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I was already a confirmed anti-Stalinist at the age of seventeen The idea of killing Stalin filled my thoughts and feelings We studied the ‘technical’ possibilities of an attack We even practiced.

If they had condemned me to death in 1939, their decision would have been just. I had made up a plan to kill Stalin; wasn’t that a crime?

When Stalin was still alive, I saw things differently, but as I look back over this century, I can state that Stalin was the greatest individual of this century, the greatest political genius. To adopt a scientific attitude about someone is quite different from one’s personal attitude.

Alexander Zinoviev, 1993¹

I think there are two ‘swords’: one is Lenin and the other Stalin. The sword of Stalin has now been discarded by the Russians. Gomulka and some people in Hungary have picked it up to stab at the Soviet Union and oppose so-called Stalinism.

The imperialists also use this sword to slay people with. Dulles, for instance, has brandished it for some time. This sword has not been lent out, it has been thrown out. We Chinese have not thrown it out.

As for the sword of Lenin, hasn’t it too been discarded to a certain extent by some Soviet leaders? In my view, it has been discarded to a considerable extent. Is the October Revolution still valid? Can it still serve as the example for all countries? Khrushchov’s report at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union says it is possible to seize power by the parliamentary road, that is to say, it is no longer necessary for all countries to learn from the October Revolution. Once this gate is opened, by and large Leninism is thrown away.

Mao Zedong, November 15, 1956²

Foreword

That a famous Soviet dissident, now living in ‘reunited’ Germany, a man who in his youth was so fanatically anti-Stalin that he planned a terrorist attack against him, who filled entire books with vehement denunciation of Stalin’s political line in every possible way, that such a man would, in his old age, pay homage to Stalin is remarkable.

Many who consider themselves Communist have not shown such courage. It is very difficult to raise one’s feeble voice against the torrents of anti-Stalin propaganda.

Unfortunately many Communists do not feel at ease on this battlefield. Everything that sworn enemies of Communism had claimed for thirty-five years was supposedly confirmed by Khrushchev in 1956. Since then, angry, unanimous condemnations of Stalin have come from the Nazis and the Trotskyists, from Kissinger and Brzezinski, from Khrushchev and Gorbachev, and many others, each adding to the ‘proof’. To defend the historic rôle of Stalin and the Bolshevik Party becomes unthinkable, even monstrous. And most people who firmly oppose the murderous anarchy of world capitalism have become intimidated.

Today, for a man such as Zinoviev, seeing the destructive folly that has taken hold of the ex-Soviet Union, with its trail of famine, unemployment, criminality, misery, corruption and inter-ethnic wars, has led to the reassessment of prejudices firmly held since adolescence.

It is clear that, throughout the world, those who wish to defend the ideals of Socialism and Communism must at least do the same. All Communist and revolutionary organizations across the globe must re-examine the opinions and judgments that they have formed since 1956 about Comrade Stalin’s work. No one can deny the evidence: when Gorbachev succeeded in eradicating all of Stalin’s achievements, crowning thirty-five years of virulent denunciations of ‘Stalinism’, Lenin himself became *persona non grata* in the Soviet Union. With the burial of Stalinism, Leninism disappeared as well.

Rediscovering the revolutionary truth about this pioneer period is a collective

task that must be borne by all Communists, around the world. This revolutionary truth will arise by questioning sources, testimony and analyses. Clearly, the aid that might be offered by Soviet Marxist-Leninists, sometimes the only ones with direct access to sources and to witnesses, will be vital. But today they work under very difficult conditions.

Our analyses and reflections on this subject are published in this work, *Another view of Stalin*. The view of Stalin that is imposed on us daily is that of the class that wants to maintain the existing system of exploitation and oppression. Adopting another view of Stalin means looking at the historic Stalin through the eyes of the oppressed class, through the eyes of the exploited and oppressed.

This book is not designed to be a biography of Stalin. It is intended to directly confront the standard attacks made against Stalin: ‘Lenin’s Will’, forced collectivization, overbearing bureaucracy, extermination of the Old Bolshevik guard, the Great Purge, forced industrialization, collusion between Stalin and Hitler, his incompetency during World War II, etc. We have endeavored to deconstruct many ‘well-known truths’ about Stalin, those that are summarized — over and over — in a few lines in newspapers, history books and interviews, and which have more or less become part of our unconscious.

‘But how is it possible’, asked a friend, ‘to defend a man like Stalin?’

There was astonishment and indignation in this question, which reminded me of what an old Communist worker once told me. He spoke to me of the year 1956, when Khrushchev read his famous Secret Report. Powerful debates took place within the Communist Party. During one of these confrontations, an elderly Communist woman, from a Jewish Communist family, who lost two children during the war and whose family in Poland was exterminated, cried out:

‘How can we not support Stalin, who built socialism, who defeated fascism, who incarnated all our hopes?’

In the fiery ideological storm that was sweeping the world, where others had capitulated, this woman remained true to the Revolution. And for this reason, she had another view of Stalin. A new generation of Communists will share her view.

Introduction:

The importance of Stalin

On August 20, 1991, Yanayev's ridiculous coup d'état was the last step in eliminating the remaining vestiges of Communism in the Soviet Union. Statues of Lenin were torn down and his ideas were attacked. This event provoked numerous debates in Communist and revolutionary movements.

Some said it was completely unexpected.

In April 1991, we published a book, *L'URSS et la contre-révolution de velours* (USSR: The velvet counter-revolution),¹ which essentially covers the political and ideological evolution of the USSR and of Eastern Europe since 1956. Now that Yeltsin has made his professional coup d'état and that he has vehemently proclaimed capitalist restoration, our analysis still stands.

In fact, the last confused confrontations between Yanayev, Gorbachev and Yeltsin were mere convulsions, expressing decisions made during the Twenty-Eighth Congress in July 1990. We wrote at the time that this congress 'clearly affirms a rupture with socialism and a return to capitalism'.² A Marxist analysis of the events that occurred in the Soviet Union had already led in 1989 to the following conclusion:

'Gorbachev . . . is implementing a slow and progressive, but systematic, evolution to capitalist restoration Gorbachev, his back to the wall, is seeking increasing political and economic support from the imperialist world. In return, he allows the West to do as it pleases in the Soviet Union.'³

A year later, at the end of 1990, we concluded our analysis as follows:

'Since 1985 Gorbachev has not firmly and consistently defended any political position. In waves, the Right has attacked. Each new wave has dragged Gorbachev further to the Right. Confronted by further attacks by nationalists and fascists, supported by Yeltsin, it is not impossible that Gorbachev will again retreat, which will undoubtedly provoke the disintegration of the CPSU and the Soviet Union.'⁴

'The Balkanization of Africa and of the Arab world has ensured ideal conditions for imperialist domination. The more far-seeing in the West are now dreaming beyond capitalist restoration in the USSR. They are dreaming of its political and

2 *Another view of Stalin*

economic subjugation.⁵ It is no accident that we recall these Marxist-Leninist conclusions from 1989 and 1990. The dynamiting of statues of Lenin was accompanied by an explosion of propaganda claiming victory over Marxism-Leninism. However, only the Marxist analysis was correct, was capable of clarifying the real social forces working under the demagogic slogans of ‘freedom and democracy’ and ‘glasnost and perestroika’.

In 1956, during the bloody counter-revolution in Hungary, statues of Stalin were destroyed. Thirty-five years later, statues of Lenin have been reduced to dust. The dismantling of statues of Stalin and Lenin marks the two basic breaks with Marxism. In 1956, Khrushchev attacked Stalin’s achievements so that he could change the fundamental line of the Communist Party. The progressive disintegration of the political and economic system that followed led to the final break with socialism in 1990 by Gorbachev.

Of course, the media hark on every day about the clear failure of Communism around the world. But we must reiterate that, if there was a failure in the Soviet Union, it was a failure of revisionism, introduced by Khrushchev thirty-five years ago. This revisionism led to complete political failure, to capitulation to imperialism and to economic catastrophe. The current eruption of savage capitalism and of fascism in the USSR shows clearly what happens when the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism are rejected.

For thirty-five years, the revisionists worked to destroy Stalin. Once Stalin was demolished, Lenin was liquidated with a flick of the wrist. Khrushchev fought mercilessly against Stalin. Gorbachev carried on by leading, during his five years of glasnost, a crusade against ‘Stalinism’. Notice that the dismantling of Lenin’s statues was not preceded by a political campaign against his work. The campaign against Stalin was sufficient. Once Stalin’s ideas were attacked, vilified and destroyed, it became clear that Lenin’s ideas had suffered the same fate.

Khrushchev started his destructive work by criticizing Stalin’s errors in order to ‘re-assert Leninism in its original form’ and to improve the Communist system. Gorbachev made the same demagogic promises to confuse the forces of the Left. Today, things have been made crystal clear: under the pretext of ‘returning to Lenin’, the Tsar returns; under the pretext of ‘improving Communism’, savage capitalism has erupted.

Most people on the Left have read a few books about the activities of the CIA and of Western secret services. They have learned that psychological and political warfare is a fundamental and extremely important part of modern total warfare. Slanders, brainwashing, provocation, manipulation of differences, exacerbation of contradictions, slandering of adversaries, and perpetration of crimes that are then blamed on the adversary are all normal tactics used by Western secret services in modern warfare.

But the wars that imperialism has waged with the greatest energy and with the most colossal resources are the anti-Communist wars. Military wars, clandestine wars, political wars and psychological wars. Isn’t it obvious that the anti-Stalin campaign was at the heart of all ideological battles against socialism and Commu-

nism? The official spokesmen for the U.S. war machine, Kissinger and Brzezinski, praised the works of Solzhenitsyn and Conquest, who were, by coincidence, two authors favored by Social-Democrats, Trotskyists and Anarchists. Instead of ‘discovering the truth about Stalin’ among those specialists of anti-Communism, wouldn’t it have been better to look for the strings of psychological warfare by the CIA?

It is truly not an accident that we can find today, in almost all stylish bourgeois and petit-bourgeois publications, the same slanders and lies about Stalin that were found in the Nazi press during the Second World War. This is a sign that the class struggle is becoming fierce throughout the world and that the world bourgeoisie is mobilizing all its forces to defend its ‘democracy’. During seminars about the Stalin period, we have often read a long anti-Stalin text and asked the audience what they thought of it. Almost invariably, they replied that the text, although virulently anti-Communist, clearly showed the enthusiasm of the young and poor for Bolshevism, as well as the technical achievements of the USSR; by and large, the text is nuanced. We then told the audience that this was a Nazi text, published in *Signal* 24 (1943), at the height of the war! The anti-Stalin campaigns conducted by the Western ‘democracies’ in 1989–1991 were often more violent and more slanderous than those conducted by the Nazis in 1930s: today, the great Communist achievements of the 1930s are no longer with us to counteract the slanders, and there are no longer any significant forces to defend the Soviet experience under Stalin.

When the bourgeoisie announces the definitive failure of Communism, it uses the pathetic failure of revisionism to reaffirm its hatred of the great work achieved in the past by Lenin and Stalin. Nevertheless, it is thinking much more about the future than about the past. The bourgeoisie wants people to think that Marxism-Leninism is buried once and for all, because it is quite aware of the accuracy and the vitality of Communist analysis. The bourgeoisie has a whole gamut of cadres capable of making scientific evaluations of the world’s evolution. And so it sees major crises and upheavals on a planetary scale, and wars of all kinds. Since capitalism has been restored in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, each contradiction of the world imperialist system has been exacerbated. When the working masses throughout the world face the specters of unemployment, misery, exploitation and war, only Marxism-Leninism can show them the way out. Only Marxism-Leninism can provide arms to the working masses of the capitalist world and to the oppressed peoples of the Third World. Given these great, future struggles, all this rubbish about the end of Communism is intended to disarm the oppressed masses of the entire world.

Defending Stalin’s work, essentially defending Marxism-Leninism, is an important, urgent task in preparing ourselves for class struggle under the New World Order.

Stalin is of vital importance in the former socialist countries

Since capitalist restoration in the USSR, Stalin's work has become important in understanding the mechanisms of recent class struggles under socialism.

There is a link between the capitalist restoration and the virulent campaign against Stalin that preceded it. The explosion of hatred against a man who died in 1953 might seem strange, if not incomprehensible. During the twenty years that preceded Gorbachev's rise to power, Brezhnev incarnated bureaucracy, stagnation, corruption and militarism. But neither in the Soviet Union nor in the 'Free World' did we ever witness a violent, raging attack against Brezhnev similar to the ones against Stalin. It is obvious that over the last few years, in the USSR as well as in the rest of the world, all the fanatics of capitalism and of imperialism, to finish off what remained of socialism in the USSR, focused on Stalin as the target.

The disastrous turn taken by Khrushchev shows in fact the pertinence of most of Stalin's ideas. Stalin stressed that class struggle continues under socialism, that the old feudal and bourgeois forces never stopped their struggle for restoration and that the opportunists in the Party, the Trotskyists, the Bukharinists and the bourgeois nationalists, helped the anti-Socialist classes regroup their forces. Khrushchev declared that these theses were aberrations and that they led to arbitrary measures. But in 1993, the apparition of Tsar Boris stands out as a monument to the correctness of Stalin's judgment.

Adversaries of the dictatorship of the proletariat never stopped in insisting that Stalin represented not the dictatorship of the workers but his own autocratic dictatorship. The word Gulag means 'Stalinist dictatorship'. But those who were in the Gulag during Stalin's era are now part of the bourgeoisie in power. To demolish Stalin was to give socialist democracy a new birth. But once Stalin was buried, Hitler came out of his tomb. And in Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Slovakia, etc., all the fascist heroes are resurrected, ilk such as Vlasov, Bandera, Antonescu, Tiso and other Nazi collaborators. The destruction of the Berlin Wall heralded the rise of neo-Nazism in Germany. Today, when faced with the unleashing of capitalism and fascism in Eastern Europe, it is easier to understand that Stalin did in fact defend worker's power.

Stalin is at the center of political debates in socialist countries

The media never stop reminding us that there are still, unfortunately, a few Stalinist outposts on the planet. Fidél Castro holds his little island like a Stalinist dinosaur. Kim Il Sung surpassed Stalin in the area of the cult of the personality. The Chinese butchers of Tien An Men Square are worthy successors of Stalin. A few dogmatic Vietnamese still have pictures of Hô Chi Minh and of Stalin. In short, the four countries that still uphold a socialist line are excommunicated from the 'civilized' world in the name of Stalin. This incessant clamor is designed to bring out and reinforce 'anti-Stalinist' bourgeois and petit-bourgeois currents in these countries.

Stalin's work is of crucial importance in the Third World

At the same time, in the Third World, all the forces that oppose, in one way or another, imperialist barbarity, are hunted down and attacked in the name of the struggle against 'Stalinism'.

So, according to the French newspaper *Le Monde*, the Communist Party of the Philippines has just been 'seized by the Stalinist demon of the purges'.⁶ According to a tract from the Meisone group, the 'Stalinists' of the Tigray People's Liberation Front have just seized power in Addis Ababa. In Peru as well, we hear of Mao-Stalinist ideas, 'that stereotyped formal language of another era'.⁷ We can even read that the Syrian Baath party leads 'a closed society, almost Stalinist'.⁸ Right in the middle of the Gulf War, a newspaper reported to us that a Soviet pamphlet compared photographs of Stalin and Saddam Hussein, and concluded that Saddam was an illegitimate son of the great Georgian. And the butchers that chased Father Aristide from Haiti seriously claimed that he had installed 'a totalitarian dictatorship'.

Stalin's work is important for all peoples engaged in the revolutionary struggle for freedom from the barbaric domination of imperialism.

Stalin represents, just like Lenin, steadfastness in the fiercest and most merciless of class struggles. Stalin showed that, in the most difficult situations, only a firm and inflexible attitude towards the enemy can resolve the fundamental problems of the working masses. Conciliatory, opportunistic and capitulationist attitudes will inevitably lead to catastrophe and to bloody revenge by the reactionary forces.

Today, the working masses of the Third World find themselves in a very difficult situation, with no hope in sight, resembling conditions in the Soviet Union in 1920–1933. In Mozambique, the most reactionary forces in the country were used by the CIA and the South African BOSS to massacre 900,000 Mozambicans. The Hindu fundamentalists, long protected by the Congress Party and upheld by the Indian bourgeoisie, are leading India into bloody terror. In Colombia, the collusion between the reactionary army and police, the CIA and the drug traffickers is provoking a bloodbath among the masses. In Iraq, where criminal aggression killed more than 200,000, the embargo imposed by our great defenders of human rights continues to slowly kill tens of thousands of children.

In each of these extreme situations, Stalin's example shows us how to mobilize the masses for a relentless and victorious struggle against enemies ready to use any means.

But a great number of revolutionary parties of the Third World, engaged in merciless battles against barbaric imperialism, progressively deviated towards opportunism and capitulation, and this disintegration process almost always started with ideological attacks against Stalin. The evolution of parties such as the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador is a prime example.

From about 1985, a right-opportunist tendency developed within the Communist Party of the Philippines. It wanted to end the popular war and to start a process of 'national reconciliation'. Following Gorbachev, the tendency virulently attacked

Stalin. This same opportunism also had a 'left' form. Wanting to come to power quickly, others proposed a militarist line and an urban political insurrection. In order to eliminate police infiltration, leaders of this tendency organized a purge within the Party in Mindanao: they executed several hundred persons, violating all of the Party's rules. But when the Central Committee decided to conduct an ideological and political rectification campaign, these opportunists all united against 'the Stalinist purge'! Jose Maria wrote:

'(T)hose who oppose the rectification movement most bitterly are those who have been most responsible for the militarist viewpoint, the gross reduction of the mass base, witchhunts of monstrous proportions (violative of all sense of democracy and decency) and degeneration into gangsterism

'These renegades have in fact and in effect joined up with the intelligence and psywar agents of the U.S.-Ramos régime in an attempt to stop the CPP from strengthening itself ideologically, politically and organizationally.'⁹

The journal *Democratic Palestine*, of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), also opened up a debate on Stalin:

'Negative aspects of the Stalin era which have been highlighted include: forced collectivization; repression of free expression and democracy in the party and in the society; ultracentralization of decision-making in the party, the Soviet state and the international Communist movement.'¹⁰

All these so-called 'criticisms' of Stalin are nothing more than a verbatim rehash of old social-democratic anti-Communist criticisms. To choose this road and to follow it to its end means, ultimately, the end of the PFLP as a revolutionary organization. The experience of all those who have taken this road leaves no room for doubt.

The recent evolution of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) is instructive about this subject. In his interview of Fidél Castro, Thomas Borge vigorously attacked 'Stalinism': it is under this camouflage that the FSLN transformed itself into a bourgeois social-democratic entity.

Stalin's work takes on new meaning given the situation created since capitalist restoration in Central and Eastern Europe

Stalin's revolutionary work also takes on importance in the new European situation, with capitalist restoration in the East. The civil war in Yugoslavia shows the carnage that could spread to the whole of the European continent if the rising contradictions between imperialist powers provoked a new World War. Such a possibility can no longer be excluded. Today's map of the world strikingly resembles the situation between 1900 and 1914, when the imperialist powers vied for world economic domination. Today, the relations between the six imperialist centers, the U.S., Great Britain, Japan, Germany, Russia and France, are becoming very unstable. We have entered a period when alliances are done and undone and in which battles in the economic and commercial sphere are undertaken with increasing energy. The formation of new imperialist blocs that will violently confront

each other becomes a real possibility. A war between big imperialist powers would make all of Europe into a giant Yugoslavia. Given such a possibility, Stalin's work deserves to be restudied.

In Communist Parties around the world, the ideological struggle around the Stalin question presents many common characteristics

In all capitalist countries, the economic, political and ideological pressure exerted by the bourgeoisie on Communists is incredibly strong. It is a permanent source of degeneration, of treason, of slow descent into the other camp. But every treacherous act requires ideological justification in the eyes of the one who is committing it. In general, a revolutionary who engages on the downward slope of opportunism 'discovers the truth about Stalinism'. He or she takes, as is, the bourgeois and anti-Communist version of the history of the revolutionary movement under Stalin. In fact, the renegades make no discovery, they simply copy the bourgeoisie's lies. Why have so many renegades 'discovered the truth about Stalin' (to improve the Communist movement, of course), but none among them has 'discovered the truth about Churchill'? A discovery which would be much more important for 'improving' the anti-imperialist struggle! Having a record of half a century of crimes in the service of the British Empire (Boer War in South Africa, terror in India, inter-imperialist First World War followed by military intervention against the new Soviet republic, war against Iraq, terror in Kenya, declaration of the Cold War, aggression against antifascist Greece, etc.), Churchill is probably the only bourgeois politician of this century to have equalled Hitler.

Every political and historical work is marked by the class position of its author. From the twenties to 1953, the majority of Western publications about the Soviet Union served the bourgeoisie's and the petit-bourgeoisie's attacks against Soviet socialism. Writings by Communist Party members and of Left intellectuals trying to defend the Soviet experience constituted a weak counter-current in defending the truth about the Soviet experience. But, from 1953-1956, Khrushchev and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union would take up, bit by bit, all the bourgeois historiography about the Stalin period.

Since then, revolutionaries in the Western world have been subject to a terrible and unending ideological onslaught about the crucial periods in the rise of the Communist movement, particularly the Stalin era. If Lenin led the October Revolution and drew the main lines for building socialism, it was Stalin who actually put those lines into action for thirty years. The bourgeoisie's hatred is of course concentrated on the titanic task achieved under Stalin. A Communist who does not adopt a firm class position with respect to the misleading, one-sided, incomplete or false information that the bourgeoisie spreads around will be lost forever. For no other subject in recent history does the bourgeoisie denigrate its adversaries so fiercely. Every Communist must adopt a attitude of systematic mistrust towards all 'information' furnished by the bourgeoisie (and the Khrushchevites) about the Stalin period. And he or she must do everything possible to discover the rare

alternative sources of information that defend Stalin's revolutionary endeavor.

But opportunists in different parties dare not directly confront the anti-Stalin ideological offensive directly, despite its clear anti-Communist goal. The opportunists bend backwards under pressure, saying 'yes to a criticism of Stalin', but pretending to criticize Stalin 'from the Left'.

Today, we can sum up seventy years of 'criticisms from the Left' formulated by the revolutionary experience of the Bolshevik Party under Stalin. There are hundreds of works available, written by social-democrats and Trotskyists, by Bukharinists and 'independent' Left intellectuals. Their points of view have been taken up and developed by Khrushchevites and Titoists. We can better understand today the real class meaning of these works. Did any of these criticisms lead to revolutionary practices more important than the work under Stalin? Theories are, of course, judged by the social practice they engender. The revolutionary practice of the world Communist movement under Stalin shook the whole world and gave a new direction to the history of humanity. During the years 1985–1990, in particular, we have been able to see that all the so-called 'Left critics' of Stalin have jumped onto the anti-Communist bandwagon, just countless cheerleaders. Social-democrats, Trotskyists, anarchists, Bukharinists, Titoists, ecologists, all found themselves in the movement for 'liberty, democracy and human rights', which liquidated what remained of socialism in Eastern Europe and in the USSR. All these 'Left criticisms' of Stalin had as final consequence the restoration of savage capitalism, the reinstatement of a merciless dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the destruction of all social gains, cultural and political rights for the working masses and, in many cases, to the emergence of fascism and of reactionary civil wars.

When Khrushchev initiated the anti-Stalin campaigns in 1956, those Communists who resisted revisionism and defended Stalin were affected in a peculiar manner.

In 1956, the Chinese Communist Party had the revolutionary courage to defend Stalin's work. Its document, 'Once more on the experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat', considerably helped Marxist-Leninists all over the world. Based on their own experience, the Chinese Communists criticized certain aspects of Stalin's work. This is perfectly normal and necessary in a discussion among Communists.

However, with the benefit of time, it seems that their criticisms were formulated too generally. This negatively influenced many Communists who lent credibility to all sorts of opportunistic criticisms.

For example, the Chinese comrades claimed that Stalin did not always clearly distinguish the two kinds of contradiction, those among the people, which can be overcome through education and struggle, and those between the people and the enemy, which require appropriate means of struggle. From this general criticism, some concluded that Stalin did not properly treat the contradictions with Bukharin, and ended up embracing Bukharin's social-democratic political line.

The Chinese Communists also stated that Stalin interfered in the affairs of other parties and denied them their independence. From this general criticism, some concluded that Stalin was wrong in condemning Tito's politics, ultimately accepting

Titoism as a ‘specifically Yugoslav form of Marxism-Leninism’. The recent events in Yugoslavia allow one to better understand how Tito, since his break with the Bolshevik Party, followed a bourgeois-nationalist line and ultimately fell into the U.S. fold.

The ideological reticence and errors enumerated above about the Stalin question, occurred in almost all Marxist-Leninist parties.

A general conclusion can be drawn. In our judgment of all the episodes during the period 1923–1953, we must struggle to understand completely the political line held by the Bolshevik Party and by Stalin. We cannot accept any criticism of Stalin’s work without verifying all primary data pertaining to the question under debate and without considering all versions of facts and events, in particular the version given by the Bolshevik leadership.

The young Stalin forges his arms

At the beginning of this century, the Tsarist régime was the most reactionary and the most oppressive of Europe. It was a feudal power, medieval, absolute, ruling over an essentially illiterate peasant population. The Russian peasantry lived in total ignorance and misery, in a chronic state of hunger. Periodically great famines occurred, resulting in hunger revolts.

Between 1800 and 1854, the country had thirty-five years of famine. Between 1891 and 1910, there were thirteen years of bad harvests and three years of famine.

The peasant worked small plots of land which, redistributed at regular intervals, became smaller and smaller. Often, they were little strips of land separated by great distances. A third of the households did not have a horse or an ox to work the soil. The harvest was done with a scythe. Compared to France or to Belgium, the majority of peasants lived in 1900 as in the fourteenth century.¹

During the first five years of this century, there were several hundred peasant revolts in the European part of Russia. Castles and buildings were burnt and landlords were killed. These struggles were always local and the police and the army crushed them mercilessly. In 1902, near-insurrectionary struggles occurred in Kharkov and Poltava. One hundred and eighty villages participated in the movement and eighty feudal domains were attacked. Commenting on the Saratov and Balashov peasant revolts, the military commander of the region noted:

‘With astonishing violence, the peasants burned and destroyed everything; not one brick remained. Everything was pillaged — the wheat, the stores, the furniture, the house utensils, the cattle, the metal from the roofs — in other words, everything that could be taken away was; and what remained was set aflame.’²

This miserable and ignorant peasantry was thrown into the First World War, during which the Tsar, still revered as a virtual God by the majority of peasants, intended to conquer new territories, particularly towards the Mediterranean. In Russia, the First World War killed about 2,500,000 people, particularly among the peasants conscripted to the army. The standard level of misery was compounded by the war’s destruction and the countless dead.

But in this feudal Russia, new productive forces developed at the end of the nineteenth century. These included large factories, railroads and banks, owned for the most part by foreign capital. Fiercely exploited, highly concentrated, the industrial working class, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, became the leading force in the anti-Tsarist struggle.

At the beginning of 1917, the main demand of all revolutionary forces was the end of this criminal war. The Bolsheviks called for immediate peace and the distribution of land. The old reactionary Tsarist system, completely undermined, collapsed suddenly in February 1917; the parties that wished to install a more modern bourgeois régime seized the reins of power. Their leaders were more closely linked to the English and French bourgeoisies that dominated the anti-German alliance.

As soon as the bourgeois government was installed, the representatives of the ‘socialist’ parties entered it, one after the other. On February 27, 1917, Kerensky was the only ‘socialist’ among the eleven ministers of the old régime.³ On April 29, the Socialist Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks, the Popular Socialists and the Trudoviks voted to enter the government.⁴ The four parties more or less followed the European social-democratic movement. On May 5, Kerensky became Minister of War and of the Marine. In his memoirs, he summarized the program of his ‘socialist’ friends:

‘No army in the world can afford to start questioning the aim for which it is fighting To restore their fighting capacity we had to overcome their animal fear and answer their doubts with the clear and simple truth: You must make the sacrifice to save the country.’⁵

Sure enough, the ‘socialists’ sent peasants and workers to be butchered, to be sacrificed for capital. Once again, hundreds of thousands were bayoneted.

In this context, the Bolsheviks touched the most profound needs of the working and peasant masses by organizing the insurrection of October 25 with the slogans ‘land to the peasants’, ‘immediate peace’ and ‘nationalization of banks and large industry’. The great October Revolution, the first socialist revolution, was victorious.

Stalin’s activities in 1900–1917

Here, we would like to bring out certain aspects of Stalin’s life and work between 1900 and 1917, to better understand the rôle that he would play after 1922.

We consider certain parts of Stalin’s life, as presented in the book, *Stalin, Man of History*, by Ian Grey; it is, to the best of our knowledge, the best biography written by a non-Communist.⁶

Josef Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili was born on December 21, 1879, in Gori, Georgia. His father, Vissarion, a shoemaker, came from a family of peasant serfs. His mother, Ekaterina Georgievna Geladze, was also the daughter of serfs. Stalin’s parents, poor and illiterate, came from the ordinary people. Stalin was one of the few Bolshevik leaders who came from modest origins. All of his life, he tried to

write and to speak so that he could be understood by ordinary workers.

During his five years at the Gori primary school, Josef Dzhugashvili was noted for his intelligence and his exceptional memory. When he left in 1894, he was recommended as the 'best student' for entrance in the Tiflis Seminary, the most important institution of higher learning in Georgia, as well as a center of opposition to Tsarism. In 1893, Ketskhoveri had led a strike there and 87 students had been expelled.⁷

Stalin was 15 years old and was in his second year at the seminary when he first came into contact with clandestine Marxist circles. He spent a lot of time in a bookstore owned by a man named Chelidze; young radicals went there to read progressive books. In 1897, the assistant supervisor wrote a note saying that he had caught Dzhugashvili reading Letourneau's *Literary Evolution of the Nations*, before that Victor Hugo's *Toilers of the Sea*, then Hugo's *Ninety-three*; in fact, a total of thirteen times with banned books.⁸

In 1897, at the age of eighteen, Dzhugashvili joined the first Socialist organization in Georgia, led by Zhordania, Chkheidze and Tseretelli, who would later become famous Mensheviks. The next year, Stalin led a study circle for workers. At the time, Stalin was already reading Plekhanov's works, as well as Lenin's first writings.

In 1899, he was expelled from the Seminary. Here began his career of professional revolutionary.⁹

Right from the start, Stalin showed great intelligence and a remarkable memory; by his own efforts, he acquired great political knowledge by reading widely.

To denigrate Stalin's work, almost all bourgeois authors repeat Trotsky's slanders: '(Stalin's) political horizon is restricted, his theoretical equipment primitive . . . His mind is stubbornly empirical, and devoid of creative imagination'.¹⁰

On May 1, 1900, Stalin spoke in front of an illegal gathering of 500 workers in the mountains above Tiflis. Under the portraits of Marx and Engels, they listened to speeches in Georgian, Russian and Armenian. During the three months that followed, strikes broke out in the factories and on the railroads of Tiflis; Stalin was one of the main instigators. Early in 1901, Stalin distributed the first issue of the clandestine newspaper *Iskra*, published by Lenin in Leipzig. On May 1, 1901, two thousand workers organized, for the first time, an open demonstration in Tiflis; the police intervened violently. Lenin wrote in *Iskra* that 'the event . . . is of historical importance for the entire Caucasus'.¹¹ During the same year, Stalin, Ketskhoveri and Krassin led the radical wing of social-democracy in Georgia. They acquired a printing press, reprinted *Iskra* and published the first clandestine Georgian newspaper, *Brdzola* (Struggle). In the first issue, they defended the supra-national unity of the Party and attacked the 'moderates', who called for an independent Georgian party that would be associated with the Russian party.¹²

In November 1901, Stalin was elected to the first Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party and sent to Batum, a city half of whose population was Turkish. In February 1902, he had already organized eleven clandestine circles in the main factories of the city. On February 27, six thousand workers in the petroleum refinery marched through the city. The army opened fire, killing 15 and

arresting 500.¹³

One month later, Stalin was himself arrested, imprisoned until April 1903, then condemned to three years in Siberia. He escaped and was back in Tiflis in February 1904.¹⁴

During his stay in Siberia, Stalin wrote to a friend in Leipzig, asking him for copies of the *Letter to a Comrade on our Organizational Tasks* and expressing his support for Lenin's positions. After the Congress of August 1903, the Social-Democratic Party was divided between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks; the Georgian delegates were among the latter. Stalin, who had read *What is to be done?*, supported the Bolsheviks without hesitation. 'It was a decision demanding conviction and courage. Lenin and the Bolsheviks had little support in Transcaucasia', wrote Grey.¹⁵ In 1905, the leader of the Georgian Mensheviks, Zhordania, published a criticism of the Bolshevik theses that Stalin defended, thereby underscoring the importance of Stalin in the Georgian revolutionary movement. During the same year, in 'Armed Uprising and Our Tactics', Stalin defended, against the Mensheviks, the necessity of armed struggle to overthrow Tsarism.¹⁶

Stalin was 26 years old when he first met Lenin at the Bolshevik Congress in Finland in December 1905.¹⁷

Between 1905 and 1908, the Caucasus was the site of intense revolutionary activity; the police counted 1,150 'terrorist acts'. Stalin played an important rôle. In 1907–1908, Stalin led, together with Ordzhonikidze and Voroshilov, the secretary of the oil workers' union, a major legal struggle among the 50,000 workers in the oil industry in Baku. They attained the right to elect worker representatives, who could meet in a conference to discuss the collective agreement regarding salaries and working conditions. Lenin hailed this struggle, which took place at a time when most of the revolutionary cells in Russia had ceased their activities.¹⁸

In March 1908, Stalin was arrested a second time and condemned to two years of exile. But in June 1909, he escaped and returned to Baku, where he found the party in crisis, the newspaper no longer being published.

Three weeks after his return, Stalin had started up publication again; in an article he argued that 'it would be strange to think that organs published abroad, remote from Russian reality, could unify the work of the party'. Stalin insisted on maintaining the clandestine Party, asking for the creation of a coordinating committee within Russia and the publication of a national newspaper, also within Russia, to inform, encourage and re-establish the Party's direction. Feeling that the workers' movement was about to re-emerge, he repeated these proposals early in 1910.¹⁹

But while helping prepare a general strike of the oil industry, he was arrested for a third time in March 1910, sent to Siberia, and banished for five years. In February 1912, he escaped again and came back to Baku.²⁰

Stalin learned that at the Prague Conference, the Bolsheviks had created their independent party and that a Russian bureau, of which he was a member, had been created. On April 22, 1912, at St. Petersburg, Stalin published the first edition of the Bolshevik newspaper *Pravda*.

On the same day, he was arrested a fourth time, together with the editorial secretary, Molotov. They were denounced by Malinovsky, an *agent provocateur* elected to the Central Committee! Shernomazov, who replaced Molotov as secretary, was also a police agent. Banished for three years to Siberia, Stalin once again escaped and took up the leadership of *Pravda*.

Convinced of the necessity of a break with the Mensheviks, he differed with Lenin about tactics. The Bolshevik line had to be defended, without directly attacking the Mensheviks, since the workers sought unity. Under his leadership, *Pravda* developed a record circulation of 80,000 copies.²¹

At the end of 1912, Lenin called Stalin and other leaders to Cracow to advocate his line of an immediate break with the Mensheviks, then sent Stalin to Vienna so that he could write *Marxism and the National Question*. Stalin attacked 'cultural-national autonomy' within the Party, denouncing it as the road to separatism and to subordination of socialism to nationalism. He defended the unity of different nationalities within one centralized Party.

Upon his return to St. Petersburg, Malinovsky had him arrested a fifth time. This time, he was sent to the most remote regions of Siberia, where he spent five years.²²

It was only after the February 1917 Revolution that Stalin was able to return to St. Petersburg, where he was elected to the Presidium of the Russian Bureau, taking up once again the leadership of *Pravda*. In April 1917, at the Party Conference, he received the third largest number of votes for the Central Committee. During the month of July, when *Pravda* was closed by the Provisional Government and several Bolshevik leaders were arrested, Lenin had to hide in Finland; Stalin led the Party. In August, at the Sixth Congress, he read the report in the name of the Central Committee; the political line was unanimously adopted by 267 delegates, with four abstentions. Stalin declared: 'the possibility is not excluded that Russia will be the country that blazes the trail to socialism It is necessary to give up the outgrown idea that Europe alone can show us the way'.²³

At the time of the October 25 insurrection, Stalin was part of a military revolutionary 'center', consisting of five members of the Central Committee. Kamenev and Zinoviev publicly opposed the seizing of power by the Bolshevik Party; Rykov, Nogin, Lunacharsky and Miliutin supported them. But it was Stalin who rejected Lenin's proposal to expel Kamenev and Zinoviev from the Party. After the revolution, these 'Right Bolsheviks' insisted on a coalition government with the Mensheviks and the Social-Revolutionaries. Once again threatened with expulsion, they toed the line.²⁴

Stalin became the first People's Commissar for Nationality Affairs. Quickly grasping that the international bourgeoisie was supporting the local bourgeoisies among national minorities, Stalin wrote: 'the right of self-determination (was the right) not of the bourgeoisie but of the toiling masses of a given nation. The principle of self-determination ought to be used as a means in the struggle for socialism, and it ought to be subordinated to the principles of socialism'.²⁵

Between 1901 and 1917, right from the beginning of the Bolshevik Party until

the October Revolution, Stalin was a major supporter of Lenin's line. No other Bolshevik leader could claim as constant or diverse activity as Stalin. He had followed Lenin right from the beginning, at the time when Lenin only had a small number of adherents among the socialist intellectuals. Unlike most of the other Bolshevik leaders, Stalin was constantly in contact with Russian reality and with activists within Russia. He knew these militants, having met them in open and clandestine struggles, in prisons and in Siberia. Stalin was very competent, having led armed struggle in the Caucasus as well as clandestine struggles; he had led union struggles and edited legal and illegal newspapers; he had led the legal and parliamentary struggle and knew the national minorities as well as the Russian people.

Trotsky did his best to systematically denigrate the revolutionary past of Stalin, and almost all bourgeois authors repeat these slanders. Trotsky declared:

'Stalin . . . is the outstanding mediocrity in the party'.²⁶

Trotsky was trying to pull the wool over everyone's eyes, talking about 'the party', because he had never belonged to the Bolshevik Party that Lenin, Zinoviev, Stalin, Sverdlov and others forged between 1901 and 1917. Trotsky joined the Party in July 1917.

Trotsky also wrote: 'in routine work it was more convenient for Lenin to depend on Stalin, Zinoviev or Kamenev I was not suited for executing commissions Lenin needed practical, obedient assistants. I was unsuited to the rôle'.²⁷ These sentences say nothing about Stalin, but everything about Trotsky: he pinned onto Lenin his own aristocratic and Bonapartist concept of a party: a leader surrounded by docile assistants who deal with current affairs!

The 'socialists' and revolution

The insurrection took place on October 25, 1917. The next day, the 'socialists' made the Soviet of the Peasants' Deputies pass the first counter-revolutionary motion:

'Comrade Peasants! All the liberties gained with the blood of your sons and brothers are now in terrible, mortal jeopardy Again a blow is being inflicted upon the army, which defends the homeland and the revolution from external defeat. (The Bolsheviks) divide the forces of the toiling people The blow against the army is the first and the worst crime of the Bolshevik party! Second, they have started a civil war and have seized power by violence (The Bolshevik promises) will be followed not by peace but by slavery.'²⁸

Hence, the day after the October Revolution, the 'socialists' had already called for the perpetration of imperialist war and they were already accusing the Bolsheviks of provoking civil war and bringing violence and slavery!

Immediately, the bourgeois forces, the old Tsarist forces, in fact all the reactionary forces, sought to regroup and reorganize under the 'socialist' vanguard. As early as 1918, anti-Bolshevik insurrections took place. Early in 1918, Plekhanov, an eminent leader of the Menshevik party, formed, along with Socialist Revolutionar-

ies and Popular Socialists, as well as with the chiefs of the bourgeois Cadet (Constitutional Democrats) party, the 'Union for the Resurrection of Russia'. 'They believed,' wrote Kerensky, 'that a national government had to be created on democratic principles in the broadest possible sense, and that the front against Germany had to be restored in cooperation with Russia's western Allies'.²⁹

On June 20, 1918, Kerensky showed up in London, representing this Union, to negotiate with the Allies. He announced to the Prime Minister, Lloyd George:

'It was the aim of the government now being formed . . . to continue the war alongside the Allies, to free Russia from Bolshevik tyranny, and to restore a democratic system.'

Hence, more than seventy years ago, the bloodthirsty and reactionary bourgeoisie was already using the word 'democracy' to cover up its barbaric domination.

In the name of the Union, Kerensky asked for an Allied 'intervention' in Russia. Soon after, a Directorate was set up in Siberia, consisting of Socialist Revolutionaries, Popular Socialists, the Cadet bourgeois party and the Tsarist generals Alekseyev and Boldyrev. The British and French governments almost recognized it as the legal government before deciding to play the card of Tsarist general Kolchak.³⁰

Hence the forces that had defended Tsarist reaction and the bourgeoisie during the civil war in Russia were all regrouped: the Tsarist forces, all of the bourgeoisie's forces, from the Cadets to the socialists, along with the invading foreign troops.

Sidney and Beatrice Webb wrote:

'In 1918 the authority of the Soviet Government was far from being firmly established. Even in Petrograd and Moscow, there was the very smallest security of life and property The deliberate and long-continued blockade maintained by the British fleet, and supported by the other hostile governments, kept out alike food and clothing, and the sorely needed medicines and anaesthetics Presently came the armies of the governments of Great Britain, France, Japan, Italy and the United States, without any declaration of war, actually invading, at half a dozen points from Vladivostok and Batoum to Murmansk and Archangel, the territory of what had never ceased to be technically a "friendly power". The same governments, moreover, freely supplied officers, equipment and munitions to the mixed forces raised by Denikin, Kolchak, Jedenich (Yudenich) and Wrangle, who took up arms against the Soviet Government. Incidentally, the Germans and Poles ravaged the western provinces, whilst the army formed out of the Czecho-Slovakian prisoners of war held an equivocal position in its protracted passage through Siberia to the Pacific Ocean.'³¹

From 1918 to 1921, the civil war killed nine million, most of them victims of famine. These nine million dead are attributable essentially to foreign invasions (British, French, Czechoslovakian, Japanese, Polish, etc.) and to the blockade organized by the Western powers. The Right would insidiously classify them as 'victims of Bolshevism'!

It appears to be a miracle that the Bolshevik Party — only 33,000 members in 1917 — could succeed in mobilizing popular forces to such an extent that they defeated the superior forces of the bourgeoisie and the old Tsarist régime, upheld

by the ‘socialists’ and reinforced by the invading foreign armies. In other words, without a complete mobilization of the peasant and working masses, and without their tenaciousness and their strong will for freedom, the Bolsheviks could never have attained final victory.

Since the beginning of the Civil War, the Mensheviks denounced the ‘Bolshevik dictatorship’, the ‘arbitrary, terrorist régime’ of the Bolsheviks, the ‘new Bolshevik aristocracy’. This was 1918 and there was no ‘Stalinism’ in the air! ‘The dictatorship of the new aristocracy’: it is in those terms that social-democracy attacked, right from the beginning, the socialist régime that Lenin wished to install. Plekhanov developed the theoretical basis needed to uphold these accusations by insisting that the Bolsheviks had established an ‘objectively reactionary’ political line, going against the flow of history, a reactionary utopia consisting of introducing socialism in a country that was not ready. Plekhanov referred to traditional ‘peasant anarchy’. Nevertheless, when the foreign interventions occurred, Plekhanov was one of the few Menshevik leaders to oppose them.³²

The socialists’ alliance with the bourgeoisie was based on two arguments. The first was the impossibility of ‘imposing’ socialism in a backward country. The second was that since the Bolsheviks wanted to impose socialism ‘by force’, they would bring ‘tyranny’ and ‘dictatorship’ and would constitute a ‘new aristocracy’ above the masses.

These first ‘analyses’, made by the counter-revolutionary social-democrats, who fought against socialism weapons in hand, are worth studying: these insidious attacks against Leninism would later be crudely amplified to become attacks on ‘Stalinism’.

Stalin during the Civil War

Let us come back for a moment to the rôle played by Stalin during the Civil War.

Many bourgeois publications place Trotsky, the ‘creator and organizer of the Red Army’, on an equal level with Lenin, the two being responsible for the military victory of the Bolsheviks. Stalin’s contribution to the struggle against the White Armies is generally neglected. However, between 1918 and 1920, Stalin, who was one of the main leaders of the Party, personally led the military struggle on many decisive fronts. At the military level, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Bukharin played no rôle.

In November 1917, the Central Committee created a smaller committee to deal with urgent affairs; its members were Lenin, Stalin, Sverdlov and Trotsky. Pestkovsky, Stalin’s assistant, wrote: ‘In the course of the day (Lenin) would call Stalin out an endless number of times Most of the day Stalin spent with Lenin’.³³

During the peace negotiations with Germany in December 1917, Lenin and Stalin, in order to preserve Soviet power, whatever the cost, insisted on accepting the humiliating concessions imposed by Germany. They thought that the Russian army was simply incapable of fighting. Bukharin and Trotsky wanted to refuse

the conditions and declare 'revolutionary war'. For Lenin, this ultra-nationalist line was a trap laid out by the bourgeoisie in order to precipitate the fall of the Bolsheviks. During the negotiations with Germany, Trotsky declared: 'We are withdrawing our armies and our peoples from the war ... but we feel ourselves compelled to refuse to sign the peace treaty'. Stalin affirmed that there were no signs of a incipient revolution in Germany and that Trotsky's spectacular act was no policy. Germany again took up the offensive and the Bolsheviks were soon forced to sign even worse peace conditions. In this affair, the Party was on the verge of catastrophe.³⁴

In January 1918, the Tsarist general Alekseev organized a volunteer army in Ukraine and in the Don region. In February, the German Army occupied Ukraine to 'guarantee its independence'. In May 1918, thirty thousand Czechoslovakian soldiers occupied a large part of Siberia. During the summer, at the instigation of Winston Churchill, Great Britain, France, the United States, Italy, and Japan, among others, intervened militarily against the Bolsheviks.

Starting in March 1918, Trotsky was People's Commissar for War. His task was to organize a new army of workers and peasants, led by 40,000 officers from the old Tsarist army.³⁵

In June 1918, the North Caucasus was the only important grain-growing region in the hands of the Bolsheviks. It was threatened by Krasnov's army. Stalin was sent to Tsaritsyn, the future Stalingrad, to ensure grain delivery. He found complete chaos. On July 19, he wrote to Lenin, asking for military authority over the region: 'I myself, without formalities, will remove those army commanders and (c)ommissars who are ruining things'. Stalin was named President of the Southern War Front Council. Later, Stalin would oppose the old Tsarist artillery general Sytin, named by Trotsky as Commander of the South Front, and the Commander-in-Chief, the old Tsarist colonel Vatsetis. Tsaritsyn was successfully defended.³⁶ 'Lenin regarded 'the measures decided on by Stalin' as a model'.³⁷

In October 1918, Stalin was appointed to the Military Council of the Ukrainian Front; its task was to overthrow Skoropadsky's régime, set up by Germany.

In December, when the situation dramatically deteriorated in the Urals, thanks to the advance of Kolchak's reactionary troops, Stalin was sent with full powers to put an end to the catastrophic state of the Third Army and to purge the incompetent commissars. In his inquiry, Stalin criticized the policies of Trotsky and Vatsetis. During the Eighth Congress in March 1919, Trotsky was criticized by many delegates 'for his dictatorial manners, ... for his adoration of the specialists, and his torrent of ill-considered telegrams'.³⁸

In May 1919, Stalin was sent once again, with full powers, to organize the defence of Petrograd against Yudenich's army. On June 4, Stalin sent a telegram to Lenin, claiming, with support from seized documents, that many leading officers in the Red Army were working in secret for the White Armies.³⁹

On the Eastern Front, a bitter conflict developed between its commander, S. S. Kamenev (not to be confused with L. B. Kamenev), and the Commander-in-Chief, Vatsetis. The Central Committee finally decided in favor of the former and Trotsky

presented his resignation, which was refused. Vatsetis was arrested pending an inquiry.⁴⁰

In August 1919, Denikin's White Army was moving forward towards Moscow in the Don, in Ukraine and in South Russia. From October 1919 to March 1920, Stalin led the Southern Front and defeated Denikin.⁴¹

In May 1920, Stalin was sent to the Southwestern Front, where the Polish armies were threatening the city of Lvov, in Ukraine, and Wrangel's troops in Crimea. The Poles occupied a large part of Ukraine, including Kiev. On the Western Front, Tukhachevsky counter-attacked, pushing back the aggressors to the limits of Warsaw. Lenin hoped to win the war with reactionary Poland and a temporary Polish Soviet government was formed. Stalin warned against such an act: 'The class conflicts have not reached the strength to break through the sense of national unity'.⁴² Poorly coordinated, receiving contradictory orders, Tukhachevsky's troops were counter-attacked by the Polish troops on an unprotected flank and put to flight.

To the South, Wrangel's White Armies were liquidated at the end of 1920.⁴³

In November 1919, Stalin and Trotsky received the newly created Order of the Red Banner for their military successes. Lenin and the Central Committee estimated that Stalin's merits in leading the armed struggle in the most difficult areas equaled Trotsky's in organizing and leading the Red Army at the central level. But to make himself come out in a better light, Trotsky wrote: 'Throughout the period of the Civil War, Stalin remained a third-rate figure'.⁴⁴

McNeal, who is often prejudiced against Stalin, writes on this subject:

'Stalin had emerged . . . as a political-military chief whose contribution to the Red victory was second only to Trotsky's. Stalin had played a smaller role than his rival in the overall organization of the Red Army, but he had been more important in providing direction on crucial fronts. If his reputation as a hero was far below Trotsky's, this had less to do with objective merit than with Stalin's lack of flair . . . for self-advertisement.'⁴⁵

In December 1919, Trotsky proposed the 'militarization of economic life' and wanted to mobilize the workers using methods he had applied for leading the army. With this line, the railroad workers were mobilized under military discipline. A wave of protests passed through the union movement. Lenin declared that Trotsky committed errors that endangered the dictatorship of the proletariat: by his bureaucratic harassment of the unions, he risked separating the Party from the masses.⁴⁶

Trotsky's outrageous individualism, his open disdain for Bolshevnik cadres, his authoritarian style of leadership and his taste for military discipline frightened many Party cadres. They thought that Trotsky could well play the rôle of a Napoléon Bonaparte, effecting a coup d'état and setting up a counter-revolutionary authoritarian régime.

Lenin's 'Will'

Trotsky knew his brief hour of glory in 1919, during the Civil War. However, without question, in 1921–1923, it was Stalin who was the second in the Party, after Lenin.

Since the Eighth Congress in 1919, Stalin had been a member of the Politburo, beside Lenin, Kamenev, Trotsky and Krestinsky. This membership did not change until 1921. Stalin was also member of the Organizational Bureau, also composed of five members of the Central Committee.⁴⁷ When during the Eleventh Congress, in 1922, Preobrazhensky criticized the fact that Stalin led the People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs as well as the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (in charge of controlling the state apparatus), Lenin replied:

'(W)e need a man to whom the representatives of any of these nations can go and discuss their difficulties in all detail I don't think Comrade Preobrazhensky could suggest any better comrade than Comrade Stalin.

'The same thing applies to the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. This is a vast business; but to be able to handle investigations we must have at the head of it a man who enjoys high prestige, otherwise we shall become submerged in and overwhelmed by petty intrigue.'⁴⁸

On April 23, 1922, on Lenin's suggestion, Stalin was also appointed to head the secretariat, as General Secretary.⁴⁹

Stalin was the only person who was a member of the Central Committee, the Political Bureau, the Organizational Bureau and the Secretariat of the Bolshevik Party. At the Twelfth Congress in April 1923, he presented the main report.

Lenin had suffered his first stroke in May 1922. On December 16, 1922, he suffered another major attack. His doctors knew that he would not recover.

On December 24, the doctors told Stalin, Kamenev and Bukharin, the representatives of the Political Bureau, that any political controversy could provoke a new attack, this time fatal. They decided that Lenin 'has the right to dictate every day for five or ten minutes He is forbidden [political] visitors. Friends and those around him may not inform him about political affairs'.⁵⁰

The Politburo made Stalin responsible for the relations with Lenin and the doctors. It was a thankless task since Lenin could only feel frustrated because of his paralysis and his distance from political affairs. His irritation would necessarily turn against the man who was responsible for interacting with him. Ian Grey writes:

'The journal of Lenin's secretaries, from November 21, 1922 to March 6, 1923, contained the day-by-day details of his work, visitors, and health, and after December 13 it recorded his smallest actions. Lenin, his right arm and leg paralyzed, was then confined to bed in his small apartment in the Kremlin, cut off from government business and, in fact, from the outside world. The doctors insisted that he should not be disturbed

'Unable to relinquish the habits of power, Lenin struggled to obtain the papers he wanted, relying on his wife, Krupskaya, his sister, Maria Ilyichna, and three or

four secretaries.⁵¹

Used to leading the essential aspects of the life of Party and State, Lenin desperately tried to intervene in debates in which he could no longer physically master all the elements. His doctors refused to allow him any political work, which bothered him intensely. Feeling that his end was near, Lenin sought to resolve questions that he thought of paramount importance, but that he no longer fully understood. The Politburo refused to allow him any stressful political work, but his wife did her best to get hold of the documents that he sought. Any doctor having seen similar situations would say that difficult psychological and personal conflicts were inevitable.

Towards the end of December 1922, Krupskaya wrote a letter that Lenin had dictated to her. Having done that, she was reprimanded by telephone by Stalin. She complained to Lenin and to Kamenev. 'I know better than all the doctors what can and what can not be said to Ilyich, for I know what disturbs him and what doesn't and in any case I know this better than Stalin'.⁵²

About this period, Trotsky wrote: 'In the middle of December, 1922, Lenin's health again took a turn for the worse Stalin at once tried to capitalize on this situation, hiding from Lenin much of the information which was concentrating in the Party Secretariat Krupskaya did whatever she could to shield the sick man from hostile jolts by the Secretariat.'⁵³ These are the unforgivable words of an intriguer. The doctors had refused to allow Lenin receipt of reports, and here is Trotsky, accusing Stalin for having made 'hostile maneuvers' against Lenin and for having 'hidden information'!

What enemies of Communism call 'Lenin's will' was dictated in these circumstances during the period of December 23–25, 1922. These notes are followed by a post-scriptum dated January 5, 1923.

Bourgeois authors have much focused on Lenin's so-called 'will', which supposedly called for the elimination of Stalin in favor of Trotsky. Henri Bernard, Professor Emeritus at the Belgian Royal Military School, writes: 'Trotsky should normally have succeeded Lenin (Lenin) thought of him as successor. He thought Stalin was too brutal'.⁵⁴

The U.S. Trotskyist Max Eastman published this 'will' in 1925, along with laudatory remarks about Trotsky. At the time, Trotsky had to publish a correction in the *Bolshevik* newspaper, where he wrote:

'Eastman says that the Central Committee 'concealed' from the Party . . . the so-called 'will,' . . . *there can be no other name for this than slander against the Central Committee of our Party* Vladimir Ilyich did not leave any 'will,' and the very character of the Party itself, precluded the possibility of such a 'will.' What is usually referred to as a 'will' in the émigré and foreign bourgeois and Menshevik press (in a manner garbled beyond recognition) is one of Vladimir Ilyich's letters containing advice on organisational matters. The Thirteenth Congress of the Party paid the closest attention to that letter *All talk about concealing or violating a 'will' is a malicious invention.*⁵⁵

A few years later, the same Trotsky, in his autobiography, would clamor indig-

nantly about 'Lenin's "Will", which Stalin concealed from the party'.⁵⁶

Let us examine the three pages of notes dictated by Lenin between December 23, 1922 and January 5, 1923.

Lenin called for 'increasing the number of C.C. members (to 50 to 100), I think it must be done in order to raise the prestige of the Central Committee, to do a thorough job of improving our administrative machinery and to prevent conflicts between small sections of the C.C. from acquiring excessive importance for the future of the Party. It seems to me that our Party has every right to demand from the working class 50 to 100 C.C. members'. These would be 'measures against a split'. 'I think that from this standpoint the prime factors in the question of stability are such members of the C.C. as Stalin and Trotsky. I think relations between them make the greater part of the danger of a split'.⁵⁷ So much for the 'theoretical' part.

This text is remarkably incomprehensible, clearly dictated by a sick and diminished man. How could 50 to 100 workers added to the Central Committee 'raise its prestige'? Or reduce the danger of split? Saying nothing about Stalin's and Trotsky's political concepts and visions of the Party, Lenin claimed that the personal relationships between these two leaders threatened unity.

Then Lenin 'judged' the five main leaders of the Party. We cite them here:

'Comrade Stalin, having become Secretary-General, has unlimited authority concentrated in his hands; and I am not sure whether he will always be capable of using that authority with sufficient caution. Comrade Trotsky, on the other hand, as his struggle against the C.C. on the question of the People's Commissariat for Communications has already proved, is distinguished not only by exceptional abilities. He is personally perhaps the most capable man in the present C.C., but he has displayed excessive preoccupation with the purely administrative side of the work.

'These two qualities of the two outstanding leaders of the present C.C. can inadvertently lead to a split

'I shall just recall that the October episode with Zinoviev and Kamenev was, of course, no accident, but neither can the blame for it be laid upon them personally, any more than non-Bolshevism can upon Trotsky

'Bukharin is not only a most valuable and major theorist of the Party; he is also rightly considered the favourite of the whole Party, but his theoretical views can be classified as fully Marxist only with great reserve, for there is something scholastic about him (he has never made a study of dialectics, and, I think, never fully understood it).'⁵⁸

Note that the first leader to be named by Lenin was Stalin, who, in Trotsky's words, 'always seemed a man destined to play second and third fiddle'.⁵⁹ Trotsky continued:

'Unquestionably, his object in making the will was to facilitate the work of direction for me'.⁶⁰ Of course, there is nothing of the kind in Lenin's rough notes. Grey states quite correctly:

'Stalin emerged in the best light. He had done nothing to besmirch his party

record. The only query was whether he could show good judgment in wielding the vast powers in his hands.⁶¹

With respect to Trotsky, Lenin noted four major problems: he was seriously wrong on several occasions, as was shown in his struggle against the Central Committee in the 'militarization of the unions' affair; he had an exaggerated opinion of himself; his approach to problems was bureaucratic; and his non-Bolshevism was not accidental.

About Zinoviev and Kamenev, the only thing that Lenin noted was that their treason during the October insurrection was not accidental.

Bukharin was a great theoretician, whose ideas were not completely Marxist but, rather, scholastic and non-dialectic!

Lenin dictated his notes in order to avoid a split in the Party leadership. But the statements that he made about the five main leaders seem better suited to undermining their prestige and setting them against each other.

When he dictated these lines, 'Lenin was not feeling well', wrote his secretary Fotieva, and 'the doctors opposed discussions between Lenin and his secretary and stenographer'.⁶²

Then, ten days later, Lenin dictated an 'addition', which appears to refer to a rebuke that Stalin had made twelve days earlier to Krupskaya.

'Stalin is too rude and this defect, although quite tolerable in our midst and in dealings among us Communists, becomes intolerable in a Secretary-General. That is why I suggest that the comrades think about a way of removing Stalin from that post and appointing another man in his stead who in all other respects differs from Comrade Stalin in having only one advantage, namely, that of being more tolerant, more loyal, more polite and more considerate to the comrades, less capricious, etc. This circumstance may appear to be a negligible detail. But I think that from the standpoint of safeguards against a split and from the standpoint of what I wrote above about the relationship between Stalin and Trotsky it is not a detail, or it is a detail which can assume decisive importance.'⁶³

Gravely ill, half paralyzed, Lenin was more and more dependent on his wife. A few overly harsh words from Stalin to Krupskaya led Lenin to ask for the resignation of the General Secretary. But who was to replace him? A man who had all of Stalin's capacities and 'one more trait': to be more tolerant, polite and attentive! It is clear from the text the Lenin was certainly not referring to Trotsky! Then to whom? To no one.

Stalin's 'rudeness' was 'entirely supportable in relations among us Communists', but was not 'in the office of the General Secretary'. But the General Secretary's main rôle at the time dealt with questions of the Party's internal organization!

In February 1923, 'Lenin's state worsened, he suffered from violent headaches. The doctor categorically refused to allow newspaper reading, visits and political information. Vladimir Ilyich asked for the record of the Tenth Congress of the Soviets. It was not given to him, which made him very sad'.⁶⁴ Apparently, Krupskaya tried to obtain the documents that Lenin asked for. Dimitrievsky reported another altercation between Krupskaya and Stalin.

‘When Krupskaya . . . telephoned him . . . once more for some information, Stalin . . . upbraided her in the most outrageous language. Krupskaya, all in tears, immediately ran to complain to Lenin. Lenin’s nerves, already strained to the breaking point by the intrigues, could not hold out any longer.’⁶⁵

On March 5, Lenin dictated a new note:

‘Respected Comrade Stalin. You had the rudeness to summon my wife to the telephone and reprimand her . . . I do not intend to forget so easily what was done against me, and I need not stress that I consider what is done against my wife is done against me also. I ask therefore that you weigh carefully whether you are agreeable to retract what you said and to apologize or whether you prefer to sever relations between us. Lenin.’⁶⁶

It is distressing to read this private letter from a man who had reached his physical limits. Krupskaya herself asked the secretary not to forward the note to Stalin.⁶⁷ These are in fact the last lines that Lenin was able to dictate: the next day, his illness worsened significantly and he was no longer able to work.⁶⁸

That Trotsky was capable of manipulating the words of a sick man, almost completely paralyzed, shows the utter moral depravity of this individual. Sure enough, like a good forger, Trotsky presented this text as the final proof that Lenin had designated him as successor! He wrote:

‘That note, the last surviving Lenin document, is at the same time the final summation of his relations with Stalin.’⁶⁹

Years later, in 1927, the united opposition of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev tried once again to use this ‘will’ against the Party leadership. In a public declaration, Stalin said:

‘The oppositionists shouted here . . . that the Central Committee of the Party “concealed” Lenin’s “will.” We have discussed this question several times at the plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission . . . (*A voice*: “Scores of times.”) It has been proved and proved again that nobody has concealed anything, that Lenin’s “will” was addressed to the Thirteenth Party Congress, that this “will” was read out at the congress (*voices*: “That’s right!”), that the congress *unanimously* decided not to publish it because, among other things, Lenin himself did not want it to be published and did not ask that it should be published.’⁷⁰

‘It is said in that “will” Comrade Lenin suggested to the congress that in view of Stalin’s “rudeness” it should consider the question of putting another comrade in Stalin’s place as General Secretary. That is quite true. Yes, comrades, I am rude to those who grossly and perfidiously wreck and split the Party. I have never concealed this and do not conceal it now . . . At the very first meeting of the plenum of the Central Committee after the Thirteenth Congress I asked the plenum of the Central Committee to release me from my duties as General Secretary. The congress discussed this question. It was discussed by each delegation separately, and all the delegations unanimously, including Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev, *obliged* Stalin to remain at his post . . .

‘A year later I again put in a request to the plenum to release me, but I was obliged to remain at my post.’⁷¹

But Trotsky's intrigues around this 'will' were not the worst that he had to offer. At the end of his life, Trotsky went to the trouble to accuse Stalin of having killed Lenin!

And to make this unspeakable accusation, Trotsky used his 'thoughts and suspicions' as sole argument!

In his book, *Stalin*, Trotsky wrote:

'What was Stalin's actual role at the time of Lenin's illness? Did not the disciple do something to expedite his master's death?'⁷²

'(O)nly Lenin's death could clear the way for Stalin.'⁷³

'I am firmly convinced that Stalin could not have waited passively when his fate hung by a thread.'⁷⁴

Of course, Trotsky gave no proof whatsoever in support of his charge, but he did write that the idea came to him when 'toward the end of February, 1923, at a meeting of the Politburo . . . , Stalin informed us . . . that Lenin had suddenly called him in and had asked him for poison. Lenin . . . considered his situation hopeless, foresaw the approach of a new stroke, did not trust his physicians . . . , he suffered unendurably.'⁷⁵

At the time, listening to Stalin, Trotsky almost unmasked Lenin's future assassin! He wrote:

'I recall how extraordinary, enigmatic and out of tune with the circumstances Stalin's face seemd to me a sickly smile was transfixed on his face, as on a mask.'⁷⁶

Let's follow Inspector Clousot-Trotsky in his investigation. Listen to this:

'(H)ow and why did Lenin, who at the time was extremely suspicious of Stalin, turn to him with such a request . . . ? Lenin saw in Stalin the only man who would grant his tragic request, since he was directly interested in doing so (he) guessed . . . how Stalin really felt about him.'⁷⁷

Just try to write, with this kind of argument, a book accusing Prince Albert of Belgium of having poisoned his brother King Beaudoin: 'he was directly interested in doing so'. You would be sentenced to prison. But Trotsky allowed himself such unspeakable slanders against the main Communist leader, and the bourgeoisie hails him for his 'unblemished struggle against Stalin'.⁷⁸

Here is the high point of Trotsky's criminal enquiry:

'I imagine the course of affairs somewhat like this. Lenin asked for poison at the end of February, 1923 Toward winter Lenin began to improve slowly . . . ; his faculty of speech began to come back to him

'Stalin was after power His goal was near, but the danger emanating from Lenin was even nearer. At this time Stalin must have made up his mind that it was imperative to act without delay Whether Stalin sent the poison to Lenin with the hint that the physicians had left no hope for his recovery or whether he resorted to more direct means I do not know.'⁷⁹

Even Trotsky's lies were poorly formulated: if there was no hope, why did Stalin need to 'assassinate' Lenin?

From March 6, 1923 until his death, Lenin was almost completely paralyzed and deprived of speech. His wife, his sister and his secretaries were at his bedside. Lenin could not have taken poison without them knowing it. The medical records from that time explain quite clearly that Lenin's death was inevitable.

The manner in which Trotsky constructed 'Stalin, the assassin', as well as the manner in which he fraudulently used the so-called 'will', completely discredit all his agitation against Stalin.

Building socialism in one country

The great debate about building socialism in the USSR took place at the juncture between the Lenin and Stalin periods.

After the defeat of the foreign interventionists and the reactionary armies, working class power, with the support of the poor and middle peasantry, was firmly established.

The dictatorship of the proletariat had defeated its adversaries politically and militarily. But would it be possible to build socialism? Was the country ‘ready’ for socialism? Was socialism possible in a backward and ruined country?

Lenin’s formula is well known: ‘Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country’.¹ Working class power took form in the Soviets, which were allied to the peasant masses. Electrification was necessary for the creation of modern means of production. With these two elements, socialism could be built. Lenin expressed his confidence in socialist construction in the Soviet Union and his determination to see it through:

‘(I)ndustry cannot be developed without electrification. This is a long-term task which will take at least ten years to accomplish Economic success, however, can be assured only when the Russian proletarian state effectively controls a huge industrial machine built on up-to-day technology This is an enormous task, to accomplish which will require a far longer period than was needed to defend our right to existence against invasion. However we are not afraid of such a period.’²

According to Lenin, peasants would work initially as individual producers, although the State would encourage them towards cooperation. By regrouping the peasants, they could be integrated into the socialist economy. Lenin rejected the Menshevik argument that the peasant population was too barbaric and culturally backward to understand socialism. Now, said Lenin, that we have the power of the dictatorship of the proletariat, what is to prevent us from effecting among this ‘barbaric’ people a real cultural revolution?³

So Lenin formulated the three essential tasks for building a socialist society in the USSR: develop modern industry under the Socialist State, organize peasant

cooperatives and start a cultural revolution, which would bring literacy to the peasant masses and raise the technical and scientific level of the population.

In one of his final texts, Lenin wrote:

‘(T)he power of the state over all large-scale means of production, political power in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured proletarian leadership of the peasantry, etc. — is this not all that is necessary to build a complete socialist society out of co-operatives . . . ?’⁴

Thanks to this perspective, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party were able to draw great enthusiasm from the masses, particularly the worker masses. They created a spirit of sacrifice for the socialist cause and instilled confidence in the future of socialism. In November 1922, Lenin addressed the Moscow Soviet about the New Economic Policy (NEP):

‘ “The New Economic Policy!” A strange title. It was called a New Economic Policy because it turned things back. We are now retreating, going back, as it were; but we are doing so in order, after first retreating, to take a running start and make a bigger leap forward.’⁵

He finished as follows:

‘NEP Russia will become socialist Russia.’⁶

However, it was the question of whether socialism could be built in the Soviet Union that provoked a great ideological and political debate that lasted from 1922 to 1926–1927. Trotsky was on the front line in the attack against Lenin’s ideas.

In 1919, Trotsky thought it opportune to republish *Results and Prospects*, one of his major texts, first published in 1906. In his 1919 preface, he noted: ‘I consider the train of ideas in its main ramifications very nearly approaches the conditions of our time’.⁷

But what are the brilliant ‘ideas’ found in his 1906 work, ideas that Trotsky wanted to see taken up by the Bolshevik Party? He noted that the peasantry was characterized by ‘political barbarism, social formlessness, primitiveness and lack of character. None of these features can in any way create a reliable basis for a consistent, active proletarian policy’. After the seizure of power,

‘The proletariat will find itself compelled to carry the struggle into the villages (But) the insufficient degree of class differentiation will create obstacles to the introduction among the peasantry of developed class struggle, upon which the urban proletariat could rely

‘The cooling-off of the peasantry, its political passivity, and all the more the active opposition of its upper sections, cannot but have an influence on a section of the intellectuals and the petty-bourgeoisie of the towns.

‘Thus, the more definite and determined the policy of the proletariat in power becomes, the narrower and more shaky does the ground beneath its feet become.’⁸

The difficulties in building socialism that Trotsky enumerated were real. They explain the bitterness of the class struggle in the countryside when the Party launched collectivization in 1929. It would take Stalin’s unshakeable resolve and

organizational capacities for the socialist régime to pass through this terrible test. For Trotsky, the difficulties were the basis for capitulationist and defeatist politics, along with some ‘ultra-revolutionary’ calls for ‘world revolution’.

Let us return to Trotsky’s political strategy, conceived in 1906 and reaffirmed in 1919.

‘But how far can the socialist policy of the working class be applied in the economic conditions of Russia? We can say one thing with certainty — that it will come up against political obstacles much sooner than it will stumble over the technical backwardness of the country. *Without the direct State support of the European proletariat the working class of Russia cannot remain in power and convert its temporary domination into a lasting socialistic dictatorship.* Of this there cannot for any moment be any doubt.’⁹

‘Left to its own resource, the working class of Russia will inevitably be crushed by the counter-revolution the moment the peasantry turns its back on it. It will have no alternative but to link the fate of its political rule, and, hence, the fate of the whole Russian revolution, with the fate of the socialist revolution in Europe. That colossal state-political power given it by a temporary conjuncture of circumstances in the Russian bourgeois revolution will cast it into the scales of the class struggle of the entire capitalist world.’¹⁰

To repeat these words in 1919 was already calling for defeatism: there was ‘no doubt’ that the working class ‘cannot remain in power’, it was certain that it ‘will inevitably be crushed’ if the socialist revolution did not triumph in Europe. This capitulationist thesis accompanied an adventurist call for ‘exporting revolution’:

‘(T)he Russian proletariat (must) on its own initiative carry the revolution on to European soil the Russian revolution will throw itself against old capitalist Europe.’¹¹

To show the extent to which he held on to his old anti-Leninist ideas, Trotsky published in 1922 a new edition of his book, *The Year 1905*, adding a preface in which he argued the correctness of his political line. After five years of socialist power, he stated:

‘It was precisely during the interval between January 9 and the October strike of 1905 that the views on the character of the revolutionary development of Russia which came to be known as the theory of ‘permanent revolution’ crystallized in the author’s mind precisely in order to ensure its victory, the proletarian vanguard would be forced in the very early stages of its rule to make deep inroads not only into feudal property but into bourgeois property as well. In this it would come into *hostile collision* not only with all the bourgeois groupings which supported the proletariat during the first stages of its revolutionary struggle, but also *with the broad masses of the peasantry* with whose assistance it came into power. The contradictions in the position of a workers’ government in a backward country with an overwhelmingly peasant population could be solved *only* on an international scale, in the arena of world proletarian revolution.’¹²

For those who think that this contradicted the fact that the dictatorship of the proletariat had been maintained for five years, Trotsky responded in a 1922

‘Postscript’ to his pamphlet *A Program of Peace*:

‘The fact that the workers’ state has maintained itself against the entire world in a single and, moreover, backward country testifies to the colossal power of the proletariat which in other more advanced, more civilised countries, will truly be able to achieve miracles. But having defended ourselves as a state in the political and military sense, we have not arrived at, nor even approached socialist society Trade negotiations with bourgeois states, concessions, the Geneva Conference and so on are far too graphic evidence of the impossibility of isolated socialist construction within a national state-framework the genuine rise of socialist economy in Russia will become possible only after the victory of the proletariat in the most important countries of Europe.’¹³

Here is the obvious meaning: the Soviet workers are not capable of accomplishing miracles by building socialism; but the day that Belgians, Dutch, Luxemburgers and other Germans rise up, then the world will see real marvels. Trotsky put all of his hope in the proletariat of the ‘more advanced and more civilized’ countries. But he paid no particular attention to the fact that in 1922, only the Russian proletariat proved to be truly revolutionary, to the end, while the revolutionary wave that existed in 1918 in Western Europe was already, for the most part, history.

From 1902, and continually, Trotsky fought the line that Lenin had drawn for the democratic revolution and the socialist revolution in Russia. By reaffirming, just before Lenin died, that the dictatorship of the proletariat had to come into open contradiction with the peasant masses and that, consequently, there was no salvation for Soviet socialism outside of the victorious revolution in the ‘more civilized’ countries, Trotsky was trying to substitute his own program for Lenin’s.

Behind the leftist verbiage of ‘world revolution’, Trotsky took up the fundamental idea of the Mensheviks: it was impossible to build socialism in the Soviet Union. The Mensheviks openly said that neither the masses nor the objective conditions were ripe for socialism. As for Trotsky, he said that the proletariat, as class-in-itself, and the mass of individualist peasants, would inevitably enter into conflict. Without the outside support of a victorious European revolution, the Soviet working class would be incapable of building socialism. With this conclusion, Trotsky returned to the fold of his Menshevik friends.

In 1923, during his struggle for the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, Trotsky launched his second campaign. He tried to clear out the Bolshevik Party’s old cadres and replace them with young ones, whom he hoped to be able to manipulate. In preparation for the seizure of the Party’s leadership, Trotsky returned, almost to a word, to his 1904 anti-Leninist ideas for the Party.

At that time, Trotsky had attacked with the greatest vehemence Lenin’s entire concept of the Bolshevik Party and its leadership. His 1923 attacks against the Bolshevik leadership are clear evidence of the persistence of his petit-bourgeois ideals.

In 1904, Trotsky the individualist fought virulently against the Leninist concept of the Party. He called Lenin a ‘fanatical secessionist’, a ‘revolutionary bourgeois

democrat', an 'organization fetichist', a partisan of the 'army mentality' and of 'organizational pettiness', a 'dictator wanting to substitute himself for the central committee', a 'dictator wanting to impose dictatorship on the proletariat' for whom 'any mixture of elements thinking differently is a pathological phenomenon'.¹⁴

Note that this hatred was directed, not at the infamous Stalin, but, rather, at his revered master, Lenin. That book, published by Trotsky in 1904, is crucial to understanding his ideology. He made himself known as an unrepentent bourgeois individualist. All the slanders and insults that he would direct twenty-five years later against Stalin, he had already hurled in that work against Lenin.

Trotsky did everything he could to depict Stalin as a dictator ruling over the Party. Yet, when Lenin created the Bolshevik Party, Trotsky accused him of creating an 'Orthodox theocracy' and an 'autocratic-Asiatic centralism'.¹⁵

Trotsky always claimed that Stalin had adopted a cynical, pragmatic attitude towards Marxism, which he reduced to ready-made formulas. Writing about *One step forward, two steps back*, Trotsky wrote:

'One cannot show more cynicism for the ideological heritage of the proletariat as does Comrade Lenin! For him, Marxism is not a scientific method of analysis.'¹⁶

In his 1904 work, Trotsky invented the term 'substitutionism' to attack the Leninist party and its leadership.

'The "professional revolutionary" group acted in the place of the proletariat.'¹⁷

'The organization substitutes itself for the Party, the Central Committee for the organization and its financing and the dictator for the Central Committee.'¹⁸

So, in 1923, often using the same words that he used against Lenin, Trotsky attacked the Leninist concept of party and leadership: 'the old generation accustomed itself to think and to decide, as it still does, for the party'. Trotsky noted 'A certain tendency of the apparatus to think and to decide for the whole organization'.¹⁹

In 1904, Trotsky attacked the Leninist concept of the Party by affirming that it 'separated the conscious activity from the executive activity. (There is) a Center and, underneath, there are only disciplined executives of technical functions.' In his bourgeois individualist worldview, Trotsky rejected the hierarchy and the different levels of responsibility and discipline. His ideal was 'the global political personality, who imposes on all 'centers' his will in all possible forms, including boycott'!²⁰

This is the motto of an individualist, of an anarchist.

Trotsky again used this criticism against the Party: 'the apparatus manifests a growing tendency to counterpose a few thousand comrades, who form the leading cadres, to the rest of the mass, whom they look upon only as an object of action'.²¹

In 1904, Trotsky accused Lenin of being a bureaucrat making the Party degenerate into a revolutionary-bourgeois organization. Lenin was blinded by 'the bureaucratic logic of such and such "organizational plan" ', but 'the fiasco of organizational fetichism' was certain. 'The head of the reactionary wing of our Party, comrade Lenin, gives social-democracy a definition that is a theoretical attack against the class nature of our Party.' Lenin 'formulated a tendency for the Party, the revolutionary-bourgeois tendency'.²²

In 1923, Trotsky wrote the same thing against Stalin, but using a more moderate tone: ‘bureaucratization threatens to ... provoke a more or less opportunistic degeneration of the Old Guard’.²³

In 1904, the bureaucrat Lenin was accused of ‘terrorizing’ the Party:

‘The task of *Iskra* (Lenin’s newspaper) was to theoretically terrorize the intelligentsia. For social-democrats educated in this school, orthodoxy is something close to the absolute ‘Truth’ that inspired the Jacobins (French revolutionary democrats). Orthodox Truth foresees everything. Those who contest are excluded; those who doubt are on the verge of being excluded.’²⁴

In 1923, Trotsky called for ‘replacing the mummified bureaucrats’ so that ‘from now on nobody will dare terrorize the party’.²⁵

To conclude, this 1923 text shows that Trotsky was also unscrupulously ambitious. In 1923, to seize power in the Bolshevik Party, Trotsky wanted to ‘liquidate’ the old Bolshevik guard, who knew only too well his fanatical struggle against Lenin’s ideas. No old Bolshevik was ready to abandon Leninism for Trotskyism. Hence Trotsky’s tactics: he declared the old Bolsheviks to be ‘degenerating’ and flattered the youth who were not familiar with his anti-Leninist past. Under the slogan of ‘democratization’ of the party, Trotsky wanted to install youth who supported him in the leadership.

Yet, ten years later, when men such as Zinoviev and Kamenev would openly show their opportunistic personalities, Trotsky declared that they represented ‘the old Bolshevik guard’ persecuted by Stalin: he allied himself with these opportunists, invoking the glorious past of the ‘old guard’!

Trotsky’s position within the Party continued to weaken in 1924–1925, and he attacked the Party leadership with increasing rage.

Starting from the idea that it was impossible to build socialism in a single country, Trotsky concluded that Bukharin’s 1925–1926 political line, the current focus of his hatred, represented kulak (rich peasants; see chapter 4) interests and the new bourgeois, called Nep-man. Power was becoming kulak power. Discussion started yet again about the ‘disintegration’ of the Bolshevik Party. Since they were evolving towards disintegration and kulak power, Trotsky appropriated himself the right to create factions and to work clandestinely within the Party.

The debate was led openly and honestly for five years. When the discussion was closed in 1927 by a Party vote, those who defended the theses of impossibility of building socialism in the Soviet Union and the right to form factions received between one and one and a half per cent of the votes. Trotsky was expelled from the Party, sent to Siberia and, finally, banished from the Soviet Union.

Socialist industrialization

At the end of the Civil War, the Bolsheviks inherited a completely ruined country whose industry had been ravaged by eight years of military operations. The banks and large companies were nationalized and, with extraordinary effort, the Soviet Union reconstructed the industrial apparatus.

In 1928, the production of steel, coal, cement, industrial looms and machine tools had reached or surpassed the pre-war level. It was then that the Soviet Union set itself the impossible challenge: to lay down the basis of modern industry in a national Five Year Plan, essentially using the country's inner resources. To succeed, the country was set on a war footing to undertake a forced march towards industrialization.

Socialist industrialization was the key to building socialism in the Soviet Union. Everything depended on its success.

Industrialization was to lay the material basis for socialism. It would allow the radical transformation of agriculture, using machinery and modern techniques. It would offer material and cultural well-being to the workers. It would provide the means for a real cultural revolution. It would produce the infrastructure of a modern, efficient state. And it alone would give the working people the modern arms necessary to defend its independence against the most advanced imperialist powers.

On February 4, 1931, Stalin explained why the country had to maintain the extremely rapid rate of industrialization:

‘Do you want our socialist fatherland to be beaten and lose its independence . . . ?

‘We are fifty to a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do this or they crush us.’¹

During the thirties, the German fascists, like the British and French imperialists, drew in full color the ‘terror’ which accompanied the ‘forced industrialization’. They all sought revenge for their defeat in 1918–1921, when they intervened militarily in the Soviet Union. They all wanted a Soviet Union that was easy to crush.

In asking for extraordinary efforts from the workers, Stalin held his eye on the terrifying menace of war and imperialist aggression that hovered over the first socialist country.

The giant effort to industrialize the country during the years 1928–1932 was called *Stalin's Industrial Revolution* by Hirokai Kuromiya. It is also called 'the second revolution' or the 'revolution from above'. The most conscious and energetic revolutionaries were at the head of the State and, from this position, they mobilized and provided discipline to tens of millions of worker-peasants, who had up to that point been left in the shadows of illiteracy and religious obscurantism. The central thesis of Kuromiya's book is that Stalin succeeded in mobilizing the workers for an accelerated industrialization by presenting it as a class war of the oppressed against the old exploiting classes and against the saboteurs found in their own ranks.

To be able to direct this giant industrialization effort, the Party had to grow. The number of members rose from 1,300,000 in 1928 to 1,670,000 in 1930. During the same period, the percentage of members of working class background rose from 57 to 65 per cent. Eighty per cent of the new recruits were shock workers: they were in general relatively young workers who had received technical training, Komsomol activists, who had distinguished themselves as model workers, who helped rationalize production to obtain higher productivity.² This refutes the fable of 'bureaucratization' of the Stalinist party: the party reinforced its worker base and its capacity to fight.

Industrialization was accompanied by extraordinary upheavals. Millions of illiterate peasants were pulled out of the Middle Ages and hurled into the world of modern machinery. '(B)y the end of 1932, the industrial labor force doubled from 1928 to more than six million.'³ Over the same period of four years and for all sectors, 12.5 million people had found a new occupation in the city; 8.5 million among them had been former peasants.⁴

Heroism and enthusiasm

Despising socialism, the bourgeoisie loves to stress the 'forced' character of the industrialization. Those who lived through or observed the socialist industrialization through the eyes of the working masses emphasize these essential traits: heroism at work and the enthusiasm and combative character of the working masses.

During the First Five Year Plan, Anna Louise Strong, a young U.S. journalist hired by the Soviet *Moscow News* newspaper, traveled the country. When in 1956, Khrushchev made his insidious attack on Stalin, she recalled certain essential facts. Speaking of the First Five Year Plan, she made the following judgment: 'never in history was so great an advance so swift'.⁵

In 1929, first year of the Plan, the enthusiasm of the working masses was such that even an old specialist of ancient Russia, who spat out his spite for the Bolsheviks in 1918, had to recognize that the country was unrecognizable. Dr. Émile Joseph Dillon had lived in Russia from 1877 to 1914 and had taught at several Russian universities. When he left in 1918, he had written:

‘In the Bolshevik movement there is not the vestige of a constructive or social idea For Bolshevism is Tsardom upside down. To capitalists it metes out treatment as bad as that which the Tsars dealt to serfs.’⁶

Ten years later, in 1928, Dr. Dillon revisited the USSR, and was lost in amazement at what he saw:

‘Everywhere people are thinking, working, combining, making scientific discoveries and industrial inventions Nothing like it; nothing approaching it in variety, intensity, tenacity of purpose has ever yet been witnessed. Revolutionary endeavour is melting colossal obstacles and fusing heterogeneous elements into one great people; not indeed a nation in the old-world meaning but a strong people cemented by quasi-religious enthusiasm The Bolsheviks then have accomplished much of what they aimed at, and more than seemed attainable by any human organisation under the adverse conditions with which they had to cope. They have mobilised well over 150,000,000 of listless dead-and-alive human beings, and infused into them a new spirit.’⁷

Anna Louise Strong remembered how the miracles of industrialization took place.

‘The Kharkov (Tractor) Works had a special problem. It was built “outside the plan.” (In 1929,) Peasants joined collective farms faster than expected. Kharkov, proudly Ukrainian, built its own plant “outside the Five-Year Plan” All steel, bricks, cement, labor were already assigned for five years. Kharkov could get steel only by inducing some steel plant to produce “above the plan.” To fill the shortage of unskilled labor, tens of thousands of people — office workers, students, professors — volunteered on free days “Every morning, at half-past six, we see the special train come in,” said Mr. Raskin. “They come with bands and banners, a different crowd each day and always jolly.” It was said that half the unskilled labor that built the Plant was done by volunteers.’⁸

In 1929, since agricultural collectivization had developed in an unexpected manner, the Kharkov Tractor Works was not the only ‘correction’ to the Plan. The Putilov factory in Leningrad produced 1,115 tractors in 1927 and 3,050 in 1928. After heated discussions at the factory, a plan was drawn up to produce 10,000 tractors for 1930! In fact, 8,935 were produced.

The miracle of industrialization in a decade was influenced not only by the upheavals taking place in the backward countryside, but also by the growing menace of war.

The Magnitogorsk steel works was designed for annual production of 656,000 tonnes. In 1930, a plan was drawn up to produce 2,500,000.⁹ But the plans for steel production were soon revised upwards: in 1931, the Japanese army occupied Manchuria and was threatening the Siberian borders. The next year, the Nazis, in power in Berlin, were publishing their claims to Ukraine. John Scott was a U.S. engineer, working in Magnitogorsk. He evoked the heroic efforts of workers and the decisive importance for the defence of the Soviet Union.

‘By 1942 the Ural industrial district became the stronghold of Soviet resistance. Its mines, mills, and shops, its fields and forests, are supplying the Red Army with immense quantities of military materials of all kinds, spare parts, replacements, and

other manufactured products to keep Stalin's mechanized divisions in the field.

'The Ural industrial region covers an area of some five hundred miles square almost in the center of the largest country in the world. Within this area Nature placed rich deposits of iron, coal, copper, aluminum, lead, asbestos, manganese, potash, gold, silver, platinum, zinc, and petroleum, as well as rich forests and hundreds of thousands of acres of arable land. Until 1930 these fabulous riches were practically undeveloped. During the decade from 1930 to 1940 some two hundred industrial aggregates of all kinds were constructed and put into operation in the Urals. This herculean task was accomplished thanks to the political sagacity of Joseph Stalin and his relentless perseverance in forcing through the realization of his construction program despite fantastic costs and fierce difficulties

(Stalin favored heavy industry.) He further asserted that new industries must be concentrated in the Urals and Siberia thousands of miles away from the nearest frontiers, out of reach of any enemy bombers. Whole new industries must be created. Russia had hitherto been dependent on other countries for almost its entire supply of rubber, chemicals, machine tools, tractors, and many other things. These commodities could and must be produced in the Soviet Union in order to ensure the technical and military independence of the country.

'Bukharin and many other old Bolsheviks disagreed with Stalin. They held that light industries should be built first; the Soviet people should be furnished with consumers' goods before they embarked on a total industrialization program. Step by step, one after another these dissenting voices were silenced. Stalin won. Russia embarked on the most gigantic industrialization plan the world had ever seen.

'In 1932 fifty-six per cent of the Soviet Union's national income was invested in capital outlay. This was an extraordinary achievement. In the United States in 1860-1870, when we were building our railroads and blast furnaces, the maximum recapitalization for any one year was in the neighborhood of twelve per cent of the national income. Moreover, American industrialization was largely financed by European capital, while the man power for the industrial construction world poured in from China, Ireland, Poland, and other European countries. Soviet industrialization was achieved almost without the aid of foreign capital.'¹⁰

The hard life and the sacrifices of industrialization were consciously and enthusiastically accepted by the majority of workers. They had their noses to the grindstone, but they knew that it was for themselves, for a future with dignity and freedom for all workers. Hiroaki Kuromiya wrote:

'Paradoxical as it may appear, the forced accumulation was a source not only of privation and unrest but also of Soviet heroism Soviet youth in the 1930s found heroism in working in factories and on construction sites like Magnitogorsk and Kuznetsk.'¹¹

'(T)he rapid industrialization drive of the First Five-Year Plan symbolized the grandiose and dramatic goal of building a new society. Promoted against the background of the Depression and mass unemployment in the West, the Soviet industrialization drive did evoke heroic, romantic, and enthusiastic "superhuman" efforts. "The word 'enthusiasm,' like many others, has been devalued by inflation,"

Ilya Ehrenburg has written, “yet there is no other word to fit the days of the First Five Year Plan; it was enthusiasm pure and simple that inspired the young people to daily and spectacular feats.” According to another contemporary, “those days were a really romantic, intoxicating time”: “People were creating by their own hands what had appeared a mere dream before and were convinced in practice that these dreamlike plans were an entirely realistic thing.”¹²

Class war

Kuromiya showed how Stalin presented industrialization as a class war of the oppressed against the old ruling classes.

This idea is correct. Nevertheless, through untold numbers of literary and historical works, we are told to sympathize with those who were repressed during the class wars of industrialization and collectivization. We are told that repression is ‘always inhuman’ and that a civilized nation is not allowed to hurt a social group, even if it was exploiting.

What can be said against this so-called ‘humanist’ argument?

How did the industrialization of the ‘civilized world’ made? How did the London and Paris bankers and industries create their industrial base? Could their industrialization have been possible without the pillage of the India? Pillage accompanied by the extermination of more than sixty million American Indians? Would it have been possible without the slave trade in Africans, that monstrous bloodbath? UNESCO experts estimate the African losses at 210 million persons, killed during raids or on ships, or sold as slaves. Could our industrialization have been possible without colonization, which made entire peoples prisoners in their own native lands?

And those who industrialized this little corner of the world called Europe, at the cost of millions of ‘indigenous’ deaths, tell us that the Bolshevik repression against the possessing classes was an abomination? Those who industrialized their countries by chasing peasants off the land with guns, who massacred women and children with working days of fourteen hours, who imposed slave wages, always with the threat of unemployment and famine, they dare go on at book length about the ‘forced’ industrialization of the Soviet Union?

If Soviet industrialization could only take place by repressing the rich and reactionary five per cent, capitalist industrialization consisted of the terror exercised by the rich five per cent against the working masses, both in their own countries and in dominated ones.

Industrialization was a class war against the old exploiting classes, which did everything they possibly could to prevent the success of the socialist experience. It was often accomplished through bitter struggle within the working class itself: illiterate peasants were torn out of their traditional world and hurled into modern production, bringing with them all their prejudices and their retrograde concepts. The old reflexes of the working class itself, used to being exploited by a boss and used to resisting him, had to be replaced by a new attitude to work, now that the

workers themselves were the masters of society.

On this subject, we have vivid testimony about the class struggle inside one of the Soviet factories, written by a U.S. engineer, John Scott, who worked long years at Magnitogorsk.

Scott was not Communist and often criticized the Bolshevik system. But when reporting what he experienced in the strategic complex of Magnitogorsk, he made us understand several essential problems that Stalin had to confront.

Scott described the ease with which a counter-revolutionary who served in the White Armies but showed himself to be dynamic and intelligent could pass as a proletarian element and climb the ranks of the Party. His work also showed that the majority of active counter-revolutionaries were potential spies for imperialist powers. It was not at all easy to distinguish conscious counter-revolutionaries from corrupted bureaucrats and 'followers' who were just looking for an easy life.

Scott also explained that the 1937–1938 purge was not solely a 'negative' undertaking, as it is presented in the West: it was mostly a massive political mobilization that reinforced the antifascist conscience of the workers, that made bureaucrats improve the quality of their work and that allowed a considerable development of industrial production. The purge was part of the great preparation of the popular masses for resisting the coming imperialist invasions. The facts refute Khrushchev's slanderous declaration that Stalin did not adequately prepare the country for war.

Here is John Scott's testimony about Magnitogorsk.

'Shevchenko ... was running (in 1936) the coke plant with its two thousand workers. He was a gruff man, exceedingly energetic, hard-hitting, and often rude and vulgar ...

'With certain limitations ..., Shevchenko was not a bad plant director. The workers respected him, and when he gave an order they jumped ...

'Shevchenko came from a little village in the Ukraine. In 1920, Denikin's White Army occupied the territory, and young Shevchenko, a youth of nineteen, was enlisted as a gendarme. Later Denikin was driven back into the Black Sea, and the Reds took over the country. In the interests of self-preservation Shevchenko lost his past, moved to another section of the country, and got a job in a mill. He was very energetic and active, and within a surprisingly short time had changed from the pogrom-inspiring gendarme into a promising trade-union functionary in a large factory. He was ultra-proletarian, worked well, and was not afraid to cut corners and push his way up at the expense of his fellows. Then he joined the party, and one thing led to another — the Red Directors Institute, important trade-union work, and finally in 1931 he was sent to Magnitogorsk as assistant chief of construction work ...

'In 1935 ... a worker arrived from some town in the Ukraine and began to tell stories about Shevchenko's activities there in 1920. Shevchenko gave the man money and a good job, but still the story leaked out ...

'One night he threw a party which was unprecedented in Magnitogorsk Shevchenko and his pals were busy the rest of the night and most of the next consuming the remains ...

‘One day . . . Shevchenko was removed from his post, along with a half-dozen of his leading personnel Shevchenko was tried fifteen months later and got ten years.

‘Shevchenko was at least fifty per cent bandit — a dishonest and unscrupulous careerist. His personal aims and ideals differed completely from those of the founders of Socialism. However, in all probability, Shevchenko was not a Japanese spy, as his indictment stated, did not have terrorist intentions against the leaders of the party and the government, and did not deliberately bring about the explosion (that killed four workers in 1935).

‘The ‘Shevchenko’ band was composed of some twenty men, all of who received long sentences. Some, like Shevchenko, were crooks and careerists. Some were actual counter-revolutionaries who set out deliberately to do what they could to overthrow the Soviet power and were not particular with whom they cooperated. Others were just unfortunate in having worked under a chief who fell foul of the NKVD.

‘Nicolai Mikhailovich Udkin, one of Shevchenko’s colleagues, was the eldest son in a well-to-do Ukrainian family. He felt strongly that the Ukraine had been conquered, raped, and was now being exploited by a group of Bolsheviks . . . who were ruining the country He felt, furthermore, that the capitalist system worked much better than the Socialist system

‘Here was a man who was at least a potential menace to the Soviet power, a man who might have been willing to cooperate with the Germans for the ‘liberation of the Ukraine’ in 1941. He, also, got ten years.’¹³

‘During the course of the purge hundreds of thousands of bureaucrats shook in their boots. Officials and administrators who had formerly come to work at ten, gone home at four-thirty, and shrugged their shoulders at complaints, difficulties, and failures, began to stay at work from dawn till dark, to worry about the success or failure of their units, and to fight in a very real and earnest fashion for plan fulfillment, for economy, and for the well-being of their workers and employees, about whom they had previously lost not a wink of sleep.’¹⁴

‘By and large, production increased from 1938 to 1941. By late 1938 the immediate negative effects of the purge had nearly disappeared. The industrial aggregates of Magnitogorsk were producing close to capacity, and every furnace, every mill, every worker, was being made to feel the pressure and the tension which spread through every phase of Soviet life after Munich. ‘The capitalist attack on the Soviet Union, prepared for years, is about to take place . . .’ boomed the Soviet press, the radio, schoolteachers, stump speakers, and party, trade-union, and Komsomol functionaries, at countless meetings.

‘Russia’s defence budget nearly doubled every year. Immense quantities of strategic materials, machines, fuels, foods, and spare parts were stored away. The Red Army increased in size from roughly two million in 1938 to six or seven million in the spring of 1941. Railroad and factory construction work in the Urals, in Central Asia, and in Siberia was pressed forward.

‘All these enterprises consumed the small but growing surplus which the Mag-

nitogorsk workers had begun to get back in the form of bicycles, wrist watches, radio sets, and good sausage and other manufactured food products from 1935 till 1938.¹⁵

An economic miracle

During the industrialization, the Soviet workers achieved economic miracles that still stagger the imagination.

Here is how Kuromiya concluded his study of the Stalinist industrialization:

‘The breakthrough wrought by the revolution of 1928–31 laid the foundations of the remarkable industrial expansion in the 1930s that would sustain the country in the Second World War. By the end of 1932 . . . , the gross industrial output . . . had more than doubled since 1928 as the capital projects of the First Five-Year Plan were brought into operation one after another in the mid-1930s, industrial production expanded enormously. During 1934–36 . . . , “the official index showed a rise of 88 per cent for total gross industrial production” In the decade from 1927/28 to 1937 . . . , gross industrial production leapt from 18,300 million rubles to 95,500 million; pig iron output rose from 3.3 million tons to 14.5; coal from 35.4 million metric tons to 128.0; electric power from 5.1 billion kilowatt hours to 36.2; machine tools from 2,098 units to 36,120. Even discounting the exaggeration, it may be safely said that the achievements were dazzling.’¹⁶

Lenin expressed his confidence in the capacity of the Soviet people to build socialism in one country by declaring, ‘Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country’.¹⁷ With this viewpoint, in 1920 Lenin proposed a general plan of electrification that foresaw, over the next fifteen years, the construction of 30 electrical power plants generating 1.75 million kW. But, thanks to the will and tenacity of Stalin and the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, in 1935, the Soviet Union had a generating capacity of 4.07 million kW. Lenin’s ambitious dream had been surpassed by 133 per cent by Stalin!¹⁸

Incredible rebuttal to all those educated renegades who read in scientific books that socialist construction in one country, particularly a peasant one, is not possible. The theory of the ‘impossibility of socialism in the USSR’, spread by the Mensheviks and the Trotskyists was a mere lamentation showing the pessimism and the capitulationist spirit among the petite bourgeoisie. As the socialist cause progressed, their hatred for real socialism, that thing that should not exist, only sharpened.

The increase in fixed assets between 1913 and 1940 gives a precise idea of the incredible effort supplied by the Soviet people. Starting from an index of 100 for the year preceding the war, the fixed assets for industry reached 136 at the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan in 1928. On the eve of the Second World War, twelve years later, in 1940, the index had risen to 1,085 points, i.e. an eight-fold increase in twelve years. The fixed assets for agriculture evolved from 100 to 141, just before the collectivization in 1928, to reach 333 points in 1940.¹⁹

For eleven years, from 1930 to 1940, the Soviet Union saw an average increase

in industrial production of 16.5 per cent.²⁰

During industrialization, the main effort was focused on creating the material conditions for freedom and independence for the Socialist homeland. At the same time, the socialist régime laid down the basis for future well-being and prosperity. The greatest part of the increase in national revenue was destined for accumulation. One could hardly think about improving the material standard of living in the short term. Yes, the life for workers and peasants was hard.

Accrued capital passed from 3.6 billion rubles in 1928, representing 14.3 per cent of the national revenue, to 17.7 billion in 1932, i.e. 44.2 per cent of the national revenue! Consumer spending, on the other hand, slightly dropped: from 23.1 billion in 1930 to 22.3 billion two years later. According to Kuromiya, 'The real wages of Moscow industrial workers in 1932 were only 53 percent of the 1928 level'.²¹ While industrial assets increased ten-fold from the pre-war period, the housing construction index had only reached 225 points in 1940. Housing conditions had hardly improved.²²

It is not true that industrialization took place at the cost of a 'feudal-military exploitation of the peasantry', as claimed Bukharin: socialist industrialization, which clearly could not take place through the exploitation of colonies, was achieved through the sacrifices of all workers, industrial, peasant and intellectual.

Was Stalin 'unfeeling towards the terrible difficulties of the life of workers'? Stalin understood perfectly well the primary need of the physical survival of the Socialist homeland and of its people before a substantial and lasting improvement of the standard of living could take place. Build housing? The Nazi aggressors destroyed and burnt 1,710 cities and towns and more than 70,000 villages and hamlets, leaving 25 million people without shelter.²³

In 1921, the Soviet Union was a ruined country, its independence under threat from all the imperialist powers. After twenty years of titanic efforts, the workers built a country that could stand up to the most developed capitalist power in Europe, Hitler's Germany. That old and future Nazis lash out against the 'forced' industrialization and the 'terrible suffering imposed on the people' is quite understandable. But what person in India, Brazil, Nigeria or Egypt would not stop to think? Since the independences from the colonial powers, what has been the lot of the ninety per cent of workers in the Third World? And who profited from this suffering? Did the workers in these countries knowingly accept these sacrifices, as was the case in the Soviet Union? And did the sacrifices of the Indian, Brazilian, Nigerian or Egyptian worker allow the creation of an independent economic system, capable of resisting the most vicious imperialism, as did the Soviet worker in the twenties and thirties?

Collectivization

The collectivization that began in 1929 was an extraordinary period of bitter and complex class struggles. It decided what force would run the countryside: the rural bourgeoisie or the proletariat. Collectivization destroyed the economic basis for the last bourgeois class in the Soviet Union, the class that was constantly re-emerging out of small-scale production and the rural free markets. Collectivization meant an extraordinary political, economic and cultural upheaval, putting the peasant masses on the road to socialism.

From rebuilding production to social confrontation

To understand the collectivization, the prevailing situation in the Soviet countryside in the twenties must be recalled.

From 1921, the Bolsheviks had concentrated their efforts on the principal objective, which was the re-establishment of industry on a socialist footing.

At the same time, they attempted to rebuild the productive forces in the countryside, by encouraging individual production and small-scale capitalism, which they tried to control and lead towards various co-operative forms.

These objectives were obtained towards 1927–1928. Davies noted:

‘Between 1922 and 1926, the New Economic Policy, by and large, was a brilliant success The production of the peasant economy in 1926 was equal to that of the whole of agriculture, including the landowners’ estates, before the revolution. Grain production reached approximately the pre-war level, and the production of potatoes apparently exceeded that level by as much as 75 per cent The number of livestock . . . in 1928 exceeded (the 1914 level) by 7–10 per cent in the case of cattle and pigs the proportion of sown area and of gross agricultural production devoted to grain was lower in 1928 than in 1913 — a good general indicator of agricultural progress.’¹

The socialist revolution had brought great gains to the peasant masses. The peasants without land had received plots. Overly large families were able to divide.

In 1927, there were 24 to 25 million peasant families, as opposed to 19.5 in 1917. The number of persons per family had dropped from 6.1 to 5.3. Direct taxes and rent were significantly lower than under the old régime. The peasants kept and consumed a much greater share of their harvests. 'Grain for the towns, the army, industry and export in 1926/27 amounted to only 10 million tons as compared with 18.8 million tons in 1909–13 (average).'

²

At the same time the Bolsheviks encouraged the peasants to form all sorts of co-operatives and they created the first experimental kolkhozy (collective farms). The point was to determine how, in the future, peasants could be led to socialism, although the schedule was still unclear. However, on the whole, there existed by 1927 very few socialistic elements in the countryside, where the dominant presence were the peasants individually working their plots of land. In 1927, 38 per cent of the peasants had been regrouped in consumers' co-operatives, but it was the rich peasants who led them. These co-operatives received 50 per cent of the farm subsidies, the rest being invested in private holdings, in general kulak.³

Weakness of the party in the countryside

It must be understood that at the beginning of socialist construction, the Bolshevik Party had little hold on the countryside.

In 1917, there were, in the whole of the USSR, 16,700 Bolshevik peasants. During the next four years of Civil War, a large number of young peasants were admitted into the Party to lead the peasant masses. In 1921, there were 185,300. But they were mostly sons of peasants who had enlisted in the Red Army. Once peace prevailed, the political ideas of these young fighters had to be checked. Lenin organized the first verification purge, as a necessary extension of the first massive recruitment campaign. It had to be determined who corresponded to the minimal definition of a Communist. Of 200,000 peasants, 44.7 per cent were excluded.⁴

On October 1, 1928, of 1,360,000 party members or candidate members, 198,000 (14.5 per cent) were peasants or agricultural workers by present occupation.⁵ In the countryside, there was one Party member for every 420 inhabitants, and 20,700 Party cells, one for every four villages. This small figure takes on real significance when it is compared to the 'cadres' of Tsarist reaction, the Orthodox pops and other religious members at that time, as they numbered 60,000!⁶

The rural youth formed the greatest reserve of the Party. In 1928, there were a million young peasants in Komsomol.⁷ The soldiers who had served in the Red Army during the Civil War and the 180,000 sons of peasants who, each year, entered the army, where they received a Communist education, were in general supporters of the régime.⁸

The character of the Russian peasant

Here was the problem that the Bolshevik Party had to confront.

The countryside was still essentially controlled by the privileged classes and by Tsarist and Orthodox ideology. The peasant masses remained in their state

of backwardness and continued to work mostly with wooden tools. Often the kulaks would seize power in the co-operatives, credit pools and even rural Soviets. Under Stolypin, bourgeois agricultural specialists had set themselves up in the countryside. They continued to have great influence as proponents of modern private agricultural production. Ninety per cent of the land continued to be run according to the traditional communal village system, in which the rich peasants predominated.⁹

The extreme poverty and extreme ignorance that characterized the peasant masses were among the worst 'enemies' of the Bolsheviks. It was relatively simple to defeat the Tsar and the landowners. But how could barbarism, mental exhaustion and superstition be defeated? The Civil War had completely disrupted the countryside; ten years of socialist régime had introduced the first elements of mass culture and a minimal Communist leadership. But the traditional characteristics of the peasantry were still there, as influential as ever.

Dr. Émile Joseph Dillon lived in Russia from 1877 to 1914. Professor at several Russian universities, he was also the chief editor of a Russian newspaper. He had traveled to all areas of the empire. He knew the ministers, the nobility, the bureaucrats and the successive generations of revolutionaries. His testimony about the Russian peasantry warrants a few thoughts.

He first described the material misery in which the majority of the peasantry lived:

'(T)he Russian peasant . . . goes to bed at six and even five o'clock in the winter, because he cannot afford money to buy petroleum enough for artificial light. He has no meat, no eggs, no butter, no milk, often no cabbage, and lives mainly on black bread and potatoes. Lives? He starves on an insufficient quantity of them.'¹⁰

Then Dillon wrote about the cultural and political backwardness in which the peasants were held:

'(T)he agricultural population . . . was mediaeval in its institutions, Asiatic in its strivings and prehistoric in its conceptions of life. The peasants believed that the Japanese had won the Manchurian campaign by assuming the form of microbes, getting into the boots of the Russian soldiers, biting their legs, and bringing about their death. When there was an epidemic in a district they often killed the doctors 'for poisoning the wells and spreading the disease'. They still burn witches with delight, disinter the dead to lay a ghost, strip unfaithful wives stark naked, tie them to carts and whip them through the village And when the only restraints that keep such a multitude in order are suddenly removed the consequences to the community are bound to be catastrophic Between the people and anarchism for generations there stood the frail partition formed by its primitive ideas of God and the Tsar; and since the Manchurian campaign these were rapidly melting away.'¹¹

New class differentiation

In 1927, after the spontaneous evolution of the free market, 7 per cent of peasants, i.e. 2,700,000 peasants, were once again without land. Each year, one quarter of a million poor lost their land. Furthermore, the landless men were no longer accepted in the traditional village commune. In 1927, there were still 27 million peasants who had neither horse nor cart. These poor peasants formed 35 per cent of the peasant population.

The great majority were formed of middle peasants: 51 to 53 per cent. But they still worked with their primitive instruments. In 1929, 60 per cent of families in the Ukraine had no form of machinery; 71 per cent of the families in the North Caucasus, 87.5 per cent in the Lower Volga and 92.5 per cent in the Central Black-Earth Region were in the same situation. These were the grain-producing regions.

In the whole of the Soviet Union, between 5 and 7 per cent of peasants succeeded in enriching themselves: these were the kulaks.¹² After the 1927 census, 3.2 per cent of families had on average 2.3 draft animals and 2.5 cows, compared to an average of between 1 and 1.1. There was a total of 950,000 families (3.8 per cent) who hired agricultural workers or rented out means of production.¹³

Who controlled the market wheat?

The supply of market wheat had to be guaranteed to ensure that the rapidly expanding cities could be fed and that the country could be industrialized.

Since most of the peasants were no longer exploited by the landowners, they consumed a large part of their wheat. The sales on extra-rural markets were only 73.2 per cent of what they were in 1913.¹⁴

But the source of commercial grain had also undergone tremendous change. Before the revolution, 72 per cent of the grain had come from large exploitations (landowners and kulaks). In 1926, on the other hand, the poor and middle peasants produced 74 per cent of the market wheat. In fact, they consumed 89 per cent of their production, bringing only 11 per cent to market. The large socialist enterprises, the kolkhozy (collective farms) and the sovkhozy (state farms) only represented 1.7 per cent of the total wheat production and 6 per cent of the market wheat. But they sold 47.2 per cent of their production, almost half of their harvest.

In 1926, the kulaks, a rising force, controlled 20 per cent of the market wheat.¹⁵

According to another statistic, in the European part of the USSR, the kulaks and the upper part of the middle peasants, i.e. about 10 to 11 per cent of families, made 56 per cent of the sales in 1927–1928.¹⁶

In 1927, the balance of forces between the socialist economy and the capitalist economy could be summed up as follows: collectivized agriculture brought 0.57 million tonnes of wheat to market, the kulaks 2.13 million.¹⁷

The social force controlling the market wheat could dictate whether workers and city dwellers could eat, hence whether industrialization could take place. The resulting struggle became merciless.

Towards confrontation

To accrue sufficient assets for industrialization, the State had paid a relatively low price for wheat since the beginning of the twenties.

In the fall of 1924, after a quite meager harvest, the State did not succeed in buying the grain at a fixed rate. The kulaks and private merchants bought the grain on the open market, speculating on a price hike in the spring and summer.

In May 1925, the State had to double its buying prices of December 1924. That year, the USSR had a good harvest. Industrial development in the cities increased the demand for grain. Buying prices paid by the State remained high from October to December 1925. But since there was a lack of light machinery products, the better-off peasants refused to sell their wheat. The State was forced to capitulate, abandoning its plans for grain exports, reducing industrial equipment imports and reducing industrial credit.¹⁸ These were the first signs of a grave crisis and of a confrontation between social classes.

In 1926, the grain harvest reached 76.8 million tonnes, compared to 72.5 the previous year. The State bought grain at a lower price than in 1925.¹⁹

In 1927, the grain harvest fell to the 1925 level. In the cities, the situation was hardly positive. Unemployment was high and increased with the arrival of ruined peasants. The differences between worker and technician salaries increased. Private merchants, who still controlled half the meat sold in the city, blatantly enriched themselves. The Soviet Union was once again threatened with war, after London's decision to break diplomatic ties with Moscow.

Bukharin's position

The social struggle to come was reflected inside the Party. Bukharin, at the time Stalin's main ally in the leadership, stressed the importance of advancing socialism using market relations. In 1925, he called on peasants to 'enrich themselves', and admitted that 'we shall move forward at a snail's pace'. Stalin, in a June 2, 1925 letter to him, wrote: 'the slogan enrich yourself is not ours, it is wrong Our slogan is socialist accumulation'.²⁰

The bourgeois economist Kondratiev was at the time the most influential specialist in the People's Commissariats for Agriculture and for Finance. He advocated further economic differentiation in the countryside, lower taxes for the rich peasants, reduction in the '*insupportable rate of development of industry*' and reorientation of resources from heavy industry to light industry.²¹ Shayanov, a bourgeois economist belonging to another school, called for 'vertical co-operatives', first for the sale, then for the industrial processing of agricultural products, instead of an orientation towards production co-operatives, i.e. kolkhozy. This political line would have weakened the economic basis of socialism and would have developed new capitalist forces in the countryside and in light industry. By protecting capitalism at the production level, the rural bourgeoisie would have also dominated the sales co-operatives.

Bukharin was directly influenced by these two specialists, particularly when he

declared in February 1925, 'collective farms are not the main line, not the high road, not the chief path by which the peasant will come to socialism'.²²

In 1927, the countryside saw a poor harvest. The amount of grain sold to the cities dropped dramatically. The kulaks, who had reinforced their position, hoarded their wheat to speculate on shortages so that they could force a significant price hike. Bukharin thought that the official buying prices should be raised and that industrialization should be slowed down. According to Davies, 'Nearly all of the non-party economists supported these conclusions'.²³

Betting on the kolkhoz . . .

Stalin understood that socialism was threatened from three sides. Hunger riots could take place in the cities. The kulaks in the countryside could strengthen their position, thereby making socialist industrialization impossible. Finally, foreign military interventions were in the offing.

According to Kalinin, the Soviet President, a Politburo commission on the kolkhozy established in 1927 under Molotov's leadership brought about a 'mental revolution'.²⁴ Its work led to the adoption of a resolution by the Fifteenth Congress of the Party, in December 1927:

'Where is the way out? The way out is in the passing of small disintegrated peasant farms into large-scaled amalgamated farms, on the basis of communal tillage of the soil; in passing to collective tillage of the soil on the basis of the new higher technique. The way out is to amalgamate the petty and tiny peasant farms gradually but steadily, not by means of pressure but by example and conviction, into large-scale undertakings on the basis of communal, fraternal collective tillage of the soil, applying scientific methods for the intensification of agriculture.'²⁵

Again in 1927, it was decided to focus on the political line of limiting the exploiting tendencies of the rural bourgeoisie. The government imposed new taxes on the revenues of the kulaks. The latter had to meet higher quotas during grain collection. The village Soviet could seize their unused land. The number of workers they could hire was limited.²⁶

. . . or betting on the individual peasant?

In 1928, as in 1927, the grain harvest was 3.5 to 4.5 million tonnes less than in 1926, due to very bad climatic conditions. In January 1928, the Politburo unanimously decided to take exceptional measures, by seizing wheat from the kulaks and the well-to-do peasants, to avoid famine in the cities. 'Worker discontent was increasing. Tension was rising in the countryside. The situation seemed hopeless. Whatever the cost, the city needed bread', wrote two Bukharinists in 1988.²⁷

The Party leadership around Stalin could see only one way out: develop the kolkhozian movement as fast as possible.

Bukharin was opposed. On July 1, 1928, he sent a letter to Stalin. The kolkhozy, he wrote, could not be the way out, since it would take several years to put them in place, particularly since they cannot be immediately supplied with machines.

‘Individual peasant holdings must be encouraged and relations must be normalized with the peasantry’.²⁸ The development of individual enterprise became the basis for Bukharin’s political line. He claimed to agree that the State should expropriate a part of individual production to further the development of industry, but that this should take place using market mechanisms. Stalin would state in October of that year: ‘there are people in the ranks of our party who are striving, perhaps without themselves realizing it, to adapt our socialist construction to the tastes and needs of our “Soviet” bourgeoisie.’²⁹

The situation in the cities was getting worse. In 1928 and 1929, bread had to be rationed, then sugar, tea and meat. Between October 1, 1927 and 1929, the prices of agricultural products rose by 25.9 per cent. The price of wheat on the free market rose by 289 per cent.³⁰

Early in 1929, Bukharin spoke of the *links in the single chain of socialist economy*, and added:

‘(T)he kulak co-operative nests will, similarly, through the banks, etc., grow into the same system

‘Here and there the class struggle in the rural districts breaks out in its former manifestations, and, as a rule, the outbreaks are provoked by the kulak elements. However, such incidents, as a rule, occur in those places where the local Soviet apparatus is weak. *As this apparatus improves*, as all the lower units of the Soviet government become stronger, as the local, village party and Young Communist organizations improve and become stronger, *such phenomena*, it is perfectly obvious, will become more and more rare and will finally *disappear leaving no trace*.’³¹

Bukharin was already following a social-democratic policy of ‘class peace’ and was blind to the relentless struggle of the kulaks to oppose collectivization by all means. He saw the ‘weaknesses’ of the Party and State apparatuses as the reason for the class war, without understanding that they were heavily infiltrated and influenced by the kulaks. The purge of these apparatuses would itself be a class struggle linked to the offensive against the kulaks.

At the Central Committee Plenary in April 1929, Bukharin proposed to import wheat, putting an end to the exceptional measures against ‘the peasantry’, to increase the prices for agricultural products, to uphold ‘revolutionary legality’, to reduce the rate of industrialization and to accelerate the development of the means of agricultural production. Kaganovich responded:

‘You have made no new propositions, and you are incapable since they are non-existent, because we are facing a class enemy that is attacking us, that refuses to give its wheat surplus for the socialist industrialization and that declares: give me a tractor, give me electoral rights, and then you will get wheat.’³²

The first wave of collectivization

Stalin decided to take up the gauntlet, to bring the socialist revolution to the countryside and to engage in the final struggle against the last capitalist class in

the Soviet Union, the kulaks, the agrarian bourgeoisie.

The kulak

The bourgeoisie has always maintained that the Soviet collectivization ‘destroyed the dynamic forces in the countryside’ and caused a permanent stagnation of agriculture. It describes the kulaks as individual ‘dynamic and entrepreneurial’ peasants. This is nothing but an ideological fable destined to tarnish socialism and glorify exploitation. To understand the class struggle that took place in the USSR, it is necessary to try to have a more realistic image of the Russian kulak.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a specialist on Russian peasant life wrote as follows:

‘Every village commune has always three or four regular kulaks, as also some half dozen smaller fry of the same kidney They want neither skill nor industry; only promptitude to turn to their own profit the needs, the sorrows, the sufferings and the misfortunes of others.

‘The distinctive characteristic of this class . . . is the hard, unflinching cruelty of a thoroughly educated man who has made his way from poverty to wealth, and has come to consider money-making, by whatever means, as the only pursuit to which a rational being should devote himself.’³³

And É. J. Dillon, from the U.S., who had a profound knowledge of old Russia, wrote:

*‘And of all the human monsters I have ever met in my travels, I cannot recall so malignant and odious as the Russian kulak.’*³⁴

The kolkhozy surpass the kulaks

If the kulaks, who represented already 5 per cent of the peasantry, had succeeded in extending their economic base and definitively imposing themselves as the dominant force in the countryside, the socialist power in the cities would not have been able to maintain itself, faced with this encirclement by bourgeois forces. Eighty-two per cent of the Soviet population was peasant. If the Bolshevik Party had no longer succeeded in feeding the workers at relatively low prices, the very basis of working class power would have been threatened.

Hence it was necessary to accelerate the collectivization of certain sectors in the countryside in order to increase, on a socialist basis, the production of market wheat. It was essential for the success of accelerated industrialization that a relatively low price for market wheat be maintained. A rising rural bourgeoisie would never have accepted such a policy. Only the poor and middle peasants, organized in co-operatives, could support it. And only industrialization could ensure the defence of the first socialist country. Industrialization would allow the modernization of the countryside, increasing productivity and improving the cultural level. To give a solid material base for socialism in the countryside would require building tractors, trucks and threshers. To succeed would imply increasing the rate of industrialization.

On October 1, 1927, there were 286,000 peasant families in the kolkhozy. They numbered 1,008,000 on June 1, 1929.³⁵ During the four months of June through October, the percentage of kolkhoz peasants rose from 4 per cent to 7.5 per cent.³⁶

During 1929, collectivized agriculture produced 2.2 million tonnes of market wheat, as much as the kulaks did two years previously. Stalin foresaw that during the course of the next year, it would bring 6.6 million tonnes to the cities.

'Now we are able to carry on a determined offensive against the kulaks, to break their resistance, to eliminate them as a class and substitute for their output the output of the collective farms and state farms.'³⁷

A fiery mass movement

Once the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party had called for accelerating the collectivization, a spontaneous movement developed, brought to the regions by activists, youth, old soldiers of the Red Army and the local apparatuses of the Party.

Early in October, 7.5 per cent of the peasants had already joined kolkhozy and the movement was growing. The Party, which had given the general direction towards collectivization, became conscious of a mass movement, which it was not organizing:

'The main fact of our social-economic life at the present time . . . , is the enormous growth of the collective farm movement.

'Now, the kulaks are being expropriated by the masses of poor and middle peasants themselves, by the masses who are putting solid collectivization into practice.'³⁸

During the ratification of the First Five-Year Plan, in April, the Party had planned on a collectivization level of 10 per cent by 1932-1933. The kolkhozy and the sovkhozy would then produce 15.5 per cent of the grain. That would suffice to oust the kulaks.³⁹ But in June, the Party Secretary in North Caucasus, Andreev, affirmed that already 11.8 per cent of families had entered kolkhozy and that a number of 22 per cent could be reached by the end of 1929.⁴⁰

On January 1, 1930, 18.1 per cent of the peasant families were members of a kolkhoz. A month later, they accounted for 31.7 per cent.⁴¹ 'Collectivization quickly assumed a dynamic of its own, achieved largely as a result of the initiative of rural cadres. The center was in peril of losing control of the campaign'.⁴²

The objectives set by the Central Committee in its January 5, 1930 resolution were strongly 'corrected' in the upward direction by regional committees. The district committees did the same and set a breath-taking pace. In January 1930, the regions of Ural, Lower Volga and Middle Volga already registered collectivization figures between 39 and 56 per cent. Several regions adopted a plan for complete collectivization within one year, some within a few months.⁴³ A Soviet commentator wrote: 'If the centre intended to include 15 per cent of households, the region raised the plan to 25 per cent, the okrug to 40 per cent and the district posed itself the task of reaching 60 per cent'.⁴⁴ (The okrug was an administrative entity that

disappeared in 1930. There were, at the beginning of that year, 13 regions divided into 207 okrugs, subdivided into 2,811 districts and 71,870 village Soviets.)⁴⁵

The war against the kulak

This frenetic race towards collectivization was accompanied by a ‘dekulakization’ movement: kulaks were expropriated, sometimes exiled. What was happening was a new step in the fierce battle between poor peasants and rich peasants. For centuries, the poor had been systematically beaten and crushed when, out of sheer desperation, they dared revolt and rebel. But this time, for the first time, the legal force of the State was on their side. A student working in a kolkhoz in 1930 told the U.S. citizen Hindus:

‘This was war, and is war. The *koolak* had to be got out of the way as completely as an enemy at the front. He is the enemy at the front. He is the enemy of the kolkhoz.’⁴⁶

Preobrazhensky, who had upheld Trotsky to the hilt, now enthusiastically supported the battle for collectivization:

‘The working masses in the countryside have been exploited for centuries. Now, after a chain of bloody defeats beginning with the peasant uprisings of the Middle Ages, their powerful movement for the first time in human history has a chance of victory.’⁴⁷

It should be said that the radicalism in the countryside was also stimulated by the general mobilization and agitation in the country undergoing industrialization.

The essential rôle of the most oppressed masses

Numerous anti-Communist books tell us that the collectivization was ‘imposed’ by the leadership of the Party and by Stalin and implemented with terror. This is a lie. The essential impulse during the violent episodes of collectivization came from the most oppressed of the peasant masses. A peasant from the Black-Earth region declared:

‘I have lived my whole life among the batraks (agricultural workers). The October revolution gave me land, I got credit from year to year, I got a poor horse, I can’t work the land, my children are ragged and hungry, I simply can’t manage to improve my farm in spite of the help of the Soviet authorities. I think there’s only one way out: join a tractor column, back it up and get it going.’⁴⁸

Lynne Viola wrote:

‘Although centrally initiated and endorsed, collectivization became, to a great extent, a series of ad hoc policy responses to the unbridled initiatives of regional and district rural party and government organs. Collectivization and collective farming were shaped less by Stalin and the central authorities than by the undisciplined and irresponsible activity of rural officials, the experimentation of collective farm leaders left to fend for themselves, and the realities of a backward countryside.’⁴⁹

Viola correctly emphasizes the base’s internal dynamic. But her interpretation of the facts is one-sided. She misses the mass line consistently followed by Stalin

and the Bolshevik Party. The Party set the general direction, and, on this basis, the base and the intermediate cadres were allowed to experiment. The results from the base would then serve for the elaboration of new directives, corrections and rectifications.

Viola continued:

‘The state ruled by circular, it ruled by decree, but it had neither the organizational infrastructure nor the manpower to enforce its voice or to ensure correct implementation of its policy in the administration of the countryside The roots of the Stalin system in the countryside do not lie in the expansion of state controls but in the very absence of such controls and of an orderly system of administration, which, in turn, resulted as the primary instrument of rule in the countryside.’⁵⁰

This conclusion, drawn from a careful observation of the real progress of collectivization, requires two comments.

The thesis of ‘Communist totalitarianism’ exercised by an ‘omnipresent Party bureaucracy’ has no real bearing with the actual Soviet power under Stalin. It is a slogan showing the bourgeoisie’s hatred of real socialism. In 1929–1933, the Soviet State did not have the technical means, the required qualified personnel, nor the sufficient Communist leadership to direct collectivization in a planned and orderly manner: to describe it as an all-powerful and totalitarian State is absurd.

In the countryside, the essential urge for collectivization came from the most oppressed peasants. The Party prepared and initiated the collectivization, and Communists from the cities gave it leadership, but this gigantic upheaval of peasant habits and traditions could not have succeeded if the poorest peasants had not been convinced of its necessity. Viola’s judgment according to which ‘repression became the principal instrument of power’ does not correspond to reality. The primary instrument was mobilization, consciousness raising, education and organization of the masses of peasants. This constructive work, of course, required ‘repression’, i.e. it took place and could not have taken place except through bitter class struggle against the men and the habits of the old régime.

Be they fascists or Trotskyists, all anti-Communists affirm that Stalin was the representative of an all-powerful bureaucracy that suffocated the base. This is the opposite of the truth. To apply its revolutionary line, the Bolshevik leadership often called on the revolutionary forces at the base to short-circuit parts of the bureaucratic apparatus.

‘The revolution was not implemented through regular administrative channels; instead the state appealed directly to the party rank and file and key sectors of the working class in order to circumvent rural officialdom. The mass recruitments of workers and other urban cadres and the circumvention of the bureaucracy served as a breakthrough policy in order to lay the foundations of a new system.’⁵¹

The organizational line on collectivization

How did Stalin and the leadership of the Bolshevik Party react to the spontaneous and violent collectivization and ‘dekulakization’ tide?

They basically tried to lead, discipline and rectify the existing movement, both politically and practically.

The Party leadership did everything in its power to ensure that the great collectivization revolution could take place in optimal conditions and at the least cost. But it could not prevent deep antagonisms from bursting or ‘blowing up’, given the countryside’s backward state.

The Party apparatus in the countryside

To understand the Bolshevik Party’s line during the collectivization, it is important to keep in mind that on the eve of 1930, the State and Party apparatus in the countryside was extremely weak — the exact opposite of the ‘terrible totalitarian machine’ imagined by anti-Communists. The weakness of the Communist apparatus was one of the conditions that allowed the kulaks to throw all their forces into a vicious battle against the new society.

On January 1, 1930, there were 339,000 Communists among a rural population of about 120 million people! Twenty-eight Communists for a region of 10,000 inhabitants.⁵² Party cells only existed in 23,458 of 70,849 village Soviets and, according to the Central Volga Regional Secretary, Khataevich, some village Soviets were ‘a direct agency of the kulaks’.⁵³ The old kulaks and the old Tsarist civil servants, who better understood how public life took place, had done their best to infiltrate the Party. The Party nucleus was composed of young peasants who had fought in the Red Army during the Civil War. This political experience had fixed their way of seeing and acting. They had the habit of commanding and hardly knew what political education and mobilization meant.

‘The rural administrative structure was burdensome, the line of command confused, and the demarcation of responsibility and function blurred and poorly defined. Consequently, rural policy implementation often tended either to the extreme of inertia or, as in the civil war days, to campaign-style politics.’⁵⁴

It was with this apparatus, which often sabotaged or distorted the instructions of the Central Committee, that the battle against the kulaks and the old society had to take place. Kaganovich pointed out that ‘if we formulate it sharply and strongly, in essence we have to create a party organization in the countryside, capable of managing the great movement for collectivization’.⁵⁵

Extraordinary organizational measures

Faced with the base’s radicalism, with a violent wave of anarchistic collectivization, the Party leadership first tried to get a firm grasp of what exactly was happening.

Given the weaknesses and the untrustworthiness of the Party apparatus in the countryside, the Central Committee took several extraordinary organizational mea-

asures.

First at the central level.

Starting mid-February 1930, three members of the Central Committee, Ordzhonikidze, Kaganovich and Yakovlev, were sent to the countryside to conduct inquiries.

Then, three important national assemblies were called, under the leadership of the Central Committee, to focus the accumulated experience. The February 11 assembly dealt with problems of collectivization in regions with national minorities. The February 21 assembly dealt with regions with a deficit of wheat. Finally, the February 24 assembly analyzed the errors and excesses that took place during collectivization.

Then, at the base level, in the countryside.

Two hundred and fifty thousand Communists were mobilized in the cities to go to the countryside and help out with collectivization.

These militants worked under the leadership of the 'headquarters' of collectivization, specially created at the okrug and district levels. The 'headquarters' were in turn advised by officials sent by the Regional Committee or the Central Committee.⁵⁶ For example, in the Tambov okrug, militants would participate in conferences and short courses at the okrug level, then at the district level, before entering the field. According to their instructions, militants had to follow 'methods of mass work': first convince local activists, village Soviets and meetings of poor peasants, then small mixed groups of poor and middle peasants and, finally, organize a general meeting of the village, excluding, of course, the kulaks. A firm warning was given that 'administrative compulsion must not be used to get the middle peasants to join the kolhoz'.⁵⁷

In the same Tambov okrug, during the winter of 1929–30, conferences and courses lasting from 2 to 10 days were organized for 10,000 peasants, kolkhozian women, poor peasants and Presidents of Soviets.

During the first few weeks of 1930, Ukraine organized 3,977 short courses for 275,000 peasants. In the fall of 1929, thirty thousand activists were trained on Sundays, during their time off, by the Red Army, which took on another contingent of 100,000 people during the first months of 1930. Furthermore, the Red Army trained a large number of tractor drivers, agricultural specialists and cinema and radio operators.⁵⁸

Most of the people coming from the towns worked for a few months in the countryside. Hence, in February 1930, the mobilization of 7,200 urban Soviet members was decreed, to work at least one year in the countryside. But men in the Red Army and industrial workers were permanently transferred to the kolkhozes.

It was in November 1929 that the most famous campaign, the '25,000', was launched.

The 25,000

The Central Committee called on 25,000 experienced industrial workers from the large factories to go to the countryside and to help out with collectivization. More than 70,000 presented themselves and 28,000 were selected: political militants, youth who had fought in the Civil War, Party and Komsomol members.

These workers were conscious of the leading rôle of the working class in the socialist transformations in the countryside. Viola writes:

‘(They) looked to the Stalin revolution for the final victory of socialism after years of war, hardship, and deprivation They saw the revolution as a solution to backwardness, seemingly endemic food shortages, and capitalist encirclement.’⁵⁹

Before leaving, it was explained to them that they were the eyes and the ears of the Central Committee: thanks to their physical presence on the front lines, the leadership hoped to acquire a materialist understanding of the upheavals in the countryside and the problems of collectivization. They were also told to discuss with the peasants their organizational experience, acquired as industrial workers, since the old tradition of individual work constituted a serious handicap for the collective use of the land. Finally, they were told that they would have to judge the Communist quality of the Party functionaries and, if necessary, purge the Party of foreign and undesirable elements.

It was during the month of January 1930 that the 25,000 arrived on the front line of collectivization. The detailed analysis of their activities and of the rôle that they played can give a realistic idea of the collectivization, that great revolutionary class struggle. These workers maintained regular correspondence with their factories and their unions; these letters give a precise idea of what was happening in the villages.

The 25,000 against the bureaucracy

Upon arrival, the 25,000 immediately had to fight against the bureaucracy of the local apparatus and against the excesses committed during the collectivization.

Viola wrote:

‘Regardless of their position, the 25,000ers were unanimous in their criticism of district-level organs participating in collectivization The workers claimed that it was the district organs which were responsible for the race for percentages in collectivization.’⁶⁰

Zakharov, one of the 25,000, wrote that no preparatory work had been done among the peasants. Consequently, they were not prepared for collectivization.⁶¹ Many complained of the illegal acts and of the brutality of rural cadres. Makovskaya attacked ‘the bureaucratic attitude of the cadres towards the peasants’, and she said that the functionaries spoke of collectivization ‘with revolver in hand’.⁶² Baryshev affirmed that a great number of middle peasants had been ‘dekulakized’. Naumov allied himself with the peasants attacking the Party cadres who ‘appropriated for themselves the goods confiscated from the kulaks’. Viola concluded that the 25,000ers ‘viewed rural officials as crude, undisciplined, often corrupt, and, in not a few cases, as agents or representatives of socially dangerous class aliens’.⁶³

By opposing the bureaucrats and their excesses, they succeeded in winning the confidence of the peasant masses.⁶⁴

These details are important, since these workers can be considered to have been direct envoys from Stalin. It was precisely the 'Stalinists' who fought bureaucracy and excesses most consistently and who defended a correct line for collectivization.

The 25,000 against the kulaks

Next, the 25,000 played a leading rôle in the struggle against the kulaks.

They first confronted the terrible army of rumors and defamations, called 'kulak agit-prop'. The illiterate peasant masses, living in barbaric conditions, subject to the influence of the pops (Orthodox priests), could easily be manipulated. The Pop claimed that the Reign of the Anti-Christ had come. The Kulak added that those who entered the kolkhoz made a pact with the Anti-Christ.⁶⁵

Among the 25,000, many were attacked and beaten. Several dozen were murdered, shot or finished off with an axe by the kulaks.

The 25,000 and the organization of agricultural production

But the essential contribution of the 25,000 in the countryside was the introduction of a completely new system of production management, way of life and style of work.

The poor peasants, on the frontline for collectivization, did not have the slightest idea about the organization of collective production. They hated their exploitation and, for that reason, were solid allies of the working class. But as individual producers, they could not create a new mode of production: this is one of the reasons that the dictatorship of the proletariat was necessary. The dictatorship of the proletariat expressed itself through the ideological and organizational leadership of the working class and of the Communist Party over the poor and middle peasants.

The workers introduced regular work days, with morning roll call. They invented systems of payment by piecework and wage levels. Everywhere, they had to introduce order and discipline. Often, a kolkhoz did not even know its borders. There was no inventory of machinery, tools or spare parts. Machines were not maintained, there were no stables, nor fodder reserves. The workers introduced production conferences where the kolkhozians exchanged practical knowledge, they organized Socialist Competition between different brigades, and they set up workers' tribunals where violations of rules and negligence were judged.

The 25,000 workers were also the living link between the proletariat and the kolkhozian peasantry. At the request of 'their' worker, large factories would send agricultural equipment, spare parts, generators, books, newspapers and other items impossible to find in the countryside. Worker brigades came from the city to do certain technical or reparatory tasks or to help with the harvest.

The worker also became schoolmaster. He taught technical knowledge. Often, he had to accomplish accounting tasks while training, on the job, new accountants. He gave elementary political and agricultural courses. Sometimes he looked after

literacy campaigns.

The contribution of the 25,000 to collectivization was enormous. During the twenties, 'Poverty, illiteracy and a chronic predisposition to periodic famine characterized much of the rural landscape'.⁶⁶ The 25,000 helped elaborate the organizational structures of socialist agriculture for the next quarter century to come. '(A) new system of agricultural production was indeed established, and this, although not without its problems, did end the periodic crises which characterized earlier market relations between the cities and the countryside'.⁶⁷

The political direction of collectivization

At the same time as these organizational measures, the Central Committee elaborated political measures and directives to give direction to the collectivization.

It is first important to note that vivid and prolonged discussions took place within the Party about the speed and scale of collectivization.

In October 1929, the Khoper okrug in the Lower Volta Region, which had registered 2.2 per cent of collectivized families in June, had already reached 55 per cent. A Kolkhoztsestr (the Union of kolkhozy) commission, which was suspicious of the speed and scale of the collectivization, was sent to conduct an enquiry. Baranov, its vice-president, declared:

'The local authorities are operating a system of shock-work and a campaign approach. All the work of setting up kolkhozy is carried out under the slogan 'The more the better'. The directives of the okrug are sometimes twisted into the slogan 'Those who do not join the kolkhoz are enemies of Soviet power'. There has been no extensive activity among the masses In some cases sweeping promises of tractors and loans were made — 'You'll get everything — join the kolkhoz'.⁶⁸

On the other hand, in *Pravda*, Sheboldaev, the Party Secretary for the Lower Volta Region, defended the rapid expansion of the Khoper collectivization. He 'hailed the "tremendous uplift and enthusiasm" of collective ploughing, and declared that only 5 to 10 per cent opposed collectivization', which had become 'a big mass movement, going far beyond the framework of our notions of work on collectivization'.⁶⁹

Contradictory opinions existed in all units, included in this Khoper vanguard unit. On November 2, 1929, the newspaper *Krasnyi Khoper* reported with enthusiasm the collective ploughing and the formation of new kolkhozy. But in the same issue, a article warned against hurried collectivization and the use of threats to push poor peasants into the kolkhozy. Another article affirmed that in certain areas, kulaks had pushed an entire village into the kolkhoz to discredit collectivization.⁷⁰

During the November 1929 Central Committee Plenum, Sheboldaev defended the Khoper experience with its 'horse columns'. Given the absence of tractors, 'simple unification and aggregation of farms would increase labor productivity'. He declared that the Khoper collectivization was 'a spontaneous movement of the masses of poor and middle peasants' and that only 10 to 12 per cent voted against.

‘(T)he party cannot take the attitude of ‘restraining’ this movement. This would be wrong from a political and an economic point of view. The party must do everything possible to put itself at the head of this movement and lead it into organised channels. At present this mass movement has undoubtedly overwhelmed the local authorities, and hence there is a danger that it will be discredited.’⁷¹

Sheboldaev affirmed that 25 per cent of the families were already collectivized and that towards the end of 1930 or mid-1931, collectivization would essentially be complete.⁷²

Kossior, who spoke at the Plenum about the situation in Ukraine, reported that in dozens of villages, collectivization was ‘blown up and artificially created; the population did not participate in it and knew nothing about it’. But ‘“the very many dark sides” (could not) block from view the general picture of collectivization as a whole’.⁷³

It is therefore clear that many contradictory opinions were expressed within the Party, at the time that the movement for collectivization was started up in the countryside. Revolutionaries had the duty to find and protect the wish of the most oppressed masses to get rid of their age-old political, cultural and technical backwardness. The masses had to be encouraged to advance in the struggle, the only method to weaken and destroy the deeply rooted social and economic relations. Right opportunism did everything it possibly could to slow down this difficult and contradictory consciousness-raising. Nevertheless, it was also possible to push collectivization too fast, by rejecting in practice all the Party’s principles. This tendency not only included leftism, which came from habits picked up during the Civil War — when it was normal to ‘command’ the Revolution — but also bureaucracy, which wanted to please the leadership with ‘great achievements’; in addition the exaggerations could also come from the counter-revolution, which wanted to compromise collectivization by pushing it to the absurd.

The November 1929 resolution

The Central Committee Resolution of November 17, 1929, officially launching the collectivization, summarized discussions within the Party.

It began by noting that the number of peasant families in the kolkhozy rose from 445,000 in 1927–1928 to 1,040,000 one year later. The share of the kolkhozy in market grain rose from 4.5 per cent to 12.9 per cent in the same period.

‘This unprecedented rate of collectivization, which exceeds the most optimistic projections attests to the fact that the true masses of the *middle peasant* household, convinced in practice of the advantages of the collective forms of agriculture, have joined the movement

‘The decisive breakthrough in the attitude of the poor and middle peasant masses toward the kolkhozes . . . *signifies a new historical stage in the building of socialism in our country.*’⁷⁴

The progress of collectivization was made possible by putting into practice the Party’s line for building socialism on all fronts.

‘These significant successes of the kolkhoz movement are a direct result of the consistent implementation of the general party line, which has secured a powerful growth of industry, a strengthening of the union of the working class with the basic masses of the peasantry, the formation of a co-operative community, the strengthening of the masses’ political activism, and the growth of the material and cultural resources of the proletarian state.’⁷⁵

Reject Bukharin’s opportunism

The Central Committee insisted that this impressive advance was not made ‘in all tranquility’, but that it was taking place with the most bitter class struggle.

‘(T)he intensification of the class struggle and the stubborn resistance of capitalist elements against an advancing socialism in a situation of capitalist encirclement of our country, are reinforcing the pressure of petty bourgeois elements on the least stable element of the party, giving rise to an ideology of *capitulation* in the face of difficulties, to *desertion*, and attempts to reach an understanding with the kulak and capitalist elements of town and countryside

‘This is precisely what is at the root of the Bukharin group’s complete incomprehension of the intensification of the class struggle that has taken place; the underestimation of the kulak and the NEP-man elements’ power to resist, the anti-leninist theory of the kulak’s ‘growing’ into socialism, and resistance to the policy of attacking the capitalist elements in the countryside.’⁷⁶

‘The *rightists* declared the planned rates for collectivization and for building sovkhozes to be unrealistic; they declared that the necessary material and technical prerequisites were lacking and that the poor and middle peasantry did not want to switch to collective forms of agriculture. *In actual fact*, we are experiencing such a turbulent growth of collectivization and such a headlong rush to socialist forms of agriculture on the part of the poor and middle peasant holdings that the kolkhoz movement has already reached the point of transition to *total collectivization of entire districts*

‘(T)he right opportunists . . . , objectively speaking, were serving as spokesmen for the economic and political interests of petty bourgeois elements and kulak-capitalist groups.’⁷⁷

The Central Committee indicated that changes in the form of class struggle had to be followed carefully: if, before, the kulaks did everything they possibly could to prevent the kolkhoz movement from starting up, now they sought to destroy it from within.

‘The widespread development of the kolkhoz movement is taking place in a situation of intensified class struggle in the countryside and of a change in its forms and methods. Along with the kulaks’ intensification of their direct and open struggle against collectivization, which has gone to the point of outright terror (murder, arson, and wrecking), they are increasingly going over to camouflaged and covert forms of struggle and exploitation, penetrating the kolkhozes and even the kolkhoz management bodies in order to corrupt and explode them from the inside.’⁷⁸

For this reason, profound political work had to be undertaken to form a hard kernel that could lead the kolkhoz down the socialist path.

‘(T)he party must assure through persistent and regular work the rallying of a farm labourer and poor peasant nucleus on the kolkhozes.’⁷⁹

New difficulties, new tasks

These successes could not make the Party forget the ‘new difficulties and shortcomings’ to be resolved. The plenum enumerated them:

‘(T)he low level of the kolkhozes’ technical base; the inadequate standards of organization and low labour productivity at kolkhozes; the acute shortage of kolkhoz cadres and the near total lack of the needed specialists; the blighted social make-up at a portion of the kolkhoz; the fact that the forms of management are poorly adapted to the scale of the kolkhoz movement, that direction lags behind the rate and the scope of the movement, and the fact that the agencies directing the kolkhoz movement are often patently unsatisfactory.’⁸⁰

The Central Committee decided upon the immediate startup of the construction of two new tractor factories with a capacity of 50,000 units each and of two new combine factories, the expansion of factories making complex agricultural equipment and of chemical factories, and the development of Machine Tractor Stations.⁸¹

‘Kolkhoz construction is unthinkable without a rigorous improvement in the cultural standards of the kolkhoz populace’. This is what had to be done: intensify literacy campaigns, build libraries, intensify kolkhoz courses and various types of study by correspondence, enroll children in schools, intensify cultural and political work among women, organize crèches and public kitchens to reduce their burden, build roads and cultural centers, introduce radio and cinema, telephone and mail services to the countryside, publish a general press and a specialized press designed for the peasants, etc.⁸²

Finally, the Central Committee evoked the danger of Left deviations. The radicalism of poor peasants may lead to an underestimation of the alliance with the middle peasants.⁸³

‘(T)he Central Committee plenum warns against underestimating the difficulties of kolkhoz construction and in particular against a formal and bureaucratic approach to it and to the evaluation of its results’.⁸⁴

The January 5, 1930 resolution

Six weeks later, the Central Committee met again to evaluate the incredible development of the kolkhozian movement. On January 5, 1930, it adopted an important decision, entitled, ‘On the Rate of Collectivization and State Assistance to Kolkhoz Construction’.⁸⁵

It first remarked that more than 30 million hectares were already sown on a collective basis, already surpassing the 24 million hectares that were sought at the end of the Five-Year Plan. ‘Thus we have the material basis for *replacing* large-scale kulak production by *large-scale* production in the kolkhozes we

can resolve the task of collectivizing the overwhelming majority of the peasant farms' by the end of the First Plan. The collectivization of the most important grain-growing regions could be finished between autumn 1930 and spring 1932.⁸⁶

The Party had to support the spontaneous movement at the base and actively intervene to lead and to guide. 'The party organizations must head and shape the kolkhoz movement, which is developing spontaneously from below, so as to ensure the organization of *genuinely collective production* in the kolkhozes'.⁸⁷

The resolution warned against leftist errors. One should not 'underestimate the role of the horse' and get rid of horses in the hope of receiving tractors.⁸⁸ Not everything had to be collectivized. '(T)he artel is the most widespread form of kolkhoz, in which the *basic* instruments of production (livestock and dead stock, farm buildings, commercial herds) are collectivized'.⁸⁹

Finally:

'(T)he Central Committee with all seriousness warns party organizations against guiding the kolkhoz movement 'by decree' from above; this could give rise to the danger of replacing genuine socialist emulation in the organization of kolkhozes by mere playing at collectivization.'⁹⁰

'Dekulakization'

For collectivization to succeed, the poor and middle peasants had to be convinced of the superiority of collective work of the soil, which would allow the wide-scale introduction of machinery. Furthermore, socialist industry had to be capable of producing the tractors and machines that would constitute the material support for collectivization. Finally, a correct attitude had to be defined for the kulaks, the irreconcilable adversaries of socialism in the countryside. This last problem led to significant discussions within the Party.

The question was posed as follows, just before the political changes in favor of the kolkhozy. Mikoyan said on March 1, 1929:

'In spite of the political authority of the party in the countryside the kulak in the economic sphere is more authoritative: his farm is better, his horse is better, his machines are better and he is listened to on economic matters the middle peasant leans towards the economic authority of the kulak. And his authority will be strong as long as we have no large kolkhozy.'⁹¹

Kulak rumors and indoctrination

Kulak authority was based to a great extent on the cultural backwardness, illiteracy, superstition and medieval religious beliefs of the majority of peasants. Hence, the kulak's most powerful weapon, also the most difficult to confront, was rumor and indoctrination.

In 1928–1929, identical rumors were found throughout the Soviet territory. In the kolkhoz, women and children would be collectivized. In the kolkhoz, everyone

would sleep under a single gigantic blanket. The Bolshevik government would force women to cut their hair so that it could be exported. The Bolsheviks would mark women on the forehead for identification. They would Russify local populations.⁹² All sorts of other terrifying ‘information’ was heard. In the kolkhozy, a special machine would burn the old so that they would not eat any more wheat. Children would be taken away from their parents and sent to crèches. Four thousand women would be sent to China to pay for the Chinese Eastern Railway. The kolkhozians would be the first ones sent in a war. Then a rumor announced that soon the White Armies would return. Believers were told about the next coming of the Anti-Christ and that the world would end in two years.⁹³

In the Tambov okrug, the kulaks carefully mixed rumor and political propaganda. They said that

‘(S)etting up the kolkhozy is a kind of serf labour (barshchina) where the peasant will again have to work under the rod . . . ; the Soviet government should enrich the peasants first and then push through the establishment of kolkhozy, and not do what it is doing now, which is to try to make a rich farm out of ruined farms which have no grain.’⁹⁴

Here we see the budding alliance between the kulaks and Bukharin: the kulaks did not openly oppose Soviet power nor even the kolkhozy: but, the peasants should first be allowed to enrich themselves, and we can always see later about collectivization. Just as Bukharin spoke of the ‘feudal exploitation of the peasantry’, the kulaks denounced ‘serfdom’.

What should be done with the kulaks?

How should the kulak be treated? In June 1929, Karpinsky, a senior member of the Party, wrote that the kulaks should be allowed to join kolkhozy when collectivization included the majority of families, if they put all their means of production into the indivisible fund. This position was upheld by Kaminsky, the president of the All-Union Kolkhoz Council. The same point of view was held by the leadership. But the majority of delegates, local Party leaders, were ‘categorically opposed’ to the admission of kulaks into kolkhozy. A delegate stated:

‘(I)f he gets into the kolkhoz somehow or other he will turn an association for the joint working of the land into an association for working over Soviet power.’⁹⁵

In July 1929, the Secretary for the Central Volga Region, Khataevich, declared that

‘(I)ndividual kulak elements may be admitted to collective associations if they completely renounce their personal ownership of means of production, if the kolkhozy have a solid poor-peasant and middle-peasant nucleus and if correct leadership is assured.’⁹⁶

However, there were already several cases that were going in the opposite direction. In Kazakhstan, in August 1928, 700 *bai*, semi-feudal lords, and their families, were exiled. Each family owned at least one hundred cattle, which were distributed to the already-constituted kolkhozy and to peasants who were being encouraged

to join kolkhozy. In February 1929, a Siberian regional Party conference decided not to allow kulaks. In June, the North Caucasus made the same decision.⁹⁷

The September 17 issue of *Pravda* presented a major report on the kolkhoz Red Land Improver in Lower Volga. Established in 1924, this model kolkhoz received 300,000 rubles, credit from the State. But in 1929, its socialized property amounted to only 1,800 rubles. The funds had been used for personal gain. The president of the kolkhoz was a Socialist Revolutionary; the leadership included former traders, the son of a priest and four other former Socialist Revolutionaries.⁹⁸ Molotov summarized the affair by; ‘kulak-SR elements will often hide behind the kolkhoz smokescreen’; a ‘merciless struggle’ was necessary against the kulak, as was the improvement of the organization of the poor peasants and of the alliance between the poor and middle peasants.⁹⁹

In November 1929, Azizyan, a journalist specializing in agriculture, analyzed the motivations kulaks had for entering kolkhozy: they wanted to avoid being taxed and having to make obligatory shipments of wheat; to keep the best land; to keep their tools and machines; and to ensure the education of their children.¹⁰⁰ At the same time, another journalist reported that ‘the weak half of the human race’ sympathized with the kulaks while collective farmers were quite uncompromising, saying ‘send them out of the village into the steppe’ and ‘put them in quarantine for fifty years’.¹⁰¹

The Central Committee resolution of January 5, 1930 drew conclusions from these debates and affirmed that it was now capable of ‘passing in its practical work from a policy of limiting the exploitative tendencies of the kulaks to a policy of liquidating the kulaks as a class . . . the inadmissibility of allowing kulaks to join kolkhozes (was presupposed).¹⁰²

Struggle to the end

After this resolution, which announced the end of capitalist relations in the countryside, the kulaks threw themselves into a struggle to the end. To sabotage collectivization, they burnt crops, set barns, houses and other buildings on fire and killed militant Bolsheviks.

Most importantly, the kulaks wanted to prevent collective farms from starting up, by killing an essential part of the productive forces in the countryside, horses and oxen. All the work on the land was done with draft animals. The kulaks killed half of them. Rather than cede their cattle to the collectives, they butchered them and incited the middle peasants to do the same.

Of the 34 million horses in the country in 1928, there remained only 15 million in 1932. A terse Bolshevik spoke of the liquidation of the horses as a class. Of the 70.5 million head of cattle, there only remained 40.7 million in 1932. Only 11.6 million pigs out of 26 million survived the collectivization period.¹⁰³

This destruction of the productive forces had, of course, disastrous consequences: in 1932, there was a great famine, caused in part by the sabotage and destruction done by the kulaks. But anti-Communists blame Stalin and the ‘forced collec-

tivization' for the deaths caused by the criminal actions of the kulaks.

The resolution on dekulakization

In January 1930, a spontaneous movement to expropriate the kulaks began to take place. On January 28, 1930, Kosior described it as ‘ “a broad mass movement of poor peasants, middle peasants and batraks”, called upon party organisations not to restrain it but to organise it to deliver “a really crushing blow against the political influence, and particularly against the economic prospects, of the kulak stratum of the village.” ’¹⁰⁴ A few days before, Odintsev, vice-chairman of the Kolkhozsentr of the Russian Republic, said: ‘We must deal with the kulak like we dealt with the bourgeoisie in 1918’.¹⁰⁵ Krylenko admitted a month later that ‘a spontaneous movement to dekulakization took place locally; it was properly organized only in a few places’.¹⁰⁶

On January 30, 1930, the Central Committee took important decisions to lead the spontaneous dekulakization by publishing a resolution entitled, ‘On Measures for the Elimination of Kulak Households in Districts of Comprehensive Collectivisation’.¹⁰⁷

The total number of kulak families, divided into three categories, was at most 3–5 per cent in the grain-growing regions and 2–3 per cent in the other regions.

- (I) ‘The counter-revolutionary *aktiv*’. Whether a kulak belonged this category was to be determined by the OGPU (political police), and the resolution set a limit of 63,000 for the whole of the USSR. Their means of production and personal property were to be confiscated; the heads of families were to be sentenced on the spot to imprisonment or confinement in a concentration camp; those among them who were ‘organisers of terrorist acts, counter-revolutionary demonstrations and insurrectionary organisations’ could be sentenced to death. Members of their families were to be exiled as for Category II.
- (II) ‘The remaining elements of the kulak *aktiv*’, especially the richest kulaks, large-scale kulaks and former semi-landowners. They ‘manifested less active opposition to the Soviet state but were arch-exploiters and naturally supported the counter-revolutionaries’. Lists of kulak households in this category were to be prepared by district soviets and approved by okrug executive committees on the basis of decisions by meetings of collective farmers and of groups of poor peasants and batraks, guided by instructions from village soviets, within an upper limit for the whole USSR of 150,000 households. The means of production and part of the property of the families on these lists were to be confiscated; they could retain the most essential domestic goods, some means of production, a minimum amount of food and up to 500 rubles per family. They were then to be exiled to remote areas of the Northern region, Siberia, the Urals and Kazakhstan, or to remote districts of their own region.

- (III) The majority of kulaks were probably ‘reliable in their attitude to Soviet power’. They numbered between 396,000 and 852,000 households. Only part of the means of production were confiscated and they were installed in new land within the administrative district.¹⁰⁸

The next day, on January 31, a *Bolshevik* editorial explained that the liquidation of the kulaks as a class was ‘the last decisive struggle with internal capitalism, which must be carried out to the end; *nothing* must stand in the way; the kulaks as a class will not leave the historical stage without the most savage opposition’.¹⁰⁹

The kulak offensive picks up strength

In Siberia, one thousand acts of terrorism by kulaks were recorded in the first six months of 1930. Between February 1 and March 10, 19 ‘insurrectionary counter-revolutionary organisations’ and 465 ‘kulak anti-Soviet groupings’, including more than 4,000 kulaks, were exposed. According to Soviet historians, ‘in the period from January to March 15, 1930, the kulaks organised in the whole country (excluding Ukraine) 1,678 armed demonstrations, accompanied by the murder of party and soviet officials and kolkhoz activists, and by the destruction of kolkhozy and collective farmers’. In the Sal’sk okrug in the North Caucasus, riots took place for one week in February 1930. Soviet and Party buildings were burnt down and collective stores were destroyed. The kulaks who were waiting to leave for exile put forward the slogan: ‘For Soviet power, without communists and kolkhozy’. Calls were made for the dissolution of Party cells and kolkhozy, as well as the liberation of arrested kulaks and the restitution of their confiscated property. Elsewhere, slogans of ‘Down with the kolkhoz’ and ‘Long live Lenin and Soviet power’ were shouted.¹¹⁰

By the end of 1930, in the three categories, 330,000 kulak families had been expropriated; most of this took place between February and April. We do not know the number of category I kulaks that were exiled, but it is likely that the 63,000 ‘criminal elements’ were the first to be hit; the number of executions of this category is not known either. The exiled from category II numbered 77,975 at the end of 1930.¹¹¹ The majority of the expropriations were in the third category; some were reinstalled in the same village, most in the same district.

Kautsky and the ‘kulak revolution’

When the kulaks threw themselves into their final struggle against socialism, they received unexpected international support. In 1930, Belgian, German and French social-democracy mobilized against Bolshevism, just as a catastrophic crisis was hitting the imperialist countries. In 1930, Kautsky wrote *Bolshevism at a Deadlock*, in which he affirmed that a democratic revolution was necessary in the Soviet Union, against the ‘Soviet aristocracy’.¹¹² He hoped for a ‘victorious peasant revolt against the Bolshevik régime’ in the Soviet Union.¹¹³ He wrote of the ‘degeneration of Bolshevism into . . . Fascism . . . in the last twelve years’!¹¹⁴ Hence, starting from

1930, social democracy was already toying with the theme 'communism = fascism'. This was the same social-democracy that upheld colonialism, that did its utmost to save capitalism after the 1929 crisis, that sustained and organized anti-worker and antipopular repression and, most significantly, that later collaborated with the Nazis!

Kautsky made a 'claim for democracy for all'.¹¹⁵ He called for a wide united front with the Russian right for a 'democratic, Parliamentary Republic', claiming that 'middle-class democracy in Russia has less interest in capitalism than Western Europe'.¹¹⁶

Kautsky perfectly summarized the social-democratic line of the 1930s, struggling against the Soviet Union: a 'democratic revolution' against the 'Soviet aristocracy', against the 'fascist disintegration of Bolshevism', for 'democracy for all', for a 'democratic, Parliamentary Republic'. Those who followed the debates in 1989 will recognize the program and the slogans used by the right-wing forces in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

'Dizzy with success'

By March 1, 1930, 57.2 per cent of all peasant families had joined kolkhozy. In the Central Black Earth Region, the figure reached 83.3 per cent, in the North Caucasus 79.4 per cent and in the Ural 75.6 per cent. The Moscow Region counted 74.2 per cent of collectivized families; Bauman, the Party Secretary, called for complete collectivization for March 10. The Lower Volga counted 70.1 per cent collectivized families, Central Volga 60.3 per cent and Ukraine 60.8 per cent.¹¹⁷

This impulsive development of the kolkhozian movement, as well as the violent reaction of the kulaks, who were followed by some of the middle peasants, once again provoked violent discussions and encouraged opposing opinions within the Party.

No later than January 31, Stalin and Molotov sent a telegram to the Party bureau in Central Asia, instructing, 'advance cause of collectivization to extent that masses really involved'.¹¹⁸

On February 4, on orders from the Central Committee, the Central Volga Committee sent instructions to local organizations, stating that 'collectivization must be carried out on the basis of the development of broad mass work among poor peasants and middle peasants, with a decisive struggle against the slightest attempts to drive the middle and poor peasants into the kolkhozy by the use of administrative methods'.¹¹⁹

On February 11, during the Central Committee conference of leading party officials from Central Asia and Transcaucasus, Molotov warned against 'kolkhozy on paper'. Following that conference, the administrative methods used in Uzbekistan and in the Chechen region were criticized, as was the lack of preparation of the masses.¹²⁰

On February 13, the North Caucasus Committee replaced a number of heads of

districts and village soviets, accusing them of ‘the criminal use of administrative methods, distortion of the class line, completely ignoring directives of the higher organs of power, impermissibly weak work of the soviets and complete absence of mass work, crudeness and a high-handed attitude in dealing with the population’. On February 18, the Committee criticized the complete and forced collectivization of cows, chickens, gardens and child daycare centers, as well as the disobedience to instructions about dekulakization. These criticisms were approved by Stalin.¹²¹

Stalin corrects

On March 2, 1930, Stalin published an important article entitled, ‘Dizzy with success’.

Stalin affirmed that in certain cases, an ‘anti-Leninist frame of mind’ ignored the ‘*voluntary* character of the collective farm movement’. Peasants had to be persuaded, through their own experience, ‘of the power and importance of the new, collective organization of farming’.¹²² In Turkestan, there had been threats of using the army if the peasants refused to enter the kolkhozy. Furthermore, the different conditions in different regions had not been taken into account.

‘(N)ot infrequently efforts are made to *substitute* for preparatory work in organizing collective farms the bureaucratic decreeing of a collective farm movement from above, paper resolutions on the growth of collective farms, the formation of collective farms on paper — of farms which do not yet exist, but regarding the “existence” of which there is a pile of boastful resolutions.’¹²³

In addition, some had tried to ‘socialize’ everything, and had made ‘ludicrous attempts to lift oneself by one’s own bootstraps’. This ‘stupid and harmful precipitancy’ could only ‘in practice bring grist to the mill of our class enemies’.¹²⁴ The main form of the kolkhozian movement should be the agricultural artel.

‘In the *agricultural artel* the principal means of production, chiefly those used in grain growing, are socialized; labor, the use of the land, machines and other implements, draught animals, farm buildings. But in the artel, household land (small vegetable gardens, small orchards), dwellings, a certain part of the dairy cattle, small livestock, poultry, etc., are *not socialized*. The artel is the *main link of the collective farm movement* because it is the most expedient form for solving the grain problem. And the grain problem is the *main link in the whole system of agriculture*.’¹²⁵

On March 10, a Central Committee resolution took up these points, indicating that ‘in some districts the percentage of ‘dekulakized’ has risen to 15 per cent’.¹²⁶ A Central Committee resolution examined the cases of ‘dekulakized’ sent to Siberia. Of the 46,261 examined cases, six per cent had been improperly exiled. In three months, 70,000 families were rehabilitated in the five regions for which we have information.¹²⁷ This figure should be compared with the 330,000 families that had been expropriated, in the three categories, by the end of 1930.

Rectify and consolidate

Hindus, a U.S. citizen of Russian origin, was in his native village when Stalin's article arrived. Here is his testimony:

'In the market places peasants gathered in groups and read it aloud and discussed it long and violently, and some of them were so overjoyed that they bought all the vodka they could pay for and got drunk.'¹²⁸

'Stalin became a temporary folk hero with the appearance of his "Dizziness with success".'¹²⁹

At the time that Stalin wrote his article, 59 per cent of the peasants had joined kolkhozy. He obviously hoped that most would remain. 'Hence the task of our party: to *consolidate* the successes achieved and to *utilize* them systematically for the purpose of advancing further'.¹³⁰

A decree dated April 3 included several special measures destined to consolidate the existing kolkhozy. The collective farmers could keep a certain number of animals and work a plot of land for themselves. Credit of 500 million rubles was set aside for the kolkhozy for that year alone. Some debts and payments of kolkhozy and kolkhozians were dropped. Tax reductions were announced for the next two years.¹³¹ In the end of March, Molotov warned against retreat. He insisted that, as far as possible, the level of collectivization be retained while the errors were rectified: 'Our approach . . . is to manoeuvre, and by securing a certain level of organization not entirely voluntarily, consolidate the kolkhozy'. Molotov underlined that the 'Bolshevik voluntary principle' differed from the 'SR-kulak voluntary principle', which presupposed equality of conditions for the kolkhoz and for individual peasants.¹³²

But it was necessary to firmly correct leftist and bureaucratic errors. On April 4, Bauman, the Moscow Committee Secretary, one of the bastions of 'leftism', resigned from the Politburo. His replacement, Kaganovich, then replaced 153 district and okrug leaders.¹³³

Right opportunism rears its head

In a rural world dominated by small producers, Stalin's criticism of such blatant errors was clearly dangerous. Enthusiasm easily transformed itself into defeatism, and right opportunism, always present, reared its head when leftist errors were criticized. For many local leaders, there was a feeling of panic and disarray; their morale and their confidence was severely shaken. Some claimed that Stalin's article had destroyed several viable kolkhozy, that he made too many concessions to the kulaks and that he was taking a step backwards towards capitalism.¹³⁴

Within the party as a whole, right-opportunist tendencies, beaten in 1929–1930, were still present. Some, afraid of the bitterness and the violence of the class struggle in the countryside, took advantage of the criticism of the excesses of collectivization to start criticizing, once again, the very concept of collectivization. Syrtsov had belonged to Bukharin's right-opportunist group in 1927–1928. In July 1930, he was promoted to the rank of substitute member of the Politburo.

On February 20, 1930, he wrote of the ‘production apathy and production nihilism which have appeared with a considerable section of the peasantry on entering the kolkhozy’. He attacked the ‘centralization and bureaucratism’ prevalent in the kolkhoz movement, called for ‘developing the initiative of the peasant on a new basis’.¹³⁵ This capitulationist position favored a change of course that would help the kulaks. In August 1930, Syrtsov warned against further collectivization and stated that the kolkhozy were not worth anything if they did not have a solid technical basis. At the same time, he stated his skepticism about the perspectives of the Stalingrad tractor factory. In December 1930, he was expelled from the Central Committee.¹³⁶

The anti-Communists attack

All the anti-Party and counter-revolutionary elements tried to change the criticism of the excesses into a criticism of Stalin and the Party leadership. Alternately attacking the Leninist leadership with right-wing and ‘leftist’ arguments, they tried to put forward anti-Communist positions.

During a meeting of the Timiryazev Agriculture Academy in Moscow, a man cried out, ‘Where was the CC during the excesses?’ A *Pravda* editorial dated May 27 ‘condemned as ‘demagogy’ all attempts to ‘discredit the Leninist leadership of the party’’.¹³⁷

A man named Mamaev, during a discussion period, wrote: ‘the question involuntarily arises — whose head got dizzy? . . . one should speak about one’s own disease, not teach the lower party masses about it’. Mamaev denounced ‘the mass application of repressive measures to the middle and poor peasants’. The countryside would only be ready for collectivization when mechanization was possible. He then criticized the ‘comprehensive bureaucratisation’ in the party and condemned the ‘artificial inflaming of the class struggle’. Mamaev was correctly denounced as ‘an agent of the kulaks within the party’.¹³⁸

Expelled from the Soviet Union, Trotsky systematically chose positions opposed to those taken by the Party. In February 1930, he denounced the accelerated collectivization and dekulakization as a ‘bureaucratic adventure’. Attempting to establish socialism in one country, based on the equipment of a backward peasant, is doomed to failure, he cried out. ‘In March, he condemned Stalin for failing to admit that the ‘utopian reactionary character of “100 per cent collectivisation” ’ lay in ‘the compulsory organisation of huge collective farms without the technological basis that could alone insure their superiority over small ones’’. He asserted that the kolkhozy ‘will fall apart while waiting for the technical base’.¹³⁹ Trotsky’s ‘leftist’ criticisms were no longer distinguishable from those of the right opportunists.

Rakovsky, the main Trotskyist who remained in the Soviet Union, in internal exile, called for the overthrow of the ‘centrist leadership’ headed by Stalin. The kolkhozians would explode and would constitute one front of the campaign against the socialist state. The kulak should not be discouraged from producing by limiting his means. Industrial products should be imported for the peasants and the Soviet

industrialization program should be slowed down. Rakovsky recognized that his propositions resembled those of the right-wing, but 'the distinction between ourselves and the Rights is the distinction between an army retreating in order and deserters fleeing from the battlefield'.¹⁴⁰

Retreats and advances

Finally, the collectivization rate fell from 57.2 per cent on March 1, 1930 to 21.9 per cent on August 1, rising again to 25.9 per cent in January 1931.

In the Central Black Earth Region, the numbers fell from 83.3 per cent on March 1 to 15.4 per cent on July 1. The Moscow Region saw a drop from 74.2 per cent to 7.5 per cent on May 1. The quality of political and ideological work was clearly reflected in the number of peasants who withdrew from the kolkhozy. Lower Volga, starting from 70.1 per cent on March 1, dropped to 35.4 per cent on August 1 and rose again to 57.5 per cent on January 1, 1931. North Caucasus obtained the best results: 79.4 per cent on March 1, 50.2 per cent on July 1 and 60.0 per cent on January 1, 1931.¹⁴¹

However, for the most part, the gains of the first large wave of collectivization were remarkable.

The collectivization rate greatly exceeded what was planned for the end of the first Five-Year Plan, in 1933. In May 1930, after the massive departures from kolkhozy, there were still six million families, as opposed to one million in June 1929. The typical kolkhoz contained 70 families instead of 18 in June 1929. The collectivization rate was higher, and the kolkhoz were for the most part artels, instead of TOZy (Associations for the Joint Cultivation of Land). The number of dairy cattle increased from 2.11 million in January 1930 to 4.77 million in May 1930. In the kolkhozy, there were 81,957 Party members on June 1, 1929; they numbered 313,200 in May 1930. With the great collectivization wave, the kolkhozy consisted mainly of landless and poor peasants. However, a large number of middle peasants had joined. In May, 32.7 per cent of the leading members were former middle peasants.¹⁴² In May 1930, the fixed assets of the kolkhozes were valued at 510 million rubles, 175 million coming from the expropriation of the kulaks.¹⁴³

Remarkable results

Despite the major upheavals provoked by collectivization, the 1930 harvest was excellent. Good climactic conditions had contributed, and these might have led the Party into under-estimating the difficulties still to come.

Grain production amounted to, depending on the figures, between 77.2 and 83.5 million tonnes, compared to 71.7 in 1929.¹⁴⁴ Thanks to national planning, mechanized agriculture, particularly of cotton and beets, rose by 20 per cent. However, because of the slaughter of a large number of animals, animal production decreased from 5.68 million rubles to 4.40, a drop of 22 per cent.

In 1930, the entire collective sector (kolkhozy, sovkhozy and individual plots of kolkhozians) generated 28.4 per cent of the gross agricultural production, compared

to 7.6 per cent the previous year.¹⁴⁵

Grain delivery to the cities increased from 7.47 million tonnes in 1929–1930 to 9.09 million in 1930–1931, i.e. 21.7 per cent. But, given the tremendous development of industry, the number of people receiving bread rations increased from 26 to 33 million, i.e. 27 per cent.¹⁴⁶

The consumption of agricultural products slightly decreased in the countryside, passing from 60.55 rubles per person in 1928, to 61.95 in 1929, and to 58.62 in 1930. But the consumption of industrial products passed from 28.29 rubles in 1928, to 32.30 the next year, and to 32.33 in 1930. The total consumption of the rural population evolved from an index of 100 in 1928, to 105.4 in 1929, and to 102.4 in 1930. The standard of living in the countryside therefore slightly increased, while it had decreased similarly in the city. The total consumption per person in the city evolved from 100 in 1928, to 97.6 in 1929, and to 97.5 the following year.¹⁴⁷

These figures contradict the accusations made by Bukharin and the right wing, according to whom Stalin had organized ‘the feudal-bureaucratic exploitation’ of the peasantry: the entire working population made enormous sacrifices to build socialism and to industrialize, and the sacrifices asked of the workers were often greater than the sacrifices asked of the peasants.

To feed the cities and succeed with the industrialization, the Soviet state followed a policy of extremely low prices for grain. But in 1930, peasant revenues considerably increased from sales on free markets and from seasonal work. As Davies wrote:

‘The state secured essential supplies of agricultural products at prices far below the market level. But, taking collections and market sales together, the prices received by the agricultural producer increased far more rapidly than the prices of industrial goods. The terms of trade turned in favour of agriculture.’¹⁴⁸

‘The centralized control of agricultural production seemed to have had some success in its primary aim of securing food supplies for the urban population and agricultural raw materials for industry.’¹⁴⁹

The rise of socialist agriculture

In October 1930, 78 per cent of peasant families were still individual producers, directed towards the market. The October 21 issue of *Pravda* wrote:

‘(I)n the circumstances of the present autumn when there has been a good harvest ... in the circumstances of high speculative prices for grain, meat and vegetables at the markets, certain middle peasant households are rapidly transformed into well-to-do and kulak house-holds.’¹⁵⁰

The second wave of collectivization

Between September and December 1930, a propaganda campaign for the kolkhozy was launched. The leadership of kolkhozy distributed activity reports to individual

peasants in their area. Special meetings were called for those who had left the kolkhozy in March. In September, 5,625 'recruitment commissions', composed of kolkhozians, went to districts with low collectivization rates to persuade the peasants. In the Central Black Earth region, 3.5 million individual peasants were invited to general assemblies of kolkhozy, where annual reports were presented.

Kulaks who were sabotaging the collectivization continued to be exiled, particularly in Ukraine, where, in the beginning of 1931, the total number of exiled of the three categories was 75,000.¹⁵¹

But the fall 1930 collectivization campaign was carefully led by the Party leadership: it was not led with the same rigor and forcefulness as the first wave, and there was no centralized campaign to exile the kulaks.¹⁵²

From September 1 to December 31, 1930, 1,120,000 families joined the kolkhozy, just over half in the grain producing regions. So 25.9 per cent of families opted for collectivized agriculture.¹⁵³

By allocating the best land and different kinds of benefits to the kolkhozians, the economic pressure on the individual peasants increased during 1931 and 1932. At the same time, the kulaks made their last desperate attempts to destroy the kolkhozy.

The second great wave of collectivization took place in 1931 and brought the number of collectivized families from 23.6 per cent to 57.1 per cent. During the next three years, there was a slight annual increase of 4.6 per cent.

From 1934 to 1935, the collectivization level passed from 71.4 per cent to 83.2 per cent, essentially finishing the collectivization of agriculture.¹⁵⁴

Economic and social creativity

It is often claimed that the 1930 collectivization was imposed by force on the peasant masses. We wish to underscore the extraordinary social and economic creativity of this period, a revolutionary creativity shown by the masses, intellectual cadres and Party leaders. Most of the basic traits of the socialist agricultural system were 'invented' during the 1929–1931 struggle. Davies recognized this:

'This was a learning process on a vast scale, and in an extremely brief period of time, in which party leaders and their advisers, local party officials, the peasants and economic regularities all contributed to the outcome . . . Major features of the kolkhoz system established in 1929–30 endured until Stalin's death, and for some time after it.'¹⁵⁵

First, the kolkhoz was conceived as the organizational form that would allow the introduction of large-scale mechanized production in a backward agricultural country. The kolkhozy were designed for grain production and industrial agriculture, particularly cotton and beets. The production from the kolkhozy was supplied to the state at very low prices, which helped with the socialist industrialization: the sums spent by the state to feed the city populations and to supply industry with agricultural raw materials were kept very low. The kolkhozians received compensation, thanks to the considerable revenue generated by sale on the free market

and by supplementary work.

Next, the Tractor Machine Station system was created to introduce machines in the countryside. Bettelheim wrote:

‘Given the juridical basis for collectivization, agriculture benefited from massive investments that totally transformed the technical conditions of farms.

‘This complete upheaval of agricultural technique was only possible thanks to the replacement of small- and medium-scale agriculture by large-scale agriculture.’¹⁵⁶

But how were modern techniques introduced in the kolkhozy? The question was not simple.

During the summer of 1927, Markevich created at Shevchenko an original system, the Tractor Machine Stations (TMS), that centralized control of machines and made them available to the kolkhozy.

In the beginning of 1929, there were two Tractor Machine Stations, both state property, with 100 tractors. There were also 50 ‘tractor columns’, belonging to grain cooperatives, each with 20 tractors. The 147 large kolkhozy had 800 tractors; the majority of the 20,000 tractors were dispersed on the small kolkhozy.¹⁵⁷

In July 1929, most of the tractors were therefore in the hands of agricultural cooperatives or kolkhozy. During a conference, some proposed that tractors and machines be sold to the kolkhozy: if the peasants did not directly own the tractors, then they would not mobilize to find the funds. But the Workers’ and Peasants’ Inspection criticized in August 1929 the experiences with tractors belonging to cooperatives. This system made it impossible to do serious planning, the population was not adequately prepared, and, since there were not sufficient repair shops, breakdowns often occurred due to lack of maintenance.¹⁵⁸

In February 1930, the Party abandoned the giant kolkhozy experience, popular until then among the activists, to take up the village–kolkhoz as the basis for collectivization. In September 1930, the Party decided to centralize the tractors used in kolkhozy by creating Tractor Machine Stations, which would be state property.¹⁵⁹ Markevich proposed to use 200 tractors for every 40 to 50,000 hectares of arable land, along with a repair shop. He underlined that it was necessary for agricultural technology to be managed by a ‘unified organizational centre’ for the entire Soviet Union. Important districts had to be chosen, technology used around the world had to be studied in order to find the best kind of machines, machines had to be standardized and the management of machines had to be centralized. The TMS should be the property of this center.¹⁶⁰

As early as spring 1930, this system showed its superiority. The TMS only served 8 per cent of the kolkhozy, but 62 per cent of the peasants in those kolkhozy remained during the ‘retreat’. The centralized harvest was greatly simplified by this system, since the kolkhozy simply gave one quarter of their harvest to the TMS as payment.¹⁶¹ TMS workers were considered industrial workers. Representing the working class in the countryside, they had great influence among the kolkhozians in the areas of political and technical education and of organization. In 1930, 25,000 tractor drivers received their education. In the spring of 1931, courses were organized for 200,000 young peasants who would enter the TMS, including 150,000

tractor drivers.¹⁶²

Third, an ingenious system for payment of the kolkhozians was devised, called 'work-days'.

A decree dated February 28, 1933 placed the different agricultural tasks in seven different remuneration categories, whose value, expressed in 'work-days', varied from 0.5 to 1.5. In other words, the most difficult or arduous work was paid three times as dearly as the easiest or lightest work. The kolkhoz' revenue was distributed, at the end of the year, to the kolkhozians according to the number of work-days they had effected. The average revenue per family, in the cereal regions, was 600.2 kilograms of grain and 108 rubles in 1932. In 1937, it was 1,741.7 kilograms of grain and 376 rubles.¹⁶³

Finally, a balance was found between collective labor and the individual activity of the kolkhozian peasants. The legal status of the kolkhozy, made official on February 7, 1935, fixed the basic principles, defined through five years of struggle and experience.¹⁶⁴ In 1937, the individual parcels of land cultivated by kolkhozians represented 3.9 per cent of the cultivated surface, but the kolkhozians derived 20 per cent of their revenue from them. Each family could own three horned animals, one of which could be a cow, one sow with piglets, ten sheep and an unlimited number of fowl and rabbits.¹⁶⁵

Investments in the countryside

At the end of 1930, the Tractor Machine Stations controlled 31,114 tractors. According to the Plan, they should have controlled 60,000 in 1931. This figure was not attained, but by 1932, the TMS did have 82,700 tractors. The rest of the 148,500 units were on the sovkhozy.

The total number of tractors increased steadily during the thirties: from 210,900 in 1933, to 276,400 in 1934, jumping to 360,300 in 1935, and to 422,700 in 1936. In 1940, the USSR had 522,000 tractors.¹⁶⁶

Another statistic indicates the number of tractors in units of 15 horsepower. It shows the extraordinary efforts made during the years 1930–1932.

In the beginning of 1929, the rural part of the Soviet Union held 18,000 tractors — counted as units of 15 horsepower —, 14 000 trucks and 2 (two!) combines. At the beginning of 1933, there were 148,000 tractors, 14,000 trucks and as many combines. At the beginning of the war, in 1941, the kolkhozy and the sovkhozy used, using the same units, 684,000 tractors, 228,000 trucks and 182,000 combines.¹⁶⁷

Despite all the bourgeoisie's hue and cry about the repression suffered by the rich peasants during the collectivization, in less than one decade, the Russian peasants left the Middle Ages and joined the twentieth century. Their cultural and technical development was phenomenal.

This progress properly reflected the sustained rise in investment in agriculture. It increased from 379 million rubles in 1928, to 2,590 million in 1930, to 3,645 million in 1931, stayed at the same level for two years, reaching its highest levels at 4,661 million in 1934 and 4,983 million in 1935.¹⁶⁸

These figures deny the theory according to which Soviet agriculture was ‘exploited’ by the city: never could a capitalist economy have made such large investments in the countryside. Agriculture’s share in the total investment increased from 6.5 per cent in 1923–1924 to 20 per cent during the crucial years 1931 and 1932; in 1935, its share was 18 per cent.¹⁶⁹

The breakthrough of socialist agriculture

Starting in 1933, agricultural production rose most years. The year before collectivization, the cereal harvest attained 71.7 million tonnes. In 1930, there was an exceptional harvest of 83.5 million tonnes. In 1931 and 1932, the Soviet Union was in the depth of the crisis, due to socio-economic upheavals, to desperate kulak resistance, to the little support that could be given to peasants in these crucial years of industrial investment, to the slow introduction of machines and to drought. Grain production fell to 69.5 and to 69.9 million tonnes. Then, there were three successive harvests from 1933 to 1935 of 89.8, 89.4 and 90.1 million tonnes. Particularly bad climactic conditions produced the worst harvest, in 1936, of 69.3 million tonnes, but its effects were mitigated by reserves and good planning of distribution. The next year, there was a record harvest of 120.9 million tonnes, followed by high levels of 95.0, 105.0 and 118.8 million between 1938 and 1940.¹⁷⁰

Socialist agriculture dramatically rose as soon as the considerable industrial and agricultural investments had an effect. The total value of agricultural production stagnated between 1928 and 1934, oscillating between 13.1 billion rubles and 14.7 billion rubles. Then it rose to 16.2 billion in 1935, to 20.1 billion in 1937, and 23.2 billion in 1940.¹⁷¹

A peasant population rising from 120.7 to 132 million people between 1926 and 1940 was able to feed an urban population that increased from 26.3 to 61 million in the same period.¹⁷²

The kolkhoisian consumption in 1938 had increased, in terms of percentage of peasant consumption under the former régime, to: bread and flour, 125; potatoes, 180; fruit and vegetables, 147; milk and dairy products, 148; meat and sausage, 179.¹⁷³

‘Colossal support’

The collectivization of the countryside halted the spontaneous tendency of small-scale merchant production to polarize society into rich and poor, into exploiters and exploited. The kulaks, the rural bourgeois, were repressed and eliminated as a social class. The development of a rural bourgeoisie in a country where 80 per cent of the population still lived in the countryside would have asphyxiated and killed Soviet socialism. The collectivization prevented that from happening.

Collectivization and a planned economy allowed the Soviet Union to survive the total, barbaric war waged against it by the German Nazis. During the first years of the war, wheat consumption was reduced by one half but, thanks to planning, the available quantities were equitably distributed. The regions occupied and ravaged

by the Nazis represented 47 per cent of the area of cultivated land. The fascists destroyed 98,000 collective enterprises. But between 1942 and 1944, 12 million hectares of newly cultivated land were sown in the eastern part of the country.¹⁷⁴

Thanks to the superiority of the socialist system, agricultural production was able to reach the 1940 level by 1948.¹⁷⁵

In a few years, a completely new system of organization of work, a complete upheaval of technique and a profound cultural revolution won the hearts of the peasants. Bettelheim noted:

‘(T)he overwhelming majority of peasants were very attached to the new system of exploitation. The proof came during the war, since in the regions occupied by the German troops, despite the efforts made by the Nazi authorities, the kolkhoisian form of exploitation was maintained.’¹⁷⁶

This opinion by someone who favored the Communist system can be completed with the testimony of Alexander Zinoviev, an opponent of Stalin. As a child, Zinoviev was a witness to the collectivization.

‘When I returned to the village, even much later, I often asked my mother and other kolkhozians if they would have accepted an individual farm if they were offered the possibility. They all refused categorically.’¹⁷⁷

‘(The village school) had only seven grades, but acted as the bridge to the region’s technical schools, which trained the veterinarians, agronomists, mechanics, tractor drivers, accountants and other specialists needed for the new ‘agriculture’. In Chukhloma, there was a secondary school with ten grades that offered better perspectives to its finishing students. All these institutions and professions were the result of an unprecedented cultural revolution. The collectivization directly contributed to this upheaval. Besides these more or less trained specialists, the villages hosted technicians from the cities; these technicians had a secondary or higher education. The structure of the rural population became closer to that of urban society . . . I was a witness to this evolution during my childhood . . . This extremely rapid change of rural society gave the new system huge support from the masses of the population. All this despite the horrors of the collectivization and the industrialization.’¹⁷⁸

The extraordinary achievements of the Soviet régime ensured it ‘a colossal support’ from the workers and ‘a disgust of the horrors’ from the exploiting classes: Zinoviev constantly wavers between these two positions. Student after the war, Zinoviev recalls a discussion that he had with another anti-Communist student:

‘If there had been no collectivization and no industrialization, could we have won the war against the Germans?’

‘No.

‘Without the Stalinist hardships, could we have kept the country in an orderly state?’

‘No.

‘If we had not built up industry and armaments, could we have preserved the security and independence of our State?’

‘No.

‘So, what do you propose?’

‘Nothing.’¹⁷⁹

The collectivization ‘genocide’

During the eighties, the Right took up several themes that the Nazis had developed during the psychological war against the Soviet Union. Since 1945, efforts to rehabilitate Nazism have generally started with affirmations such as ‘Stalinism was at least as barbaric as Nazism’. Ernst Nolte, followed by Jürgen Habermas, claimed in 1986 that the extermination of the kulaks by Stalin could be compared to the extermination of the Jews by Hitler!

‘Auschwitz is not primarily a result of traditional anti-semitism. It was in its core not merely a ‘genocide’ but was above all a reaction born out of the anxiety of the annihilating occurrences of the Russian Revolution. This copy was far more irrational than the original.’¹⁸⁰

Hence the Nazis were tormented by the ‘anxiety’ that the Stalinist crimes created; and the extermination of the Jews was a ‘reaction’ to this ‘anxiety’. Hitler, in his time, made similar declarations: the invasion of the Soviet Union was a ‘self-defence’ measure against Judeo-Bolshevism. And some still wonder why fascism is rising in Germany.

The Soviet term, ‘liquidation of the kulaks as a class’, indicates perfectly clearly that it is the capitalist exploitation organized by the kulaks that is to be eliminated and not the physical liquidation of the kulaks as persons. Playing with the word ‘liquidation’, academic hacks such as Nolte and Conquest claim that the exiled kulaks were ‘exterminated’.

Stefan Merl, a German researcher, describes the precarious conditions in which the first kulaks were expropriated and sent to Siberia, during the first wave of collectivization in January–March 1930.

‘With the beginning of spring, the situation in the receiving camps aggravated. Epidemics were widespread, leaving many victims, particularly among the children. For this reason, all children were removed from the camps in April 1930 and sent back to their native villages. At that time, some 400,000 persons had already been deported to the North; until the summer of 1930, probably 20,000 to 40,000 persons died’.¹⁸¹

Here, Merl informs us that a great number of the ‘victims of the Stalinist terror during the collectivization’ died because of epidemics and that the Party promptly reacted to protect children.

Merl estimated that the fall 1930 transports ‘took place in less barbaric conditions’. The majority were sent to Siberia and Kazakhstan, ‘regions where there existed a considerable deficit of labor . . .’¹⁸² During the years 1930–1935, the Soviet Union was short of labor, especially in newly developed regions. The régime tried to use all available forces. It is difficult to see why it would have ‘killed’ men who had been working the land in Siberia or Kazakhstan for the previous

year or two. Nevertheless, Merl estimates that the 100,000 heads of family of the first category, sent to the Gulag system, are all dead. But the Party only placed 63,000 kulaks in the first category and only those guilty of terrorist and counter-revolutionary acts should be executed. Merl continues:

‘Another 100,000 persons probably lost their lives, at the beginning of 1930, due to expulsion from their houses, deportation towards the North and executions’. Then he adjusts the number by another 100,000 persons, ‘dead in the deportation regions at the end of the thirties’. Once again, no precision or indication.¹⁸³

Merl’s number of 300,000 dead is based on very approximate estimates and many of these deaths were the result of natural causes, old age and disease, and general conditions in the country.

Nevertheless, he is forced to defend these ‘weak’ estimates when confronted by a crypto-fascist such as Conquest, who ‘calculated’ that 6,500,000 kulaks were ‘massacred’ during the collectivization, 3,500,000 in the Siberian camps!¹⁸⁴

Conquest is a major ‘authority’ in the right wing. But Merl noted that Conquest’s writings show a ‘frightening lack of criticism of sources’. Conquest ‘uses writings from obscure émigrés taking up information transmitted by second or third hand Often, what he presents as ‘facts’ are only verified by a single questionable source.’¹⁸⁵ ‘The number of victims put forward by Conquest is more than double the number of deportees, according to his “proof”.’¹⁸⁶ For a long time, writings by authors who are not Communists, such as Merl, allowed one to refute Conquest’s gross slanders.

But in 1990, Zemskov and Dugin, two Soviet historians, published detailed statistics of the Fulag. Hence the exact figures are now available and they refute most of Conquest’s lies.

During the most violent period of the collectivization, in 1930–1931, the peasants expropriated 381,026 kulaks and sent their families to unplowed land to the East. These included 1,803,392 persons. As of 1 January 1932, there were 1,317,022 people in the new establishments. The difference is of 486,000. The disorganization helping, many of the deported were able to escape during the trip, which often took three months or more. (To give an idea, of the 1,317,022 settled, 207,010 were able to flee during the year 1932.)¹⁸⁷ Others, whose case was reviewed, were allowed to return home. An undetermined number, that we have estimated at 100,000, died during the travels, mainly because of epidemics. The considerable number of deaths during displacements must be seen in the context of that epoch: a weak administration, precarious living conditions for the entire population, sometimes chaotic class struggles among the peasant population overtaken by leftism. Of course, for each death during displacement, the Right affirms that the guilty party is the Party, is Stalin. But in fact the contrary is true. The Party’s position is clearly stated in one of the numerous reports about this problem, this one dated 20 December 1931 by the person responsible for a work camp at Novossibirsk.

‘The high mortality observed for convoys nos 18 to 23 coming from the North Caucasus — 2,421 persons out of 10,086 upon departure — can be explained by the following reasons:

‘1. A negligent, criminal approach to the selection of deported contingents, among whom were many children, aged over 65 years of age and sick people;

‘2. The non-respect of directives about the right for deportees to bring with them provisions for two months of transfer.

‘3. The lack of clean water, which forced the deported to drink unclean water. Many are dead of dysentery and of other epidemics.’¹⁸⁸

All these deaths are classed under the heading ‘Stalinist crimes’. But this report shows that two of the causes of death were linked to the non-respect of Party directives and the third had to do with the deplorable sanitary conditions and habits in the entire country.

Conquest ‘calculated’ that 3,500,000 kulaks were ‘exterminated’ in the camps.¹⁸⁹

But the total number of dekulakized in the colonies never exceeded 1,317,022! And between 1932 and 1935, the number of departures exceeded by 299,389 the number of arrivals. From 1932 to the end of 1940, the exact number of deaths, essentially due to natural causes, was 389,521. And this number does not just include dekulakized, since after 1935 other categories were in the colonies as well.

What can one say about Conquest’s affirmation of 6,500,000 ‘massacred’ kulaks during the different phases of the collectivization? Only part of the 63,000 first category counter-revolutionaries were executed. The number of dead during deportations, largely due to famine and epidemics, was approximately 100,000. Between 1932 and 1940, we can estimate that 200,000 kulaks died in the colonies of natural causes. The executions and these deaths took place during the greatest class struggle that the Russian countryside ever saw, a struggle that radically transformed a backward and primitive countryside. In this giant upheaval, 120 million peasants were pulled out of the Middle Ages, of illiteracy and obscurantism. It was the reactionary forces, who wanted to maintain exploitation and degrading and inhuman work and living conditions, who received the blows. Repressing the bourgeoisie and the reactionaries was absolutely necessary for collectivization to take place: only collective labor made socialist mechanization possible, thereby allowing the peasant masses to lead a free, proud and educated life.

Through their hatred of socialism, Western intellectuals spread Conquest’s absurd lies about 6,500,000 ‘exterminated’ kulaks. They took up the defence of bourgeois democracy, of imperialist democracy. In Mozambique, Renamo, organized by the CIA and the security services of South Africa, has massacred and starved 900,000 villagers since 1980. The goal: prevent Mozambique from becoming an independent country with a socialist direction. In Mozambique, Western intellectuals did not need to invent cadavers, all they needed to do was write about imperialist barbarity. But these 900,000 deaths are a non-fact: no-one talks about them.

Unita, also openly financed and supported by the CIA and South Africa, killed more than one million Angolans during the civil war against the MPLA nationalist government. After having lost the 1992 elections, Savimbi, the CIA man, took up his destructive war yet again.

‘The Angolan tragedy threatens the life of 3 million people Savimbi refused

to accept the government's electoral victory of 129 seats against 91 and has plunged Angola yet again in a ferocious conflict that has taken another 100,000 lives (in the last twelve months).¹⁹⁰

One hundred thousand Africans, of course, are nothing. How many Western intellectuals who still like to scream about the collectivization have simply not noticed that two million Mozambican and Angolan peasants were massacred by the West to prevent these countries from becoming truly independent and escaping from the clutches of international capital?

Collectivization and the 'Ukrainian Holocaust'

Lies about the collectivization have always been, for the bourgeoisie, powerful weapons in the psychological war against the Soviet Union.

We analyze the development of one of the most 'popular' lies, the holocaust supposedly perpetrated by Stalin against the Ukrainian people. This brilliantly elaborated lie was created by Hitler. In his 1926 *Mein Kampf*, he had already indicated that Ukraine belonged to German 'lebensraum'. The campaign waged by the Nazis in 1934–1935 about the Bolshevik 'genocide' in Ukraine was to prepare people's minds for the planned 'liberation' of Ukraine. We will see why this lie outlived its Nazi creators to become a U.S. weapon. Here are how fabrications of 'millions of victims of Stalinism' are born.

On February 18, 1935, the Hearst press in the U.S. began the publication of a series of articles by Thomas Walker. (Hearst was a huge press magnate and a Nazi sympathizer.) Great traveler and journalist, Walker had supposedly crisscrossed the Soviet Union for several years. The February 25 headline of the *Chicago American* read, 'Six Million Perish in Soviet Famine: Peasants' Crops Seized, They and Their Animals Starve.' In the middle of the page, another headline read, 'Reporter Risks Life to Get Photographs Showing Starvation.' At the bottom of the page, 'Famine — Crime Against Humanity'.¹

At the time, Louis Fischer was working in Moscow for the U.S. newspaper *The Nation*. This scoop by a completely unknown colleague intrigued him greatly. He did some research and shared his findings with the newspaper's readers:

'Mr. Walker, we are informed, "entered Russia last spring," that is the spring of 1934. He saw famine. He photographed its victims. He got heartrending, first-hand accounts of hunger's ravages. Now hunger in Russia is "hot" news. Why did Mr. Hearst keep these sensational articles for ten months before printing them . . .

'I consulted Soviet authorities who had official information from Moscow. Thomas Walker was in the Soviet Union once. He received a transit visa from the Soviet Consul in London on September 29, 1934. He entered the USSR from Poland by train at Negoreloye on October 12, 1934. (Not the spring of 1934 as he says.)

He was in Moscow on the thirteenth. He remained in Moscow from Saturday, the thirteenth, to Thursday, the eighteenth, and then boarded a trans-Siberian train which brought him to the Soviet-Manchurian border on October 25, 1934 It would have been physically impossible for Mr. Walker, in the five days between October 13 and October 18, to cover one-third of the points he “describes” from personal experience. My hypothesis is that he stayed long enough in Moscow to gather from embittered foreigners the Ukrainian “local color” he needed to give his articles the fake verisimilitude they possess.’

Fischer had a friend, Lindsay Parrott, also American, who visited the Ukraine in the beginning of 1934. He noticed no traces of the famine mentioned in Hearst’s press. On the contrary, the 1933 harvest was successful. Fischer concluded:

‘The Hearst organizations and the Nazis are beginning to work more and more closely together. But I have not noticed that the Hearst press printed Mr. Parrott’s stories about a prosperous Soviet Ukraine. Mr. Parrott is Mr. Hearst’s correspondent in Moscow.’²

Underneath a photograph of a little girl and a ‘frog-like’ child, Walter wrote:

‘FRIGHTFUL — Below Kharhov (sic), in a typical peasant’s hut, dirt floor, thatched roof and one piece of furniture, a bench, was a very thin girl and her 2 1/2 year old brother (shown above). This younger child crawled about the floor like a frog and its poor little body was so deformed from lack of nourishment that it did not resemble a human being.’³

Douglas Tottle, a Canadian union worker and journalist, found the picture of this same ‘frog-like’ child, dated spring 1934, in a 1922 publication about the famine of that year.

Another photo by Walker was identified as that of a soldier in the Austrian cavalry, beside a dead horse, taken during the First World War.⁴

Poor Walker: his reporting was fake, his photographs were fake, even his name was assumed. His real name was Robert Green. He had escaped from the Colorado state prison after having done two years out of eight. Then he went to do his false reporting in the Soviet Union. Upon his return to the States, he was arrested, where he admitted in front of the court that he had never set foot in the Ukraine.

The multi-millionaire William Randolph Hearst met Hitler at the end of the summer of 1934 to finalize an agreement under which Germany would buy its international news from the Hearst-owned company International News Service. At the time, the Nazi press had already started up a propaganda campaign about the ‘Ukrainian famine’. Hearst took it up quickly, thanks to his great explorer, Walker.⁵

Other similar reports on the famine would show up in Hearst’s press. For example, Fred Beal started to write. A U.S. worker sentenced to twenty years of prison after a strike, he fled to the Soviet Union in 1930 and worked for two years in the Kharkov Tractor Works. In 1933, he wrote a little book called *Foreign workers in a Soviet Tractor Plant*, favorably describing the efforts of the Soviet people. At the end of 1933, he returned to the U.S., where unemployment and prison awaited him. In 1934, he started to write about the Ukrainian famine, and soon his prison

sentence was dramatically reduced. When his 'eyewitness account' was published by Hearst in June 1935, J. Wolyneć, another U.S. worker who had worked for five years in the same Kharkov factory, exposed the lies that showed up throughout the text. Although Beal pretended to have heard several conversations, Wolyneć noted that Beal spoke neither Russian nor Ukrainian. In 1948, Beal offered his services to the far-right as an eyewitness against Communists, in front of the McCarthy Committee.⁶

A book from Hitler

In 1935, Dr. Ewald Ammende published a book, *Muss Russland hungern?* (1936 English title: *Human Life in Russia*) Its sources: the German Nazi press, the Italian fascist press, the Ukrainian émigré press and 'travelers' and 'experts', cited with no details. He published photos that he claimed 'are among the most important sources for the actual facts of the Russian position'.⁷ There are also photos belonging to Dr. Ditloff, who was until August 1933 Director of the German Government Agricultural Concession — *Drusag* in the North Caucasus. Ditloff claimed to have taken the photos in the summer of 1933 'and they demonstrate the conditions ... (in) the Hunger Zone'.⁸ Given that he was by then a civil servant of the Nazi government, how could Ditloff have freely moved from the Caucasus to the Ukraine to hunt pictures? Among Ditloff's photos, seven, including that of the 'frog-like' child, had also been published by Walker. Another photo presented two skeletal-like boys, symbols of the 1933 Ukrainian famine. The same picture was shown in Peter Ustinov's televised series *Russia*: it comes from a documentary film about the 1922 Russian famine! Another of Ammende's photos was published by the Nazi paper *Völkischer Beobachter*, dated August 18, 1933. This photo was also identified among books dating back to 1922.

Ammende had worked in the Volga region in 1913. During the 1917–1918 Civil War, he had held positions in the pro-German counter-revolutionary governments of Estonia and Latvia. Then he worked in liaison with the Skoropadsky government set up by the German army in the Ukraine in March 1918. He claimed to have participated in the humanitarian aid campaigns during the 1921–1922 Russian famine, hence his familiarity with the photos of the period. For years, Ammende served as General Secretary of the so-called European Nationalities Congress, close to the Nazi Party, which included regrouped émigrés from the Soviet Union. At the end of 1933, Ammende was appointed Honorary Secretary of the Interconfessional and International Relief Committee for the Russian Famine Areas, which was led by the pro-fascist Cardinal Innitzer of Vienna. Ammende was therefore closely tied to the Nazi anti-Soviet campaign.

When Reagan started up his anti-Communist crusade at the beginning of the eighties, Professor James E. Mace of Harvard University thought it opportune to re-edit and re-publish Ammende's book under the title *Human Life in Russia*. That was in 1984. So all the Nazi lies and the fake photographic evidence, including Walker's pseudo-reporting on the Ukraine, were granted the 'academic

respectability' associated with the Harvard name.

The preceding year, far-right Ukrainian émigrés in the U.S. published *The Great Famine in Ukraine: The Unknown Holocaust*. Douglas Tottle was able to check that the photos in this book dated to 1921–1922. Hence the photo on the cover comes from Dr. F. Nansen's International Committee for Russian Relief publication *Information* 22, Geneva, April 30, 1922, p. 6!⁹

Neo-Nazi revisionism around the world 'revises' history to justify, above all, the barbaric crimes of fascism against Communists and the Soviet Union. First, it denies the crimes that they themselves committed against the Jews. Neo-Nazis deny the existence of extermination camps where millions of Jews were slaughtered. They then invent 'holocausts', supposedly perpetrated by Communists and by Comrade Stalin. With this lie, they justify the bestial crimes that the Nazis committed in the Soviet Union. For this, revisionism at the service of the anti-Communist struggle, they receive the full support of Reagan, Bush, Thatcher and company.

A book from McCarthy

Thousands of Ukrainian Nazi collaborators succeeded in entering the U.S. after the Second World War. During the McCarthy period, they testified as victims of 'communist barbarity'. They reinvented the famine-genocide myth in a two-volume book, *Black Deeds of the Kremlin*, published in 1953 and 1955 by the Ukrainian Association of Victims of Russian Communist Terror and the Democratic Organization of Ukrainians Formerly Persecuted by the Soviet Regime in the USA. This book, dear to Robert Conquest, who cites it regularly, contains a glorification of Petliura, responsible for the massacre of tens of thousands of Jews in 1918–1920, as well as a homage to Shukhevych, the fascist commander of the Nazi-organized Nachtigall Battalion and later the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA).

Black Deeds also contains a series of photos of the 1932–1933 famine-genocide. They are all fakes. Deliberate fakes. One picture is captioned 'A little cannibal'. It appeared in issue 22 of the *Information* bulletin of the International Committee for Russian Relief in 1922, with the original caption 'Cannibal from Zaporozhe: has eaten his sister'. On page 155, *Black Deeds* included a picture of four soldiers and an officer who had just executed some men. The caption reads 'The Execution of Kurkuls [Kulaks]'. Small detail: the soldiers are wearing Tsarist uniforms! Hence, Tsarist executions are given as proof of the 'crimes of Stalin'.¹⁰

One of the authors of volume I of *Black Deeds* was Alexander Hay-Holowko, who was Minister of Propaganda for Bandera's 'government' of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) in Western Ukraine. During the brief existence of this fascist clique, Nationalist mobs and Ukrainian auxiliary troops killed some thousands of Jews, Poles and Bolsheviks in the Lvov region. Hay-Holowko, who now resides in Vancouver, also served in the SS.

Among the persons cited as 'sponsors' of the book is Anatole Bilotserkiwsky, alias Anton Shpak, a former officer in the Nazi police at Bila Tserkva. According

to witnesses and documents Shpak/Bilotserkiwsky and others personally took part in the execution of two thousand predominantly Jewish civilians.¹¹

Between 1 and 15 Million Dead

In January 1964, Dana Dalrymple published an article in *Soviet Studies*, entitled 'The Soviet Famine of 1932–1934'. He claimed that there were 5,500,000 dead, the average of 20 various estimates.

One question immediately comes to mind: what are these sources of the 'estimates' used by the professor?

One of the sources is Thomas Walker, who made the famous 'trip' to Ukraine, where he 'presumably could speak Russian', according to Dalrymple.

Another source was Nicolas Prychodko, a Nazi collaborator who worked for the Nazi-controlled 'Minister of Culture and Education' in Kiev. Prychodko was evacuated West by the Nazis during their retreat from Ukraine. He provided the figure of seven million dead.

These are followed by Otto Schiller, Nazi civil servant charged with the reorganization of agriculture in Nazi-occupied Ukraine. His text, published in Berlin in 1943 and claiming 7,500,000 dead, was cited by Dalrymple.

The next source was Ewald Ammende, the Nazi who had not been in Russia since 1922. In two letters published in July and August 1934 in the *New York Times*, Ammende spoke of 7,500,000 dead and pretended that in July of that year, people were dying in the streets of Kiev. A few days later, the *NYT* correspondent, Harold Denny, gave the lie to Ammende: 'Your correspondent was in Kiev for several days last July about the time people were supposed to be dying there, and neither in the city, nor in the surrounding countryside was there hunger.' Several weeks later, Denny reported: 'Nowhere was famine found. Nowhere even the fear of it. There is food, including bread, in the local open markets. The peasants were smiling too, and generous with their foodstuffs'.¹²

Next, Frederick Birchall spoke of more than four million dead in a 1933 article. At that moment, he was, in Berlin, one of the first U.S. journalists to publicly support the Hitler régime.

Sources six through eight are William H. Chamberlin, twice, and Eugene Lyons, both anti-Communist journalists. After the war both were prominent members of the American Committee for the Liberation from Bolshevism (AMCOMLIB), better known as Radio Liberty. AMCOMLIB funds were raised by 'Crusade for Freedom', which received 90 per cent of its funds from the CIA. Chamberlin gave a first estimate of four million and a second one of 7,500,000 dead, the latter number based on an 'estimate of foreign residents in Ukraine'. Lyons' five million dead were also the result of noise and rumors, based on 'estimates made by foreigners and Russians in Moscow'.

The highest figure (ten million) was provided, with no details, by Richard Stallet of Hearst's pro-Nazi press. In 1932, the Ukrainian population was 25 million inhabitants.¹³

Among the twenty sources in Dalrymple's 'academic' work, three come from anti-Soviet articles in Hearst's pro-Nazi press and five come from far-right publications from the McCarthy era (1949–1953). Dalrymple used two German fascist authors, a former Ukrainian collaborator, a right-wing Russian émigré, two CIA collaborators, and a journalist who liked Hitler. A great number of the figures come from unidentified 'foreign residents in the Soviet Union'.

The two lowest estimates, dated 1933, came from U.S. journalists in Moscow, known for their professionalism, Ralph Barnes of the *New York Herald Tribune* and Walter Duranty of the *New York Times*. The first spoke of one million and the second of two million dead of famine.

Two professors to the rescue of Ukrainian Nazis

To help the new anti-Communist crusade and to justify their insane military buildup, U.S. right-wingers promoted in 1983 a great commemoration campaign of the '50th anniversary of famine-genocide in Ukraine'. To ensure that the terrifying menace to the West was properly understood, proof was needed that Communism meant genocide. This proof was provided by the Nazis and collaborators. Two U.S. professors covered them up with their academic credentials: James E. Mace, co-author of *Famine in the Soviet Ukraine*, and Walter Dushnyck, who wrote *50 Years Ago: The Famine Holocaust in Ukraine — Terror and Misery as Instruments of Soviet Russian Imperialism*, prefaced by Dana Dalrymple. The Harvard work contains 44 alleged 1932–1933 famine photos. Twenty-four come from two Nazi texts written by Laubenheimer, who credited most of the photos to Ditloff and began his presentation with a citation from Hitler's *Mein Kampf*:

'If, with the help of his Marxist creed, the Jew is victorious over the other peoples of the world, his crown will be the funeral wreath of humanity and this planet will, as it did millions of years ago, move through the ether devoid of men.'¹⁴

The majority of the Ditloff–Laubenheimer pictures are utter fakes coming from the immediate World War I era and the 1921–1922 famine, or else portray misrepresented and undocumented scenes which do not describe conditions of famine-holocaust.¹⁵

The second professor, Dushnyck, participated as a cadre in the fascist Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, which became active at the end of the thirties.

'Scientific' calculations

Dushnyck invented a 'scientific' method to calculate the dead during the 'famine-genocide'; Mace followed his method:

'(T)aking the data according to the 1926 census ... and the January 17, 1939 census ... and the average increase before the collectivization ... (2.36 per cent per year), it can be calculated that Ukraine ... lost 7,500,000 people between the two censuses.'¹⁶

These calculations are meaningless.

The world war, the civil wars and the great famine of 1920–1922 all provoked a

drop in the birth rate. The new generation born in that period reached physical maturity, 16 years of age, around 1930. The structure of the population would necessarily lead to a drop in the birthrate in the thirties.

Free abortion had also dramatically reduced the birthrate during the thirties, to the point where the government banned it in 1936 to increase the population.

The years 1929–1933 were characterized by great, violent struggles in the countryside, accompanied by times of famine. Economic and social conditions of this kind reduce the birthrate.

The number of people registered as Ukrainians changed through inter-ethnic marriages, changes in the declared nationality and by migrations.

The borders of the Ukraine were not even the same in 1926 and 1939. The Kuban Cossaks, between 2 and 3 million people, were registered as Ukrainian in 1926, but were reclassified as Russian at the end of the twenties. This new classification explains by itself 25 to 40 per cent of the 'victims of the famine-genocide' calculated by Dushnyck–Mace.¹⁷

Let us add that, according to the official figures, the population of Ukraine increased by 3,339,000 persons between 1926 and 1939. Compare those figures with the increase of the Jewish population under real genocidal conditions, organized by the Nazis.¹⁸

To test the validity of the 'Dushnyck method', Douglas Tottle tried out an exercise with figures for the province of Saskatchewan in Canada, where the thirties saw great farmers' struggles. The repression was often violent. Tottle tried to 'calculate' the number of statistical 'victims' of the 'depression-genocide', caused by the 1930's Great Depression and Western Canadian drought, complicated by the right-wing Canadian governments' policies and use of force:

Saskatchewan population 1931	921,785
Saskatchewan population growth 1921–1931	22%
Projected Saskatchewan population 1941 (1931 population plus 22%)	1,124,578
Actual Saskatchewan population 1941	895,992
"Victims of Depression–Genocide"	228,586
"Victims as a percentage of the 1931 population"	25%

This 'scientific method', which any respectable person would call a grotesque farce for Canada, is widely accepted in right-wing publications as 'proof' of the 'Stalinist terror'.

B-movies

The 'famine-genocide' campaign that the Nazis started in 1933 reached its apogee half a century later, in 1983, with the film *Harvest of Despair*, for the masses, and in 1986, with the book *Harvest of Sorrow*, by Robert Conquest, for the intelligentsia.

The films *Harvest of Despair*, about the Ukrainian 'genocide', and *The Killing Fields*, about the Kampuchean 'genocide', were the two most important works

created by Reagan's entourage to instill in people's minds that Communism is synonymous with genocide.

Harvest of Despair won a Gold Medal and the Grand Trophy Award Bowl at the 28th International Film and TV Festival in New York in 1985.

The most important eyewitness accounts about the 'genocide' appearing in the film are made by German Nazis and their former collaborators.

Stepan Skrypnyk was the editor-in-chief of the Nazi journal *Volyn* during the German occupation. In three weeks, with the blessing of the Hitlerite authorities, he was promoted from simple layman to bishop in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and in the name of 'Christian morality', put forward vicious propaganda for *Die Neue Ordnung*, the Hitlerite New Order. Fleeing the Red Army, he sought refuge in the U.S.

The German Hans von Herwath, another eyewitness, worked in the Soviet Union in the service that recruited, among the Soviet prisoners, mercenaries for General Vlasov's Russian Nazi army.

His compatriot Andor Henke, also appearing in the film, was a Nazi diplomat.

To illustrate the 'famine-genocide' of 1932–1933, the authors used sequences from pre-1917 news films, bits of the films *Czar Hunger* (1921–1922) and *Arsenal* (1929), then sequences from *Siege of Leningrad*, filmed during the Second World War.

When the film's producers were publicly attacked by Tottle in 1986, Marco Carinnik, who was behind the film and had done most of the research, made a public declaration, quoted in the *Toronto Star*:

'Carynnik said that none of the archival footage is of the Ukrainian famine and that very few photos from '32-33' appear that can be traced as authentic. A dramatic shot at the film's end of an emaciated girl, which has also been used in the film's promotional material, is not from the 1932–1933 famine, Carynnik said.

' "I made the point that this sort of inaccuracy cannot be allowed," he said in an interview. "I was ignored." '19

Harvest of Sorrow:

Conquest and the reconversion of Ukrainian Nazi collaborators

In January 1978, David Leigh published an article in the London *Guardian*, in which he revealed that Robert Conquest had worked for the disinformation services, officially called the Information Research Department (IRD), of the British secret service. In British embassies, the IRD head is responsible for providing 'doctored' information to journalists and public figures. The two most important targets were the Third World and the Soviet Union. Leigh claimed:

'Robert Conquest . . . frequently critical of the Soviet Union was one of those who worked for IRD. He was in the FO [Foreign Office] until 1956.'²⁰

At the suggestion of the IRD, Conquest wrote a book about the Soviet Union; one third of the edition was bought by Praeger, which regularly publishes and distributes books at the request of the CIA.

In 1986, Conquest contributed significantly to Reagan's propaganda campaign for ordinary U.S. citizens about a possible occupation of the U.S. by the Red Army! Conquest's book, co-authored by Manchip White, was entitled, *What To Do When the Russians Come: A Survivalist's Handbook*.

In his book *The Great Terror* (1968, revised 1973), Conquest estimated the number of dead during the 1932-1933 collectivization at five to six million, half in Ukraine. During the Reagan years, anti-Communist hysteria needed figures exceeding those of the six million Jews exterminated by the Nazis. In 1983, Conquest thought it opportune to extend the famine conditions to 1937 and to revise his 'estimates' to 14 million dead.

His 1986 book *Harvest of Sorrow* is a pseudo-academic version of history, as presented by the Ukrainian far-right and Cold warriors.

Conquest claims that the Ukrainian far-right led an 'anti-German and anti-Soviet' struggle, repeating the lie that these criminal gangs invented after their defeat as they sought to emigrate to the U.S.

Conquest, dealing with Ukrainian history, mentions the Nazi occupation in one sentence, as a period between two waves of Red terror!²¹ He completely erased from his history the bestial terror that the Ukrainian fascists undertook during the German occupation, since they are the best sources for the 'famine-genocide'.

Roman Shukhevych was the commander of the Nachtigall Battalion, composed of Ukrainian nationalists wearing the German uniform. This battalion occupied Lvov on June 30, 1941 and took part in the three-day massacre of Jews in the region. In 1943 Shukhevych was named commander of the *Ukrainian Insurgent Army* (the Banderivtsy, or UPA), armed henchmen of the OUN fascist Stepan Bandera, who after the war pretended that they had fought Germans and Reds.²²

All their 'tales' of battles that they had fought against the Germans turned out to be false. They claimed to have executed Victor Lutze, the Chief of Staff of the German SA. But, in fact, he was killed in an automobile accident near Berlin.²³ They claimed to have done battle against 10,000 German soldiers in Volnia and Polyssa, during the summer of 1943. Historian Reuben Ainsztein proved that during the course of this battle, 5000 Ukrainian nationalists had participated at the sides of 10,000 German soldiers, in the great campaign of encirclement and attempted annihilation of the partisan army led by the famous Bolshevik Alexei Fyodorov!²⁴

Ainsztein noted:

'(T)he UPA gangs, which became known as the Banderovtsy, proved themselves under the command of Shukhevych, now known as Taras Chuprynka, the most dangerous and cruel enemies of surviving Jews, Polish peasants and settlers, and all anti-German partisans.'²⁵

The Ukrainian, 14th Waffen SS Galizien Division (also known as the Halychyna Division), was created in May 1943. In his call to Ukrainians to join it, Kubijovych, the head of the Nazi-authorized Ukrainian Central Committee, declared:

'The long-awaited moment has arrived when the Ukrainian people again have the opportunity to come out with guns to give battle with its most grievous foe

— Muscovite–Jewish Bolshevism. The Fuehrer of the Great German Reich has agreed to the formation of a separate Ukrainian volunteer military unit.’²⁶

Before, the Nazis had imposed their direct authority on Ukraine, leaving no autonomy to their Ukrainian allies. It was on the basis of this rivalry between German and Ukrainian fascists that the Ukrainian nationalists would later build their myth of ‘opposition to the Germans’.

Pushed back by the Red Army, the Nazis changed tactics in 1943, giving a more important rôle to the Ukrainian killers. The creation of a ‘Ukrainian’ division of the Waffen SS was seen as a victory for ‘Ukrainian nationalism’.

On May 16, 1944, the head of the SS, Himmler, congratulated the German officers of the Galizien Division for having cleansed Ukraine of all its Jews.

Wasył Veryha, a veteran of the 14th Waffen SS Division, wrote in 1968:

‘(T)he personnel trained in the division [14th Waffen SS] had become the backbone of the UPA, . . . the UPA command also sent groups of its people to the division to receive proper training This reinforced the UPA which was left on the Native land [after the Nazi retreat], in particular its commanders and instructors.’²⁷

Although the Melnyk and Bandera tendencies of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists were at odds with each other and even fought each other, we can see here how they collaborated against the Communists under the leadership of the German Nazis.

The Nazi officer Scholtze revealed in front of the Nuremberg tribunal that Kanaris, the head of German intelligence, had ‘personally instructed the Abwehr to set up an underground network to continue the struggle against Soviet power in the Ukraine. Competent agents were left behind specially to direct the Nationalist movement’.²⁸ Note that Mandel’s Trotskyist group always supported the ‘anti-Stalinist’ armed struggle that the OUN fascist thugs led between 1944 and 1952.

After the war, John Loftus was an attorney for the U.S. Justice Department Office of Special Investigations, in charge of detecting Nazis who were trying to enter the United States. In his book *The Belarus Secret*, he affirms that his service was opposed to the entry of Ukrainian Nazis. But Frank Wisner, in charge of the U.S. administration’s Office of Policy Coordination, a particularly important secret service at the time, systematically allowed former Ukrainian, Croatian and Hungarian Nazis to enter. Wisner, who would later play an important rôle at the head of the CIA, asserted: ‘The OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) and the partisan army it created in 1942 (sic), UPA, fought bitterly against both the Germans and the Soviet Russians’.²⁹

Here one sees how the U.S. intelligence services, immediately after the war, took up the Ukrainian Nazis’ version of history in order to use the anti-Communists in the clandestine struggle against the Soviet Union. Loftus commented:

‘This was a complete fabrication. The CIC (U.S. Counter-Intelligence Corps) had an agent who photographed eleven volumes of the secret internal files of OUN–Bandera. These files clearly show how most of its members worked for the Gestapo or SS as policemen, executioners, partisan hunters and municipal officials.’³⁰

In the United States, former Ukrainian Nazi collaborators created ‘research in-

stitutes' from which they spread their revision of the history of the Second World War. Loftus wrote:

'Funding for these 'research institutes,' which were little more than front groups for ex-Nazi intelligence officers, came from the American Committee for Liberation from Bolshevism, now known as Radio Liberty. The committee was actually a front for OPC.'³¹

'Against Hitler and against Stalin': it was around these words that former Hitlerites and the CIA united their efforts. For uninformed people, the formula 'against fascism and against communism' may seem to be a 'third path', but it surely is not. It is the formula that united, after the defeat of the Nazis, former partisans of the disintegrating Greater Germany and their U.S. successors, who were striving for world hegemony. Since Hitler was now just part of the past, the far-right in Germany, Ukraine, Croatia, etc., joined up with the U.S. far-right. They united their efforts against socialism and against the Soviet Union, which had borne the brunt of the anti-fascist war. To rally the bourgeois forces, they spread lies about socialism, claiming that it was worse than Nazism. The formula 'against Hitler and against Stalin' served to invent Stalin's 'crimes' and 'holocausts', to better cover up and even deny Hitler's monstrous crimes and holocausts. In 1986, the Veterans of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, the very ones who pretended to have fought 'against Hitler and against Stalin', published a book entitled, *Why is One Holocaust Worth More than Others?*, written by a former member of the UPA, Yuriy Chumatskyj. Regretting that 'revisionist historians who claim there was no plan to exterminate Jews, there were no mass gassings and that fewer than one million Jews died of all causes during World War II, are persecuted', Chumatskyj continues:

'(A)ccording to Zionists' statements Hitler killed six million Jews but Stalin, supported by the *Jewish state apparatus*, was able to kill ten times more Christians'.³²

Conquest's fascist sources

The title of the crucial part — Chapter 12 — of *Harvest of Sorrow* is 'The Famine Rages'. It contains an impressive list of 237 references. A more careful look shows that more than half of these references come from extreme-right-wing Ukrainian émigrés. The Ukrainian fascist book *Black Deeds of the Kremlin* is cited 55 times! No wonder that Conquest uses the version of history provided by Ukrainian Nazi collaborators and the U.S. secret services.

In the same chapter, Conquest cites 18 times the book *The Ninth Circle* by Olexa Woropay, published in 1953 by the youth movement of Stepan Bandera's fascist organization. The author presents a detailed biography for the thirties, but does not mention what he did during the Nazi occupation! A barely concealed admission of his Nazi past. He took up his biography again in 1948, in Muenster, where many Ukrainian fascists took refuge. It is *there* that he interviewed Ukrainians about the famine-genocide of 1932–1933. None of the 'witnesses' is identified, which makes the book worthless from a scientific point of view. Given that he said nothing

about what he did during the war, it is probable that those who ‘revealed the truth about Stalin’ were Ukrainian Nazi collaborators who had fled.³³

Beal, who wrote for Hearst’s pro-Nazi 1930’s press, and later collaborated with the Cold War McCarthyite House Committee on Un-American Activities, was cited five times.

Kravchenko, the anti-Communist émigré, is a source ten times; Lev Kopelev, another Russian émigré, five times.

Among the included ‘scientific’ references is Vasily Grossman’s novel, referenced by Conquest fifteen times!

Then, Conquest cites interviews from Harvard’s *Refugee Interview Project*, which was financed by the CIA. He cites the McCarthy-era Congressional Commission on Communist Aggression as well as Ewald Ammende’s 1935 Nazi book. Conquest also refers five times to Eugene Lyons and to William Chamberlin, two men who, following World War II, were on the Board of Trustees of Radio Liberty, the CIA Central European radio network.

On page 244, Conquest wrote: ‘One American, in a village twenty miles south of Kiev, found . . . they were cooking a mess that defied analysis’. The reference given is the *New York Evening Journal*, February 28, 1933. In fact, it is a Thomas Walker article in Hearst’s press, published in 1935! Conquest deliberately ante-dated the newspaper to make it correspond to the 1933 famine. Conquest did not name the American: he was afraid that some might recall that Thomas Walker was a fake who never set foot in Ukraine. Conquest is a forgerer.

To justify the use of émigré books recording rumors, Conquest claimed ‘truth can thus only percolate in the form of hearsay’ and that ‘basically the best, though not infallible, source is rumor’.³⁴ This statement gives fascist slanders, disinformation and lies academic respectability.

The causes of famine in the Ukraine

There was famine in the Ukraine in 1932–1933. But it was provoked mainly by the struggle to the bitter end that the Ukrainian far-right was leading against socialism and the collectivization of agriculture.

During the thirties, the far-right, linked with the Hitlerites, had already fully exploited the propaganda theme of ‘deliberately provoked famine to exterminate the Ukrainian people’. But after the Second World War, this propaganda was ‘adjusted’ with the main goal of covering up the barbaric crimes committed by German and Ukrainian Nazis, to protect fascism and to mobilise Western forces against Communism.

In fact, since the beginning of the fifties, the reality of the extermination of six million Jews had imposed itself on the world conscience. The world right-wing forces needed a greater number of deaths ‘caused by communist terror’. So in 1953, the year of triumphant McCarthyism, a spectacular increase in the number of deaths in Ukraine took place, twenty years previous. Since the Jews had been killed in a scientific, deliberate and systematic manner, the ‘extermination’ of the

Ukrainian people also had to take the form of a genocide committed in cold blood. And the far-right, which vehemently denies the holocaust of the Jews, invented the Ukrainian genocide!

The 1932-1933 Ukrainian famine had four causes.

First of all, it was provoked by civil war led by the kulaks and the nostalgic reactionary elements of Tsarism against the collectivization of agriculture.

Frederick Schuman traveled as a tourist in Ukraine during the famine period. Once he became professor at Williams College, he published a book in 1957 about the Soviet Union. He spoke about famine.

'Their [kulak] opposition took the initial form of slaughtering their cattle and horses in preference to having them collectivized. The result was a grievous blow to Soviet agriculture, for most of the cattle and horses were owned by the kulaks. Between 1928 and 1933 the number of horses in the USSR declined from almost 30,000,000 to less than 15,000,000; of horned cattle from 70,000,000 (including 31,000,000 cows) to 38,000,000 (including 20,000,000 cows); of sheep and goats from 147,000,000 to 50,000,000; and of hogs from 20,000,000 to 12,000,000. Soviet rural economy had not recovered from this staggering loss by 1941.

'... Some [kulaks] murdered officials, set the torch to the property of the collectives, and even burned their own crops and seed grain. More refused to sow or reap, perhaps on the assumption that the authorities would make concessions and would in any case feed them.

'The aftermath was the "Ukraine famine" of 1932-33 Lurid accounts, mostly fictional, appeared in the Nazi press in Germany and in the Hearst press in the United States, often illustrated with photographs that turned out to have been taken along the Volga in 1921 The "famine" was not, in its later stages, a result of food shortage, despite the sharp reduction of seed grain and harvests flowing from special requisitions in the spring of 1932 which were apparently occasioned by fear of war in Japan. Most of the victims were kulaks who had refused to sow their fields or had destroyed their crops.'³⁵

It is interesting to note that this eyewitness account was confirmed by a 1934 article by Isaac Mazepa, leader of the Ukrainian Nationalist movement, former Premier under Petliura in 1918. He boasted that in Ukraine, the right had succeeded in 1930-1932 in widely sabotaging the agricultural works.

'At first there were disturbances in the kolkhosi [collective farms] or else the Communist officials and their agents were killed, but later a system of passive resistance was favored which aimed at the systematic frustration of the Bolsheviki's plans for the sowing and gathering of the harvest The catastrophe of 1932 was the hardest blow that Soviet Ukraine had to face since the famine of 1921-1922. The autumn and spring sowing campaigns both failed. Whole tracts were left unsown, in addition when the crop was being gathered . . . in many areas, especially in the south, 20, 40 and even 50 per cent was left in the fields, and was either not collected at all or was ruined in the threshing.'³⁶

The second cause of the famine was the drought that hit certain areas of Ukraine in 1930, 1931 and 1932. For Professor James E. Mace, who defends the Ukrainian

far-right line at Harvard, it is a fable created by the Soviet régime. However, in his *A History of Ukraine*, Mikhail Hrushevsky, described by the Nationalists themselves as 'Ukraine's leading historian', writing of the year 1932, claimed that 'Again a year of drought coincided with chaotic agricultural conditions'.³⁷ Professor Nicholas Riasnovsky, who taught at the Russian Research Center at Harvard, wrote that the years 1931 and 1932 saw drought conditions. Professor Michael Florinsky, who struggled against the Bolsheviks during the Civil War, noted: 'Severe droughts in 1930 and 1931, especially in the Ukraine, aggravated the plight of farming and created near famine conditions'.³⁸

The third cause of the famine was a typhoid epidemic that ravaged Ukraine and North Caucasus. Dr. Hans Blumenfeld, internationally respected city planner and recipient of the Order of Canada, worked as an architect in Makayevka, Ukraine during the famine. He wrote:

'There is no doubt that the famine claimed many victims. I have no basis on which to estimate their number Probably most deaths in 1933 were due to epidemics of typhus, typhoid fever, and dysentery. Waterborne diseases were frequent in Makeyevka; I narrowly survived an attack of typhus fever.'³⁹

Horsley Grant, the man who made the absurd estimate of 15 million dead under the famine — 60 per cent of an ethnic Ukrainian population of 25 million in 1932 — noted at the same time that 'the peak of the typhus epidemic coincided with the famine it is not possible to separate which of the two causes was more important in causing casualties.'⁴⁰

The fourth cause of the famine was the inevitable disorder provoked by the reorganization of agriculture and the equally profound upheaval in economic and social relations: lack of experience, improvisation and confusion in orders, lack of preparation and leftist radicalism among some of the poorer peasants and some of the civil servants.

The numbers of one to two million dead for the famine are clearly important. These human losses are largely due to the ferocious opposition of the exploiting classes to the reorganization and modernization of agriculture on a socialist basis. But the bourgeoisie would make Stalin and socialism responsible for these deaths. The figure of one to two million should also be compared to the nine million dead caused by the 1921–1922 famine, essentially provoked by the military intervention of eight imperialist powers and by the support that they gave to reactionary armed groups.

The famine did not last beyond the period prior to the 1933 harvest. Extraordinary measures were taken by the Soviet government to guarantee the success of the harvest that year. In the spring, thirty-five million poods of seeds, food and fodder were sent to Ukraine. The organization and management of kolkhozy was improved and several thousand supplementary tractors, combines and trucks were delivered.

Hans Blumenfeld presented, in his autobiography, a résumé of what he experienced during the famine in Ukraine:

'[The famine was caused by] a conjunction of a number of factors. First, the hot

dry summer of 1932, which I had experienced in northern Vyatka, had resulted in crop failure in the semiarid regions of the south. Second, the struggle for collectivization had disrupted agriculture. Collectivization was not an orderly process following bureaucratic rules. It consisted of actions by the poor peasants, encouraged by the Party. The poor peasants were eager to expropriate the “kulaks,” but less eager to organize a cooperative economy. By 1930 the Party had already sent out cadres to stem and correct excesses After having exercised restraint in 1930, the Party put on a drive again in 1932. As a result, in that year the kulak economy ceased to produce, and the new collective economy did not yet produce fully. First claim on the inadequate product went to urban industry and to the armed forces; as the future of the entire nation, including the peasants, depended on them, it could hardly be otherwise

‘In 1933 rainfall was adequate. The Party sent its best cadres to help organize work in the kolkhozes. They succeeded; after the harvest of 1933 the situation improved radically and with amazing speed. I had the feeling that we had been pulling a heavy cart uphill, uncertain if we would succeed; but in the fall of 1933 we had gone over the top and from then on we could move forward at an accelerating pace.’⁴¹

Hans Blumenfeld underscored that the famine also struck the Russian regions of Lower Volga and North Caucasus.

‘This disproves the “fact” of anti-Ukrainian genocide parallel to Hitler’s anti-semitic holocaust. To anyone familiar with the Soviet Union’s desperate manpower shortage in those years, the notion that its leaders would deliberately reduce that scarce resource is absurd’⁴²

Ukraine under Nazi occupation

The Japanese armies occupied Manchuria in 1931 and took up position along the Soviet border. Hitler came to power in 1933.

The programs of industrial and agricultural reorganization undertaken by the Soviet Union in 1928–1933 came just in time. Only their success, at a cost of total mobilization of all forces, allowed the victorious resistance to the Nazis.

One of history’s ironies is that the Nazis started to believe their own lies about the Ukrainian genocide and about the fragility of the Soviet system.

Historian Heinz Hohne wrote:

‘Two sobering years of bloody war in Russia provided cruel proof of the falsity of the tale about sub-humans. As early as August 1942 in its “Reports from the Reich” the SD (Sicherheits Dienst) noted that the feeling was growing among the German people that we have been victims of delusion. The main and startling impression is of the vast mass of Soviet weapons, their technical quality, and the gigantic Soviet effort of industrialization — all in sharp contrast to the previous picture of the Soviet Union. “People are asking themselves how Bolshevism has managed to produce all this.”’⁴³

The U.S. professor William Mandel wrote in 1985:

'In the largest eastern portion of the Ukraine, which had been Soviet for twenty years loyalty was overwhelming and active. There were half a million organized Soviet guerillas . . . and 4,500,000 ethnic Ukrainians fought in the Soviet army. Clearly that army would have been fundamentally weakened if there had been basic disaffections among so large a component.'⁴⁴

Historian Roman Szporluk admits that the 'zones of operation' of 'organized Ukrainian Nationalism . . . was limited to the former Polish territories', i.e. to Galicia. Under Polish occupation, the fascist Ukrainian movement had a base until 1939.⁴⁵

The Ukrainian holocaust lie was invented by the Hitlerites as part of their preparation of the conquest of Ukrainian territories. But as soon as they set foot on Ukrainian soil, the Nazi 'liberators' met ferocious resistance. Alexei Fyodorov led a group of partisans that eliminated 25,000 Nazis during the war. His book *The Underground Committee Carries On* admirably shows the attitude of the Ukrainian people to the Nazis. Its reading is highly recommended as an antidote to those who talk about the 'Stalinist Ukrainian genocide'.⁴⁶