Trotsky did not drop his theory of the permanent revolution—even when events proved its inadequacy—nor did he expressly accept Lenin's thesis of the necessity of an ~~alliance~~ *alliance* of the socialist workers with the peasantry in an agricultural country. For ~~this time the Party was agreed that the socialist revolution in Russia meant a great effort required a great effort to launch world revolution.~~ *a great task* The survival of ~~socialist~~ *socialist* Russia amongst the advanced capitalist states was ~~seemingly~~ *impossible, unless the world*

Communism
*revolution could
be brought about
in time.*
Owing to foreign intervention and ~~the~~ civil war, military necessity compelled the adoption of so-called War Communism, the actual economic system of which ~~involved~~ *involved* the requisitioning of grain from the peasants. At the same time some of the Bolsheviks were definitely pressing for the immediate establishment of a communist society. Trotsky and a number of other leaders stood for a general conscription of labour and for a ruthless war against all the peasantry except the poorest. Lenin himself is known not to have favoured War Communism and he ~~certainly~~ *certainly* refused to justify it on grounds of socialist theory. It was ~~contrary~~ *contrary* to one of his main political doctrines, which we have already mentioned, that the working-class must, in an agricultural country, take full account of the peasantry whom they must ~~as~~ regard as their allies in the revolution. This alliance

IV. War Communism & the W.C.P.

masses

should be based above all on the village poor, but should exclude only the well-to-do peasants; and it should try to win over, or at least to neutralise, the bulk of the remainder.

The disastrous consequences of interventions and civil war and the complete collapse of War Communism in the great famine of 1921 led to a strategic retreat known as the NEP, i.e. the return to a free grain market and the end of requisitioning. ~~This was entirely on the lines of the Right policy.~~ Lenin suggested that a partial return to capitalist methods in agriculture would provide the revolution with a breathing space, in which it could collect its strength to pursue its main task—the promotion of the world revolution. The Left, under Trotsky, ~~followed~~ this line, but Lenin's authority carried weight even with them. *only reluctantly fell in with*

Incidentally, Important economic concessions were offered to ~~the~~ capitalists ~~in exchange~~ in exchange for loans and other assistance. Lenin was prepared to sacrifice ~~the~~ *sovereignty of the state* ~~the existence of Soviet Russia~~ could be safeguarded and the cause of the world revolution advanced only by this means. In view of Russia's primitive economic conditions, ~~capitalism~~ *the return to capitalism* was regarded by Lenin as a step forward. ~~But~~ Without the advent of the world revolution he did not think that ~~the Russian Socialist regime~~ *the Russian Socialist regime* could hope to maintain itself, in the face of the inevitable coalition of capitalist governments. In these circumstances a counter-revolution was regarded as a foregone conclusion, for as Lenin said, "the small peasant farmer oozed capitalism from every pore." It was understood that the NEP could be no more than a breathing space.

When Lenin died the Party lost its authoritative leader. Stalin steered a middle course between the Right wing under Bucharin, Rykov, and Tomsky and the Left wing under Kamenev & Zinoviev on the one hand, and Trotsky & Pyatakov on the other. *At the height of*

For several years after the death of Lenin the Party continued on the lines of the NEP. But the world revolution failed to materialise; instead, there was a ~~general~~ *worldwide* stabilisation of capitalism. But, as Lenin had foreseen, the NEP inevitably tended to increase the political influence of the peasant proprietor and, as Lenin had equally foreseen, this influence tended towards the restoration of capitalism in Russia. On the other hand the measures adopted by the government for the feeding of the urban population and the development of industry necessarily led to ~~punitive measures~~ *punitive measures* against, and continuous interference with, the peasants. What was true in Western Europe proved true also in Russia. Liberal economics and popular government were mutually incompatible, especially if the latter was motivated by the interest of an industrial working class. The NEP became unworkable because the peasants increasingly resisted government interference, and refused to carry on their farms on any other than a profit basis. As a result there was a great decrease in the agricultural raw materials of industry; and, after 1926, a rapid deterioration of the heavy industrial plant became apparent.

In this crisis the Right advised a further retreat and a more complete NEP. Bucharin told the peasants to get rich. There were tendencies towards a closer connection with Western capitalist

13
main

this long drawn out crisis has been the inevitable result of the NEP.

The economic system of the country was on the verge of collapse.

The Five Year Plans

14 6. not clear what "it" is, + "this" ?

Could be carried out almost entirely with the help of the young members of the party.

powers. ~~The~~ The Left advised the opposite—a return to the pre-NEP policy, i.e. to the exploitation of the peasants by the workers of the towns and by the use of "administrative" methods or requisitioning. At the same time the policy of world revolution should be intensified at all costs. Stalin and a small group of the Centre took an entirely different line, and one which till then had been regarded as impossible—the policy of socialist construction in Russia irrespective of the course of events outside. This was the policy of the Five Year Plans and Collectivisation. Stalin saw that the line of the Right would mean the end of socialism, and the line of the Left the end of Russia. The Five Year Plans should solve the industrial, the collectivisation the peasant problem. This was a complete break with the traditional line of the Party.

Lenin had been convinced that he was doing what Marx had advised. Actually he was doing only what Marx might have advised under the altered circumstances. Stalin was similarly convinced that he was following in the footsteps of Lenin. In fact he was making an original contribution to politics. The idea of socialism in one country practically amounted to the attempt to make Russia into an industrial country by her own means, without foreign loans and without ~~the help of other capitalist countries~~. In Marxist theory this was not possible, ~~and this meant the adjustment of political to economic reality~~. Stalin's policy was the ~~complete~~ reversal of ~~this~~. It is not surprising that almost the whole of the old Party refused to follow this line. Both Right and Left went into opposition, convinced that the ruin of the revolution was inevitable. The Right wing saw in Stalin a traitor to the Russian people. ~~The~~ The Left wing regarded him as a traitor to the world revolution, as his ~~policy~~ meant that Russia would have to postpone it, and even to slow it down in order to achieve success at home.

~~forward~~ The Five Year Plan and Collectivisation were a definite move to ~~the~~ socialism. ~~The~~ Russia could not afford to wait any longer. The NEP, conceived by Lenin as a strategic retreat, could not be turned from a transitory into a permanent position. Industry had to be made politically independent of the peasantry if the revolution was to be safe against a reactionary upheaval. The NEP, which was essentially a state of suspension between capitalism and socialism could not last. While in several ~~European countries~~ Central European Countries a similar state of suspension resulted in the return to capitalism under a fascist dictatorship, in Russia alone the outcome was the establishment of socialism under the dictatorship of ~~the~~ working-class ~~party~~.

15 Stalin's programme implied, as we have seen, that socialism could be established in one country, though in this case the country was as large as a continent. After widespread and unavoidable suffering, which seemed for a while almost to justify the predictions of Stalin's opponents, the Five Year Plans were triumphantly successful. Russia, which ten years ago was of no account as an industrialist country, ranks now amongst the very first. Socialism has been established in one country.

who would necessarily be the victims of so ruinous an undertaking.

(IV) The Trials—and after.

The Trials can only be understood in the light of the above ~~facts~~ knowledge. Without it, they would have been both meaningless and incomprehensible: meaningless, because the executed men had risked their lives for their political ~~convictions;—incomprehensible~~ convictions, and it was the validity of these convictions that was tested in the Trials; incomprehensible, because their alleged confessions and their actual self-accusations would have been impossible without these same convictions. It is not surprising that the great majority of Western European observers, to whom the background of the Trials was unknown, believed that the confessions had been extorted and that the self-accusations were due to some (still unexplained) devilry of the GPU. Zinoviev and Kamenev seemed to have confessed, lightly and freely, everything that had been laid to their charge; but in the subsequent trials of Radek and Piatkov it became apparent that the former accused had only confessed what was actually proved against them, while withholding all information about those parts of the conspiracy which were still unrevealed. Finally, the trial of Rykov, Bukharin, Rakovsky and the common criminal, Yagoda, revealed that the military conspiracy of Tukachevsky had, ~~by all the accused, been shielded to the very last~~ by all the accused in the previous trials, been shielded to the very last.

That the confessions were spontaneous and voluntary was a legend: not even Radek, who had, though too late, withdrawn from the conspiracy, found it compatible with his honour as a revolutionary to give away any of his former associates. The behaviour of the accused seems unaccountable only on the complacent assumption of the universal validity of the unheroic standards of public morality current in middle class politics. Leaders of a great revolution may be expected to adopt a different standard.

The meaning and purport of the Trials lay almost exclusively in the moral and political field. The real issue was whether or not the accused would publicly stand to their political line, *i.e.* whether they would assert that the actual developments had justified the methods of professional revolutionaries, employed by them in their struggle against the Soviet government, or whether they would perhaps contend that though they were belied by the present they would be vindicated by the future. In effect they all confessed themselves to have been mistaken and refused to die as ~~the~~ martyrs to a cause in which they no longer believed. Their *(recantation—have space)* was only partly due to the unexpected success of policies which, on their conviction, should have failed. More often it was due to the belated realisation that they had been blindly led on to shoulder responsibilities, far beyond those they had consciously accepted. In the second trial, Trotsky's methods were exposed: he had forced upon a reluctant staff of subordinate leaders one fateful step after another, while the bulk of the followers did not suspect to what their leaders were committing them.

The leaders themselves had been convinced that they were merely following in the footsteps of Lenin, who had not hesitated to make use of the help of ~~the~~ the German reactionaries against the Socialist revolutionaries of Kerensky's Provisional Government, and

who had coolly advocated the retreat from War Communism to capitalist forms in agriculture, when the interests of the revolution seemed to demand it. He did not even shrink from offering foreign capitalists valuable concessions in Soviet Russia, even at the expense of its sovereignty. In every case Lenin had been justified by the event. Everything hinged on the assumption that they too would be similarly justified. Should this assumption prove false, moral annihilation was unavoidable. They would have to acknowledge to themselves that they were not revolutionaries but counter-revolutionaries, and their acts of terrorism and sabotage against the innocent population had been not the unavoidable sacrifices of a revolutionary struggle, but heinous crimes against their own most cherished ideals. They would then have forfeited their lives, not only according to the laws of the Soviet state, but before by the judgment of their own consciences as revolutionaries. Many of them could have only one wish—the wish of the accused, Shestov, who concluded his last plea with the words:

"Here before you, in the face of the whole working class, in the face of those oppressed by capitalism in all countries, I have to the best of my ability shattered to pieces the ideology which has held me captive for thirteen years. And now I have only one desire; to stand with the same calmness before the firing squad and to wash away with my own blood the stain of traitor to my country."

The moral collapse of the accused was only possible because the Trials themselves revealed their utter isolation from the masses. The old Bolsheviks who had refused to follow the line of "Socialism in one country", were acting on a purely//17 theoretical conviction which increasingly failed to find any response from the ~~population~~ people. Apart from some dissatisfied groups of middle-class nationalists (mainly in the former Bukhara, the Ukraine, and White Russia) they had no following in the country. With no group of students, of Komsomols, of factory workers, of collectives (Kolkhozes) or of other organizations or strata of the population did the conspirators have a connection. They were acting entirely on their own, and were planning a "palace revolution" or a coup de main, the ~~author~~ authorship of which they intended to conceal from the masses. The assassination of Stalin and other leaders of the government was to have been subsequently disowned by the conspirators, who wanted simply to take power without any previous declaration of a political programme of their own. This fact alone would be sufficient to prove the complete absence of any backing from the people.

So the most audacious conspiracy ever engineered by a group of revolutionaries, who refused to accept the inevitable course of events and were prepared to throw the achievements of a great revolution into the melting pot, in order to overthrow its supposedly treacherous leaders, failed; failed just in time to destroy the hopes of foreign enemies to achieve an easy victory, with the help of military treason.

This is why the U.S.S.R. has emerged from the Moscow Trials as an even greater military power than she was before.

The Trials—and after.

The Trials can only be understood in the light of the above facts knowledge. Without it, they would have been both meaningless and incomprehensible: meaningless, because the executed men had risked their lives for their political convictions; incomprehensible convictions, and it was the validity of these convictions that was tested in the Trials; incomprehensible, because their alleged confessions and their actual self-accusations would have been impossible without these same convictions. It is not surprising that the great majority of Western European observers, to whom the background of the Trials was unknown, believed that the confessions had been extorted and that the self-accusations were due to some (still unexplained) devilry of the GPU. Zinoviev and Kamenev seemed to have confessed, lightly and freely, everything that had been laid to their charge; but in the subsequent trials of Radek and Piatakov it became apparent that the former accused had only confessed what was actually proved against them, while withholding all information about these parts of the conspiracy which were still unrevealed. Finally, the trial of Rykov, Bukharin, Rakovsky and the common criminal, Yagoda, revealed that the military conspiracy of Tukachevsky had, ~~by all the accused, been shielded to the very last~~ by the accused in the previous trials, been shielded.

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The meaning and purport of the Trials lay almost exclusively in the moral and political field. The real issue was whether or not the accused would publicly stand to their political line, i.e. whether they would assert that the actual developments had justified the methods of professional revolutionaries, employed by them in their struggle against the Soviet government, or whether they would perhaps contend that though they were belied by the present they would be vindicated by the future. In effect they all confessed themselves to have been mistaken and refused to die as the martyrs to a cause in which they no longer believed. Their recantation ~~was~~ ^{the moral collapse} partly due to the unexpected success of policy which, on their conviction, should have failed. More often it was due to the belated realisation that they had been blindly led on to shoulder responsibilities, far beyond those they had consciously accepted. In the second trial, Trotsky's methods were exposed: he had forced upon a reluctant staff of subordinate leaders one fateful step after another, while the bulk of the followers did not suspect to what their leaders were committing them.

The leaders themselves had been convinced that they were merely following in the footsteps of Lenin, who had not hesitated to make use of the help of the German reactionaries against the Socialist revolutionaries of Kerensky's Provisional Government, and

20 They seemed only to confess
30 what they were as conspirators
40 the great majority

2. who had coolly advocated the retreat from War Communism to capitalist forms in agriculture, when the interests of the revolution seemed to demand it. He did not even shrink from offering foreign capitalists valuable concessions in Soviet Russia, even at the expense of its sovereignty. In every case Lenin had been justified by the event. Everything hinged on the assumption that they too would be similarly justified. Should this assumption prove false, moral annihilation was unavoidable. They would have to acknowledge to themselves that they were not revolutionaries but counter-revolutionaries, and their acts of terrorism and sabotage against the innocent population had been not the unavoidable sacrifices of a revolutionary struggle, but heinous crimes against their own most cherished ideals. They would then have forfeited their lives, not only according to the laws of the Soviet state, but ~~before~~ by the judgment of their own consciences as revolutionaries. Many of them could have only one wish—the wish of the accused, Shestov, who concluded his last plea with the words:

"Here before you, in the face of the whole working class, in the face of those oppressed by capitalism in all countries, I have to the best of my ability shattered to pieces the ideology which has held me captive for thirteen years. And now I have only one desire; to stand with the same calmness before the firing squad and to wash away with my own blood the stain of traitor to my country."

Assassination
0
[Signature]
The ~~final collapse~~ of the accused was only possible because the Trials themselves revealed their utter isolation from the masses. The old Bolsheviks who had refused to follow the line of "Socialism in one country", were acting on a purely // 17 theoretical conviction which increasingly failed to find any response from the ~~population~~ people. Apart from some dissatisfied groups of middle-class nationalists (mainly in the former Bukhara, the Ukraine, and White Russia) they had no following in the country. With no group of students, of Komsomols, of factory workers, of collectives (~~colleagues~~) or of other organisations or strata of the population did the conspirators have a connection. They were acting entirely on their own, and were planning a "palace revolution" or a coup de main, the ~~author~~ authorship of which they intended to conceal from the masses. The assassination of Stalin and other leaders of the government was to have been subsequently disowned by the conspirators, who wanted simply to take power without any previous declaration of a political programme of their own. This fact alone would be sufficient to prove the complete absence of any backing from the people.

So the most audacious conspiracy ever engineered by a group of revolutionaries, who refused to accept the inevitable course of events and were prepared to throw the achievements of a great revolution into the melting pot, in order to overthrow its supposedly treacherous leaders, failed; failed just in time to destroy the hopes of foreign enemies to achieve an easy victory, with the help of military treason.

This is why the U.S.S.R. has emerged from the Moscow Trials as an even greater military power than she was before.

7
Add the last sentence from Kenneth;
1 + 2 + 3

[Such was the background of the trials. Without it, they would have been both meaningless and incomprehensible. Meaningless, for the executed men had risked their lives for political convictions. ^{their self-accusations, that they started in the trial} Incomprehensible for their alleged confessions and their actual self-accusations would have been impossible without them. No wonder that the great majority of Western European observers, to whom this background was unknown, believed the confessions to have been extorted and the self-accusations to have been due to some still unexplained devilry of the GPU. Zinoviev & Kamenev seemed to have confessed, lightly and freely, everything that had been laid to their charge. However, in the subsequent trials of Radek and Pjatakov it became apparent that Zinoviev and Kamenev had only confessed what was actually proved against them, while withholding all information about the still undisclosed parts of the conspiracy. Lastly, the trial of Rykov, Bukharin, Rakovsky and the common criminal Yagoda, revealed that the military conspiracy of Tukachevsky had been shielded to the very last minute by ^{all the} ~~the~~ accused ~~in~~ the previous trials. The spontaneous and voluntary confessions were a legend - not even Radek who had withdrawn from the conspiracy, though too late, found it compatible with his honour of a revolutionary to give away any of his former comrades. It is only on the ^{complacent} assumption of the universal validity of the non too ^{heroic} ~~high~~ standards of ^{current in} public morality of middle class politics that the behaviour of the accused cannot be accounted for. ~~The moral standards of revolutionaries are different.~~ Leaders of a great revolution naturally tend to conform to ^{the highest standards of morality.} ~~the highest standards of morality.~~

The meaning and purport of the trials lay in the moral and political ~~sphere~~ ^{real} field. The ~~question~~ ^{real} at issue was whether the accused would publicly stand to their political line ^{and} i.e. whether they would assert that

~~conspirative~~ methods of professional revolutionaries ~~which~~
actual developments had justified the ~~methods which they~~ employed,
in their struggle against ~~perhaps~~ Soviet government, ~~by them~~
or, ~~if they~~ whether ~~they would~~ contend that the future would
~~then~~ though not the present,
still bear out. ~~From the moment the~~

~~They all~~ ^{In fact} they all ^{confessed} ~~acknowledged~~ themselves to
have been mistaken and refused to die as the martyrs of a ~~cause~~ they
no longer believed in. Their ~~break down~~ ^{moral (debile) collapse} was only partly due to the
unexpected success of policies which in their ~~conviction~~ ^{conviction} should have
failed. More often it was the result of the belated realisation of
their having been blindly led on to shoulder responsibilities ~~which went~~
far beyond those they had consciously accepted. ^{to the second time} Trotsky's methods were
~~exposed~~ ^{completely} by which he ~~morally~~ ^{supra} forced a reluctant staff of subaltern
leaders ~~to take~~ one fateful step after another, while the bulk of
the ~~conspirators~~ following did not ~~even~~ ^{faintly realise} ~~understand~~ ^{suspect} their leaders
were ~~engaging~~ ^{themselves} committing them to. The ~~leaders~~ ^{themselves} were con-
vinced that they were merely imitating Lenin ^{following in Lenin's footsteps}, who had not hesitated to
to make use of the help of German ~~reactionaries~~ ^{the reactionaries} against the ~~provisional~~
Socialist Revolutionaries ~~and~~ ^{and} of the ~~Provisional Government of Kerenski~~ ^{Provisional Government of Kerenski} and who had coolly
advocated the retreat from War Communism to capitalist ~~forms~~ ^{forms} in
agriculture, when the interests of the revolution ~~was~~ ^{was}
appeared to demand ~~such a sacrifice~~ ^{this}. Indeed, the
ment did not shrink from offering ~~to~~ foreign capitalists valuable
concessions in Soviet Russia, even at the expense of the ~~so~~ ^{so} ~~viability~~ ^{viability}
of the Soviet state. ^{And} Lenin had been justified by events. Everything
hinged on the ~~assumption~~ ^{assumption} that they ~~also~~ ^{too} would be justified by events.
Should this ~~not happen~~ ^{assumption prove false}, ~~the moral collapse of the conspirators was~~ ^{an inevitable} ~~inevitable~~ ^{was unavoidable}.
They would ~~have~~ ^{then} in their own judgment, ~~have~~ ^{before} to
acknowledge themselves ~~not~~ ^{to} be not revolutionaries, but counter-

against the immense population

revolutionaries and their acts of terrorism and sabotage, not the unavoidable sacrifices ~~inevitable means~~ of a revolutionary struggle but the heinous crimes ~~committed~~ committed against their ~~own~~ ^{own} most cherished ideals. Then they ~~forfeited~~ ^{would have} forfeited their lives, not only according to the laws of the Soviet state, but also ~~according to~~ ^{before} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~immoral~~ ^{immoral} judgment of their own conscience as revolutionaries. ~~Many~~ ^{Many} of them might ~~then~~ ^{then} have only one wish ~~like the~~ ^{like the} ~~known~~ ^{known} of the last plea of the ~~who said:~~ ^{who said:} "I am Shostov, who ~~concluded~~ ^{concluded} his last plea with the words: in the face of the whole working class, in the face of those oppressed by capitalism in all countries, I have to the best of my ability shattered to pieces the ~~an~~ ideology which has held me captive for 13 years. And now I have only one desire, to stand with the same calmness ~~in the~~ before the firing squad and to wash away with my own blood the stain of traitor to my country".

~~The political significance of the trials lay~~ ^{in this}. The ~~political~~ ^{moral} collapse of the accused was only possible, because the trials themselves ~~revealed~~ ^(their) ~~their~~ ^{utter} isolation from the ~~masses of the population~~ ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~old Bolsheviks~~ ^{old Bolsheviks} who had refused to follow ~~Sandans~~ ^{Sandans} line of "Socialism in one country" were acting on a purely ~~theoretical~~ ^{practical} conviction ~~in the masses of the population~~ ^{in the population} which increasingly failed to find any response in the ~~masses of the population~~ ^{population}. Apart from some dissatisfied groups of nationalists (~~in the~~ ^{mainly in} ~~former~~ ^{former}, Bukhara, ~~in~~ ^{and} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Ukraine~~ ^{Ukraine}, White Russia) ~~and~~ ^{and} they had no following ~~what so~~ ^{in the} ~~in the~~ ^{in the} country. ~~There was~~ ^{within} ~~no~~ ^{no} group of ~~students~~ ^{Students}, of Komsomols, of factory workers, of ~~collectives~~ ^{collectives} or of ~~other~~ ^{other} ~~organisations~~ ^{organisations} ~~strata of~~ ^{strata of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~population~~ ^{population} ~~had~~ ^{have a} ~~any~~ ^{connection} ~~with~~ ^{did} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~conspirators~~ ^{conspirators}. They were acting entirely on their own ~~initiative~~ ^{initiative} and were ~~aiming at~~ ^{aiming at} a palace revolution or a coup ^{planning}

de main, the authorship of which they intended to conceal from the masses. ~~THEIR MAIN PURPOSE~~ The planned assassination of Stalin and ~~other leaders of the government~~ ^{subsequently} disowned by the conspirators ~~who wanted to take power~~ ^{simply} without any previous declaration of ~~their own~~ ^{a political programme} of their own. This fact alone would be sufficient to prove the ~~complete absence of any backing in the population~~ ^{engineered} complete absence of any backing in the population, ~~THEY~~ The most audacious conspiracy ever ~~started~~ ^{engineered} by a group of revolutionaries ~~who refused to accept the inevitable course of events and were prepared to throw the achievements of a great revolution into the melting pot of a counter-revolutionary~~ ^{a supposedly treacherous} ~~of~~ ^{in order to} ~~ship which they had nourished by~~ ^{had failed just in time to destroy the hopes of powerful foreign enemies for} ~~an easy victory~~ ^{with the help of military} ~~treason.~~ ^{This is why the USSR has emerged from these series of} ~~the Trials~~ ^{Moscow} ~~as an even greater military power than she was before.~~

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By K.P.

~~THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RUSSIA~~

Section 8 Self-sufficiency

The significance of Russia is the same question as the significance of socialism. If we approach the problem from this point of view, it can easily be shown that socialism, more than ever, offers the one path to lead us out of the present labyrinth.

The actual forms of the material existence of man are those of world-wide interdependence. But for this fact the nations of the world could decide tomorrow that they would henceforth live peacefully in economic self-sufficiency as independent sovereign states. Passion and prejudice might prevent them from following this course, but, were it not for the economic factor, politically and morally it would be justifiable. The truth is, however, that the establishment of the self-sufficiency of all countries would inevitably cause such a sudden and disastrous fall in the material resources of ~~mankind~~ mankind that the population of the world would be greatly reduced: for the enforced return to primitive conditions of production would involve the starvation and death of vast masses of human beings. For this one fundamental reason the solution of the problem of war by attempting to achieve the self-sufficiency of all countries is morally unacceptable and politically impossible.

This is the answer to the position to which pacifists are logically driven. Dirtless farming may be a scientific possibility, but its introduction would involve such dislocation that humanity would be faced with immeasurable suffering for at least a generation.

It is, of course, true that if the world could be divided among several large empires, there need in the long run be no fall from the present standard of living; but as international economic co-operation would actually increase wealth, any other solution stands condemned, apart from the exploitation and war which are inseparable from rival empires.

If, as we have shown, a self-sufficiency offers no real solution, we must attempt to secure at least that measure of international economic co-operation which existed until 1914. Now this cannot be done in the traditional forms of economic co-operation, which have broken down and cannot be restored. New forms of economic co-operation will have to be created, and it is this necessity which compels us to establish new forms of political organisation on an international scale. ~~It is~~ Precisely in the imperative need for new forms of international life lies the ultimate cause of all the strain, stress, and suffering that mankind is now undergoing, and may yet have to undergo in the future.

It should not be necessary to answer the criticism that the traditional forms of international economic co-operation might be restored. The international gold standard, the international capital and unrestricted commodity markets, have passed away. The system hinged on the gold standard, the true significance of which was not sufficiently realised at the time. It has now become apparent that the closer the interdependence of the nations the greater are the sacrifices needed to keep the system working; for the working of the gold standard implies the adjusting of national to world price-levels. In the past, governments could and would do so. Now they are neither willing nor able. As long as the price-level was rising, governments might agree;

but, under the capitalist system, a permanent fall in the price-level means a slowing down of production and a drop in the consumers' wealth produced; it means mass unemployment, a falling off of production, and the consequent threat to the whole social structure. No government can deliberately bring about such a condition of affairs, for no society could maintain itself under such conditions. It is therefore impossible to restore the gold standard and the system of which it was the keystone. ~~Still less is it possible to return to laissez-faire.~~

X The only alternative is the setting up of new forms of ~~inter-~~ international economic co-operation, but during the period of transition huge economic sacrifices would have to be made by all the countries concerned. The process of adjustment would cause dislocation of the whole system, with an ~~immense~~ toll in human suffering. Under our ~~industrial-system~~ present economic system no country will voluntarily embark upon the sacrifices which would be involved. The reason is obvious. A genuine community might well resolve to make ~~heavy~~ sacrifices for the sake of a great purpose and persevere in its endeavour until its purpose was achieved; but under our industrial system society is not such a community. The property system divides society into two—those who are responsible for the actual carrying on of industrial production, and those who have no such responsibility. The workers cannot reasonably be expected to shoulder the burden of wage-cuts and unemployment, under a system in which they have no say about the carrying on of industrial production, and in which the sacrifices involved would certainly fall unequally. For this simple reason it is impossible under our present system to make the whole of the population act as a single unit where economic questions are concerned; and this is the ultimate reason why our states, as at present constituted, are unequal to the task of setting up a new system of economic co-operation.

Moral and Political Now since only true communities—communities in deed as well as in word—can generate the ~~moral~~ moral forces necessary to achieve a new system of international co-operation, it follows that in the national sphere too our present economic system will have to be replaced by a real economic commonwealth—in other words, by socialism.

In the period lying before us foreign affairs will continue to dominate over home affairs. The powers who are against international co-operation will force their imperialist wars on other countries; and they will be opposed by those powers, who, for whatever reasons, favour co-operation. But no measure of human suffering will bring us any nearer to the desired international political order except in so far as the nations themselves are transformed during the course of the wars—wars in which victories will be as costly as defeats—into socialist commonwealths.

This socialism which is the one solution of the international problem is not a peculiar kind: it is precisely the same as that socialism which consists of the communal ownership of the means of production, that socialism which alone can solve the problems of social justice and of poverty, which alone can emancipate the working-class. Of this socialism Russia is the embodiment; and it is because of this fact that she is, as we have shown in another article, the centre of the crisis of our time. The socialist working-class movement must steer its course by Russia.