

RUSSIA

THE RUSSIAN STATE PARTY

NEWSLETTER ON CONTEMPORARY COMMUNISM

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THE NEW PURGE AND THE MOLOTOV OFFENSIVE

(1) Democratic Glamor and Terrorist Reality

When the first post-war five-year plan was submitted by N. A. Voznesensky, Chairman of the State Planning Commission, to the plenum, the delegates listened to reports of the wartime achievements of individual republics, provinces, and towns. They had to decide on the financial allocations, and sometimes there were minor changes submitted from the floor. Finally the two chambers unanimously approved the government bill.

Behind this curtain of unanimity the party crisis unfolded. Stalin, after his withdrawal into the Caucasus during September-December, 1945, stood again in the limelight. He announced the five-year plan and carried out the aggressive line of the Politburo. But a few months after this demonstration of compromise, in June, 1946, the dismissal and punishment of factory directors, engineers, and accountants was announced. The Minister of State Control had discovered that industrial production figures had been faked, bonuses had been distributed illegally, factory funds had been misappropriated. Even the newly-installed Minister of Agricultural Machinery, B. L. Vannikov, was relieved of his ministerial duties and transferred to another, unspecified post; his department had been involved in widespread plan-figure faking and misappropriation of funds. Two of his subordinates were held for trial. Vannikov, an old party member, Commissar for Munitions during the war, has been made the first scapegoat of the party in the reconstruction crisis.

"Falsification of production figures" means, in Soviet parlance, that reconstruction is lagging behind the expected schedule. The accusations went in all directions; firms involved included the Russian Diesel Plant in Leningrad, the Tulsa Coal Company near Moscow, and the Dniepropetrovsk metallurgical and engineering plant in the Don Basin. The selection of these key points of Russian industry demonstrated the necessity of finding sabotage in all branches of Russian industry in order to explain the shortcomings everywhere. So far, the fruits of victory are bitter for the broad masses of the Russian people.

Numerous reports from all of the Russian-occupied zones in Europe—conversations with deserting Red Army soldiers in Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, and other news filtering through the Balkans and Scandinavia—illustrate the reason behind the purge: near famine conditions in large areas of Russia. The peasant soldiers do not want to return to their destroyed villages, from which their

families have been dispersed. The impulse behind the mass desertions of Soviet soldiers in all countries occupied by the Red Army is the conviction that immediately after demobilisations they would have to work in labor battalions, for hunger rations and under armed guards.

How exclusively the Soviet managers depend on the N.K.V.D. for their labor force came out strikingly in the report of the Chairman of the State Planning Commission, N. A. Voznesensky, at the March session of the Supreme Soviet: "We have quite a number of business executives who expect to be 'provided' with labor power through mobilisation." (N. A. Voznesensky, Report on the Five-Year Plan for 1946-1950, published by *Soviet News*, London, 1946, page 23.) The ironical quotation marks around the meaningful "provided" are by Voznesensky himself, who reminds the Soviet business executives that they also must adopt "new methods," e.g., agreements with workers and collective farms.

(2) The Resistance Movement

That two republics have been deprived of their status, and that a million and a half of their inhabitants were moved to other, unknown regions of the Soviet Union, was announced at the same time as the purge of the managers.

Depriving these republics of their place within the federated union brought the sum of the regions punished with extinction to five: four autonomous Soviet republics (Kalmyk, Crimean, Volga-German, Chechen-Ingush), and one autonomous national region (Karachay). This forced migration, larger even than that of the Germans from Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany, was carried out under the same terrorist conditions. The old and the very young, if they did not perish on the road, were settled somewhere else; the able-bodied were put into labor battalions.

No secret is better guarded than the exact site and the organization of the N.K.V.D. labor camps. The number of forced laborers, now established by various independent reports of Polish prisoners in these camps during the war and by the few observers who had even a limited opportunity to travel in Russia, is about 15-18 millions. A report, for instance, has come out by a Polish prisoner of war about Dalstroi, the gigantic industrial enterprise managed by the N.K.V.D. and covering a territory about the size of France.

Some fifteen years ago rich gold mines were discovered between the Okhotsk Sea and the Upper Kolyma. There was no transportation in this scantily populated region, and the exploitation of the gold mines was possible only by the importation of a large amount of labor. The N.K.V.D. solved the problem of industrialisation and deported to Dalstroi increasingly large numbers, estimated at 1,500,000, shipped 1937 and 1940, via Vladivostok. Now there are large ship-building and technical plants centreing around an N.K.V.D. town, Magadan, formerly a small fishing settlement on the Nogaev Bay of the Okhotsk Sea, from which the extensive labor camps are administered.

Resistance is widespread to the drive

for manpower needed for reconstruction. As in Nazi Europe, labor-draft dodgers and escaped deportees form a regular underground. In the Ukraine this underground resistance has led to serious difficulties. Tens of thousands of young peasants, deserters from the Red Army and displaced workers, have taken to the woods, resisting transfer, and building up a Ukrainian Partisan Army. Weapons were found in the wake of battles. Living on the land, they form a chain of partisan groups from Kiev through the West-Ukraine to the corner of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia—to-day a no-man's land. In this corner the Benderovtsi are active (see *The Russian State Party*, Vol. 1, No. 4, June, 1946, page 4).

The Soviet authorities are discovering underground organisations now everywhere. An alleged Nazi underground organisation, "Freies Deutschland," has been brought to trial in Breslau. Included in their ranks are Volkdeutsche, Reichsdeutsche, and professional S.S.-men. On June 21, in Kattowice, a group of werewolves, with their leader, H. Reimann, were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. On June 22, the Polish Security Police announced that, having liquidated the Freies Deutschland group, they caught the "Grüne Kreuz" partisans. Their leader, according to these authorities, was a former Gestapo assistant, H. Steinburg. A Warsaw communique about this group said:

"The members of this organisation were told that they were in the service of the British intelligence, and that the moment a new war breaks out they must collaborate with British parachutists and help them in their struggle against Polish and Russian forces. Since January, 1946, over 300 of German sabotage groups, headed by five commanders, have been arrested and sentenced to death in Western Poland. Several officers, both men and women, mostly from Dresden, have fallen into the hands of the Security authorities. Since February, 1945, 39 leaders have been caught, and in all 200 diversionary centres dispersed. A large quantity of explosives, ammunition, machine-guns, automatic guns, and printed material has been discovered." (Quoted in *East Europe*, London, No. 89, page 14.)

Very little is known about similar partisan groups in the Balkan Soviet States. But one symptom of tension is the discovery of a conspiracy in the Bulgarian army. On June 20 the Sofia Court of Justice published the indictment in the trial of the "Tsar Krum," headed by Lt.-Col. A. Krstev, commander of the 25th Infantry Regiment. According to the indictment, this group opposed the democratisation of the army and had formed a fascist organisation "aiming at the overthrow of the Fatherland Front"—the communist-dominated block of parties headed by Georgi Dimitrov.

The designation of all of these resistance movements as fascist and the discovery of former Gestapo or S.S.-men among them are the simplest devices used by the N.K.V.D. for the extermination of all opponents. It can also apply the opposite method, as was demonstrated by the Kielci pogrom in Poland. On July 4, 34 Jews were killed there

ad 42 wounded. An eight-years-old boy had reappeared after two days' absence and told how Jews had kept him in a cellar, intending to murder him, but how he had managed to escape. This story started the pogrom, which was punished, as is well known, by the solemn execution of its leaders by the Polish Security Police.

The resistance of the Polish masses to Soviet domination is especially stubborn. The referendum in Poland and the elections were accompanied by constant discoveries of anti-government organisations, for instance, a National Military Union in the Gdansk (Danzig) area, where 85 of the Security Police were killed "while defending the security of the referendum." The pogrom became an excellent reason for raiding villages and arresting large groups of resistance fighters, under the suspicion that they had participated in anti-Semitic activities.

(3) War Veterans and Aggression

A new generation comes to the fore in the Soviet administration. It is the generation of party men hardened through the war, who have earned their spurs in political situations of utter emergency or at the front. These young men, mostly unknown to the Western world, are decisive in setting Soviet policy. They control the State administration and the army. Georgi Malenkov, for example, one of the secretaries of the party Central Committee, is Stalin's junior by some thirty years. One of the most outspoken chauvinists, he writes speeches filled with aggressive belligerency against Western Imperialism.

Malenkov's intimate collaborator in the secretariat is A. A. Zhdanov. Stalin, Zhdanov, and Malenkov decide in the secretariat the agenda for the Politburo sessions. Both Zhdanov and Malenkov aspire to be Stalin's successor, but there are also many other candidates.

Among the men most in the forefront we find not one of the victorious generals. In addition to the men of the secretariat there are, in the order of importance: Voznesensky, in charge of the five-year plan; Shvernik, who has replaced Kalinin as nominal President of the U.S.S.R.; Schermakov, on the highly important post of first Secretary of the Moscow Town and Province Party Committee; Kuznetsov, who, from 1943 to 1946, was Zhdanov's successor in the corresponding position in Leningrad; Kossygin, Minister of Foreign Trade; Rodionov, former party organiser from Gorki, responsible for the development of the huge Molotov automobile plant, prime minister of the Russian Republic; Bulganin, former mayor of Moscow, a close collaborator with Commander-in-Chief Stalin in military matters. Kossygin, as an example, is only forty years old; he, like Malenkov, is the prototype of the new party-statesman.

This reassertion of party organisers and tightening of the party and its apparatus indicate the rise of the expansionists within the Politburo and the decline of the more conservative wing.

The conservatives, as represented by the more cautious Stalin, are united with the expansionists in the firm conviction that war between the United States and Russia in the next generation is unavoidable. But the question is how to manoeuvre to postpone the outbreak of

the conflict as long as possible and how to get the best starting position.

Stalin counted on the increasing disintegration of the British Empire. By his view, the Labor Party will liquidate the empire, piece by piece, and at the end perish with it. In such a process no British government will be able to mobilise the masses again for total war.

Starting from this premise, the conservatives in the Politburo considered the situation in the U.S.A. also very favorable for their ultimate world rule. In Paris, Molotov, under a smoke screen of aggressive verbiage, has manoeuvred to get a compromise to the detriment of British interests. This indicated to the conservatives the possibility of a long peace with the U.S.A. if a clear division of interest spheres would counteract the anti-Soviet forces within the United States, which would then be unable to get mass support for war. The technological inferiority of the Soviets could be thus outbalanced by political strength.

Stalin, therefore, suggested a policy of large-scale compromise on all points that touch Western sensitivities. In particular, the Red Army would withdraw from certain areas of Europe, even with a certain shrinkage of Soviet influence; China, Korea, and Germany would be partitioned; and there would be a cease-fire policy in Western Europe. Such a strategy would have brought large loans and imports from the United States, which would have assuaged the unrest in Russia by raising the standard of living—and without detriment to the reconstruction of the war industry and the rebuilding of the military forces. In one word, the Roosevelt-Browder policy, the password of the Russian conservatives, aimed to gain so much time that all the factors would be on their side.

The expansionists regard this concept as dangerous and illusionist. No compromise on territory should be made. The larger the space the better for future defence. They see the interval between World War II and World War III as relatively very short, and point to the establishment of air and naval bases of the United States all over the world, especially in the Pacific. Unrest and resentment at home, disillusionment and resistance in Soviet-occupied Europe, increasing infiltration through many new frontiers, produce a more and more aggressive attitude. A holy war against the imperialists appears to them the best solution: war alone could mobilise the Russian and the European masses around the Soviet regime.

The expansionists have a political defence plan in preparation. Moscow and Baku might be destroyed by atom bombs, other centres are being established behind the Urals or in the mountains of the Caucasus, or perhaps in Dalstroi. The N.K.V.D. has portable headquarters. Dozens of other strongholds of Communism, dozens of parallel centres are built in secrecy, not only for the shift of industry to unknown, subterranean spots, but also centres for political warfare.

The attitude of Molotov in Paris reflects on the diplomatic level the presence of the terrorists at home.

MARSHAL ZHUKOV IN DISGRACE?

At the beginning of July, Marshal Zhukov, conqueror of Berlin, got a surprisingly modest assignment: commander-in-chief of the Red Army garrison

in the Ukraine. This assignment is one of those orders to an old Communist somewhat estranged from the party, who has to reassert his value by solving an especially difficult but dull task.

To Readers: The above Newsletter, with maps and biographical notes of leading Stalinists not included here depends on subscriptions. Send direct to RUTH FISCHER, 319 West 80th Street, New York 24, N.Y. Tel.: TR 7-0793.

RUSSIA IS SLIPPING AWAY FROM STATE CAPITALISM IT DOES NOT WORK

Nothing else can be expected under a Money System.

The inherent laws of commodity production where labor-time and the product is measured by a money price, assert themselves.

Pravda speaks of an "ideological breakthrough" in connection with literature and of "a situation which is extremely dangerous for the whole socialist structure of our country."

An opposition has been discovered that can not be eliminated by a purge—the country as a whole has slipped away from a State pseudo socialism.

The Russian State is not collapsing—it just grows more like any other Totalitarian Capitalist State.

Instead of Communist Party members acting as watchdogs for the State they have reacted as ordinary people under a money system; they have co-operated with one another and accepted bribes from the workers at the expense of the State.

In Australia, also, it is clearly evident that the great bulk of the population do not obey State regulations. Russia is no different. The rot which is apparent in the collective farming system is brought out in a lengthy communique on collective farm abuses, issued over the names of Stalin and Zhdanov on August 20:

1) The various ways in which the State regulations are being abused are so extensive that they give a picture of breakdown of the system. The communique speaks of the division of public land into private holdings having assumed a "mass character." (Small private allotments were officially granted to collective farmers as a concession some years before the war.)

2) The deterioration has been spreading swiftly since the war. In one Province the number of illegal acts numbered 7500 in 1945, and grew to 11,700 in the first half of 1946.

3) The main saboteurs of the system are the people who were supposed to safeguard it—the Party and technical officials. Their illegal arrangements for their own benefit have robbed the poor man at the tractor or the hoe. He in his turn has gone in for as much scrounging and private work for himself as possible, but he is clearly the one who comes off worst in the deal, except for "Lord State." In Yaroslavl Province, for instance, various individuals and organisations owed the collective farm R.24 million, at a time when the collective farmers themselves owed R.30 million to the "non-divisible farm fund." In another Province 14.6 per cent. of the total number of working days had been occupied in work other

than for the farm. As the farmers are paid according to working-day output graded according to quality and quantity, this has led to their getting less money and "hence to a decrease in the personal interest of collective farmers in collective farm work."

4) This trend is not new. The communique of August 20 refers to the decree of May, 1939, which was also issued owing to serious abuses of Party policy in collective farming. The conclusion which may be drawn from this fact is that the process is inevitable.

19,367 cases of turning collective farms "into sources of private income" have already been uncovered in the Kuibyshev region alone. The decree states that these "common criminals guilty of anti-government activity" would be tried without delay.

The decree announces measures to stop the rot, and gives time limits of a few months for land and money to be restored, and provides punishment of offenders as criminals. In view of the vast numbers of people involved in the exploitation of collective farms for a private profit, it is a major dilemma for the Russian State:

1) If the "reverse gear" orders in the decree are seriously carried out it will mean an upheaval in agricultural society and creation of a great body of new malcontents. Yet the strain of the war demands that tension should now be relaxed.

2) If it is not seriously carried out and investigators are squared, robbery of the State will continue, with serious effects on the standard of living in the towns and further discontent among industrial workers who are being asked to produce more than ever before. This means that the Five-Year Plan will be in danger. A vicious circle already exists which passive resistance to Communism on the farms must render all the more difficult to break. On the one hand the Plan depends on giving the workers plenty of food. The Plan provided for an overall increase in agricultural production of 27 per cent. by 1950 (which equals about 10 per cent. when the territory acquired since 1940 is deducted). This increase, although small in comparison with the 30 per cent. rise in industrial output which is demanded, entails an enormous effort owing to the vast devastation in the Western lands, and crippling losses in machinery. On the other hand, an increase cannot be obtained without fresh supplies of machinery. The Plan calls for about 6.5 million additional workers to be brought into industry. They must come largely from the land on which the additional food is to be produced.

"Time maketh ancient good uncouth."
STALINIST-COMMUNISM STINKS

"The organisation" [the U.S. Communist Party] "would fill any political boss with envy," writes Arthur M. Schlesinger, jun., associate professor of history at Harvard, in *International Life*, August 19.

"The party has always had a tremendous turnover." It may total about

65,000—"far short of the 1916 goal of 100,000."

There is "a hard core of perhaps 10 per cent. who have been members for 15 years, a fairly solid ring of 30 per cent. or 40 per cent. who have been in from two to 10 years, and a vaporous penumbra of people who join the party because of some local strike, or lynching or rally, lose interest, and are dropped when they fail to pay dues."

That would be typical of the Communist Party in Australia. Judging from the number of votes cast for Communist candidates at the recent Federal election there must have been a tremendous falling off of older membership, as three more years of growth of voters reaching 21 years of age, apart from young soldiers have increased the total of voters by 500,000, yet the Communist vote was smaller.

Here, too, they had a membership drive for 1916, which has petered out pre-election instead of increasing in tempo as the election drew near.

"With history breathing down their necks, Communists are working overtime to expand party influence, open and covert, in the labor movement, . . ." says Schlesinger.

But, as Prof. Moryah pointed out (see No. 24 S.S.R.)

"It is the fate of ALL movements that the terms, tags and labels they popularise in their revolutionary youth become in the course of time the direct ANTITHESIS of the philosophy which gave them birth."

They have swallowed, hook, line and sinker, the phraseology of a Marxist socialism, and now use it as a "vanguard," or a fifth column, "for the second mightiest power on earth—a power which, like all preceding powers, rests upon a basis of slavery."

Why is it that they are as they are? Barnum, the great showman, said people love to be bamboozled.

That does not, however, explain it.

Those people can laugh at themselves for allowing themselves to be hoodwinked.

For reasons best understood by psychologists, and those who have made a study of religion, especially primitive early Christianity, whose adherents hoped for an earthly millenium, and that in their own lifetime, the great majority of Communists WANT to be hoodwinked—they want the anodyne of a belief which their great Lenin referred to as the OPIUM OF THE PEOPLE.

Communism of the C.P. brand is an old religion put into a new shaped capitalist bottle.

"The Communist Party," says Schlesinger, "fills the lives of lonely and frustrated people, providing them with social, intellectual, even sexual fulfillment they cannot obtain in existing society. It gives a sense of comradeship in a cause guaranteed by history to succor the helpless and to triumph over the wealthy and satisfied."

Like many another organisation in this money and power-lusting world, the C.P. is composed of five per cent. shrewd guys and 95 per cent. working bullocks. To quote Schlesinger again, "To some it gives opportunities for personal power not to be found elsewhere. Communists are happy to exchange their rights as individuals for these deeper satisfac-

tions; and absorption in the party becomes in time the mainspring of their lives. The appeal is essentially the appeal of a religious sect—small, persecuted, dedicated, stubbornly convinced that it alone knows the path to salvation. To understand the Communists you must think of them in terms, not of a normal political party, but in terms of religious groups like the Jesuits, the Mormons, or Jehovah's Witnesses."

The clean breath of reality is needed to sweep away the miasma, of robot acceptance of a party line dictated by the changing necessities of Soviet foreign policy—of inculcation of "mass discipline" that goes with religious orders or a police State.

The working class need the individualistic view of Freedom promulgated by the Anarchists; the clear thinking and tactics of the earthly I.W.W.; the theoretical simple sanity of the S.P.G.B. Companion Parties' viewpoint, as an antidote to the hole and corner conspiracies of the Stalinists.

LABOR-IMPERIALISM ALSO STINKS

Many workers whose class consciousness is offended by the practices of the Labor Parties, both in British Imperialist Policy and in the Australian backing, are inclined to accept the mask of Socialism assumed by Communist criticism of Labor-Imperialist policies.

Both, however, stink.

An international movement of the working class for Freedom means freedom from Stalinist Imperialism, as well as freedom from British and American Imperialism.

STEEL

The British Labor Party has deferred the nationalisation of the steel industry for two years, and has fallen back to the older "rationalisation" schemes of renovating and modernising the industry.

Until British workers are organised to control an industry there can be little advance in nationalisation for the workers. There may be a transitional period during which nationalisation may be necessary, but it can be of no practical benefit nor interest to the workers until they are organised to control it in the interests of the working class—and then the working class MUST be politically prepared to liquidate capital as ownership.

Nothing of this sort is yet appearing in Britain.

HOUSING

The housing problem is brought into clearer focus with the activity of "squatters."

The legal fetish in the minds of Labor members is quite evident in the brutal orders issued by A. Bevan to local authorities to cut off water and gas to these "squattling" home-seekers and home-needers. People who never had had houses before—who had never known more than having to live in one room were being awakened to struggle and demand something better for themselves and their children.

And a Labor Minister can only react by calling the cops and urging local authorities to cut off the water and gas!

MONEY MUST GO!

Socialism is unthinkable under a money system.