15 *The Soviet State and Policies*

THE ALL-UNION COMMUNIST PARTY

The history of the Communist Party, now supremely powerful in the Soviet Union, is the history of the Bolsheviks. Its organization started in Minsk in 1898. Only nine members attended, even fewer than were at the first meeting of the Nazi party. Lenin, who was then in Siberian exile, participated for the first time at the second party congress in London in 1903. It was then that the differences of opinion on tactical questions arose, which resulted in the schism between the majority group, the Bolsheviks, and the minority group, the Mensheviks. This cleavage was never healed.

The party was then named the Social Democratic Party and survived as such until 1917. In 1918 the title was changed to Russian Communist Party of the Bolsheviks. After Russia had become the Soviet Union in 1922, the party called itself the All-Union Communist Party of the Bolsheviks. Its program has been revised several times since the victory of the revolution; the last revision took place in 1939, being an amended version of the Party Constitution of 1934. The best possible definition of the party can be found in its preamble:

> The All-Union Communist Party of the Bolsheviks, being a section of the Communist International, is the organized vanguard of the working class of the U.S.S.R., the highest form of class organization. The Party is guided in its work by Marxist-Leninist theory. The Party leads the working class, the peasantry, the intellectuals, that is all the Soviet people, in the struggle for the strengthening of the dictatorship of the working class, for the strengthening and development of the socialist order, for the victory of communism. The Party is the leading nucleus of all organizations of toilers, both social and State, and ensures the successful construction of communist society.

The position of the party in Soviet life is unique. It has seized control of the state; the state is its organ but is destined to cease existing as soon as the ultimate goal of the proletarian dictatorship, the classless society, has been reached. Until that time, the state

remains the executive organ of the party and is completely subject to the party's will. Strangely, the party had no official standing in its own state until, in 1936, the new "Stalin Constitution" legalized it in Article 126; it is further mentioned in Article 141 as one of the agencies permitted to nominate candidates for elections.

The party is organized in the form of a pyramid. The so-called communist cells, formed by every group of occupational, semi-occupational, or military character, are the prime agencies of communist propaganda and political agitation. They are largely responsible for the maintenance of the revolutionary proletarian spirit in the country. The cells form the base of the party pyramid which extends from the villages, towns, and countries to districts, regions, territories, and provinces. Each of these geographical units has its own congress which sends delegates to the highest organization, the All-Union Congress of the party.

This congress rules, in theory, and issues the directives of the party, the "Party Line." In practice, however, it is not the cumbersome congress but the Central Committee which wields the real power. Consisting of about seventy members, the Committee's most important function is the election of the general secretary of the party (Stalin has been reelected ever since he first became secretary in 1922) and the Political Bureau (*Politbureau*). The influence of the general secretary depends on his personality, just as it does in any similar organization of totalitarian or semitotalitarian character. Stalin gained his power through the skill with which he made his post influential; another man might have remained insignificant. One of the most powerful bodies of the Soviet bureaucracy is the *Politbureau*. It consists of a dozen or less persons and acts under the chairmanship of the party's general secretary. It is responsible for the directives which the party will be required to follow; it also decides upon party purges which have taken place several times since 1921. In some instances, the purges have lasted for a protracted period. This happened after the murder of Kirov in 1934 and again between 1936 and 1938 when the purges which accompanied the famous Moscow trials assumed such proportions that the whole domestic organization of the Soviet Union seemed upset. However, it is quite possible that the liquidation of high military and political officers strengthened Russia's security through

the elimination of a potential Fifth Column. Moreover, the reorganization of the party and the amending of the party constitution in 1939 were designed to pacify the restlessness of all who had experienced the terror of living under the ever-present threat of the GPU, the secret police.

Party membership is sharply restricted and candidates are thoroughly investigated before admission is granted.[1] Only the *Komsomols*, members of the Young Communists, who are looked upon as natural party candidates, are directly eligible to the party. Their records are an open book from earliest childhood, and their family affiliations are known. The *Komsomols* are at the same time the vanguard and the reserve troops of communism and, since the time of the revolutionary war, have proved to be the bulwark of the party. Candidates who do not belong to the *Komsomols* must have the recommendation of at least three party members of long standing and must pass through a probation period with flying colors. According to statistics of March 1, 1939, the Communist party numbered 1,588,900 members and 888,800 candidates for membership.[2]

The party, whose administration became increasingly centralized in the late thirties, is subject to the strictest discipline. Its moral requirements border on prudery. Executive officers must have been members for years before being eligible for higher rank in the party bureaucracy. Even the secretaryship of the "cells" requires at least one year's successful service. The personal conduct of party members must be faultless and of a higher standard than is expected of the average citizen. After all, the party is the country's élite; numerically, it constituted less than 1 per cent of the whole population before 1940.

The party and its policy (the Party Line) are supported mainly by the organizations of workers for whom the Soviet state and party exercise their trusteeship, the labor unions and the cooperatives.

[1] Only during the war, the admission to membership of the party was liberalized, especially for soldiers to whom membership was granted as a reward for their courageous fighting.

[2] James T. Shotwell and others, *Governments of Continental Europe*, "Soviet Russia," M. T. Florinsky, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1942, p. 833.

UNIONS AND COOPERATIVES

Obviously, the character of labor unions is bound to be different in the Soviet Union from what it is in capitalist countries. In the latter, unions are predominantly fighting organizations, defending members' rights against powerful employers. Unions outside of Russia are founded on the need to check arbitrary actions of the economically stronger management and for the protection of the workers who are powerless as individuals and can only defend themselves through collective action.

In the U.S.S.R., the unions are supposed to voice the workers' political will (actually, this is purely theoretical because this will is dictated by the *Politbureau*). They act as agencies for collective bargaining with the government, for supervising administrative practices of management, and for cultural activities of educational character. Of these three main duties, collective bargaining, which is most important in the West, is least important in the Soviet Union. The party's complete control of economic planning and budgeting automatically imposes upon the workers the necessity of accepting wages proposed by the government through its appointed managers. Rarely does a dispute go to the higher officials for decision. Problems of working conditions, on the other hand, belong to the direct responsibilities of the management which may be criticized by the workers for its production policies. The interesting educational activities of the workers' unions and clubs will be discussed later.

Officially, union membership is voluntary but the disadvantages of not belonging to one of the unions are so considerable that practically everyone applies for membership. Before the war, there existed more than 150 large labor unions in the Soviet Union with an approximate membership of 22 million. Local committees are coordinated with the committees of the regions, districts, and republics. The chief organization is the All-Union Central Congress of Trade Unions which leads the nation-wide system of unions through its elected All-Union Council of Trade unions.

According to reports of this highest organ representing Soviet labor for the years 1937, 1938, and 1939, the participation of work-

ers lacks vigor and interest.[1] Since the incentive of trade unions in capitalist countries is missing the workers apparently do not feel the need of collaborating to the desired extent. Basically, Soviet labor unions are merely agencies set up for the purpose of education in collectivism and socialistic discipline. This is one reason why Western trade unions have been reluctant to admit Soviet trade unions into the international labor organization. In this connection, it should be mentioned that delegates of Soviet labor unions were elected by secret ballot even before the Constitution of 1936 initiated an electoral reform.

The cooperatives are also typical of the way in which collectivization and common action are practiced in the Soviet Union. They constitute one of the most popular and most valuable forms of common enterprise and practical education for socialistic living. Retail trade is handled almost exclusively by cooperatives. In agriculture, the operation of cooperatives has been very successful. It may be noted that the rural and urban cooperatives are the only organizations allowed to own "private" property except, of course, the collective farms. The small village stores, operating on the cooperative basis, surpass in numbers the other types of cooperative organization, for example, department stores in larger cities whose members are mostly their shareholders. Business policies are devised by a management which has to face the criticism of its members at regular meetings.

The administration of cooperatives is organized in a fashion similar to that of the labor unions. The small local cooperatives are united through representation in the *rayons* (national districts). The district organizations are coordinated with the city cooperatives of the *oblast* (Union republic) and those of the R.S.F.S.R. (Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic). They are headed by the Central Board of the Central Union of the U.S.S.R. and the R.S.F.S.R. At the head of this organization the All-Union Congress of Consumers Cooperatives rules supreme.

The cooperatives, like the labor unions, are engaged in educational work. Their very activity constitutes an informal education of the consumer. For specialists there exists a Cooperative Academy

[1] Shotwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 896–897.

at Moscow and a Cooperative Institute at Leningrad, both holding the rank of universities.

Soviet cooperatives, like Soviet labor unions, serve the double purpose of supplying their members with commodities and instilling in them a sense of responsibility toward the community. They have a definite place in the economic as well as in the civic organization. They teach the masses the way of cooperative living as a socialist principle. They make it clear that no one who remains outside the social life of the community can expect to be granted the privileges of a collective to whose benefit he did not contribute. He cannot remain an individualist because the good of the collective is more important than his own personal interest. However, he may retain his individuality if he is able to subordinate his interests to those of the community which, in turn, will then secure as many advantages for him as conditions permit.

The Soviets hold that only by living and thinking in terms of the collective may modern man understand the character and function of his society. Therefore the Soviet government is vitally interested in the work of its labor unions and cooperatives and looks upon them as the backbone of Soviet society.

THE STATE AND ITS ADMINISTRATION

Lenin used to say that the structure of the Soviet state was so simple that any housewife could not help doing efficient administrative work. Until 1936, the Soviets, or councils, of the various geographical and administrative units, elected by open ballot, were the legal representatives of the people. The higher representatives were chosen by the lower ones, making the organization of the Soviet state appear like a pyramid, based on the village Soviet and rising through district and regional Soviets, autonomous territories, and Soviet republics to the Supreme Soviet, the highest body of the Union.

The guiding principle of this system was first, to make participation of the people in government as wide as possible, thereby teaching them a practical lesson in civics. Second, this type of indirect elections made it easier to exercise closer control over the representative organs of the state. Lenin's disciples used to call this system

a "democratic centralism." Indeed, formally, the Soviet state appears to be democratic. The federal union between the Soviet republics, autonomous republics, and national regions might in some respects be compared with the federation of the United States. It went farther in that it recognized and actually fostered indigenous cultures and languages for the many nationalities of the Soviet Union. In czarist times, one may remember, national cultures were suppressed in favor of Russian cultural predominance.

The political independence of these republics and regions, however, was necessarily restricted. All the parts of the Soviet Union remained politically, ideologically, and economically under the control of the Moscow central party organization. They were united in the Marxist-Leninist ideology. They were encouraged to retain and cultivate their national traits, but since it is impossible to separate political doctrines from cultural organization—and the Soviet would be the last to suggest such a cleavage—even vastly different cultures tended to become coordinated through the dominance in all of them of Marxist-Leninist theories and practices.

This federal unitarianism gave the executive powers so broad that the principle of federation remained politically theoretical until the Constitution of 1936 introduced important changes. The position of the R.S.F.S.R., the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republics, remained dominant in political and economic influence; its center, Moscow, being the seat of the central government as well as of the party, determined the character of the Soviet system's development throughout the whole union. It must, on the other hand, be admitted that the Soviet federation, while accepting political and economic orders from Moscow, solved the minority problem for the Soviet state. Equality was established among the many nationalities and races living within the union, and discrimination such as anti-Semitism was liable to severe punishment. Equality between the sexes was also established, as well as between town and country and between manual and intellectual work. But there was no possibility of deviating from the ruling ideology.

The new constitution, promulgated in 1936, has further simplified the Soviet state and no doubt contributed, in theory, to its democratization. To be sure, it has by no means discarded the basic Soviet ideology, nor has it abolished the one-party system. The fact

that group discussion was allowed and encouraged does not alter this fundamental principle. The most striking example of "popular cooperation" is the Stalin Constitution of 1936 which was submitted to all Soviet peoples and discussed for months before it came to the All-Union Congress of Soviets for acceptance. Yet of 154,000 suggestions for amendments, only 43 were accepted, and these were of minor significance.[1]

In itself, the constitution is a remarkable document of progressive social and political conception. Unfortunately, many of its most important provisions remained in the realm of theory. The Soviet government felt free to disregard any of the provisions without asking the Supreme Soviet's permission if it believed that conditions required such violation.[2]

Some of the articles of the constitution bring out a marked contrast between the doctrine of the proletarian dictatorship and the democratic form of government. The constitution, while paving the way for the time of ideal communist living, is clearly designed for the socialist transition period. Therefore, it cannot be regarded as more than temporary, fitted to socialism rather than to communism.[3]

The constitution changed the electoral system and introduced a direct, universal, equal, and secret ballot. It ended the disfranchisement of certain groups of citizens who had no proletarian background and were not permitted to take part in former elections. The cumbersome All-Union Congress, the Soviet parliament, whose function had been the election of the Central Executive Committee, was abolished. Instead, a Supreme Soviet, to be elected directly by all citizens, was established. It consists of two houses: the Soviet of the Union, elected on the basis of one deputy for every 300,000 of the population (Art. 34); and the Soviet of Nationalities, elected on the basis of twenty-five deputies from each constituent republic, eleven deputies from each autonomous republic, five deputies from each autonomous region and one deputy from each national area (Art. 35). Since the constitution envisaged a reform of the Soviet judiciary, a new "Law on the Judiciary of the

[1] Shotwell, *op. cit.*, p. 840.
[2] See below, pp. 314–316.
[3] See above, pp. 263–264.

U.S.S.R., the Constituent Republics and the Autonomous Republics" was written and approved by the Supreme Soviet as late as 1938. The Supreme Soviet elects the Attorney General, the highest law officer of the Soviet Union, and the Supreme Court.

Secret balloting was substituted for the former open election but it should be understood that there is no choice between several political parties as in the Western democracies. The people indicate their preference for leading personalities, but do not decide between political trends. Candidates are nominated by the Communist party but also by trade unions, cooperatives, young people's associations, and cultural organizations. While thus a democratic form of government and election gave the people the illusion of what was called "Soviet democracy," the dictatorship of the proletariat did not cease to exercise its power.

However, there exists also what one might call a "Soviet Bill of Rights." In Articles 118–133 of the constitution, basic rights for Soviet citizens are set forth: the right to work and rest; the right of equal educational opportunities; the right of free speech, free press, free assembly and meetings, as well as of street processions and demonstrations (Art. 124). But—through the Communist party, these rights are to be supervised "in the interest of the working people," a restriction which makes the bill largely theoretical. The constitution can therefore not be regarded as a safeguard for democracy. At best, it is a codification of Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist principles applied to the Soviet system, a juridical definition of Soviet government and administration, and an outline of a unitarian socialist society in which deviations from established laws cannot be tolerated and in which the distribution of rights and duties defines the proper place of human beings who may be punished if they do not conform. Stalin himself was quite frank in admitting that "the draft of the new Constitution actually leaves in force the regime of the dictatorship of the working class as well as it preserves unchanged the present leading position of the Communist party." [1]

This seeming contradiction between form and content, between

[1] Stalin in an address to the eighth congress of the Soviets on November 25, 1936, as quoted in Shotwell, *op. cit.*, p. 854. It was this congress which adopted the constitution.

content and interpretation, and between totalitarian and democratic elements may be responsible for the misunderstanding of Soviet attitudes in the Western world. In the democracies, particularly, it is pointed out that elements of constitutionality, parliamentarism, federalism, fairness to the minorities, and humanitarian aims seem to be contradicted by a one-party system operating under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Marxist doctrine, and the authoritarian law enforcement by the party. But since the Soviet system does not shun the use of unpleasant, if temporary, means to achieve a desirable end, conventional interpretations have been frankly discarded.

Thus the party, as executor of the Marxist ideology, imposes its will upon the government and does not tolerate any interference or opposition by any group or individual. Its general secretary and the men of the *Politbureau* wield absolute dictatorial power. They are theoretically responsible to the Supreme Soviet, but the delegates have never protested against their party leaders' decisions. Stalin and his associates have determined the Party Line according to prevailing conditions and their directives have become law. They have administered the proletariat's "will" as they have seen fit. They have created a new interpretation of Marxism which, in certain details, differs considerably from the original concepts of Marx and Engels, and even of Lenin. They justify their practices with their ultimate purpose, namely, to enforce a socialist discipline so that the people may become ready for the difficult task of living in a classless society. They regard themselves as the trustees of the people's will and are determined to carry out to the fullest extent their interpretation of this will. To reach the goal of happiness, they take the road of compulsion.

SOVIET ECONOMY: PLANNING

The goal of Soviet Marxism is the moneyless classless society. Only as long as the transitional state of socialism exists is money needed. In the Soviet Union this money has a different character from currency used in capitalist countries, because it is used for internal service alone. Only the government handles foreign currencies; the domestic rouble cannot be converted into foreign currency. The official course of the rouble given to foreigners who

traveled in Russia before the war was entirely arbitrary, because it was computed on the gold basis while paper roubles with much less buying power were issued for domestic use.

The evolution of Soviet money and economy from the days of the revolution to those of complete socialization and long-term planning passed through various stages. Right after the victory of the Revolution in 1917, a program of socialization was introduced. At that time, the country went through a period of chaos and complete economic collapse which was the consequence of the First World War as much as of the Revolution. The Soviet government believed that state-controlled planning was the only way out of this economic breakdown. It began to work on this planning as early as 1919. Meanwhile, the period of so-called War Communism introduced the most severe economic centralization and control.

This method did not work. In 1921, Lenin was compelled to relax governmental pressure by introducing the NEP, New Economic Policy. The enemies of communism thought they had triumphed and many followers of the revolution feared the worst. The reintroduction of a limited amount of private enterprise and independent "capitalistic" trading was looked upon by many as proof that socialism would not work. The relative freedom of peasants, merchants, and artisans to do business, in a small way, without governmental interference seemed to indicate the end of Marxism in Russia. But nothing was further from the truth. All Lenin wanted was to secure a breathing spell for the new Soviet state. In 1926, the NEP was already severely curtailed. In 1928, the first Five-Year Plan was introduced and made it impossible for anyone to continue private trading. Shortly afterwards, the peasants were forced to give up their economic independence. At the beginning of the thirties industry, commerce, and agriculture were safely in the hands of the government which from then on regulated production.

The Soviets "hold that money should not be a commodity in itself. . . . It cannot be employed for the accumulation of capital by an individual." [1] This does not mean that an individual cannot

[1] L. E. Hubbard, *Soviet Money and Finance*, Macmillan & Company, Ltd., London, 1936, p. 125.

amass a considerable sum of money but that he cannot use this money as "capital"; in other words, he cannot invest it into "reproductive" capital. In addition, buying power is curbed through the limitation of products. Complete economic planning cannot be reconciled with the unrestricted use of money. The value of money in the Soviet Union is thus rather theoretical. Fullest use of it can be made in retail trade. Apart from that, it serves as an instrument of accounting rather than as a means of exchange.

Soviet economy seems to show a number of characteristics which one may superficially compare with aspects of capitalist economy. Wrong interpretations of attempts by Soviet economists to adapt Marxism to changed world conditions have contributed much to the wishful thinking of capitalist economists who hoped for a reversal of Soviet socialism.[1] However, there is no basis for any such assumption. As an example, the problem of savings may be enlightening.

The state itself puts money away by taxation and "contribution," by compulsory limitation of consumers' goods, and through the private savings of individuals who earn more roubles than they can spend. Naturally, the use of the savings is determined by the party government; citizens have no influence on the financial policies of their government. "Private" savings are encouraged by the state, not in the form of open accounts but in the form of government bonds. Before the war, these bonds paid as much as 8 per cent interest or could be paid back by the state in a lump sum with a premium. Since the outbreak of the Russo-German war, war bonds have taken the place of the peacetime bonds.

Why should people save money in the Soviet Union? They do not need money for their old age because security is guaranteed to them until they die. They do not need to save for vacations because they are entitled to a free annual rest in the country with pay. Those who are in a position to save—not too many Soviet

[1] In its Spring issue of 1944, the New York magazine *Science and Society* published an article by L. A. Leontiev and others on the "Political Economy in the U.S.S.R.," a translation from *Pod Znamenem Marxizma*, No. 7–8, Moscow, 1943, in which advice was offered for a better and more modern interpretation of Marxian principles. The article was interpreted in some American newspapers as a reversal toward state capitalism and created a good deal of confusion.

Such an interpretation is absolutely unjustified. Marxist doctrines may have been modified to suit new conditions but they remain the foundation of the Soviet state.

citizens are—may perhaps here and there be able to buy a few "luxuries" (if such are available); they may rent a lot and build a *datcha*, a little summer house. But the incentive to save for purposes such as exist in capitalist countries is lacking. The incentive is what one may call "social pressure"; it has become, during the war, a patriotic must.

Most wage earners are expected to subscribe to government loans in order to keep prices at the desired level. To this extent, the loans have actually the effect of price stabilization. During the war, loans helped to finance armaments and, when peace has returned, will no doubt help to pay for the country's reconstruction. This may seem rather orthodox economic practice for a socialist state; but the significance of money and savings is altogether different from what it is in nonsocialist countries.

Planning in the broadest and deepest sense of this word is the foundation of Soviet economy. It is more: it is an instrument for the realization of the political and social doctrines of Stalinism; it is an agency of public education without equal. The prerequisites for planning are: first, complete socialization of all means of production, industrial and agricultural, by the state; second, centralization under a unified leadership. Article 11 of the constitution expressly states these as basic principles.

The five-year planning system went into effect on October 1, 1928. Its executive organ was *Gosplan*, a vast department headed by about seventy members appointed by the Council of People's Commissars. Essentially, *Gosplan* is responsible for the preparation of the plans, the coordination of information and details, and the control over the execution of the accepted plan in its various parts. *Gosplan* is assisted by various agencies of territorial and functional character. The directives of the plan, its fundamental principles, and the implications of its goal are set forth by the Communist party. When the plan has been outlined completely, its duplications ironed out, and the host of suggestions from all the industrial and collective-farm "trusts" worked into its draft, when all the "counterplans" urging more production have been embodied, then the finished product is returned to the party for final approval. The first of the plans (1928–1932) aimed at the complete industrialization of the country; the second (1932–1938) at the elimination

of the "exploitation of man by man"; the third Five-Year Plan, interrupted by the war, was dedicated to the transformation of society into a classless state on the basis of complete socialization of industry and collectivization of farming.[1]

Since Soviet statistics are not always reliable, it is very hard to know just how far the plans succeeded in accomplishing their aims. An objective survey of the two completed periods shows both positive and negative results. Without doubt, the goal of the first Five-Year Plan, the industrialization of the country, has been essentially accomplished. Furthermore, agricultural collectivization and the establishment of farm cooperatives have achieved a great increase in farm production. In addition, planning played an important educative role by enforcing a new kind of communal living which was necessary for the successful carrying out of the plans.

On the other hand, while general production increased as much as 400 per cent between the beginning of the first and the end of the second Five-Year Plans, the quality of production was not high and the market remained short of consumers' goods. The question of how efficient the workers were cannot be answered easily. Considering the quantity and the lack of quality of Soviet production, it would be misleading to make comparisons with the highly developed industrial capacity and quality of capitalistic Western countries. The Soviet toilers, on the average, have shown great enthusiasm for fulfilling the requirements of the plans. But it must not be forgotten that an industrial country needs a tradition of industrial skill. Russia had been a backward agricultural country; her prewar industries were few and little developed. The Soviet government found itself confronted with the immediate need for industrial skill; it could not wait for its gradual development. So it invented the phrase "socialist competition" and encouraged the *Stakhanov* movement, named after Alexei Stakhanov, the miner, who was one of the first Soviet workers to increase his output manyfold simply by intelligently organizing his work. The introduction of payment for piece work, too, did much to increase output. The title "hero of labor" was created, granting the receiver honor and money as well as certain privileges.

[1] Cf. V. M. Molotov, *Preliminary Report on the Third Five-Year Plan*, cited by M. T. Florinsky in Shotwell, *op. cit.*, p. 867.

If there has been a lag in scheduled production, it has, in most cases, been not so much the fault of the workers as of the management. In fact, the tremendous and still-growing bureaucracy extending from the Supreme Economic Council down to the individual "trusts" or "syndicates" has hampered efficient management repeatedly and remains one of the basic problems of soviet economy. Managers are state employees; although they are responsible for the execution of their allotted tasks in the fulfillment of the Five-Year Plans, the lack of competitive pressure and the fear of being held to account for anything that goes wrong have hampered the exercise of enterprising spirit and individual initiative in many instances.

Nevertheless, the curve of Soviet production and the standard of Soviet living went up until the time when the growing international crisis made it necessary for the government to curtail production of peacetime commodities in favor of armaments. However, it would be unfair to conclude that the socialist scheme of centralized planning did not succeed. The Soviets themselves fully realized that it was far from accomplished and that they had much to learn and to change before achieving their goal. The amazing capacity of war production certainly proves that the experience of Soviet planning may furnish some useful lessons for the future when planning on an international scale may well determine the character of domestic planning. It also proves that people can be educated not to regard money as the sole incentive for production.

SOVIET FOREIGN RELATIONS

Soviet foreign policy has been rather puzzling at times. But if it is the main task of a foreign policy to pursue consistent ends, the "mystery" of Soviet foreign policy can easily be solved.

War and peace have different connotations in capitalist countries and in the Marxist Soviet Union. So have concepts like pacifism. The Soviet government has consistently pointed out that its policy has always been characterized by a strong desire for peace. The sincerity of such statements is obvious because the country needed peace for its reconstruction. However, this does not mean that it renounced war unqualifiedly as an instrument of policy. But the question remains: what kind of war? Lenin answered: "We

Marxists do not belong to the absolute opponents of any kind of war. . . ." It was clear to him that the Soviet Union was bound to meet opposition from the outside against the establishment of a socialist community. Such a conflict would be a "revolutionary" war, "resulting from class struggle . . . waged by the revolutionary classes" and having a "direct bearing upon revolutions. . . ." [1] "Socialists cannot be opposed to types of war without ceasing to be socialists. We are struggling against the very root of wars —capitalism. But inasmuch as capitalism has not as yet been exterminated, we are struggling not against wars in general, but against reactionary wars. . . ." [2]

In other words, the Soviets are not opposed to war on principle but only to imperialist wars which, in their view, are a result of the capitalist system. In the Marxian interpretation, such imperialist wars are but a phase in the class struggle, one more step in the deterioration of the nonsocialist state. As long as the communist classless society has not been established, wars cannot be prevented. Wars may be classified, according to Stalin, into just and unjust wars. Unjust wars are those conducted for purposes of imperialistic conquest or to suppress nations attempting to destroy conditions which their imperialistic and nationalistic tyrants want to perpetuate. Just wars are those fought for the protection of suppressed nations or for deliverance from the capitalist yoke.[3] (One should add that a basically ideological conflict such as the Second World War was originally termed by Marxists an "imperialist" war and became "just" only after the Germans attacked Russia.)

The Soviet people are, of course, opposed to imperialistic wars; the Party Line has always maintained this position. However, this does not mean that Marxists believe in pacifism. Pacifism is "cheating of the masses," and if necessary "communists must take part in any reactionary war." [4] Proletarians will go to battle as expediency may dictate, if they are in danger of becoming the victims of imperialist aggression.

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Sochineniia* (Works), 3d ed., Moscow, 1935, Vol. XXX, pp. 332–333.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, p. 453
[3] T. A. Taracouzio, *War and Peace in Soviet Diplomacy*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1940, p. 25
[4] Lenin, *op. cit.*, Vol. XX, pt. II, p. 530; see also Taracouzio, *op. cit.*, pp. 32–33.

Such belligerent spirit was evident in the first years of the young Soviet republic under Lenin and Trotzky. Both men believed in war as an instrument for the achievement of socialism in the world. Their hope for world revolution by armed force was very much alive at the time of the wars with Poland and the Baltic states between 1917 and 1921. Only during the last years of his life, Lenin, the realist, saw that world revolution could not be brought about in the near future and that great caution had to be used pending the proper time for action. Trotzky was less realistic. His insistence on permanent revolutionary war cost him his position in the Soviet Union.

His elimination from the political scene in Russia soon after Lenin's death left Stalin in control of foreign policy. Believing in the necessity of peace at home and abroad, Stalin succeeded in silencing the belligerency of the "leftists." He did not hesitate to appease the capitalist powers by curbing the activities of the Third International. He kept the Soviet Union at peace until November, 1939, the beginning of the Finnish war. He permitted Maxim Litvinov, the Soviet Union's shrewdest foreign commissar, to crusade for collective security until the attitude of the British and French at Munich convinced him of the futility of any attempts to preserve peace through collective action.

Historically, the Soviet search for peace is documented in the records of some of the most important conferences and sealed in some of the most important treaties concluded between 1922 and the outbreak of the Second World War. At the first international conference at which the Soviets participated after the victory of their revolution, in Genoa, 1922, they moved for complete international disarmament, a proposal which was turned down. The Treaty of Rapallo with Germany was the consequences and initiated a series of individual agreements which were to replace collective pacts. Stalin suggested in 1925 that "Soviet relations with the capitalist countries were based on the acceptance of the co-existence of two opposing systems." [1]

The Briand-Kellogg Pact (Paris, 1928) and the Litvinov Protocol (Moscow, 1929) which was intended to make the Paris pact for the "renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy" work-

[1] Taracouzio, *op. cit.*, pp. 111–112.

able, are other indications of Soviet intentions to remain at peace. A few years later, on the occasion of the London Economic Conference of 1933, Litvinov initiated a new agreement defining aggression. This agreement was signed mainly by central and eastern European nations, and testifies to the determination of the Soviets to convince their European neighbors of their peaceful intentions.

The accession of Hitler to power in 1933 introduced a new factor in the situation. Not only were the National Socialists violently opposed to Marxism and Bolshevism as the sources of all the world's ills, but they also espoused General Haushofer's geopolitical theories according to which the control of the *Heartland* (viz. Russia and Siberia) was necessary for any power that wanted to dominate Europe and Asia.[1] Britain did not at first react to the potential danger of Hitlerite Germany but France was frightened and sought a rapprochement with the Soviet Union. This was made easier by the fact that the latter changed its views on the vital (to the French) issue of revisionism. As Radek expressed it

> The way to revision of the predatory Versailles peace leads through a new world war. Discussion of revision is the smoke-screen behind which Imperialism prepares the most terrible and ruthless war that the human brain can conceive.[2]

The result was the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact in May, 1935, between France and the Soviet Union, after the French proposal of an "Eastern Locarno" had failed of acceptance. A similar pact between the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia, contingent on the French treaty, was concluded two weeks later. In the meantime, Russia had been admitted to membership in the League of Nations in September, 1934.

Subsequent developments gradually pressed Britain closer to France; on the other hand, the Berlin-Rome Axis was formed in November, 1936, opposing the Paris-Moscow "front." The Spanish Civil War caused a further deterioration of international relations. The Soviet Union became unofficially yet actively involved in a type of war which, to the Marxian way of thinking, was permissible.

[1] See above, pp. 77 ff.

[2] Karl Radek in *Izvestia*, May, 1933, quoted in G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, *A Short History of International Affairs, 1920–1938*, Oxford University Press, London, 1938, p. 372.

The catastrophe of Munich dealt the final blow to the system of collective security which had been shipwrecked by Nazi aggressiveness and democratic lack of resolution. A few months later, Litvinov left the commissariat of foreign affairs. The Soviet Union, feeling deceived and hurt in its national pride, became more distrustful than ever and abstained from cooperating with the Western European democracies which had participated in the episode of Munich. Fearing that a Nazi Germany which had denounced the Bolshevist state in unprintable terms at the *Parteitag* of 1936 would not forever remain content with verbal abuse, Stalin bought himself time by concluding an economic treaty with Hitler in August, 1939.

The rapid and unopposed successes of Nazism in southeastern Europe, the increasingly close connection between Japan and the Axis, combined with a fear that the Western powers might come to terms with Germany at Russia's expense, account for this unexpected step. "On August 23, 1939, the communist policy of peace entered its fourth phase: attack" [1] The Russo-German treaty was in fact the signal that put an end to the era of peace.

The world was shocked when, on September 28, 1939, the German and Russian armies met in central Poland, agreed upon a frontier, and shared the "booty." The shock changed to anger when the Red Army occupied the Baltic States, and grew into outright hostility when the Soviets attacked Finland.

Whether the Soviets thought to have purchased immunity or whether they believed that a reckoning with Germany would inevitably come,[2] it is impossible to tell. At any rate, no less distrustful of Germany than of the Western powers, they sought to match the strategic advantages gained by the Nazis in Poland. There is no cause to believe that the Soviets contemplated launching an aggression for the cause of world revolution at this time. If for no other reasons, the dangerous uncertainty of the world situation would have made it an ill-chosen moment to embark on such a crusade. In addition, the Soviet Union had to bear in mind the danger of an aggressive Japan. Japan was deeply involved in China at this time, but the lack of physical means combined with internal

[1] Taracouzio, *op cit.*, p. 238

[2] See A L. Strong, *The Soviets Expected It*, Dial Press, Inc., New York, 1942.

dissension hampered, for all its bravery, the effectiveness of Chinese resistance.

In 1938, after the Munich Agreement, the Soviets stood before the debris of their quest for collective security. Thus the Soviet actions against Poland, the Baltic States, and Finland may be interpreted as essentially preventive. The Soviet Union's desire for peace was strictly in line with Stalin's domestic policy of consolidation. Soviet proposals for disarmament and a system of international security against aggression were sincere because they were based upon the Stalinist conception that a long period of peace was necessary for Soviet socialism to become securely established.

The mature Stalinism of the Second World War stressed its belief in evolution. In accordance with this policy, the first major step was the abolition of the *Comintern*, the Communist International, on June 9, 1943. This organization convoked its first Congress in Moscow, in 1919, as the "general staff of the world revolution" and consisted of representatives of the Communist parties in many lands. However, a great many difficulties of a technical and political nature gradually decreased the Comintern's importance until, after 1935, it dwindled into virtual insignificance.

Stalin's policy of consolidation could not make much use of the Comintern which was working to undo the efforts of the Foreign Commissariat toward improving relations between the U.S.S.R. and the outside world. In addition, domestic consolidation led logically to a new nationalism in the development of which the Comintern had no place. Obviously, patriotism for the "Socialist Fatherland" excluded internationalism and therefore world revolution. Abolition of the Comintern was a master stroke of Soviet foreign policy. It served to discredit German propaganda against the Bolshevik bogey and to reassure the nations allied with Russia that, for the time being, the Soviets had no intention of interfering in the domestic affairs of other countries.

Another, even more important event in the development of Soviet foreign policy, was the passing of a constitutional amendment, reported by Foreign Commissar Vyacheslav M. Molotov on February 1, 1944 to the Supreme Soviet, according to which the Union Commissariats for Foreign Affairs and for Defense were to be transformed from Union Commissariats into Union Republic

Commissariats. This meant that the Soviet Union Republics (sixteen of them since 1940) were to have control of their own foreign policy and their own military organization.

The significance of this amendment, both for the period of the war and after, is far-reaching. First of all, this development is indeed the logical outcome of Soviet policies on federation and nationality ("minority") problems. As such, it implies a recognition of the sacrifices contributed by all the 180 nationalities, races, and tribes throughout the Union which have reached their political maturity as members of the union of Soviet republics.

More important for world politics is the creation of a system of federated states, each controlling its own defense system and its foreign policy without losing the advantages of participation in the federal economy, guaranteeing them an adequate economic existence. Being members of the union, they are, of course, adherents of the Soviet-Marxist ideology which through the Communist party still rules them from Moscow. But in a world full of economic insecurity, it will not be too difficult for the people to follow this central ideology, particularly since they may retain their indigenous culture, their own defense system, and their own ideas about relations with neighboring states.

There can be no doubt that this amendment opens the way for nations not now belonging to the Soviet Union to join it. It is a further step toward a peaceful penetration of Soviet influence toward southeastern and central Europe or, at least, a bid on the part of the Soviets to join their fortunes which, after the victory over Hitler, will be bright and promising.

Soviet relations with the Western democracies have, on the whole, greatly improved during the Allied comradeship in arms. From the Soviet acceptance of the Atlantic Charter through the conferences of Moscow, Teheran and Dumbarton Oaks to the Yalta agreement, the Soviet government has indicated its readiness to continue cooperation after the end of the Second World War. Peace being imperative for the reconstruction of the war-ravaged Soviet Union, there can be no doubt that the maintenance of peace is a vital Soviet interest. The Kremlin will do all in its power to secure peace for as long a time as possible.

However, emerging as one of the world's largest and mightiest

powers, the Soviet Union will not necessarily orient its policies along the same lines as the Western powers. The Soviet rulers are basically self-centered; their policy is first of all Russian. They are realistic and unconventional. They want security. Not satisfied with promises or treaties, they want strategic guarantees so as to protect themselves against future aggression. They are intent on preventing the Western powers from forming "*cordons sanitaires*" against themselves; rather do they wish to forge federations of states "friendly" to the Soviet Union particularly in Central and Southeastern Europe.

Coming out of her isolation and taking part in the attempt of the United Nations to create a peaceful and prosperous postwar world, the Soviet Union will yet continue to play a lone hand if it feels that it would be to its advantage.