

CLASS STRUGGLES

IN THE USSR

**THIRD PERIOD: 1930-
1941**

PART 2: THE DOMINATORS

**CHARLES
BETTELHEIM**

The Book: It offers a Marxist analysis of the process of transformation of the soviet social formation through the years 1931-1941. The results of Bettelheim's analysis of Stalinism and its realities are presented in two parts: while the earlier part is devoted to the dominated (peasants, workers), the repression and mass terror which struck them, capital accumulation and its particular crises which made them its victims, the present part deals with the dominators, their ideology and its changes in the 1930s, the manifestations of the new class and the historical conditions of its formation, the role of the party and the USSR's foreign policy.



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Class Struggles in the USSR

Third Period: 1930-1941

Part Two: The Dominators

French Original

Charles Bettelheim

English Translation

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Part Two The Dominators

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PREFACE TO THE FRENCH EDITION

Stalinism as a whole amounts to a system. The thirties deals with an especially complex and rapidly changing reality. It needed a type of investigation which cannot be seen in its manner of presentation. The results of our analysis of Stalinism and of its true nature are therefore given in two volumes: the first volume was devoted to the dominated such as the peasants, the workers, the repression and mass terror to which they were exposed, and the accumulation of the capital of which they were the victims. The analyses of Part I, the *Dominated* revealed that during the 1930s, a series of attacks were launched against the "Soviet" working class and peasantry (indeed, the peasantry had practically even ceased to exist as such once collectivisation was brought about). We also notice the arrival in the world of a new form of capitalism where mass repression, terror and penal work on large scale in the concentration camps had played an extraordinary role. The rise of this capitalism is accompanied by crises of overproduction of a peculiar nature.

This second volume deals with the *Dominators*, their ideology and the changes that it underwent during 1930s, with the forms of existence of a new class, with the historical conditions leading to its formation, with the role of the party and with the international policy of the USSR*

This manner of treatment gives clarity to our purpose. On the other hand, it leads to some repetitions needed for an understanding of the linkages between different elements and factors that constitute Stalinism, from the bottom to the top. We request the reader not to hold it against us.

* The general pattern of the work is thus as follows: Vol. 1 *The Early Period 1917-1923*; Vol. 2, *The Second Period 1923-1930*; *The Third Period 1930-1941, the Dominated (Part I)*, and *the Dominators (Part II)*.

Abbreviations of the titles and indications about the publishers.

B	Bolshevik
EJ	Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn
IVOVSS	History of the Great Patriotic War (in Russian)
KP	Komsomolskaya Pravda
KPSS	Collection of resolutions and decisions of the party (unless otherwise stated, the pages shown refer to the 1953 edition. In other cases, the date is specified between brackets).
P	Pravda
PZ	Partinaya Zhizn
PK	Planovoe Khoziaistvo
MEW	Marx-Engels Werke (Dietz Verlag)
N.Kh.	Narodnoe Khoziaystvo (Statistical economic yearbook, the year is specified in the notes).
SPR	Spravochnik Partiinogo Rabotnika
VI	Voprosy Istorii (Journal of the Problems of History)
VI KPSS	Voprosy Istorii KPSS (Problems of the History of the Party)
ZI	Za Industrializatsyu

**Glossary of the usual acronyms of terms
and of additions to the abbreviations of the glossary
in the first part**

CC	Central Committee
CCC	Central Control Commission (of the party)
Gensek	General Secretary (of the party)
KPSS	CPSU: Communist Party of the Soviet Union
NKVD	Commissariat for Internal Affairs
Obkom	Regional Committee of the Party
PB	Polit Bureau
Raikom	District Committee of the Party
RAPP	Russian Association of Proletarian Writers
RSFSR	Federated Socialist Republic of the Russian Soviets Sharaga Prison for the scientists and researchers who or are detained so that they could pursue their Sharashka researches under the control and the directives of the NKVD
Sovnarkom	Council of the Peoples' Commissars
VAPP	Pan-Soviet Association of Proletarian Writers
VTUZ	Institute of Higher Technical Education
VUZ	Institute of Higher Education
vydvizhensty	Promotees

Part One

ABSOLUTE SECRETARY AND THE PROLETARIAN FETISH

The consolidation of positions by the new ruling class and its subjugation to a political direction comprising the leadership of the State and of the party (which had itself become an administrative apparatus) is accompanied by a new *official ideology*. It insists on its being identical to Bolshevism and to Leninism but in reality, its distinctive traits are of such an importance as to constitute a new formation which can be described as the *Stalinist ideological formation* because it takes its birth in the USSR during the period when Stalin occupied a dominant place on the Soviet political scene, while seeming to appear in the nature of a continuation of the Bolshevik ideological formation. Further, the *General Secretary* plays a decisive role in the formation of this new ideology¹. We may conveniently denote by “Stalinism” this ideological formation and by the “Stalinist system” the system of social relationships in the countries where “Stalinism” - with more or less “new” modalities - plays a major role in the dominant ideological and political practices.

The influence of Stalinism operates quite beyond the frontiers of the USSR and beyond the years 1930-1953. In changed forms, it is active even today*, in the Soviet Union as also in other countries led by parties claiming to belong to the different variants of a “Marxism-Leninism” but reproducing some of the fundamental traits of Stalinist conceptions. This is in evidence in countries as different as those of Eastern Europe and Central Europe, from Poland to Albania, Rumania, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia or China, etc. In these different countries the Stalinist ideological formation influences official ideology more or less profoundly even while it undergoes transformations linked to the political culture of these countries, to the internal social and political contradictions and

* The date of publication of the book is March 1983, Tr.

to the more or less acute contradictions which exist between them and the Soviet Union. Furthermore, depending on each case, this official ideology can exert an effective influence on the decisions of the parties in power or can be used for waging of polemics which is only distantly related to the practical decisions of the leaders. Similarly, the response to this ideology in the different classes or strata of the population of these countries can be quite different and as an extreme case it can be almost inexistant. The role of this polemics is in no way less real: it serves to legitimise the practice of power and - with help from the repression - it stands in the way of a critical debate which gets marginalised as a result, pulverised and put down.

However, the Stalinist ideological formation also has an influence over parties (or over political groupings) in a struggle for power in order to set up an economic and social system more or less similar to the one obtaining in the USSR. These parties then claim to be one variety or the other of "Marxism-Leninism" by adopting certain traits of Stalinist theory, pretending at the same time to denounce the "abuses" or the "errors" committed in the USSR during the Stalinist era. Generally speaking, such parties put forth somewhat changed forms of the Stalinist formation. They often adapt and modify topical themes of the ideological discourses of the Soviet, Cuban, Chinese or Vietnamese parties. The impact of such variants of Stalinist ideology is mainly felt in the countries with little industrialisation. They can influence strong movements of national liberation (which does not mean in any way that they always really help the liberation of these countries, indeed far from it²). These observations would show that the problems posed by the Stalinist ideological formation retain their relevance to our times. However, their non-Soviet and contemporary aspects are beyond the scope of this work.

We shall be mainly concerned here with the *Stalinist ideological formation of the period 1930-1953* (but mostly upto 1941). This ideological formation includes a partly theoretical discourse and practices sustained by specific discourses which we shall examine for their chief aspects without forgetting that they evolve over time when the dominant social and political relations in the USSR undergo a transformation, depending upon the periods

and major contradictions that characterise them.³

An examination of these changes during the years 1928 to 1953 leads to a rough and provisional periodisation; this periodisation is based upon tracing the most visible displacements of certain ideological themes. It would thus appear that between 1928 and 1931, two ideological themes dominate, one of the destruction of the remnants and the bases of capitalism (collectivisation, elimination of the private sector, “dekulakising”) and the other of the “proletarianisation” of the party, of the state apparatus and of culture - denoted by the expression “cultural revolution” We shall later describe their characteristics and limits.⁴

This period sees the beginning of the ‘setting up’ of the working class, its subjection to an increasingly severe factory discipline and the strengthening of the authority and privileges of the managers. These traits of Stalinist ideology are reinforced during the period 1932-1934 which is characterised by the “struggle against egalitarianism” and by the accent that it places on acquisition of technical skills. From 1935 to 1938, there is a third period during which the dominant themes are the unity of the party (which in practice is subject to extremely brutal repression), the necessity of its “monolithism”, struggle against saboteurs, plotters and traitors who have infiltrated within its ranks. It is the period when the glorification of the personality of Stalin takes a concrete shape. It is also the period which witnesses an open development of Russian nationalistic themes and the glorification of Russian traditional values. These years coincide with a sort of permanent *coup d'état* by Stalin. He has most of the old leaders of the party arrested and replaced by men who appear to him to be more devoted to him personally. Lastly, from 1939 onwards begins a more conservative period where the glorification of Stalin and the glorification of national and traditional values tends to coalesce and get an edge over the references to “marxism” This conservatism is further reinforced during the war. It is imposed by circumstances to some extent but it gets entrenched in the defense of the new social order and of the privileges that characterise it. It is fed on the assertion that the “socialist mode of production” is now established and

henceforth it is a matter mostly of perfecting it. However, economic and political contradictions that arise in the aftermath of war lead to a new ideological thrust, radical in appearance, which points, for example, to the theme of "proletarian science"⁵ The post-war period is beyond the scope of this work.

The above-mentioned indications point to certain aspects of the complexity of Stalinist ideology. This complexity is also related to two types of facts:

1. With respect to the overwhelming mass of population it is essentially an official ideology and not merely the dominant ideology: *it functions more through constraints than through conviction* so much so that the degree of subordination of different classes and layers of society to this ideology is highly variable. This has its repercussions on the way it functions and the forms that it assumes.

2. - It is a peculiarly contradictory combination of *themes* some of which are borrowed from *bolshevism* and others from *Russian political culture* and of *practices* that are in part refuted by ideological discourse.

CHAPTER 1

IDEOLOGICAL THEMES AND PRACTICES OF STALINISM

A preliminary observation is necessary. The inability of the official ideology to function as the dominant ideology has resulted in the dominant ideology in the USSR in the 1930s (and this is true even now) being the same as the one dominating the rest of the capitalist world albeit with its specificities. This ideology tends to produce the same fundamental effects: they accept the social relationships and power such as they exist.

However, the dominant ideology is clothed in the USSR in very specific forms which would be discussed briefly when we deal with the Soviet ideological formation during the Stalin era. These forms are related to the very history of Russia and of the countries under its yoke, to the history of the class struggles witnessed in the USSR and to the interaction of official ideology and dominant ideology. The latter contributes to the growth of the influence of the former because both are ideologies of subjugation to power. However, the dominant ideology enters at the same time into contradiction with the official ideology and is an essential element of its weak influence, especially in so far as it carries individualist values while the official ideology leans towards a complete subordination of the individual before the decisions of the party which is presented as an instrument of history leading the proletariat from victory to victory.

This observation becomes highly meaningful when we examine the different areas in which discourse of the official ideology unfolds.

Section 1

POLITICAL AND LEGAL IDEOLOGY⁶

One of the dominant themes of Stalinist ideology is that of the *leading role of the party*. Its constant presence and the major place that it occupies make it the fundamental element of this ideology.

1. The "leading role of the party"

Having identified the party with the proletariat, its dictatorship is postulated as essential for the "construction" and "consolidation" of socialism. Its role is presented as a *necessity* dictated by the "objective laws of history" because it is supposed to carry knowledge indispensable for the victory over capitalism and over the "enemies of the people"

The assertion of the leading role of the party was already at work in the bolshevik ideological formation and in Leninism but

it had a different appearance. On the one hand, it referred to a position of principle, to the identification of the proletariat and its vanguard. It is a matter of "substitutionism" which leads to the assertion that the proletariat exerts its dictatorship as soon as the party has captured power (*hence the founding myth of October.*) It tends to concentrate the power in the bolshevik party by asserting that it *incarnates the historical mission of the proletariat* such as it was conceived in the entire marxist tradition. On the other hand it was also a throwback on a certain interpretation of concrete history. It asserts the coincidence - simultaneity - of the vanguard of the proletariat and the leadership of the bolshevik party. However, during the period of Lenin, this coincidence was not postulated as definitely achieved. The idea that the bolshevik party can be seen incapable of assuming the role assigned to it by the official ideology, that it can cease to be the "vanguard of the proletariat" and that it may even be necessary to create another communist party was not theoretically excluded (as it was mentioned in 1918 or 1919, for example). On the contrary, such eventualities are not envisaged by Stalinist ideology which considers the party is implicitly, by *its very nature* capable and the only capable one, of propounding the correct political line based upon scientific principles.

The leading role of the party becomes increasingly the ideological formula which marks the emergence of a new *form of State*. This State is led not "by the party" but by a self-appointed politico-ideological oligarchy (very restricted in number and which can, at certain moments, be closely dependent on the person seen to be its chief). In this form of State, the "leading" lights of the party intervene essentially to ratify decisions of the dominant oligarchy on which they are dependent. The members of this group are named and dismissed by the small circle of top leaders. The party thus becomes an apparatus through which the oligarchy dominates the State. This oligarchy is answerable to none. It controls all the "mass organisations" and even the "private life" of each. It asserts itself as the only one knowing science and the only one to lay down law. The State that it leads tends to be totalitarian. Everything should be subordinate to it and whatever seeks to go against it can be termed as enemy activity (under the

label of the “enemy of the people”, “counter revolutionary” etc) punishable by death or deportation etc. This image of the party and its relationship to power, to law and to knowledge is in an embryonic state in the bolshevik ideology but the totalitarian practice of the party has its full development in the Stalinist era when the top leadership seeks to control how anyone shall think, imposes his behaviour on him and makes him a simple clog in the “machine” of the society and the State. This totalitarian practice *hides the real inability of the party in effectively mastering the social processes which it seeks to direct.* Such an inability only makes its attempts at “universal” control on the State apparatus, or social groups and on individuals more violent.

If the figure of the “leading party” is associated with a *new form of State*, it begins to assert itself only between October 1917 and the beginning of the 1930s. It is in the course of these last years that this State of a new type takes shape in real terms, thus giving an illusion that the Soviet formation of the 1930s is itself radically new, that it is based upon an “economic basis” of a non-capitalist type. We have seen that this illusion corresponds in no way to reality. It can, however, draw upon a postulate that seeks to establish a necessary link between the emergence of a new form of state and the development of an “economic base” which would also be so. Stalinism has widely used this illusion to assert the “socialist” character of the Soviet system.

The recourse to such a postulate may appear to justify certain passages of Marx, especially the one where he declares:

It is always in the immediate relationships between the masters of the means of production and the direct producers that we must seek the close secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure, as also the political form of the relationships of sovereignty and dependence, or, in short the form of the State at a given historical period.⁷

Concrete historical analysis leads to doubts being entertained about such a postulate and the conclusions which can be drawn from it by bolshevism and Stalinism.

In USSR of the 1930s, the theme of the leading role of the

party refers to a reality and a practice. It is an ideological symbolism under which *the dominant role of the leadership of the party* is represented and asserted in State structures as a whole. This theme tends to set up, without saying so, the leadership of the party into a higher organ of State power. It tends to legitimise implicitly the activity of the leadership of the party which prepares and in fact elaborates laws and decrees and which tries to control all the limbs of the State, which decides the appointment, promotion and dismissal of the highest cadres and which thus ensures through appropriate organs of the State, the manner in which these cadres fulfil the tasks which devolve upon them.

But the theme of the “leading role” of the party also hides at the same time this reality by letting it be understood that the party does not dominate the State and contents itself with merely guiding it. From it arise, for example, the themes developed in Chapters III to VIII of the constitution of 1936 which enumerate the different organs of power. These chapters announce that the Supreme Soviet is “the highest organ of State power” (article 30) that it concentrates all the rights of the Union, and that it has the “exclusive” exercise of legislative power (art 33). These chapters specify in detail the composition and the mode of election of the state organs; they even foresee the adoption of laws “by simple majority” (art 39) while in practice, “unanimity” is established since long.

The role as “highest organ of the State power” assigned by the constitution to the Supreme Soviet is pure fiction and is in contradiction with facts. In real practice, as pointed out, this “highest organ” is the leadership of the party. The constitution of 1936, in an indirect and camouflaged way, allows it to be so because its text contains, within brackets as it were, a proposition which practically gives full powers to the party. One may draw attention to a sentence in article 126, where it is said that the CP of USSR is “the vanguard of the workers” which “represents the directing core of all the organisations of workers, social as well as of the State” This amounts to saying that the Supreme Soviet, like any other organisation, is governed by the party and should conform to its requirements.

Article 126 of the Constitution further makes it clear that

the leading role of the party concerns not only the organs of power but all the activities of the citizens. It is under the ideological form that we see the generalised domination of the party on all the social organisations (Komsomols, pioneers, trade unions, women's associations, writers' union, association for scientific knowledge, etc.)

During the 1930s, the theme of the "leading role of the party" is developed in a quasi obsessional manner because of the acuteness of the economic and political contradictions which the party was trying to confront.

The theme of the "leading role of the party" makes it possible to use the thesis of Marx on the historical mission of the proletariat which becomes the "mission" of the leadership of the party. The character of "historical necessity" attributed to this mission implied that it need not depend upon the risks inherent in the elections. Therefore, the elections can only be a symbolic gesture seeking a "ratification" of the decisions of the party by the "verdict of the ballot box" It does not even allow that a veritable popular check operate on it and on its decisions. If there is a check at all it can only be symbolic, it does not seek to limit the initiatives of the leadership but, in fact, reinforces its authority by a semblance of democracy.

The theme of the leadership role of the party seeks to justify the monopoly of the *leadership* [and, increasingly, that of *its chief (Vozhd) personally*] not only in political, economic and administrative decisions but in all the fields. The role of the *Vozhd* extends also to the sciences, to literature and the arts. This extension of the role of the chief constitutes a specific trait of Stalinist ideology. The post-stalinist ideology *tends* (but only tends) to limit the ideological "monopoly" of the party to enunciating the so-called "correct" formulation in the domain of policies and marxist theory (although the present CPSU does not hesitate either - in several cases - to decide what is "right" in the domain of literature and the arts).

2. *The "Cult of the party and its Chief"*

By postulating that only the leadership of the party can lay down what is "true" and "just", Stalinist ideology raises it to a

“higher entity” which should be respected by all. This obligatory respect soon changes into a “cult” in actual practice through an insistence on an absolute allegiance on the part of the members of the party to the decisions of its leadership and on a behaviour in conformity to the directives of the party on the part of workers, peasants, scientists, writers, artists, film makers etc. This cultural practice in the beginning is placed at the level of guidelines for behaviour. It is formally imposed through repetitions of the same phrases glorifying the “scientific” and “historical” character of the decisions of the party and, even more, through the watch on the population, the omnipresence of the police and through a general recourse to spying. At some moments, this practice tends to become obligatory to an extent because of the disarray and disquiet in the population which is reassured with the thought that there exists an authority which knows how to prepare for a better future.

The mode of functioning of the party, which is its extreme centralisation, results in its authority appearing to be identified with that of the polit bureau and the general secretary. The more the leadership of the party is centralised the more the “cult” of its authority assumes a personal character. This cult is accepted by the group of leaders, by cadres of the party and by the dominating class, and so not only because it is imposed by the mode of functioning of the party and police repression but also because their domination can be consolidated only by chasing away all disagreements, by avoiding to the maximum, the risk of statements other than those certified as “correct” getting spread. Under these conditions, where “monolithism” becomes a principle, it becomes necessary that the supreme leader of the party monopolise the power to decide what is true and what is false. The *Vozhd* must, therefore, appear as the incarnation of wisdom, of science, and even of all knowledge, the one who solves all the problems without any dispute, in the light of “marxism-leninism” in the domain of “political economy of socialism”, of biology or linguistics, of literature, of painting, of the theatre and cinema.⁸

For the new dominating class, it is not enough to avoid contradictory material from spreading, it was also to be ensured that the risk of an ideological decision is reduced to the maximum

extent so that the myth of the infallibility of the leadership gets accepted. This aspect of Stalinist ideology brings it quite close to the nazi ideology which proclaims on its part the *Fuehrerprinzip*, the principle of the chief.

However, the cult of the chief is also fed by other non-official but popular manifestations. Thus the cult of the chief is rooted in forms of spontaneous manifestations which are born of the relationship of the workers and peasants themselves with the party as the organ of power. These relationships lend to the party an appearance as a higher power on which depends the daily life of each and even its survival. The respect accorded to it is above all an expression of fear. It is concentrated on him who is at top of the party, because the base of the party and the workers experience to a considerable extent the contradictions between the top and the cadres (out of which comes the arbitrariness and oppression of an immediate and everyday nature). They often look upon the top as a recourse against the "abuses" of local power. This recourse, more or less imaginary, used to function in old Russia where the "protector Czar" appeared as a means of defence against local authorities. During the 1930s, the situation becomes more contradictory because there is mistrust and even hate towards the top and a certain hope reposed in it. This hope is, furthermore, entertained by the official cult of the Supreme Chief which feeds populist politics. This politics produced all the more the effect desired by the power because the figure of the "protector" or of the "father of the people" is very much a part of the Czarist tradition of absolutism, that is to say of old Russian political culture.⁹

When the cult of the chief "interiorised" by the masses happens to add to the official cult practiced by the party, it becomes a real social force, at least for some time (during a part of the war years, for example).

3. The Fetishism of the State

Stalinist ideology developed state fetishism very systematically. This comes forth spontaneously in the exercise of power but by using it, Stalinist ideology functions, in this domain, as a veritable dominant ideology and thus contributes to making

the authority of the party palatable as the apparatus situated at the top of the system of the state.

The real illusions which give substance to state fetishism function "conspicuously" because the abstract entity of the state appears as possessing a true power. It extracts this power from the very forces which the society gives to it on the basis of a division of work which makes it the foremost ideological power. This power is born of the dominant social relationship and the contradictions which these relationships strengthen. The development of social contradictions renders the nature of the State increasingly "independent" in appearance and makes it possible to bestow on this abstract power, and those that speak in its name, the apparatus that can intervene in the movement of the contradiction and in the class struggle. In this way is built an increasingly extended base of the "supernatural power" of the State.

Several passages from Marx and Engels (contrary to Stalinist ideology) deal with a critique of State fetishism and develop the thesis of the withering of the State with the disappearance of antagonistic classes:

The moment there are no longer any social classes to be held in oppression, the moment the collisions and the excesses resulting from it are eliminated along with the domination of class and the struggle for individual existence motivated by earlier anarchy of production, there is no longer anything to be put down which necessitates a power of repression or a State.¹⁰

The thesis of the "disappearance" of all political power can, of course, be debated: one can cast doubt on the idea that in a complex society contradictions are not inevitable and that their mediation does not need institutional forms of the state. However, even if we doubt some of the conclusions of Marx and Engels, it is no less true that the sharpening or diminution of social contradictions should obviously be accompanied by a process of strengthening or of "withering" of the coercive role of the state. Therefore, the strengthening of this role in the "Soviet" social formation of the 1930s is undoubtedly the result of an increase in social contradictions and in particular of the struggle of the new dominant class for an increase of its authority and its privileges.

Stalinist ideology does not pose the problem in these terms. It asserts that the (supposed) weakening of social contradictions should not lead to a corresponding weakening of the State, but, on the contrary, to its strengthening.¹¹

A. The Stalinist Thesis of the Strengthening of the State

It is in the 1930s, at the XVI party congress, that Stalin enunciates the thesis that the withering of the state would occur through its reinforcement.¹²

This theoretical rupture is seen again in the report which Stalin presents in January 1933 in the "Balance Sheet of the First Five-year Plan" which he prepared. In this report, the general secretary of the party once again asserts that the "withering of the state will not come about by the weakening of the State power but by its strengthening to the maximum" ¹³

The fact that such an assertion is in contradiction to the classical theses upheld by Marx, Engels and Lenin renders the position of Stalin "theoretically uncomfortable" especially at a time when the USSR is supposed to have become a "socialist State" This undoubtedly explains why, in his report presented in 1936 on the new constitution, Stalin does not deal directly with the theoretical problem of the State in a society supposed to be socialist and therefore "freed from the antagonism of classes." The general secretary observes the same silence on this question in his 1938 work on *"Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism."*

However, at this time the theses of the withering of the State and the law (thesis accepted by the leaders of the party as not of a classical nature by imputing them to the old "official theoretician" on the problem of State and law, Pashukanis)¹⁴ are condemned by official ideologues and denounced as the manifestations of "counter-revolutionary Trotskyism."¹⁵

Finally, Vyshinsky proclaims that Stalin has made a decisive advance in the theory of the State; thus he writes:

Lenin has shared the idea of the withering of the State, but Stalin has introduced a correction and proved that under socialism the state should be strengthened. Consequently, the law should also follow and become

socialist. Everywhere in the world, those who are in power violate the law and the rights of the individual. There is only one country where, like pure gold, justice shines. And that is the Soviet Union.¹⁶

Such a text, written when arbitrary arrests, convictions and deportations were ever on the increase, illustrates not only the glorification of the “new theory” but its function of mystification of reality.

Finally, in 1939, in his report of 10 March to the XVIII Congress, Stalin openly breaks away from “classical” theoretical positions. He declares on this occasion that the formulation of Engels, which was earlier cited, is a “general formula” which cannot be extended “to the special and concrete case of the victory of socialism in a single country”, because, according to him, it “should have a sufficiently strong state” to be able to defend the conquests of socialism against attacks from outside.”¹⁷ But he lets it be understood that this withering could intervene if “the victory of socialism” were to be achieved on large scale than that of a single country.

B. Negation of the “Regressive Function” of the State

In the report cited above, Stalin implicitly distances himself from the question of the “function of repression” and does so in a paradoxical manner. He denies that the Soviet State exercises such a function; in fact, he declares: “because exploitation is suppressed, the exploiters no longer exist, *there is no one to be repressed.*”

This assertion, enumerated when millions of men and women are deported, rests, if one may say so, on a “play on words” typical of the *code* used by the official language. In fact, Stalin specifies that “the function of *repression* is replaced by the function of *protection* of socialist property against the thieves and the misappropriators of public property” and by the “function of military defence.” It is, therefore, these functions (and not the repression!) which requires the existence of a large police force, army and the “intelligence services necessary to capture and punish the spies, assassins, those engaged in sabotage...”¹⁸

Thanks to this code language, the activity of the police and corrective organisms, howsoever directed against innumerable workers and peasants, becomes a function of “protection of the people”

By identifying the State and people, Stalinist ideology justified the widest possible repression. Not yielding to the state, is not being one of the people, it is being its enemy so much so that one must logically conclude, in the words of Solzhenitsyn, that the people have become their own enemy.”

State fetishism and the official negation of repression lead to another code language which brings forth the terms of “education” and “reeducation” Vyshinsky Chief Public Prosecutor of the USSR from 1935 to 1940 - explicitly cites these terms. He says that the State should “guide the large masses of the population” and goes on to add that this involves a task of educating where “an exceptional role devolves on organs such as the courts” and the institutions of “correctional work.”¹⁹

This “educative” activity should “purify the conscience of the people” The class characteristic of the State said to be “socialist” becomes very clear here. One of the tasks is to enforce the people to be disciplined, by forging in them a “human conscience” that is respectful of “social and civic duties”, aimed at a total subordination of all to work.²⁰

The Stalinist Fetishism of the State and its apologia covers a theory and practice of total subordination of all workers to an authority which is quite external to them and on which they can exercise no control whatever. As for the “defence of socialist legality” also invoked by Vyshinsky, we notice that in practice it leads only to imposing “duties” to the individuals facing the all-powerful state and does not give them any right.

C. The State, the rights of the Individual and the 1936 Constitution

In Stalinist ideological discourse, things do not appear in this manner but in an inverted form: that of the defense of individuals against the arbitrariness of the State. The constitution of 1936 and official commentaries which accompany its discussion and promulgation yield a new typical example of an inversion of

reality in Stalinist ideology. Let us allude to some facts.

On 5 December 1936, - while mass repression is already let loose in the country and while it engulfs the leading party itself - the VIII extraordinary congress of Soviets adopts a new constitution. This is supposed to incorporate "the balance-sheet of the conquests already made" and to ensure a "consequent and unfailing democratism."²¹

As far as the rights of individuals are concerned, Chapter IX of the constitution enunciates an apparently important discourse: it deals with tribunals and prosecution agencies and asserts that judges are independent and are answerable only to the law" (article 112), that "the right of defence is guaranteed to the accused" and that "the hearings in all the tribunals are public" (article 111).

Now, this constitutional provision is in contradiction not only with everyday practice but also with official legal doctrine. Thus, a Soviet jurist has asserted, in a comment on this doctrine:

One shall remember that the independence of the judges and their subordinates only before the law does not mean independence from the State, or independence from the policies of the party and the government, because the Court is an organ of the power and its function is one of the functions of the State.²²

Moreover, no legislative provision is likely to strengthen any kind of "independence" of the judges.

The official stand of the constitution is particularly mystifying insofar as civil liberties are concerned. These are enumerated in articles 124 to 128. They include the freedom of speech, press, gatherings, processions and demonstrations in the streets, the freedom to form social organisations, "the inviolability of person" (art 127), of "home" and of "correspondence" (art. 128). Now, all these liberties are constantly trampled upon by the NKVD and the citizens can take no steps against its decisions.

The same mystification on the subject of elections. According to the text of the constitution (article 134) these are henceforth held under universal suffrage, equal and direct, and by "secret vote" (article 134), all the earlier restrictions stand abolished,

especially those that hit peasants whose "votes counted" far less than of those earning salaries. According to article 141, all sorts of associations and organisations can present candidates and - on the "decisions" of the majority of voters" - members of the legislative bodies can be relieved of their mandate (article 142). These provisions have practically no importance whatever. In fact, candidates can only be set up with the agreement of the party, and it proposes only one candidate per constituency. Secrecy of voting is not respected. As there is only one candidate, he who enters the secret enclosure of the ballot box can be suspected to be doing so to strike off the name of the official candidate.²³ Moreover, those that are set up receive about 98% of the votes cast.²⁴ This did not prevent a large number of legislators being eliminated, after the constitution came into force as "enemies of the people." Such is especially the case of six of the seven presidents of the executive elected by the congress and almost all its members and alternate members. This "elimination" then resulted in execution or deportation.

The Stalinist ideology of the State and of its relationship with citizens thus enunciates a double discourse: a "democratic" discourse which is in contradiction with facts and an absolutist and repressive discourse which is a commentary on actual practice. This duality is an expression of a social schizophrenia. It reflects the deep contradictions of an economic and political system which pretends to act in the name of the working masses even as it oppresses these masses, subjects them to repression and exploits them with an intensity rarely attained in history.

D. The Specific Form of Stalinist State Fetishism and Bolshevik Ideology

It is important to emphasise that the specific form of Stalinist State fetishism and the political relationship which this fetishisation nourishes (and which it feeds on) has its roots not only in the Russian past. It is present in embryonic form in bolshevik ideology: it is the concrete circumstances by which the formation of the "society" has passed which give to it its Stalinist and later its post-Stalinist historical form.

The bolshevik ideological formation carries in it a *new*

symbolism which enables the face of the party to incarnate the proletariat, people, revolution, knowledge, practice etc.²⁵ The October insurrection gives a form to this symbolism and thus inaugurates a *new system of representation* which sets off the emergence of a new type of State where the face of the party asserts itself increasingly as social power: power over itself by the society whose contradictions are “abolished” in its imagination so much so that it is visualised as a totality which can only be doubted by the “enemies” This power visualises itself as universal and with the gift of knowledge and the capability of laying down the law. Incapable of really controlling economic and social forces, the Stalinist party tries to break all that comes in the way of its decisions, whether these obstacles come from the people, cadres, concrete or theoretical data, or the rules of morality of whatever kind. The party exists as an *organisation* which incarnates the unity of the people.

The democracy which presents itself as this kind of power is the dictatorship of the people. By its very nature, it asserts itself to be in the “service of the people” (because the official ideology mystifies the effective divisions of the society and of the State while the privileges and the powers which multiply within these divisions are denied). It is conceived as *democracy of the masses* (all are organised by the party and can be mobilised to bring forth the directives fixed by it). From it arises the concept of a *real democracy as against bourgeois democracy*. This real democracy has the peculiarity of not letting the people express themselves (except in order to approve the party). In concrete reality, it is negation of the freedom of the individual but Stalinist ideology maintains that it is the supreme form of this liberty because it lays down the rights and the duties of everyone to obey the party. Through obeying it, “they are only obeying themselves.”

Such is the ideological matrix of Stalinist totalitarianism. It throws into “the waste basket of history” the previously acquired democratic gains that are likely to serve as the starting point of a veritable social emancipation, namely the freedom of association, freedom of information, the right to go on strike, universal adult suffrage, etc.

E. The Soviet State as the successor of the Russian State

Stalinist ideology does not restrict itself to strengthening the fetishisation of the state but gives up the notion of a transient state characterised by the role it would play in social transformation. In place of this transient state it substitutes a durable state which is identified with the *Russian State*.²⁶ This state is not born in 1917. It has behind it a long history, that of Russia whose citizens are called upon to study history in order to learn better to love it.²⁷

From 1936 onwards, the strength and the role of the old Russian State are held out as positive elements of world history, because this State has “served as the bastion of Europe against great invasions” As a result of the glorification of the Russian State, the leaders of the great revolts of the past, such as Razin or Pugachev, or the Decemberists no longer appear in a favourable light because they have weakened a State which embodies “progress” Henceforth, the true heroes are those who contributed to the building of the Russian State such as Alexander Nevski, Dimitri Donskoi, Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great. They were the heroes of the cinema of Eisenstein and precursors of Stalin. The State thus built is the one in which the Russian nation is forged and its revolutionary capabilities led to the victories of 1917 and of the civil war. This discourse tends to fortify the Soviet State by giving it a past and a geographical base (that of the Czarist empire) and to identify October with the heroism of the *Russian* people. On a historical plane, it subordinates the other nationalities whom the Russian people have protected from the fate of barbarians, placed them on the way to civilisation and kept them along the path of the revolution.

Thus the idea of a *nation* is restored and grafted on to that of the State²⁸, while the Russian people become *guides and mentors*.

Immediately after the war, a communist leader from Azerbaijan faithfully develops this ideology when he writes:

The leading force which unites, cements and guides the peoples of our country is our elder brother, the great Russian people By their virtues, the Russian people deserve the confidence, respect and love of all the other peoples.²⁹

Thus goes the official ideology which covers up violent national contradictions, hatred of other nations on the part of the chauvinists of Great Russia and the subordination of the party apparatus and the States of different republics by cadres of the guiding nation.

4. The Russian Nationalist Component of the Ideological Formation of Stalism

The Stalinist ideological formation of the end of 1930s is thus characterised by a strong Russian nationalist component. This component is not foreign to bolshevism which very quickly poses the problem of a reconstruction of the *national economy* and the place of *Russian* industry in the world economy. Moreover, a section of the bolsheviks (Stalin among them) seek as early as in the 1920s to maintain the domination of Russia over the peoples incorporated in the Czarist empire (this they did through the domination of the party over the totality of Soviet Republics). During the 1930s, the nationalist component of the official ideology is reinforced and is seen in practices seeking to ensure the pre-eminence of the Russian language and culture over those of the other nationalities. This ideology also orders an “artistic policy” which holds up Russian literary works of earlier centuries as a model.

A. Stalinist Nationalism and the Czarist Imperial Past

The face of Stalinist nationalism is turned towards the imperial and Czarist past. As against the bolshevik position, Stalinism tends more and more towards glorifying the history of Russia. Thus, it plays a conservative and even a reactionary role in reproducing (in general by more or less disguising it) the large number of prejudices inherited from the past. This aspect of Stalinist ideology enables it to “produce a consensus” within important layers of the Russian people whose nationalism is flattered and this contributes to “legitimising” the dominant place occupied by the Russian party and cadres all over the country.

This nationalism “which produces consensus” is one of the elements which gives a populist appearance to Stalinism. During the second world war, it becomes an essential element of the official

discourse which seeks to mobilise in favour of the power the patriotism of the country invaded by the armies of Hitler. This discourse does not hesitate to evoke the defence of the fatherland to which is associated the name of its supreme leader. This appeal to nationalism is seen to be infinitely more effective than invoking the defence of "socialism" which has a bitter taste for the workers. After the war, this nationalism is used to flatter certain "popular" prejudices (on the other hand condemned in the official discourse). The most significant of these prejudices is antisemitism. It is officially fought, but the censor, which is always vigilant otherwise, turns a blind eye from time to time to anti-Semitic labels. At different times, the "struggle against cosmopolitanism" becomes an almost open form under which an anti-Semitic ideology is actually developed.³⁰

Stalinist nationalism and its glorification of a certain Russian past fulfils yet another function because it presents the leaders of the party and the Soviet State as "continuers" of the "great men" of the past such as Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great. From 1937, patriotic expressions are commonly used. Thus, we find in the *Izvestia*:

The word "Fatherland" has become a fundamental political concept [.....] The most important condition for success is the combatant patriotic spirit of our nation, the unlimited fidelity to the Fatherland...³¹

Russian nationalism, furthermore, is known to assume the form of an "internationalism" when it presents Russia as the defender of other revolutions or as sustaining the struggle of the colonial peoples against oppression by "western" capitalism. At the same time, traditional internationalism becomes an expression to be used by various communist movements as instruments of Soviet foreign policy. This internationalism then appeals for "the defence of the land of the Soviet" or to express solidarity with Russia.

The rise of Stalinist nationalism is an expression of the victory of the national capitalist component of Bolshevism which calls upon the exploited people to participate in the "construction of the country" Thus, while nationalism pushes the dominant class to "build" a strong country, it holds out to the masses the

illusion of a “radiant” and “prosperous future” for which they should pay with an increase in sacrifices and misery.³²

B. The 1936 Constitution and Russian Nationalism

Chapter II of the 1936 Constitution denotes a significant moment of the penetration of Russian nationalism in Stalinist ideology pertaining to law. This chapter shows the Soviet State not as an eminently transient and new political form but as an enduring reality. It enumerates the republics which form a part of the union and defines the powers and the tasks of the union and of the different republics (articles 10 to 16). However, it reaffirms the right of each republic to “freely secede from the USSR” (article 17).

This “right of secession”, like many other provisions of the constitution, is a pure deception because no concrete possibility whatever existed for the population of a republic to assert openly its desire to leave the Union. In fact, the official leaders of any given republic are members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and were duty bound to apply the policy of the CC of this party to which they were totally subordinate by virtue of the rules of “democratic centralism” Thus, it could be officially said:

It is evident that the probability of a republic of the Soviet Union expressing its desire to secede, through the democratically elected Soviet organs is so infinitely small as to be practically equal to zero.³³

In fact, those who exercise the real functions of directing communist parties of the different republics are, most often, the Greater Russians because the communist leaders with origins in these republics can easily be accused of “nationalist deviations” Such accusations, moreover, make their appearance soon enough. Thus, as early as in 1926, Shumsky, the commissar for education in the Ukraine is accused of wishing to “Ukrainise” too rapidly the cadres of the republic, and also of “fighting against Russian culture in general and its highest expression, Leninism”³⁴ At that time the first secretary of the Ukrainian party was Kaganovich who relieved Shumsky of his functions in 1927; in 1933 he was arrested. The same year, Skrypnik, who had succeeded Shumsky in the Commisariat of Education, committed suicide after being

accused of becoming a tool in the hands of “nationalist bourgeois” elements. (Skrypnik was a member of the party since 1897). In the succeeding years, a large number of old members of the party in Ukraine and in other republics, had to face the same accusations and were eliminated.

As far as national demands which tend to be expressed through channels other than the “Soviet organs” they are condemned by article 58 of the criminal code of the RSFSR (and the corresponding articles of the codes of other republics) under the heading of “counter-revolutionary agitation and propoganda, intended to undermine or weaken the Soviet regime by exploiting national prejudices of the masses”, which is a specific *crime*.³⁵

By officialising the enduring character of the Soviet State and by treating it as a continuation of the Russian State the “Stalinist Constitution” makes a break from the bolshevik tradition. This rupture is seen more generally in Stalinist ideological discourse. In fact, till the end of the 1920s, it was officially recognised that the former Czarish empire was a “prison house of the people”, worse than the British empire. Even in 1929, the as yet official historian Pokrovsky could say: “In the past, we Russians - and I am a 100% great Russian - we were the worst gangsters imaginable.”³⁶

In 1936 - when the new constitution was being written - a *positive role* is attributed to Russia, so much so that expansionism is soon looked upon as an *asset* because of the “civilising role” of Russia whose work was considered to be continued by the Soviet Union, but with a new content - that of class - which makes it possible to associate the peoples of USSR in a “freely agreed union” (article 13 of the constitution).

C. Nationalism, Elitism and National Bolshevism

The rise of Stalinist nationalism acquires its full significance from its combination with other components of Stalinist ideology, namely, the cult of the chief, a certain populism and the respect of rigorous hierarchical distinctions leading to the establishment of an “elite” supposed to be of “another nature”³⁷ than the “ordinary people”

The insertion of nationalist and elitist elements in Stalinism and the role which they play, makes this ideology³⁸ increasingly “national bolshevism”³⁹

This national bolshevism has many traits in common with Italian fascism and especially with another “national-bolshevism” which had grown in Germany from 1919 to 1922 and which was one of the ideological sources of the “national revolutionaries” and then of “national socialism”⁴⁰

The existence of these common traits did not escape some ideologues of nazism and fascism.⁴¹

Among the former, we find even in 1927 (and so even before Stalinism had acquired its face of the 1930s) Erich Mahlmeister. After the exclusion of Trotsky from the PB of the Soviet party, he talks of a “Stalinist bolshevism” and adds that it is, as an idea, “the national socialism of Russia”⁴². This theme is taken up again in 1934 by Joseph Drexel in an article in the magazine *Widerstand*. Drexel wrote at that time: “The new Russia is the Third Reich.”⁴³ Of course, the fact that some nazi ideologues accept that there exist affinities between the ideology to which they claim to belong and Stalinism would not fail to eliminate specific traits which place these ideologies in opposition to one another nor the national contradictions that lead to the confrontation between the nazi Germany and the Russia of Stalin.

The problem of the ideological relationship between stalinism, fascism and nazism is clearly far too wide to be dealt with here. One must, however, point out that these ideologies feed not only large scale repressive practices but also refer to an *ideological power of great similarity*. This was already emphasised with respect to elitism and the cult of the chief but can be extended to many other ideological themes. Thus the notion of a “correct” thought and discourse is found in nazi ideology.⁴⁴ The “abolition” of the proletariat in Stalinist discourses, about which Stalin had said in 1936 that it does not exist any more in USSR and that it has been replaced by a new type of working class is not only not without any analogy either with the opposition between “proletariat” and “worker” which we come across in Ernest Juenger for whom the second term puts in a nutshell a very great “positivity” because it has a connotation of technique. Nazi

ideology like Stalinist ideology thus speaks of a “workerism” which makes it possible, to exert in the name of the “workers”, the oppressive practices of which they are the main victims.⁴⁵

It may also be noted that Stalinist workerism makes it possible to repress real workers and hence every time their behaviour is far from that of the model worker in this discourse in official novels and films. In the eyes of the authorities these workers cease to be “true workers”, they are lazy and egoist “petits bourgeois” Official discourse easily finds an explanation of such loss of values in the peasant origins of these workers.

The Stalinist workerism also draws on the *myth of origins* as does nazism. Thus when an important cadre of the party would want to eliminate someone whom he finds troublesome, he would have his background examined if his ancestors were not workers. In this case, his “bad origin” is enough to make him suspect, and therefore guilty.

These various remarks throw light on the specific nature of Stalinist ideology in the domain of politics and law. They also show how closely the most diverse elements are linked.⁴⁶ We may mention, among others:

1. A largely dogmatic version of Marxism-Leninism. This version has evolved over time, as the “exigencies” of the moment demanded it. However, we can consider this version found its canonic form in Chapter IV of the History of the Communist Party of the USSR (Bolshevik)⁴⁷ The propositions advanced there are, furthermore, interpreted by the ideological authorities of the party as the need for them arose at that time and they were clarified by the *Vozhd*.

2. A Russian nationalism which glorified the Czarist past of the country, its historic mission and the progressive role of its great men, including the bloodiest czars most indifferent to the fate of the workes.

3. A “demonism” which bursts forth each time it is necessary to the power, Satanic enemies which only strive to harm. These are “monsters” and “demons; the “lustful vipers” denounced by Vyshinsky and his collaborators during the Moscow trials. This “demonism” is not without influence on the popular layers who

are still given to a large number of superstitions. Thus a large number of the “enemies of the people” can be denounced even though they come up from the people themselves.

4. A Fetishism of the State which has multiple appearances such as the cult of the party and its chief, cult of the police as the “glorious sword of the proletariat” and as “protector of the people”, assertion of the mastery of the party and the State over social development.

5. A discourse of socialist requirements and legalities, a discourse that is uttered - whenever it is possible - with a detailed legalism. This legalism does not exclude total arbitrariness, the “confessions” and “depositions” being extracted by every possible means.

This discourse on “legality” is chiefly developed in the second part of the 1930s and is used for several ends. Immediately, it enables the members of the party to be judged and found guilty by an assertion that the *law should be the same for all* (whereas, till the mid-1930s, the members of the party were relatively protected against the actions of the police who had to obtain a prior authorisation of the higher members of the party to proceed against them). But this “legalism” also contains, *for the future*, a promise of stability and anticipation, a promise to which the cadres of the party are especially sensitive at a time when the *legality of the State* is not respected and where they are constantly under the danger of a second legality, *political legality*, that of terror included in a legislation of exception.⁴⁸

Thus, during the 1930s - at the political and legal level - the Stalinist ideological formation represents a mixture of extremely diverse elements which lends to this ideological formation the chance of justifying its highly contradictory actions and of generating a response in the very different layers of the population; here they can see themselves in reflexion as also their familiar “values” formed of a history of oppression over centuries.

Section 2

ECONOMIC IDEOLOGY OF STALINISM

The economic ideology of Stalinism has multiple dimensions. On the one hand, it has evolved with time: it assumes different aspects depending upon periods. It is not the same during the years of the “revolution from above” (1928-1933) when prevailed an open voluntarism (which leads to a denial of all “law” and even of all constraint) during the years of consolidation of the position of Stalin through the turn of the second half of the 1930s which sees the formation of the earliest outline of the political economy of socialism and during the exercise of consolidation of Stalinist dictatorship, from the 1940s till the death of the General Secretary when the political economy of socialism and the series of its “economic laws” assume their true form.

On the other hand, the complexity of Stalinist economic ideology gets further augmented by the multiple role that it plays. It enters not only as a system of representations which “reveals” the reality while hiding it through apologia. But it also pretends to be a guide to action especially when it assumes the form of a “political economy”

It is not necessary for us to engage in an analysis of the historical development of Stalinist economic ideology⁴⁹, but it will be useful to point out some of the major themes as they make their appearance mainly from 1936 without forgetting that some of them are borrowed from the authors of the 1920s.⁵⁰

1. The Socialist Mode of Production

One of the central themes of the Stalinist economic ideology concerns the *socialist mode of production*. This notion is a major innovation of Stalinism. Thus one can develop a discourse which claims to be scientific, that of the “political economy of socialism” which is supposed to enunciate the “laws” of this mode of production.

By putting forth the notion of the socialist mode of

production, Stalinism breaks away from earlier marxist discourse where socialism is not a mode of production but a *transitory phase*, the first phase of communist society.

This understanding of socialism takes shape progressively in the writings of Stalin⁵¹. Its complete and definitive form is to be seen in the *Manual of Political Economy* of the Academy of Science of USSR (1954). Despite the late date of the publication of this work, one must refer to it because it systematically develops the major themes of the Stalinist economic ideology of the period of maturity. Bernard Chavance highlights the fact that the socialist mode of production is “defined (in the *Manual*) as an economic form of an entirely new society, *complete*, representing the outcome of the historic evolution of humanity. It has its specific laws and *it is reproduced and developed on its own foundation*, which sets it apart from all the earlier economic and social regimes (...) According to Soviet theory (...) it is an economic system which is based upon the *social ownership of the means of production* and which is rationally organised at the same time through *state planning*.”⁵²

In this understanding, two categories play a key role, that of “socialist ownership” and of “State planning”. One must, therefore, spend some time over the significance of these categories and of their place in Stalinist economic ideology.

2. *Socialist Ownership*

In the 1936 constitution, “socialist ownership assumes the form either of State property (belonging to the entire people), or the form of kolkhoz co-operative (ownership of each kolkhoz, ownership of the cooperative union)”⁵³. Socialist ownership is also considered as “social property” according to a tradition which goes back to the 1920s and which can claim to be based on the interpretation of some of the writings of Lenin.⁵⁴

The category of “socialist ownership” can be operative only at the price of a complete subversion of the analyses and categories of Marx. For him, *capitalist ownership* is not a *juridical Category*. It is a social category which denotes the *set of conditions of capitalist production*. Even in the *Poverty of Philosophy* Marx had denounced the juridical illusion which reduces ownership to

an “independent relationship”⁵⁵ Nearly twenty years later, in a letter dated 24 January 1865, he returns to this theme and writes that “the modern bourgeois ownership” (that is to say, capitalist ownership) can only be understood “by an analysis (...) which encompasses the set (of) property relationships not in their *juridical expression or relation of will*, but in their real form, that is to say as relationship of production”⁵⁶

Although the socialist “virtues” of state undertaking is a common point for most marxisms⁵⁷ (where Stalinist ideology only repeats the assertions on this point), the belief in such a “virtue” is in contradiction to the theoretical thought of Marx and enables Stalinism to systematically develop its specific themes.

The identification of State ownership to a social property constitutes an anchor of a formalist reasoning which claims to change the significance of mercantile and capitalist categories by sticking to them the label of socialist. This procedure (which becomes systematic in the *Manual* but which had appeared much earlier) makes it possible to speak, for example, of a “socialist price” or of a “socialist wage” by asserting that only the *terms* of price and wages exist in “socialism” but that these “terms” have, henceforth, new “contents” which make them the “instruments” of planned economy.⁵⁸

Such an affirmation leads to a rejection of a fundamental thesis of Marx, namely that the form of social relationships cannot be separated from their nature, that it is their social mode of manifestation which has determined effects. This excludes their reduction to the simple role of “instruments”

3. *Planned economy*

The category of “planning” is mentioned by Marx a large number of times, particularly when he speaks of the possibility the “individuals associated with a control on the whole of their production” can have when exchange value and money will have disappeared.⁵⁹

In Stalinist economic ideology, the category of planning denotes State activities tending, simultaneously, to “elaborate” economic plans and “applying” them. During 1930s the “defects”

of this "application" does not prevent one from speaking henceforth of "*planned economy*" or "*socialist planned economy*" These expressions assume that economic development is "subject" to the state plan and that there exists thus a "*mastery over economy*" by the plan.

We all know that this "mastery" is an illusion because effective development fails to conform to the "objectives" of the plan. However, it corresponds to a *real appearance* born of the combination of State ownership, State fetishism, and forms of intervention that constitute economic plans. These exert an effective but blind action on the process of reproduction. They do not shield the process from the exigencies of capital accumulation and the contradictions resulting from them although they give specific forms to the development of these contradictions.⁶⁰

4. *The Economic Laws of Socialism*

The notion of the "economic laws of socialism" appears only progressively in Stalinist ideology. During the 1920s it is generally accepted that there exist "economic laws of the period of transition," but this idea is practically rejected during the first two five-year plans and reemerges progressively from 1937. Thus, while in the initial phase an open voluntarism dominates, in a second phase, the stabilisation of the system appears to call for a proclamation by the power of the existence of objective economic laws.

It will serve no purpose to retrace here the transformation which Stalinist ideology has undergone in this domain⁶¹, it will be enough to recall briefly some of the "theoretical" formulations corresponding to the final form of this ideology namely the one enunciated by Stalin in *the Economic Problems of Socialism in USSR*.

In this book, Stalin developed an "objectivist" conception of the economic laws of socialism. He proclaims that these "reflect objective processes which operate independently of human desire" He criticises those who confused these laws with those "enacted by governments, created by the wishes of men and having only a juridical force"⁶² However, the existence of these laws is affirmed and postulated, it is never demonstrated. Such is the case for

what Stalin calls “the fundamental economic law of socialism” about which he says:

The essential traits and the exigencies (of his law) could be formulated more or less as follows: ensuring the maximum satisfaction of the material and cultural needs which keep increasing all the time in the entire society by developing and perfecting ceaselessly the socialist production on the basis of a superior technique.⁶³

It will be noticed that it is only apparently that the above-mentioned “fundamental law of socialism” proclaims the primacy of the “maximum satisfaction of the material and cultural needs” because it is immediately specified that this “satisfaction” calls for ceaseless perfecting of production. Moreover, the highly official *Manual of Political Economy* (which appeared two years after the text of Stalin, in 1954) says:

The fundamental economic law of socialism is indissolubly linked with law of priority development, that is to say relatively quicker development, of the branches producing the means of production as compared to the one for the branches yielding articles of individual consumption.⁶⁴

Thus, mainly during the days of Stalin, this law sought to justify the *primacy of accumulation* and a slower growth of real wages than that of work productivity. Thus it expresses some deep tendencies of capitalist production and accumulation.

Another “economic law of socialism” enunciated by Stalin in his writings of 1952 is the “harmonious development of the national economy” which, he asserts, has come forth in opposition to the law of competition and of anarchy of production (...) on the basis of socialisation of the means of production...”⁶⁵

Stalin places this law in opposition to those which consider that there appears to exist a “law of planning” for socialist economy because, according to him, “the law of harmonious development of national economy” offers to our planning organisation the *possibility* of correctly planning social production. But we should not confuse *possibility* and *reality*. These are two different

things.⁶⁶

Such a formulation makes it possible to develop the theme of more or less “correct” laws to be “applied” This theme is taken up again in the context of the “law of value” about which it is accepted that it exists “objectively” but about which it is said specifically that it should be “applied” in a just manner in order to avoid “confusion (...) in the price policies”⁶⁷

As B. Chavance points out, the reasoning at work here contains a veritable rupture with the *form* of voluntarist theses of the beginning of 1930s. In fact, it postulates that the laws of socialism exist, to a certain extent, independently of the planning activity of the state which seeks to “apply” them.⁶⁸

All in all, the Stalinist economic ideology is above all an apologia. Even in its “developed” form, *it only apparently gives up the voluntarism of the early 1930s* because the economic laws whose existence it proclaims essentially serve to “justify” the decisions of the power. However, in the form which it acquires from 1952-54, Stalinist economic ideology plays a more complex role. In essence, it tends to render above discussion a political economy presented as “applying” objective laws which can only be enunciated and interpreted by the power. Thus no discussion can be possible. Under the cover of a “scientific nature” Stalinist economic ideology fortifies the absolutist practices of the leadership of the party. On the other hand, by invoking the notion of “application” of laws, it opens a field of justification to the errors which can affect this “application” - for example, in the domain of prices - and thus certain “gaps” between what takes place really and what “should have” taken place if the laws were correctly applied could be explained.

Footnotes

1. In the last part of Volume 2 of this work (1923-1930), I had partially anticipated the changes in the bolshevik ideological formation during the 1930s. I will not repeat here the analysis which I have presented there. However, it now appears to me more correct to speak Stalinist ideological formation in order to account for the bearing of the changes undergone by official ideology from the 1930s.
2. In any case, they do not help such a liberation, when they let their

country fall in the sphere of Soviet domination once they capture power.

3. Of course, I leave aside an examination of Soviet ideology of the post-1953 years. I will content myself with a few brief observations on this subject:
 - a. The official ideology of these years has seen serious changes but they are nonetheless a product of the Stalinist formation because the main themes of Stalinism are still at work.
 - b. The relationship of the Soviet leaders to this ideology has undergone a deep change. It hardly seems to dictate their decisions or it does so under other forms: thus contemporary Soviet expansionism is more directly related to the internal contradictions of the system and to Russian nationalism and its aspirations for a wider international hegemony based upon a relationship of military forces favourable to Russia rather than to an "international revolutionary" role which the USSR thought it played through the CI. However, in a changed form, Stalinist ideology can still be used to "legitimise" the policy adopted by the Soviet leaders.
 - c. The credibility of the theoretical themes of Stalinist ideology among the workers of the USSR was always low. During the last two decades, it has almost vanished.
4. Sheila Fitzpatrick's book, *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931*, Bloomington - London, Indiana University, 1978, will be found especially instructive for this period.
5. cf. On this point the book of D. Lecourt on the development of this theme through the episode of "Lysenkoism" in 1948 (D. Lecourt, *Lyssenko*, Paris, Maspero, 1976).
6. In the following pages, the citations illustrating the various themes of Stalinist ideology have been kept limited as much as possible because many of them appear later in the pages devoted to the transformations of political relationships. A specific illustration of it can be found in the proceedings of the XVII and XVIII congress of the party and in the newspapers of that period, especially from 1935 and on the occasion of the great Moscow trials.
7. cf. K. Marx, *Capital*, Book III, Section 6, quoted from *Oeuvres Economie (Economic Works)*, Paris, Gallimard, "The Pleiade", 1960, Vol.2, p 1400-1401
8. Literature and cinema are especially held in respect as the means of shaping the spirit of the masses. During the first congress of the union of writers, the phrase of Stalin according to which the writers

are the “engineers of the souls” is repeated *ad nauseum* and the role of the leaders of the union (like the censor) is to keep a watch that the “engineers” fulfil their task in the manner the leadership of the party understands it. It will be borne in mind, furthermore, that in 1924, Stalin had repeated the idea of Lenin but had expressed it in harsher words: “The cinema is the most effective tool for stirring the masses. Our problem is to know how this tool should be handled” (*cf. Le Cinematographe, No.55 - The Stalinist Cinema*, quotes Gay Leyda, Kino, p. 198 and p. 351). In the beginning of the 1930s (and also later) each film is examined in the Kremlin for an assurance that it is “ideologically correct” and “effective”

9. On this point, see the contribution of St Cohen, “Bolshevism and Stalinism”, in Robert C Tucker (ed), *Stalinism*”, Essays in Historical Interpretation, New York, Marton & Co., 1977, p. 27
10. *cf.* E. Engels, *Anti Duehring*, Paris, ES, 1950, p. 319. See on this point Vol. I of the present work.
11. The identification of the increase of the authority of the State to the development of liberty is a matter that haunts the Russian autocracy and despotism in general. Therefore, it is no chance that the in the *Legend of the Grand Inquisitor*, Dostoyevski makes him say that “the organisation of total liberty passes by the setting up of an absolute dictatorship”
12. On this point see the article: “Stalin and the State” in No. 24 of *Communism*, especially the section on “the maximum reinforcement of the state” as the path of its withering, p. 33.
13. *cf.* Stalin, Balance Sheet of the First Five Year Plan presented to the Plenum of 7 January 1933, in *Questions of Leninism*, Paris, Publisher Norman Bethune, 1969, Vol. 2, p. 595 (in French).
14. *cf.* On this point *Sovietskoe gosudarstvoi Travo*, No. 4, 1936.
15. *cf.* N.Timasheff, *The Great Retreat*, New York, E.P. Dutton, 1946, p. 254; this author cites various Soviet periodicals.
16. Cited by N.Timasheff, *ibid*, p. 256.
17. *cf.* Stalin, *QL*, Vol. 2, p. 877
18. *Ibid*, p. 881, (Emphasis added by me, C.B.)
19. *cf.* A. Vyshinsky, *The Law of the Socialist State*, Russian edition of 1938, appeared in translation in London, Macmillan, 1948, p. 50. See also the preface to the collection, from *Prisons to the establishments for education*, Moscow, 1934.
20. *cf.* A.Vyshinsky, *The Law ...*, *op.cit*, p.49 and p.52.

21. cf. The report of Stalin on 25 December 1936 to the VIII Congress and the text of the constitution, in *the New Constitution of USSR*, Paris, BE, 1937 (citations of the speech by Stalin in *op.cit.* p.24 and p. 28).
22. cf. M.V. Kozhnevnikov, *Istoriya Sovjetskogo Suda, 1917-1956, gody*, Moscow, 1957, p. 277, L. Schapiro, who cites this text, goes on to note further that since 1931 almost all the judges are members of the party (*The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, London. Methuen and Co., Ed. 1970, p. 458-59, and therefore subject to its discipline.
23. cf. On these points, the observation of L.Schapiro, in *The Communist Party. op.cit.*, p.457-458.
24. During the 1937 elections to the Supreme Soviet, there was (officially) 98.6% voting and those elected received on an average 98% of the votes; 81% of those elected are members of the party (against 73.8% in the earlier Congress of Soviets, elected within the framework of the 1925 Constitution (cf. Nicolas S. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat, op.cit.* p. 99.).
25. cf. Claude Lefort, *L'invention democratique*, (The Democratic Invention) Paris, Fayard, 1981, p.95s.
26. cf. H.Carrere d'Encausse, *Staline, L'ordre par la terreur*, (Order through Terror) Paris, Flammarion, 1980, p. 78.
27. cf. Richard Pipes, Pierre Le Grand et le "Systeme Russe" (Peter the Great and the Russian System) in *Histoire* No. 33, April 1981, p. 37-46.
28. H. Carrere d'Encausse, *op.cit.*, p. 80 to 84.
29. Ibid.
30. The assertion that there is "no anti-Semitism" in USSR allows it to be perpetrated. It is known that this assertion authorises the tribunals to condemn as "anti Soviet propaganda" those who take the risk of denouncing discriminatory measures or anti-Semitic ragging.
31. Cited in N. Timasheff, *op.cit.* p. 167.
32. B. Kerblay speaks of an "alliance brought about in the collective conscience between Marxism-Leninism and Patriotism" and a "drift from one to the other". (cf. *La Societe Sovietique Contemporaine*, Paris, A. Colin, 1977, p. 272.
33. *Sovietskoe gosudarstvoi Pravo*, Moscow, 1948, p. 254.
34. cf. Stalin, W, Vol. 8, p.157s.

35. This article 58 is replaced since 1958 by the law on the "crimes against the State" which makes similar actions punishable with a maximum of seven years in prison plus five years of deportation whenever necessary.
36. Cited by H.Carrere d'Encausse, *Staline*, p.cit p.81.
37. The "elitist" character of Stalinism is obviously related to the Leninist notion of "vanguard" but Stalinist elitism has its own specific characteristics. It tends to justify the multiplication of privileges of the "elite", that is to say, in essence the members of the party apparatus and of the *nomenclatura*.
38. Its signs are chiefly the increasing role in official discourse played by the words "fatherland", "patriotism", and "the land of our forefathers"
39. cf. Mikhail Agursky, "An ideology for the new class in USSR: national bolshevism" in *Les Nouveaux Patrons* (The New Employers), Geneva, Ed. Noires, 1980, p. 81 to 90.
40. On these different ideologies, on their thematic studies and on their language, see Jean Pierre Faye, *Langages totalitaires* (Totalitarian Languages), Paris, Hermann, 1972, especially p.5, p.83, p.91 and p.760.
41. Such is the case especially of Renzo Berton, who published in 1934 a book titled: *Triomphe dur Fascisme en URSS* (Victory of Fascism in USSR) cited by M. Agursky, *art.cit*, p. 88).
42. cf. Erich Mahlmeister, *Russland und der Bolschewismus*, Russland und wir (Russia and Bolshevism, Russia and Us) Friburg, 1927.
43. J. Drexel, "*Dostoiewskij -Stimme des Ostens*" (Dostoyevsky, Voice from the East), *Widerstand*, Vol. 9, 1939, p.84. This reference and the previous one is found in the work of J.P. Faye, already cited, p.432, notes 99 and 100.
44. This adjective "correct" appears for the first time in a speech at Breslau by Himmler where he seeks to find out what can be considered as "acceptable in words, writings and deeds," (cf. on this point, the article of J.P. Faye, *L'archipel total* (The Total Archipelago) in *Recherches*, No.32-33, p. 27.)
45. cf. *ibid*, p. 17-18 and p. 27 to 29.
46. A part of the developments that follow were inspired by an intervention of Moshe Lewin in the course of a round table discussion devoted to Soviet industrialisation in the 1930s. This round table discussion was under the auspices of the EHESS at Paris on 10 and 11 December 1981 (EHESS: The School for Advanced Studies in

the Social Sciences. *Tr*)

47. cf. The translation of this book at the Bureau d'Édition, Paris, 1939.
48. This point was particularly brought out by Helene Carrere d'Encausse in her contribution to the Round Table discussion of EHESS devoted to Soviet industrialisation in the 1930s. (cf. her paper: *Permanences and Changes of Political Power in the Years of Industrialisation, 1928-1941*).
49. This was recently done, and excellently, by Bernard Chavance, in the book *Le Capital Socialiste* (Socialist Capital), Paris, Le Sycomore, 1980. The reader will only have to refer to it.
50. On this point too the book of B. Chavance is highly illuminating. Among the authors developing themes treated by Stalinist ideology, even when driven out of the party and "liquidated", mention must be made of N. Bukharin who has published, among others, the *Economy of the Period of Transition* (published again, Paris, EDI, 1976) and of E. Preobrazhensky and his book *The New Economics* (published again in Paris, EDI, 1966). An interesting analysis of the development of Stalinist economic ideology can be found in the thesis of Louis Basle, *Elaboration of the Political Economy of Socialism in the Soviet Union 1917-1957*, thesis submitted for the award of a doctorate conferred by the State in economic sciences, Paris X, 1979.
51. It continues to be valid today in the USSR and in the countries of the Bloc, but also in China, in Vietnam, in Albania, in Cuba etc.
52. cf. B. Chavance, *Le Capital Socialiste, op.cit.* p. 307 (the emphasis is added by me, C.B.)
53. cf. Article V of the Constitution.
54. cf. B. Chavance, *Le Capital Socialiste, op. cit.*, p. 64, particularly note 60.
55. cf. Karl Marx, *Oeuvres* (Works), Vol. 1, p.118.
56. cf. *ibid*, p. 1453-1454.
57. Especially of the marxism of Kautsky (cf. K. Kautsky, *Das Erfurter Program* (published for the first time in 1892, Berlin, Dietz Verlag, 1965, p. 115).
58. cf. B. Chavance, *Le Capital Socialiste, op.cit*, p.221s and p.308.
59. See, for example, K. Marx, "Principles of a critique of Political Economy", in *Oeuvre-Economie* (Economic Works) *op.cit*, Vol. 2, p.211.
60. On this point, see the last part of Part I of the present work, *Les*

Dominees (The Dominated).

61. The theses of the economic laws of transition such as they were generally accepted at the end of NEP can be found in the work of I.Lapidus and K.Ostrovitianov, *Precis d'economie politique* (French translation, Paris, ESI, 1929). The different conceptions which make their appearance later are expounded in the already cited works of B. Chavance (but especially in his thesis: *Les Bases de l'economie politique du socialisme* (The Bases of the Political Economy of Socialism), Paris X, 1979, cyclostyled text) and of L.Basle. See also A. Smolar, "Utopia and Science: The Political Economy in the Marxist View of Communism and during Industrialisation", *Revue de l'Est*, 4, 1974, and A.Miller, "A Political Economy of Socialism in the Making", *Soviet Studies*, April 1953.
62. cf. J.Stalin, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, Paris, French Communist Party publication, 1952, p.6
63. *Ibid*, p. 34.
64. cf. Manual *op.cit*, p.443.
65. cf. J.Stalin, *Les Problemes* (The Problems) *op.cit*, p.9.
66. *Ibid*, p.10, The words are underlined in the original text of Stalin.
67. *Ibid*, p.19.
68. cf. B. Chavance, *The Bases* (The Bases), *op.cit*, p.461.

CHAPTER 2

HOW THE STALINIST IDEOLOGICAL FORMATION WORKED

An analysis of the main themes constituting the Stalinist ideological formation, their development and their relationships with the political practice suggests - and justly - that this ideological formation represents a putting together of various and contradictory elements where role varies with the political and economic contingencies. Thus, Stalinist theories of the “revolution from above” are deeply different from those of consolidated Stalinism which takes over from the 1940s onwards.

However, the allegedly scientific and dogmatic form of the Stalinist discourse can hide the strange and shifting character of the Stalinist ideological formation. It unifies its mode of functioning. It lets its votaries to engage in ideological terrorism (based upon terror pure and simple) and to indulge in flight from reality: Stalinist discourse is given out as “scientific” It asserts itself to be truer than the facts themselves, than living reality.

Section 1

PSUEDO-SCIENCE AND DOGMATISM

The contradictory discourse of Stalinism is systematically ossified by two *corpus* which are brought to bear in a dogmatic manner: “Dialectical materialism” and “historical materialism” authored by Stalin. He gives them a canonic form when he publishes, in September 1938, *Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism*¹.

The Stalinist conception of dialectical materialism (or *diamat*, for short) is highly speculative. The *diamat* is presented

as a set of four “principles” in juxtaposition and without coherence. The first place is assigned to the general interdependence of all the phenomena. This interdependence is built in a reductionist manner, it really leaves no place to the notion of contradictions which affect the different levels of the real. The inter-dependence thus plays a role of metaphysical principle of totality. On the other hand, Stalinist ideological philosophy does not refer to any concrete analysis: the “motion” to which it alludes is posed as an abstract category, removed from all contradictions, from their relationships and from their complexity. Consequently, it appears to flow essentially from *quantitative* accumulations ending up in *qualitative* changes² which assume “the figure of an evolutionist conception” where the motion “goes from simple to complex, from the lower to the higher in a dull neo-hegelian perspective.”³

This metaphysical dialectical materialism plays several roles. On the one hand, its existence as a dogma shuts the door on all “unauthorised” public discussion of philosophical problems that are not restricted to a simple repetition or a simple commentary on a “theory” which has no critical importance whatsoever. On the other hand, it functions as a “theoretical *guaranty* of a political line”⁴ and as justification of an historical materialism which itself is dogmatic. This historical materialism does not refer to concrete analyses and appears as the “application” to history of the “universal laws” of the dialectic. Consequently, real history is mentioned only to “illustrate” dogmatically presented theses of “historical materialism” and to “justify” the course of events such as it is presented in official discourse.

The role of these two “theoretical cores” of Stalinism is instrumental in essence. The *diamat* becomes a “science of the sciences” in whose name one settles what is true or false in the domain of the sciences, from outside, without any social experimentation. Thus, the theories of the biologist Lyssenko are announced as true because they are “justified” by dialectical materialism. The *diamat* is an impoverished *hegelianism* where all that is proclaimed as real is declared rational. At the same time, historical materialism claims to show the “steps” (five, in all) through which humanity passes in the course of its history⁵ Such an evolutionism is based on an *underlying teleology* and

plays the role of an apologia by presenting socialism as the “end of history”

This ideology retrospectively shows different steps of Czarist expansionism as “progress” that enabled the Russian people to bring socialism to the people who would not have attained it without his help. Under these conditions, what is judged to be in conformity with the historical role of the Russian people is considered as “going in the direction of history.”

Here, we must emphasise two points.

1 - Stalinist ideology calls itself “scientific” What it proclaims as true is presented as the result of a scientific analysis, but it is only a case of presenting something without any justification by any concrete analysis or any social or historical experimentation. While scientific conclusions can be demonstrated and can be discussed and doubted, propositions advanced by Stalinist ideology should remain un-discussed (except when the leadership of the party wishes to put forth new propositions); thus, they constitute a *dogmatism claiming to be science* which collects undemonstrated assertions (often ones which cannot be demonstrated) and put forth these as “proofs” even when they happen to be in contradiction with what can be observed. These assertions are supposed to constitute “principles” or “cases of knowledge” because of the *authority* bestowed upon the person who enunciates them. Whenever possible this authority seeks to fortify itself by a reference in its turn most often to another authority, namely the authority of the books of the “founders of marxism” (in practice, Marx, Engels and Lenin). Hence the extraordinary importance which Stalinism bestows upon *citations*. These citations mostly have the role of doing away with demonstration of any kind and they give to Stalinism its dogmatic form.

A more general observation may be made at this point: the dogmatic character of the “theoretical” enunciations and the recourse to citations as “proofs” of the “truth” of what is being asserted is a characteristic common to the ideology of several so-called “marxist-leninist” parties. At the theoretical level, they are in fact used in varying degrees depending upon the norms that have taken shape in the USSR during 1930s and which, even in

the Soviet Union, are very far from being totally given up after the death of Stalin (although the recourse to citations no longer plays the same role today). It can be assumed that this dogmatism is linked to the position occupied by ideology in the system of domination of the Soviet type in general as also of specific forms of centralised leadership which characterise the parties in power in such a system. The renewal of the organs of power takes place through cooption. This needs "legitimisation" of the discourse of leaders which does not arise from specific opinions of the members of the party but from the supposed fidelity of the leaders to the theoretical core which they are supposed to guard and manage most faithfully. That too is one of the reasons for the dogmatic character of the ideology of these parties.

2 - The allegedly "scientific" form of Stalinist ideology thus tends to fortify the power of the party where the leadership is presented as the depository and interpreter of the laws of the history of the society and of the class struggles. The party claims to be the instrument of history created by history. All it does is to apply its laws and it even has the duty of applying these in an unrelenting way because they should liberate mankind and give birth to a superior "new man"

The allegedly scientific and teleological aspects of some of the concepts of Marx and the character of undebatable truth which Lenin attributes to them could open up the way to Stalinist pseudo-science but the implicit justification for terrorist practices which Stalin draws from it is foreign to the thought of the author of the *Capital*.

It will be seen, on the other hand, that the use which Stalinism makes of so-called science is similar to the one made by Hitlerism, although one claims to observe the laws of history while the other claims to observe the laws of nature. Both have before them a certain evolutionism which has its model in the work of Darwin.

This model constitutes a theoretical substratum of two totalitarian systems which turn to terror by scoffing at any positive laws (even when these are promulgated by themselves) in order to ensure the fulfilment of "scientific" laws proclaimed by them. As Hannah Arendt points out:

In the political corps of the totalitarian regime (the) place of positive laws is taken up by total terror whose duty it becomes to give reality to the law of historical or natural movement (...) This movement (...) distinguishes in the human race the enemies against whom a free play is given to terror (...). Culpability and innocence become notions without any meaning: he is "culpable" who becomes an obstacle to the natural or historic progress (...)⁷

The structure and development of Stalinist ideology correspond to extremely diverse functions that this ideology fulfills (and to which we shall return presently). It puts forth, in a systematic form, some of the real appearances of the system including those on which the action of the party is based. It tends to hide the social contradictions in order to invest the party with the monopoly of power and to so fill the ideological field that no other discourse can be entertained.

In its development, the dogmatism of Stalinist discourse increasingly takes a form of religious dogma. More specifically, as Victor Serge points out, it shows up as an "over-devout" discourse which sustains a "religious order" ⁸

In his later writings, Stalin even condemns those whose ideas he is driven to rejecting by asserting that they are "sinning against marxism" ⁹

Section 2

THE FLIGHT AWAY FROM THE REAL AND THE MYSTIQUE OF THE PARTY

The Stalinist ideological formation very specifically combines a discourse which takes into account a certain level of reality and the constraints that are seen and a discourse which contradicts not only the real movement but even reality lived. The mode of operation of this combination directly hinges upon two *founding myths*: the myth that since October 1917 a "proletarian power" was set up and the myth of the "construction of socialism" a myth that becomes indispensable during the 1930s. These two myths

not only announce that the working class has won great victories over the class enemy, they carry the promise of immediate and important successes for the workers. This promise is quite removed from the real movement which, in the 1930s, is characterised by a lowering of living standards of the workers and peasants, an hardening of factory discipline, punishments at work, etc.

Stalinist ideology is an alienated ideology incapable of holding together its promises and living reality. Its discourse develops along the mode of upsetting reality and hiding it. Thus a language is developed that is convenient, coded, where a part of what is said signifies the opposite of what is asserted (but the assertions have to be repeated all the same by each because that is the official truth and there cannot be any other). This coded language slowly assumes the form of a dead language from which all life is sapped because it has lost contact with reality.

If the mechanisms of inversion and ideological reversal are at work here, they are so in a precise way because the discourse of official ideology is carried out so as to go beyond the domain of a simple alienated ideology to operate on the terrain of potent countertruths, pure and simple falsehoods. Such is the case of the discourse presenting "socialist emulation" as a "help between comrades" while in fact it was a case of veritable competition¹⁰, of the ones who assert, during a clear rise in prices, that "a Soviet money is the most stable in world" to say nothing of the talk of massive voluntary membership of the Kolkhozes or of the most democratic constitution in the world.

We are thus in the face of obvious examples of a flight from truth. It appears, however, impossible to make out, in each case which, of these flights, is a matter of ideological illusion, of a self-intoxication of the leaders who would wish that the things be the way they wish them to be, or of untruths skillfully enunciated.

We must emphasise here that the flight from the real which characterises a large portion of Stalinist ideology cannot be separated from the mystique of the party. This tries to pose as true what is enunciated "by the party", thus hiding the question of errors and of untruths from the view of those who adhere to this mystique (and rendering increasingly difficult, the correction of mistakes and denunciation of lies).

One of the earliest declarations (which stands witness to the mystique of the party and to the beginning of a process of sticking “unanimously” to its assertion) belongs to a period much before the absolutist regime of the Gensek. It goes back to the XIII Congress of the party (23-31 May 1924). This congress, meeting four months after the death of Lenin, opts for the “model of unanimity” Thus, not one of the spokesmen of the opposition present at this Congress participated in voting. It is on this occasion that Trotsky enunciated a proposition which was later to be imposed in an increasingly brutal manner:

I know that one cannot be right against the party (...) because history has not created any other means of bringing about what is just.”

Thus begins the dawn of a new “criterion of truth”, at any rate a “truth” with a practical political reach.

About a year and a half later, during the XIV Congress (18-31 December 1925), the way the debates unfold leads Bukharin to invoke, in his turn, the role of the party in the enunciation of “truth” He does so during a discourse in which he opposes Krupskaya who was defending an opinion different from that of the majority. Bukharin then declared:

N.K. Krupskaya says that truth is what corresponds to reality, each can see and hear and answer by himself. But what happens to the party then? It has vanished by a stroke of the magic wand.¹²

One would rather say, in these days, that what is “true” is not what “conforms to the reality” but what the party states to be so.

It is true that these formulations of Trotsky and Bukharin in no way represent the “official doctrine” They stand, however, for the points of view quite widely accepted in the party and especially by its leadership.

From 1930, when Stalinist ideology begins to assert itself, the capacity which the party was supposed to possess for telling the “truth” and, therefore, to enunciate the “correct” ideology acquired an unprecedented dimension. Henceforth, the capacity of the party to distinguish between the true and the false

corresponds no longer only to what such and such leaders of the party accept. Without being explicitly stated, it becomes a dogma which has to be "accepted" compulsarily and which ends in practice in a prohibition of any open discussion on an increasing number of problems.

However, the degree of effective adherence to the discourse of the party is evidently impossible to evaluate because it varies considerably as a function of the themes developed by the party, the moments and the social layers and the individuals.

Moreover, for those who conform to official discourse, the idea of dissociating from it appears criminal. The crux of the dogma is *to doubt is to betray*¹³. Thus whenever doubt raises its head, it cannot be entertained.

For those who wish to be with the party, or not go against it, official discourse had to be fundamentally "true" (whatever its relationship with the real) and, therefore, continued to be accepted by the members of the party who were arrested and deported. For them, to adhere to the dogma and to be identified with the party gives birth to the certainty that the party can only act for the good, and what turns out badly is only an "accident" Confronted with an evidence or with a reality of daily life which contradicts the discourse, what is heard or seen is declared to be outside Soviet reality. It is the exception necessary for the rule. Thus arise the sentences of this type.

That is an heritage of the old order. That is not true. Your witnesses are false witnesses. It is a matter of local bureaucratism. The fact is without any general application. The State which belongs to the workers cannot exploit them, nor oppress them. Bad is the opposite of good. Without violence or injustice the new state could not have survived.¹⁴

He who adheres to this ideology and who is arrested by the NKVD under false charges can continue to believe that he alone is the victim of judicial or police mistakes and that all other prisoners are really culprits.

By allowing the flight from the real, the discourse of Stalinist ideology carries a certain order but for this order to be maintained, the discourse has to be continually repeated.

And thus the *rituals* which surround the repetition. These rituals must contribute to masking of the contradictions. Repetitions and rituals give to the discourse, a "Semblance of reality" which it does not have itself.

Footnotes

1. cf. Stalin, *QL*, Vol. 2, p. 785 to 822.
2. cf. *ibid*, p.787-790.
3. cf. Dominique Lecourt, *La Philosophie Sans feinte* (Philosophy without pretence), Paris, Albin Michol, 1982, p. 146-147
4. *Ibid*, p.145.
5. cf. *Ibid*, p.811.
6. F. Engels had already established a parallel between Marx and Drawin in his introduction to *The origin of the Family* and in the introduction in 1890 to the *Communist Manifesto*; other authors too have done so. Marx did not refute them. cf. P.Thuiller, *Darwin & Co*, Brussels, Edition Complexe, 1981.
7. cf. H. Arendt, *Le Systeme Totalitaire* (The Totalitarian System), Paris, Seuil, "Points", 1972, p. 209-210.
8. cf. Victor Serge, *Memoires d'un revolutionnaire*, (Memoirs of a Revolutionary), Paris, Seuil, "Points" 1979, p.294-296.
9. cf. J.Stalin, *The Problems* *op.cit*, 1952.
10. cf. The Second Part of Vol. I of the present work, *Les Domines* (The Dominated).
11. Cited by L. Schapiro, *The Communist Party ...*, *op.cit.*, p.288-289.
12. cf. *ibid*, p.298.
13. I draw inspiration here from the expression used by Moshe Lewin who writes to make the same observation: "doubt = treachery" He sees in this equation one of the most lethal instruments of the moral and cultural reaction which hits the country in the 1930s. (cf. M.Lewin, "Society, State and Ideology during the First Five Year Plan" in Sheila Fitzpatrick (ed), *Cultural Revolution in Russia 1928-1931*, *op.cit*, p.69.
14. cf. Claude Lefort, *Un homme en trop* (A man too many) Paris, Seuil, 1971, p. 171.

CHAPTER 3

THE PRACTICAL IDEOLOGY OF STALINISM AND ITS SOCIAL EFFECTS

The contradictions of real social movement in the 1930s and the dialectic which is developed between this movement and abstract stalinist ideology give rise to political and ideological practices that exert powerful influences on different forms of social consciousness. Thus a process takes form whose effects react on its own conditions of existence. The complexity of this process is such that we can only imperfectly describe it by giving a detailed description of some of its moments and characteristics.

Section 1

THE SPECTRE OF A CONSPIRACY

The spectre of a conspiracy is inherent in Stalinist ideology in practice. It is born of a sharp contradiction between the illusion of a mastery which is supposed to be exerted on development and social transformations and the real absence of such a mastery. This contradiction gives an extra-ordinary dimension to the *political illusion* which appears to constitute a State into “a power that is apparently autonomous”¹ and all powerful. Such an illusion had acquired a similar dimension during the French Revolution to the extent that at times any resistance to what the men in power desire appears to be due to hostile activities. As Engels points out, the fear of these hostile activities generated in France, in 1793 and till July 1794, what is known as “terror as a means of self-preservation”.²

Stalinist ideology produces even more exacerbated forms of this political illusion. In fact, it arises while State power is

concentrated within the leadership of a single party considered to be invested with a historical mission. Further, this party must accomplish its mission all the more because it is guided by a scientific vision of the world and of history and has at its head a person who is “the head of the world proletariat” and is gifted with an outstanding capacity (a “genius” in fact) for bringing into play the principles of a just policy.

Under these conditions, it is inevitable that the spectres of a *conspiracy* and of *sabotage* should raise their head as an explanation for the non-realisation of projects and the promises of a power that calls itself and believes itself to be all powerful. The belief in its strength lends the power to impute difficulties and failures to conspiracies and to revolts which prevent it from fulfilling its historic mission. That is the explanation for the fear and the repression that strikes at real resistances and at acts deemed to be criminal as soon as they are seen (for example, peasant resistance to collectivisation). And also the repression which strikes at past activities that are more or less imaginary. Thus, we witness a multiplication of the spectacles of the Moscow trials and innumerable police actions and local trials, during the second half of the 1930s, ending in condemnation of hundreds of thousands of criminals without crimes. This repression is not the product only of objective social contradictions, of the struggle to eliminate the men supposed to be “incapable” or inadequately loyal or attempts seeking to pacify discontent of the workers (who are said to be “responsible” for a difficult material situation, even an unsupportable one). These trials and arrests and condemnations without trial are also the result of an ideological obsession. The power and its agents are convinced that if “things do not happen as they should happen, it is so neither because of the economic system nor of their own policy but because of a *subversive* activity of saboteurs and other agents of the enemy. Thus a whole set of “enemies” and “conspiracy” hachers come up and they are consigned to death, to prison or to detention camps. The spectre of multiplication of conspiracies becomes more menacing in periods of economic or political crises. It attacks most of the leaders and a part of the security services. This does not prevent agents of these services subjectively being in an ambivalent

situation. They often know far too many concrete facts which prevent them really from believing in the culpability of those that are accused of conspiracy but they are not allowed to raise doubts for to doubt is to betray. Thus, they turn a blind eye, they consider the spectre of conspiracy necessary for “explaining” difficulties and incoherences which cannot be accounted for by official ideology.

The leaders fear the past and the future at the same time. Thus, the repression after the Second World War, the one connected with accusations of “cosmopolitanism”, a highly antisemitic accusation, seeks to eliminate thousands who have nothing to do with zionism (but whom the power fear for their critical spirit) and to destroy those who are living witnesses to the antisemitism of the period of collaboration with Hitler.

The spectre of conspiracies is not limited to ruling circles, it pervades a part of the workers and the peasants who are unable to account for difficulties in which they are struggling as not being at least partially due to sabotage and subversion. Thus, by unmasking “imaginary conspiracies” (their so-called perpetrators often finding themselves obliged to “confess”) the power does not only not become weaker but is strengthened. The ghost of conspiracy becomes one of the elements of a “populist” policy and fortifies the “cult of the chief”, who is strong, clairvoyant and without pity”³

Starting with the assassination of Kirov (December 1934) the spectre of conspiracy plays an increasingly menacing role in Stalinist ideology in action. This assassination takes place at a time when there is a sharp turn to the crisis due to the behaviour of some leaders who dare to raise doubts about Stalinist policy while Stalin and his supporters wish on the contrary to establish power without any sign of opposition. The assassination of Kirov marks the beginning of a new type of terror.⁴

Henceforth, conspiracies, treachery and sabotage become familiar demons of the practice of Stalinist ideology. They raise their heads not only because of the “manoeuvre” of the agents of security and of law (even though these manoeuvres are necessary for “unmasking” the accused) but basically as a product of a particular form of political illusion. It is a creation of the very

crisis of the Stalinist system.

As F. Furet points out, the exacerbated forms of the political illusion came up for the first time during the French Revolution. It "opened up a world where every social change is attributed to forces that are known, listed and living. Like mythology, it attributes to the objective universe subjective wishes (...) that is to say provides it with agents deemed to be responsible and with scapegoats. The action no longer meets with obstacles or limits but only with enemies, preferably traiters..."⁵

Bolshevism had already entertained such a Jacobin conception of history criticised by Marx and Engels⁶. It was taken up and exacerbated by Stalinism which gave to it an ideological edge without precedent by a fusion of state fetishism and pseudo-scientific dogmatism. At the practical level, there is an equally unprecedented obsession with "conspiracies" and "traitors". We may think that such an obsession is a part of a certain French ideological tradition and that the trials and Stalinist terror was accepted by many Frenchmen as a political practice "that is usual" and not as a sign of the disorder of a system afflicted with "ideological folly" and passing through a grave political crisis in which the consolidation of a new privileged class was at stake.

From the winter of 1936-1937, terror becomes a veritable ideological weapon. It was no longer a case only of eliminating the real or imaginary enemies of the past or of the future. In the absence of carrying conviction that the system was building a better world it became necessary to convince others that its existence was inevitable and that all must bow before it.

Section 2

THE IDEOLOGY OF TERROR AND THE SOVIET IDEOLOGICAL FORMATION

The ideology of conspiracy and of treachery, the efforts of Stalinist leaders to establish a power which no one can risk opposing openly gave rise in the society as a whole to an ideology of terror. It tended to reduce any opposition and even any criticism

to total silence. It paralysed resistance of the workers and peasants to increased exploitation and oppression. It made it possible to impose on workers and cadres such constraints and requirements as would not have been possible in other conditions and which they sought to escape not by an organised resistance (which was rendered impossible by the reach of police repression) but by multiple acts of “disobedience” and “indiscipline” which made them all “guilty” of some infringement.

Under these conditions of terror, the Stalinist discourse on “iron discipline” had, as its counterpart, highly contradictory social practices: blind discipline, servility, personal “loyalism” but also indiscipline, disobedience, lying, hiding and cynicism. These practices were not simple “vestiges of the past”, They were the product of the system and an integral part of the Soviet ideological formation of the Stalinist period. Not only were they bred by the system but it could not even survive without them because it has to partially cheat on the rules it had formally laid down if it was to function at all. Consequently, it entertained “misdemeanours” and “crimes” which yield “objective reasons” for the perpetration of terror and for multiplication of ideological practices to which it gave birth among those who implemented it or submitted to it.

It is evidently impossible to analyse here *the Soviet ideological formation of the Stalinist period* (even if we were to restrict ourselves to the 1930s) because it is characterised by extreme bursting of the forms of social consciousness.⁷

In the absence of an analysis of this ideological formation, it is indispensable to reveal some aspects of social practices entertained by it, particularly at the level of the new dominating class, that is to say those who manage the reproduction of fundamental social relationships. This exercise is necessary to understand some of the traits of Stalinist system in action.

One of these aspects is an “unconditional outer loyalism” from each functionary at each level with respect to their superiors. This loyalism and this unconditionality took care of various ideological relationships but their existence contributed to the reproduction of a formal respect of the hierarchy which was the source of a discipline built on servility that brings to mind the

practices of oriental despotism from which Czarist society can hardly be separated. Initially, bolshevism had attempted to promote a discipline of another kind, but having failed in this task, Stalinism imparted all its vigour to the old discipline founded on hierarchy. It conferred authority to each as a *function of his rank*. This rank is increasingly "materialised" by insignia, uniforms and other symbols of the place occupied in the social hierarchy and especially by a series of *material privileges*.

In his novel, *the Tulaev Affair*⁸, Victor Serge dramatically illustrates certain manifestations of authority. He shows how the behaviour of a Soviet accountant changes - when this mediocre and rather stupid person is promoted as "the senior assistant" and receives the "external marks" of his rank. The description which he gives of this metamorphosis deserves to be summarised:

"From his unremarkable table Romashkin (that is the name of the person) goes up to a polished desk which faces another desk similar to his own but a trifle bigger, that of the director of rates and salaries of the trust. Romashkin got an internal telephone (...) which was an unbelievable symbol of authority" He now has a certain power and Romashkin - quite timid till then - begins to exercise it on his subordinates with a simple firmness without appeal" He "realises" the authority that adds inches to a man's stature, holds the organisation together, makes work fruitful, saves time, lowers general costs " His conclusion: the principle which bestows worth on a man earlier worthless is the "*principle of hierarchy*. This principle is his watchword in his reactions with his superiors, and especially with the chairman of the trust. When this Chairman would call him on the telephon, "Romashkin would experience some difficulty in answering the call seated, without bending, without smiling endearingly. Only, he would have certainly liked to rise from his seat to wear a respectful look ..."⁹

These few lines throw light on the form of discipline spreading over all the arms of power while terror increasingly shapes the manner of their behaviour.

A frantic *individualism* constitutes the other face of a rigid formal discipline. The development of this individualism accompanies the rapid expansion of the administrative, economic

and ideological apparatus and has no patience with the spread of terror in the later half of the 1930s. In no time at all, the State apparatus is penetrated by managers and by *small and middle-level functionaries* who have nothing in common at all with the earlier militancy of the bolshevik party (who are by and large removed from positions of responsibility between 1917 and 1930). In the middle of the 1930s, official publications increasingly denounce the “petit-bourgeois” mentality of the new administrators, managers and functionaires.¹⁰

Formal discipline and the chase for privileges forms a unity and favors the rise of cynical and mediocre cadres in the apparatus who prefer to be surrounded by servile elements even though they are incompetent. Thus the transformations already set off before the terror of the 1930s become more rapid and are consolidated. They lead to an hierarchy of persons despotic towards their subordinates and servile before their superiors, as Moshe Lewin has observed very justly¹¹.

The hierarchy of privileges is not limited to its effects on the members of the dominating class. It also exerts an influence on some of the exploited and, especially, during the period of great *social mobility*. The promotions of workers and peasants to positions of some small importance with a little bit of “responsibility” of any kind and the alleviation of some small privileges (e.g. postings in less painful jobs) also affects a number of the exploited whose number is non-negligible. These promotions and privileges, or the hope of obtaining them, has an influence over the ideological links of a portion of the workers with power. They often lead to these workers “supporting” the power to some extent and enlarge its social base to an appreciable extent.

Similar is the case of campaigns of denunciation and spying. If some spies are moved by a spirit of “patriotism”, others - and they are perhaps not fewer in number - are moved by jealousy of their superiors or by plain arrivism. Thus, they are in solidarity with the power. During the time when the discovery of the “conspiracy” is ever on the rise, many of those who are generally servile are ready to pull down managers placed above them, often in the hope that they would occupy the post held by the disgraced

should circumstances be favourable. During the period of repression of managers in the second half the 1930s, we see a “mine of young wolves” who denounce the “faults” and the “crimes” (real or imaginary) of their superiors. During the same period we also see the executives occupying a certain position wishing to protect themselves against possible accusations and to give evidence of their zeal, setting up a purely formal discipline which reduced the efficiency of the apparatus to its lowest. The executives achieve any task whatever and repeat the slogans of the time. Thus, we have - to use the expression of Claude Lefort a “check on those who produce, whatever be their field of production, by professionals of incompetence.”¹²

Thus, a brutal, quasi-military “style of command” is fashioned. This style has often been described, and even glorified, by Soviet leaders of those times. It seeks to attain objectives whatever the price (*vo shto by to ne stalo*), deal with severity with the leaders responsible at a lower level who do not “fulfil” targets fixed, accept neither any discussion nor reservations nor explanations. They “put pressure” (*nazhat*) on the lower ranks, have a “solid fist which organises and controls”, do not accept any objections and come down with a heavy hand in order to harm so that others learn the lesson (*bolno stuknut kogo sleduet, v primet i nauku drugim*)¹³.

These social practices introduced in the ideological formation of the Stalinist period, are developed from contradictions of the system and characteristics of the official ideology which places the set of social transformations and relationships before a double code.

Section 3

THE TWO CODES OF STALINIST IDEOLOGY

One of the peculiarities of the Stalinist ideology such as it had asserted itself in the USSR in the 1930s arises from its status: it is the *official* ideology, it is not a dominant ideology whose influence would be *direct* upon the population (in the sense that

the population would have appropriated it, would have made it its own even in a changed form). It is only very partly that official ideology coincides with the image that the population has of the real situation, of the policy followed and the history of the country. This coincidence shows up especially when official ideology incorporates spontaneous images of social consciousness, like those associated with state fetishism or of the currency or, for a part of the Russian population, those devoting a large part to the greatness of Russia and its historic mission. When such is the case, official ideology plays an active role in the backing which a part of the population gives to the system of domination.

If official ideology does not generally function as a *dominant ideology*, it is because there are strong contradictions between the real social movement and even the apparent reality and the discourse of official ideology. Hence, despite formal "respect" shown to it, the ideology of the party does not succeed in functioning as a system of representation, values and norms to which the dominant class would, in fact, be subject and so would the dominated class under differentiated forms.¹⁴

Official ideology, therefore, functions much more "*under constraint*" than in willing acceptance, or in appearances or as consensus. One of its functions can even be to help in discovering those who are not entirely subservient to the party because they express their disagreement with such or such proposition of official discourse. To fulfil this function well, it is not unnecessary that some of its propositions be more or less absurd.¹⁵

At the international level, that of the Communist International, parties affiliated to it and sections that these parties influence (that is to say, outside the USSR) official Soviet ideology plays another role and is likely to receive a much more real adhesion than what it obtains even in the Soviet Union. This ideology, in fact, plays an unquestionably active role beyond Soviet frontiers and cannot work there under constraint. Moreover, non-Soviets are more or less unaware of the extent of contradictions between the discourse of official ideology and the realities lived by the population of the USSR and forms of consciousness corresponding to these realities. However, even this external adhesion becomes possible only at the cost of a great "vigilance"

by removing systematically from the top of the International and affiliated parties, those leaders who are not ready to accept without any discussion the discourse of Soviet official ideology. The history of the CI is one of multiple exclusions and elimination of "deviationist" elements, especially during the 1930s. This history is also one of physical elimination of a large number of those who could bear witness abroad to the profoundly fallacious character of official ideology and to what was the concrete reality of life in USSR. This, and the future annexation of a part of Poland explains the physical decimation, which took place in the USSR in 1938, of the old leadership of the Polish party.

To the massive functioning of official ideology "under constraint" corresponds the use of a double code written into this ideology, *a code of interpretation* and *a code of subjugation*. Both of them are indispensable for the reproduction of relationships of domination of the system.

1. The Code of Interpretation

To a large extent, Stalinist ideology constitutes *a system of myths*. This system is built around the founding myth of the October Revolution proclaimed to be a "proletarian" revolution. This myth itself hinges wholly upon a code of interpretation and identification. Stalinism tends to solidify this code and make a total system out of it. The official language is thus found *subverted* and impoverished. It produces a dead language, a *wooden language*, which is a vehicle of several myths. Thus, industrialisation and collectivisation which are supposed to bring an abundance of agricultural produce and well-being to the peasants and which brought poverty and lowering of the level of life of workers and peasants and even famine, is announced to be no less than the source of a "more joyful life" *By turning the back to the principle of reality and using a codified language which negates it, the discourse of the party sets itself on a path of "fiction-making" As it progresses, this fiction-making gives an increasingly mythical content to official discourse.*¹⁶

Similarly, the Stalinist ideology develops the myth of an economy which the plan has mastered, that of the Kolkhozians who "collectively take their destiny in their hands", that of the

workers “who are enthusiastic about production” (symbolised successively by the Udarniki and the Stakhanovists), that of a Soviet Union that would “give birth to progress” in all spheres, succeed in “transforming nature” and in “fashioning a new man”¹⁷

The reality incessantly giving a lie to these assertions led the party to an increasingly mendacious discourse to a *falsification ever more brazen of reality and of history*. Hence the rewriting of history which characterises the Stalinist (and post-Stalinist) regime.

Once on the path of large scale falsification, the leadership of the party is led to encoding the quasi-totality of the field of expression and saturating to the maximum, the space of public discourse because any other discourse could be in violent contradiction with official ideology. When such a saturation is more or less achieved, spontaneous forms of social consciousness are seen to practically ban any coherent expression. This unleashes a process of inner shutting up¹⁸ and blocks the enunciation of a systematic critical discourse. The different social classes are voiceless.

In conditions of the 1930s characterised by great social mobility and massive repression, official ideology in action is an element stabilising the existing order. It produces a *specific desocialisation*, a *social pulverisation* different from that which is produced in the countries of old style capitalism, but this desocialisation is at least as effective. To escape it, it is necessary to take the risk of negating official discourse¹⁹ and developing social practices independent of it. This is possible only under certain conditions. In their absence official discourse also becomes the vector of a *code of allegiance*.

2. *Code of Allegiance*

The ideological monopoly claimed by the leadership of the party also fulfills the *function of allegiance*. By forcing each one to repeat *ad infinitum* what is said by the party (even when he knows that it is false) and acting, at least outwardly, according to directives, political, scientific, artistic, etc., the top leaders of the party change official discourse into a *code of allegiance* any lack of respect towards which is looked upon as “lack of loyalty” and

“deviation” And the deviant quite easily becomes an *enemy*, a potential one at any rate.

The allegiance so obtained has all the more importance as official discourse is in contradiction with what is “thought” as “true”, as “just” by a portion of those who “adhere” to it publicly. Thus, when the party asserts - at a time when there is a shortage of most common articles of consumption that “life has become more beautiful” or when it says that the citizens of the USSR (constantly in danger of being arrested arbitrarily) live under “the most democratic constitution in the world” and when it demands that each repeat it, it brings into play a specific practice of *enslavement*. Accepting what is evident does not imply any allegiance because you limit yourself to saying what you think is true. On the contrary, prostrating before a discourse you do not believe in, that is accepting the *authority* of the enunciator of the discourse. By functioning as it does, official discourse plays the role of an *instrument of social surrender* which it would not have if the discourse had spontaneously inspired acceptance.

The role of an instrument of social surrender to the code of allegiance which characterises Stalinism is also formed of absurd and killing accusations that the organs of security and law make against real or imaginary “opponents.” Those are made victims of senseless epithets like “trotskyists-Bukharinists” or “trotskyists-Hitlerites” (while Trotsky and Bukharin were the earliest to warn against the Nazi menace and proposing a policy of opposing it much better than Stalinist policy who made the social-democrats the chief enemy). They also hurled absurd and vulgar swear words as that of “lustful vipers” This dimension of official discourse does not aim only at “justifying” condemnation of those so accused, it seeks also to oblige each one to repeat these intemperate sentences which has apparently become an “act of faith” imposing a sort of *credo quia absurdum* (“I believe because it is absurd”).

Of course, the fragments of an ideology based on evidence are not characteristic of Stalinist ideology. Only the elements of ideology are specific when functioning under constraint. They alone are the instruments of enslavement and social surrender.

The function of allegiance of official ideology requires, lastly, the intervention of the police, but this happens only in the

boundaryline cases (incidentally quite many in the Stalinist era). But even before the police intervenes, social surrender is obtained through the action of a closed network of ideological instruments. Each of them keeps a watch on a part of a particular population with which it is regularly in contact, whom it calls to order, "guides" its noticeable behaviour, teaches it the day's "truth", repeats to him the "correct discourse", the one which should form a part of the conversation in public. (At that time, because of police action, nearly all conversation was potentially public). Ideological agencies obliged almost every single one to "participate" in meetings, explanatory campaigns, lectures and "discussions" where he had to speak and say what was expected of him. The agencies that are given this task of ideological subjugation are several. First, the party itself, then several administrative organs of the State (such as the school, the universities) and all kinds of "associations" (Komsomol, trade union, union of writers, of film makers, society for the spread of knowledge, etc.). All these organisations, having security police and informers, are placed under the "direction of the party". Almost no one can escape these agencies of ideological subjugation. Even the "unorganised", few in number, notice that they are under observation because of the network of spies and informers who were quite "ready" to report every incorrect behaviour or statement for fear that if they did not do so they themselves could be denounced. The role of ideology as a code of allegiance implied, as a result, a strict watch on the population.

It was shown that the specificity of the system requires effectiveness of official ideology as an instrument of social surrender and enslavement is better ensured if the numerous aspects of this ideology are not spontaneously accepted. It is by openly bending before what is subjectively unaccepted that you acknowledge allegiance to the power.

It is necessary to emphasise that an important shift has taken place in the operation of this code of allegiance during the Stalinist era and the present period. Today, the power is generally satisfied with a *public allegiance* to official ideology (which appears to have lost much of its authority even over those who are the most "authorised" spokesman of it). During the Stalinist era power

demanding a *private allegiance* too. It wanted that it should appear as if its ideology had indeed been *interiorised*. Therefore, *the effort made to discover what each person thought and to unmask those with a double face*.

Also, in the 1930s and till the death of Stalin, a constantly mentioned preoccupation in speeches and in the press was of the fight against *men with a double face* in order that the party could become an “impregnable fortress” where none of these men could penetrate.

In the Stalin era, this fight against individuals with “a double face” had several aspects. It was inscribed in the “routine” of those innumerable meetings mentioned earlier and where each one was called upon to speak and publicly denounce such or such person (known militant or a comrade in the workplace) arrested by the security services as an “enemy” or a “saboteur”. These meetings served to “police thought” and locate those who do not show enough “fervour” which too could bring them the accusation of “men with double face”

The political police played an essential role in the uncovering of these individuals suspected of “bad thinking”. The *agents provocateurs* established a “relationship of confidence” with those on whom they had to report on their “secret thoughts”. They would make these persons talk “open heartedly” and if the confidences made to them were against the thinking of the party, they would denounce these persons at an appropriate moment. The NKVD would know how to extract confessions of the “crimes” or “offences” they were supposed to have committed. To carry out this “work”, the security services could depend upon provocators “maintained” by them and upon numerous casual informers who would denounce the “subversive” opinions they had heard (or imagined to have). The reasons for these denunciations were manifold: personal hostility, professional jealousy or again the hope of being promoted or have a house sanctioned (generally, one which the person so denounced used to occupy).²¹

The minuteness with which “policing of thought” was carried out in the Stalinist period would give the illusion that the dictatorship of the party was an “ideocracy”. This illusion led to hiding the reality of relationships of exploitation and power. In

fact, “respect” demanded by official ideas only seeks to subjugate all before the power. What is demanded is the constancy of this subjugation and not the “fidelity” to “ideas” which changed with times.

The metaphor “men with double face” denotes a reality which is pushed back by official ideology. The fact was that the discourse of Stalinist ideology was hardly and very badly interiorised so much so that it was frequently denied in private discourses that burst forth.

Official discourse thus “doubled” with various other discourses. These are in patches. They are discourses of peasants, middle layers, intelligentsia, etc. These multiple and atomised discourses incorporate *a part* of “explanations” of official discourse but in a *fragmentary form*. They do not have the same relationship to the real as the discourse of the party but they do not manage to form a unified social counter discourse which could help in the formation of an organised resistance to the power. However, those who privately have a discourse other than the power are innumerable and really have a “double face” Their personality tends to decompose. Thus, the new Soviet man is a “*double man*” This leads to a specific *social schizophrenia* which makes for a grave social dysfunctioning inherent to the set up of ideological domination.

However, the power does not give up having a full adherence to its own discourse. With this aim it seeks to mobilise literature, cinema and art to “transform the thought” of those it enslaves. Thus, it wants that writers be “the engineers of the souls”, to use the words of Stalin.

The main effect of this slogan is to powerfully bring forth “a socialist realism” which must illustrate official discourse. The cultural section of the Central Committee keeps a watch on the respect of this “realism” and the “norms” fixed by the party.²² One of the tasks of this “realism” very specifically is “to show our man in a true manner, to show him such as he *ought to be*”²³ to quote the formula of Alexander Fadeev²³

“Socialist realism” of the 1930s has only a limited influence because the authors dear to the Soviet readers continue to be those

of the XIX century as also some of the authors who manage to escape from these norms of realism. This realism is generally felt, and quite justly, as instituting a *ritual of falsification* not only of the present, constantly glorified, but also of a constantly rewritten past (conforming to the need of the hour²⁴). This does not manage to change in any profound manner what the people think because the imaginary discourse of official “realism” is opposed markedly to the concrete reality. This has, therefore, no credibility, generally speaking.

All in all, the way Stalinist ideology operates (born as it is of the contradictions of the system) makes the leaders and the led live in a double world: that of real relationships and that of the official discourse. The latter seeks to order a set of behaviours that are partly inadapted to the real but *necessary to the* “respect” of power and to the leadership of the party. That is the source of a permanent and serious crisis of ideology. It contributes to giving its specific form to the movement of contradictions characteristic of the Stalinist system and it is a burden on the conditions of political battles. The post-Stalinian period is much less rigid on the ideological plane but allows a massive pressure of official discourse to continue, with perverse effects indicated previously.

Footnotes

1. Marx notes to what extent this illusion had grown in Germany of the end of the XVIII Century. (cf. Marx, *German Ideology* in *Philosophical Works*, Paris, Edition Costes, 1938, p. 182s, especially p. 185.
2. cf. the Letter of 20 February 1889 from F.Engels to K.Kautsky, in MEW, Vol. 37, p. 156.
3. cf. Nicolas Werth, *Etre Communiste en URSS sous Staline* (To be a communist in USSR under Stalin), Paris, Gallimard/Juillard, 1981, especially p. 269.
4. cf. on this point Part I of the present volume, *The Dominated*.
5. F.Furet, *Penser la Revolution Francaise* (Thinking the French Revolution), Paris, Gallimard, 1978, p. 43.
6. This fact was revealed by Trotsky in 1904 in *Our Political Tasks* (republished in 1970 by Pierre Belfond); he mentioned then that this conception was foreign to Marx and analysed the “dead-ends

and the ideological follies of the Jacobine terrorism" (*op.cit* p.189), cited by F. Furet, *op.cit.*, p.119.

7. See the first part of the present volume for some observations made on this question. We may add here the following observations: the manifestations of the various forms of social consciousness that burst forth are especially difficult to be located because they are generally pushed back and repressed. However, it is possible to note certain traits through memoirs and accounts in the Soviet Union and also through writings of foreigners who have lived for a considerable time in the USSR and who have had long contacts with the citizens of this country. Some of the traits of these forms that burst forth in the social consciousness appear also through the writings published in the USSR, chiefly between 1956 and 1965 at a time when the norms laid down on the contents of the literary works were somewhat less strict, particularly for those dealing with the pre-war period. Almost all these writings bring out how much the spontaneous forms of social consciousness are many-sided and diverse, and in contradiction with the official ideology. For an idea of it, it is enough to read some of the following works: Biellox, *Affaire d'habitude* (A matter of habit), Juillard, 1969; Ciliga, *Dix Ans au pays du mensonge deconcertant* (Ten years in the country of disturbing Lies), Paris, Champ Libre, 1977. Boris Mozhaiev, *Dans la Vie de Fedor Kuzmine* (In the life of Fedor Kuzmin) Paris, Gallimard, 1966; Emilio Guarnaschelli, *Une psetite Pierre* (a small stone) (exil, deportation and death of an Italian Communist Worker in USSR, 1933-1939), Paris, Maspero, 1979, Valentin Rasputin, *L'Adieu a l'ile* (Farewell to the Island), Paris, Laffont, 1979; Moshe Zalcman, *Histoire Veridigne de Moshe* (Moshe's True Tale), Paris, Encres, 1977 A. Solzhenitsyn, *La Maison de Matriona* (Matriona's House), Paris, Juillard, 1965.
8. cf. V.Serge, *Les Revolutionnaires*, Paris, Seuil, 1980, p.657s.
9. Ibid, p. 938-939.
10. Complaints of this nature can be seen especially in the Soviet review *Za Sotsialisticheskuyu Zakonnost* for example, in Vol. 7 of 1936 where there is an article by Vyshinski (especially p.74-76).
11. cf. Moshe Lewin, "The Social Background of Stalinism", in Robert C.Tucker (ed), *Stalinism, Essays in Historical Interpretation*, New York, Morton & Co., 1977, p. 120.
12. cf. Claude Lefort, *Elements d'une critique de la bureaucratie* (Elements of a critique of Bureaucracy), Geneva, Librairie Droz, 1971, p.158.

13. cf. M.Lewin, "L'État et les classes sociales en URSS, 1925-1933" (The State and the Social Classes in URSS, 1925-1933) in *Actes de la Recherche en Science Sociales*, February 1976, p. 128. The author cites particularly a speech made in Kharkov by P. Postyshev and reproduced in No.5 of PS, 1933. As Lewin points out, the expressions used summarise what was considered then as "the bolshevik art of governing).
14. This becomes evident from volumes 1 and 2 of the present work that the bolshevik ideology could not function either as dominant ideology of 1917 to 1930. This was not very explicitly formulated at that time. I think it necessary, therefore, to indicate it clearly here.
15. cf. *infra* the paragraph devoted to the "Code of allegiance".
16. cf. Stephen F. Cohen, "Bolshevism and Stalinism", in Robert C. Tucker (ed). *Stalinism, op.cit*, p.26.
17. cf. Marc Ferro, *L'Occident devant la Revolution Sovietique et la dissidence* (*L'histoire et Ses mythes*) (The West and the Soviet Revolution and dissidences, History and its Myths), Brussels, Editions Complexe, 1980, p. 88s.
18. In a paper "*Le regime ideologique sovietique et la dissidence*" (The Soviet ideological regime and Dissidence), Claude Orgini happens to deal with this theme. cf. his writing, in *Chronique des petites gens d'URSS* (Chronicle of the common people in USSR), Paris, Seuil, 1981, p. 165s.
19. At different times, the writers officially published in USSR manage it, but it is, generally by using the official discourse while altering the terms (cf. G.Svirski, *Les Ecrivain de la Liberte*, (Writers of Freedom), Paris, Gallimard, 1981).
20. cf. Stalin, *l'Homme, le capital le plus precieux* (Man, the most precious capital), Tirana, 1968, p.26.
21. The accounts of these spyings and provocations as also the descriptions of the role of the repeated meetings are numberless. We do not generally find them in the "official" literature but in the memoirs of those who lived and worked in USSR and published abroad. We can also come across them in the Soviet literature published abroad. Thus, the book cited already by Yuri Dombrovski, *La Faculte de l'Invtile* (The Useless Faculty), Paris, Albin Michel, 1979, constituted a remarkable evidence on the way spying and provocation functioned. It seeks to suddenly come upon the "Secret thoughts" The book by N.Werth, already cited, *Etre Communiste* (To be a Communist) provides a large number of examples of "The thought policing" at work in the Stalinist period. Its merit lies in basing itself on a deep study of important archival documents.

22. cf. Victor Serge, *Memoires* *op.cit* p.280s.
23. Cited by G.Svirski, *Ecrivain de la Liberte* (Writers of Freedom), *op.cit.* p.76.
24. On the genesis of the Stalinist Concept of "Socialist realism", See the observations of S.Cohen in his work "*Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution*", New York, Alfred A. Knoff, 1974, p.355-356.

ANNEXURE

ARE HUMAN RIGHTS MARXIST?

An analysis of the ideological formation of Stalinism brings out the cracks which marks its structure. These cracks clearly show the distinction between this ideological formation of Bolshevism, Leninism and the thinking of Marx. These cracks are found at several levels: the conception of the dialectics, conception of history, role of the development of productive forces and class struggles in history, conception of the State, its characteristics and its role, conception of economic laws, assertions about the existence of a "socialist mode of production", etc.

The observation of these cracks leads to a rejection of the simplistic thesis (of the evolutionist - Stalinist type) that would like Marx to have "caused" Lenin and Lenin, Stalin, and so the Gulag and the Soviet totalitarian system.

This observation goes much beyond the simple assertion that Marx would not have liked to set up a social formation similar to the Soviet formation and that, if he had been alive, he would reject it as foreign to all the aspirations expressed in his writings.

However, to admit the propositions enunciated just now does not enable us to consider as solved another problem, that of the perverse effects that some of the enunciations of Marx can exert when they are put into practice in a privileged and unilateral manner. Thus, it is not enough to reject the evolutionist idea of a "causation" of Stalin by Marx to be able to affirm that Marx's writings - particularly those having a utopian content - did not

contribute to what was being done in his name in the Soviet Union. In reality, it is not without some reason that the General Secretary of the Bolshevik party and his successors could claim Marx on their side.

One must not forget that *there are several Marxes in Marx*. His texts are not always coherent between themselves. Thus, it is possible to develop discourses and practices conforming to some of his writings while being in contradiction with others. We can, for example, cite a text of Marx which does not express Marx's dominant ideas, namely the *Preface* in 1859 to the *Critique of Political Economy*. The class struggle is absent from this text, the productive forces here appear as the motive force of history and one comes across an outline of a sort of "General Theory of Revolutions"¹ Now, Stalin has largely delved into this *Preface* to justify the conceptions which he put into practice during 1930s. Hence one can see a certain *historical relationship* between the text of Marx and the Stalinist practice.

There are other examples of this "plurality" of Marx. The most significant - with respect to the question we are tackling - are from the writings of the younger days of Marx, like the *Jewish Question*² In his writings, Marx mainly grapples with the ideological function of "human rights" To him, they aim essentially at the defence of the "egoist" man, man such as he is, member of the bourgeois society, that is to say an individual apart from the community (...) uniquely concerned with his personal interests and obeying his private inclinations."³

Enunciations of this kind, and the critique of human rights in general were exploited by Stalin and his partisans who dealt with contempt what they called "rotten liberalism" and who equated the rights of man with "bourgeois liberties", incompatible with "socialism" (although Stalin had proclaimed - in the 1936 constitution - that these rights would be respected in the USSR, even though he violated them systematically). This "stalinist" manner of dealing with human rights - freedom of expression, freedom to oppose power in the saddle, the freedom to organise for the defence of one's interests and one's opinions - are characteristic even today of the Soviet system. It can certainly lay claim to following some isolated texts of Marx, by interpreting

them is a very particular manner, but it cannot lay claim to the general principles defended by Marx, either when he emphasises the positive role of democratic rights in the struggle of the exploited and oppressed classes or, more generally, when he upholds that the democratic forms, especially universal franchise, are necessary for the “emancipation of work”⁵

To summarise, there is a “Stalinist way of using” the texts of Marx⁶ This usage makes it possible to establish practices, and the traits of the Soviet formation related to these practices. But this is a case of giving importance to isolated texts and to the letter of these texts in order to use them and aim at targets other than those Marx had in view. This amounts to turning them, in the final analysis, against the fundamental concepts of Marx⁷ Of course, such use of Marx could be forced, not only because some of his texts lent themselves to such an use but above all because of the accidents of class struggle which systematically placed a higher importance on some particular writings of Marx distorted with the aim of bestowing on the Soviet dominant class a state apparatus of an increasingly repressive nature.

Footnotes

1. cf. On this point my remarks in Volume 2 of this work and the remarks of Dominique Lecourt, in *La Philosophie sans Feinte* (Philosophy without Sham), *op.cit.*, p. 140.
2. cf. Marx, *Philosophical Works*, Paris, Editions Costes, 1927, Vol. 1, p. 169s; cf. also, Marx, Works III - Philosophy, Paris, Gallimand, “La Pleiade” 1982, especially p.366-367
3. cf. p.195 of the Vol. I of the Editions Costes and p.366s of Marx, Works III, *op.cit.*
4. See, for example, what Marx has written under the heading “Observations on the recent regulations of the Russian Censor”, in *Philosophical Works*, Vol. 1, *op.cit.*, p.120s; cf. also *Works III Philosophy*, *op.cit.*, p. 111s.
5. On this subject, see the plan of a work that Marx intended writing and which was to be a “critique of politics” in MEW, Vol. 3, p.537; this text was reproduced by Maximilien Rubel in *Oeuvres-Economie* (Works, Economics, Vol. 2, p.LXVII/LXIX.
6. On this subject, see the remarks of Claude Lefort in “*Droits de l'homme et politique*” (Human Rights and Politics, in *L'invention*

democratique (The Democratic Invention), *op.cit.*, p.58s.

- 7 When Marx and Engels took part in the activities of the workers' movement, they had increasingly emphasised the importance of democratic liberties. In 1865, in a writing intended for the German Workers Party, Engels wrote: the workers movement is impossible without freedom of the press, without the rights of coalition and meeting" (MEW, Vol. 16, p. 73). In 1871, after the experience of Paris Commune, Marx began insisting more than ever before on the rights of citizens and on the subordination required for the officials who should not be appointed but elected by citizens [cf. K.Marx, *La Guerre Civile en France*, (Civil War in France,) Paris, ES, 1968.]

Part Two

THE DOMINATORS IN TWILIGHT 1928-1938

From the end of the 1920s, the leadership of the party formed around Stalin launched a merciless drive against some bourgeois sections existing in the period of the NEP and against other social sections assimilated to the bourgeoisie. This drive - accompanying collectivisation and liquidation of "private enterprises" - was supposed to "cause disappearance" of the bourgeoisie (a result announced as attained in 1936) whereas it only resulted in changing its conditions of existence. It was accompanied by serious economic and social contradictions leading, at various moments, to a modification of the forms and objectives of the drive, while within the party itself there arose serious internal conflicts.

At the end of the 1920s, the leadership of the party unleashed the offensive against some of the capitalist sections of NEP society and against those considered as bourgeois. The offensive is mainly directed against NEPmen, private industrialists, artisans and traders who had sufficiently extended their undertakings as to appropriate a part of surplus value, and against the kulaks as capitalist exploiters. A number of peasants called pro-kulak or sub-kulak were considered to be similar to them. We know that in a few years the "private bourgeoisie" of the NEP is liquidated! Its undertakings were confiscated and its members transformed into wage earners when they are not deported or arrested.

However, the drive unleashed by the party leadership also aims at other targets. Their position and outcome are more complex. This concerns a part of the leadership and managers of the State apparatus and their immediate collaborators (directors of undertakings, production engineers, higher technicians). This also concerned a portion of intellectuals.

The offensive directed against these “targets” is not determined mainly by their place and their relationship to production and reproduction but to their ideological or political position. It is because of these positions that some of those who were declared to belong to the “bourgeois intelligentsia” were eliminated. The scope of these operations of elimination and “purification” is explained to a large extent by resistance (careful but real) to the policy of rapid industrialisation and over accumulation from within the managerial class (of the party, economy, industry, etc.). A number of them considered some of the “objectives” of the plans or some of the methods used for attaining them as dangerous to the future of the country or the regime

The leaders of the party who wanted to have docile managers attacked those who took a critical attitude (or supposedly critical). They considered these managers to be impregnated with “bourgeois culture” and sought to eliminate them to have the apparatus purified, renewed and “cast in the mould”

Footnote

This process of liquidation was described in the volumes 2 and 3 of the present work. We may add a statistical indication to it: according to the official statistics, the business community and the kulaks accounted, in 1928, for 4.6% of the Soviet population (cf. N.Kh V 1956 g, p.19) that is 7.5 million persons with their families. In 1935, these categories disappeared.

CHAPTER 1

THE “CULTURAL REVOLUTION” (1928-1931)

We owe the expression “cultural revolution “ to Lenin who used it in some of his writings of 1922 and 1923. For the major part of NEP, it was used only occasionally and chiefly to talk of a rapid and wide-ranging development of the educational system.

From 1928, the top level of the party wanted, on the other hand, to give to this term a "radical" connotation. It was supposed to denote a form of proletarian class struggle in the domain of culture. In fact, this struggle was unleashed by the ruling group formed around Stalin. It unfolds as a "revolution from the top" with which are associated mainly a portion of the youth and the students of working class origin. Despite the ambitions announced earlier, this movement had mostly the effect of modifying the recruitment of cadres and the discipline to which they were subject.

Section 1

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AS "CLASS WAR"

The new connotation which the term "cultural revolution" acquired at the end of NEP clearly appeared in an intervention of A.I. Krinitskii, Chief of the *agit prop* ("agitation and propoganda") department of the Central Committee. During a meeting which took place in Moscow between 30 May and 9 June, 1928, under the auspices of this department, Krinitskii declared that the "cultural revolution" can only be a "*class war*" carried on by the proletariat against bourgeois elements which have survived from the earlier society and which, according to him, had organised an attack on the cultural front, "striving to increase their share, struggling for their own school, their own art, their own theatre and seeking to use the State apparatus for this purpose"²

Krinitskii faulted those responsible for *Narkompros* (the Commissariate of Enlightenment "under Lunacharski³) for having been paralysed by" a counter-revolutionary and opportunist conception of the cultural revolution (which had reduced itself to) a pacific upbringing, without any class content in the cultural level - a conception which does not make any distinction between the bourgeois and proletarian elements of culture (...) and which does not notice the sharp struggle of the proletariat against its class enemy, a struggle waged in everyday life in the school, arts,

sciences, etc.”⁴

If we compare the formulations of A.I. Krinitskii with those used till then, they show the appearance of a political line seeking to upset “cultural life”, recruitment and formation of cadres and, at a deeper level, the relationship between cadres, “intelligentsia” (this word being used in its widest sense) and leading sections of the party.

When, in June 1928, A.I. Krinitskii dealt with the theme of “cultural revolution”, his declarations followed a few others that had emanated from the highest level of the party. These are the earliest signs of a change in the line intended to cast a suspicion on the “bourgeois specialists” whose “loyalty” was more or less accepted since the beginning of the NEP.

The most remarkable declaration in this respect is the one by Stalin on the occasion of the “Shakhty *affaire*”⁵ which involved an important group of engineers in the mines in Donbass and accusations being framed against them.

When Stalin spoke of the Shakhty *affaire* before the Plenum of April 1928, he did not content himself with doubting “bourgeois experts” He also denounced “*the incompetence of communist cadres who were responsible for keeping a check on them.*” He asserted that this incompetence was as worthy of attention as the treachery of experts. *It shows, said he, that in the absence of technical knowledge, the communist cadres can be taken for a ride.* For the *Gensek*, the hour had come to put to an end to the dichotomy between “red” and “experts”⁶

The Shakhty *affaire*, the Plenum of April 1928 and the speech of A.I. Krinitskii in June of the same year are the earliest indications of the “cultural revolution” of the years 1928-1931. They cover simultaneously two essential aspects.

On the one hand, the cultural revolution grows on the place of production where it concerns *encadrement of direct producers*, the conditions of recruitment of those whom Stalin calls “*officers*” and “*sub officers*” of production. It also concerns the formation of these officers and the manner in which they are subordinated to the orders coming from the party leadership.

On the other hand, the “cultural revolution” tends to upset

conditions of functioning of the ideology apparatus (school, publishing house, scientific research, etc.). This second aspect assumes the imaginary form of a struggle for a “proletarian culture” However, the real nucleus of this revolution is the “*policy of working class preference*”

This is followed from 1928 to 1931 and receives its thrust from decisions taken by the party leadership. We may examine a few of them.

1. The decisions and measures which install and support the policy of preference.

The Plenum of April 1928 adopts a resolution on the “Shakhty affaire” The text calls for a tightening of “vigilance” of the “specialists”, for a push in the increase of technical knowledge of communist cadres in the economy, for giving a new dimension to *working class preference* in administrative and technical posts and for favouring the advancement of “red proletarian specialists” coming up from the ranks. When we compare this resolution with the extremely “careful” promotion policy followed till then, one is obliged to notice a very serious turning point in the policy of formation of political and technical cadres.⁷

Another resolution adopted by the Plenum held in July 1928 specifies this turning point. This resolution has the heading: “Improvement in the preparation of specialists.” It specifies that recruitment of engineers and technicians should be so done, under such conditions, that a much bigger place than earlier be given to the members of the party and to candidates of working class origin⁸. A resolution adopted during the Plenum of November 1928 adds to these two earlier resolutions. It seeks to reinforce the working class base of the party and to multiply the preferences for cadres coming up from the ranks⁹

These resolutions are followed by measures to be adopted to ensure implementation of the decisions taken by the Plenum of April 1928.

Thus, in order to facilitate the appointment to posts of technical responsibilities of young workers and cadres from the

base, lacking technical knowledge to begin with, new “*industrial academies*” were created. With the same purpose, a large number of part-time courses were made open to young workers and cadres who wished to acquire specialist training¹⁰

At the same time, the rise of cadres and technicians who are members of the party or of working class origin is accelerated by “purges” carried out in the administrative apparatus. The “suspect bourgeois elements” were chased from these organs which were “consolidated” by promotion of workers “coming up from the ranks”

The slogan of “red and expert” was thus the order of the day while the conditions of admission and the syllabi of institutions of higher studies (especially engineering institution) were modified. A new policy of admission of students is thus put into practice. It gave high priority to communist candidates or those “from the working class.” These candidates could be admitted even if their “level of preparation” was low. The organisations of the party and the trade unions are given responsibility of finding a sufficient number of applicants among their own members and to ensure their selection.

The implementation of these measures resulted in “mass promotion” to administrative or technical posts of workers considered to be “free of all bourgeois influence” An important part of these promotions were direct. The workers promoted did not pass through any “educational course” These “promotees” constituted those called *praktiki*. They are called upon to “learn on the job” by immediately assuming the functions of technicians in factories, or of engineers or directors. Between 1928 and 1933, 140638 “workers from the ranks” were thus promoted. More than half of these are not members of the party. At the same time, there is recourse to a number of other “promotions” of manual workers assigned to office jobs. Nothing less than 660000 communist workers left the factory between 1930 and 1933 to become employees or functionaries and to undertake studies. A higher number of workers who were not members of the party also had similar promotions. All in all, those who were thus promoted to administrative posts, who undertook studies, became engineers, technicians and directors between 1930 and 1933 were about one

and a half million”¹¹

The “mass promotion” of the beginning of 1930 represents the most spectacular aspect of the “turning point” taken in 1928. It had considerable economic, social and political impact. Especially, it created an impression in a part of the working class that the country had entered a “new era” where possibilities of advancement were open on a wide scale to the simple workers wishing to become technicians or office workers. In fact, this mass promotion often led only to bureaucratic posts or “production assistants”

However, in 1928 and 1929, some other measures were adopted leading to quick promotion to positions of high responsibility for a few thousand communists who had passed out from establishments of higher studies. By applying these measures with a more selective character, some 10,000 communists were admitted, between 1928 and 1931 in engineering colleges and other institutions of the same level, about 8,000 other communists were also admitted, through similar measures, into higher military institutions. In the same way, the trade unions brought up “from among the ranks” 5000 to 6000 communist workers and nearly 4000 non-communist workers¹²

On the whole, this “mobilisation” of future cadres intended to receive higher technical or military training, plus the influx of working class masses, communists or otherwise, in institutions of diverse levels, gave access to a specialised educational formation or to a higher education to tens of thousands of young persons from a section drastically different from the old “intelligentsia” Thus, during 1930s we notice the formation of a class of dominators with an origin quite different from those of 1920s because they come largely from the ranks of these “promotees”

The students at universities and engineering colleges constituted the most significant group of “promotees”, *vydvizhentsy*. They were the “*new technical intelligentsia*” which replaced not only the old “*specialists*” but also, and mainly, the members of the old guard of bolsheviks who had assumed the reigns of power in the economy and the industry. This “*new intelligentsia*” owed its advance not to its participation in past struggles but to selection it had undergone at a time when the

leadership of the party had launched an all out effort of industrialisation which gave primacy to accumulation and technique. Its ideology was strikingly different from the old bolsheviks, as it was also from that of the old "bourgeois intelligentsia"

Because of its mode of selection and education given to it, the "new intelligentsia" did not have the critical spirit as that of the "bourgeois intelligentsia" Its authority owed much more to the power vested in it by the leadership of the party than to its experience and to its knowledge and abilities. This led to a series of consequences. On the one hand, this "new intelligentsia" tended to be strictly subordinate to the leadership of the party to which it owed its position. It thus was only too willing to execute faithfully orders received, with the least possible discussion even when it thought it was hardly realistic. There was also an effort to teach them that *to doubt* the validity of orders received was already an act of *treachery*. Thus, this new intelligentsia was generally full of respect for the hierarchy, bureaucratic and military spirit. On the other hand, it also ordered about in a quasi-military fashion. It justified "politically" the "responsibility" it had accepted because in most cases, it could not justify it by its "technical competence" It could not put up with any discussion on what had been ordered. It thought that to cast doubts on its orders was to cast doubts on political authority, and thus to be guilty of "anti Soviet" behaviour. It was thus a set of *chiefs* rather than of *leaders*. The leadership of the party expected of them whom it had appointed that they obtain results asked of them "whatever the price" They should be seen to be harsh, ready to impose the most severe sanctions on their subordinates and be even ready to call in the police to arrest, on charges of "sabotage", those who did not fulfill the tasks fixed for them. Thus was formed a section of managers acting in a despotic way.¹³

The ideology of this new intelligentsia is also very different from that of the old bolsheviks who held technical or managerial responsibilities for many years. By their past, these old bolsheviks felt it was their right to sit on judgement on decisions of the party leadership. At the same time, class struggles waged by them shoulder to shoulder with workers often made them sensitive to

difficulties of these workers in their work or their daily life. On the other hand, the new intelligentsia of “promotees”, even though it had “come up from the ranks” found itself far removed from simple workers. They thought they were different from common workers because of their “merits” and their special “competences”. They easily felt a blind respect for *diplomas* and *titles* unlike the old bolsheviks who ignored them. Generally speaking, it accepted to be strictly subordinate to the top of the party because it knew that the party has a very different experience than its own and chiefly because it “owed” its promotion to the party. Since it owed its “career” to the party, it was prepared to show to it its loyalty and its spirit of discipline. It tried to appear even more “devoted” in the second half of 1930s when the purges struck even in their own ranks.

On the whole, the ideology of the new intelligentsia was largely dominated by pre-occupations with “social advancement”, with “vertical mobility” towards more and more important posts. A larger number of *vydvizhentsy* (“promotees”) were convinced that their “two-fold quality” of members of the party and of men with a “technical formation” should open before them a career which would lead them to high political responsibilities. This was precisely what happened to some of them. In fact, after about ten years, it was among these *vydvizhentsy* that replacements were found to “take on the mantle” of old members of the party, that of the “old guard”. It was also from their ranks that arose those leaders who led the party even in the beginning of 1980s.

Those among *vydvizhentsy* destined to the highest positions of “responsibilities” saw their future taking shape at a time of mass repression and “purges” (when they are not themselves the victims). Some of them quickly found a place in the list of high executives, members of the politbureau and of the government. That is the case of Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchov, Leonid Illich Brezhnev¹⁴, Alexsei Nikolaevich Kosigin, Dmitri Fedorovich Ustinov, Nikolai Semenovich Patolichev and many others.

The “upward mobility” of these crack “*vydvizhentsy*” was accompanied by a series of convulsions and mass repressions which also “renewed” the party. The outstanding career of the *vydvizhentsy* who attained a position in the top leadership of the

party should not blind us to the fact that the promotion policy greatly upset the composition of a big portion of dominating class.

2. The recruitment of the "specialists" before the implementation of the "promotion" policy.

To get an idea of the range of the swing in the spring of 1928, we must place this problem in its historical perspective.

Since the beginning of the Soviet regime, many bolshevik leaders had a mistrust of "specialists" (the engineers and the technical and administrative executives) educated before the Revolution. When they were not members of the party they were called "bourgeois specialists" and were subject to a series of discriminations. However, and soon enough, the leadership of the party accepted that they had to have the services of these "bourgeois experts" to be able to face the scientific and technical tasks confronting the power.

In 1920, Lenin emphasised the question of these "specialists" and denounced as an illusion any attempt to seek to do without them and to build socialism with "only the hands of the communists"

During the NEP, we witness a progressive abandonment of the efforts made during the civil war which sought to recruit and form *technical cadres* coming from the working class.¹⁵

In 1927, the policy of recruitment was as follows:

For *administrative* cadres, the party still practised a policy of relatively wide working class preferences. At this time, some 20,000 communists left each year their factories to undergo some courses and become executives. These recruits were in main oriented towards bureaucratic careers or towards the army.

As against this, to reach the posts implying real *technical* responsibilities and the corresponding baggage of learning, the party insisted on training by specialist schools and institutions. At this time, these institutions practically opened their doors, because of the nature of entrance tests and the type of "culture" that these competitions required, only to the children of the scientific and technical intelligentsia and the old bourgeoisie. The admission of children of workers was an exception.

Thus, on the one hand, "administrative cadres" (forming bureaucratic agencies) were largely of proletarian origin¹⁷, while, on the other, "technical cadres - who played an important role in production - were almost totally away from the party and working class."¹⁸

Till 1927, the leadership of the party appeared to put up with this state of affairs and said it had faith in most of the members of the old intelligentsia. Thus, at the XV congress of the party (December 1927) Staline asserted:

Hundreds and thousands of intellectual workers (...) are rallying to the Soviet power¹⁹ (He adds that it is necessary to consolidate the alliance (with what he calls) the hard-working intelligentsia.

The contrast between such assertions and resolutions and measures adopted during 1928 is striking. It is thus a *radical* turning point which was at work. Why was such a shift taken at the beginning of 1928?

3. The Immediate Causes for the Shift in 1928

The new "promotion policy" is inseparable from a shift in the general policies represented by the abandonment of the NEP. It constituted a specific aspect of the implementation of a policy of industrialisation that gave priority to the heavy industry. Generally, it responded to two preoccupations. One, giving to a part of the workers the feeling that they could improve their standard of living by entering the path of promotion. Secondly, to exert pressure on the old technical intelligentsia and, in course of time, to eliminate it because as a group it held (and justifiably as the facts later confirmed) that it was impossible to achieve in the time limits and with the means available, all the projects started simultaneously at the end of 1920s and at the beginning of 1930s. Most of the earlier engineers and technicians emphasised that a simultaneous launch of so many projects could only increase highly the expenses of investments, lengthen considerably construction delays and, lastly, *retard the moment when new factories would be completed and would enter into production*, so much so that the "speed" of the proposed industrialisation was only apparent and not real. These opinions were, further, widely shared by the

red directors, by a number of bolshevik cadres who had acquired certain experience of problems of economics and industry and by a number of *trade union cadres* who were conscious of the consequences of the attempts to complete all these industrial projects on prevailing conditions of work and the life of the working class.

The fraction of the leadership that had gathered around Stalin refused to take these arguments into account. They only saw "defeatism" in it due to the class origin of the experts and to the influence they exerted on the bolshevik production managers. The leadership was convinced that the more they invested and the more they put the projects on site, more the industrial production could be assured of growth. Thus, it considered a large part of old technical intelligentsia hostile and untrustworthy and decided to promote as quickly as possible, new industrial cadres of working class origin from whom they expected greater "cooperation" and "enthusiasm" These new cadres, indispensable for completing industrial projects, would be appointed by the side of the old. They would replace the older ones if required.

In fact, since 1928, the top leadership of the party tended to reduce to silence the old industrial and economic cadres who expressed (even careful) reservations about the safety of industrial projects. When they were not dismissed, they were placed in a difficult situation by reactivating the latent animosity of workers against the old technical intelligentsia. Thus, from 1928, the majority fraction in the party leadership attacked "bourgeois experts" with ever increasing vigour. It denounced their "lack of confidence in "possibilities of socialism" and even their supposed "hostility" to the Soviet regime. It was at this time that the trials were hatched (like that of Shakhty). They were intended to "demonstrate" that some of these experts were saboteurs and spies.

Between 1928 and 1931, two elements push the leadership of the party towards eliminating a portion of old technical cadres and replacing them by "promotees" of working class origin.

The first element was the confirmation through facts of warnings sounded by "experts" that the projects were too "ambitious" and would result in premature wear and tear of existing equipment and in a large number of "technical

difficulties” When these difficulties appeared, the leaders of the party thought that the earlier warnings only attacked their authority and that they undermined the confidence of the workers in the political line of industrialisation. These leaders were thus led to treat the “bourgeois experts” as “enemies”

The second element was a multiplication of accidents at the work place, lowering of the standard of living, deterioration of housing and working conditions. All this led to an increasing discontent of the working class. The leadership of the party tried to turn this discontent against the old cadres held responsible for what was happening and termed them as “Saboteurs” Even old cadres of the party, notably certain “red directors”, were denounced for their “blindness” and “incompetence”

By so acting, the party leadership developed a “working class” policy which was combined with the shift made in 1928 in the domain of “promotions” because it favoured some “workers from the ranks” occupying technical and administrative posts.

Section 2

THE EFFECTS OF PROMOTION POLICY ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE NEW DOMINATOR CLASS AND ON THE WORKING CLASS

In practice, the “policy of promotion” played a decisive role in the process of building a new dominator class which arose during the 1930s. It brought forth chiefs from the working class. It brought forth new “specialists” who ceased to be workers and became technical, economic, administrative and political executives. They became directors of production, appropriation, accumulation of surplus value and were also integrated into the new leading class whereas the old bourgeoisie was eliminated.

One of the consequences of the “promotion policy” oriented towards the training of “chiefs” was the following. While one and a half million workers and communists became managers or

specialists and left the factory during 1928 and 1931²⁰, the average level of qualification of factory workers came down rapidly because workers who remained in production and those who came to replace the "earlier ones" received only a rapid and superficial technical education.

The "promotion policy" such as it was practiced from 1928 onwards had several consequences for the working class. This policy emptied the working class of an important part of its most experienced elements, those that could have helped millions of new comers to the industrial production to learn "on the job" and assimilate the traditions of solidarity which enables the workers to stand up to the authoritarianism of the directors, executives and specialists (But these experienced workers were now away and the benefit of their familiarity with factory life unavailable to the new comers). Lastly, this policy introduced among the workers the individualist ideology of "promotion", which contributed to reduced workers' resistance to the hardening of despotism in the factory and to profound changes in the relationship between the managers and the working class.

In fact, while the working class was deprived of what could be considered its "best" elements by the leadership of the party, it increased its ranks with millions coming from the countryside²¹. Now, the dominant ideology in the party led to "accepting" as "true workers" only those who were present since a long time in industry and who - according to official ideology - give evidence of their respect for "wholesome discipline of the factory" through their behaviour.

Between 1928 and 1932, the proportion of workers having these characteristics goes down rapidly. The change in the composition of the working class plays a not negligible role, in the development of an ideological and political process with important consequences. Such as the "devaluation" of the real working class in the eyes of the managers. These managers have an increasing tendency of identifying the large mass of workers with "peasants" (while these peasants were considered as a mass of "doubtful" elements, "prokulak" or "petit bourgeois" This led to their being treated as elements "foreign" to the proletariat.

By emptying the factories of a large part of the "old

proletariat", the apparent "workerism" which presided over promotion policy contributed necessarily to an increase of scorn of the managers towards a working class which would not be a "true proletariat" This makes *anti-working class practices* easier to adopt.

One of the components of the ideology which was dominating them in the party was - it was said - the identification postulated between *true belonging to the working class* and a *spirit of discipline* which accords *priority to production*.

The *udarniki* (*shock workers*) movement at the beginning of the first five-year plan gave a concrete form to some of the effects of this ideology, which was shared by a number of party cadres. In their eyes, to be an *udarnik* it was not enough to exceed certain *norms of production*, it was, in addition, necessary to be governed by certain *ideological norms* of obedience and discipline. It was with reference to some of these norms (explicitly or in an implied manner) that the managers nominate the *udarniki*. For these managers as for the leadership of the party, the *udarniki* were the only *true proletarians*. They alone constituted "the proletariat", a proletariat that was thus coopted by the party.

It is primarily among these "coopted proletariat" that the "promotees" were chosen, leading to a paradoxical consequence: "You became a proletarian by ceasing to be a worker"²²

To sum up, the criteria which defined "the proletariat" by a certain type of submissiveness, by conformity to a certain number of ideological norms also intervened, in a transformed manner, in the policy of promotion, and therefore in building a new dominating class. The "promotees" were, on priority, those who were, by official ideological criteria, the "most advanced", that is to say the most "suitable" for *assimilating the technique* and, especially, *the most suitable to give orders*. The "promotees" who "advanced" consequently acted before their subordinates as the *symbols of knowledge and power*. In those days, the emphasis was moreover placed on this *last term* in order to find an excuse for the effects of the low level of the technical knowledge of the new managers. Those incorporated in the new dominator class, therefore, had to be strictly subjected to ideological norms of the hierarchical system. They had to be *respectful* of the system and

desirous of *crossing different stages* while accepting, at least in appearance, the *constraints* imposed in order to satisfy this “ambition”²³. The ideological norms that *structured* the system of selection enabled the leading core of the party to associate with the dominator class those elements that were officially called a “*new intelligentsia*”, different from the old one by its respect of authority incarnated by the leadership of the party and by the absence, at least apparently, of critical spirit.

In short, the policy of promotion of the years 1928-1931 played a considerable role in the formation of a new dominator class and in its structuring. However, these transformations required other developments, notably several phases of repression intended, among others, to ensure the subordination of managers to the leadership of the party. Towards the end of 1920s and in the beginning of 1930s, a first phase of repression and terror directed against the cadres struck mainly at what was called the “old intelligentsia”, or the “bourgeois intelligentsia”

Section 3

THE REPRESSION AGAINST “THE OLD INTELLIGENTSIA”

During the first five-year plan, a large number of old economic, industrial and administrative managers were subjected to a specific form of repression and terror with multiple aspects: Public trials or *in camera* trials, arrest by the security services and deportations (generally passed over in silence by the press and made known only by the accounts of former prisoners and those deported).

One of the earliest public trials targetted against the specialists in industry (about which a reference had already been made) opened in March 1928, under the chairmanship of Vyshinsky²⁴ against engineers and the technicians of the mines at Shakhty in the Donbass. These specialists were accused of acts of sabotage and organising accidents deliberately in the mines. These accidents were said to be the handiwork of “White Guards” with

headquarters abroad. The accused were supposed to have been paid by these organisations. Of the 43 accused, 11 were condemned to death (five shot dead and six pardoned by the central executive committee - TsIK), the rest were condemned to various prison sentences, some with reprieve, others pardoned²⁵

According to a number of testimonies and according to declarations made since, there certainly were isolated acts of sabotage but the trial as a whole was a frame up. The accusations, in the main, rested on fabricated "facts", on "confessions" obtained by use of every means of pressure (a chain of interrogations, continuous prevention of sleep, etc.)

From 1928 to 1931, other trials of this nature unfolded based on similar accusations held under the same conditions.

In 1929, there is, notably, the trial against the SVU or "union for the liberation of Ukraine" Although very serious accusations were made against the so-called leaders of this organisation, some of them were not even arrested. The trial was used above all to reinforce the security organs and its set of activities and to *create an atmosphere of terror* by carrying out a campaign against "the bourgeois intelligentsia"

In 1930, while millions of peasants were arrested and deported, several "great trials" were held against technicians in agriculture and industry. These judicial actions were represented as "political trials" held in the open. Simultaneously, other trials went on *in camera* and it was mostly these that led to most severe punishments.

One of these trials again served as a pretext for a huge campaign against specialists (scientists and high technicians) in the area of agriculture. Some were accused of having formed a counter-revolutionary organisation, the TKP ("*Peasant Party of Work*"). It was supposed to have a membership of 100000 to 200000 among whom were several former SRs. An open trial was announced but the accused were finally judged and condemned *in camera* and the press mostly dealt, to justify the sentences, with theoretical writings of the accused.

Again in 1930, while difficulties were ever on the rise in the area of food supply, another closed door trial was held. The

accused (46 in number) had held various posts till then in the VSNKh (Higher Council of National Economy), Commissionerate of Commerce, the Meat and Fish office, etc. All of them were condemned to death for "sabotaging food supply", "bad quality" of the product and its distribution, for rise in prices, etc.²⁶ At the same period (in November-December 1930), an open Trial of the so-called "Industrial Party" (*Prompartiya*) was held during which about 1000 specialists were indicted. Eight high technicians were accused of forming the "executive committee" of this party. They "confessed" to organising subversion, sabotage and spying at the instigation of foreign embassies, the Embassy of France among them. Most were condemned to death, but the TsIK commuted the sentences to imprisonments which indicated a change in the leadership on the question of how old specialists were to be treated. This change is linked to the increasing shortage of specialists while industry was growing and big works were coming up in increasing number. In fact, condemned specialists while generally kept as prisoners, were henceforth grouped together and were assigned - under the direction of the organs of security - to tasks more or less corresponding to their speciality. This early instance of the use of engineers, technicians or scientists (for example, microbiologists), in the works carried out within a framework of incarceration is, in some way, the prehistory of *Sharaga*²⁷ or the prison where scientists and researchers carried out their researches under the vigil of the NKVD.

A few months after the trial of *Promparitiya* - in March 1931 - began the public trial of the so-called "Federal bureau of the CC of the menshevik party" The majority of the accused held high positions in Gosplan, Gosbank and in the commissariat of commerce. Others were marxist theoreticians (that is the case of I. Rubin)²⁸ or writers. They were accused of having formed a "united front" with the *TKP* and the "*industrial party*" and of having sabotaged economic plans by proposing "very low targets" The accused "confessed" to all that was held against them, including the charge of having organised contacts with former opposition groups within the bolshevik party, with the "rightist" opposition and with the Trotskyist (thus Riazanov, who was then the director of Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute also came under a

cloud). They were condemned to five to ten years of prison²⁹

The dissimilarities and contradictions in the accusations as also the nature and the form of “confessions” indicated the baselessness of the accusations made in the course of the trial. In reality, these trials fulfilled several “objectives” They reduced to silence well-known executives and administrative, economic or technical officers who did not bow before each and every step of the power, mainly before those which, in their opinion, were harmful to the “projected” economic and industrial development. They also reduced to silence lesser known managers and technicians who, at the level of their institutions or undertakings, could have formulated criticisms that the power was not prepared to tolerate (especially when justified). Besides, it was known that these trials could produce “scapegoats” who could be held responsible for worsening of the conditions of life of workers and peasants. These trials could show the power as leading a “struggle against the bourgeoisie”

The repression against old industrial, economic and scientific cadres also fulfilled a “social function” It led to the rise of new cadres chosen by the party. They increasingly replaced older cadres and become one of the segments of the new dominator class that was coming into being.

The policy that led to this result was *camouflaged* behind a discourse extolling the merits of an “intelligentsia” which was henceforth devoted to the Soviet regime because of its “proletarian origin” (real or imaginary). This policy also tended to “unify” the dominator class by strictly subordinating the layer of new technicians, engineers and executives to the leadership of the party.

During the years 1928 to 1932, the policy of substitution of new executives in place of the old ones was no longer limited to engineers, specialists, administrators, scientists, etc. It touched the field of art and literature also. Thus, from 1928, the “Association of Proletarian Writers (VAPP)” practically conquered the position of hegemony in the domain of literature, thanks to government support, whereas other writers were not only subjected to humiliations and persecutions but were often put into prisons. The ragging and persecutions affected even the writers till then considered as “proletarian” but who were now faulted of having

given up “classical” forms of expressions. This is the case of Mayakovsky who stopped editing the review *Novy Lef* and committed suicide, despairing of the mediocrity and sectarianism of the period. From 1928 to 1932, the VAPP (and RAPP, for those who wrote in Russian) occupied the centre of the stage and denounced those whom it called “bourgeois writers” By supporting such a policy, the leadership of the party favoured formation of a layer of “official writers” who were the only ones to be tolerated. Their essential role was to glorify the regime and its leaders. They were the recipients of several privileges.

However, 1928-31 witnessed only the beginning of a process. One saw especially the setting up of conditions of an “intellectual terrorism” which was to develop later, even when the VAPP and RAPP had vanished, and which constrained the quasi-totality of cadres to verbally “rally around” pronouncements of the party. Such a “terrorism” then tended to become typical of the conditions of “scientific and cultural work” in the USSR. They did not meet at all the requirements of what Marx used to call “free scientific search”

To sum up, during the years 1928 to 1931, the earliest stage of the formation of a new dominator class and a new intelligentsia took shape. This new intelligentsia did not play any more the *critical role* of the earlier one³⁰. It knew that it could be struck by repression any moment and that it had to accept the decisions of the leadership of the party, including (at least at certain times) those concerning the “criteria” of what was scientific or of an “artistic quality”

The recourse to practices described in the foregoing pages were accompanied by the early attempts to put the party in action by the leading group formed around Stalin. This introduced new relationships and new practices within the party.

Footnotes

1. In Volume II of the present work (1923-1930) there was a reference to this “cultural revolution” (cf. especially p.170, n.5, p.211-212 and p.216-217). cf too on this question. Volume I of this work, mainly the pages 443-444. Lenin mentions a “cultural revolution”

in his scarcely explicit writings. On the whole, he has recourse to this expression to denote a process of rapid assimilation on a mass scale of the "bourgeois culture". In fact, he has a strong mistrust of those who praise, in the abstract, the development of a "proletarian culture". He considers their propositions as highly dangerous. In his view, they would only end in "fabricating" in the name of proletarian a "culture" which would be artificial. Therefore, he was opposed to the partisans of the *Proletkult* and of Bogdanov (on these differences, see the last part of Vol. II of the present work).

2. cf. the proceedings of this meeting by B. Olkhovyi, *Zadachi agitatsyi propogandi i Kulturnogo Stroytelstva*, Moscow, Leningrad, 1928, cited by the Sheila Fitzpatrick (ed) *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931*, *op.cit* p.10.
3. This commissariat is mainly in charge of educational institutions at different levels.
4. Ibid
5. cf. on this point *Pravda*, 10 March 1928, and Volume II of the present work.
6. cf. the report of Stalin dated 13 April 1928, in W, Vol. II, (1949), p.57s.
7. cf. KPSS, Vol. II, p.380s, more specially p.385 to 388. The facts recalled here were analysed in detail by Sheila Fitzpatrick in *Educational and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934*, Cambridge UP, 1979, and by Kendal E. Bailes, *Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin*, Princeton UP, 1978.
8. cf. KPSS, Vol. II, *op.cit.*, p.398s.
9. Ibid, p.420.
10. cf. S.Fitzpatrick, "Stalin and the Making of a New Elite", *Slavic Review*, September 1979, p.382, and, by the same author, *Education and Social Mobility* *op.cit.*, See also P.M.Mikhailov, "Iz Istorii deiatelnosti Kom. Partii " VI KPSS, No.10, 1976, p.76-86.
11. cf. S.Fitzpatrick, "Stalin and the Making of a New Elite", *art.cit*, p.386s, where there is a reference to *Sostav rukovodiashchikh rabotnikov i spetsialistov*, SSSR, Moscow, 1936.
12. cf. S.Fitzpatrick, "Stalin and the Making of a New Elite", *art.cit* p.384. The author cites the archival documents (TsGAOR, f. 5..451, op.15, d.785, p.65 VTsSPS, Sector of industrial managers) and two other sources: S.Fedyukin, *Sovietskaya vlast i bourzhuaznie spetsialisty*, Moscow, 1965, p.243, and B.S.Telpukhovskii, VI KPSS, No.8, 1976, p.93.

13. On this point, see the contribution of M.Lewin, "Society, State and Ideology" in *Cultural Revolution in Russia*, S.Fitzpatrick (ed), *op.cit*, p.698.
14. Born in 1906, son of a worker. He passed out at a very young age from a technical school in agriculture and worked in several capacities as technician and bureaucrat. He was a "candidate" for party membership in 1929 and became a full member in 1931. In 1930, he joined the Timiriazev Agricultural Academy (which is an institute of higher studies and research). He incidentally, left this institute quite soon, was a worker for a while in a metallurgical factory, this enabled him to join as a student in a metallurgical institute which opened to him better prospects than his stint in an agricultural institute, even as prestigious as the Timiriazev Academy. He *graduated* in 1935. He joined the party apparatus during 1936-38 purges and worked with Khrushchev. During the war, he was director of a factory and later lieutenant-general. At the end of the war, he followed a career of *apparichik*. He became member of the central committee and an alternate member of the Presidium and Secretary of the CC in 1952. After the death of Stalin, he took over the political functions in the army, then became responsible for the reclamation campaign of the lands for agricultural use. In 1956, he was named to the Presidium of the party and became president of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (Head of State) in 1961. Three years later, he replaces Khrushchev who had a quicker rise via the Industrial Academy of Moscow from where he had graduated in 1931, to enter directly in the party apparatus as the secretary of the Moscow district, joined the CC in 1934 and became an alternate member of the PB in 1938.
15. During the civil war, the preferential system of recruitment was inaugurated for the working class cadres. This system offered a certain priority for entrance in the University to the youngsters from the working class and *recommended* by the party organisations. It is the *Komandirovanie*. This was abandoned in 1925 and disappeared completely in 1926 (see, on this point, D.Lindenberg, *L'internationale communiste et l'Ecole de classe* (The Communist International and the Class School) Paris, Maspero, 1972 and R. Pires, *Die Russische Intelligentsia* (The Russian Intelligentsia, Stuttgart, 1962). The steps taken in 1928, therefore, appear as a revival of a policy which was in practice on a smaller scale between 1920 and 1925.
16. cf. S.Fitzpatrick, "Stalin and the Making of a New Elite", *art.cit*, p.378-379.

17. In 1927, two thirds roughly of the managers in the industry and half the cadres of the party apparatus were of working class origin. See *Kommunisty V Sostave apparata gosuchrezhdenyi i obshchastvennykh organizatsii*, Moscow, 1929, p.25, cited by S.Fitzpatrick, "Stalin and the Making of a New Elite", *art.cit*, p.381, n.25.
18. According to a census made in 1927, less than 1% (8396) of the members of the party had completed higher education half of this weak contingent occupied purely administrative functions. Only 7.8% of the communists with higher education had technical degrees. In 1928, there were only 138 communist engineers working in industrial establishments. On this point, see *Sotsialnyi i natsionalnyi sostav VKP (h)*, Moscow, 1928, p.41; *Kommunisty v sostave apparata*, *op.cit*, p.15; *Partiinia Zhizn* (later PJ) no.21, 1977, p.30, and Molotov, in *Krasnoe student- chestvo*, October 1928, p.21, cited by S.Fitzpatrick in "Stalin and the Making of a New Elite", *art.cit*, p.378.
19. cf. XV Congress of the PC (b) of USSR, BE, Paris, p.55.
20. cf. M.Anstett, *L'enseignement professionnel et la Main-d'oeuvre qualifiee en URSS* (The professional education and qualified manpower in USSR), Paris, Marcel Riviere, 1958, p.126, cited by Jacques Sapir in his thesis of the 3rd cycle, *organisation du travail, class ouvriere, rapports sociaux en URSS de 1924 a 1941* (organisation of work, working class and social relationships in USSR from 1924 to 1941), Paris, EHESS, February 1980, p.382.
21. cf. on this point, the second part of Volume I of the present work, *the Dominated*.
22. These remarks are developed by J.Sapir in his thesis, already cited.
23. In the book by A.Ciliga, *Dix ans au pays du mensonge deconcertant* (Ten years in the country of disturbing lies), *op.cit*, we find a remarkable description of the ideological relationships that dominated within different categories of students "coming from the working class" (cf. *op.cit*, p.86 to p.90).
24. Andre' Vyshinski (1883-1954) was an old menshevik advocate. He joined the bolshevik party only at the end of the civil war. First restricted to administrative tasks in higher education, he came back into "judicial career" from the end of the NEP and held increasingly important positions. In 1930s, he became attorney general and public accuser. It was he who asked for death sentences against former bolshevik leaders then indicted. He became the "theorician of Soviet jurisprudence" and made "confessions" the chief proofs of

- culpability. He ended his career as a diplomat.
25. cf. Ray Medvedev, *Le Stalinisme*, Paris Seuil, 1972, p.160-161.
 26. Ibid, p.162-163.
 27. Extensive information on the Sharaga and its history can be found in Lucienne Felix, *La Science au Goulag* (Science in the Gulag), Paris, Christian Bourgeois, 1981. The author mentions that it was in 1930 that the pre-history of this institution begins (*op.cit.*, p.23). See also, on this question, Mark Popovski, URSS - *La Science Manipulee* (The Manipulated Science), Paris, Ed. Mazarine, 1979.
 28. I.I Rubin has made an important contribution to the marxist theory of value, especially in his work, *Ocherki po teorii stoimosti Marksa*, Moscow, 1928, translated into French under the title, *Essais Sur la theorie de la valeur de Marx* (Essays on Marx's theory of value), Maspero, 1978.
 29. R.Medvedev, *Le Stalinisme*, *op.cit*, p.164-165.
 30. The process of substituting a "new intelligentsia" in place of the old (a process which does not necessarily exclude the "rallying" of a number of old intellectuals) and the role played by repression and terror in this process could be noticed also in the aftermath of the Second World War in several countries of the Soviet bloc. For Poland, the article of Maria Hirszowicz, "Intelligentsia Versus Bureaucracy? The Revival of a Myth in Poland" in *Soviet Studies*, July 1978, especially p.344, gives a description of this process.

CHAPTER 2

THE EARLIEST ATTEMPTS BY THE LEADING GROUP TO "USURP" THE PARTY

The 1920s were notable for the increase in the autonomy of the party apparatus *vis-a-vis* the decisions of the congress and even of the Polit Bureau through an increasing control exercised by the general secretary on this apparatus and by the creation of the *Nomenklatura*¹. This gave a special status to certain cadres

of the party and the State whose promotions were handled by the secretariat of the party and by those looking after cadres. Thus the practice of appointments of cadres replaced elections. Over the years, the party passed through several crises which often resulted in the leaders showing differences with the General Secretary (*Gensek*) were thrown out from the central organs. The *Gensek* thus sought increasingly to lay down the political, economic and ideological line all by himself. The process that was evolved in this way tended mainly to lay down the line by "applying" unilaterally the "resolution on the unity of the party" pushed to its limits. This resolution, adopted by the X Congress, prohibited the fractions.

In theory, this resolution did not prohibit the members of the party from expressing criticisms against the line followed by the leadership or against any step taken by it. Some time after the X Congress, the criticisms began to be tolerated less and less. There were often instances of punishments starting from assignment to lower posts of party members occupying "positions of responsibility" and going up to banishment outside the USSR (case of Trotsky in 1929) with expulsion from the party and deportation being intermediate stages of punishment. These punishments were generally meted out in the name of the "discipline of the party" and between 1923 and 28, mainly struck the "opposition said to be leftist". Among those punished were a number of leaders at the head of the party in October 1917 including Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamanev². However, till 1929, political and ideological debates could still be held openly, within certain limits and with careful choice of language. These debates were essentially available to highly placed leaders - who formed what one may describe as an *oligarchy* - and to their known supporters.

From 1929, the process of "seizure" of the party led to still greater intolerance. What was enunciated by the general secretary was alone deemed to be "correct", just as were his decisions and his interpretations of resolutions of statutory leading organs. He laid down his interpretations even when they were obviously in contradiction to the text of these resolutions. Thus, there began a new phase in the transformation of the mode of working of the

party. (The effects of this earliest phase would weaken for a while towards the end of 1931)³.

Section 1

THE RESOLUTION OF THE PLENUM OF APRIL 1929

In 1929 took shape a conception condemning any criticism whatever of the "leadership of the party" (that is to say, in fact, of the ruling fraction with the General Secretary at the core), even when such a criticism emanated from the members of the leading organs. The criticisms were increasingly looked upon as "deviations" and "fractional activities" that were banned. Only the line and resolutions upheld by the ruling fraction were considered as "just", as "orthodox", in the etymological sense of the word.

At the beginning of 1929, Stalin systematically expressed his opinion in two speeches that the criticism of the members of the PB about the "party leadership" amounted to a "deviation" or a "fractional activity". The first speech was made at the joint session of January-February 1929 of the PB and the Presidium of the CCC⁴, and the second one made in April before the Plenum of the CC and the CCC⁵. In this latter speech, the General Secretary denounced what he called, in a formula destined to a high future, as "the group of three". He asserted that these criticisms were the expression of a "right-wing deviation" and they constituted a "fractional grouping"⁶.

The three members of the PB so denounced were Bukharin, who was, till then, closely associated with the party by the side of Stalin and was considered an eminent theoretician, Rykov, who had succeeded Lenin as the President of the Council of the People's Commissars and Tomski, President of the Central Council of Trade Unions.

Following the report made by Stalin, the April Plenum severely condemned "the group of three" and recommended their expulsion from all posts held by them. Only Rykov still remained

President of the Sovnarkom (where he remained till the end of 1930 when he was also excluded from the PB)⁷

The resolutions of the April 1929 Plenum constitutes an important assertion that only the points of view and the decisions of the majority of the PB are “just” (even if, in fact, they were in contradiction to the conclusions of the party congress) and that any criticism, even expressed within a restricted circle, constituted a “fractional activity”⁸. A few months later, the decisions of the *Gensek* began, in practice, to acquire the same status.

Section 2

“DEVIATIONS” AND THE ACTION OF THE “CLASS ENEMIES”

Already in the 1920s, the activities of those opposed to the ruling group were often denounced as *favouring* “class enemies” However, in June 1930, during the XVI Congress of the party, *an additional step was taken*. No longer was it merely asserted that the criticisms constituted deviations likely to lead to “fractional” activity and no longer was it merely said that these criticisms could “help class enemies” Henceforth, still more serious accusations were hurled at the opponents.

In his political report to the XVI Congress of the party on 27 June 1930⁹, Stalin went beyond merely saying that the resistance of the “exploiting classes” (described henceforth as “moribund classes”) found its “reflexion” in the party. He added that “all the various deviations of the Leninist line within the ranks of the party were a reflexion of the resistance of moribund classes” This speech went *even farther* in accusations. In fact, Stalin added: “It is impossible to develop a veritable struggle against class enemies while having their *agents* within our ranks (...)”¹⁰

This clearly signifies that those who were qualified as “deviationists” were identified with “traitors” who had infiltrated into the party. However, upto the end of 1934, the relationship of forces in the PB was such that all conclusions could not be drawn from such an identification. The “deviationists” lost their positions and their assignments but they were not automatically expelled

from the party and subjected to most severe punishments. At that time, only a portion of “opponents” or “critics” who were members of the party were meted out punishments and pitiless police steps taken against them. Those who were subjected to these punishments were not systematically treated as “enemies of the people” The comparison to what was to come later, the repression, while quite real, was not yet of an extreme brutality. Such was also the case, generally, with the repression to which some former Mensheviks and SRs were subject¹¹

If the “deviationists” of the party were already accused of being “agents” of class enemies, they were nevertheless considered as being so “objectively” Therefore, they were not treated as “consciously hostile” elements and “in the pay” of enemies. That was to come later.

It is nevertheless true that in 1929, a very important shift was made. This shift became sharper in 1930. Till June 1930, we still find traces in the form of protests against some cadres, particularly those who do not accept being accused by Stalin and by the PB of not having applied the party line correctly during the winter of 1929-1930 and of letting themselves be carried away by the “vertigo of success”¹². Some of these cadres went to the extent of doubting the content of the directives given earlier by the CC (which pushed them into acting with a severity they were faulted about later). Others even went further and let it be known that the steps of a “retreat” decided upon in February-March 1930 were “rightist” in character¹³ Towards the end of May, an editorial in *Pravda* practically put an end to such attitudes and declared that they constituted an attempt seeking to “discredit the Leninist leadership of the party”¹⁴.

However, we can still see open manifestations of other disagreements with the policy followed by the party leadership. Thus, during the preparation of XVI congress of the party, “pages for discussion” were officially published and they doubted what was conveniently called the “general line” On 28 May 1930, there was a sudden end to any discussion, when the *Pravda* published what appeared to be the *last open critique addressed to the CC*. On this occasion, Trotsky observed that the party leadership had established the principle of its “infallibility”¹⁵.

Section 3

THE LOMANIDZE AND SYRTSOV
"AFFAIRE"

There was a wide gap between official condemnation of all criticism and effective absence of opposition to the decisions of the leading group and its political line. Towards the end of 1930, one of the manifestations of this opposition was the Lomanidze and Syrtsov *affaire*, so named after its protagonists¹⁶, who were then first secretary of the Transcaucasian Committee of the party and an alternate member of the PB respectively. Both had received punishments in December 1930 for reasons which appeared to be mainly as follows.

In October 1930, Syrtsov gave a speech (without the permission of the PB where - during the discussion of economic plan of 1930-31 - he recommended care in the pursuit of collectivisation and expressed himself to be sceptical about the plans of mechanisation and stock-farming (plans which were to remain unfulfilled)¹⁷ According to a different version, Syrtsov - who was till then quite close to Stalin - appeared to have come out suddenly against him in the course of a meeting of the PB. He appeared to have held at least one "secret" common meeting with Lomanidze¹⁸

On the other hand, in the same autumn 1930 (at a date which is impossible to be specific on the basis of information presently available), in the course of a speech before the Transcaucasian Committee of the party, Lomanidze, while supporting the "general line", expressed a series of "reservations" found in a declaration adopted by this committee of the party. The declaration denounced the attitude "of the feudal lords with respect to the interests of the workers and the peasants" which prevailed in the Transcaucasian Soviets, a majority of them accused of merely being police organs of taxation. Furthermore, Lomanidze argued that the character of the Kolkhozes was not fully socialist and questioned the official assertion according to which the country had entered into the "period of socialism"¹⁹

These declarations and contacts and conversations which Syrtsov and Lomanidze may have had with other members of the party were presented as a "conspiracy" giving rise to an intense ideological campaign²⁰. The *affaire* ended with the removal of Syrtsov and Lomanidze from the leading bodies of which they were members²¹, and in particular from the CC.

From the point of view of the conditions in which the party functioned, this *affaire* marks a date, because - for the first time - members of the CC are excluded from it not by a full meeting of the CC (that is to say a relatively large body with many members and the only one with the right by the statutes to pronounce expulsions), but - in violation of the statutes - by a joint session of the PB and the CCC (that is to say by a restricted group of top leaders)²². Shortly before this session was held, on 20 November 1930, a "self-criticism" by Bukharin was published in *Pravda*. This "self-criticism" had an attack on Syrtsov and Lomanidze, and was practically a prelude to the expulsion of Rykov from the PB (on December 1930) and his replacement by Molotov at the head of Sovnarkom of the USSR. However, towards the end of 1930, the general secretary was not yet in a position to treat as "enemies of the people" those who did not submit in silence to his authority. He was in a position even less to do so during the next three years when he was obliged to beat a retreat. He would have his revenge from December 1934.

Footnotes

1. cf. 3rd part of the present work, Chapter IV, Section II.
2. On these various points, see Volume II of the present work.
3. In the present volume, as in the previous ones, attention is centred on essential moments of the processes of transformation of the party. Therefore, one should not look here for a "history of the party" which would require much larger developments. There is no dearth of historical works on the Bolshevik party. One may mention, among others, Pierre Broue, *Le Parti bolchevique* (The Bolshevik party), Paris, Edition de Minuit, 1960; L.Schapiro, *The Communist Party....., op.cit.*; T.H. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership in the USSR, 1917-1967*, Princeton UP, 1968. As for the works from the Soviet Union, they can only be used if deciphered, because they change or hide the facts as needed by the political line at the given time.

4. cf. Stalin, W.t.11, p.332s, this text was published for the first time in 1947.
5. cf. Stalin, QL, p.311s.
6. cf. Stalin, QL, p.399
7. cf. KPSS, Vol. II, *op.cit.*, p.445 and L.Schapiro, *The Communist Party...*, *op.cit.* p.378 and p.648.
8. In fact, punishments made earlier against other leaders like Zinoviev, Trotsky and Kamanev, given the misleading label of "fractional activity" sought much clearer stands and were the object of a much wider circulation in the party than the very "careful" stand of the three.
9. cf. Stalin, W,t.12, p.242s.
10. *Ibid*, p.363 (emphasis added, CB).
11. The book by A.Ciliga, *Dix Ans au pays du mensonge deconcertant* (Ten years in the country of disconcerting lies), p.203s, p.233s and p.249s) gives an overall view on the "political repression" of the beginning of the 1930s, on the conditions of detention and on the chief conceptions of the different ideological currents.
12. cf. Volume II of the present work..
13. cf. R.W.Davies, *Socialist Offensive: The Collectivisation of Soviet Agriculture, 1929-1930*, London, Macmillan, 1929, p.319-323.
14. cf. *Pravda*, 27 May 1930, cited in *ibid*, p.323.
15. *Writings of Leon Trotsky* (1930), cited in *ibid*, p.328.
16. Lomanidze (1894-1934) was a member of the party since 1917. He rapidly held important positions. In 1927, he was one of the representatives of the Comintern at Canton at the time of insurrection and, in February 1928, he is held responsible by the EC of the CI for its failure. After receiving punishment in 1930 for his critical remarks against the leading group, we find him appear again at the XVII Party Congress, in 1934, but in December 1934 he was driven to suicide. S.I. Syrtsov (1893-1938) was a member of the party since 1913 and had held a number of positions. In May 1929, he became chairman of the Sovnarkom of the RSFSR in place of Rykov. In July 1930, following the XVI Party Congress, he was elected alternate member the PB. As a result of the opinions he had expressed in October 1930, he is expelled from the PB and from the CC but he continued to hold the position of administrative director of some importance, at least till 1936. He "disappeared" during the purges as he was then accused of "conspiracy" (cf. L.Schapiro, *The Communist Party...*, *op.cit.* p.395-396 and p.401).

17. The text of this speech is available only indirectly, through the criticisms levelled against it (See the book of R.W.Davies on Collectivisation, p.375-376).
18. cf. *Cahiers Leon Trotsky* (Leon Trotsky Notebooks), Diffusion EDI, 1st Quarter of 1980, p.11-12.
19. These formulations are known only from the citations made from it in the writings attacking them (cf. R.W. Davies, *op.cit.*, p.376).
20. This campaign was combined with another, launched in September 1930 against a number of specialists who had occupied important positions in the Gosplan, in the Agriculture Commissariate, in the Commerce Commissariate, etc. Among these specialists may be mentioned personalities such as economists Shayanov, Kondratiev, Bazarov and Groman. The press denounced the participation of most of these specialists in "counter-revolutionary organisations" and of "acts of sabotage" in food supply. During the trial held later, some of them made long "confessions" and are accused of being "organisers of famine and agents of imperialism"
21. Other members of the party accused of keeping contacts with Syrtsov and Lomanidze and of participating in their "conspiracy" were sentenced to various punishments. But at this time, it was a case of penal sanctions. Lominidge, in fact, was appointed Secretary of the Party at Magnitogorsk and, as is known, he reappeared in 1934 at the XVII Congress of the Party.
22. cf. R.W. Davies, *op.cit.*, p.377.

CHAPTER 3

THE “RETREAT” OF THE YEARS 1931-1934

The years 1931 to 1934 were characterised by an intertwining of several processes. Some of them continued even beyond 1934 while others would either change form or be suddenly interrupted.

Section 1

THE OPEN RISE OF CONSERVATISM

What became noticeable in the beginning was the open rise of conservatism asserting itself in the domain of production as in that of literature and art. A particularly visible aspect of this rise was the abandonment of the “cultural revolution.”

1. Abandonment of “Cultural Revolution” in Production

The prelude to the “cultural revolution” being given up was a decision taken by the CC in October 1930 placing a moratorium of two years ending promotion of qualified workers to administrative posts. Another decision taken in March 1931 by the CC further strengthened the resolve: it banned all new mobilisation of workers for the purpose of political campaigns and ordered that all promotees over the preceding six months to administrative posts be *reverted to production*. The same decision prohibited undertakings from giving free time during working hours for any activities unrelated to production including educational activities¹. From May 1930, 31,000 workers were thus sent back to production. This was considered quite inadequate by the CC which launched a stern call for order. In June, the VSNKh (Higher Council of National Economy) of the USSR cancelled earlier decrees that permitted a reduction in working hours of two hours per day to workers undertaking studies while remaining on the job in production and reducing the work load of those appearing

for examinations for entrance to the Higher Technical Institutes (VTVZ)².

1932 is marked not only by a sudden reduction (leading, in practice, to withdrawal) of recruitment of qualified workers selected for studies in the VVZ and VVTZ³ but also by a serious reform of conditions of working and of the syllabi of these institutions. Greater time was now given to theoretical education and very tough entrance examinations were made necessary to all. The "class quota" favouring students of working class origin were practically abolished⁴. Lastly, quite a large number of VVZ and VTVZ were abolished.

There were other steps too which made access of workers to higher education more difficult because funds for their studies had to be paid to the extent of 50% by undertakings where the "promotees" were working and the balance of 50% by trade unions. But no allocation was made to trade unions or to undertakings for this purpose. In the autumn of 1931, the trade unions announced that funds at their disposal for workers' promotion were exhausted⁶.

Moreover, fewer and fewer workers were ready to prepare for promotions as undertakings did not leave them any free time for preparation whereas they had to work longer hours and they were hard put to fulfill their norms of production. Besides, scholarships paid to them (either by the State or shared by undertakings and trade unions) appeared to them more and more insufficient as the cost of living and nominal wages had gone up⁷. To top it all, from the autumn of 1931, workers were generally encouraged towards evening courses in preference to full time courses. It may be added that in 1935 the withdrawal of quota, that gave priority in admission to workers in VVZ and VTVZ was total and that, since 1932, the system of scholarships was changed in such a way that the amount paid to each student was no longer related to social origins and means but depended upon marks⁸. This was to the advantage of students from privileged sections who were better prepared for requirements of the universities⁹.

From 1931, we therefore notice a withdrawal of the "cultural revolution" in production. K.E. Bailes speaks in this context of a "*general retreat*" marked by partial and then total abolition of

the steps taken to favour entry of workers in higher technical education. However, he notes that henceforth the accent was placed on "quality" of new technicians more than on their quantity¹⁰ S.Fitzpatrick qualified this period (1931-34) as being that of the "restoration of the order"¹¹.

The steps which we have just described were officially justified by requirements of production. Undoubtedly they played a role in the abandonment of the earlier policy but that was not the total explanation because the policy followed since then constituted a veritable turning point and had other aspects relating to literature and art.

2. The Abandonment of "Cultural Revolution" in Literature and Art

Starting from 1928, one can notice the development of a semblance of "proletarian" art and literature which, moreover, was used for unleashing of a veritable intellectual terrorism. In 1932, these semblances stop. Thus, on 23 April 1932, it was decided to scrap the RAPP and to organise the Union of Writers. This organisation was much more "eclectic", open to representatives of a highly classical and traditional literature who even occupied positions of importance in it. One of the conditions to belong to the new Union was adequate political "orthodoxy" In any case, the party controlled access to key posts in the new association which held its first Congress from 17 April to 1 September 1934.¹² Henceforth, it was this union - with "bourgeois" tastes but sensitive to the need to render homage to the party and to "pioneer" workers and cadres - that kept a watch (with the help of the censor and the ideological section of the CC of the party) on literacy conformism, on production of edifying works cast in the mould of "socialist realism", providing a justification or apologia of the existing order and, whenever necessary, a glorification of the Russian past¹³.

Slowly, one can notice the return to the front of the stage of the old intellectuals who were relieved of their positions or exiled to regions far removed from Moscow or Leningrad. This return could be noticed in several domains, mainly those concerning history and the physical sciences. Such traditional institutions as the Moscow Opera (the Bolshoi) and the Academy of Sciences got

back their role¹⁴, their style and their customs.

This withdrawal of the "cultural revolution" without explanation or analyses is indicative of the largely artificial character of the movement set in motion with a certain purpose. The movement was launched towards the end of the 1920s by the ruling fraction of the party to go hand in hand with the revolution from above taking shape in the countryside. It was intended to "show the door" to a number of old cadres and intellectuals, to "give a fillip" to some of the newer working class cadres and to give to writers and artists, a taste of intolerance unknown in the period of the NEP. Once these objectives were attained, the "cultural revolution" became an impediment as it subjected cadres to pressures which the party alone wanted to exert and as it extolled the artistic tendencies which were not those of the new dominating class whose aspirations and tastes were basically conservative and who wished for a return to the cultural atmosphere before the 1917 revolution.

It was in this atmosphere - which is a product of a certain transformation of political contingencies and a relationship of forces - that the leading group took various measures intended to consolidate the position of cadres and to increase their privileges.

Section 2

CONSOLIDATION OF THE POSITION OF CADRES AND INCREASE IN THEIR PRIVILEGES

Stalin's speech on 23 June 1931¹⁵ was, in some way, "an official announcement" of the turning point concerning cadres although the policy advocated in it may appear as a simple response to the exigencies of a new situation and may be linked to the criticism of "deviations" for which others and not the party leadership was to be held responsible.

As for cadres, the first theme of this speech should hold our attention specifically, the theme of *solicitude* that it showed towards "old intellectuals and technicians"

This theme was repeated in several places. It could be seen in the assertion that a "new state of mind" was created among old "intellectuals and technicians" which merited "an expression of solicitude", because "it would be wrong and opposed to dialectics to continue the earlier policy under new conditions..." The same theme is taken up again towards the end of the speech. This insistence does not exclude the general idea that "the working class should form its own intellectuals and technicians for production" but the accent is now placed, for this purpose, at least as much on the role of the "doers" coming directly from the factory as on the role of workers trained in higher institutions. This had the effect of down-grading more and more the role of such a training for workers.

The second theme which the speech dealt with was the *struggle against* egalitarianism which was shown as concerning chiefly manual workers. Stalin said that "it cannot be tolerated that a roller in a steel mill should be paid as much as a sweeper" and he denounced the "levellers (who) who are not in agreement with this thesis"¹⁶ Facts soon show up that in reality the denunciation of egalitarianism should specifically benefit the cadres in economy and in industry whose incomes were increased just as their powers on workers were also increased.

In fact, even before the speech mentioned above was delivered a secret decree was adopted, on 10 June 1931, intended "to improve the living conditions of engineers and technicians" and "to raise their authority"¹⁷ This decree provided to engineers and technicians, a certain number of rights so far reserved for workers in industry. It also specified that in the matter of housing they would be entitled to "additional space" However, in 1932, a majority of wages were placed in the range of 100 to 500 roubles, and salaries exceeding 500 roubles were rare¹⁸. An important step was taken the same year and the *partmax* (ceiling of the earnings from party wages) was abolished through a decision taken on 8 February 1932¹⁹ Cadres who were members of the party could thus receive increasingly higher incomes whereas earlier these wages could not be higher in principle than the wages of an average worker.

All in all, 1931 is a serious turning point. One could

increasingly notice a rupture between two policies. The one which was dominant between the years 1928-1931 when a policy with a "working class" appearance, marked by an "egalitarianism" howsoever vaguely defined and with a stress on "workers' promotion" On the other hand, the policy of subsequent years when "workers' promotion is greatly slowed down and when cadres, old or new, were "wooded" with a whole range of powers and privileges in their favour.

Thus, cadres having a certain level of "responsibilities" formed more and more clearly, a new class of exploiters who enjoyed a more or less "bourgeois" lifestyle while the members of this class laid down a hierarchical relationship recalling those of old Russia. This change was to become more pronounced in the second half of the 1930s.

Section 3

THE RESISTANCES TO THE "PARTY BEING TAKEN OVER"

In the atmosphere of the "retreat" which characterised the period beginning with 1931, the open pursuit by Stalin of his attempts at autocratic leadership of the party comes up against an increasing resistance of the leading layer that formed the new oligarchy and that has replaced the oligarchy of old bolshevik leaders. Some of these top leaders - who owed their career to a large extent to Stalin nonetheless - aspired all the more to have their voice heard as the economic and social situation worsened (grave crisis in agriculture and food supply, shortfalls in a number of objectives of the plan, lowering of real wages, etc.). They attributed this worsening situation in part to Stalin's policies and thought they could hardly make themselves heard during 1928 to 1931 because their position was not yet quite assured and because they shared the illusions of Stalin on the speed with which success could be achieved. Further, the extreme tension of the years 1929 and 1930 did not encourage them to take initiatives likely to "divide the party" The progressive withdrawal of this tension

was favourable to the development, in the face of an official line, of some criticisms and resistances. Its manifestation assumed several forms within ruling circles.

1. "*The Riutin Affaire*"

One of the earliest manifestation of any note of this resistance to the official line and to the authority which Stalin had tried to concentrate in his hands was the "*Riutin affaire*"²⁰. It broke out in the summer of 1932 after Riutin had written and published a document analysing the line of the party, especially concerning the peasantry, very critically. The article by Riutin held Stalin personally responsible for adoption and implementation of the present policy and asked for his "elimination"²¹. This document which was circulated among leading circles of the party, and perhaps more widely, was "discovered" by the OGPU. It was denounced as constituting a "platform" of the opposition. Stalin asked for Riutin to be arrested and condemned to death. If this demand were to be conceded, it could have led to the first execution of an old member of the party. The demand was rejected by the CCC²². However, Riutin was expelled and arrested. He died during the purges of 1936-1938. During the trial of Bukharin, in 1938, he was accused retrospectively of having prepared a "terrorist attack" against Stalin with a view to "overthrowing the Soviet regime"²³.

The entire "*affaire*" grew in an extremely tense situation leading to demonstrations of exasperation not only in the population but also among some cadres who questioned the policy and methods of the central apparatus. The exasperation reached its culminating point during the autumn of 1932 when the agricultural crisis and famine had wide regions in their grip, made millions of victims and relegated to a secondary position, the proclamation of "victories" which accompanied the announcement that the first five-year plan was completed "in four years."

In 1932, the authority of Stalin was called into question by several cadres, not only by Riutin but also by other leaders, especially those of the Ukrainian Republic who challenged the general secretary. He reacted with great severity by relieving them of their posts. Towards the end of 1932, arrests and deportations

grew in number but they were targetted mainly against former opponents of the left who had officially rallied behind the "general line"²⁴. On the whole, other opponents were subjected to relatively milder punishments and were not treated as "agents of the enemies of the people"

In November 1932, the tensions grew even at the top of the party and favoured the *rapprochements* between the various opposition groups²⁵. These tensions reached such a degree - if one is to take on trust the information filtering out at this time but remaining unverified - that Stalin "offered his resignation" to PB which did not wish or dare to accept it²⁶. Whatever be the truth behind these rumours their existence reveal that the political position of Stalin was then relatively uncertain.

In fact the resistances which the General Secretary had to face from 1932 (and which showed up in another form in 1934) arose simultaneously from a large number of discontented workers and peasants, high cadres such as those referred to just now, and even from top leaders. Among them was Ordozhonikidze²⁷ who spoke out in defence of a more "moderate" line on industrialisation and the "protection" of the engineers and cadres whom Stalin and his entourage wanted to be held responsible for all difficulties. This top level resistance was persistent and clearly appeared during the XVII Congress of the Party (1934). Ordzhonikidze took part in it as he had in the XVI Congress.

2. The Resistance of Ordzhonikidze²⁸ to the various aspects of the "Industrial Line" of the Gensek, its Conditions and its Effects.

At the time of the XVI Congress, in June-July 1930, Ordzhonikidze, at that time the president of the CCC, and who wanted to carry out a certain number of enquiries in the districts, circulated among the delegates of the Congress a limited number of copies of an article highly critical about the situation in the industry dependent upon VSNKh. This article gave an account of conversations with former engineers and technicians and highlighted the lack of experience of communist cadres running industry, particularly of those recently promoted to posts of

executives²⁹. The situation prevailing in industry and the report of Ordzhonikidze to the XVI Congress caused much damage to the position of Kuibychev who was then the President of the VSNKh. In the autumn of 1930 he was relieved of this position³⁰ and was replaced by Ordzhonikidze who held this post till his death in 1937.

In 1931, Ordzhonikidze again displays his opposition, on several occasions, to the line that favoured very high rhythms of industrialisation (such as to be unattainable). From a study of many writings and declarations it can be seen that there was growing conflict between those who, like Molotov, wanted to maintain the line of extremely "ambitious" plans - but which, in fact, caused damage to a regular and harmonious rise in production, while placing directors and functionaries of enterprise and even local and regional political cadres into difficulties with accusations of inability of fulfilling plans - and those, like Ordzhonikidze, who wanted to adopt more realistic plans. The Commissar for Heavy Industry could obtain the support of a large number of economic cadres and leading functionaries in favour of his "industrial line". Furthermore, he also wanted a return to production duties of engineers and technicians removed from their posts in previous years because in his opinion their presence was indispensable. We have seen this return indeed took place little by little from 1931.

The signs of a conflict between two "industrial lines" (which ended, beginning from 1931, in the victory in practice of those who were opposed to plans of "superindustrialisation") was already apparent from the last months of 1930. Thus, while in the aftermath of the trial of the so-called "industrial party", Molotov declared that the "lesson" of the Shakhty trial was not enough³¹, Ordzhonikidze announced, on the other hand, at the first Pan-Soviet conference of leaders of industry in the beginning of 1931, that this trial was virtually a guarantee of loyalty of "bourgeois specialists"³².

During the spring of 1931, and at the beginning of summer, the journal of the VSNKh (which had become the Commissariat of heavy industry), *Za Industrializatsiu* (ZI) published a series of articles asking for "correction of distortions of the party line

concerning the specialists”³³

Finally, in the course of a conference of leaders of industry, the speech of Stalin of 23 June 1931 which has already been cited, marked the beginning of a “turning point” which brings the official line closer to the one advocated by Ordzhonikidze.

This turning point is the indication of a relative weakening of the positions of Stalin and his supporters. This favoured the expression (within the leadership) of more “moderate” positions than those of the *Gensek* and his group. The evolution that came about was clearly noticeable from the beginning of 1933 when a serious discontent among the people and a relative “detente” in the policy of mass repression could be felt³⁴.

At the same time, there was a change in the policy followed by the leading group with respect to the party and its cadres.

On the one hand, in the beginning of 1933, steps were taken to reduce the weight of new entrants in the party. Thus, in the light of a resolution of the Plenum adopted on 12 January 1933, and a resolution of 28 April, it was decided to carry out a purge in the party (which mostly eliminated elements recruited hastily since 1929)³⁵

On the other hand, the leadership of the party coming to grips with a tense situation and under the presence of more “moderate” elements, like Ordzhonikidze - made some gestures of reconciliation towards opponents, especially those belonging to the “rightwing”. Some persons who were driven out from the political scene could be seen to “reappear” again. Thus, for the first time since three years, the central press published articles from the pen of Bukharin, chiefly in *Izvestia* of 1 May 1933, in *Pravda* of 4 August and in *PK* of July-August 1933. The major theme of this article was the need to put an end to the stresses and strains of a “revolution from above” and the need to inaugurate a “new era”

3. The New Situation and the XVII Congress

In the new situation of 1933-1934, some cadres who had been till then zealous in carrying out the “general line” distanced themselves from it. A trend favourable to the policy of limiting

economic and social tensions and recourse to repression was thus coming up, with great circumspection among leading cadres of the party.

Since punishments were meted out to any group that could be termed as a "fraction", this trend apparently did not have any organisation of its own nor did it have an official "spokesman". However, in 1933-1934, Kirov³⁶ in effect played the role of a "representative" of what could be considered as a "line of great moderation". Kirov, it may be pointed out, was never an opponent. On the contrary, he had behind him a record of being a faithful supporter of the general secretary. Moreover, Stalin had nominated him to the post of secretary of Leningrad to "cleanse" the organisation of the city and of the region of the supporters of Zinoviev and to enforce with an iron hand, measures that required "collectivisation from the top". This, Kirov had carried out with energy and success.

If Kirov was, in fact, the "representative" of a more "moderate" line, it was that he noticed in what chaotic situation industry found itself plunged by the adoption of plans that were too "ambitious" and unrealistic. It was also because he was "pushed to the forefront" by cadres tired of being constantly on tenterhooks in the face of resistance from workers and peasants. They needed some kind of "easing". In any case, in 1934, when the XVII Congress opened, Kirov looked like "number 2" in the party, without there being any kind of open "confrontation" at any time. All the battles were waged in the name of "unity" in the party and "redeployment" of its forces.

The way the XVII Congress went off deserves our attention. In fact, it was the last congress that managed to propose, and even assert, a line not of Stalin's although it was done under the cover of fulsome praise heaped upon him.

The Congress claimed to be for "unity". In fact, while a large number of opponents were filling the prisons, the Congress put up a show of *rallying* of some leaders of the old opposition. Thus, after having been kept out for years, some of them appeared on the rostrum of the Congress. Such was the case of Bukharin³⁷, Rykov and Tolski (that is to say for the old "right wing" opponents, of Zinoviev, Kamanev³⁸, Piatakov and Preobrazhensky

(representing or leading the old "left wing" opposition) and even of Lomanidze. The old opponents presented a "carefully worded self-criticism" with reference to Stalin, who asserted before the Congress that Leninism had won a "total victory" and that all opposition was defeated and dispersed³⁹ The Congress formally adopted a political line which made many hope for a withdrawal of measures of massive and brutal repression, that were employed since years and for a shift to a "reasonable" effort of industrialisation. Therefore, after the Congress, the opponents who had not yet "rallied round" swore allegiance and were reintegrated in the apparatus of the party and the State. Such was the case of Christian Rakovsky, former spokesman of the "left wing" opposition and for a large number of other members of this opposition released from prison or brought back from deportation and who accepted the line officially adopted by the Congress⁴⁰

This line was, in fact, a defeat for Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich and their supporters and a victory for Ordzhonikidze and Kirov who had practically acted hand in hand⁴¹.

The differences between Molotov and Ordzhonikidze relating to industrial policy came out openly at the Congress.

Thus, in his report to the Congress, Molotov defended a "Superindustrialist" line. He proposed an average annual rate of growth of nearly 19% during the second five-year plan⁴² and quite high increases in production for a number of branches of industry⁴³

These proposals were opposed by Ordzhonikidze. In fact, contrary to all "practice", Ordzhonikidze intervened in the course of the XVII Congress to suggest that the intended rate of growth for industrial production over the second five-year plan be 16.5%⁴⁴. He also demanded that the "targets" be reduced for a certain number of industries, particularly those concerning cast iron, steel and electricity⁴⁵

In an intervention of this nature, Ordzhonikidze obviously had the support of a large portion of the top leadership of the party. He had given voice to the opinion of leaders of enterprises, engineers and technicians face to face with innumerable difficulties, because they were given tasks which just could not be

realised. We thus notice a set of forces representing a part of the party leadership and industrial cadres (essentially old cadres of the party responsible for running the enterprises and old engineers and technicians). These forces stand in opposition to the nucleus of the leading group, mainly Stalin and Molotov. They have the support of the party apparatus but doubtlessly not the majority.

The intervention of Ordzhonikidze is all the more significant as Kuibyshev (President of the Gosplan) had presented a project of the second five-year plan as being essentially a work of Stalin whose "genius" and "brilliant clairvoyance" he had gone on to praise⁴⁶

At the end of Ordzhonikidze's intervention, a commission was appointed to examine modifications to the plan suggested by him. In this commission figured Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Kuibyshev, Ordzhonikidze, Kirov and some other high functionaries. They decided to incorporate into the plan the smaller figures proposed by Ordzhonikidze⁴⁷ but it did not change investment funds proposed by Molotov. The heads of enterprises were thus assigned smaller targets in production while getting the same investment funds as those provided for bigger targets. That was an important victory over the supporters of a "less heavy rhythms" That they and the production specialists thought it to be so was confirmed by an engineer and industrial leader in his memoirs published during the 1960s⁴⁸

The proceedings of the Congress indicated that the changes made in the plan were approved even by those who were closest to Stalin, mainly Molotov and Voroshilov⁴⁹ On the contrary, there is no indication that it had received the approval of Stalin.

In reality, despite the praises heaped on the general secretary by almost all speakers, the XVII Congress points to an undeniable weakening of Stalin's position. He is obliged to make compromises and finds himself on the defensive⁵⁰

The weakening of the position of the general secretary could be seen from the extremely serious nature of the crisis through which the Soviet society and economy was passing and differences between the leading group formed around Stalin and other members of the top leadership of party like Ordzhonikidze and

These differences were related not only to targets to be achieved during the second five-year plan (targets which Ordzhonikidze could get the Congress to modify) but they apparently extended to many other domains and in particular to the large scale use of terror (which had met with hostility from a large number of members of the party apparatus) and to the orientation of international politics⁵¹. A Soviet source has recently confirmed the existence of sharp differences in the views of Stalin and Kirov and the desire of a number of delegates of the Congress to shift Stalin from the post of general secretary⁵².

The forces that sought the removal of Stalin from this post were sufficient in number to challenge the rule of cooption which, since a decade, was in vogue in the choice of members of the leading bodies. There are many indications that as a result of the voting which took place at the end of the Congress, Stalin was not reelected general secretary⁵³.

However, very rapidly - and under conditions which still remain unclear - Stalin again assumed the title of general secretary. He continued to be so till his death. In 1934, in any case, Stalin was not "solidly" entrenched, and the question of Kirov occupying the position of general secretary was apparently also examined by the the PB but without any decision being made⁵⁴.

In 1934, the contradictions working in the leadership of the party were not restricted to those mentioned above. They also touched the question of "revolutionary legality" which was the subject of the last public debates between leading personalities.

4. The Debate on "Revolutionary Legality".

This debate is of fundamental importance. It poses the problem of the State and that of terror although these questions were not stated very clearly.

Stalin and Kirov both come in defence of "revolutionary legality" but have different conceptions of it.

For Stalin, the major end of this legality was the defence of the State and of its property. He asserted that revolutionary legality was a "sword" in the hands of the State, pointed at its enemies. He even emphasised that it should, above all, ensure the

protection of State property and property of the Kolkhoz. That was one of the themes developed by the general secretary in his report on the fulfilment of the first five-year plan presented in January 1933 to the Plenum of the CC. In this report, Stalin enunciates the formula: "The principal anxiety of the revolutionary legality in our times.... is (...) the protection of the property of the society, and nothing else"⁵⁵

This conception directly hinges upon another assertion according to which the "withering of State will not come about through a weakening of the power of the State but by its strengthening to the maximum"⁵⁶.

During the XVII Congress, the denunciation of Stalin by those who - in his view - had a tendency "to rest on their laurels" arises from the same conception. And, therefore, the warning: *Don't let yourself get intoxicated by the success achieved, and do not fall into presumptuousness*⁵⁷

An examination of the declarations of Kirov and of those who shared his views shows that to them the accent placed on *revolutionary legality* had a very different meaning, indeed the very opposite. For them, as seen especially after the XVII Congress, "revolutionary legality" concerned, in the first place, *protection of citizens* against the arbitrariness of the State⁵⁸ Moreover, in the beginning of 1934, there began appearing a new column in *Pravda* under the title "Karotkie Signaly" for letters from workers and peasants complaining against "abuses of power" of which they were victims, abuses denounced as violations of "revolutionary legality" It is curious to note that soon after the death of Kirov this column was suspended.

Upholding a conception of "revolutionary legality" seeking to protect citizens against the "abuse of power" appears, in part, as a fear of various regional cadres who dread the rise in popular discontent against arbitrariness of local cadres and directors of enterprises. Thus, in the archives of Smolensk, we find, on 9 July 1934, a letter from Rumantsev, regional secretary, asking all the organisations of the party and of the Komsomol to "put an end to large scale violation of revolutionary legality (...), cheating on workers' wages, deviations and abuses of confidence in commercial operations of cooperatives and, even more serious, passivity on

the part of most party organisations with respect to these abuses and crimes”⁵⁹

Upholding this conception was also intended to protect cadres against arbitrary decisions of central bodies and against repression and terror which used to strike then, especially between 1929 and 1931.

The emphasis on “revolutionary legality” from the point of view of the protection of citizens appeared especially clearly in two speeches of Kirov in July 1934⁶⁰. He had then raised his voice against abuses taking place in the collection of grains. He thought the methods employed were politically harmful. He denounced the way in which members of the Kolkhoz were expelled from collective farms, thus condemning them to die of hunger⁶¹.

In fact, behind the position of Kirov on “revolutionary legality” - and of those who, like Bukharin, supported him - there were several preoccupations. Firstly, there was what was just mentioned above, the fear of a rise in discontent among workers and then the desire of cadres themselves (that is to say the dominating class in development) who seek protection from arbitrary acts of the political apparatus. These preoccupations reveal a conception about “building socialism” that was noticeably different from that of Stalin and his group. For Kirov and his supporters, “building socialism” can only be possible by reducing arbitrariness and strong productivist pressure enforced on workers and on their living standard, and also by favouring a relative degree of freedom of expression as also agreements with countries with certain democratic liberties in force. For Stalin and his group, the emphasis had to be placed above all on the absolute authority of the leading group and on development of industry, whatever may be the needs of the masses, on an iron discipline and on agreement with Germany (which, according to its declarations, only has a dictatorship of capital similar to that in the other capitalist countries). In this conception, freedom of expression within the country had no place and the role of Russia, its past and its “great men” were more important than internationalism. The emphasis on discipline tended increasingly to change the party into simply an administrative apparatus linked to police apparatus. Those at the top of such an apparatus have no accounts to render.

They govern the country.

In 1934, the influence of Kirov and his supporters in leading bodies and in the party apparatus was sufficiently strong and their positions on "revolutionary legality" led to the adoption of some of their decisions.

One of the most important of them, at least in appearance, was the reorganisation of the OGPU, decided on 10 July 1934. It was then subject to a high Commissariate of the Interior (NKVD) and, in theory, its powers were limited and its activities subject, in principle, to the control of the *prokuratura*⁶².

Other decisions apparently inspired by Kirov and his supporters were: amnesty for some peasants sentenced earlier; adoption of a model statute for the Kolkhozes which raised the area of their individual portion⁶³ and, also, the dismantling of the "political departments" attached to the SMT, because they used to intervene arbitrarily in the life of the Kolkhozes.

These departments were created in January 1933⁶⁴ and were directly placed under the CC and went over the heads of the territorial organisations of the party. In fact, they used to play a repressive role and were used as instruments to enforce strict measures at the time of collection. In several speeches during the summer and the autumn of 1934, Kirov criticised the working of "political departments" and asked for their merger with territorial bodies at the base of the party (the *raikomy*), as also the "revitalisation" of rural Soviets⁶⁵. This last proposal remained without any follow-up. On the other hand, the Plenum of November 1934 (25-28 November), the last to be attended by Kirov (as he was assassinated a few days later), adopted a resolution which abolished "political departments" of the SMT and transferred their functions to the territorial bodies of the party⁶⁶.

On the whole, the differences appearing on several points, including revolutionary legality were serious. The last point raised a fundamental question. Should this legality mainly be a "sword" for the defence of the State, or rather a weapon enabling citizens (including party cadres) to defend themselves against any arbitrariness. In practice immediately following the XVII Congress, the conceptions of Kirov resulted in some concrete steps.

It should, however, be emphasised that the differences between Stalin and the first secretary of Leningrad essentially concerned the *means* to be employed to reach *similar objectives*. They are not any less serious because they put apart *two political lines* about which it cannot be said that they would have led to similar economic, social and political results.

The line championed by the general secretary who wanted to subject the party, cadres and all workers to the absolute authority of the ruling group, which amounted to the authority of the Secretariat, presupposed a maximum hardening of party "discipline" and despotism in the factory as also an increasing recourse to repression and terror.

The other line, championed by Kirov and his supporters, sought to avoid a tense economic and social situation and to satisfy aspirations of new high functionaries and the new dominating class in the process of formation which asked for greater initiative and to be able to influence the decisions of the supreme bodies of the party. It called for another conception of legality and of democracy in the party and in society.

This line had a few limited victories between 1932 and 1934, but these victories were set at nought as a result of the assassination of Kirov. In the aftermath of this assassination, there opened a new period of "getting hold of the party" and recourse to terror⁶⁷

Footnotes

1. cf. *Spravochntc partiinogo rabotnike* (later SPR), No.8, 1931, p.385s. It is in this article that there is a reference to the decision in October 1930 (cf. S.Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934*, *op.cit.*, P.212 and n.5 and 6, p.315. See also K.E.Bailes, *Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin*, *op.cit.*, which gives an interpretation of this decision which is at variance with the one proposed by S.Fitzpatrick.
2. The decision of VSNKh is signed by Kossior and is dated 25 June 1931 (cf. S.Fitzpatrick, *Education...* *op.cit.*, p.212 and n.6 and 7, p.315).
3. The VUZ and VUTZ are the Institutes of higher education, the former with a character less technical than the second.
4. cf. S.Fitzpatrick, *Education...*, *op.cit.* p.213 and p.218-219; See

also *Za Industrializatiu* (ZI), 2 September 1931 and *Vechernaya Moskva* (VM), 23 June and 10 August 1932.

5. The total number of VUZ and VTUZ comes down from 719 in 1932-1933 to 594 in 1933-1934. The number of students in them comes down from 233000 to 188000. In 1934, only 40% of the students in these establishments come from the workers' faculties (*rabfaks*); in 1938, this proportion comes down to 22.9% (cf. *ibid.*, n.55 and 57; p.318.. S.Fitzpatrick mainly cites *Kulturnoe Stroitelstvo*, Moscow, 1940, and N.de Witt, *Education and Professional Employment in the USSR*, Washington DC, 1961).
6. cf. S.Fitzpatrick, *Education....*, *op.cit.*, p.212, 213 and n.8.
7. The situation gets even worse in 1933 and 1934 with the famine. At this time, the poorest students or those without contacts with the privileged milieus are often forced to give up higher education they were pursuing. This was particularly so in Ukraine where the famine was the most severe. In this Republic, students had to spend, in 1933, 72 roubles per month for their food while their stipends were 55 to 90 roubles per month. Further, the corruption in the canteens was such that rations received by students were quite insufficient (information from archival documents cited by Vladimir F.Bashvoi, "a Deiatelnost KP (b) Ukr V Oblasti podgotovki Kadrov... V period vtorai piatiletki", Leningrad, 1966 (Lenin Librany in Moscow), p.161, cited by Kendall E.Bailes, *Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin*, *op.cit.*, p.247).
8. cf. *Sobranie Zakonov* (SZ), 19 July 1932.
9. cf. K.Bailes, *Technology....*, *op.cit.*, p.249.
10. *Ibid.*, p.173s.
11. S.Fitzpatrick, *Education....*, *op.cit.*, p.209.
12. cf. Annie Cohen-Solal, *Paul Nizan*, Paris, Grasset, 1980, p.170, and *Journal de Moscou*, 16 May and 18 August 1934.
13. cf. S.Fitzpatrick, "Culture and Politics under Stalin: A Reappraisal", in *Slavic Review*, June 1976, p.211s.
14. cf. S.Fitzpatrick, *Cultural Revolution in Russia*, *op.cit.*, p.37-38.
15. This speech is published under the title: "New Situation, New Tasks and Building of Economy" (cf. QL, t.2, p.505s). Significantly, this speech was delivered at a conference of leaders of industry. These leaders at the time were specially "valued".
16. *Ibid*, p.519.
17. cf. VKP, 162, p.63, cited by M.Fainsod, *Smolensk a l'heure de*

- Staline* (Smolensk in the Hour of Stalin), Paris, Fayard, 1958, p.352-353.
18. cf. G.Friedmann, *De la Sainte Russie a l'URSS* (Holy Russia to USSR), Paris, 1938, p.111.
 19. cf. Roy Medvedev, *Le Stalinisme* (Stalinism), *op.cit.*, p.590.
 20. From the name of the main protagonist, an old bolshevik, officer of the Red Army, spokesman of the "right wing" in Moscow, in 1928. He lost all his posts but, after a self-criticism, he gets back official duties for a while.
 21. See other details on this case in the number for the first trimester 1980 of *Cahiers Leon Trotsky* (Leon Trotsky Note Books), p.14.
 22. It appears that Riutin was then defended by Kirov and even by persons closer to Stalin than Ordzhonikidze, Kuibyshev and Kossior; only Kaganovich appeared to have upheld Stalin's viewpoint (cf. Boris I. Nicolaevski, *Les Dirigeants Sovietiques et la Lutte pour le Pouvoir* (Soviet Leaders and the Struggle for Power), Paris, Denoel, "Lettres Nouvelles", 1969, p.43 and R. Conquest, *The Great Terror*, London, Macmillan, 1968, p.28.
 23. cf. The Official Proceedings of the Trial of Bukharin (1938).
 24. cf. V.Serge, *Memoires....*, *op.cit.*, p.293-294.
 25. An undated letter (but apparently written with sympathy and probably between September and November 1932), sent by Trotsky's son, Sedov, to his father, indicates that an "opposition bloc" was formed at this time. This bloc which seeks exchange of information, mainly - included Lomanidze, old Trotskyists who had gone over to "Stalin's line", the "right wingers", the "Zinovievists" and members of the apparatus, that is to say regional and national cadres. P.Broue mentions this letter and a reply to it by Trotsky in an article appearing in the number for the first trimester 1980 of *Cahiers Leon Trotsky* (Leon Trotsky Notebooks). This article was written after references in the archives of Trotsky at Harvard and of which a part was available to the public only since the beginning of 1980.
 26. cf. V.Serge, *Portrait de Staline* (French edition), p.94-95, cited by I.Deutscher, in *Staline*, Paris, 1953, p.265. It was at this time that the wife of Stalin, Nadezhda Allinyeva, committed suicide because she could no longer bear what she learnt of the dismal conditions obtaining in the country.
 27. Gregory Ordzhonikidze, called Sergo, was born in 1886 in Georgia. He joined the bolshevik fraction in 1903. He was connected with the clandestine work of Stalin. After being sent to the party school

- in Longjumeau, he returned to Russia. He was elected to the CC of the Prague Congress. He became alternate number of the PB in 1926, then the Chairman of the CCC which carried out enquiries against the "unified opposition". Once again an alternate member of the PB in 1930, he became a full member in 1934. He was Commissar for Heavy Industry from 1928. He was driven to suicide in 1937, while his brother who was also an old bolshevik was executed after the second big trial.
28. There is a good account of the stands taken by Ordzhonikidze on industrial policy and cadres in the book of K.E.Bailes, *Technology... op.cit.* There is also an interesting testimony to the trips made by Ordzhonikidze and the situation in the industry in V.A.Kravshonko's book *j'ai choisi la liberte'* (I chose Freedom), Paris, Edition Self, 1947, New Edition O.Orban, 1980.
 29. cf. *Materialy K Ochetu TsKK VKP (b) XVI Sezdu VKP (b)*, Moscow, 1930, extract from it are cited by S.Fitzpatrick in "Stalin and the Making....", art.cit., p.388-389. See also the book of K.E.Bailes, *Technology...., op.cit.*
 30. Named as the Chief of Gosplan, he was responsible for the preparation of the plans and not their execution. Member of the party since 1904 (Kuibychev is born in 1888) he entered the PB in 1927. He died in 1935 (the accused in the "trial of Bukharin" are supposed to have assassinated him).
 31. cf. The Speech of Molotov at the Plenum in December 1930, in *V borbe Za Sotsializm, Rechi et Stati*, 2nd edition, Moscow, 1935, p.63-64.
 32. cf. *ZI*, 2 February 1931, p.2. A number of "bourgeois specialists" had participated in this conference. Even a place of honour was accorded to them.
 33. cf. *ZI*, 12 March 1931; 26 April 1931; 4 June 1931 among others.
 34. See Volume 1 of the present work, *The Dominated*.
 35. cf. *kPSS....*, P.741s and H. Carrere d'Encausse, *Staline*, op.cit., p.43. Following this purge which took place between 1 June and 30 November 1933, 22% of the members of the party were sent out, but the membership was reduced to 33% undoubtedly as a result of a number of voluntary withdrawal of membership.
 36. Kirov was born in 1886 and belonged to the party apparatus since 1910. He was an organiser in the Red Army during the civil war. In 1927, after the defeat of the new opposition, he became the first secretary of Leningrad (the biggest industrial region of the county)

and alternate member of the PB.

37. The intervention of Bukharin at the XVII congress received long applause although it had remarks indirectly critical of foreign policy then followed (cf. *Pravda*, 31 January 1934, p.2). From 1930 to 1933, Bukharin had participated in the work of guiding Ordzhonikidze at the VSNKh and at the Commissariat of heavy industry. In 1932, he is a member of the Presidium of the Commission for preparing the Second Five-year Plan (This was odd for someone whose conceptions were described as "foreign" by Stalin). In 1934, he became the editor-in-chief of *Izvestia*, the official daily of the government (cf. B.Cohen, *Bukharin...*, *op.cit.* p.354-355). He was to play an essential role in the writing of the 1936 Constitution before being arrested and executed.
38. Both were for a while excluded from the party towards the end of October for failure to denounce Riutin.
39. cf. Stalin, W.t.13, p.353s, *XVII Sezd VKB (b)*, *Sten. Ochet*, Moscow, 1934.
40. See Francis Conte, *Christian Rakovski (1873-1941)*, *Essay in Political Biography*, thesis, Bordeaux III, 1973 (ref. Bibliotheque de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme: Th 545).
41. One such common action appears to have come up in PB since at least three years when Stalin could no longer depend upon a fixed majority in this body and had to make up with Kirov and Ordzhonikidze. That could be the explanation of the ambiguous and contradictory nature of some of the interventions of Stalin between 1931 and the end of 1934 (date of assassination of Kirov). This is only an hypothesis as the discussions within the PB remain inaccessible. The pointers confirming this hypothesis have been recorded by various authors, mainly by K.Bailes, in *Technology...*, *op.cit.*, p.275s.
42. cf. *XVII Sezd VKP (b)*, Moscow, 1934, p.354.
43. cf., in *ibid*, the report of Molotov and that of Kuibyshev.
44. *XVII Sezd...*, *op.cit.*, p.435.
45. *Ibid*, p.435-436.
46. *Ibid.*, p.413.
47. *Ibid.*, p.648-650.
48. cf. V.Emelianov, "O Vremeni, O tovarishakh, O Sefe; Zapiski inzhenera", *Novi Mir*, No.102, 1967, p.40.
49. cf. *SVII Sezd...*, *op.cit.*, p.436.

50. This is the conclusion drawn by K.Bailes in his book *Technology....*, *op.cit.*, p.279 and by some of the other authors, mainly B.Nicolaevski (cf. the following note). H.Carrene d'Encausse, in *Staline*, *op.cit.*, p.45 has spoken of this subject of "reconciliation" This surely existed, but on the surface. Deep down, contradictions were sharp but hidden through compromises.
51. Kirov appears to have been a supporter, after the rise to power of Hitler, of a *Western reconciliation* in foreign policy (cf. B.Nicolaevski, *op.cit.*, p.45). We shall come back to these problems in the fourth part of this book.
52. cf. S.Krasnikov, *Kirov*, Moscow, 1964, p.194-195, cited by K.Bailes, *Technology...*, *op.cit.*, p.279. The differences within the leadership of the party and the differences that appeared on the occasion of the XVII Congress were described quite early in the previously cited work of B.Nicolaevsky. The author gives in it an account of the long talks he had had in 1936 with Bukharin who was at that time on an official visit in Western Europe (cf. mainly, *op.cit.*, p.45 to 48). According to A.Kolendie, in *Les Derniers Jours* (the Last Days), Paris, Fayard, 1982. in an election with secret ballot for the candidates to the CC it was Stalin who received the fewest votes.
53. Boris I. Nicolaevski was one of the earliest to have noted, in the reports appearing in the Soviet press, that the CC elected at the end of the XVII Congress did not "confirm" the election of Stalin to the post of general secretary and he was only the first of the four secretaries of the CC (See on this subject, *Les Dirigeants Sovietiques* (The Soviet Leaders) *op.cit.*, p.109-110.
54. cf. L.Schapiro, *The Communist Party...*, *op.cit.*, p.401-402; See also R.Medvedev, *Le Stalinisme*, *op.cit.*, p.204-205 and p.214.
55. cf. Stalin, QL, t.2, p.593.
56. *Ibid*: Stalin had already formulated the same thesis in 1930, at the XVI Congress of the party. It is linked to the idea that "the more socialism advances" greater the "intensity" of the class struggle. In practical terms, this implies a hardening of the State repression and terror.
57. QL, t.2, p.718.
58. cf. PS, No.6-7, March 1934, p.37 (cited from F.Benvenuti, *Kirov in Soviet Policies, 1933-1934*, cyclostyled text, CREEs, 1977, p.23).
59. cf. VKP,186, p.66-70. cited from M.Fainsod, *Smolensk....*, *op.cit.*, p.74.
60. cf. Kirov, *Stati i rechi*, Moscow, 1934, p.116s.

61. *Ibid.*, p.133-134.
62. In fact, various provisions which should have reduced the powers of the security organisations did not have the effect anticipated by supporters of a less repressive line. The disbandment of the old "Judiciary Collegium" of the OGPU was accompanied by the creation of "special collegia" of the NKVD having similarly wide powers as those of the "Judiciary Collegia". They could bring into play a secret procedure without giving the dossier to those who were arrested nor giving them any right of defence. These "Special Collegia" could decide on imprisonment or deportation. Moreover, any check on decisions to arrest on the part of the *prokuratura* appeared unimportant because Vyshinski, who headed it since June 1933, left all powers in the hands of the organs of repression.
63. cf. P.Broue, *Le Parti bolchevique* (The Bolshevik Party) *op.cit.* p.350.
64. cf. KPSS...., t.5, 1971, p.78s.
65. Kirov, *Stati i rechi*, *op.cit.*, p.112s
66. KPSS...4, t.5, 1971, p.198s.
67. On this point, cf. part 3 of t.1 of the present volume, *Les Domines* (*The Dominated*).

CHAPTER 4

HARDENING OF DICTATORSHIP OF THE LEADING GROUP ON THE PARTY AND ON THE CADRES (1934 END TO 1938 END)

The terror unleashed immediately after the assassination of Kirov (1 December 1934) became increasingly intense from 1935 to 1938. A combination of mass repression and individual and inquisitorial repression was in force with varying intensity till after the death of Stalin. It did not disappear completely then but the victims of repression were fewer in number and its targets and its forms had changed¹.

The terror unleashed in December 1934 tended to impose the most total dictatorship possible of the leading group and, especially, of its chief, the *Gensek*. This dictatorship had its effect upon the popular masses, on the cadres and on the party organs that were formally responsible for leading the party. It acted to install an autocratic power which claimed to be marxist-leninist, the canons and principles of this marxism-leninism being defined by the power itself. This dictatorship hardened while the economic and social transformation studied in part 1 of Volume 3, *the Dominated* was taking place.

Section 1

THE EARLIEST WAVE OF TERROR LET LOOSE ON PARTY MEMBERS AND ON CADRES (DECEMBER 1934-SUMMER 1936)

Much before December 1934, repression had already struck members of the party or cadres, but it was then essentially to punish *specific acts*. Thus some were condemned by application (often

quite arbitrary) of the *texts* promulgated by the power and others were expelled from the party through an (extensive) *interpretation of working rules*. After December 1934, *whole groups* were *condemned* or *expelled* through political decisions only formally clothed (and that too, not always) in judicial or statutory decisions conforming to the rules in force. Thus a peculiar process of terror got underway. We have seen in Part 1 of Vol. 3 how it was unleashed towards the end of 1934 and the beginning of 1935 and what were some of its most spectacular features. It is known that the earliest measures taken in December 1934 gave unprecedented powers to the NKVD and permitted the judicial bodies under it to award punishments, sometimes even without judgement or investigations². These steps led to the first wave of terror against cadres. They were followed by important changes in composition of personnel in leadership positions in the party, in administration and important centres.

1. The Appointment to New Positions of the Highest Responsibilities and the Reorganisation of the Party and Repression Apparatus.

In the beginning of 1935, a reshuffle of the personnel leading the party strengthens the position of Stalin's supporters, although some compromises were still necessary with those elements that had reservations about the terror against cadres.

The most important decisions were taken at the time of the Plenum of 1 February 1935 and immediately afterwards. It was decided to appoint new members to the PB. Among them figured Mikoyan who was then very close to Stalin and (as an alternate member) Zhdanov, who was then the right hand man of the general secretary and occupied the post held earlier by Kirov at Leningrad³

Other appointments were also significant. Thus Yezhov (who would head the NKVD during the peak of terror of the 1930s) became secretary of the CC in place of Kirov. Shortly later he was made the president of the CCC in place of Kaganovich who became Commissar for Transport⁴. Of a similar nature was the appointment of Khrushchev as the first secretary of the party organisation at Moscow⁵ (where he was to attain notoriety by his

“purification” activities), and that of G.M. Malenkov, who became the acting director of the Department of Cadres in the Secretariat⁶

From March 1935, Yezhov worked in close relationship with the NKVD. From May 1935, he set up operational teams for purges to come whose responsibility was assigned to I.A. Serov⁷. The services placed under the direction of Serov formed the investigating teams where the purges striking the different organs were readied. Thus there was a team for agriculture, a team for each of the branches of industry, one for transport, commerce, power and the cadres of the party. The first stage in the work of this group appeared to be ready in October 1936⁸.

2. The Start of Terror Against the Party Members and Cadres.

In the spring of 1935, there was an early offensive by the top of the party against the heads of enterprises and engineers and even against cadres who were members of the party. In order to present these industrial cadres as “enemies of the people”, the propaganda used against them the discontent of the workers directly subjected to pressure which the chief functionaries of the enterprises applied on the workers in order to get the plans “carried out”

Stalin gave a sort of signal for the use of such discontent of the workers in a speech delivered on 4 May 1935 on the occasion of the passing out of the graduates of the Higher Institute of the Red Army. This speech contained a threat against leading cadres whose “scandalous attitude” (as he put it) towards “the men, the cadres, the workers” he went on to condemn⁹

The threat so uttered was not mere rhetoric. It was even preceded by judicial steps at first mainly taken against industrial cadres accused of bringing the workers to book often for “violation of work discipline”. Thus, in April 1935, a circular from the public prosecutor of the USSR required investigating groups to incriminate industrial cadres who file too big a number of cases against workers¹⁰. This circular opened the way for judicial action against some industrial cadres. Simultaneously, these cadres were subjected to repression and could be expelled from the party when

the undertakings under their charge did not "fulfil" their plan.

At this time, the "pressure" exerted over industrial cadres was still relatively moderate. In fact, "gaining control" of the party first began with a preliminary stage of purging of its own organisations. This began to strike at tens of thousands of bolsheviks and young communists, in Leningrad and elsewhere immediately after the assassination of Kirov but matters rapidly turned worse. In the spring of 1935, the party and the communist youth were subjected to a massive "purge" which was extended to other centres in the country. Those expelled, condemned or thrown out of job were accused of being "zinovievists, trotskites, double faced elements and foreigners" During spring, official organisations of the veterans were liquidated. The Society of Old Bolsheviks was dissolved on 25 May 1935, and then the Society of Old Deportees and Political Prisoners. At the same time, the libraries were "cleansed" Circulation of the books of Zinoviev, Kamanev, Trotsky, Preobrazhensky etc., were banned¹¹. A deep change in the composition of the party was intended as also effacing from memory and from the population, whole pages of the history of the party. The falsification of history was on an unprecedented scale. History was "rewritten" to suit the needs of arrests and purges.

In May 1935 begins the "verification" of party documents which leads to new purges. This verification was carried out in the beginning of 1936 under a circular of the CC intending the "renewal" of all party documents and cards¹². At the same time, police repression of a political nature became stiffer¹³

In 1935, repression involving the members of the party was especially aimed at those who, justifiably or otherwise, were supposed to have belonged to the old "left-wing" opposition or had contacts with some of its members or had shared their views. Also targetted were those who supported or could have supported the demands of workers for improvement of the living standard of the working class.

In Stalin's speech that we have cited above, he in fact denounced certain "comrades" who intended to place at the disposal of the population a little more of the "articles of mass consumption and giving to the population a little more of all those

petty things which beautify their life” He specified that the offensive was set in motion “by pushing back these comrades” whose “stock it was necessary to devalue” And he added, “I have also taken the work in hand myself”¹⁴.

After having carried out an offensive against a number of old bolsheviks and also against young communists, the leading group did not stop the offensive but directed once again its action against economic and administrative cadres. This became particularly clear in June 1935. At this moment, the leading group sought to “complete” the initiatives of the security bodies by using most systematically, the denunciations and complaints coming from the population.

The leadership of the party then sought to make denunciations “compulsory” A decree of 9 June 1935 changed *non-denunciation* of a punishable act or word into a “crime” Adults in the family of the author of the act who did not denounce him were punishable by two to five years in prison and confiscation of their property. They were “punished” even if they were able to prove that they were unaware of the incriminating act¹⁵

Complaints coming from the population were mainly contained in letters sent by workers (by peasants too) to local or territorial bodies of the party, or to the regional press. Some of these letters came from what was called the “worker and peasant correspondence” of the press. This was an institution going back to the 1920s, and started at the initiative of Bukharin.

From June 1935, the leading group therefore thought of the possibility of a better “check” on cadres by using these demands from the bottom. Therefore, the population was invited to express their complaints. Letters sent by ordinary citizens and addressed to different party organs, to the local press and to the first secretary of the region grew in number¹⁶

Under conditions obtaining then, the real efficacy of this “check” on cadres was limited. The solidarity of cadres at the local and regional level was high. It easily acted against the authors of letters. The addressees of letters forwarded names of the complainants to those about whom they complained and then the complainants became victims of repression. Thus, shortly after

the adoption of the June 1935 resolution, a directive of the Supreme Court prohibited revealing the names of correspondents¹⁷. In practice, this directive largely remained a dead letter as can be seen from the fact that in March 1936, a decision of the CC again condemned the practice of the local authorities forwarding to the criticised functionaries any information on the authors of complaints¹⁸.

And yet, the campaign against cadres rose in 1935. Expulsions and punishments increased and incidentally involved technicians and engineers of a low rank (who had fewer and less effective means of protecting themselves). In principle, these measures did not have any penal dimension, but a good number of those expelled quickly fell victims to repression.

At the end of 1935, the "counter-productive" effects of the campaign of purification were so serious that the Plenum of December of 1935 decided to stop it¹⁹ and to launch a campaign of recruitment from 1 June 1936²⁰.

In practice, the decision to stop the campaign directed against certain cadres was hardly implemented because contradictions at work in the party and State apparatus were *exacerbated* by the discontent of workers ever on the rise. This discontent was sharpened by the appearance of the Stakhanovist movement which sprang forth in the autumn of 1935²¹. In fact, this movement was employed by party leaders against the majority of workers (the norms of work were upwardly revised, and against cadres (accused of not having taken into account the "potentialities" of production "revealed" by Stakhanovism and even of "sabotaging" the movement)²².

Lastly, in March 1936, the very relative truce announced by the Plenum of December 1935 was broken. Industrial cadres were again systematically attacked. The newspapers utilised reader's letters which continued to arrive in large numbers because this particular form of "check from below" was always welcome.

The central press denounced those cadres whom it considered as the "saboteurs of the Stakhanovite movement" on whom the *Pravda* called for "opening of fire". A number of cadres were accused of having organised fictitious "shakhanovite decades" and

of being responsible for the non-attainment of new norms imposed on workers by not taking necessary "technical steps" In April, an editorial in the same newspaper declared that a section of administrators of the mining basin of Donetz have "become bankrupt" They were considered incapable or "saboteurs" who should be punished and whose defects should be rectified²³

The local and regional organisations of the party got into action. They took increasingly severe steps against industrial cadres, so much so that *Pravda* has even led to condemn "pogroms against the directors" In fact, measures of repression disorganised production leading to a veritable exodus of engineers and technicians who left their place of work. Besides, the authority of technical cadres on workers tended to collapse because workers treated their engineers with ever increasing frequency as potential "saboteurs"²⁴.

The leadership of the party had to take note that an appeal for "check from below" - even when it came *via* the press - produces consequences which it cannot control and which it does not wish.

Therefore, a "corrective" was applied in June 1936 (immediately after the Plenum held from 1 to 4). A muzzle was immediately placed on criticisms which weaken the position of cadres on the spot.

The "fire" was directed against the old opponents, against "enemies" and "hostile intrigues" The open prelude to this frontal attack took the form of an article in *Pravda* which announced "we shall continue to destroy enemies of the people, trotskyite monsters and termagants" whatever may be their clever camouflage²⁵" It soon became clear that by speaking of a "clever camouflage" just any one could be presented as a "trotskyite termagant"

The frontal attack launched in June²⁶ grew in July when the NKVD and the party committees (largely renewed since the assassination of Kirov) were "mobilised" to carry "purification" to the farthest possible extent. This purification was mostly targetted against old members of the party. In 1936, the culminating point of this attack was the "Great Trial" which opened on 19 August against Zinoviev, Kamanev and some other

old leaders and opponents who were condemned to death and executed²⁷.

This trial gave the signal for the first great purge against old members of the party. This was an important step in the liquidation of old cadres. Like the "great trials" later, it did not seek to discover a "culpability" but to "fabricate" it. It had to serve as a "lesson" by "demonstrating" that to oppose the party, even in thought, led to a crime and that the "truth" was what the party wanted. This "pedagogical culpability"²⁸ was the occasion for a mass campaign and a veritable "people's mobilisation"

The August trial opened the way for condemnation for "duplicity" and for other crimes which the public was called upon to denounce. It helped in creating an atmosphere of terror. This terror "grew heavy" with an increase in the number of arrests and punishments made for perpetration of crimes whose list became a ritual. Spying, sabotage, anti-Soviet or anti-party activity, conspiracy, trotskysm, cosmopolitanism, lack of vigilance, spirit of compromise, duplicity, etc.²⁹ From 1936 to 1953, we come across this vocabulary which does not disappear entirely after the death of Stalin. Even now punishments, deportations or expulsions abroad are pronounced for "similar" motives³⁰ (in much smaller numbers than before), almost always without proof.

In 1936, a "circular" from the Central Committee (whose extracts are available thanks to the Smolensk archives) gives the tone of "mobilisation" for which the public is called. This circular asserts that "all frontiers were erased" between white guards, kulaks, spies, etc., and "the partisan monsters of Trotsky and Zinoviev". It declared that "the fundamental quality of every bolshevik (...) should be his skill in recognising an enemy of the party, however masked he may be"³¹.

The pressure then increased on members of the party to "unmask enemies". There is a plethora of false evidences as also of false "confessions". The police only had to find "culprits" at any cost.

However, during the summer of 1936, only old cadres were targeted. This orientation - explained perhaps by the relative solidarity of new cadres - tended to "protect" recently promoted

cadres and explained difficulties of the present by the past of some individuals. This orientation of repression and terror appears also to be due to sleuthing initiatives and initiatives of certain members of the leading group³². In any case, in the autumn of 1936, this repression was declared inadequate by Stalin and this was the turning point.

Section 2

THE UNLEASHING AND THE GROWTH OF TERROR ON A LARGE SCALE AGAINST CADRES (SUMMER 1936 TO 1938 END)

The starting point of this turn is a telegram which Stalin and Zhdanov, then away from Moscow, sent in September 1936 to the members of the PB present in the Capital³³. This telegram faults the GPU of having been a "trotskyite-Zinovievist bloc"³⁴. As a result of this telegram Yagoda is replaced by Yezhov as the head of the NKVD. Very soon the triggering of the *Yezhovshchina* became visible³⁵.

In the next few months from September to December 1936, one could witness a veritable people's, especially workers' "mobilisation" demanding the severest punishments against the accused in the different trials that followed the "great trial" of the month of August. In the large number of meetings held in an atmosphere in which none would take the risk of expressing the smallest doubt about the truth of the accusations (for fear of being arrested on the spot) or on the need to be declared guilty. Thus the power "associated" the people with the terror.

This "association" also continued to take the form of denunciation coming from the bottom. It was not only a matter of acts of individual spying which were encouraged and even imposed (because not denouncing a "suspect" was itself a crime) but also of public accusations made against certain cadres by the base of

the party or by simple citizens.

The denunciations made it possible to give an outlet to the discontent of the workers while "browbeating" the cadres of the party by the top of the party. During this period, local and regional functionaries of the party such as trade union leaders, did not hesitate - because they were encouraged by the top leadership - to turn the anger of workers against the heads of enterprises³⁶, especially unpopular ones, who were accused of misusing (really or imaginarily) their position and to whom were attributed the bad conditions of work and difficulties of daily life.

Towards the end of 1936, this expression of popular discontent was again put under check. It got in fact more and more into contradiction with the desires of the people's commissariates in charge of enterprises whose production was disorganised by denunciation of a section of their cadres. Moreover, discontent expressed in this manner acquired such a violent form that the top considered it dangerous to have recourse to it. As a result, the NKVD once again assumed a sort of monopoly for some time against the choice of the targets of repression.

The terror continued to strike cadres. However, it was somewhat "recentred" and struck the old members of the party more. The holding of the second "big trial of Moscow" between 23 and 30 January 1937, helped in this "recentering" because the main accused here was Piatkov³⁷ (who continued to be a member of the CC till a few months earlier and had joined the party in 1917 and had played an eminent role in the civil war³⁸), and beside him was Radek (an important personality in the CI) and 16 other accused who were mostly old bolsheviks.

In the trial of January 1937, no high party dignitaries were involved (as they were in August 1936). The trial was aimed essentially against old bolsheviks occupying important posts in the economy but the wave of repression that it set off rapidly reached industrial functionaries. This was the veritable signal for the great purge which struck them while continuing to strike the old members of the party and sustain an atmosphere of terror in which a large number of "local trials" were held, in the image of the trial at the centre.

The significance and the reach of the Trial of January 1937 were clear for Ordzhonikidze, protector of industrial cadres whose presence in his view was indispensable for a more or less normal working of industry and its development. In the days that followed this trial, the differences between Stalin and Ordzhonikidze led to an open confrontation. Ordzhonikidze protested to Stalin against arrests of his close collaborators, investigations made by the NKVD in his own offices and the imprisonment of his elder brother. There was an open dispute between Ordzhonikidze and Stalin. The latter defended the prerogatives of the NKVD. He asserted that he would not dream of opposing the investigation including in his own offices. A few hours after this dispute on 18 February 1937, Ordzhonokidze shot himself dead with a revolver³⁹

The disappearance of Ordzhonikidze, the sentences pronounced in the "Piatkov Trial", the arrests preceeding it, taking place at the same time or following it, opened a quasi-general offensive which at first struck industrial cadres and rapidly spread to cadres in the State and party apparatus⁴⁰. This offensive enabled new cadres to have a quick rise in their career.

However, another event was preparing the unleashing of the "offensive" of the leadership group against a large number of cadres in the economy, in the party and the government in office since the beginning of the 1930s. This event was the Plenum of the CC meeting a few days after Ordzhonikidze's suicide and it went on till 5 March 1937⁴¹. It really inaugurated the mass terror against cadres.

1. The March 1937 Plenum and the Large Scale Renewal of Cadres.

The reports presented by Stalin from 3 to 5 March 1937 before the CC contained a sort of "directive" which gives direction to the general purge and renewal of cadres that took place in 1937 and 1938 (although the concrete unfolding of the purges did not evidently follow the outline that these speeches had led one to expect)⁴²

The report of 3 March opened with an assertion that the country was in the grip of a large number of acts "of sabotage,

spying and diversion of agents of foreign states” and that these had been at work for ten years. The main personalities involved in these actions were “trotskite-zinovievist agents of fascism”⁴³

This report and the resolution adopted by the Plenum also sought to launch again the “initiatives” of denunciation coming from “the base” Thus, the intervention of Stalin had in it a violent critique of party cadres, of “leaders, at the centre and in the districts who (...) could not recognise the true face (of the) agents of diversion, spies and assassins, and were seen to be careless, debonair and naive...”⁴⁴. So much so that they could not notice that “the actual saboteurs (...) are mostly members of the party (who) sing praises of our men” As against these cadres and leaders, Stalin said, there were “militants from the ranks”, “simple people”, “simple men at the base “capable of “suggesting just solutions”⁴⁵

The tone of this speech is clearly “populist”, he calls upon “the base” to express its discontent and, once again, aims to warn the apparatus of the party which hides the reality at the top and covers all sorts “abuses”

This speech is a preliminary to a resurgence of terror against cadres not only by his appeals to act as informer and to be “watchful” but by his very vague characterisation of the “enemy” It is *so vague that almost anyone could have this label stuck to him*. The “enemies” could be placed in the most diverse categories. Members of old parties or old oppositions (who were still free), those with family ties or had some relationship with them, *those with critical views* or even those who were quite simply ironical, those who did not denounce “enemies”, those who neglected their work etc. Also likely to be declared as potential “enemies” were *those who did not criticise* (for they could be suspected of “*disguising their opinions by servile praise and flattery*”), those whose *good work* would be intended to pass off as “faithful” to the power or those who denounced old opponents because that could be “a way of covering present enemies”

Such formulations increase the “targets” of repression beyond all earlier limits.

An essential passage of the speech of 3 March was the one

that mentioned as a *target for repression* not so much (as in 1928-31) old specialists but *cadres on the spot including those who appeared devoted to the party and its leadership*. This report also draws a distinction between “old trotskytes” who could be detected by their ideas and their declarations and those whom Stalin called “present trotskytes” whose activity had to be “unmasked” because, as he said, they most often hide themselves behind “obsequious and servile praise” and behind a hypocritical denunciation of trotskysm⁴⁶.

Stalin also indicated that one had to “carry on a struggle against comrades who underestimate (...) the forces and size of the sabotage...”⁴⁷

The report of 5 March tended to widen further the reach of the purges and the repression by waging a war on “complicities” that could be forged (and which could be forged effectively) between some members of the party. The report, in fact, accuses a large number of responsible leaders and militants of forming, in their locality, their province or their region, “a small family of persons close to one another”, a “workers co-operative whose members arrange to live in peace, to do themselves no injustice, to wash dirty linen only in the family-fold, to praise one another, and to send from time to time to the centre reports that are meaningless and sickening on the success achieved”⁴⁸

These two reports of Stalin were thus at the source of new waves of repression and terror that struck leaders accused of all sorts of misdeeds, including “political carelessness” The militants were in fact incited to come out with denunciations in order to prove their “perspicacity” or, quite simply, to avoid the risk of themselves being accused of “under-estimating” the activities of the “enemy”

The speech of 3 May prepared the substitution of a large number of leaders on spot by the “promotees” trained since 1928 to whom Stalin attributed a high level of competence. He said, in fact, there was no reason to hesitate in eliminating the careless elements or those who lack “perspicacity” or “vigilance” even if they have long experience because, said he, the period that had gone by, had trained tens and hundreds of thousands of technically steeled bolsheviks⁴⁹.

At this time, Stalin placed emphasis on “democratic procedures” which should have been followed for ensuring renewal of cadres. He asked “the mass of members of the party” to put a check on cadres through the *activity of party organisations*. The report of 3 March 1937 declared that one had to have recourse to appointment of leaders through election. Stalin insisted on respecting the statutes of the party which provided for “secret vote”, “freedom of criticism and self-criticism” and the “right to present and challenge candidatures” The respect for statutes is asserted to be necessary for a “check on leaders by the mass of party members”⁵⁰ These sentences remained without any relationship with actual political practice.

2. *The NKVD and the Purge of Cadres*

The declarations on initiatives from the base in the renewal of the cadres, on secret vote, on the check by the mass of party members remained, in fact, practically dead letters because the terror against the cadres was taken over by the NKVD.

In order to “purge” the economic and administrative apparatus of “suspect” elements, sets of investigations organised since 1935 by Yezhov were transformed into operational sections which carried out their task on a territorial basis. The chiefs of these sections were instructed to arrest all those who were considered responsible for bad administration, cheating the authorities, non-fulfilment of plans and, also, those who could become anti-social elements in future. Repression struck even those who were “guilty” of jokes about the regime or leaders or even those showing scepticism⁵¹. The repression thus struck cadres at all levels and belonging to bodies of any kind. The repression went on merrily on the basis of “denunciation”, “confessions” and through the zeal of the agents of the NKVD who, in the absence of sufficient “performances” could themselves be in danger of falling prey to repression.

The increasing role of the NKVD quickly led to a watchfulness against the recourse to “democratic methods” in the renewal of cadres. Thus, on 17 April 1937, *Pravda* declared in its editorial that enemies of bolshevism were trying not only in words but also in deeds to use secret election for their objectives”

in order to weaken the party and to lead to a rupture between the apparatus of the party and its base.

In fact, the leadership of the party cancelled the directives given at the time of the Plenum in March and criticised cadres responsible for not "directing the criticism" better and for not succeeding in pushing out "incorrect proposals"⁵². Progressively, criticisms considered as "unhealthy and likened by press to "pettyfoggery" inspired by "Trotskyite blackguards" whose aim is to weaken the authority of the "commanders of production and economy and to sap the discipline of the working class"⁵³

From June 1937, the already limited role of meetings at the base in the party tended to become purely symbolic. Purges of cadres became increasingly an affair of the central organs, above all of the NKVD. On 5 June 1937, *Pravda*, of course, certainly spoke again of the work of purification in which the "base of the party" should take part but it insisted mainly on the idea that it is "the strong sword of the dictatorship of the proletariat" (that is to say, the NKVD) which should "liquidate the enemies". On 8 June *Pravda* went further and emphasised above all the decisive role of the "organs", that is to say the security services which "worked on the basis of denunciations and "confessions"

Thus there was a turning point which was confirmed by the Plenum held from 23 to 29 June. This Plenum emphasised more than ever before the action of the NKVD. It wanted clearly to put an end more or less to accusations coming from the "base". For many months, in fact, the discontent of the population could be seen in a flood of accusations made in the meetings called to "clean up" the apparatus. Now, regional cadres found it increasingly difficult to "control" these meetings.

The campaign of the purge of cadres was still clothed in a certain "working class" or populist character, but that was, in essence, a rhetoric and consisted of posing "good workers" against corrupt cadres and to call for their replacement by the Stakhanovites⁵⁴.

In any case, after the meeting of the Plenum in June, there was no question any longer of a "check from below". On the other hand, the press praised in the most glowing terms the NKVD which

was called upon to pursue the battle against “enemies”, “deviationists” and “new spies” An editorial in *Pravda* asserted that the “bulwark (in this battle) is the glorious work of the NKVD (because) in the country of the Soviets (...) our intelligence service is the flesh of the flesh and the blood of the blood of the entire country (...), that it received the strong and increasingly active support of millions of workers...”⁵⁵

Henceforth, a massive repression hit the cadres at all levels. The members of the party, of the bodies at the base upto regional committees, were practically engaged in denouncing, to the NKVD, any cadre that it considered as having compromised himself. If they did not do so, they were considered “accomplices” and dealt with as such⁵⁶. The “rules” of “vigilance” were applicable to the members of the NKVD itself. They were not supposed to await passively the denunciations before them. At this time, in the NKVD too, any one could be denounced by his own subordinates. However, to put a limit on the effects of this “activism at the base”, it was made clear that security agents could arrest only cadres at levels lower than their’s and never their “equals” or their “superiors”⁵⁷

Thus, there was a veritable outburst of terror which struck cadres in all the bodies of the party and which continued till the second half of 1937. Among those affected by the terror were cadres certainly guilty of true abuses, illegal actions, grave negligences (mainly concerning the safety at the work place) and of corruption. But there is evidence enough to indicate that the purge and arrests acted basically in a “blind” manner. A large number of the condemned were victims of totally “fabricated” motives, on the basis of “confessions” extracted by the “zeal” of investigating personnel or of denunciations coming from true culprits or activists “wanting to be important” and hoping to accept posts thus rendered vacant. Towards the end of 1937, things became so widespread that it was quite frequent for a new cadre barely appointed to be arrested in his turn for “criminal activities” he was supposed to have committed elsewhere.

3. Administrative and Economic Chaos

Under the staggering blow of repression striking the party

and the whole of the apparatus of the State, there was deep disorder in the economy and administration. In some districts, the local administration even ceased to exist. The "chiefs" named to head enterprises or the economic apparatus were completely ignorant of their new duties and fulfilled them badly. Economic "performances" were low. In the beginning of 1938, the administration tended to be paralysed because newly appointed cadres did not dare to take any initiative for fear of being accused of "hostile scheming"⁵⁸. Acts of lawlessness were on the increase and were carried out by fake policemen⁵⁹

The "purging" of the administration and the "toning up" of the party, instead of improving the working of the apparatus, led to worsening in their malfunction. Practices of deceit, corruption, arbitrariness, crying negligence of complaints of the people continued to be uppermost.

In the beginning of 1938, the top leadership had to give up for a while the exercise of terror against cadres in the state apparatus. It became urgent to change the gears if a veritable chaos had to be avoided. A step in the direction of saving the situation was adopted at the Plenum in January 1938 through a resolution dealing with the "errors" committed in expulsions and measures to be taken to rectify these errors⁶⁰.

This "corrective" led to legal proceedings directed against those who were henceforth designated as "*the saboteurs*" of the earlier repression. Thus, there was a double campaign. The first takes the form of "*denunciation of the denouncers*." In practice, it is directed against cadres on the lower rung of the party, termed as "careerists"⁶¹. The second is directed against a section of cadres of the NKVD, of public prosecutors and judicial bodies who were held responsible for the "errors" and the "excesses" committed⁶².

This campaign did not prevent the majority of those who were arrested in the preceding months from continuing in detention. It did not prevent either that in March 1938 opened the "third Moscow trial" where the main accused were Bukharin, Rykov, Yagoda (who was chief of the GPU during the "first trial"). We thus have the spectacle of the old "right wingers" side by side with the men who were always faithful to Stalin.

The accused were declared to be culpable of having organised a "bloc of rightists and trotskytes", of having hatched plots with bourgeois nationalists from Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Bielorussia and Azerbaijan, on the orders of states inimical to the USSR. Bukharin was even accused of having "wanted" to assassinate Lenin in 1918 and of having "taken part" in the assassination of Kirov.

One of the objectives of the trial (beside "demonstrating that any disagreement with the party was supposed to lead to "crimes") was to open the way for a new wave of liquidations. It stuck indiscriminately persons who were recently promoted to positions of responsibility, and others who belonged to what remained of the old guard of cadres. It appears that some of the accused were suspected of being hostile to the *rapprochement* which the Soviet leaders were preparing with Nazi Germany (the last public declarations of Bukharin were clearly against the Nazis and the Fascists). It was this very suspicion that led to the liquidation of a large number of cadres in the army. Through a process that had become widely used, this suspicion was not uttered. On the other hand, concerned persons were charged with their alleged "links" with Nazi Germany and the spy network of that country.

Thus in 1937 and 1938 we witness a few liquidation of old bolsheviks, old cadres in the Red Army and a large number of cadres of the NKVD.

Towards the end of 1938, this campaign led to the fall of Yezhov who was replaced by Beria as the head of the NKVD. Thus ended a specific phase of terror directed against cadres and which had largely stuck the party and the economic, military and administrative apparatuses. However, this phase had a heavy bearing on the future. Firstly, it favoured the growth of a purely formal discipline, the selection of cadres being chosen for their servility rather than for their experience or their capacity. It gave rise to a mad individualism in the cadres (hidden under a discourse of devotion to the party). Reciprocally, it aggravated mistrust of the top of the party toward its own cadres. Further, coming as they did shortly before the second world war, the purges seriously disturbed the working of the civil and military apparatus. As Moshe Lewin has noted:

As political action and a method intended definitively to prepare the country to face the war, the purges made no sense. They constituted the most systematic sabotage of the war effort, of cultural creativity, of the administrative life that a leadership had ever inflicted on its own country⁶³.

Section 3

THE EXTENT OF THE RENEWAL OF CADRES

The extent of repression striking the party and its cadres between the end of 1934 and the end of 1938 is such that one may speak of a radical renewal of the power apparatus.

1. The Quantitative Aspects of the Renewal

The dimension of renewal of cadres carried out during these years is very difficult to gauge. No official statistics as a whole are available. The few figures that we can have are far from being trustworthy. Besides, they concern only the members of the party. Now, at this time, there were still quite a large number of cadres in industry or in the economy who were not party members. The fragmentary data which can be used are nevertheless highly significant.

Basing himself on official publications, Zbigniew K. Brzezinski reaches the conclusion that between 1936 and 1939 the total number of expulsions from the party (almost always followed by arrests) would have been 850,000⁶⁴. This represents more than a third of the party in 1935.

In the light of archival documents to which A.D. Sakharov had access and his calculations for the period 1936-1939, he concludes that during this period 1200000 members of the party appear to have been arrested and only 50000 of them were finally set at liberty⁶⁵. One should, however, point out with L. Schapiro that a part of those who were arrested in 1936-1939 could be those

who were expelled during the earlier years and, especially, that all were not cadres.

During recent years, partial statistics were published which appears to indicate that the purges would have been less widespread than indicated above⁶⁶. These statistics are, however difficult to reconcile with all that is known on the condition of the party and cadres in 1937 and 1938. Moreover, they cannot account for the extent of changes that took place in encadrement proper of the party and in important industrial sectors. On this point, some official figures concerning certain people's commissariates are highly significant.

For example, in the Commissariat of Machine Tools (which played an important role in industrialisation and in defence), the entire leadership of the commissariat and a large portion of engineers, technicians and cadres were "purged" in 1937 and 1938. In 1937, all the directors of the factories in this commissariat, except two, were "purged"⁶⁷. Similarly, in aeronautical construction, the quasi totality of engineers and technicians were arrested in the same period⁶⁸. The extent of the purges were equally large in naval construction.

As for heavy industry, which is the base of all industrialisation, here is what L.Kaganovich (who was the commissar for this industry) told the XVIII Congress of the party, in March 1939:

In 1937 and 1938, the leading personnel of heavy industry was completely renewed and new men were appointed in the place of the saboteurs unmasked. Thousands of new men were appointed to leading posts.... In some branches, we considered it necessary to send out several layers⁶⁹.

L.Kaganovich goes on to say:

Now we have cadres who would fulfil (...) any task whatever that would be assigned to them by Comrade Stalin.

This last sentence highlights one of the objectives of the purges, namely to possess cadres whose principal merit was to give evidence of an absolute submission before any order whatever

coming from the top. Such an objective does not exclusively concern cadres of economic enterprises and the apparatus but also those in the party, the administrative and political apparatus and the "intelligentsia" in general. Thus it concerns a very wide "qualitative" field.

2. *The Qualitative Aspects*

During the *Ezhovshchina* the terror struck not only the engineers, technicians and the administrators but also the scientists and the artists (whether members of the party or not). The cadres in economy and administration were most often faulted for their "deficiencies" when the plans they had to execute were not "realistic" or the norms of production were not respected in quantity and in quality⁷⁰.

As for artists, writers and scientists, it was their "conception" which was challenged when they were accused of defending points of view that were "foreign" or even hostile to marxism. These accusations attacked quite particularly authors who strayed from the norms of "socialist realism" in the manner in which they were defined by the party.

However, the main "targets" of the terror were mostly administrators, technicians, engineers. Their cases caused the trials in almost each Republic, region or rayon. Some of these trials were not even reported in the local press. Moreover, and especially, many trials and arrests took place even without the press talking about them. Most of these operations of the police or the judiciary were carried out in total violation of the rules of procedure laid down by the power itself.

Besides, the terror appeared to obey a "plan" During a few months, specialists or functionaries and employees posted in the same branch of activity all over the country were charged for nearly the same motives. Thus, as R. Medvedev has pointed out, during the second trimester of 1937, in hundreds of *rayony* and tens of regions, there were trials underway where the chief accused were the functionaries responsible for agriculture. The charges of accusation were always more or less the same: "anti-Soviet rightist saboteurs" or "violators of socialist legality, trotskytes and rightists" etc. As for cadres (civil or military) they were at the

same time, cadres of the same level (secretaries of the party at the *raikom*, or presidents of the Soviet of the *rayon* or directors of the SMT) who were arrested or indicted throughout the country. Administrators and cadres (and, of course, simple workers) in agriculture, industry, commerce, transports etc., were in turn the victims⁷¹. From 1937, the NKVD itself was subjected to several bloody purges.

The extent of the terror affecting cadres, like the terror in general, gave rise to many problems. Particularly, the problem of its "objectives", of its "intentionality" or the "uncontrolled" character which the terrorist process tends to require gradually rendering in some way "mad" (particularly by the fear that they feel within them) those who "direct" this process. The question has often been posed, particularly for Yezhov and for Stalin⁷² It is highly probable that the "psychic equilibrium" of those who direct an enormous process of repression end up by being perturbed themselves by this process. A long time earlier Marx had pointed out that the Jacobin terror was unleashed by men who were themselves terror struck. Now, Jacobin terror was an ordinary phenomenon compared to the terror and repression of Stalin and it is almost certain that such was the case for Stalin and for Yezhov. However, true problems do not concern the psychology of some leaders. They concern the peculiarities of a system which, over the years, functioned by terror and by repression and changes in the forms of political and social domination resulting from a repression as widespread as the one to which the cadres of all the apparatus of domination were subjected.

Footnotes

1. For the present period, cf. the article of R. Brunet, "La Géographie du goulag" (The geography of the Gulag), in *L'Espace géographique*, No.3, 1981.
2. Immediately after the XVII Congress of the party, the OGPU was merged into the NKVD. This should have, in principle, limited the prerogatives of the former. In fact, such was not the case. The NKVD was then strengthened and those who were faulted for not being sufficiently "energetic" during collectivisation were thrown out of the OGPU. Moreover, it may be mentioned that immediately

after the Riutin *affaire* the personal secretariate of Stalin was strengthened by the creation of a special section for "Surveillance" of the security organs. This section rapidly became "*special political department of the security of the State*". From 1933, the closest collaborators of Stalin, chiefly N.I. Yezhov (later to become the chief of the NKVD) and A.N. Poskrebyshev who headed for many years the personal Secretariat of Stalin were included in this department. Later Malenkov and Serov joined it. The XVII Congress had tried to place this special department under the control of the CC but this attempt remained without any effect. In 1936, this special department became the central nucleus of the NKVD (cf. B.Nicolaevski, *op.cit.*, p.107-112).

3. On these points, cf. *Pravda*, 2 February 1935, and L.Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, *op.cit.*, p.406-407 which describes the placement of the personnel responsible for the organs of repression that were to go into action in 1937. See the honours bestowed on them in July 1937 (in *ibid*, p.425-426).
4. *Ibid.*, p.407, and *Pravda*, 1 March 1935.
5. cf. *Pravda*, 9 March 1935.
6. cf. L.Schapiro, *ibid.*, p.407 and note 3 on pages 115-116.
7. I.A. Serov was born in 1905, joined the party in 1926 and attended a military institution.
8. cf. on this point. K.Bailes, *Technology op.cit.*, p.281-282, which is mainly based on a memoir written by an NKVD agent who had gone over to the West and who worked with Serov. This memoir (*Na Sluzhbe u Stalina*) can be found in the archives of the University of Columbia.
9. cf. Stalin, QL, t.2, p.722s.; mainly p.727. What had most often attracted the attention in this speech was the recognition of the importance of the cadres, put in a nutshell by the then new slogan: "The Cadres Decide All".
10. cf. *Ugolovno-processualnyi Kodeks RSFSR*, Moscow, 1937, p.141-142, cited from G.T.Rittersporn, "*Heros du travail et commandants de la production*" (Heroes of work and commanders of production), in *Recherches*, September 1978; p.259, n.19.
11. cf. P.Broue, *Le parti bolchévique*, *op.cit.*, p.354, and The archival documents cited in M.Fainsod, *Smolensk ...*, *op.cit.*, p.407s.
12. cf. *KPSS* Vol. 2, p.822s.
13. Thus, from the spring of 1935, the number of political prisoners rapidly increased. The prisoners were subjected to an increasingly

severe regimen. The few "rights" that they were still entitled to were abolished (cf. I. Deutscher, *op.cit.*, p.284).

14. cf. The Speech of 4 May 1935, in QL, t.2, p.724-725.
15. cf. P.Broue, *Le Parti bolchevique*, *op.cit.*, p.354.
16. In the "Smolensk Archives", these complaints constitute five fat files, and the annotations on many letters show that they were really examined (cf. G.T. Rittersporn, "L'Etat en lutte contre lui-meme" (The State in a battle against itself), no.4, 1978, p.7-8).
17. *Ugotovnyi Kodeks RSFSR*, Moscow, 1953, p.106 cited in G.T.Rittersporn, "L'Etat " *art.cit.*, no.21.
18. cf. PS (*Partinoe Stroitelstvo*, publication of the Department of party organisation). No.8, 1936, p.54-55. The same practice had moreover been already condemned in 1932 by a decree of the procurer of the USSR (cf. G.T. Rittersporn, "L,Etat ", *art.cit.*, p.8).
19. One does not know the exact number of expulsions but it is known that the party membership suffered a reduction of 300000 members in 1935 and of 200000 in 1936 (cf. T.H.Rigby, *op.cit.*, p.209).
20. cf. The Resolution of 25 December 1935, in *KPSS* Vol.II, 1953, p.822s.
21. cf. On this point the second part of tome 1 of the present volume, *The Dominated*. On the Stakhanovite movement, see the thesis, already cited, by J.Sapir, p.452s, and an older thesis of of A.Pasquier, *Le Stakhanovisme* (also cited in *the Dominated*), Caen, 1938. These two works contain an extensive bibliography.
22. See what G.Sapir says on this subject, *op.cit.*, p.486s.
23. cf. Notably *Pravda* of 1 March, 26 March and 15 March 1936; cf. also the article of G.T.Rithersporn, "Les heros du travail el commandants de production - Le mouvement Slakhanoviste", in *Recherches*, Septemvber 1978, p.268s.
24. cf. *Pravda*, 2 June 1936 and G.T.Rithersporn, "Les heros... *art.cit.*, p.270-271.
25. *Pravda*, 5 June 1936.
26. cf. notably the editorials in *Pravda* of 8 and 11 June and the article of L.Beria in *Pravda* of 12 June 1936.
27. cf. Tome 1 of the present volume, *The Dominated*.
28. The term "pedagogical culpability" is used by Annie Kriegel in her book, *Les Grands Proces dans le systeme Communiste*, (Great Trials in the communist system) Paris, Galliward, "Ideas", 1965, Mainly p.65.

29. *Ibid*, p.52.
30. cf. The book of Efim Ethkind, *Dissident malgré lui* (Dissident despite himself), Paris, Albin, Michel, 1977.
31. VKP 499, p.322-328, cited from M.Fainsod, *Smolensk op.cit.*, p.262. In fact this formula was first used by Stalin in a speech on 19 July 1936. One could thus become a suspect on the pretext that one does not show any motive for suspicion.
32. We know, in any case, especially from K.E.Bailes, *Technology, op.cit.*, that G.Ordzhonikidze as also Kuibyshev had tried to "protect the cadres" in technical areas whom they considered indispensable for a smooth running of the enterprises. Kuibyshev - who was responsible for the Gosplan - died in 1935, apparently assassinated by the NKVD. This can be deduced from the trial of Bukharin (cf. R.Medvedev, *Le Stalinisme, op.cit.*, p.225). In 1936, Ordzhonikidze was still active and always tried to "protect" the cadres. He was to be driven to suicide (camouflaged as an heart attack) in 1937.
33. cf. The *Secret Report of Khrushchev* to the XX Congress of the CPSU. The integral text of this report was published in France by Editions Buchet-Chastel, Paris, later by Le Seuil, "Points" in 1976 Brenko Lazitch, *Le Rapport Khrucshchev et son histoire* (The Khrushchev Report and its history).
34. P.Broue, who had studied the Trotsky archives, was able to prove that if the "terrorist activities" mentioned in the accusations submitted for trial in the "Trotskyite-Zinovievist bloc" were entirely imaginary, it is not true any less that in 1932 - four years before the telegramme - the various internal oppositions to the party had tried to establish contacts in the hope of being able to put an end to the economic disasters and the crisis that was then devastating and in order to meet the workers' discontent which was ever on the rise. (cf. *Cahiers Leon Trotsky*, no.5, 1st trimestre 1980, p.38 and p.5 to 33.
35. *Yezhovshchina* denotes the period of large scale repression corresponding to the presence of Yezhov as the chief of the NKVD. This expression must not make us lose sight of the wide-ranging operations of repression that were already underway much before Yezhov became the chief of the NKVD and that this commissar was merely *carrying out* a policy.
36. cf. G.T. Rittersporn, *Conflits Sociaux et Politiques en URSS - 1936-1938* (Social and Political Conflicts in the USSR), doctoral thesis, Paris I, 1976, p.116-117.
37. cf. Tome 1 of the present volume, *The Dominated*.

38. Piatakov had been one of the top leaders of the "United Opposition", put down in 1927 (cf. Vol.2 of the present work, p.73). A few months after he was deported, he "capitulated" considering that the plan of industrialization then underway fulfilled a part of the demands of this opposition. Readmitted into the party, he became vice-commissar for heavy industry, which he really set on good footing along with Ordzhoniskide.
39. These details are found in the book of I.Dubinski-Mukhodze, *Ordzhonikidze*, Moscow, 1963, p.6-7. In the second edition of this book (1967), the episode of the dispute has disappeared (cf. K.Bailes, *Technology ...*, *op.cit.*, p.282, no.48). Officially, Ordzhonikidze died of an heart attack and official honours were bestowed on him. Stalin even went to his wife. In fact, this visit is an occasion for a confrontation between Stalin and the wife of Ordzhonikidze, from whom Stalin snatched away the papers left by the Commissar for heavy industry. The younger brother of Ordzhonikidze (kept in detention for 17 years) has given numerous details on this event to Roy Medvedev (cf. the latter's book, *Le Stalinisme*, *op.cit.*, p.242s. In this book, many important pages are devoted to the death of S.Ordzhonikidze and to the extermination of a number of cadres of the party and the State during the years 1937 and 1938).
40. These facts, which are quite well-known today, were described with remarkable candour by V.A.Kravshenko, in *J'ai choisi la liberte* (I chose freedom), *op.cit.*, 1947, p.248 to 351.
41. Bukharin and Rykov, "under house arrest" after the earlier trials and the accusations levelled against them in these trials, continued to participate in the meetings of the CC of March 1937. They and their supporters were accused of being conspirators "who hide behind the party card disguising themselves as bolsheviks". Molotov summoned Bukharin to "confess" that he was a "fascist agent", telling him: "if you do not confess, that will prove that you are well and truly an agent of the fascists". Bukharin and Rykov rejected all the accusations. A commission was set up within the CC. Its conclusion was that Bukharin and Rykov should be arrested, tried and executed. Stalin pointed out that this was a job for the NKVD, and its former chiefs were arrested (as also a number of other "right-wingers"). They would make an appearance again in 1938 to be tried publicly and condemned to death (on the exchanges taking place between Stalin, Molotov, Bukharin, etc., during the March Plenum. cf. R.Medvedev, *Le Stalinisme*, *op.cit.*, p.222s. The author has used the unpublished memoirs of the wife of Bukharin,

A.M.Larina).

42. On these speeches, see Stalin, *Oeuvres* (Works), Tome XIV, p.128s and p.152s.
43. *Ibid.*, p.129.
44. cf. Report of 3 March 1937, in Stalin, *Oeuvres* (Works), Tome XIV, P.128.
45. cf. The Closing Speech at the Plenum, in *Ibid*, p.161-162.
46. cf. *Ibid.*, p.134s.
47. *Ibid.*, p.142. This formulation, as also an article in *Pravda* of 27 March 1937 appears to allude to a certain resistance to the unleashing of repression which showed up at the level of the CC, earlier at the Plenum of autumn 1936, then during the Plenum of March 1937 (cf. A.Uralov, *Staline au pouvoir* (Stalin in power), Paris, 1951, p.34-41 and L.Schapiro, *op.cit.*, p.419).
48. Stalin, *Oeuvres* (Works), *op.cit.*, Tome XIV, p.155.
49. *Ibid.*, p.1'43.
50. Stalin, *Oeuvres* (Works), Tome XIV, *op.cit.*, p.157. Further, it was pointed out at that time that the leaders on the spot, even appointed earlier by the higher echelons, including the CC, could be dismissed.
51. The pieces of evidence concerning the way these purges were carried out are quite many today. In a literary form but which depicts very well the atmosphere of those days, can be mentioned the evidence contained in the book of Dombrovski, *La Faculte de l'inutile* (The Faculty of the useless), *op.cit.*
52. *Pravda*, 25 May 1937, p.1.
53. *Pravda*, 6 June 1937, p.1, and 24 June 1937, p.1.
54. cf. for example, the editorial in *Pravda*, 9 July 1937.
55. *Pravda*, 18 July 1937, p.1.
56. From June to September 1937, a large number of articles, mostly in *Pravda* return to these theses of "vigilance" and of "complicity" through omission.
57. cf. G.T.Rithersporn, "L'État ..." (The State ...) *art.cit.*, p.26.
58. cf. On these different points, mainly, *Pravda*, 24, 26 and 30 January 1938, 12 February, 27 March, 16 and 17 April and 13 June (cited by G.T.Rithersporn, "L'État ..." *art.cit.*, p.27) as also SZ, 1938, p.116, and B, No.9, 1938, p.85-86.
59. cf. *Pravda*, 24 March 1938, p.6.
60. cf. KPSS Vol. II, *op.cit.*, p.849-858.

61. cf. for example, *Pravda*, 24 April 1938, p.6 and 8 June 1938, p.6.
62. cf. G.T.Rittersporn, *Conflits* (Conflicts), *op.cit.*, p.331s.
63. cf. M.Lewin, "Stalin and the Fall of Bolshevism" in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Summer 1965, p.116.
64. cf. Zbigniew K. Brzezinski in his book, *The Permanent Purge*, Cambridge (Mass), 1956, p.98-99. See what L.Schapiro has to say on this subject in *The Communist Party*, *op.cit.*, p.440 and the table on page 211 of the book by N.Werth, *Etre Communiste* (To be a Communist), *op.cit.*
65. The figures calculated by A.D.Sakharov can be found in his publication abroad, *Razmyshleniya o Progresse, mirnom socushchestvovanii i intelektualnoi svobode*, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1968, p.24. On this question, see also L.Schapiro, *op.cit.*, p.440 and T.H. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership ...*, *op.cit.*, p.209-214.
66. For example, in 1937, the number of those "leaving" the organisation of the party in the region of Moscow could only have been 13.4% (cf. *Moskovskaya Gorodskaya i Moscovskaya Organizatsii KPSS v tsifrakh*, Moscow, 1978, p.27-29 and p.46-47.
67. cf. J.M. Cooper, *The Development of the Soviet Machine Tool Industry, 1917-1941*, doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, September 1975, p.399-400.
68. cf. Sharagin (assumed name), *En prison avec Tupolev* (In prison with Tupolev), Paris, Alhin Michel, 1972. The author of this work is an engineer, G.A. Ozerov.
69. *XVIII Congress: The Land of Socialism*, Moscow, 1939, p.349 cited by Azrael, *Managerial Power and Soviet Politics*, Cambridge (Mass), Harvard University Press, 1966, p.100.
70. cf. G.T.Rittersporn, *Conflits ...*, (Conflicts...), thesis cited , p.118-119.
71. cf. R.Medvedev, *Le Stalinisme*, *op.cit.*, p.284-296.
72. The question of the "madness" of Stalin has often been raised. In his *Secret Report* Khrushchev speaks of "madness for the grand" in Stalin, of his megalomania, etc. There is hardly any doubt that the increasingly unchecked power which the general secretary enjoyed and the adulation (produced by a bureaucratic structure) surrounding him had created "psychic disturbance" in him. There are various indices that suggest that some Kremlin doctors had noticed such disturbances and that some of them (Drs. Pletnev and Levin) had taken the risk of informing the members of the leadership group of

their findings. This even cost them their life. This was one of the reasons, it would appear, why Yagoda, who was one of the confidants of Stalin's doctors, was "liquidated" during the great trial of 1938. B.Suvarin was one of the first in the West to be informed of this diagnosis of the Kremlin doctors (cf his article, "Le Grand Secret du Kremlin" (The Great Kremlin Secret), in *Est-Ouest*, November 1953. The article was in part reproduced in the same review of 31 December 1979.

Part Three

THE PARTY BOURGEOISIE IS ESTABLISHED

The Soviet Union of the second half of the 1930s underwent a profound change in the forms of political and social domination. These changes affected the party itself, the new dominating class and the relationship between these latter.

CHAPTER 1

THE CHANGES IN THE PARTY

From the 1920s, the party was undergoing important changes. These changes acquire larger proportions towards the end of this decade and in the beginning of the next. From 1935, under the effect of specific forms of repression and terror, they rapidly reach a point unknown till then. These changes concern the party leadership, its cadres, its members taken as a whole, the composition of its membership and the manner it functioned.

Section 1

THE RENEWAL OF THE PARTY LEADERSHIP AND ITS CADRES

The renewal of the leadership and its cadres was largely brought about under the impulsion of the leading group formed around Stalin, and basically on the initiative of Stalin himself. This renewal takes place over many stages. These stages do not

always follow the rhythm and path sought to be imposed by the leading group. In fact, this was a complex social process where uncontrollable forms of resistance intervene and equally uncontrollable factors tend to speed up the change.

In the earlier phase, the process of renewal mostly affects the leaders and members of the apparatus belonging to the Bolshevik party of the Lenin era. The first to be affected were the leaders of the old oppositions (the "left wing" opposition to begin with). Next to be eliminated were cadres who had supported these opposition groups, had sympathy for them or who could be "suspected" of such a sympathy and, lastly, a majority of old party cadres.

While these liquidations were in the process, there began a second phase during which cadres and leaders promoted between 1929 and 1934 were affected, among them a large number of delegates to the XVII Congress. The *Yezhovshchina* is the culminating moment of this phase that affected men who had only recently assumed positions of high responsibility and who had launched their "career" while Stalin was closely controlling the promotions in the party and State apparatus.

To illustrate the scope of this renewal of the cadres, it may be pointed out that in the beginning of 1930, 110 of the 139 members of the CC elected at the XVII Congress were arrested, executed or driven to suicide¹. Similarly, it will be noticed that of the 1966 delegates to the XVII Congress, called "the congress of the victors", 1108 were arrested and most of them executed during the *Yezhovshchina*. *At the XVIII Congress (1939) only 3% of the delegates to the previous congress were seen again*².

At the end of the 1930s, *of the leaders of the Lenin era* only *Stalin* and *Molotov* remain in place. The others were dead, were executed or had committed suicide. One alone was still alive, Trotsky. He was exiled. Moreover, he too disappeared in August 1940, assassinated in Mexico by a Soviet agent.

During the 1930s, we notice not only the liquidation of those who had been members of the politbureau before the XVII Congress (such as Bukharin, Rykov, Kamanev, Zinoviev, Sokolnikov, Bubnov and Tomski), we notice too the liquidation of a large number of members of the Polit Bureau elected immediately after the XVII

Congress (1934). Of the 11 members of this politbureau (among whom there were only two leaders of the earliest years of the revolution), eight had been “eliminated” in the beginning of 1939 (either “expelled”, assassinated, like Kirov, or driven to suicide). Two other members of the bureau elected later (in 1935 or 1937) were eliminated in 1939³

Between 1936 and 1939, the “renewal” of the apparatus of the leadership of the party at the level of the Republics and the big cities was just as radical as the one at the centre. There too, even men who had apparently always been faithful supporters of the general secretary were affected. During these years, we can thus notice a replacement of the order of 80 to 100% (depending upon the case) of leading cadres of the Republics and regions⁴.

It may also be pointed out that while in 1930, 69% of secretaries of the region, of circumscriptions and the CC of the Republics had joined the party before October, in 1939 80.56% were those who had joined the party after 1924.⁵

The “renewal” on a massive scale of cadres was the result of a policy seeking multiple objectives (and whose effects were widely seen in “settling of accounts” that took place at all levels). One of the objectives sought by the Stalinist leadership was the elimination of those whose “loyalty” towards it appeared “doubtful”. Another objective was to remove those whose personal conduct was likely to weaken the regime, either through a most blatant “abuse” of their powers and their privileges for personal ends or because they imposed on those placed under their direction such conditions of work as to give rise to discontent. It was of little importance that they did so in strict application of directives from above because some cadres had to be sacrificed at the altar of popular discontent. They were *scapegoats* whose elimination would strengthen the overall authority of the party and therefore also of new *apparachiki*.

One of the consequences of this massive renewal of party cadres carried out under the impulsion of the Stalinist ruling group was to closely subject cadres to this group and to push them, for survival, to give evidence of “unconditionality” with respect to it.

An essential aspect of this “unconditionality” was the “*setting up*” of parties of the different Republics. All that could resemble even remotely as defending the aspirations of different Republics

was eliminated. Thus, in a number of Republics, and especially in Ukraine, the "purges" follow one after another, month after month, from 1936. It would often happen that those a few months earlier who were instrumental in eliminating the cadres on spot are themselves eliminated in their turn. Such is the case, in 1937-38, when, in the Ukrainian Republic all members of the PB, of the Orgburo and secretariat were arrested while only three of the 102 members of the Ukrainian CC retained their places⁶ Many of those who were appointed to leading positions in the beginning of 1937 were arrested towards the end of the year or in the beginning of 1938. Those who succeeded them met a similar fate⁷ In 1938, these liquidations were the work of Khrushchev, who was then the first secretary of the Ukrainian CC since January. He again "purged" the leading organs of the party and government.

Thus the party was becoming increasingly a party of Russian nationalism (even when the "locals" were in leading positions). The cadres and leaders of this party cast anew were the ones to be "on the rise" in the second half of the 1930s. Khrushchev then became a key person. It is under his tutelage that Kirilenko and Brezhnev really began their career as future top leaders⁸

Section 2

THE RENEWAL OF PARTY MEMBERSHIP

The exclusions and arrests had also contributed to the renewal of party membership and its social composition. This renewal came about through wide fluctuations in the number of members.

The overall figures indicate that during the period under study taken as a whole, party membership passed through three distinct phases.

The first one is the phase of *rapid expansion* (1929 to 1933) when membership rose from 1.5 million to 3.6 million⁹

The second phase (1933-1937) is one of *sudden shrinking* of membership. It then fell from 3.6 million to 1.9 million. There was thus a diminution of 1.7 million or 47 per cent.

The third phase (1937-1939) saw an *expansion which took off slowly and then became rapid*, taking membership to 3.5

million, that is to say in the neighbourhood of the previous maximum, and a 100% increase of growth despite the purges.

These fluctuations in membership were the result mainly of recruitment policy, operations of purges in the party and of repression. The figures cited here *only partially explain* the sweep and brutality that marked the "renewal" For a more complete view of the brutality and the conditions under which it was inflicted, one must distinguish between exclusions resulting from the very fact of the purges¹⁰ and losses in membership attributable to other causes, especially natural causes. One should also take into account membership figures during different periods. Unfortunately, data at our disposal does not contain accurate statistics on these different points¹¹. But what is available is enough to throw light on the extraordinary sweep of the renewal of party membership as also the changes in its social composition.

The years 1929-1932 are again characterised by a policy of recruitment which was a continuation of the last years of the NEP and which aimed at encouraging the growth of the number and proportion of working class members of the party. This policy, whose application coincides with a rapid increase in the number of workers in industries of transformation and mines, led to an increase in the *number* of party members who were well and truly workers. The overall growth of party membership is however such that the *proportion* of these workers showed a slight decrease¹².

This decrease recorded is, moreover, due, largely to the fact that a high proportion of those who were workers at the time of their entry into the party, or a little earlier, left the ranks of the working class as they were promoted to positions of responsibility. We know, in fact, that during 1929-1932, several hundred thousand workers were educated at the middle-level technical or higher institutions¹³ and that a number of them joined the party and became cadres. Therefore, the proportion (and not only absolute numbers) of party members of *working class origin* went up from 61.4% to 62.2%¹⁴.

The policy of recruitment of workers in this period is largely the result of an effort by the leading sections of the party to create a "social base" formed of working class members and cadres who owed their "promotion" entirely to the policy of the leadership. This policy corresponded also to "working class" ideology which

still predominates then.

In 1933, the matters changed radically. The crisis of 1932-1933 gave rise to a discontent among a large number of workers with consequent effect among worker members of the party. Many of them were accused of "a lack of political consciousness" and were expelled. At the same time, "working-class ideology" of the period of the first five-year plan gave over increasingly to an ideology and a policy that bestowed a decisive role to technique and cadres¹⁵. These ideological and policy changes were to play an important role during the purges, repressions and recruitments which was to follow. They led to a profound change in the social composition of the party.

The very manner in which the purification was carried out had an unfavourable influence on the proportion of workers and peasants in the party. Thus, in the spring of 1933, the central authorities adopted a directive seeking a purge in the party of "ill-prepared" elements with an inadequate level of "political knowledge". In fact, this directive was applied quite specifically to manual workers¹⁶.

A large number of other directives intervened during the years that followed; some intended to interrupt all recruitment and then, from December 1935, other seeking to "open up" the party once again. It was, however, only in 1938 that recruitment had its earlier sweep once again.

Between 1933 and 1936, changes in the social composition of the party can be analysed only with difficulty in the absence of sufficiently large and accurate statistical data. From November 1936, the picture is different although statistics published essentially makes it possible to have an idea of class composition of *new party members*. These statistics are, however, highly significant. They point to a *total change in recruitment policy*. In fact, during the years 1936-1939, this policy has nothing at all in common with the policy of the end of the 1920s.

The sudden changes which affected cadres and party members went hand in hand with profound changes in the way the party operated.

Section 3

THE CHANGES IN THE MANNER OF WORKING OF THE PARTY

The changes in the manner the party operated during the 1930s was a continuation of the way it did on the morrow of October and which continued all through the 1920s¹⁷ However, henceforth their cumulative character and their sweep bestowed a specific importance on these changes.

At the end of these changes, the party ceased to be a political party in the sense that this expression could have when it is used to denote a voluntary organisation of militants who could exercise a certain control on the political line and on decisions of the party. What we now have is something else, *an administrative apparatus of the State* which fulfills a *role of checks* on other apparatuses of the State. This party, now an administrative apparatus, was subject to the total authority of a *leading group* which was itself subordinate to a *supreme leader*. The party thus became an apparatus in which *all the important decisions are taken at the top*, often by Stalin himself. If at the end of the 1920s, the party leadership had an oligarchical character, after 1936 it increasingly had an autocratic character. This change is, of course, related to the change in the way the party operated, but it also brought about changes in the whole set of real organisational forms (as against the formal organisation which did not undergo any notable change), as also its ideology and its manner of behaviour¹⁸. The importance of rules of hierarchy increased considerably. Those who did not belong to a sufficiently high level in the hierarchy could not expect to be informed of real reasons for which decisions were taken, nor of conditions in which they were taken (the debates taking place at the top were to be *secret* henceforth). Nor could they discuss these decisions either, neither before nor after decision making. They were in the nature of *orders* laid down for the rest of the party¹⁹ by a leadership in the nature of an *army headquarters* which has a chief (*Vozhd*) at its head. That was the word, chief (*Vozhd*), used to denote Stalin from the 1930s. Like the term *Fuehrer*, it meant both "chief" and "guide"

As "guide" Stalin was the *supreme theoretical authority*, from whom all ideas and orientations took their origin and which no one had the right to dispute or call in question. The role of the "Guide" was essential in the party which denied its internal contradictions and which has thus to be presented as a "unified" ideology. As "chief", he was not only placed imaginarily "at the head of the people", he also had at his command a State apparatus formed of a *corps of cadres*, the *apparachiki*, appointed, transferred, dismissed by the *Vozhd* or on his orders. These men of the apparatus had the chief role of keeping a watch on the way the party and other organs functioned. They were organised on a strict hierarchical ladder, similar to a *military organisation*.

The party was thus divided into several levels. At the top was the *Vozhd* surrounded by a leading group, next came the "supreme" organs answerable to the leading group. Then came a hierarchised body of cadres forming the party apparatus. Its most privileged members were enrolled on the *Nomenklatura*. Lastly came the ordinary members. Generally, they had no role. If any role was assigned to them, it was often as a test intended to verify if they could in due course become cadres or join the *Nomenklatura*. On the whole, ordinary members formed a "base" which legitimised the maintenance of the party form and lent it a "working class" or "people's" character symbolically. Besides functioning as "reservoir" from which new cadres are picked, the presence of these ordinary members within the population could enable the cadres and the leadership to gather information on "the state of mind of the masses".

The way such an organisation operated showed the veritable character of the apparatus of the Supreme State. In such an apparatus, it was no longer party members who named their leaders, elected them or dismissed them. *The leadership on the spot "renewed itself" by cooption*. It was a body of leaders who "recruit" or "exclude" party members. It was thus the leadership that "chose" members and not the other way round. As Bertold Brecht has written ironically while describing an "imaginary" country:

It was not the members who chose the secretaries but the secretaries who chose the members. When mistakes were committed, those who had criticised

the mistakes were the ones punished but those who were responsible for the mistakes remained at their post. Before long, they were no more the best but only the most servile²⁰.

During the 1930s, the general secretary is increasingly helped by the political police in the implementation of policies of recruitment, exclusion and promotion of cadres²¹.

The ideology spread by the party leadership (which incidentally, constituted an elaboration of some of the representations already there in the Bolshevik ideological training) imaginarily invested "the party" (that is to say, henceforth its chief) with a sort of "infallibility" which gave a quasi "theocratic" character to its domination. This was noted by several authors, particularly by R. Bahro, in *l'Alternative* (The Alternative)²².

It was not the organs statutorily placed at the top of the party that ensured its leadership (but the general secretary surrounded by the leading group). These organs, however, survived, by having practically ceased to be sovereign, because from 1935 onwards the leading group had the necessary means at its disposal to get its "proposals" adopted by the PB, the CC and the Congress. Moreover, henceforth it nominated or suspended at its will members of the congress and those of the "organs of collective leadership", the CC and the PB. Thus while by virtue of article 58 of the party statutes, (such as it was formally in force till the XVIII Congress) no member of the CC could be expelled without a majority vote of two thirds of the plenum of the CC, one could see in the second half of 1930s a large number of expulsions and arrests of the members of the PB and of the CC without any voting, and only on a simple decision of the top of the party apparatus²³.

The leading group further increasingly tended to do without holding meetings of statutorily designated decision-making organs and it spaced out these meetings. Such a tendency had already begun to appear during the NEP but it acquired its full force during the 1930s. A few figures may be cited to illustrate this development. While in the six years following the October Revolution, there were six party congresses, five conferences and 79 Plenums of the CC, in the six years following the death of Lenin, there were only four congresses, five conferences and 43

Plenums of the CC. Later, between 1934 and 1953, only three congresses were held, and one conference and 23 Plenums²⁴

However, the fact that the supreme apparatus of the State continued to have the form of the party evidently had political importance and practical consequences. Its meetings were held, (formal) elections of delegates to the congress and to "leading organs" were conducted, reports and the proposals of the leaders were "approved" by a vote. These symbolic practices played a role of "legitimation"

The symbolic character of these practices do not exclude that, at a critical juncture, their maintenance could impose certain limits on those (or on him) who were (was) at the apex of the apparatus.

Thus, at different times, Stalin had to temporise and take into account to some extent, the "reservations" or differences of opinion of members of the PB or of the CC belonging to the leading group. The vacillations noticed in 1937 on the role which denunciations emanating from the ranks had to play in the unleashing of repression point, or so it would appear, to influence the existence of consultative practices could have in a situation of crisis.

Moreover, after the death of Stalin, the existence of the party form provided the possibility of regulating some of the problems of leadership within the organs of "collective decision-making"

However, as a general rule, towards the end of the 1930s, the situation was such that the only "centre" of decision was the chief of the leading group who imposed henceforth his *dictatorship on the party* in an autocratic manner. There you have the central instrument of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" of which the party was supposed to be the 'instrument' This dictatorship operated with utmost harshness, on the masses of the people as much as on the new dominator class (which ensured the reproduction of the relationship of domination and exploitation), "functionaries of capital" and functionaries of the administrative, police and ideological apparatus of every kind all of which had to be subject to this specific form of generalised *oppression*.

Footnotes

1. cf. R. Medvedev, *Le Stalinsisme*, *op.cit.*, p.241 and Stephen F. Cohen, *op.cit.*, p.341.
2. cf. Stephen F. Cohen, *op.cit.*, p.341.
3. cf. The list of the members of the PB at different dates and the indications concerning their fate in L. Schapiro, *The Communist Party ...*, *op.cit.*, p.648-649. Concerning the fate of the members of the Central Committee formed at the XVII Congress, cf. Slava L., *The Origins and Consequences of the Purge of the Full Members of the 1934 Central Committee of the CPSU*, Indiana Ph.D. Diss.)
4. cf. R. Conquest, *The Great Terror*, *op.cit.*, p.237.
5. cf. M. Fainsod, *How Russian is Ruled*, 2nd Edition, Cambridge, 1963, p.1966.
6. cf. R. Conquest, *The Great Terror*, *op.cit.*, p.256.
7. *Ibid*, p.257-258.
8. *Ibid*, p.258-259.
9. These figures and the ones on the following pages are for total memberships. They include full members and "candidates" or "probationers" (enrolled on probation). They refer to estimated membership on January 1 each year. The Soviet source is *PJ*, No.19, October 1967, p.8-10, cited by T.H. Rigby, *op.cit.*, p.52. The figures are rounded off to the first decimal. These figures are confirmed by those arrived at by N. Werth in his book *Etre Communiste ...*, *op.cit.*, p.210-211.
10. The two main "purges" were in 1933-1934 (years when more than a million members of the party were expelled) and in 1936-1938 (years when the expulsion affected 850000 members of the party). To these two purges should be added those of 1929-1933 and those of 1935. The 1936-1938 purge is the most significant because it was not decided upon by the CC and affected the old members as also half of some two million new members admitted in the year 1929 to 1933.
11. R. Medvedev has attempted these evaluations indirectly. He starts with the membership of the party at the time of the XVII Congress (in 1934). He evaluates the "natural losses" of this period at 300000 to 400000 persons and places at a little more than one million the number of members between November 1936 (period when the party accepted new members after being "closed" for several years) and 1939. These figures lead him to estimate that at the time of the XVIII Congress (1939) the party membership should have gone up (in the absence of purges and repression) to 3.5 million while it

rose only to a little less than 2.5 million. He thus deduces that the difference of roughly one million is due to "systematic purges" (cf. R. Medvedev, *op.cit.*, p.283).

12. This proportion is 44% in 1929 and 43.8% in 1932 (cf. T.H.Rigby, *op.cit.*, p.116.)
13. On this point, see the first part of this volume; cf. also A.L. Unger, "Stalin's Renewal of the Leading Stratum", *Soviet Studies*, January 1969.
14. cf. T.H. Rigby, *op.cit.*, p.116.
15. We have seen that since 1931-1932, the criteria of "effectiveness" and of "speed" of training was invoked to change the social composition of batches of the schools, institutes and faculties and to admit to them an increasing proportion of students belonging to the old bourgeoisie. This point was made out by many authors who have studied the social origins of the students of the specialist schools and universities. See, chiefly, N.De Witt, "Soviet Professional Manpower", Washington, 1955, p.179, R.Feldmesser, "Social Status and Access to Higher Education: A Comparison of the United States and the Soviet Union", in *Harvard Educational Review*, No.2, 1957, p.92 to 106 and, by the same author, "The Persistence of Status Advantage in the Soviet Union", in *American Journal of Sociology*, July 1953, p.19 to 27.
16. See on this point Merle Fainsod, *Smolensk ...*, *op.cit.*, p.249 who cites the directive of 28 April 1933. This author indicates that in the organisation at Smolensk between 1933 and 1934, the Party members from the working class showed a slide back of about 20% and similar is the case for membership from the peasantry while membership classified as "employees and others" showed a growth (*ibid.*, p.251 to 262; cf. also PS No.9. May 1936, p.56).
17. The essential aspects of the process of change set up earlier to the 1930s were pointed out in the two earlier volumes of the present work.
18. cf. R.Tucker, in *The Development of the USSR: An Exchange of Views*, Donald W. Treadgold (ed), Seattle (Wash), 1964, p.33 and, by the same author, "Bolshevism and Stalinism" in *Stalinism*, R.Tucker (ed), New York, Morton and Co., 1977, p.17.
19. This does not mean that those orders were always carried out. We know that applying these come up with multiple resistances, which come especially from the corps of functionaries itself. Therefore, the contradictions which set up the *party leadership* against its apparatus and the large number of punishments that strike the

apparachiki.

20. Bertold Brecht, in *Me Ti, Le livre des Retournements* (Me Ti, the Inside Out Book).
21. In 1904, while criticising the Leninist conception of “democratic centralism”, Trotsky had asserted that this concept would lead to a personal dictatorship. He had then written, “Lenin’s method ends up as follows: The organisation of the party (a small committee) begins to take the place of the party as a whole. Then the Central Committee takes the place of the organisation and finally a “dictator” takes the place of the Central Committee cf. N.Trotsky, *Nashi Politicheskie Zadachi*, p.54, Geneva, 1904, cited by I.Deutscher, *Trotsky*, Paris, Julliard, Vol. I, 1962, p.132. It is necessary to point out that later Trotsky himself came over to “Leninism” and would pass under silence his analysis of 1904.
22. The idea that “one cannot be right against the party” is enunciated for the first time by Trotsky in 1924. In 1925, for Bukharin the truth was what the party had affirmed (cf. L.Schapiro, *op.cit.*, p.298). We notice that the notion of a sort of “infallibility” of the party is old and is not specifically Stalinist. It appears to be related to a conception of theory and of an organisation defended by Lenin. As a matter of fact, Trotsky had a premonition of it from 1904 when he found fault with the founder of Bolshevism for defending a theory of “orthodox theocracy” (cf. I.Deutscher, *op.cit.*, p.132).
23. cf. R.Medvedev, *Le Stalinisme*, *op.cit.*, p.406-407.
24. R. Medvedev, *Le Stalinisme*, *op.cit.*, p.407 which cites *Sovietskaya Istoricheskaya Entsiklopediia* VIII (1965), p.275.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROCESS OF CONSOLIDATION/ SUBJUGATION OF THE NEW DOMI- NATING CLASS

During the 1930s, the consolidation of the new dominating class comes about in a highly contradictory manner. In the course of 1935-1938 especially it is seen as its very contrary, namely as its subjugation through terror.

Section 1

THE TERROR AND THE PROCESS OF CONSOLIDATION/SUBJUGATION OF THE NEW DOMINATING CLASS

At first sight, the terror over cadres appeared purely as an instrument of their subjugation to the leading group and its chief. However, to set off this subjugation, the leading group *bestowed* on new cadres extensive *powers* over workers (cf. the first two parts of Tome 1, *the Dominated*) and also a number of privileges.

1. Subjugation as Counterpart of Powers and Privileges

The powers and the privileges increasingly bestowed on cadres were rooted in the relations of production and reproduction and changed these cadres into a dominating and privileged class. It is no less true that as *individuals*, their membership of this class depended continuously upon the "confidence" conferred on them by the leaders on whom they had absolutely no control. Their subjugation to the leading group was the price they had to pay in order to belong to the dominating class. This class was thus subject to a political power which owed them no explanation. In this sense, members of this class who were not a part of the leading group could only exercise a *social domination and not a political domination*. As individuals, they did not dominate the State, they only served it although it was their "collective property"

Political power was exercised by a small group belonging to the dominating class by occupying within it a *hegemonistic* position as history had concentrated "legitimacy" in its hands which enabled it to decide formally how the means of accumulation were to be used, to have the right to appoint and to dismiss "functionaries of the capital" and to repress them by invoking strong police organs that are closely linked to it. Under these given historic conditions, the subjugation of managers and administrators before the leading group was a necessary condition for the protection of the new dominating class. By subjugating it to the leading group by recourse to terror, not only did it consolidate the dominating class but, at the same time, made the

individual position of its members more fragile.

One of the reasons why they were so subjected to terror was that those who exercised power considered themselves a "very thin layer" on whom "proletarian politics" depended¹.

2. The Subjugation of Cadres and the "Sharpening of Class Struggle"

In the second half of the 1930s, the subjugation of cadres to the political power was undoubtedly determined to a large extent by two essential components of the ideology of the leading group: the *unsaid* identification of cadres with the new *bourgeoisie* and identification of the leading group with the proletariat. At this level, the terror unleashed against cadres belonged to *an imaginary class struggle*. In reality, it was only a struggle between several layers of the new dominating class, between its hegemonistic layer, which took the initiative and the other layers.

An indication of these ideological components of terror can be found in the writings of Stalin which assert that the class struggle becomes sharper even while the "construction of socialism"² progresses. One of the aspects of the class struggle" so preached was aimed at opponents in the party (identified as "agents of class enemies, traitors, etc). Another aspect of the pseudo-class struggle was aimed at cadres who were insufficiently "disciplined", "loyal" etc., and who too were identified as "agents of the enemy" A real element of this "imaginary class struggle" was the war unleashed by the leading group to impose its dictatorship on the party, on cadres and, of course, on the population as a whole (whose lack of "discipline" was supposed to point to influence of the "enemy" ideology). Another real element of this imaginary struggle was that party cadres and the State apparatus effectively formed a new dominating class but this was so because of the place it occupied in the relationships of production and reproduction. The struggle waged against those who belonged to this class changed in no way those social relationships nor the functions of those who were responsible for the reproduction.

The effects of this imaginary class struggle were also a reality. They led hundreds of thousands of cadres to their death or to

concentration camps. They gave rise to a system of *sharaga* which "took away" a certain number of persons from the place they occupied in the dominating class and gave them special status as prisoners working for the State.

3. *The System of sharaga*

In the slang of the prisoners, the *sharaga* (or *sharashka*) was a place of detention where specialists were brought together and were given tasks of scientific or technical research under the control of the NKVD. They received facilities needed for this purpose. The place of detention could be vast and provided with laboratories. Scientists so imprisoned were often better treated than free citizens. In the *First Circle*, Solzhanitsyn has described how a *Sharaga* operated³ This system had existed since the beginning of the 1930s. Specialists condemned for "sabotage"⁴ were made to work here. This imprisonment was often only a pretext to isolate them. At the end of the 1930s, mainly in the days when Beria was heading the NKVD, the *sharaga* system was widespread. At this time not only a few were specialists arrested but entire study centres were transferred to the prison and production workshops were added on.

From the beginning of the 1930s, the *sharaga* was placed directly under the security police and, inside it, under either a specialised "central administration" or a special "technical section" Much of the *Sharaga* was what may be called an "object" placed under the responsibility of a high functionary of the NKVD but quite often under a detainee who was "director of research" or "chief builder" Under him worked the "heads of the Laboratory" and an entire series of researchers who were all under the vigilance of the watchmen of the NKVD. The discipline here was reminiscent of prisons with fixed hours for getting up, meals, health workouts, etc.⁵

In the forefront of activities which "benefitted" from this system were, towards the end of the 1930s, "frontline industries", mainly aeronautics and rocketry. An important part of these industries also function under the control of the NKVD⁶

In principle, the competent commissariats provided technical specifications to the authorities of these industries. In fact, the

NKVD gave to itself the right to modify specifications. This had its drawbacks⁷ However, if products thus obtained - on the directives of Stalin, Beria or Ustinov - were sometimes aberrant, such was not always the case. For example, two very good planes, the PE-2 and the TU-2, had come out of the Sharaga. However, the "distance" between the design laboratories and the manufacture of the prototypes on the one hand and then the assembly line manufacture on the other resulted in the performances of these planes coming out of the factories being much lower than those of the prototypes. In fact, the "design laboratory" of Tupolev (that is to say the *Sharaga* where Tupolev was detained) had to redesign the entire structure of the projected plane to adapt it to real conditions of production in the factory. These conditions were lost sight of by design laboratories far removed from the mass production and subjected to the exigencies of the leaders who did not know anything about the constraints of industrial production. Consequently, there was a gap of three years between the flight of the prototype of TV-2 and the development of the production chain (in December 1943)⁸.

Researches carried out in the sharagas were totally secret and we have few details on this institution and on the way it functioned⁹

During the years of the war and later from 1941 to 1955, the sharagas grew in number and spread out so much that some of them became cities and industrial zones with their factories, garages and workshops and also had their cinema houses, libraries etc. Some of these cities did not have all its population as prisoners and prisoners lived side by side with "free" persons including foreign scientists (particularly the Germans, for example). However, their freedom of movement was strictly controlled without their being subject to the lifestyle of prisoners. Among the "free" men coming to work in these "secret cities" (where work was mainly atomic researches, aeronautics, rocketry and bacteriological warfare) there were obviously Soviet citizens attracted by better salaries paid to them.

One of the motivations for work for the detainees was lesser hardship in living conditions than in the camps. But they received those better conditions only if they "produced" Other motivations were also the "love of the profession", patriotism and, on occasions,

“devotion to the party” because former party members thus imprisoned continued to consider themselves as communists and wanted to behave *like one*. Another motivation was the hope of being set at liberty which happened to some when they had accomplished their mission. Thus the mathematician, Alexander Nekrasov (1883-1957) (who was condemned for “spying”) was freed after he furnished important works. He received the title of “scientist emeritus” in 1947 and the Stalin Prize in 1951” for his contribution to aeronautical technology”

The system of the Sharaga was a limiting case of subjugation of some intellectuals who were specialist in scientific and technical research. As detenues they were well and truly “enslaved” but as responsible for the progress of research they could retain the functions of directing it.

A peculiar treatment was applicable to these men who were at one and the same time under a penal sentence and placed again in some of their functions. This resulted from many a type of preoccupations.

One of these preoccupations concerned *secrecy* in which the power desired that some researches be carried out. Shutting up researchers was one way of keeping their works secret. This preoccupation is far from secondary. Secrecy was a nightmare for the Soviet leaders¹⁰. Therefore, independently of their sharagas, there were cities where secret researches were carried out by “free” workers under strict vigilance of the “organs” For ordinary works, the Zekies were engaged in these cities. Hierarchical relationships were then pushed to the extreme¹¹.

Another preoccupation was to keep the condemned scientists (condemned for one of the numerous reasons which motivated the condemnation between 1935 and 1953) in their professional activity which the power considered more or less indispensable.

A last preoccupation was doubtlessly not absent in the confinement of some scientists, often of exceptional merit. The desire to isolate from the rest of the society men whose prestige and authority could amount to constituting a challenge to the leading group which pretended to be infallible, if ever these scientists were to express publicly their opinion or questions of social and political interest. Thus, for many years, genetics, theories of relativity and other works in mathematics, linguistics

etc., were proclaimed to be “non-scientific” by the power. Under these conditions, it often desired to isolate research workers who, by their intellectual formation, were likely to want to assert openly what they thought was true, and not merely only in their field of “specialisation” Experience has shown, moreover, that the denunciation of any deceptions or falsehoods of Soviet leaders often came from such persons. This is the case of Academician Sakharov, Roy and Jaures Medvedev, Solzhenitsyn, Pliushch and many others.

Section 2

UNITY AND CONTRADICTIONS IN THE DOMINATING CLASS, SUBJUGATION TO THE LEADING GROUP AND FORMATION OF A PARTY BOURGEOISIE

The brutal nature of the process of subjugation of the dominating class to the leading group such as it was described earlier was a part of the contingencies of the years under examination. However, basically this process was intertwined in the internal contradictions of the dominating class and in those which oppose it to the dominated class. In the historical conditions of the 1930s, these contradictions do not allow the Soviet dominating class to expand the exploitation of direct producers without itself being subjected to constraints of the hierarchical and disciplinary relationships imposed by a single party and by its leadership. To consolidate its domination it became essential for it to submit itself to decisions and the supposed “wisdom” of this party and accept, at any rate in appearance, dogmas proclaimed by it.

The role thus played by the party was not due only to the specificities of Soviet history. At a deeper level, it was related to the specificities of State capitalism which did not allow the bourgeoisie to bring about its unity under the same modalities as “private capitalism”

In fact, under the domination of private capitalism the unity

of capital is seen under the inverted shape of competition. Each fragment of capital is pushed to bring about the maximum exploitation of its workers, to intensify and to innovate in order to, withstand competing capitals. But having done so, it contributes to the development of specifically capitalist productivity. By waging a struggle for apparently piecemeal interests, it ends up by serving the interests of capital as a whole. The "motivations" of those who manage different individual capitals lead to imposing the laws of capitalist accumulation and productivity to be obeyed.

In conditions of capitalism of the "Soviet" type the laws of capitalism do not operate in the same manner. Competition is exercised under other modalities. Therefore we notice a *transformatin of the forms through which the unity of capital forges ahead.*

In fact, the extension of State ownership and State planning deciding production, prices, wages, investments etc., modifies the conditions in which each fragment of social capital is opposed to the others and it also modifies the modalities of distribution of the mass of the surplus value between different branches and different units of production (the accumulation continuing to be dominated by the exigencies of capital valorisation).

Because of these modifications, the competition which opposes the different agents of capital fighting for consolidation of their positions or for an increase in the volume of capital and of production that each controls, does not acquire mainly the form of confrontations on "product market" or on the "capital market" so much so that the "discipline" and the "unity" imposed by *market form and money forms* receive a strong set back. To this type of unity is substituted another, the one which takes the "plan form"

However, the constraints which flow from this form do not operate in the same manner as do the market form (although the first is the second only in another form), because the constraints of the market are interiorised by agents of capital to whom they appear as objective and inevitable. The case is different for constraints of the plan which appear to agents of capital as forms of decisions taken more or less arbitrarily, and which get imposed on them from outside without their having really participated in working it out. This exteriority of exigencies of the plan leads

the agents of capital to try to hide behind those which show the greatest difficulties in order to run "their" enterprise in the most convenient way, all the while giving the impression that they are conforming to the objectives of planning.

The plan form is thus far from enough to impose the unity of the capital and of its agents. Under the Soviet conditions, the dictatorship of a "*party of a new type*" constitutes one of the political forms under which this unity tends to be imposed.

The role played by the dominating class in the exploitation of direct producers, in their dispossession, in the appropriation of surplus value on the basis of wages and in the process of accumulation make this class a bourgeoisie formed by the "functionaries of capital"

This is not in the nature of a simple analogy or an "image" or a stylistic clause but a way of accounting for real social relationships. History shows that the bourgeoisie can be seen in phenomenally multiple forms, as merchants, captains of industry, financial predators, capitalist farmers, leaders of State or private industries, chairmen of multinational firms, leading functionaries of these enterprises or economic apparatuses etc. With the growth of new specific forms of capitalism, the bourgeoisie also acquires new forms.

However, beyond the very varied forms which capitalism and the bourgeoisie can assume, both of them are always based upon *capital relationship*. It is on it, in fact, that there is an *opposition* between those who produce surplus value and those who have it at their disposal. The former constitute what Marx calls the "total worker" (*Gesamtarbeiter*)¹² the others form the *global capitalist*" (*Gesamtkapitalist*)¹³ Lastly, behind the diversities of the faces of the bourgeoisie hides the unity of the *capital-relation* which itself is seen under *two aspects*: that of *capital as function* personified by "representative of capital as function" (which is the *active capitalist*) and an apparently more passive aspect, that of *capital as ownership* personified by the capitalist as the *one who carries* the ownership determination of *capital*¹⁴. The respective places of these two faces, and therefore also the relationship between these two personifications of capital, is modified even as the forms of capitalism are changed as also the faces under which the bourgeoisie shows up.

In the conditions of the Soviet Union of the 1930s, the predominance of the State form of ownership of capital makes it possible for political leaders to play essentially the role of agents of capital as ownership whereas managers are the agents of capital as function. The bourgeoisie is thus formed of all those who participate in a dominating position (as representatives of State capital or as managers) in the activity of the economic, political and ideological apparatus of the State. Those who belong to this bourgeoisie can only maintain themselves in the dominant position if they are themselves subjugated to the ideological relationships from which the immanent tendencies of capitalism "become inescapable as motives of their operations" as Marx says about the capitalists of his time¹⁵

What can appear to be against what we call "capitalist" is a dominating class which has at its disposal the means of production only collectively and which does not "own" it individually, so that revenues are shown juridically in the form of wages.

If we stop with this objection, we lose sight of capitalist class forms in the first place, and above all, of *total capitalist*. And then that the capitalist is what he is not because he "is in possession" of a fortune of the means of production but because he *fulfills a role in the reproduction of capitalist relationships*. Finally, we "forget" that with the centralisation itself of capital - an expression of the deep-seated tendencies of capitalism - the active capitalist becomes more and more frequently a simple *director* who does not own any title to capital, who does not appear any more as a capitalist but "as his own opposite, as a salaried worker"¹⁶.

That the Soviet bourgeoisie be formed of salaried persons does not in any way appear as an exception. It is the *extreme case*, the one where all the capitalists appear as their own opposites because they receive a salary. This bourgeoisie benefits from different privileges but only a small layer (the one that finds itself at the peak of the party) also dominates the State. Those who are not a part of this layer appear as simple "servants" of the State and can be treated with severity by the leadership of the party. The subjection of the majority of the dominating class to a political group that exerts upon it a hegemonistic action is the result of the peculiarities of functioning of Soviet capitalism as it had developed

during the 1930s. These peculiarities are such that an access to the functions of directing production and reproduction of capital and to the privileges and powers attached to it are strictly controlled and managed by the party leadership. It thus exercises a veritable monopoly. This monopoly ensures that the "Soviet bourgeoisie constitutes a bourgeoisie of the party"¹⁷ that represents the dominating class of a *party capitalism*¹⁸

In this type of capitalism, the role of the party (that is to say its leadership) is all the greater as the internal contradictions of the dominating class are less regulated by structural forms of market and competition.

During the 1930s, the contradictions within the "Soviet bourgeoisie" do not only contribute to the leading group and its apparatus playing an essential role, it contributes also to investing its leadership with an authority which enables it to impose decisions on various layers of the dominating class as much as upon the dominated class. The role of the leading group or of the party leadership acting as the highest organ, including at economic level, appears all the more essential as this leadership finds itself - by the very place that it occupies in the system of social relationships - creating the illusion of being "projected above" contradictory interests and demands of different other layers of the dominating class and thus appears in a position to "arbitrate" between them by virtue of principles claiming to be above all discussion.

Thus, the subjugation of the dominating class before the party and its leadership is related to the system of contradictions in which this class is held. However, it is also the historical form clothed in these contradictions during the years 1935-53 which imposes the *specific dictatorial type* of this subjugation. Later history shows that when the positions of the Soviet dominating class are consolidated, its relationships with the party leaderships change. For example, during the anti-Khrushchevian period (1953-1964) the hegemony which the party leadership exercised over the dominating class does not disappear but this hegemony ceases to have the same dictatorial character. Henceforth, the leadership of the party emanates, in some sort, from the upper layers of the dominating class, so much so that it represents them, upto a certain point. This explains the "collegial forms" of leadership which tends to emerge.

Section 3

THE RISE IN THE PRIVILEGES OF THE
NEW DOMINATING CLASS

During the second half of the 1930s, even while cadres were individually in a precarious situation and subject to terror, we notice a consolidation of their privileges which prolonged the turn taken in 1931.

Thus, from 1933, the differentiation in the earnings of cadres increased more and more. Not only the highest salaries showed further stiff increases, but they were henceforth coupled with a big diversity of bonuses. Some were paid from funds intended for this purpose and handled by peoples commissariats, others were paid from receipts and profits of enterprises. With this purpose in mind, "director's funds"¹⁹ were created in 1936, financed by 4% of profit anticipated by the plan and by 25% of profit made over and above the plan.

In 1934, by virtue of an order dated 23 January, the progressive nature of the tax on salaries was done away with, starting for a gain of 500 roubles or more per month. Thus this *progressive nature did not affect high wages and salaries any more*. A. Bergson analysed the distribution of wages and salaries for October 1934 and noted that at that time the best paid Soviet wage earners (getting more than 1420 roubles) got, in effect, more than 28.3 times what the least paid wage earners did²⁰. He carried out a systematic comparison between the wage distribution in the Soviet Union and in the United States and found that in 1934 this distribution was of the same type in both countries. He thus concluded that in so far as inequalities of wages were concerned "capitalist principles" were then prevalent in the Soviet Union.²¹

The policy on salaries of cadres thus begun continued later on. For example, in 1938 "personal salaries" were established for "specialists and valued practitioners" appointed to a post of direction. The theoretical limit of these "personal salaries" was then 1400 to 1200 roubles per month, depending upon sections of activity²² (the workers at the bottom of the scale received 100 to 120 roubles). In the same year, bonuses to inventors are

considerably increased. They could go as high as 100000 and even, in some cases, 200000 roubles²³

In fact, inequalities from which privileged categories profited increased further by the existence of a practice of reimbursements of "costs", perquisites such as functional housing, reserved holiday resorts etc.²⁴ Over and above this, some products could be had only by privileged categories.

In 1937 and 1938, bonuses received by directors, engineers and chiefs of services for exceeding plan targets could increase their earnings greatly. In the coal industry, the bonus received by the director of a mine and by his assistants was equal, for each 1% of excess over targeted production to 4% of his salary. In steel-making these bonuses increased by stages. If production exceeds the target by 5% the monthly salary of a chief of section, his assistant and engineers went up by 10% for each one percent rise in production. If production exceeds the target by 10%, each excess percent of production earned a bonus of 15% of the salary, etc.²⁵ The bonus could sometimes equal the annual salary or even exceed it - although a "ceiling" equal to the salary was supposed to be in force. From 1937, the Soviet press used to point out directors and engineers who collected bonuses of 8000, 12000 or more roubles per year²⁶. But the highest income then went to film directors (the best known among them could earn 80000 to 100000 roubles per year) and writers²⁷

As far as political cadres were concerned, there was a system of "*cost of representation*" which was quite high but was not published nor was published the amount of "packets" (pakety) which also brought benefit to leaders in the domain of the economy as also those of the party and State apparatuses²⁸. All these cadres were a part of the dominating and exploiting class. Their living conditions were quite different from those of simple workers but among themselves too there existed wide differences in powers and incomes.

The differences in living conditions within exploiting class was further aggravated by a number of privileges which were not monetary in nature and which made it possible quite literally for this class to live in "another world" than the mass of workers, *in a "world" which is strictly hierarchised, the hierarchy of privileges being superimposed on that of the functions.*

The development of hierarchy of privileges found its continuation in various ways such as the reestablishment, in 1936, of a system of "personal ranks", more or less similar to those introduced by Peter the Great. For example, from a sufficiently high level, certain officials, judges, educators etc., had a certain "title" bestowed on them which corresponded more or less to old academic degrees and to old "ranks" of the Czarist period. Progressively, this system was diversified. One could notice the creation of a number of titles such as the "chief judicial remembrancer" Among artists too, an entire hierarchy was set up such as "artist emeritus", emeritus artist of such and such Republic, emeritus artist of the Soviet Union. To such titles corresponded laid down earnings and privileges²⁹

Orders and decorations were on the increase too. On 27 December 1938 is created the title of "hero of socialist work", "the highest level of distinction in the domain of economy and culture" It was intended for persons who, "by their remarkable pioneering activity" had contributed to the "advancement of economy, culture, science and the growth of strength and the glory of the USSR" The titles gave the right to the order of Lenin, the highest Soviet decoration and it carried a large number of material advantages and privileges. Other decorations were also created conferring advantages and privileges on a lesser scale³⁰ Among these advantages were exemptions from payment of taxes and various priorities in allocation of housing, transport, etc. In theory, these advantages were not reserved for cadres or intelligentsia, but in practice, they are essentially the ones to receive them with the exception of a few stakhanovites.

Monetary and non-monetary privileges are only partially known because they were far from being announced systematically but the titles and the ranks belong to the facts of day to day life.

A particularly important form of privilege was the access to the network of *special shops* reserved for certain cadres (Further, these shops were diversified according to the function and the rank of those given access to them). They stocked products, or products of a quality, which could not be had elsewhere or which are only exceptionally available in the shops intended for "common" people (because, in fact, even when there was no rationing, a large number of products - even the most usual ones - were rare and to obtain

them, one had to be informed in time about their arrival and to "form the line"). Generally speaking, products in the "special shops" were sold at a lesser price than the comparable product when they could be bought in the shops open to the public³¹. This increased the purchasing power of the roubles received by the beneficiaries of the highest earnings.

The system of special shops had its equivalent in medical care. There were hospitals and clinics reserved for different layers of the dominating class: "top leaders", "cadres with responsibilities" and "eminent personalities", etc. Their list is prepared with great care. They had the services of the best doctors and medicines beyond the reach of the "common people"

The hospitals reserved for top party cadres and State functionaries were under the supervision of the "fourth directorate general" of the Health Ministry. It had the "latest techniques, rare medicines" and "had centres strictly reserved in all the capitals of the Republics and in the headquarters of the region"³². This system already existed in the 1930s, although under other names.

From a certain hierarchical level, the possibility of having a chauffeur-driven car was an important element of the living standard and social "standing" (especially at a time when the car was still very far from being common and public transport was crowded). The different hierarchies were marked by the type of car allotted to such and such job. For cadres whose hierarchical level was quite modest for them to be entitled to a personal vehicle, an access to a "pool" of cars belonging to an enterprise or a department was sometimes possible.

The allotment of a *dacha*, a country house, a seaside or mountain resort depended on where cadres belonged. The same is the case with the "category" of the *dacha* (that is to say its size and location). The allotment of a *dacha* is not "automatic" except for those occupying the highest positions.

Similarly, the size and the location of housing depended upon the hierarchical level. During the 1930s, directors of big undertakings, their chief engineers, secretaries of the city committees of the party, chairmen of urban Soviets as also top political leaders, directors of institutes, academicians etc., were allotted several rooms, with a servants room whereas the majority of workers had at best one room or a "corner" of a room, or they

lived in the barracks.

An important privilege was the allocation of free stay in "rest houses" (which were, in fact, big hotels). There again, there was an hierarchy of "rest houses" The most comfortable ones were reserved for higher cadres and their families. There were simpler "rest houses" for workers but these were mostly intended for Stakhanovites, *udarniki* and certain qualified workers³³

It is obviously impossible to calculate "real earnings" to which the total of these non-monetary privileges and high salaries would amount and to evaluate the ratio between this earning and the earning of a worker. One can at least make estimates. For the post-war years, Roy Medvedev estimates this ratio at one to 40 or one to 50 and for some functionaries 1 to 100 but he takes as the basis of comparison average working class earning³⁴. If we take as the basis the earning of least paid workers, we have coefficients at least as high as from the end of the 1930s. To tell the truth, conditions of existence were so profoundly different that the figures can hardly say anything at all. The simple workers, who call themselves *us* and the privileged of whom they speak by referring to them as *they* lived, as we have already said, in two different worlds.

Thus, during the 1930s, we notice an increase in privileges of cadres, but to this increase corresponds a deep transformation of relationships of the party and the leading group with the dominating class.

Footnotes

1. To take up again an expression used by Lenin on 26 March 1922 (cf. *OC*, Vol. 33, p.260), and which was cited in Vol. 1 of the present work).
2. It is well-known that this theme of "the accentuation of class struggle" with the advance of "socialism" is strongly affirmed by Stalin since the beginning of 1933 (cf. *QL*, p.593) and repeated later on several occasions.
3. cf. A.Solzhenityn, *Le Premier Cercle* (The First Circle). Paris, R Laffont, 1968.
4. cf. J.Scott, *Au dela de l'oural* (Beyond the Urals), Le Beffrois, Geneva, Marguerat, 1945.

5. cf. L. Felix, *La Science au Goulag* (Science in the Gulag), *op.cit.*, p.22 and p.30.
6. cf. Sharagin, *En prison avec Tupolev* (In Prison with Tupolev), *op.cit.*
7. cf. The thesis of G.Sapir (already cited), p.515.
8. *Ibid.*, p.516.
9. The chief source of information are the souvenirs of former detainees like Sharagin or Solzhenitsyn. We may add H. and E. Barwich, *L'Atome rouge* (The Red Atom), Paris, R. Laffont, 1969; Lev Kopelev, "Solzhenitsyn in the Sharaga" (in Russian) in *Vrememy*, No.40, 1979; D.Panin, *Memoires de Sologdine* (Memoirs of Sologdin), Paris, Flammarion, 1975. One must not overlook the book based on investigations by Lucienne Felix, *La Science au Goulag*, *op.cit.*, Christian Bourgeois, and the book by Mark Popovski, *URSS - La Science manipulee* (USSR - the Manipulated Science), *op.cit.*
10. cf. Mark Popovski, *URSS - La Science manipulee*, *op.cit.*, p.94s.
11. *Ibid*, p.193s.
12. cf. K.Marx, *Das Kapital*, Book I, V and VII Sections and the Observations of Henri Nadel in his thesis, *Genese de la conception marxienne du Salarial* (Genesis of the Marxist Conception of Wage Labour), State Doctorate, Paris VIII, 1979, mainly p.399.
13. cf. Marx, in MEW, t.23, p.249.
14. cf. Marx, *Das Kapital*, MEW, t.25, P.392-394, ES, Book 3, t.2, p.43-46.
15. cf. K.Marx, *Das Capital*, ES, t.2, p.10.
16. cf. K.Marx, *Das Kapital*, MEW, t.25, p.393-401, or ES, Book III, t.2, p.45-53.
17. This concept is developed in the second section of the last chapter of this same third part.
18. We return to this concept at the end of Chapter IV of this third part.
19. cf. The article of G.Poliak, "Regarding the director's funds in Industrial Enterprises (in Russian)", in PK, No.4, 1938, p.55-69.
20. A Bergson, *The Structure of Soviet Wages*, Cambridge (Mass), 1954, p.129.
21. *Ibid*, p.208-209.
22. cf. SZR SSSR, 1938, No.39, S 229, cited by A.Baykov, *The Development of the Soviet Economic System*, Cambridge (G.B.), UP, 1950, p.342.
23. cf. A.Baykov, *op.cit.*, p.341, note.
24. cf. The article of M. Lewin, "L'Etat et les Classes Sociales en URSS (The State and the Social Classes in USSR)" in *Actes de la Recherche en Science Sociales*, No. 1, February 1976, p.20.

25. cf. The decisions of the different commissariats, in G. Bienskock, S.M. Schwarz and A. Yugow, *Management in Russian Industry and Agriculture*, London, Oxford UP, 1944, p.95, no.15.
26. cf. *Ibid.*, p.94-95.
27. cf. G.Friedmann, *De la Sainte Russie a l'URSS* (From Holy Russia to the USSR), *op.cit.*, p.120.
28. cf. R.Medvedev, *Le Stalinisme*, *op.cit.*, p.591.
29. On this question see the book of Nicholas Timashef, *The Great Retreat*, *op.cit.*
30. cf. A.Baykov, *The Development ...*, *op.cit.*, p.348-349.
31. A Ciliga, *Dix Ans au pays du mensonge deconcertant* (Ten years in the country of disconcerting lies), *op.cit.*, p.125.
32. cf. M.Popovski, *URSS, La Science manipulee* (USSR - Manipulated Science); *op.cit.*, p.119, no.6.
33. cf. G.Friedmann, *De la Sainte Russie a l'URSS* (From Holy Russia to the USSR), *op.cit.*, p.119.
34. cf. R.Medvedev, *Le Stalinisme*, *op.cit.*, p.591.

CHAPTER 3

THE CHANGES IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE PARTY WITH THE DOMINATING CLASS

In the 1930s, changes in the relationship of the party with the dominating class acquired many and contradictory forms such as the increasingly rigid subordination of other apparatuses of the State to the party and integration of an increasingly big number of technical, scientific and administrative cadres with the party.

One of the essential aspects of the increasing subordination of State apparatuses to the party (that is to say actually to its leaders) involved economic apparatuses and, quite specifically, industrial undertakings.

Section 1

THE FORMS OF SUBORDINATION OF THE MANAGERS OF INDUSTRY TO THE PARTY AND ITS LEADERSHIP

The subordination of industrial enterprises and their cadres to the party assumed very distinctive aspects. To cite only a few of them, one would recall that it was under the authority of the party (whose leadership enunciated the orientation of economic plans and ratified them) that undertakings were created, transformed or merged. It is again this very authority that appointed or relieved enterprise directors and controlled their management. There were other forms of control too such as administrative, accounts, banking and police. The main form of administrative control to which undertakings were subject was exercised by the *People's Commissariat* to which a given undertaking belonged so much so that it was subjugated before a two-fold authority, that of the Commissariat and that of the party¹. But it was the party that held sway.

The enterprise directors were thus far from "sovereign" in the matter of management, even within the framework of plans assigned to them. The subordination of enterprise directors to the party and to administrative organs resulted directly in limiting the problems of management which the directors could solve at their level because they were subject to the constant intervention of bodies external to the enterprise. This led to a large number of contradictions between the enterprise directors and leaders of the organs to which they were answerable. In fact, in view of the role played by the party in the development of the plan and its execution, these contradictions, in essence, were placed between two poles. The enterprise directors and the party (its leadership and its "representatives") which intervened, in principle, to ensure that the orientations of the plans were kept in view or that some priorities were respected². The former pole essentially had responsibilities of management. It represented above all capital as function while the second pole represented capital as ownership.

Between these two poles were interposed the people's Commissariats that were responsible for economic tasks that belonged simultaneously to the ownership and management and which gradually tended to become autonomous. This structure carried within it a large number of contradictions whose movement determined various changes in the management of enterprises and the role of the party with respect to them. It is important to take an overall view of these changes operating in this regard during the 1930s.

1. Industrial Management and the role of the Party in Enterprises on the eve and in the beginning of the Five-year Plans.

The principle, adopted in 1918, of "single direction" of State enterprises aimed at concentrating power to manage the State enterprises exclusively in the hands of a director named by the political authorities. Thus, a system of management took shape which tended to be consolidated during the NEP. However, during the 1920s this system remained far from being fully implemented in practice because of the role of the party and the existence of workers' trade unions who were not yet fully subject to the economic leaderships. The application of the system was also limited by the working of production conferences³ and the existence of the "triangle"

The "triangle"⁴ had a factual existence. It was formed, at the level of each factory, by the director, the secretary of the Committee of the party in the factory and the representative of the *Zavkom* (trade union committee of the factory). This institution had no formal existence and was the outcome of relationships and practices that stood in the way of full development of one man management⁵.

From 1928, while the accent was increasingly on "exigencies" of industrialisation, there were attacks on the limitations seen in the working of one man-management.

The earliest attack came from the chiefs of enterprises themselves. This happened when the VSNKh published an article called "Fundamental rules concerning rights and duties of the

Directors of the industrial enterprises”⁶ This article aimed at ensuring “utmost freedom to the director”⁷ In the conditions obtaining in 1928, the effects of this attack was quite modest.

In September 1929, the leadership of the party also took a decision which aimed at strengthening the system of one man-management. This decision was related to the launching of the first five-year plan and to desire to subordinate trade unions increasingly to the “exigencies of production” The text of the decision⁸ observes, and regrets, that one “could still come across in factories a direct intervention of party organisations and trade unions in the operational work of the director of the factory concerning production.” It added that, henceforth, “all the reins of administration of the economic life of the factory should be concentrated in the hands of the director of the factory” His operational and economic orders were “unconditionally obligatory for all personnel whatever be the post occupied in the party or the trade union. The director alone has the right to recruit, select, promote and dismiss without being tied by the opinion of party organisations or trade unions”

Apparently, the idea was to reaffirm the principle of one man-management unequivocally. In reality, this reaffirmation - which appeared indispensable for an “efficient working” of industrial undertakings - was in contradiction to the economic role of the party which appeared indispensable for launching state plans. All through the 1930s, we see different attempts, one on the heel of the other, aimed at “handling” this contradiction. It goes back to the opposition between managers on the one hand, who often sought only to fulfil the easiest tasks of the plans for “their” enterprises (or even giving the impression that they had “fulfilled” the plan when such was not the case) and the party, on the other, which sought to impose plan “fulfilment” or, at least, its objectives deemed to be priority.

Right from the launching of the first Five-Year Plan, the movement of this contradiction and social struggles that went with it, led the party to adopt a series of “steps” aimed at “regulating” the power of the enterprise directors.

The decision of 7 September 1929, mentioned earlier, was one of these “measures” In view of the context in which it was

adopted, it sought to have the enterprise directors subordinate their own decisions to respecting "objectives of production" and general social and economic conditions (prices, wages, sums of investments, etc.,) fixed by the political power and by the party in the first place.

The reaffirmation, in this form, of the principle of one-man management evidently allowed contradictions between the director and party to subsist. New proposals were, therefore, adopted to "overcome" this contradiction by seeking to *merge* the role of the party and that of the enterprise director. The idea of such a merger assumed special importance in the beginning of the 1930s.

2. *The Idea of Merging the Enterprise Management and the Party*

In February 1931, Stalin asserted that *outside of the merger of the roles of the party and the management of the enterprises there could not be any one-man management*. Thus, in a speech delivered on 4 February at the First Conference of cadres in industry of the USSR, he said

We are often asked why we do not have one-man management. It does not exist and will not exist as long as we have not mastered the technique. As long as among us bolsheviks there will not be sufficient number of men at home with questions of technique, economy and finance, we will not have a true one-man management⁹.

Awaiting that such be the case, Stalin discounted the possibility of a general action of the party and the appointment of enterprise directors fully devoted to it really obliging enterprises to conform to orientations and decisions of the party.

What happened in the years that followed did not confirm that the appointment of managers supposed to be most faithful to the orders of the party would lead to a better subordination of the activity of enterprises to political decisions taken at the top. It did not lead in any way to the constitution of a true system of one-man management in strict conformity with the policy and orientations of the party.

The so-called "merger" of the management of the enterprise and the party was seen to be largely illusory. Even when a director of enterprise was a party member, he sought generally to fulfill firstly his specific *function* as enterprise director, by fulfilling the *tasks* which appeared to him most urgent or the easiest to fulfil. Moreover, to develop his activity, he frequently took steps that were not in conformity with party policy taking care generally to hide it.

Under these conditions, the leadership of the party stressed direct intervention of *base organisations of the party* in the day to day management of enterprises. This was in contradiction with the principle of one-man management. Thus, during 1932, the CC of the party ordered that party committees at the factory level need not hesitate to *submit the enterprise directors to a permanent control*. Severe criticisms were despatched to the party committees that "did not take care of concrete details of production" Moreover, criticisms were conveyed to enterprise directors who in the name of one-man management, protested against constant interference of party committees in their managerial activity.

In 1933, the "one-man management" was especially weakened by the network of "party organisers" set up at the level of factories and directly answerable to the CC¹⁰ This was far from the decisions of September 1929, theoretically still in force, which sought to reinforce the principle of "one-man management"

At the XVII Congress (26 January-10 February 1934), the problem of relations of enterprise directors and party organisations was at the centre of a large number of speeches. It involved, in the words of one of the speakers, resistance to "a rupture between the political line and our organisational work"¹¹

The question of "*rupture*" between the political line and real practice was dealt with at length at the Congress by L.M.Kaganovich¹². Stalin devoted to it a major part of his report. He emphasised the idea that even when a correct line and solution were adopted, success depended upon organisational work and the struggle for practical application of the line¹³.

The existence of a "rupture" between the line and effective practice, *between what was resolved and what was implemented*

thus became the starting point of serious preoccupation. At that time, this "rupture" was not attributed - as was the practice later - to the activity of "saboteurs" and "enemies of the people" It was essentially explained by the weakness of the "organisation" and by a bad choice of cadres. Thus "the incorrigible bureaucrats and file pushers", the "talkatives incapable of organising anything at all", and "the militants who had rendered service in the past and who now go about as big lords and think that the laws of the party and the Soviet State were not applicable to them"¹⁴ were at the receiving end of the attacks.

At that time, "organisational steps" and strengthening of the *control organs* were called upon to play a decisive role. Among the main decisions of the Congress, in this domain, can be mentioned: the extension, with the leading organs, of departments responsible for the control of the day to day activity of regional and local organs and to keep up to date cards of all cadres, increase in powers of the Control Commission of the party and of the Soviet Control Commission and, in the domain of industrial production, the creation of "industrial sections" concerned with controlling the working of enterprises and verification of activities of their directors¹⁵ This creation was highly significant.

3. *The Setting Up of "Industrial Sections" (1934) and its Effects,*

The creation of "industrial sections" by the XVII Congress put the official seal on the abandonment of the orientations of September 1929. It sought to set up a *detailed and daily control by the party on economic management*. L.M. Kaganovich even spoke of the *role of operational management devolving upon the PB* and Stalin underlined the need to verify that the decisions and instructions sent out by leading centres were implemented¹⁶. The organs then set up had an essential characteristic: *They did not come up from the base of the party*. They worked with the *higher bodies* and sought to subject enterprise directors to the orientations and decisions taken by the PB and the CC.

In order to fulfil this objective, the statutes of the party adopted by the XVII Congress provide, in article 25, for the creation of "production sections" under the CC as also at the level

of regional and district committees of the party. These "sections" were specialists¹⁷ and had to keep a systematic control on the running of enterprises. Their functions were complex. On the one hand, at the level of the CC, "*industrial sections*" duplicated the different peoples commissariats for industry¹⁸ which were governmental organisations. On the other, they tended to *replace with a control exercised "from above" by the party the control which the party committee at the level of enterprise were supposed to exercise*. They were supposed to strengthen enterprise director by "*protecting*" him from the interventions of party members in each enterprise.

The reduction in the functions of control exercised by the primary organisations of the party (its factory committees etc.) arises from new statutes. Article 50 enumerates the function of organs of the base of the party that are increasingly restricted in their executive tasks to carry out the work of agitation and organisation among the masses in order to make the party line and slogans reach them; ensure recruitment and education of the sympathisers; "mobilise" the masses in the enterprises to fulfil the production plan, contribute to strengthening work discipline and growth of shock effort; fight against wastage and keeping a watch on improvements in living conditions of workers and, lastly, participating actively, as an organ of the party, in the economic and political life of the country¹⁹

The enumeration of the functions of the primary organs of the party clearly indicates that they must *not interfere in the activity of the enterprise directors, and it was not a part of their duty to control each decision taken by this director*. L.M.Kaganovich put it quite clearly when he said:

The foreman is the authorised leader of the workshop, the director of the factory is the leader of the factory and each is assigned rights and responsibilities which go with these positions²⁰.

His brother, M.M. Kagumovich, who was a high functionary in the Commissariat of Heavy Industry was quite specific:

It is necessary, above all, to strengthen one-man management. It is necessary to begin from the

principle that director is the "supreme chief of the factory. All those who are employees of the factory should be completely subordinate to him"²¹.

However, if the decisions of the congress reinforce the authority of the directors over their "subordinates", the system of one-man management is in no way reinforced by the creation of "industrial sections", because *these sections* - just as the People's Commissariats on which each enterprise depended - *constantly involve themselves in the operational leadership of these enterprises*.

Things come to such a pass that in 1937 Stalin rebuked party organisations "of putting themselves in the place of economic organs" and of "depersonalising" them, while they should "help them, systematically strengthen them and guide the economy not by going over their heads but by acting through them."²²

In reality, things were even worse. The responsible members of the local and regional organs of "production sections" frequently established close links with directors of enterprises which they were supposed to strengthen, they covered up their "illegal" activities, did not denounce their "weaknesses" or their "abuses" Instead of really helping the centre to verify what was happening in enterprises, local and regional organs of the "divisions of productions" tended to constitute themselves into a *supplementary screen* between the leadership of the party and the reality of what was happening in industrial enterprises. That was an aspect of the struggle which developed between the managers of industry, agents of capital as function who tended to develop their autonomy and the leading group who occupied the place of the agents of capital as ownership. In these conditions, during 1936-1938 contradictions deepened between these two layers of the dominating class. These contradictions were not foreign to repression and terror which was unleashed on managers and on those who should have defended capital as ownership.

In the eyes of the leading group, what happened in industry had an appearance of a "conspiracy" in which enterprise directors and local and regional functionaries of the party took part. To "thwart" this "conspiracy", the leading group attempted for a while

to revive, conferences on production at the level of factories but without real success and encouraged primary organisations of the party to control the activity of the leadership of industry²³

These limited attempts aimed at developing a certain control from the base (in order to ensure a better application of the orders of the centre and to enable it to know the reality better) soon proved to be inadequate. Noticing these insufficiencies was one of the elements that led to the quasi-general “purge” of the old enterprise directors who were members of the party (those who were called “red directors”). They were struck with all the greater severity by repression while their long past in the service of the party had given them the feeling that they, more than the others, have the right to stand up against orders and directives which appeared to them impossibly excessive. They often refused to be reduced to the role of simple “docile instruments” responsible for the implementation of decisions taken outside their participation and which they thought were dangerous.

We have seen that a central point of large scale repression and terror against the “red directors” coincided with the “big trial” in January 1937 against the so-called “parallel Trotskyite Centre”, which ended with death sentences for 16 accused²⁴, especially Piatakov (People’s Vice-Commissar for heavy industry). In the months that followed, almost all “red directors” and administrators in industry, or those close to them, were arrested, deported, sentenced to death, executed without trial or driven to suicide²⁵

However, in an attempt to obtain blind execution of “any task whatever”, it was not considered sufficient to radically modify the composition of the team of enterprise directors (henceforth coming forth from what was called the new *Soviet Intelligentsia*). Therefore, the XVIII Congress completely changed the forms of control which were decided upon by the XVII Congress.

4. New Attempts to have Recourse to a Control over the Enterprise Directors by Primary Organisations of the Party (March 1939).

The XVIII Congress of the party (10-21 March 1939) cast doubts on the existence of “production sections” (except for

agriculture where they were allowed to remain). In his report to the Congress, Zhdanov proposed that they be done away with. He had the following criticisms to make:

The production sections do not actually know what they should really be busy with. It happens that they sometimes assume the functions of the economic organs, compete with them, leading to a "depersonalisation" and lack of responsibility in work²⁶.

Zhdanov faulted these organisms for seeking to substitute themselves for People's Commissariats and directly issuing orders to economic organs at the base.

The modifications in the statutes adopted by the XVIII Congress did away with "production sections" in industry. On the contrary, it was decided "to raise the role of the basic organisations of the party in production enterprises" and to bestow on them "the right to control the administration of enterprises"²⁷ The appointment of a large number of persons *recently* promoted by the leading group at the head of these "basic organisations" was evidently not foreign to strengthening their role.

To justify the right given to primary organisations to control the running of enterprises, Zhdanov referred to attempts made during the course of earlier years. He asserted that experience had shown the success of the work of party organisations to be certain where primary organisations could link the political work of the party with a struggle for the fulfilment of economic tasks²⁸ He rose against those who had reservations about the right of control given to primary organisations of the party. On this subject, he said:

It appears that those who think that one-man management consists in giving orders in the factory without obtaining support of militants in enterprises have no understanding of what one-man management is all about. Our Soviet Bolshevik one-man management consists in knowing how to take steps, organise work, choose cadres (...). But it means at the same time that one should know how to obtain

support, in this work, from the organisation of the party, from active cadres, from the enterprises as a whole²⁹

From 1939, the control of primary organisations of the party in *enterprises* was not exercised by workers but by cadres, engineers and technicians who were closely dependent upon the enterprise director for their promotion and for various material advantages, mainly in the matter of bonus and allotment of housing.

Under these conditions, the control of primary organisations of the party could not have gone further. It was, therefore, without much success that the leading group tried to seek the support of the "base" to be better informed of what was going on in the enterprises and ensure a stricter application of its directives and decisions. Thus primary organisations of the party were frequently reminded of the role they were called upon to play. For example, a decision taken on 23 October 1939 by the CC emphasised the need "to raise the role and the responsibility of primary organisations of the party" particularly in the coal mines of the Donbass³⁰.

This decision, as also another one related to the steel-making enterprises of the Donbass and the province of Cheliabinsk asked for *an almost daily control over the enterprise director*³¹. But these calls were hardly followed by implementation. Thus "production teams" in the industry had to make their reappearance.

5. The reconstitution of "production teams"

In the autumn of 1939, it became clearly evident that there were narrow limits for existing hierarchical relationships in enterprise to control exercised by primary organisations. This situation, and the pressure exerted by those among the top leaders in favour of control exercised by local and regional organisations of the party led to the reappearance of "production teams" as also the strengthening of the role of local and regional party committees in controlling industry and transport³².

The XVIII Conference of the party (15-20 February 1941) reaffirmed emphatically the need for a control over enterprise

directors by local and regional organisations of party. It called for a reconstitution at all levels of the "production teams" and said it was necessary at the level of city, district and regional committees etc. that secretaries of these committees be assigned responsibility for this centre.

These contradictory decisions coming within a few years of one another suggest a confrontation within the same leadership group of spokesmen of two layers of the dominating class defending two different conceptions. One of these conceptions emphasised the *political role* of the party. For its supporters, it was *state organs* who had the responsibility of economic tasks. They emphasised the role of people's commissariats and the *Sovnerkom* placed under the political control of the party. At the XVIII Congress, this conception was defended by Zhdanov, apparently upheld by Stalin. The other conception emphasised direct *economic role* of the party. This point of view, which was defended by Malenkov, soon had the upper hand at the time of the XVIII Conference³³ as can be seen from a resolution adopted by it.

The quick succession of one form of control by another reveal that neither of the forms put into practice could enable the party leadership to "master" real economic and social development. This can also be seen from "violations" of plan "objectives", disobedience of industrial cadres and the inability of the party and government to put a check on the situation without getting involved in day to day working. Therefore, the constant tendency to set up a sort of "military model" of centralised direction and directly intervening in the activity of the enterprises, by basing itself simultaneously on the party organisation, on police and banking, financial and budgetary systems.

This *military model* is similar to that of German State capitalism of the First World War. In this "model" the *top* gives orders (written into "economic plans" and in relatively detailed directives issued all through the year) and leaves a minimum of autonomy to leaders of enterprises. They are reduced as far as possible to the role of simply "carrying out" orders. They can hardly take into account concrete conditions of work and get the best possible out of them. This form of authority leads to enormous wastage of resources, fits and starts in production, frequent

immobilisation of equipments and inability to adapt techniques and number of decisions to the requirements of diverse local conditions. It leads also, in so far as managers are concerned, to "passivity" (when they limit themselves to obeying directives while choosing to carry out those that are easiest to implement on a priority basis) or their "indiscipline" (when they try partially to escape from directives received by orienting and organising production in a manner which in their view, conforms better to the potentialities of "their" enterprises, to priority needs or their specific interests).

The reasons for the choice of this "military model" of organisation and authority are several. I shall mention only a few of them which appear to me specially important.

The first, and the most fundamental, is related to the antagonistic character of the process of production which imposes on direct producers maximum exploitation and excludes them from all participation in the development of plans and directives and even the modalities of their execution.

The second is related to the contradiction between capital as ownership and capital as function and to the fact that the leading group which concentrates political power in its hands seeks to ensure the primacy and unity of capital as ownership by taking recourse to disciplinary measures and surveillance instead of setting up a system of sufficiently flexible managerial indicators. This primacy given to disciplinary measures and surveillance appears to be related to two preoccupations of the leading group: 1) to ensure an hegemonic and dictatorial power over other layers of the dominating class; 2) to reduce to the minimum the role of "economic levers" of direction and control of the economy through prices and money.

These two preoccupations, which are doubtlessly inseparable, come in the way of giving to enterprise directors any "autonomy" whatever (even a relative one) in management. They are also opposed to any clear definition of the "criteria of competence" of managers. If such criteria were to be adopted they would reduce the authority of the leading group. It could give rise to a *legitimation* of the functions of managers independent of the fact that they are appointed to their posts by the central power

which alone can be the judge of the merits of their continued occupancy of this post, their removal or their promotion. The dictatorship of the leading group necessarily reduces the eventual role of the “criteria of competence” It leads to according first place to the criteria of obedience to the power, to “loyalty” towards it and even to “servility”

6. Forms of Direct Subjugation of Managers and Engineers to the Leading Group.

During the 1930s, the leading group concentrated political power in its hands and tried to exercise its dictatorship as directly as possible on the whole of the dominating class.

In the extreme cases we come across an extreme form of the “military model” of the organisation of the economy where central authorities directly take over certain productions. The case of the sharaga is only a specific example of it.

This took place when the central authorities (theoretically the PB, in practice its members who had concentrated maximum power in their hands) “released” one or several factories from the competence of the Commissariats to which they were subordinate in order to place them under the direction of an engineer personally chosen by these authorities. In this case, this engineer was directly responsible to the central authorities, the factories placed under his direction had the benefit on a basis of priority of all that was needed but he himself had to ask for authorisation from the authorities for all the initiatives of a certain magnitude that he wished to take. The factories so directed did not any longer depend upon any “economic plan” as a whole and the distinction between capital as ownership and capital as function tended to vanish for the benefit of the former. There was no “managing” as such (even in the limited sense that this term had within the system of economic Commissariats) but *direct organisation of a given production* whose worth in use is judged to be of decisive importance. This type of organisation essentially concerned a part of the *defence sector*.

The most famous example is the programme of research and production of a new interception plane. In 1939, the performances

of planes with Soviet defence forces were mediocre. Stalin decided to go over the head of the competent service of the aeronautical industry and asked two engineers to develop their projects. This decision was taken in the middle of the year. The two chosen engineers quickly became famous. They were A. Mikoyan and M. Gurevich. Their plane came to be known as MIG³⁴. Two weeks after they submitted their files (in October 1939), these engineers received an order to construct the prototypes. The work was to begin on 1 November. All facilities were given to them for this purpose. The order for them was placed in January 1940. Four months later, on 5 April 1940 the first prototype had its flight. By the end of 1940 some twenty planes were delivered. The hundredth was out by the end of February 1941 and distributions to units of the airforce had already begun³⁵

Such an organisation had reduced to ten months the time separating the first flight and entry into service and quickly went over to assembly line production.

The central authorities directly taking over certain production appeared, therefore, capable of easily solving problems of direction and control than those that arise from the system of Commissariats and the hierarchical chain that this system involved. In fact, things are more complex. By isolating design offices from factories, engineers chosen from the industrial system as a whole, it was impossible to take into consideration concrete conditions of assembly line production and quality of the product became low when production involved several chains. Moreover, haste in construction of prototypes gave rise to serious consequences. Studies on blast engines were carried out later. The motor was too heavy, there were structural defects in the plane, its circuitry was very fragile. At last, production of this MIG was carried out at the cost of other planes produced without any priority (the YAKI and the LAGG) so much so that this kind of direct take over - accompanied by outstanding honours bestowed on engineers chosen by the high political leadership did not in any way lead to solving problems posed to the organisation of production. It only replaced one form of military organisation by another, by reproducing its defects, under specific modalities.

This direct take over of certain parts of production

represented an attempt to negate the contradiction between the leading group and a fraction of the dominating class. Some individuals belonging to this class, but who were not members of the leading group, were chosen by the top and found an exceptional authority bestowed on them. This attempt to negate the contradiction did not make it vanish because the production apparatus as a whole continued to function as before and the leading group retained its dictatorial power over the rest of the dominating class.

Section 2

RAPID PENETRATION OF THE NEW DOMINATING CLASS IN THE PARTY AT THE END OF THE 1930S

Changes in the relations of the new dominating class with the party is indicated not only by the increasing subordination to the leading group, but also by its penetration in the party, apparently in a contradictory manner. This penetration corresponded to a new policy of recruitment to the party. At the end of the 1930s, the leading group reserved for what it called the *new intelligentsia* a salary different from what used to be paid to "old intellectuals". This change in salary was written into the statutes of the party adopted by the XVIII Congress (10-21 March 1939).

I. The Statutes Adopted by the XVIII Congress and "Soviet Intellectuals"

On 18 March 1939, in his report to the Congress³⁶ Zhdanov said that the old statutes between the different social categories for admission into the party needed to be abolished. He added that these distinctions constituted an "obsolete cadre" and "outdated norms" and he condemned "the attitude of disdain towards pioneering men" who were "the new Soviet intellectuals to whom their education and their merits had led to be raised to leadership posts".³⁷

The first paragraph of the resolution adopted by the Congress and which modified statutes affirmed that "the intellectuals (...) have become a body of intellectuals of an absolutely new type (...). These are the workers and peasants of yesterday, sons of workers and peasants who have raised themselves to posts of authority. Soviet intellectuals do not serve capitalism (...) but socialism"³⁸.

2. *The "Renewal" of the Intelligentsia and the Change of Status*

The reasons given for this change in the statutes voted by the XVIII Congress are inscribed in the line of argument developed by Stalin over several years. Already on 25 November 1936, in his report on the draft of a new constitution presented to the Congress of Soviets, he had said that "intellectuals" (engineers, technicians, "workers on the cultural front", employees etc.,) had undergone great changes during these years "because exploiting classes no longer existed" and that they

"worked for building a classless socialist society"³⁹

At the XVIII Congress, in his report on 10 March 1939, Stalin returned to the same theme and said:

Hundreds of thousands of young men, coming from the ranks of the working class, peasantry, working intellectuals, went to higher institutions and technical institutions, then came to complete the enlightened ranks of the intellectuals. They have revitalised it as a new way, in the Soviet way. They have radically changed the face of the intelligentsia, in their image and likeness. What was remaining of the old intellectuals has dissolved in the mass of the new people's and Soviet intelligentsia. In this way a new intelligentsia has made its appearance, a Soviet intelligentsia closely linked to the people and ready, in its majority, to faithfully and correctly serve it.⁴⁰

In his report before the XVIII Congress, Molotov also discussed the question of the "new intelligentsia" and emphasised its numerical magnitude. He cited figures which showed that those who officially entered in this category were above 9.6 million in

1937 which represented, along with the members of their families 13 to 14% of the population of the USSR⁴¹. This was a far cry from some tens of thousands of the old intellectuals at the end of the 1920s.

The contrast between these figures marks the reality that some “tens of thousands of intellectuals” of the 1920s formed an “intelligentsia” in a restricted sense while the “millions” of intellectuals at the end of the 1930s formed an “intelligentsia in a wider sense of the word”⁴².

Now, it was the intelligentsia in the restricted sense which concerned the new policy of party recruitment. According to the resolution on the statutes, “intellectuals of the new type” were those from the working class or peasantry “*who had risen to posts of authority*”⁴³. In point of fact, the first part of this assertion was far from always being verified.

3. *Some Figures Concerning Entry into the Party of the New Dominating Class.*

The penetration of the new dominating class in the party was spread over a certain period before the XVIII Congress. It began some time in November 1936 (at the time of the speech of Stalin on the new constitution).

The table given below highlights the extent to which recruitment to the party between November 1936 and March 1939 was socially different from that of 1929.

*Classwise or Social Category-wise Distribution of the New Members of the Party**

	Recruitment in 1929	Recruitment in Nov. 1936 to March 1939
Workers	81.2	41.0
Peasants	17.2	15.2
“Intelligentsia” employees and functionaries	1.7	43.8

* As percentage of the number of new members.

Thus, much before the XVIII Congress, one can notice the magnitude of penetration of the new dominating class in the party and the change in recruitment policy.

Other evaluations reveal that in 1936-1937, "the ordinary workers do not account for even a third of the party membership whereas, in the rural zones, the great majority of the members belonged to the party apparatus"⁴⁴.

In the aftermath of the XVIII Congress, the penetration of the new dominating class in the party and the change in its policy of recruitment were even more striking. The statistics published, although not extensive, can yield to an evaluation that during the years 1939 to 1941, the workers represented less than 20% of new members and peasants less than 10% whereas functionaries, employees and "intellectuals" accounted for more than 70%⁴⁵. In fact, a high proportion of "peasants" joining the party belonged in reality to the apparatus of the framework of Kolkhozes and State farms, or were in it before long. Similarly, "workers" who joined the party then were for the most part old workers promoted to various posts or on the point of being so promoted, thus ceasing to be direct producers. Further, among these latter ones, we mainly find qualified workers and "Stakhanovites" often exercising functions of "small cadres"⁴⁶.

In these conditions, workers from the ranks who belonged to the party did not constitute any more than the equivalent of 5 to 6% (at the most) of workers really working in factories and on construction sites.

At the factory level the penetration of the new dominating class in the party is even more striking. Thus *Pravda* of 23 July 1940 indicated that in "Presnaya" factory for machine making, in Moscow, there were only 119 members of the party of a total strength of 1300 wage-earners. Of these 119 members 100 were engineers and technicians and others were employees. Only 12 members of the party were manual workers. This was perhaps an extreme case but it illustrates very well the change taking place in relations between the party and the new dominating class⁴⁷.

As a result of this change, the new dominating class and the party showed specific signs that reveal the conditions in which the "Soviet" economy and society was growing.

Footnotes

1. cf. T. Dunmore, *The Stalinist Command Economy*, London, Macmillan, 1980.
2. cf. on this point (the fourth part of) *The Dominated*.
3. On these different points, see Volume I of the present work, p.134s and Vol. 2, p.199s, etc. p.205s.
4. The "Triangle" or, in Russian, *Triugolnik*, is sometimes also denoted by the word "troika". It can also exist at the level of the workshop (cf. Mary MacAuley, *Labour Disputes in Russia*, Oxford, 1969, p.38, no.3).
5. cf. on this point A. Baykov, *Soviet Economic System*, Cambridge, 1950, p.115.
6. TPG, 2 February 1928.
7. cf. A. Baykov, *op.cit.*, p.116.
8. cf. *Pravda*, 7 September 1929 and the work of G. Bienstock, S. Schwarz and A. Yugow, *Management ...*, *op.cit.*, p.35-37.
9. cf. Stalin, *QL*, p.500-501.
10. On these different points, cf. *PS*, June 1932, p.5; December 1932, p.47; August 1933, p.39; *Direktivy KPSS I Sovetskovo pravitelstvo po khoziuistvennym voprosam*, 4 Vol., Moscow, 1957-58; Vol. II, p.372-377 and J.R. Azrael, *Managerial Power and Soviet Politics*, Cambridge (Mass), 1966, p. 93.
11. cf. *XVII Sezd VKP (b)*, Moscow, 1934, p.619.
12. cf. *ibid*, p.532-533.
13. Stalin, *QL*, t.2, p.708.
14. *Ibid*, p.712-713.
15. On these different points, cf. *KPSS*, T.5(1971), p.150s. cf. also, *Partinoe Stroitelstvo*, nos. 7, 17, and 32, 1934.
16. cf. Stalin's report to the XVII Congress, *QL*, t.2, p.666.
17. cf. *KPSS*, t.5 (1971), p.165-166.
18. cf. G. Bienstock *et al.*, *Management ...*, *op.cit.*, p.18 and M. Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled*, *op.cit.*, p.170-171.
19. cf. *KPSS*, t.5 (1971), p.170.
20. L.M. Kaganovich, *Socialism Victorious*, London, 1934, p.137 cited by T. Cliff, *Russia, a Marxist Analysis*, International Socialism, 1970, p.19.
21. cf. *ZI*, 16 April 1934, cited by Cliff, p.19.

22. cf. Stalin, Concluding speech on 5 March 1937, before the Plenum of the CC. *Sochineniya*, t.1 (XIV), Stanford, 1967, p.227 (cf. the French Translation, in *Oeuvres*, t.XIV, Paris, NBE, 1977, p.153).
23. On the production conferences during the NEP, see the Vol.2 of the present work, p.205s. On their (limited and irregular) working in the 1930s, see G.Bienstock *et.al*, *Management ...*, *op.cit.*, p.44s.
24. cf. *Report of the Court Proceedings in the Case of Anti-Trotskye Centre*, Moscow, 1937.
25. It is necessary to emphasize that according to the XVIII Congress, and with the exception of final twists taking place in the beginning of 1941, the composition of the corps of industrial administrators remained remarkably stable. At the death of Stalin, in 1953, the majority of those who then occupied posts of directors in industry were already in that position ten years earlier (cf. J.R. Azrael, *op.cit.*, p.107).
26. The French text of this report can be found in *Notes et Etudes documentaires* (Notes and Studies of Documents), 12 September 1952, p.12s. The text cited can be found on p.24.
27. cf. The articles 27 and 61 of the Statutes adopted by the XVIII Congress, *KPSS*, t.5 (1971), p.388s.
28. Zhdanov, report to the XVIII Congress, *op.cit.*, p.25 and 26.
29. *Ibid*, p.26.
30. cf. *KPSS*, t.5 (1971), p.421.
31. cf. G.Bienstock *et.al*, *Management ...*, *op.cit.*, p.20-21.
32. cf. On this point the decision of the CC dated 29 November 1939 in *KPSS*, t.5 (1971), p.430s.
33. A partial description of the conflicts involving these two conceptions can be found in an article by Jonathan Harris, "The origins of the conflicts between Malenkov and Zhdanov: 1931-1941", in *Slavic Review*, June 1976, p.287s. The article gives interesting indications on the positions taken concerning these questions by various Soviet leaders. The author thinks, without really any proof, that Stalin may have modified his own point of view between the XVIII Congress and XVIII Conference.
34. cf. *Air Enthusiast*, Vol. 1, p.252, cited by J.Sapir, *op.cit.*, p.518.
35. cf. *ibid*.
36. cf. the report presented by Zhdanov on 18 March 1939 to the XVIII Congress on the changes to party Statutes in *Documents sur les XVIIIe et XIXe Congrès du PC (b) de l'URSS*, *Notes et Etudes*

documentaires (Documents on the XVIII and XIX Congresses of the CP (b) of the USSR, Notes and Documentary Studies), *op.cit.*, p.14.

37. *Ibid*, p.14.
38. *Ibid*, p.31, cf. also *KPSS*, t.5 (1971), P.367.
39. Cf. Stalin, *QL*, t.2, p.754-755.
40. cf. Stalin, *QL*, *op.cit.*, p.884. Texts revised from the Russian original (Pravda, 11 March 1939, reproduced in Stalin, *Sochinenia*, XIX (1934-1939), Stanford, 1967, p.398).
41. cf. Report of Molotov on the Third Five Year Plan, in *La Correspondance Internationale*, 11 April 1939, p.395.
42. In fact, the category "intelligentsia" frequently used in the USSR in the 1930s is a vague category which includes all those who are neither workers nor peasants. We can distinguish "intelligentsia" in the restricted sense (that includes writers, artists and scientists, qualified persons, engineers, technicians and cadres - ITC -, high functionaries and directors of enterprises, various administrations and institutions, members of the highest level of the leading apparatus) and an "intelligentsia" in the wider sense which also includes the small and middle functionaries and employees of different apparatuses (cf. M.Lewin, "L'Etat et les classes sociales en URSS..." (State and Social Classes in USSR...), *art.cit.*, p.18-19). Soviet statistics often give together the figures related to these different groups in order to make the "intelligentsia" appear as large as possible but the intelligentsia recruited by the party hardly includes small functionaries and employees. A recent study estimates that the intelligentsia, in its restricted sense, (specialists having a secondary or higher level) formed, in 1940, only 3.3% of the population while "the non-qualified functionaries" formed 13.2% of it. (cf. S.L. Seniavskii, *Izmeneniia v Sotzialnoi Structur Sovetskogo Obshchestva*, 1938-1970, Moscow, 1973, p.299, cited by *ibid*, p.19, no. 43).
43. cf. *Supra*, p.200 (emphasis added, C.B.)
44. cf. The evaluations of G.T. Rittersporn, in "L'Etat ..." (The State...), *art.cit.*, p.24 which refers to various Soviet sources.
45. cf. T.H. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership*, *op.cit.*, p. 225.
46. cf. *ibid.*, p.226 to 231.
47. Later, the leadership of the party will try to mark this change by trying to obtain a pretty high Worker and peasant recruitment so that direct producers be present in sufficient number in its ranks and so that it could continue to be considered a "workers' party" or

of the "working class". But this recruitment could not be made without difficulty, the workers who did not wish "to make a career" (and that is the immense majority) refused to join the party. Often, they agreed to join it under great pressure. For example, a worker would pay a bribe to the chief of the party organisation to avoid joining it (cf. *Chronique des petites gens de l'URSS* (Chronicle of ordinary people in USSR) *op.cit.*, p. 141.

CHAPTER 4

THE SPECIFIC NATURE OF THE NEW DOMINATING CLASS

The nature of exploitative relationships which were dominant in the Soviet Union determined the capitalist character of the dominating class in that country but the specific conditions in which it exerted its domination gave rise to several contradictions internal to this bourgeoisie.

Section 1

THE INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS IN THE NEW BOURGEOISIE

1. The Contradictions Between the Apparatuses

The most striking change is specifically due to the rise of the State apparatuses that were supposed to develop the economic plans and put them into operation. These apparatuses thus had to "control" the process of extraction, distribution, transfer and accumulation of the surplus value and, therefore, also the process of production and distribution. Formally, each economic apparatus of the State had the charge of certain sectors of production,

circulation and accumulation. That was how the different commissariats came up, for agriculture, for heavy industry, light industry etc., Commissariat for finance, Gosbank, etc., and the economic apparatus under them.

Henceforth, one of the contradictions at work in the Soviet bourgeoisie took the form of confrontation between the different apparatuses which had the role of supports for the various fractions of the bourgeoisie. The strength of these apparatuses and of the fractions it supported depended to a large extent on the capital and the accumulation funds which each could manage to control. The work of "planning" did not, therefore, take place in a pure "economic and technical space" but was deeply marked by the social and political contradictions, particularly by the contradictions internal to the bourgeoisie and more specifically by those which place the leaders against the cadres of the big economic apparatuses although they are but the provisional agents. These cadres do not defend any less the positions of the Commissariats or other organisations to which they belonged, because their authority depended to a large extent on the "performances" obtained by the organisms for which they have responsibility.

However, to the contradictions between big economic apparatuses may be added to contradictions internal to these apparatuses. For example, the contradictions which opposed the various undertakings or units of production in the central organism on which they depended.

In concrete terms, all these contradictions assumed the form of oppositions between the functionaries of capital or groups of these functionaries having "responsibilities" at the level of People's Commissariats, directorates of Commissariats, enterprises, factories, etc.

The contradictions dividing the Soviet bourgeoisie were, of course, far from being limited to the economic sphere of the apparatus. They put them up against other State apparatuses whose weight and role were decisive and which supported other fractions of the bourgeoisie, the party, army and police being foremost of them. In the 1930s the last one moreover played a central role in direct liaisons with the leading group. Further, it controlled vast

economic activities.

The struggles that developed between the apparatuses - and which profoundly divided the "Soviet" bourgeoisie - had various aspects of power at stake and a certain manner of exercising this power, as also the 'orientation' given to the process of accumulation and the control over a more or less important part of production and capital.

These contradictions played an essential role in the relationship of the bourgeoisie with the party.

However, before discussing this aspect of Soviet reality, we must emphasise that the contradictions internal to the new dominating class struck roots not only in the various apparatuses that served as supports. This class had other divisions too, the existence of national fractions being the most important of them.

2. National Fractions of the Soviet Bourgeoisie

The domination of the Soviet bourgeoisie was exercised within a *highly structured and differentiated* space. This differentiation reflected the unequal development of various parts of the Soviet Union and the specificities of Republics and regions, mainly cultural and linguistic specificities inherited over a long history. These differentiations and specificities nourish contradictions that oppose non-Russian people covered in the Soviet Union to the hegemony of the great-Russian fraction of the bourgeoisie. We also see the growth of economic and political contradictions between various national fractions of the bourgeoisie. Thus, one national fraction of the bourgeoisie fights for the leadership functions inside "its" own Republic (in the process putting itself in opposition to the penetration and leadership role of cadres from outside the Republic). Through this struggle, it sought to preserve, within its own Republic, the control over most wealth. It could also seek to occupy more posts in the leadership at the Union level.

The struggles that grew on this basis were made more resolute by cultural contradictions and class contradictions. In fact, national aspirations of the masses of people in each Republic constituted a reality over which the national fractions of the

bourgeoisie could be brought to depend in order to strengthen their own position of domination.

It is difficult to say what had been the real scope of the contradictions between the different "national" fractions of the Soviet bourgeoisie in the 1930s. It would appear that this scope was not negligible, it went through dimensions of repressive operations which struck leaders of the Communist parties and governments of non-Russian Republics who were accused of "bourgeois nationalism" according to stereotypes then widespread. However, we must not miss sight of the fact that such repressive operations fulfilled many functions and were aimed at preserving the overall domination of the bourgeoisie at the expense of a portion of the members of this bourgeoisie.

3. *The Solidarity Groups and "Clientelism"*

The complex structure of the Soviet bourgeoisie also gave birth to limited links of solidarity with professional or local "groups" Thus, there could exist links of solidarity (fairly strong) between enterprise managers in the face of party leaders, or links of solidarity between technicians, or between artists, scientists etc. In certain cases, these links were strengthened by the existence of organisations common to these layers and recognised officially (for example, the Union of Writers). This enables them to defend, upto a certain extent, their specific "demands" However, such links of solidarity were constantly challenged by internal rivalries of these different layers and, especially, by the hegemonistic role of the party apparatus. In officially "reorganising" the existence of some of these groups, the party apparatus managed, to a large extent, to subordinate organisations so "recognised" for it placed its cadres in their leadership posts.

For an overall view of the complex structure of the Soviet bourgeoisie, we must also take into account the *links of informal solidarity* established between some elements of the dominating class. Such links enabled those who were thus united to strengthen their personal positions and their (legal and illegal) privileges. Thus *groups* were formed (which, for want of a better word we may call "clienteles"¹) which tried to use the position of their members either to profit from a situation they knew well, and to

hide if from higher ranks or to push forward some of their members. Those who happen to get a post of director in their turn “promote” others and this could eventually take them upto the precincts of the party leadership.

It must be noted that hiding facts or diverting funds or goods which became possible assumed very soon a very wide scope. This contributed to the opacity of the system and a widespread lack of information about reality by central bodies. These bodies tried to be better informed by requiring from the local organisations more and detailed reports.

It must be noted that “clientelism” also touched certain elements of the working class which led to breaking unity. It functioned then as a means for linking the fate of a part of the exploited to the fate of a few elements of the bourgeoisie. This clientelism corrupted a fraction of the working class that took some small material advantages from the results of illegal activities of a class of bureaucrats. This worker “clientalism” also functioned on the basis of operations of “worker promotion” which, at times, took hundreds of thousands of workers out of the workshops and opened to them a career of small chiefs or bureaucrats. Cadres in charge of organising these “promotions” were particularly “well placed” to form for themselves a “clientele”

Although the actual functioning of various solidarity groups rested on identical practices, we must of course distinguish groups that aimed above all to improve the immediate material situation of those who were part of them and groups that aimed at ensuring the “promotion” of their members by establishing links of “personal fidelity” towards certain political leaders.

The top of the party tried to fight by various means the “clienteles” formed around leaders. Thus, groups could be accused of fractionalism: or be dislocated by a policy of frequent transfers of cadres. However, the recourse to these methods did not succeed in avoiding the formation of important political “clientels” around high level cadres. Thus, such men as Kirov or, later, Yezhov, Beria or Khrushchev had had vast clienteles who “supported” their patron in various ways.

The party was the main place where “clienteles” were formed.

If such was the case, it was because the party was the organization through which the new dominating class was organised and saw the regulation of its contradictions.

Section 2

THE PARTY AND THE REGULATION OF CONTRADICTIONS INTERNAL TO THE NEW DOMINATING CLASS

In the 1930s the new bourgeoisie, formed through the liquidation of the old dominating classes and through the ordeals of mass repression and terror, had consolidated itself under the tutelage of the leading group and assumed its form because of interventions of the party apparatus. We have seen that this new dominating class constituted a *party bourgeoisie*³

Nor only was it the party, primarily its leading group, which enabled its coming into being and acquiring its form, but it is on it that the "fate" of each of its members depended. It was the party that distributed members of this class among various apparatuses, it was the party that appointed, removed or promoted those who were a part of the new bourgeoisie. In short, it is the party that *managed* this class. *It is the structural political form*⁴ of its development and of handling contradictions arising out of its domination. The leadership of the party was the organ in which *political power was concentrated*, it was above all other apparatuses including those involved in exercise of power such as the army and police.

Despite its centralising and hierarchical organisational forms, the party itself was shaped by internal contradictions and made its way through a set of economic, ideological and political contradictions that grew within the social formation. Thus, its *unity was in no way ensured*. It was the result of a struggle in which intervened in a decisive manner, *the leading group* that emerged through a series of confrontations between the high level cadres. This was the group that constituted the "unifying" *body*

of the party and the bourgeoisie so long as it managed to regulate within itself its own internal contradictions. This was the case in the second half of the 1930s. The leading group then constituted the *real apex* of the party.

From 1935, Stalin's power had a decisive sway over other dignitaries, as could be seen from the fact that he could get rid of strongest leaders of even the NKVD (Yagoda, and then Yezhov).

The "unifying" action of the leading group functioned through the party apparatus. This leads to a *masked* institutionalisation of the powers of the bourgeoisie and its privileges, particularly through the growth of the system of the *nomenklatura*.

1. The nomenklatura

The *nomenklatura* was created as early as in the 1920s⁵ We notice at first the beginning of a practice where the party organisations (at various levels) had to establish a *list* of persons whom they recommended for future positions of responsibility. This practice was the result of a decision of the IX Congress of the party (1920) seeking to avoid "arbitrariness" in the appointments and promotions. These lists were one of those at the origin of the *nomenklatura*⁶.

Along with this practice, the central organs of the party also established lists of persons suitable for appointments or promotions to certain important posts. The principal organ responsible for this task was placed under the party secretariat and, from 1926, had the name of *Orgaspred*. In 1930 *orgaspred* had two divisions, one managing cadres of the party apparatus and the other managing other apparatuses of the State⁷ This *central nomenklatura* had tens of thousands of *nomenklaturists*.

Various regional and local party organisms also formed their lists of persons "considered suitable" for occupying certain functions. These lists constituted the *nomenklatura* of these party bodies.

In the 1930s, the system of *nomenklatura* was "in focus" One could see it from the *nomenklatura* of the regional committee of the party in Smolensk which was managed by the division of

directive organs of the party of the *obkom* and which had hundreds of posts to be filled through appointment or "elections" These posts could only be allotted to persons indicated by this division of the party and whose names appeared on a list of the *nomenklaturists*. The posts in question were not only for the party functionaries but also for enterprise directors, the SMT of the Sovkhozes, chiefs of commercial services, members of the Soviets and their executive committees, *organs of the judiciary*⁸ and *public prosecutors*, planning bodies, financial and lending organs and main functionaries of *trade unions* and *cooperatives*, responsible chiefs of the press, publications, schools, scientific institutions and various associations (such as the Union of Writers, Red Cross, sports associations etc.) In practice, the party had the upper hand on all appointments and "elections" Each party organisation had its *nomenklatura* whose composition was supervised by the central organs of the party and police.

To be placed on one of the lists of the *nomenklatura* thus opened up the possibility of occupying certain posts (that is to say of being appointed or "elected" on the "presentation" of the party)⁹ To be placed on the *nomenklatura*, it is not indispensable to be a member of the party¹⁰ However, generally speaking, "the most responsible" posts could only go to party members and, hence, the decision taken by the XVIII Congress to widely open the doors of the party to economic, technical, administrative cadres.

Since party membership was not an indispensable condition to be placed on the *nomenklatura* and have access to a post of a functionary of capital, the expression "party bourgeoisie" did not imply an identification between the new Soviet bourgeoisie and the party (a majority of this bourgeoisie were, in fact, not members of the party). The expression essentially highlights the fact that the party was the structural political form of the growth of the Soviet bourgeoisie and of regulating its contradictions. The *nomenklatura* maintained by the party was the institutional form (without being so proclaimed) through which the party ensured the "governance" of the Soviet bourgeoisie.

It is, of course, not the *nomenklatura* which "created" the Soviet bourgeoisie. It is not this institution which gives rise to the privileges and powers of the *nomenklaturists*. They were the

result of the totality of social relationships of domination and exploitation.

The increase in the number of privileges available to the new dominating class led, furthermore, to a deep change in its practical ideology. As Helene Carrere d'Encausse has pointed out, for those whom the power called the "intelligentsia"

living better than the nation as a whole is not to be condemned but, on the other hand, to be desired because a new link is established between the material wealth, of course quite relative, and socialist virtue...

From the 1930s, the race for material advantages was also a race for qualification as a "good communist"¹¹. This term was evidently understood as meaning devoted and loyal to the party leadership.

2. Domination, Social Exploitation and Political Leadership

One of the specific traits of the party bourgeoisie in the 1930s was that it was a socially dominating and exploitative class but taken as a whole it did not constitute a really leading class. While it dominated and exploited the direct producers, the fate of individual members strictly depended on a *leading nucleus which was self-recruiting* and constituted the *hegemonic* group of the bourgeoisie. Those who belonged to other layers were appointed and controlled by the leading group and by men in whom it had confidence (those responsible for the directorate of cadres). The composition of the leading group did not depend on the "choice" of other layers of the bourgeoisie and these layers had no control over decisions of this group (although an informal pressure emanating from them could influence some of its actions).

In fact, the dominating class was subordinate to a political leadership which, at the time, exercised a veritable dictatorship on it.

The subordination of the Soviet bourgeoisie to a leading group placed above it can be explained, in part, by historical reasons. The double process of formation of this class and of the struggle of this leading group to strengthen its dictatorship through

terror on the dominating class itself¹² are those historical reasons.

The historic process which led to this situation in the 1930s should, however, be explained in the same way as we must also explain the relative stability of the structures to which it had led. One such explanation would require special emphasis on the following points.

1. *The nature and acuteness of contradictions* at work in the dominating class which rendered it incapable of "regulating" its problem by itself, either through the "rules of the game" (such as those that would impose the forms of competition not passing through a mediation of an "economic plan") or through self-governance.

The contradictory unity of the Soviet dominating class required that it be subject to a *discipline* and *rules* enunciated by a "*higher authority*" This authority had to impose itself on the dominating class all the more as its internal contradictions were magnified by resistances put up by the exploited classes and in the first place by the peasantry.

2) The dictatorial role of the leading group had its roots also in a capitalism whose contradictions were no longer regulated directly by the market form but by the form of the plan while class contradictions were extremely acute.

3) The leading group placed itself above the dominating class and tended to subjugate it totally because it considered this class as a simple *instrument* for realising objectives which appeared to it to be dictated by "economic necessities" and especially by "historical exigencies" which, it asserted, it was its *mission to fulfil*.

In the 1930s, the historical mission proclaimed by the leading group referred to a certain vision of "constructing socialism" and also a certain vision of the role of Russia on the world stage.

Thus there functioned a system of representation in whose name the leading group treated the dominating class as a mere instrument that needed to show maximum docility. This class had *privileges* accrued to it ("corresponding" to the functions that it fulfilled) but it could not assert *any right nor ask for any right*. This did not prevent it from exercising a large number of "rights"

in practice over common workers.

The various elements which forced the dominating class to a subordination before the leading group showed a change with time only feebly. This subordination was maintained although its forms were no longer the same as in the 1930s. Thus, after the death of Stalin, the situation of the dominating class became progressively more stable (after the XX Congress the position of a *nomenklaturist* was seldom in danger) and it could exert more than before a certain weight on decisions of the leading group.

In short, the leading group was placed above the dominating class. With respect to it, it functioned as a *directing council* which dominated simultaneously apparatuses of the party and those of the state in which this class was structurally incorporated.

Section 3

THE HIERARCHISATION OF THE DOMINATING CLASS AND ITS BUREAUCRATIC CHARACTER

The Soviet bourgeoisie occupied a dominating place in exploitative relationships as it was incorporated in both state and party apparatuses. Therefore, it was seen as a bourgeoisie composed of *functionaries* of a certain rank. Although they did not have the benefit of any special statutes (which could confer rights on them), the members of this bourgeoisie belonged to hierarchical system to which they were subjugated. This was true of those who were formally incorporated into apparatuses or to administrative and political apparatuses of the state and of those who fulfilled the functions of cadres in trade unions or in associations of artists and writers. There was thus a hierarchised and bureaucratised class.

Lenin noticed in 1922, five years after October, and after the torment of the civil war that the "Soviet bureaucracy" displayed deep analogies with the Czarist bureaucracy¹³. Over the years

these similarities did not perish in any way but were only strengthened.

The permanence of characteristics of the Czarist bureaucracy continued to mark the "Soviet" bourgeoisie. This was the cause of the ceaselessly renewed popularity of the satirical plays of the 19th century that attacked the bureaucracy of the times. Thus, *Inspector General* of Gogol was always looked upon as "contemporary" by Soviet theatre goers.

On the other hand, the Czarist bureaucracy itself showed similarities with the Prussian bureaucracy¹⁴ analysed by Marx in the *Critique of the Philosophy of the State by Hegel*¹⁵. In this book, Marx enunciated formulations which illuminate remarkably clearly some characteristics of the Soviet bourgeoisie. Thus, he writes:

The general spirit of the bourgeoisie is the *secret*, the mystery, hidden in its breast by the hierarchy...¹⁶

We are aware to what extent the Soviet bureaucracy considered all it did as "state secrets" and how much the "divulging" of these "secrets" appeared to it as "*treachery*" towards its mystery¹⁷

Marx went on to add this remark which was also perfectly applicable to the Soviet bourgeoisie:

Consequently, *authority* is the principle of its knowledge and deification of the authority its *way of thinking*, (there reigns within it) the *sordid materialism*, the materialism of passive obedience, of faith in authority of the *mechanism* of formal fixed activity, of principles, of conceptions and traditions that were rigid.¹⁸

A few lines later, Marx also noted:

The bureaucracy is a circle from which there is no escape. Its hierarchy is an *hierarchy of knowledge*. The top leaves it to the lower circles the job of finding the details and lower circles believe the top to be capable of under-standing the general and thus they deceive one another¹⁹.

The juxtaposition of these two formulations throws light on

one of the common characteristics of "Soviet", Czarist and Prussian bureaucracies. The hierarchy is, in form, an hierarchy of knowledge, but the *principle of this "knowledge" is authority.*

The juxtaposition of the characteristics of the Soviet bureaucracy and the description given by Marx of the Prussian bureaucracy of the 19th century throws light on the similarity of working of these two bureaucracies and a part of their system of representation and "values"

On several points the Soviet bureaucracy appears even as a caricature of the Prussian bureaucracy. Such is the case with the proliferation of "state secrets" and the "mysterious" character of bureaucratic "knowledge" (which gives rise to a series of *rituals*). Such is also the case with the "deification" of authority which bestows on him who is at the top of the power apparatus the ability to enunciate what is "true" and "just" and which gives birth to the figure of "corypheus of Science", the Greek divine spokesman, which the Soviet bourgeoisie of the years 1930 to 1950 saw reincarnated in Stalin.

But once the similarities between the Czarist, Prussian and the Soviet bureaucracy (fundamental form of the existence of the bourgeoisie in the USSR) are pointed out, it is necessary to point out what differentiates the latter from earlier state bureaucracies.

This difference does not appear to me to be mainly due to the fact that the Soviet bureaucracy is a social class whereas the bureaucracies to which it was compared could only be social layers in the service of the dominating class. This difference is essentially due, it would appear, to the fact that the Soviet bureaucracy is the *form of existence of the dominating class.*

Section 4

REDOUBLING DIFFERENT APPARATUSES BY THE PARTY AND ITS STATUTES

The place of the supreme state apparatus which the party tended to occupy (and which official ideology called "the leading role of the party") was highlighted, among others, by the presence

of the *nomenklaturists* appointed by the party in all apparatuses, organisations, associations, etc., and by the existence *within the party* of apparatuses playing roles parallel to those of these (sectoral or territorial) state apparatuses which took real decisions. We thus have before us a “redoubling” of these different state apparatuses simultaneously from the “outside” and “inside”

This redoubling is “external” since the *quasi-totality of the administrative and ideological apparatuses of the State had their “counterpart” within the party*. This was true at the territorial level where, for example, each government of the Republic was doubled (and dominated) by the CC of the party of the Republic. Similarly, the Council for the region or the *rayon* was doubled (and dominated) by the corresponding committee of the party. This is true also at the sectoral level where each “sector of activity” is run by several specialist apparatuses that were themselves *redoubled by an apparatus of the party*. Thus, the commissariats for industry, agriculture, planning, finance, education, external affairs, etc., were subject to the guardianship of *corresponding sections of the CC*. For example, the *section on political economy of the CC* supervised the activity of the Gosplan and various economic commissions. Similarly, the *ideological section of the CC* supervised the press, publication, “culture” (and, therefore, also State organs responsible for keeping a watch on “good ideological content” of anything that is printed, distributed etc. At the state level this is the role of the censor, Glavlit, etc.).

Such a redoubling aimed at ensuring that “direction of such matters as “thought” remained entirely in the hands of the leading group of the party while *running* of these same matters and “culture” was the responsibility of different apparatuses of the State. A “good combination” of a *delegated management and control* exercised over it should, “in theory” make it possible to implement the policy of the party, chiefly by blocking or putting brakes on particularist tendencies of different apparatuses with contradictory interests and aspirations. In the face of these contradictions, the party and its *apparachiki* were supposed to defeat “collective interests” The redoubling of administrative and ideological apparatuses by the party was also “internal” to them.

This "internal" redoubling was based not only on the appointment of *nomenklaturists* in different administrative, economic, ideological and political apparatuses, where they functioned as leaders or cadres. It was also based on the function of "control" exercised on these very apparatuses by members of the party working there, and mainly by *party committees*. These "controls" were often found to be inadequate and the party leadership imposed "crossed careers"²⁰ on many members where each cadre went - as far as possible - from a post of responsibility in the party apparatus to a post of responsibility in other apparatuses and so on. In practice, the pressure of "common interests" and "collusions" within different apparatuses was generally seen to be very strong. It would push some party members to act as "responsible" for the particular apparatus where they were appointed. Thus, discipline due to the party was pushed to the second place.

In order specifically to prevent this "shift in loyalty" the party leadership also appointed in different administrative, economic, ideological apparatuses etc., *apparachiki* who did not have any managerial duties but only the *task of control*. Thus, each director of the enterprise was controlled, in principle, by the secretary of the party committee of this enterprise. This secretary had to be kept in the know of what was happening in the enterprise by a whole set of party members. He had at his disposal, in theory, an information network (and informers) who were supposed to supply him, as also the party leadership, with a veritable "intelligence" of what was going on in various apparatuses. In fact, collusions were frequent between cadres of different state apparatuses and the party cadres who were supposed to control their activity. To put a limit on this "information blocs" the leadership of the party had at its disposal another information network (and informers), namely the network of *the agents of the political police*. It controlled, at one and the same time, cadres of the state apparatus and those of the party. This was expected to prevent collusions between the aforementioned²¹. However, except in periods of intense political aggression, all these controls had only a very limited efficacy. Moreover, in periods of high repression, "efficacy" of redoubling controls was limited by the excessive

enthusiasm of the police (which “discovered” nonexistent acts of “disobedience”) and by a paralysis of initiatives to which such redoubling gives rise.

The system we have just described resulted from the *sharpness of social contradictions* including *contradictions internal to the bourgeoisie of the party*. It had given rise to interpretations of Soviet reality which appears to me debatable. One of these interpretations would have it that in the USSR (and in countries having the same political structure) the *state having disappeared, it would be replaced by the party*. That is a thesis proposed in a problematic manner by T. Lowit in his works to which we have already made a reference, and especially in his article “Are there states in Eastern Europe?”²² I feel that T. Lowit’s description does not lead to the conclusion that the state has disappeared but rather to an exercise of the power of the state by the party present in all the apparatuses. The State always imposed its coercive power on the dominated classes and on members of the dominating class but profoundly changed the form in which it imposed its power. When this new form of domination had its full growth, that is to say when the party leadership dominated people through the complete set of state apparatuses and especially through the policing system and terror, one was confronted by a totalitarian power. The different apparatuses of the State continued to be the bulwarks of conflicting interests. That was, precisely, the reason for the need felt by the political leadership of the party to multiply control in an effort to be in full command of the working of these apparatuses.

The party thus became an apparatus *separated* from other apparatuses, *placed above them* and doing its utmost to *dominate* them through constant struggle and efforts. Thus it intended to constitute itself into a “supreme State apparatus”. This makes it not a “Party State” but a *party of the State*.

The notion of a party of the State explains essential realities better, that is it conveys the distinction between the party and other apparatuses (which it dominated) and the fact that the party could have imposed its power only with the help of its other apparatuses because it did not derive (or not mainly) its authority from the confidence reposed in it by more or less wide layers of the

population but from specific relations that it maintains with the administrative, economic, police, ideological apparatuses, etc. Because of these relations, it had the benefit of an exceptional capacity for constraint and repression as also for the “state fetishism”, for the “supernatural” power which is attached to the state with the result that people had the sentiment that there was no escape from its hold (except in a revolutionary period).

Thus relations of the party with the State do not land to a fusion of the two. Moreover, in cases of grave crisis, party and State apparatuses could come apart and, if necessary, confront one another.

The notion of the state party, that is to say a party distinct from the state while maintaining with it relations of interiority, was essential for possessing two fundamental and specific roles played, as we have seen, by the “leading party” On the one hand, it presided over the *promotion and management*’ of a new bourgeoisie. On the other hand, it became the *specific organisation of the dominating class* and had constantly to wage a battle for its *unification* even at the expense of repression against some of its members. It was because of the mediation of the state party, which was itself subjected to the dictatorial authority of a small political oligarchy or of an autocrat who had imposed himself on this oligarchy, that the Soviet bourgeoisie “directed” and “oriented” capitalist accumulation. From it arise the specific traits of Soviet capitalism about which it could be said that it was a “*party capitalism*”

Section 5

THE “PARTY CAPITALISM” AND ITS SPECIFIC TRAITS

The notion of “party capitalism”, proposed here tentatively for discussion, is intended to reveal that Soviet capitalism was also subject to *specific constraints* even while it was subjugated to the exigencies of accumulation for the sake of accumulation.

These constraints arose from the place which the party occupied in the system of social relationships and the struggle which led its leadership to maintain its role in the process of production, and reproduction. It also flows from the image which this leadership had of the means to be put into operation for maintaining its role.

In the conditions of the USSR of the 1930s, party capitalism was capable of pushing the rate of exploitation of producers to an exceptionally high level. However, despite such a rate, it was hardly capable of regularly increasing production, especially civil production. The high rate of exploitation, of course, led to a high rate of investment but did not bring about a rate of growth of production commensurate with the gigantic effort at accumulation.

During the years 1930 to 1950, the contradiction between the capacity for exploitation and for accumulation of party capitalism and its capacity to generate growth in production was partially masked by enormous transfers of the population from agriculture towards industry. This ultimately led to high increases in the overall production. However, even at this time, the specific form assumed by the crises of over accumulation of capital²³ showed that this type of capitalism could only slightly bring about an intensive accumulation leading to a rapid growth of productivity of work and, therefore, of avoiding generalised shortages and substantially increasing the living standards of workers²⁴. This resulted in constraints which this capitalism allowed to weigh on the economy.

Among these constraints, mention must in the first place be made of the narrow limits imposed on initiatives of enterprise directors placed under the watch of the party and central administrations which led to a brake on a number of innovations. On the other hand, bureaucratic domination exercised by the party surrounded all economic activities with an atmosphere of "secrecy" (isn't secrecy the very "soul of bureaucracy"?) which also blocked innovations becoming known and technical progress being achieved.

Moreover, the preoccupation of the party with maintaining enterprise under its control often led it to selecting such "officers of economy" whose chief merit was "flexibility" and docility and not technical or managerial abilities. This kind of choice was

dictated, in the last resort, by the fear of a rise of an active and experienced layer of economic cadres who would be prepared to run the risk of rejecting the guardianship of the party.

However, there were other elements too, and as decisive, which could explain the feeble “dynamism” of civil production and consumption in conditions of party capitalism as it developed in the USSR from the second half of the 1930s. In these conditions the cost of reproduction of the work force could be maintained at a low level making it possible to make large investments in the production of the means of production, then, increasingly, in the production of armaments. But the low level of wages encouraged neither the leaders of economy nor those of the enterprise to improve conditions of production to any great extent. This practice of low wages resulted in an increase of labour productivity leading to a relatively low fall in monetary costs. This contributed to a disincentive to favour a part of technical changes which would raise labour productivity²⁵ as it appeared to be “hardly profitable” Thus a vicious circle was set up because the low level of wages and bad living conditions were in their turn scarcely favourable to the development of efforts of producers and an increase in productivity. The same was the case with the hardening of despotism in the factory. By raising discontent among workers, it also tended to put a brake on an increase in productivity. These factors played an important role particularly towards the end of the 1930s, at a time when the Soviet Union had signed a pact with nazi Germany and occupied a part of Poland and was set on the path of external conquests.

Footnotes

1. The phenomenon of “clientelism” appeared as early as the 1920s, quite specifically in the party. During this period, it was a case of “clientels” whose extension apparently remained local but which formed many groups. These groups represented one of the forms of *typical elementary organisations of such a bourgeoisie*. The “clientalism” is denoted in official discourse by various expressions of a pejorative nature such as *Krugovaya poruka* (“solidarity guarantee”), *Kumovstvo* (“nepotism”), *pokruvatelstvo* and other “family circles” (cf. M.Lewins, “L’Etat et les classes en URSS”

- (The State and the classes in the USSR), *art.cit.*, p.21.
2. Even in 1930, certain central services received such documents at the rate of 2500 per day (cf. a study by Shklovsky published that year in *Revolutsia Prava*, cited by M.Lewin, in "L'Etat et les classes sociales in URSS", *art.cit.*, p.21). This did not improve central control in any way, because these reports contained so many inaccuracies and contradictions that Ordzhonikidze said "You may delve into it as much as you like but you will not be able to take out any accurate data" (cf. S. Ordzhonikidze, *Stat i rechi*, 2 vol, Moscow, 1956, t.2, p.228.)
 3. cf. *Supra*, p.177. I am substituting this term to one of "state bourgeoisie" which I had used in the first two volumes of this work. The earlier term can be more useful to denote the functionaries of State capital at the end of the 1920s (when the party had not yet played its role of midwife and unifier of a new class). It is no longer suitable at the end of the 1930s.
 4. The concept of the "structural form" was put forth by M. Aglietta in *Regulation et Crise du Capitalisme* (Regulation and crisis of capitalism), Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1976, p.163. It was developed, in a totally different context by A. Lipietz, in his book, *Crise et Inflation, pourquoi?* (Why Crisis and Inflation?) Paris, Maspero, 1979 (cf. especially, p.176s).
 5. cf. Volume 2 of the present work, p.314, no. 3 and p.419, no.2. See also M. Voslensky, *La Nomenklatura, Les privileges en URSS* (The Nomenklatura, The privileged in the USSR), Paris, Belfond, 1980, and also the following writings of sociologist Thomas Lowit: "Y a-t-il des Etats en Europe de l'Est?" (Are there States in Eastern Europe?), *Revue française de Sociologie*, XX, 1979, p. 431S. (See especially p. 438s.) "Le parti polymorphe en Europe de l'Est (The polymorphous party in Eastern Europe, in *Revue française de science politique*, no. 4-5, 1979 and also *Autorite, Encadrement et organisation du travail dans les industries des pays de l'Est europeen* (Authority, encadrement and organisation of work in the industries of the East European countries), CORDES Report, 1980.
 6. cf. Boris Lewytskyj, *Die Kommunistische Partei der Sowjetunion* (The Communist Party of the Soviet Union) Stuttgart, 1967, and by the same author: "Die Nomenklatura - ein Wichtiges Instrument Sowjetischer Kaderpolitik" (The Nomenklatura, an Important Instrument of the Soviet Policy on Cadres), *Osteuropa*, no.6, 1961.
 7. cf. M.Voslensky, *op.cit.*, p.81.
 8. This practice did not change when the 1936 constitution proclaimed

- the "independence" of judges and tribunals.
9. M. Faisnod, *Smolensk...*, *op.cit.*, p.80s, which cites the file RS 924, Protocol no.156 of the office of *Obkom* (decision of 19 October, 1936).
 10. cf. T. Lowit, "Le parti polymorphe" (The polymorphous party...) "*art.cit.*", p.444.
 11. cf. H. Carrere d'Encausse, *Staline, L'ordre par terreur* (Stalin, Order by Terror), *op.cit.*, p.91.
 12. With Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great, Russian history had already known situations where political power changes and subjugates the dominant class, subordinating it to itself through terror which, incidentally, did not have the same scope as that of the 1930s. These episodes suggest that a certain "political culture" of Russia could "favour" these relationships and political practices. They would in no way be enough to explain the situation in the 1930s. Marc Raeff's book *Comprendre l'ancien regime russe* (Understanding the old Russian Regime), Paris, Seuil, 1982, gives a large number of indications on Russian political culture.
 13. cf. Lenin, OC, t. 36, p. 619.
 14. These similarities have been brought to light by G.Konrad and I. Szelenyi in *La Marche au pauvoir des intellectuels* (The Intellectuals march to power), Paris, Seuil, 1979, p.91. According to these authors, these similarities have roots in history. They arise from the role which the state played since long in the *process of accumulation* in Russia and in Prussia. According to Konrad and Szelenyi, *the reinforcement of the role of the Soviet State in the process of accumulation had contributed to the reinforcement of a State bureaucracy similar to that of the Czarist Russia*. These aspects of the analyses by Konrad and Szelenyi appear to me relevant. I am, however, in disagreement with some aspects of their analyses, mainly with those which lead them to consider that the countries of the East would experience what they call "precocious socialism" (*ibid*, p.149s) and that intellectuals as such (that is to say as "owners of a knowledge") could constitute a dominating class, which happens to be the central thesis of their book. The analyses presented in Tome 2 explains the reasons for this disagreement.
 15. Cf. J. Molitor's translation of this passage (which is dated 1841-1842) in the fourth tome of the *Oeuvres philosophiques* (Philosophical works), Paris, Costes Editeur, 1935. The German text can be found in MEW, T.1.

16. Emphasis in the text, J. Molitor's translation, *op.cit.*, p.102 and MEW, t.1, p.249.
17. These are the terms used by Marx in the passage quoted, "treachery" is emphasised by him (*ibid*).
18. Retranslated from the German text, *op.cit.*, p.249. This remark by Marx also illustrates essential aspects of ideological and political relationships of the "Soviet" formation dominated by the bourgeoisie, namely the cult of tradition, authority and conservatism.
19. cf. Molitor's translation, p.101-102, reviewed from MEW, t.1, p.249.
20. In his book, *Pays de l'Est, Vers la crise économique generalisée* (Countries of the East, towards general economic crisis), Lyon, Federop, 1979, Jacques Sapir indicates the importance assumed at some moments by the recourse to the "crossed careers" (*op.cit.*, p.209).
21. On the working of this redoubling and collusions between different apparatuses, see G.Konrad and I. Szelenyi, *La Marche au Pouvoir des Intellectuels* (The Intellectuals march to power), *op.cit.*, p.169.
22. In *Rovue Francaise de sociologie*, XX, p.431-466.
23. On this point see the fourth part of tome I of the present volume: *The Dominated*.
24. It is known that on the eve of the Second World War, the real wage of the Soviet worker did not return to the level reached at the end of the NEP. After having crashed at the end of the war, it returned to the level of 1913 and of 1928 only between 1963 and 1965 (cf. Jovan Pavelski, "Le niveau de vie en Union Sovietique de 1950 a nos jours" (Living standards in the Soviet Union from 1950 to our days) in *Cahiers de l'ISEA*, t. III, no. 2, February 1969, p.360). We are thus witnessing a period of long pullback which allowed the return to 1913 living standards only after half a century.
25. For example, auxiliary works of handling and transport inside the factory were mechanised only to a very small extent.

Part Four

RATHER HITLER THAN THE EMANCIPATION OF THE PEOPLE

During the 1930s, relation of the Soviet Union with the rest of the world witnessed a series of spectacular changes. We do not propose to examine them in detail here nor do we seek to analyse the whole range of changes contingent upon factors internal or external to the USSR that had led to these changes. We would focus our attention upon the turning points, upon episodes that throw light on the political, economic and ideological changes that took place in the USSR itself, on the manner in which orientations taken by Soviet diplomacy were expressed and decisions of the Communist International (CI) (these depending directly upon the former and through it on the policies of some Communist Parties).

Generally speaking, it would appear that Soviet foreign policy was, above all, the consequence of political and social developments taking place within the USSR itself and repercussions of these developments on the conception that the leaders of the USSR had of the *interests of the Soviet state*. The political line of then CI was subordinate to *these very factors* because the CP of the USSR played an absolutely dominant role in defining and applying this "line"¹.

The decisive role played by the CP of the USSR and by the internal situation of the Soviet Union in the changes affecting the modalities of the intervention of the USSR in the international relationships imposes an analysis of these changes within the framework of a periodisation which openly takes into account the policy of the Soviet party and its turns. This leads us to the following periods: the years 1928 to 1934 when the orientations adopted in 1928 predominated while the policy of collectivisation

from above and rapid industrialisation were on the anvil; the years 1934 to August 1938 when a new orientation appears to take form, that of "rapprochement" with France and England; and finally, the years from August 1939 to June 1941 which are characterised by various forms of Soviet-German Co-operation.

Footnotes

1. This remark is valid for the years earlier than 1930 too, including those when Lenin was alive, as can be seen, among others, by Soviet diplomatic decisions and those of the CI concerning Turkey in 1921 and China in 1927 and 1930. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is one of the rare parties to resist this subordination to an extent because it had a direct experience of the expansionism and colonialism of Greater Russia on its frontiers, mainly in Central Asia. It escaped this subordination from 1935 when Mao Tse-Tung took over the leadership (on this point cf. F.Claudin, *La Crise du Mouvement Communiste* (The Crisis in the Communist Movement), t.1, Paris, Maspero, 1972, especially p.142 to 189 and p.285 to 346.

CHAPTER 1

THE PERIOD 1928-1934: DENUNCIATION OF THE ENTENTE COUNTRIES AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST "SOCIAL-FASCISM"

Basically, despite the limited changes (about which we shall say a few words), the foreign policy of the USSR and the line of the CI did not undergo any major changes between 1928 and 1934.

Till the beginning of 1934, the main international treaty signed by the USSR and which was the basis of its external policy was the one concluded with Germany at Rapallo, in 1922. Although the explicitly stated contents of the treaty are quite

modest, it laid the basis of the political, economic and military relationships between the USSR and Germany for more than 10 years. It had become the symbol of a German-Soviet *entente*. The two countries came out at the same time of their diplomatic isolation and together denounced the treaty of Versailles imposed by "imperialist brigands" with a view to "colonise Germany" (according to the terms then used by the CI). Along with the Rapallo accord, the Reichwehr had obtained from the USSR the possibility of having training centres at its disposal. As a counterpart, it cooperated in the training of the Red Army¹. That indeed was the result of military treaties directly negotiated between the Red Army and the Reichwehr with von Seeckt and von Hammerstein representing the German side without any consultation with the German social-democrat government²

These treaties permitted the Reichwehr to receive through the USSR or manufacture in USSR with its own technicians the armaments which the treaty of Versailles had forbidden it to possess such as strike tanks, aeronautical weapons, poison gas, etc. The USSR also placed at the disposal of the Reichwehr, sites and exercise centres for the use of its weapons. This military collaboration continued till the autumn of 1933.

In a general way, the VI Congress of the CI (1928) and the July Plenum of the CC of the bolshevik party asserted that a revolutionary situation was ripening. This quickly led the CI to consider that social-democratic parties were "the main enemy" of the working class. Moreover communist parties were invited to purge themselves of all hesitant elements³. Thus we witness the browbeating of the majority of CPs, particularly of the German Communist Party which saw Thaelman imposed upon it as the general secretary while its CC had unanimously divested him of his functions⁴.

Section 1

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST "SOCIAL FASCISM"

In April 1929, the X Plenum of the EC of the CI carried to its "logical" limit the orientations it had taken a year earlier. The social-democrats became "social-fascists" In the joint report presented by Manuilsky and Kuusinen, it was said:

The aims of the fascists and social-democrats are the same, the differences exist in orders and to an extent in methods (...). It is evident that as social-fascism grows it would look more and more like pure fascism⁵

The report adds that this would make the conquest "easy" for the revolution of the majority of the German working class.

Contrary to the assertions of the CI, the development of the economic crisis - from October 1929 - did not in any way ripen into a "revolutionary situation" On the other hand, we notice a rapid growth of the Nazi party which obtained 6400000 votes in 1930 as against 900000 in 1928. The membership of the GCP remained stationary although its votes showed an increase while votes obtained by the social democrats went down⁶

The leadership of the CI and the bolshevik party stuck to the orientations decided in 1928 despite the lie given to their "forecasts" by facts. In fact, these orientations were in no way the product of an explicit and rigorous analysis. It was the result of a "pseudo-leftist" and Sectarian path followed inside it by the bolshevik party in its struggle against "rightists" and "trotskytes" both of whom were for a united front with the social democrats in the face of rising fascism. On the other hand, the leading Soviet group formed around Stalin was, in effect, more hostile to social democracy than to German nationalism, and this for several reasons.

One was the hope placed by the leadership of the CP in the Bismarkhian tradition of *Ostpolitik*. This policy of non-antagonism with Russia had the support of a big segment of the

German right-wing and particularly of the higher-ups responsible for the German army and diplomatic services. Another reason, closely related to the first, was military collaboration prevailing between the USSR and the German military high command and which the social democrats were opposing. The Soviet leadership was apparently convinced that the Nazis, once in power, would not revoke this collaboration (and such indeed was the case for a while). In its view, the strengthening of Germany against France and England (then considered as potentially the main enemies) was a good thing. Of course, these leaders could not refuse to see that a Nazi victory would lead to brutal repression against the GCP but it did not appear to be particularly worried and declared that this victory could only be for a short duration and the later defeat of nazism would inevitably bring the GCP to power. Most importantly, these leaders were convinced that the loud antibolshevik noises of the nazis was more a matter of internal politics and the anti-communism of the nazies would not change the external policy of Germany. For them, this policy could not be affected more than their own by the "ideological considerations" as the two countries had common interests in the face of England and France that were looked upon as imperialists and the most expansionist and menacing⁷ All these understandings would harden the virulence of the attacks against social democrats and the true beneficiary of these attacks was the national socialist party.

However, beyond the considerations that made nazism appear as in no way harmful to the interests of the State of the USSR - and which, therefore, led the leaders of this country not to look upon it as its main enemy - there is one other element which explains for sure the attachment of the Soviet leadership to the line defined (under its direct influence) by the VI Congress of the CI. Several aspects of the ideology of the Soviet leading group, its profound scorn for democracy and for the existence of authentic working class organisations, its conceptions of an economy "subservient to the State", the anti-semitism of many of its members brought this leading group very close to nazism and ready to collaborate with it.

Further, the nationalist component of the ideology of the Stalinist leading group made it especially full of "empathy" for

the nationalism of a defeated Germany. A certain conception of "bolshevism" had already driven, in the beginning of the 1920s, some members of the GCP to an expression of sympathy for nationalism (with which they had even organised common demonstrations on the occasion of the assassination of the militant of the extreme right, Schlageter). This had led Lenin to denounce national bolshevism, this "bloc against nature between the gentlemen of the Hundred Blacks and the Bolsheviks" This tendency was then excluded from the GCP. But this did not prevent the executive committee of the CI from attempting a reconciliation with German nationalism in the name of the "revolutionary role of disaggregation" which the German bourgeoisie could play in the face of the capitalism of the *Entente*"⁹ That too was, and despite the various turns made later, one of the backgrounds to the political line followed by the CI from 1928 to 1934.

Section 2

THE DENUNCIATION OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE ENTENTE AND THE GERMAN POLICY OF THE USSR

In the political report which Stalin presented he showed France as "the most aggressive and the most militarist of all the aggressive and militarist countries of the world"¹⁰ This declaration only reiterated the denunciation practiced since the years of the "entente" capitalism" It could, however, be explained by the defeat of attempts made by the Soviet Union wishing to sign a non-aggression pact with France. An attempt in this direction had already been made without success by Litvinov in March 1930"¹¹

At that time, Germano-Soviet relationships were, in fact, passing through a difficult phase. After the ratification of the Young treaties by Reichstags in March 1930, and the evacuation

accords by the allied troops three months later, the German government no longer considered its relationship with Moscow as the cornerstone of its foreign policy. However, after long negotiations a joint Germano-Soviet communique was issued on 14 June 1930 affirming the spirit of Rapallo as the basis of the relationship of these two countries. A few months later, on 23 March 1931, Germany accepted to renew the non-aggression pact which had been concluded between the USSR and Germany in 1926 ("Treaty of Berlin") and on 24 June the treaty was in effect renewed. This was acclaimed as a great success for Soviet diplomacy¹². In fact, this success was very relative because relations with Germany had a tendency to deteriorate. It was only in May 1933 when the nazies were in power, that the renewal protocol of the "treaty of Berlin" was ratified. *The USSR was thus the first country to have entered into a treaty with Nazi Germany.*

During the 1930s and the years that followed the GCP faithfully adopted the line of struggle against social democracy. It participated by the side of the nazies and "steel helmets" in the referendum of 9 August 1931 against the social democratic government of Prussia. The fall of this government was hailed by *Pravda* on 13 August 1931 in the words:

The results of the vote represent (...) the greatest blow which the German working class had ever dealt to social democracy.

As for the CI, it saw in it an "example of the application of the policy of a united front" Trotsky commented on this declaration with the words:

No proletarian brain could even understand for what reason the participation in the referendum along with Fascists (...) should be considered as a "policy of united front towards social democrat and christian workers," all the more so as the way is now open for a "Hitler-Hindenburg government"¹³.

The GCP, for its part, followed the path of the CI and opposed any joint action with socialists while it supported strikes organised by nazies to limit the public to the ADGB (the communist-

dominated trade union linked to the socialist party). On this occasion, in the autumn of 1932, E. Thaelmann spoke of a class “united front with the nazi proletariat”¹⁴.

In the situation so developing the nazi party (NSDAP) comes close to power although its electoral influence was lesser than in November 1932 during the second elections of the year. On 30 January 1933, Hindenburg invited Hitler to be the Chancellor. That was the beginning of the III Reich. On 27 February the Reichstag was burnt after a nazi provocation which made it possible for the regime of terror to be installed in the name of the “protection of people and State” Thousands of militants and workers were arrested. The communist, socialist and centrist press was banned. Parties other than the nazies were declared illegal and the NSDAP organised new “elections” which ensured for it a parliament at its beck and call. However, again in March 1933, the leadership of the GCP declared “The proletariat has lost no battle, has faced no defeat... It is only a momentary retreat”¹⁵

The CI followed the same political line. It refused to attend the meeting which the socialist workers International had proposed to it in February 1933 when Hitler had become Chancellor. In June 1933, the CI again considered social democracy as the “main social base of the bourgeoisie” and its left wing “as its most crafty and the most dangerous fraction”¹⁶ It refused any unity of action with the socialist parties. On the plane of the relationships between the States, Litvinov, who was then the Commissar for foreign affairs, declared on 29 September 1933

Naturally, we sympathise with the sufferings of our German comrades but we, marxists, are the last one to be faulted for letting our sentiments dictate our policies.

With the same “logic”, the CI in December 1933 continued to present social democracy as the main enemy.

On the level of the relationship between states, Stalin underlined, in his report of 20 January 1934 to the XVII Congress that, as far as the Soviet Union was concerned, the rise to power of nazism does not in any way change its relations with Germany so long as they do not deviate from the “old policy contained in the treaties”.

He went on

Naturally, we are not enthusiastic about the fascist regime in Germany. But it is not a matter of fascism here for the simple reason that the fascism in Italy did not prevent the USSR from establishing excellent relations with that country¹⁷

That being said, he cautioned against the risks involved in Germany adopting a "new policy, anti-Russian, similar to the one of the ex-Kaiser"¹⁸. Even before 1933, Soviet leaders had made some attempts to avoid these risks.

Section 3

SOVIET STEPS TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION WITH GERMANY

Although German policy and good relations with the Reichwehr remained the dominant factors of Soviet foreign policy till 1934, the leaders of the USSR did not in any way reduce efforts to diversify their relations with other countries. These efforts were undertaken in the 1920s but they acquired a particular scope from 1930. These efforts could be seen in the multiplicity of economic treaties, especially in the signing of non-aggression pacts. Under these treaties the USSR and the signatory country agreed to eschew all aggressive action against the other signatory and to remain neutral in case where it was the victim of aggression by a third State. Soviet diplomacy underlined the originality of this kind of purely defensive pact which did not contain any obligation to join in an action against a third State. The first non-aggression pact was concluded in December 1925 with Turkey but till 1930 these pacts were few.

In 1931, Soviet diplomacy became more active and began to achieve some successes. Many reasons could explain this fact. Firstly, from the Soviet side the internal political crisis related to the campaign for "collectivisation from above", the debacle in agricultural production and famine imposed an effort intended to consolidate the diplomatic situation of the country while its internal economic difficulties were rendering it particularly

vulnerable. It so happened that the economic crisis engulfing industrialised countries from 1930 made them more receptive to an improvement in their relationships with the USSR which appeared as a huge potential market. Moreover, the rise in right wing extremism and nationalism in Germany forced the signatories of the Treaty of Versailles and partisans of the *status quo* to improve their diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

The various negotiations that started in 1931 were difficult and were often interrupted. In 1932, the USSR, however, began to find its diplomatic efforts meeting with some success. It signed a series of non-aggression pacts, with Finland (21 January), Lithuania (5 February) and Estonia (4 May). On 27 November, the pact between Poland and Soviet Union was ratified and on 29 November, the Franco-Soviet pact was signed. The French government was hesitant for a long time but finally accepted and encouraged its eastern allies, particularly Poland to do the same in the hope of reducing the risks of a political *entente* of a closer nature between the USSR and Germany¹⁹ Although these treaties were received officially in Berlin in a spirit of "understanding", they raised its unhappiness and gave rise to German attempts at "rapprochement" with France. These attempts remained without result. The non-aggression pact between France and the Soviet Union was ratified on 15 February 1933. This year and especially 1934 thus appeared as the starting point of a new step in Soviet foreign policy, a step in which this policy appeared to be oriented towards a rapprochement with "Western democracies"

Footnotes

1. On these points, cf. E.H Carr, *The Interregnum, 1923-1924 and Socialism in One Country*, London, Macmillan, 1954 and 1958 to 1965 and Louis Fischer, *Soviets in World Affairs, 1917-1929*, Princeton, 1951.
2. cf. Krumacher Lange, *Krieg und Frieden* (War and Peace), Munich, 1970, p.186-195 and Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Berlin. Russian military affairs, cited by Jacques Martin, *Memoire sur l'étude des relations politiques et économiques germano-sovietiques depuis l'armistice de Brest-Litowsk jusgu'au declenchement de l'operation Barberousse*, (Memoir on the study

- of the German-Soviet political and economic relations since the armistice of Brest-Litovsk till the unleashing of the operation Barbarossa), Ecole des Hautes etudes en Sciences Sociales (School of Studies in Social Sciences) (1974-1975), p.51s; See also Jean Pierre Faye, *Langages totalitaires* (Totalitarian Speeches), Paris, Hermann, 1972, p.93.
3. In volume 2 of the present work, p.377 to 381, there is a mention of the positions adopted within the CI and the party in 1928 and 1929. It can be seen there that the differences especially between Stalin (who violently denounced social democracy) and Bukharin (who was in favour a united front) were related to differences concerning Soviet internal policy and in particular to peasant problems and collectivisation.
 4. cf. F.Claudin, *La Crise du mouvement communiste*, (The Crisis of the Communist Movement), t.1, *op.cit.*, p.161 and J.Humbert-Droz, "L'Oeil de Moscou" a Paris ("Moscow's Eye" on Paris), Paris, Juillard, "Archives", 1964, p.256-259.
 5. cf. F.Claudin, *op.cit.*, p.179-180 and *Critica Marxista* of July-August 1965.
 6. F. Claudin, *op.cit.*, p.182-183.
 7. cf. Max Beloff, *The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia*, London, Oxford U.P., Vol. I, 1947, p.32s.
 8. Lenin's declaration on 22 September 1920, cited by J.P.Faye, *op.cit.*, p.91
 9. cf. *Die Rote Fahn* (The Red Flag), no.144, 26 June 1923 and Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism*, Frankfurt, 1950, p.339-343.
 10. cf. Stalin, *W*, t.12, p.263.
 11. cf. B.Ponomarev *et.al* (eds), *History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1945*, Moscow, 1969, p.287.
 12. cf. *Izvestia*, 26 June 1931.
 13. cf. Trotsky, *Ecrits* (writings) III, p.64, cited by F.Claudin, *op.cit.*, p.187.
 14. cf. MargareteBuber-Neumann, *La Revolution mondiale* (The World Revolution), Paris, 1971, p.289.
 15. *Ibid*, p.300-301.
 16. cf. B.M.Leibson and K.K.Chirinia, *Povorot v Polilike Kominterna*, Moscow, 1965, p.55 and Julius Braunthal, *History of the International*, New York, Praeger, 1967, Vol. II, p.395.

17. cf. Stalin, *W*, t.13, p.308-309.

18. *Ibid.*, p.309.

19. cf. J.A.Large, "The 'origins of Soviet Collective Security Policy, 1930-1932", in *Soviet Studies*, April 1978, p.212s, especially p.228 and *Documents diplomatiques Francaise*, (French Diplomatic Documents), 1932-1935, Vol. I, Paris, 1964, p.245-247 and p.395.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONTRADICTIONS OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY AND THE POLITICAL LINE OF THE CI (1934-1939)

During the early months of 1934 various elements of internal policy and international policy led to a change in external objectives apparently aimed at by the Soviet leadership and the Communist International (CI).

On the internal plane, a seeming attitude of "indifference" of the Soviet government towards Hitler's coming to power is far from meeting the approval of all those who still had a say in the bolshevik party. A conception very different from that of Stalin was then voiced by Kirov who was known to desire simultaneously a reduction in internal social tensions, and a "Western reorientation" to Soviet foreign policy¹ and evidently also by Bukharin. Both of them denounced the illusion that the power of Hitler would be weak and ephemeral and called for its antibolshevik threats to be taken seriously.

Kirov did not hesitate to declare before the XVII Congress that nazi Germany and Japan were the "most evident enemies" of the USSR and of the Soviet Communist party².

As for Bukharin, he wrote as early as in 1933 in *Izvestia* that Hitlerism posed "a dark and bloody threat to the world"³

Intervening once again with firmness at the XVII Congress of the party, he developed ideas quite different from those of Stalin and which found a serious echo among the participants at the Congress⁴ Bukharin underlined that the fascist ideology of Hitler in *Mein Kampf* should be taken seriously and that it was an openly *bestly* philosophy which inaugurated an era of assassinations and crimes and that when Hitler demanded a “living space” for Germany, it amounted to an open appeal for the destruction of our State” He declared that German intentions concerning the Soviet Union taken in conjunction with Japanese ambitions obviously signified that “our entire population should find a place in one of the blast furnaces of Magnitogorsk” He gave a call not to be resigned to the existence of the nazi regime and ended with the declaration:

It is the *bestly face of the class enemy!* That is what, comrades, we must realise and what we would face in all the historic battles that history has placed upon our shoulders⁵

In the years that followed, and till his arrest, Bukharin would uphold the same ideas and strove for a policy of *entente* with western democracies and for an accord between the communist and socialist parties.

On the international plane, the effective development of policy of Hitler gave increasing credence to those who asserted that the “antibolshevism” of Hitler did not arise only from ideology and propoganda but was practically at the root of his foreign policy. In any case, the pact signed on 26 January 1934 between Germany and Poland (without the USSR being probably informed of it) was considered by Soviet leaders to be a blow dealt to earlier German-Soviet policy. The leaders of the USSR thus showed themselves open to offers made at the end of May 1934 by Barthou, minister of external affairs of France. He proposed to the Soviet government a pact of mutual assistance within the framework of the League of Nations. On 25 May, Barthou announced before the French parliament that the entry of Russia in the League of Nations would be “a major event for world peace” Less than a week later, on 31 May, *Pravda* expressed itself in favour of negotiations between the French Communist Party (PCF) and French socialist leaders⁶.

This position of *Pravda* was a turning point for the PCF. In fact, in the first months of 1934 the struggle against "social fascism" was still being waged. All negotiations with socialist parties were rejected in the name of "unity at the base". The case of Spain and France was no different.

When Paris was in the throes of several fascist demonstrations (culminating on 6 February 1934) and when Socialists in France - French Section of the Workers' International (SFIO) - proposed unity in action, the PCF declared:

More than ever we denounce socialist chiefs, the socialist party, servants of the bourgeoisie, the last bastion of capitalist society⁷

Even after united demonstrations in February 1934, socialist leaders were denounced vehemently. Although they attended funerals of communists killed by the police, the organ of the French communist party, *L'Humanite* held doubts about them. It wrote "our comrades were shot down by the ammunition paid out of the funds voted by the socialist members of the parliament". On 19 February, this same newspaper denounced the slogan of the defence of the (French) Republic in the words: "As if fascism was not the Republic, as if the Republic was not already fascist"⁸

Again in March, the CI developed the same idea, especially in so far as the workers' struggle in Spain was concerned⁹. Everything changed after the 31 May article in *Pravda* made its appearance. *L'Humanite* reproduced this article and asserted that it was permissible to discuss unity in action with Socialist leaders. Further, *L'Humanite* launched an appeal in this direction to the administrative commission of the SFIO. This orientation was confirmed by the Ivry Conference of the PCF.

The follow up of these events show that the Soviet leading group (which Stalin dominated totally after the assassinat of Kirov in December 1934) was far from giving up the policy of collaboration with Germany. Thus, in January 1934, Litvinov was again in Berlin to propose the renewal of German-Soviet co-operation. The approach failed¹⁰. Soviet leaders were then led to emphasising, their rapprochement with Western countries at least in their public declarations. However, the effective orientation of

Soviet foreign policy was more contradictory than what it appeared to be. These contradictions were related, among others, to the development of a nationalist ideology.

Section 1

NATIONAL IDEOLOGY AND FOREIGN POLICY OF THE USSR

Generally speaking, development of a nationalist ideology tended to facilitate diplomatic relations of the Soviet Union with various foreign powers. By replacing formerly proclaimed internationalism, and its assertive desire to support the world revolution, with "Soviet" (in fact *Russian*) nationalism, the USSR presented a less disturbing face for political leaders of other countries. It was principally from 1934 that the terms *motherland* and *Russia* began to reappear in the Soviet press. The Russian past was more and more "rehabilitated" while *cosmopolitanism* was denounced as it was supposed to have "origins foreign to Russia"¹¹. In July 1934, an editorial in *Izvestia* declared that a Soviet citizen "should love his motherland" In 1936, the play *Motherland* was a great success, and then the film *We Russians*¹².

The rise of Russian nationalism was not a pure "tactical" manœuvre intended to "mobilise the energies" (when evoking a "radiant socialist future" was not enough) and to reassure international opinion, that is to say the leaders of the great powers. It also corresponded especially to changes in the relationship of social forces inside the country, to the consolidation of social inequalities, to the rise of conservatism and to the fear of "foreign adventures" to which a scarcely militant internationalism could be exposed.

The internal changes in the USSR and those on the international scene thus opened the way for new developments, on the diplomatic plane as also on the directives of the CI and the practice of its different sections. Thus, in September 1934, the USSR joined the League of Nations where it occupied a permanent seat in the Council. This was the equivalent of its "formal readmission into the international community"¹³. Shortly later,

the PCF widened its policy of "negotiations" with other parties. On 24 October, it contacted not only the Socialist but also the Radical Party and launched the idea of a "broad popular front" open to this "bourgeois party"

It was of little importance whether this initiative of the PCF was, in effect, due to Maurice Thorez, as he asserts¹⁴ or that it was suggested to him. One fact is certain: it facilitated Franco-Soviet talks for which the support of the radicals was indispensable (especially after the assassination of Barthou, on 9 October)¹⁵

The Franco-Soviet pact was finally signed on 2 May 1935. A few days later (from 13 to 15 May) talks were held in Moscow between Laval and Stalin which provided for a passage which came as a serious shock to the PCF. This passage reads as follows:

Stalin understands and approves fully the policy of national defence practised by France for maintenance of its armed forces to the level of its security.

This declaration obliged the PCF to make a 180 degree somersault. While a month and half earlier Thorez had reiterated his opposition in principle to any policy of national defence declaring that the working class should not be led to the "so-called defence of democracy against fascism?¹⁶", the PCF affirmed, after Stalin's declaration: "Stalin is right" The moment the defence of the Soviet Union was at stake, everything changed¹⁷

The Franco-Soviet pact was different from treaties signed till then by the USSR. It was not just a simple pact of non-aggression but a *pact for mutual assistance*. This pact put an end officially to co-operation between the Red Army and the Wehrmacht. On the internal plane in France, the signing of this pact led the PCF to making new overtures to the Radical Party. On 31 May 1935, Maurice Thorez said before the parliament.

We communists renew the Jacobin tradition, we would be ready to bring you our support, President Herriot, if you or any other leader of your party would want to assume the direction of a radical government (...)

Maurice Thorez even spoke of an extension of a popular front including parties to the right of the Radical Party¹⁸. This extension does not take effect but the "alliance" with socialists and radicals

takes shape in July 1936 and leads to the elaboration of a "common programme" supported by the three parties in the elections. This ends in the electoral victory of the Popular Front. The parliamentary majority thrown up by these elections was to enable the formation of a government led by the socialist, Leon Blum, and supported by the PCF. This government could last only two years.

Section 2

THE VII CONGRESS OF THE CI AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

On 25 July 1935 opened the VII (and the last) Congress of the CI amid the international situation rapidly described earlier. The CI was considered more and more as a simple instrument of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union by the leading group of the Soviet party. Stalin referred to it as *lavochka* (literally "the shop"). The debates in the VII Congress were rather confused but confirmed its complete subordination to the diplomatic interests of the USSR.

In fact, under the cover of a so-called "anti-fascist and anti-capitalist struggle" presented by Dimitrov in his report to the Congress, the central slogan given to the CPs was "the struggle for peace and for the defence of the USSR" In the resolution presented to the Congress by Dimitrov, it was affirmed that "the politics of peace of the USSR has (...) created the bases of its collaboration, in the cause of the safeguard of peace, with small states for whom the war that was menacing their independence, was a special danger, as also with the states which now have a stake in safeguarding peace"¹⁹ The report of Dimitrov let it be seen that "big States" which had a stake in peace were France and the United States and this was specified in the report of Togliatti²⁰. According to Dimitrov, this situation opened "the possibility of a very wide united front of the working class, of all workers and the entire people against the menace of imperialist war" Thus the

entire people are invited to form a "world front" In the situation so described, Togliatti called the CPs to bring pressure on the foreign policy of their countries to help in the consolidation of peace²¹. At the time this appeal had a concrete significance especially for the CPs of France and Czechoslovakia, the countries that had signed mutual assistance pacts with the USSR.

The general subordination of the policy of the CPs to Soviet policies was finally made clear by Togliatti who said, in the same report:

For us, it is absolutely indispensable that there exist an identity of objectives between the policy of peace of the USSR and the policy practiced by the working class and communist parties in capitalist countries. This identity of objectives cannot be the matter of any doubt in our ranks²².

The VII Congress of the CI avoided all analysis of problems of imperialism, of socialist revolution and anti-imperialist revolutions, Dimitrov said:

We have eliminated purposely from the reports as also from the resolutions of the Congress sweet phrases on revolutionary perspectives.

In fact, the VII Congress of the CI pushed to the extreme the logic of positions already affirmed by the previous Congress (in 1928) which had declared that the USSR had become "the international motive force of proletarian revolution (...), the basis of the worldwide movement of oppressed classes, home of international revolution, the greatest factor in world history²³"

These affirmations led to a total subordination of the action of the various CPs to the "interests" of the USSR such as they were defined by the leading group in the Soviet Party. At the time of the VII Congress, these interests obviously coincided with a diplomacy that claimed to be the one of "struggle against fascism" For a time, this diplomacy appeared to predominate. It however covered a subtle game which was preparing for a twist in the foreign policy of the USSR. This twist began to appear in 1937. It affected the war in Spain and its outcome. It laid the ground for a turnabout that was the German-Soviet pact of 1939.

Section 3

THE CIVIL WAR IN SPAIN AND SOVIET "AID" TO THE SPANISH REPUBLIC

The civil war in Spain is a major political event of the 1930s because of its general political significance and the forms taken by "aid" or, more exactly, the intervention of the Soviet Union. There is of course, no question here of analysing in detail the different aspects of the war in Spain. We will have to restrict ourselves to some general indications²⁴.

The government and forces supporting it, the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) among them, wanted to stick to modest objectives of the programme of the popular front but the mass movement rapidly grew and advanced demands that went well beyond the governmental programme. Factories and lands were occupied and collective enterprises were created²⁵.

Largo Caballero and his supporters (members of the PSOE) supported the mass movement, proposed unification with the communists, fusion of the UGT and the CNT (trade union centre of anarchist-trade unionist orientation). Practically, "between February and July 1936, a triple power had been installed in Spain, the lawful power, in reality quite weak; the power of workers, their parties and trade unions (...); and the power of counter-revolutionaries..."²⁶. The last was formed of Fascist groups and leaders of the army which was getting ready for a military putsch.

This took place on 19 July 1936. Thanks to mass resistance it was unable to exercise power extending over the whole country. There was an immediate counter attack. In the decisive regions of the country (which constituted what was called the "republican zone") political power was exercised *de facto* by workers organisations that were mainly under the influence of anarcho-trade unionists. They proceeded towards a "collectivisation at the base" of the main means of production²⁷ and took a series of steps which were not there in the initial framework of the programme of the "workers republican bloc"

The PCE was opposed to this development and tried to weaken mass organisations which were in disagreement with it whereas it consolidated the State apparatus inside which it was represented more and more.

Very soon, the Spanish civil war acquired an international dimension because it posed the problem of aid which outsiders could bring to Spanish political forces in confrontation: the lawful government and the leaders of the putsch.

Although theoretically favourable to the republic, the British government adopted a policy of so-called "non-intervention" by virtue of which those who adhered to it undertook to bring non-military aid (even in the form of supply of armaments) to either camps, thus treating the lawful government and fascist rebels on the same footing²⁸. Similar arguments were put forth by the governments of France, USSR, Germany and Italy. Only London and Paris respected them. Germany and Italy brought massive aid (in material and men) to the Franquists. Soviet military aid to the Republicans was equally strong from the autumn of 1936 to the autumn of 1937, but it was onerous and conditional. It enabled the penetration of two thousand "specialists" from the Soviet Union (political cadres, sleuths and armymen) into the Spanish State apparatus. These specialists set up their own apparatus with the help of the PCE²⁹

Soviet policy in Spain was aimed at specific objectives, namely, to control the policy and strategy of the republican government. It could enable the abandonment of the entire support to the government in the framework of a policy of developing a German-Soviet rapprochement. It also had in view economic and mainly financial objectives. The Government of the USSR took away as much gold as possible from the Republic. From September 1936, Soviet emissaries obtained from the first Caballero government a delivery of 510 tonnes of gold (the major portion of the reserves of the Spanish republic) in exchange for promises of delivery of arms. In fact, the value of gold seized by the USSR largely exceeded the value of the arms supplied.

The Spanish Republican Army received much fewer arms than the Franquists and often of bad quality. The quantities delivered by the USSR represented between 1/7 and 1/5 of those

delivered to Franco by the Germans and the Italians. Now, according to diplomatic documents seized by Germany at the end of the war, the price of German arms was not 500 million marks³⁰.

Some months after the arrival of the spanish yellow metal, Stalin already declared that Spain owed millions to Russia. In 1938, at the time of a request for military material made by Hidalgo de Cisneros, Molotov and Voroshilov made him sign a receipt of a debt of 110 million dollars³¹. Arms ordered at that time, moreover, never reached the republican army. On the other hand, there are indications that the rest of the Spanish gold was transferred to the USSR at the time of the defeat of the Republic³².

To the sums thus obtained by the USSR should be added, according to various sources, a payment of 2.5 billion francs of the period to the PCF. This sum, which was outside the management of Spanish authorities led, among other things, to the creation of a daily *Ce Soir* and acquisition of boats³³ on the account of an agency called "France-Navigation"³⁴. For some time this agency brought effective aid to the Spanish republicans, but rapidly controlled by the CI, it became above all an instrument of Soviet international policy.

To a number of republican fighters who did not know about the sums demanded by the USSR as the price of the few and technically old arms, the Soviet government appeared as the only friend of republican Spain. The arrival of the first arms sent by the USSR (28 October 1936) was greeted by them with enthusiasm.

The representatives of the Communist International used the prestige bestowed on the USSR at this time to put brakes on the people's movement on the pretext of the "bourgeois democratic" nature of the struggle of the Spanish people and of the need to "unify the widest possible forces" While in the beginning the people's forces had some real power, the State's forces were playing only a secondary role. The power of the State (where the PCE played an increasing role) was progressively restored. It can be considered that, in essence, this "restoration" was acquired towards the end of 1937, but this "restoration" placed the government in a close dependence on the PCE (and, therefore, on the CI, that is to say on the Soviet leaders)³⁵ Many a step had to be taken to arrive at this situation which was the result of a multiplicity of factors,

particularly errors of the people's movement and manoeuvres of the Soviet agents and politicians of the Spanish republican bourgeoisie.

We are in no way attempting here a "balance sheet of errors" of organisations that were victims of repression to which they were subjected by various agents of Soviet policy. The survivors of these organisations have themselves tried to do it with clarity³⁶. It remains for us to emphasise that the root cause of these errors lay in an insufficient appreciation of the nature of the USSR and its politics³⁷.

This had lead, for example, the CNT to accept (in September 1936) the dissolution of the Central Committee of the militia, then their liquidation in order to integrate them in the people's army. Their members soon discovered that they were specially discriminated against in the distribution of arms. Three months later, on 12 December 1936, began the political crisis of Catalonia whose government was shuffled under Soviet pressure applied through the intermediary of Antonov Ovesenko. The CNT accepted the elimination of the POUM (and thus readied itself for its own elimination).

Soviet pressure to push forth the formation of a government largely dependent upon it became acute in the beginning of 1937. It became brutal when the Caballero government drew the logical conclusion of the analysis it had made of the situation in which Spain found itself in the spring of 1937. According to this analysis, which remained implied, the civil war had changed into a war where Fascist powers played an essential role while the Spanish government only obtained limited Soviet "aid" and had, in exchange, increasingly taken the country into their hands either through the Russians, or through their agents. Spain thus became a battleground for manoeuvres by some foreign powers. It paid for it through its ruin and the death of its children. The conclusion of this analysis was that they should negotiate the end of war (as the military situation was still relatively favourable) and the retreat of the Germans and the Italians. This negotiation was possible. It even began, because France and England were in favour of it and Germany and Italy did not wish to plunge into a conflict which could take them further than they wished to go. Moscow had

knowledge of the diplomatic approaches undertaken in Paris and was hostile to their success. Soviet diplomacy did not want a peace that would permit the consolidation of a democratic regime in Spain. The USSR considered that it was in its interest to *let the war continue*.

Its intervention had, in essence, two forms: a provocation at Barcelona and the decision to the downfall of the Largo Caballero government.

The provocation at Barcelona took place on 3 May 1937. On that day storm troops led by Eubasio Rodriguez Sales (a known instrument of Soviet policy) attempted to capture the town's telephone exchange. This building was the bastion of workers forces and was in possession of the CNT and the UGT, since the beginning of the civil war. The reaction of the Catalan population was immediate. In a few hours, it was mobilised and gathered with arms in hand. They were prepared to resist the agents of Soviet policy as they had resisted the Franquists.

It is not possible to give here an account of the twists and turns of this resistance which was victorious on the ground without the Catalonian front being disarmed³⁸. However, the victory on ground did not prevent the provocation from attaining its objective. On 5 May, the central government takes over charge of "law and order" in Catalonia, limiting provincial autonomy. On 7 May, forces connected with the PCE unleash repression, adding to the hundreds of dead and wounded in the preceding days a large number of assassinations and arrests.

This provocation and other pretexts were used by the leaders of the PCE to demand that Largo Caballero be replaced by a politician more docile to its desires. Early in May the fall of Caballero was formally decided at a meeting of the executive of the PCE where the Spaniards were in a minority³⁹. It was decided that Juan Negrin will replace Caballero. On 15 May 1937, Largo Caballero resigned. On 17, Juan Negrin formed his government. This was an occasion for the NKVD - already widely present in the State apparatus - to further increase its presence. The conditions were henceforth fulfilled for Soviet agents to increase the arrests and fill State prisons and semi-official *chekas*⁴⁰.

One of the most important operations took place on 16 June: leaders of the POUM were then arrested and practically held in isolation by the NKVD. Andres Nin, leader of the POUM was assassinated by them after being tortured. Others were "indicted" Some were sent up for trials. The NKVD would have liked that these trials be similar to those in Moscow but they could not get all the results that they wished because the mass of people were mobilised and international solidarity could prevail. Moreover, the State apparatuses were not under the total control of agents of Soviet policy.

The action of the agents of the USSR weakened the resistance to fascism which was also undermined by numerous manoeuvres of the partisans of the USSR present in the military apparatus.

Two of these manoeuvres were especially indicative of the desire of Kremlin to let the war continue by avoiding victory. The first was in the beginning of July 1937. At that time, the republican army had prepared a grand offensive in the direction of Estremadure and Andalusia. The conditions were favourable. Merida and Badajoz could be occupied because fascist troops were pushed back before Jarama and the plains of Guadalajara. The victorious republican offensive could cut off the armies of the enemy in the North and South and could destroy their vital communications with Portugal, Morocco and Italy. The Higher Council of War had given its acceptance of the offensive. However, at the moment when it was to have been launched, General Kulik, chief of the team of Soviet military technicians received a counter order from Moscow and imposed an "alternative solution" This was the offensive of Brunete at Navalcarnero which was on 6 July. This offensive considered as senseless by most Spanish commanders, ended in a disaster in material and men. It was a veritable slaughter which seriously weakened the republican army.

The second significant manoeuvre took place in much less favourable circumstances in December 1938, while the Franquists were getting ready for their offensive in Catalonia. The republican headquarters had prepared a plan against the key position of Motril which would have obliged the enemy to displace towards the south a large portion of its reserves in Andalusia and Estremadure. The attack should have taken place on 11 December. The same day

General Miaja - who knew of the plan since 20 November and had approved it - suddenly cancelled the order of attack on the advice of his Soviet advisers. The enemy thus had the possibility of opening its offensive against Catalonia.

One must remember that this second "manoeuvre" was at a time when Soviet leaders considered that, for them, the "Spanish operation" was over. They stopped their shipments of arms and allowed a defeat to be consummated, a defeat that their "aid" had only prepared while delaying it⁴¹. The true objectives of their diplomacy were not to take long in appearing clearly.

Section 4

THE OBJECTIVES OF SOVIET DIPLOMACY

The objectives of Soviet diplomacy between 1934 and 1939 cannot be considered as unchanged. As a first stage this diplomacy tried to improve the relations of the USSR with western democracies. In the second stage, it sought to maintain "equidistance" with the Western countries and Germany while preparing for a rapprochement with the latter which, in the third stage, was concretised as a veritable alliance.

The second stage began towards the end of 1937. One could see it in Russian publications and Soviet documents, as R. Girault has correctly pointed out⁴². One would also see that by examining the various little episodes of the Spanish war. This change of objectives of Soviet diplomacy in 1937 is related to internal upsets then witnessed in the USSR with the hardening of the personal dictatorship of Stalin. It was not determined, as often mentioned, because of the capitulation of the French and the English at Munich, because that was in September 1938.

1. The Place of the Spanish War in the Soviet Foreign Policy.

What has been said in the preceding pages would reveal that in the first stages of the Spanish war, the "aid" given to the Spanish

Republic was a "card" used by the USSR to negotiate with France and England. In the second stage, Soviet positions in Spain became the means of developing a policy of neutrality, then negotiating for a German-Soviet pact. In the beginning of 1939, Krivitsky could highlight this aspect of Soviet policy in Spain. He was the first to announce, nearly four months in advance, the signing of the German-Soviet pact⁴³.

To attain these international objectives, the USSR supported the Spanish Communists and implanted in Spain a large number of agents so that the two practically were in control of the army and the police of the Spanish Republic and, moreover, they had at their disposal an autonomous repressive apparatus. At the same time, the Spanish war was used by the USSR to attain other objectives. Thus it made use of the positions acquired inside the Spanish Republic to "liquidate" as many as possible of the anarchists, anarcho-trade unionists, trotskites and supporters of the POUM. The Soviet leaders and their agents tried to present those it wanted to liquidate as "counter-revolutionaries" Their preoccupation was to get rid of the elements that were, at one and the same time, particularly combative and specially vigilant towards the attempts of the Soviet policy at treachery. Whence the remark of Slutski: "although they are anti-fascist soldiers, they are our enemies"⁴⁴ The Stalinist leaders, furthermore, wanted to "set up" in Spain trials and "confessions in public of their "enemies" in order to "confirm" the "truth" of the Moscow trials. The political situation in Spain and the courage of the militant victims of accusation made this project an utter failure.

2. Soviet Diplomatic Initiatives and the International Situation in Europe.

If 1937 is an year of a diplomatic twists and turns, it is no less true that between 1934 and 1939, various Soviet initiatives bear testimony to the fact that the Stalinist leadership of the USSR had never given up hope of restoring German-Soviet Co-operation (earlier symbolised by Rapallo) and this even during the few years when it proclaimed its attachment to the League of Nations and to the accords concluded with France.

These political overtures bear no immediate results (because of the negative attitude of Hitler). However, they laid the grounds for later negotiations, for example those begun on 24 December 1936 between Kandelaki and Schacht, President of the Reichbank and Minister of Finance. They covered too the matter of new economic accords among which was the one signed in March 1938. A little after the signing of this accord, Moscow recalled its ambassador in Berlin, Jacob Suritz who was not in the good books of anti-semitic nazies. He was replaced by Alexis Mirekalov. He was received by Hitler on 4 July 1938 who said:

I have learnt with satisfaction about the declaration under which your proposal to direct your efforts towards the establishment of normal relations between Germany and the Soviet Union. I agree with you that this corresponds to the interests of our two countries and would serve the cause of world peace⁴⁵

This declaration laid the ground for new developments and echoed the desire, expressed with increasing clarity by Soviet publications since 1937, to stay away from the line of rapprochement with Westerners.

This new line, in reality, reinforced an old and fundamental orientation of Soviet policy. This reinforcement can be explained by the situation then obtaining in the USSR, after the first two "Great trials" and the liquidation of the old leadership of the Red Army and while the Trial of Bukharin was getting ready. It was later to be come in favour because of international events which raised doubts about the desire of the "Westerners" to oppose German expansionism in the East. It also responded to changes taking place among nazi leaders about the order in which their operations of military expansion were to be carried out. These changes were related to the absence of resistance from the "Westerners" to the challenges flung by nazi Germany. Let us recall some of the events.

In March 1936, Rhineland, which should have remained demilitarised, was reoccupied by the German army while it was still quite weak. It provoked nothing more than purely formal protests. The system of alliances which France had concluded with Warsaw, Bucharest and Belgrade lost a large part of its credibility as a result. Only Prague still believed that Czeko-

slovakia would receive the support of France if it were to be attacked by Germany. The faith in a Western resistance to German expansionism was again seriously impaired when, in March 1938, Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany (which had officially "recognised" its independence two years earlier) and the "Westerners" limited themselves to purely formal protests. In the autumn of 1938, Germany annexed a part of Czechoslovakia, the Sudetenland, which was the home of a German-speaking minority. This time again France which was an ally of this country remained unmoved as did England and they "recognise this annexation by signing with Germany "the Munich agreement" (September 1938). When Ribbentrop, Foreign Minister of the Reich, came to Paris in December, the declarations of Georges Bonnet were quite ambiguous. They were interpreted as giving a blank cheque to Hitler in the East. Therefore, on 15 March 1939, German troops entered Prague. Germany occupied Bohemia and Moravia and created a "protectorate" in Slovakia and ceded to Hungary the Carpathian Ukraine (which was a part of Czechoslovakia).

Thus a situation ripened which made German leaders feel that the "Westerners" were incapable of resistance and confirmed the Soviet leaders belief that it was now possible for them to come openly to an understanding with nazi Germany with a view to fulfilling their own expansionist designs.

In March 1939, the situation was ripe for the German-Soviet pact.

3. Towards German-Soviet Pact

Germany and the USSR then exchanged a series of "messages" which were a prelude to open and official negotiations. The preparation by the USSR for these negotiations did not prevent it - indeed, the contrary - to carry on discussions with the West. In fact, the more these discussions progressed, greater was the price which the USSR tried to extract from Germany for an *entente*.

One of the earliest "messages" openly sent by the USSR can be seen in the speech which Stalin delivered on 10 March 1939 before the XVIII Congress of the Party⁴⁶.

In this speech Stalin listed all conflicts and invasions of the

previous four years and declared: "The new imperialist war has become a fact" Then, he examined the interests jeopardised by German aggressions (as also Italian aggressions in Ethiopia and the Japanese aggression in China) and said that these were not the interests of the USSR, but in the first place "those of England, France and the United States (who had made) one concession after another to the aggressors" From it Stalin drew the conclusion that these countries and "England and France had given up the policy of collective security" One could not say more explicitly that the USSR did not believe any longer in the accord of mutual assistance with these countries which had become "neutralist"

In Stalin's opinion this neutrality, this "non-intervention" was aimed at encouraging Germany and Japan to attack the USSR and China⁴⁷

But, added Stalin, Western supporters of this policy were "cruelly disillusioned", because instead of pushing further towards the East, against Soviet Union, "they (the Germans) had turned (...) towards the West and were demanding colonies"

This part of the report ended with an explicit warning: "The great and dangerous political game begun by the supporters of the policy of non-intervention could well end for them in serious failure⁴⁸"

Reference was then made to the nature of this failure, at least in veiled terms, when Stalin declared that the USSR was ready to enter into accords with all countries, the moment they did not seek to harm the interests of the USSR. He specified that the USSR would not allow "war provocaters" (which, in the context, meant the Western countries) "to have others pull chestnuts out of the fire for them" by pushing "our country into war"⁴⁹

This "message" was well received by Hitler and strengthened the positions of the supporters of *Ostpolitik* in Germany. One of the German "responses" was as follows: Instead of annexing Carpathian Ukraine (which could be used by Germany as a pretext to demand annexation of the Soviet Ukraine), the Reich could "cede" this territory to Hungary.

In the period which followed Stalin's speech events changed rapidly⁵⁰ On 22 March Germany annexed the Lithuanian port of

Memel; on 27 March Spain joined the "anti Comintern pact" which was earlier concluded between Germany and Italy. March end Germany officially raised the question of Dantzig with Poland.

At this time, the course of events could still appear to be in suspense. A decision of the English and the French contributed to a clearer orientation of this course. It concerned the "unconditional guarantee" given by the United Kingdom and France to Poland, on 30 March 1939. This "guarantee", which could not have materialised as the two guaranters were incapable of any direct help to Poland, was interpreted by Germany and by the USSR as directed against their ambitions. German demands on Polish territories were old and well-known. Soviet demands were never officially proclaimed but were often indicated during diplomatic talks. For the Soviet leaders, the Anglo-French "guarantee" to Poland amounted to a refusal to take these demands into account. Henceforth, things began happening very rapidly.

On 17 April 1939, Mirekalov, who was the ambassador of the USSR in Berlin, had a long interview with von Weizsacker, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, during which the USSR made new overtures. On 28 April, Hitler gave an important speech at the Reichstag where he did not attack the USSR as was customary for him earlier. He concentrated his criticism on England and the pact concluded with Poland⁵¹.

On 3 May 1939, the USSR sent a new "message" Litvinov who was a Jew and had been the architect of the Soviet policy of "collective security" was relieved of his duties. He was replaced by Molotov. All those who closely watched Soviet developments saw in this reshuffle in the Soviet Government, preparation for an open change in the foreign policy of the USSR.

From the spring of 1939, negotiations which continued between the USSR, England and France were carried out in an increasingly unreal atmosphere. As recalled by Rene Girault, in April 1939 "the Anglo-French propose a common declaration of the three governments which would be a sort of guarantee given, on the part of each, to the East European States (...) threatened with aggression"⁵². In fact, no one was negotiating. The British Government sought especially "to hold back the Soviets from going towards the Germans" while "the choice of the Soviets was not

really to negotiate with the Westerners"⁵³.

On the German side, documents available to us now showed that Hitler allowed himself to be persuaded by the partisans of *Ostpolitik*. He envisaged a treaty with the Soviets. There were probes in the direction of the USSR. It did not have any immediate results because Soviet leaders obviously wanted to obtain a higher price (in the form of territorial expansion) in exchange for a treaty with the Reich.

Soviet diplomacy now allowed the stakes to be raised. The French government, which had not given up an accord with the USSR understood it. It was willing to pay a certain price (behind the back of other States). A note from Daladier to Georges Bonnet suggested that it would be necessary to offer "satisfaction" to the Soviets from the side of the Baltic countries⁵⁴.

These diplomatic negotiations led to nothing. The Westerners come for military negotiations. These begin in Moscow on 12 August and pushed nazi Germany to take fresh steps. On 14 August, Ribbentrop proposed to travel to Moscow to conclude a truly political accord. On 15 April, the Soviets asked for details. On 19 April the Germans sent the reply: they were ready to ask Japan not to attack the USSR any more and were ready to delimit with the USSR the spheres of interest in Eastern Europe. The same evening, the Soviets accept to receive Ribbentrop in Moscow "to sign a non-aggression pact *which was drafted by the Soviet side* because Moscow had sent it at that time to Berlin"⁵⁵

The same day, 19 August, a commercial treaty was signed between the USSR and Germany. This treaty was under negotiation since the end of 1938. Its clauses were very advantageous to the USSR. It included a credit of 200 million marks to be repaid only after seven and a half years. The rate of interest was exceptionally low. The Soviet press announced that it "could become an important step towards the improvement of not only our economic but also political relations with Germany"⁵⁶.

Henceforth, the dice was cast. Ribbentrop arrived in Moscow. On 23 August 1939, a non-aggression pact was signed between Germany and the USSR. It had a *secret protocol*. This protocol made the pact a veritable alliance concluded between partners who divide up foreign territories. The Soviet turning point was reached.

The Anglo-French military delegation had to leave. In the beginning of December the German army invaded Poland. The English and the French declare war on Germany. The second world war had begun but the USSR remained for a while away from the conflict.

Footnotes

1. cf. B.Nicolaevski, *op.cit.*, p.45.
2. cf. Kirov, *Stati i rechi*, Moscow, 1934, p.40 and 45-46. Cited by Francesco Benvenuti, *Kirov in Soviet Politics, 1933-1934, op.cit.*, p.27. F.Benvenuti points out that in the abridged version of this speech published by *Pravda* (24 January 1934) this formulation was left out.
3. *Izvestia*, 1 May 1933.
4. The stenographic transcript of the debates at the Congress (XVII Sezd) mentions applauses (p.129) and *Pravda* 31 January 1934, p.129, (prolonged applauses).
5. XVII Sezd VKP (b), Moscow, 1934, p.127-129, cited by S. Cohen, *Bukharin...*, *op.cit.*, p.360-361.
6. cf. *Vsiemirnaia Istoria*, Moscow, 1962, t.9, p.301-302 and Jacques Fauvet, *Histoire du parti communiste francais* (History of the French Communist Party), t.1, Paris, Fayard, p.144.
7. Cited by F.Claudin, *op.cit.*, p.197-198.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 198.
9. cf. *Correspondance internationale*, 23 March 1934.
10. cf. Jacques Martin, *op.cit.*, p.73.
11. cf. H.Carrere d'Encausse, *Staline, op.cit.*, p.78.
12. cf. Nicholas S. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat, op.cit.*, p.166-167.
13. cf. Robert G. Wesson, *Soviet Foreign Policy in Perspective*, Georgetown (Ont), The Dorsey Press, 1969, p.127.
14. cf. Maurice Thorez, *Fils du peuple* (Son of the People), Paris, ES, 1949, p.87s.
15. cf. F. Claudin, *op.cit.*, p.204.
16. *Debats parlementaires* (Parliamentary Debates), Paris, 1935, p.1038.
17. F.Claudin, *op.cit.*, p.205.
18. Maurice Thorez, *Oeuvres* (Works), t.9, p.26, cited by F.Claudin, *op.cit.*, p.206.

19. cf. The Collection *Borba 'Za mir: materiali triekhi Internationalov*, Moscow, 1967, p.494-495.
20. cf. Togliatti, *Sul movimento operaio Internazionale*, Rome, 1964, p.110-111.
21. *Ibid.*, p.114-115.
22. *Ibid.*, p.136-137.
23. F.Claudin, *op.cit.*, p.85 and p.215-216.
24. There are many contradictory accounts of the Spanish war and on the activity of the Soviet apparatus in that country. They have to be interpreted in the light of the political positions of their authors and with many crosschecks.

The essential facts are as follows: In February 1936, the elections had been won by a "worker-republican bloc" composed of PCE, PSOE (Spanish workers socialist party), UGT (General Union of Workers) with the support of a large section of anarcho-trade unionists. The government formed after those elections consisted only of "bourgeois" and "petit-bourgeois" republican parties. cf. F.Claudin, *La Crise...*, *op.cit.*, p.243.

25. In the beginning of the 1960s, a Soviet historian accepted these facts but without drawing any conclusion about the contradiction between the mass movement and the line of the PCE (cf. K.L. Maidanik, *Ispanski proletariat V nationalnoe-revoliustionnoivoini*, Moscow, 1960, p.64-65).
26. F. Claudin, *op.cit.*, p.249.
27. The forms of this "collectivisation" which did not transfer ownership and management to State enterprises and its functionaries are described in publications of CNT-FAI and by K.Korsch, see, especially, Karl Korsch, *Marxisme et Contre-revolution* (Marxism and Counterrevolution) (texts put together, with commentary, by Serge Bricianer, Paris, Seuil, 1975).
28. In the aftermath of the franquist uprising, the French government was divided over the attitude to be adopted. Under pressure from radical ministers, advice of the government in London was sought. It unequivocally pronounced itself in favour of "non-intervention" and the French government rallied behind it. As for the *Soviet government*, it informed the French government that the pact of mutual aid would not intervene in case where there would be war which would be the consequence of intervention of one of the two countries in the internal affairs of a third country. However, in France, there grew a movement of solidarity with the Spanish people.

In this movement without any coordination, the PCF, some elements such as Merceau Pivert and his friends), trotskytes, and even some elements of the radical party (like Pierre Cot) were taking part. The aid thus offered was not negligible but it could only be marginal. The PCF played a special role in setting up the Inter-national Brigade but its activity was controlled by the CI. Its agents, that is to say those of the Soviet party, increasingly decided who could become part of it. They even liquidated on the spot those whose ideas were not in conformity with the Soviet political line. The day when the USSR stopped its "aid" to Spanish combatants, it also wound up the activity of the International Brigade (in October 1938). cf. J.Gerkin, *Les Communistes contre la Revolution espagnole* (The Communists against the Spanish Revolution), Paris, Belford, 1978, mainly p.25-29 and p.236-237 and R.G. Wesson, *op.cit.*, p.122 to 125.

29. At that time, Spanish communist leaders were quickly surrounded by "representatives of the CI" Among them the Italian Togliatti, the Hungarian Geroe (who later was to play a role in the repression of the Budapest uprising in 1956), the Bulgarian Stepanov and the Argentine Codovilla (cf. *ibid.*, p.244, n.133). Even before the civil war Codovilla was "adviser" to the PCE (*ibid.*, p.242, no.130). cf. also J. Gorkin, *Les Communistes...*, *op.cit.*, p.33. On other agents of the NKVD in Spain, cf. *ibid.*, p.206-209.
30. cf. *Documents of Foreign Policy*, London, 1951.
31. cf. Julian Gorkin, *Les Communistes ...*, *op.cit.*, p.76-77; which cites various sources. Cf. also the article of Jean Monds, "Krivikty, and Stalinism in the Spanish Civil War", in the English review *Critique*, No.9, Spring-Summer 1978, p.14.
32. cf. D.Grisoni and G.Hertzog, *Les Brigades de la mer* (The Sea Brigades), Paris, Grasset, 1979, p.287.
33. J.Gorkin, *op.cit.*, p.75-76.
34. On "France-Navigation" and some of the operations carried out by it, a lot of information is given in the book by D.Grisoni and G.Hertzog cited above. "France-Navigation" was created on 15 April 1937 (*op.cit.*, p.59).
35. cf. F.Clauin, *op.cit.*, p.263 to 265 and no.147.
36. cf. mainly the book of Diego Abad de Santillan (militant responsible for the CNT), *Por que perdimo, la guerra* (Why did we lose the war?), Buenos Aires, 1940.
37. Victor Serge is one of those who had best warned the Spanish

- revolutionary organisations on the true nature of Soviet policy. As a former militant of the bolshevik party, he was imprisoned in the USSR by the NKVD for his positions. He was set at liberty in 1936 as a result of an international campaign in which Romain Rolland and Gide played a big role. He settled down in Brussels towards the end of 1936. He then had a talk with Julian Gorkin, one of the leaders of the POUM. He told him: "You are condemned to fight on two fronts (...) your most dangerous enemy, because he happens to be inside the fortress and should capture it without any hesitation of the means to be used is Stalinism." (cf. G.Gorkin, *op.cit.*, p.42).
38. On this subject see G.Orwell's book, *Catalogne libre* (Free Catalonia), Paris, Gallimard, "Ideas", 1976.
 39. The composition of the executive of the PCE that met at the beginning of May 1937 is given by G.Gorkin in the work cited (*op.cit.*, p.82). The author points out that two of the most important representatives of the PCE tried to oppose the decision taken to cause the fall of the Caballero government. One of these two was none other than Jose Diaz, General Secretary, of the PCE. The other was Jesus Hernandez, Director of the Central organ of the PCE, *Mundo obrero* and minister for education. This resistance shows that the leadership of the PCE (no more than its ranks) were far from being simply "aligned" with the policy of Kremlin, but it was not in a position to offer resistance. Jesus Hernandez (who was asked to give a violent speech against Caballero) had later revealed this plot and had made it known that he knew of the conditions in which the leader of the POUM, Andres Nin, was tortured and assassinated (cf. Jesus Hernandez's *La Grande Trahison* (The Great Betrayal) Paris, Fasquelle, 1953). As for Jose Diaz who happened to be in the USSR during the Second World War, he had tried to defend Spanish refugees against the bad treatment meted out to them. He died in Tiflis in a "fall" from the balcony.
 40. That was the name then given in Spain to the prisons "managed" by Soviet agents (we know that *Cheka* was the first political police set up by the bolsheviks after the capture of power).
 41. Let us say, in passing, that the real role of the USSR in Spain was evidently denied by Soviet historiography but it was nonetheless alluded to by some Russian historians in the "denunciation of the personality cult". The responsibility for this role was imputed to Stalin. Thus, in the course of a discussion of A.Nekrich's book, 22 June 1941 (published in French under the title *l'Armee rouge assassinee* (The Red Army Assassinated), Paris, Grasset, 1968) which took place in Moscow on 16 February 1966, the Soviet

- historian Snegov alluded to the foreign policy of Stalin and said that Stalin had "betrayed the Spanish Republic, Poland, and the communists of all the countries". The reply to Snegov tried to deny these assertions but did not say a word in the case of Spain (cf. the French translation of Nekrich's book, p.244, cited from F.Claudin, *op.cit.*, p.283.
42. R. Girault, "Pourquoi Stalin a signe le pact germano-sovietique" (Why did Stalin sign the German-Soviet Pact?) in *l'Histoire*, July-August 1979, p.112.
 43. cf. The article of Krivitsky, "Stalin's Hand in Spain", *Saturday Evening Post*, 15 April 1939. In his book, *I was Stalin's Agent*, Krivitsky has shown that the presence of the USSR in Spain constituted an element of bargaining intended to arrive at one of the essential aims of Soviet foreign policy, namely to conclude a part with Germany (cf. *op.cit.*, p.98-99)
 44. cf. The book of Krivitsky, *op.cit.*, p.120.
 45. cf. Archives of the Ministry of External Affairs of the Reich, Berlin, 1938, cited by J.Martin, *op.cit.*, p.78-79.
 46. cf. Stalin, *Oeuvres* (Works), t.14, p.232s.
 47. *Ibid*, p.237 to 240.
 48. *Ibid*, p.241 to 242.
 49. *Ibid*, p.244.
 50. On the events of this period and various international negotiations in which the USSR then participated, see mainly the article of Rene Girault, "Pourquoi Stalin a signe 'le pact germano-Sovietique" (Why did Stalin sign the German-Soviet Pact?), p.105s E.H. Carr, *German Soviet Relations between the two World Wars*, Batlimore, 1951, and Adam B. Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence, the History of Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1967*, London 1968.
 51. cf. Martin, *op.cit.*, p.81.
 52. cf. *art.cit.*, of R.Girault, p.108.
 53. *Ibid*, p.108.
 54. *Ibid.*, p.109.
 55. *Ibid*, p.110 (emphasis in the Text).
 56. A Werth, *La Russie en guerre* (Russia at War), Paris, Stock, 1965, t.1, p.54.

CHAPTER 3

THE YEARS OF THE GERMAN-SOVIET PACT AUGUST 1939 TO JUNE 1941

The contents of the pact concluded on 23 August 1939, especially of its secret clauses, and the pact signed on 28 September 1939, on the occasion of the sharing of Poland (and which constituted the German-Soviet pact) are highly significant. They throw light on the conceptions of the leaders of the USSR about their interests and their role on the international stage.

The published part of the pact signed on 23 August 1939 (and which came into force immediately) is presented as an ordinary non-aggression pact. However, a clause present in all other pacts of this kind was absent from it, the clause which annuls the obligation of non-aggression in case where one of the signatories attacked a third party. It is the secret clause of the pact which practically makes the USSR and Germany partners in sharing the spoils of the defeat of other nations, through an agreement of the distribution of the spheres of influence and foreseeing future consultations.

The secret protocol of the 23 August pact leads to sharing of Poland between Germany and the USSR while it leaves undecided the question of the maintenance of the remaining part of the Polish State. It places Finland, Estonia and Lithuania in the zone of Soviet influence. The same was the case of the south of Bessarabia, then in Rumania. In the weeks that followed, "adjustments" were made in the provisions of this protocol. These adjustments especially provided for the territorial ambitions of the USSR¹.

The USSR undertook on the other hand, to handover to Germany a section of the antifascists and some foreign communists who happened to be on its territory. In application of this undertaking, several hundred persons, most of whom were in Soviet

prisons and camps were handed over to the Gestapo in the winter of 1939-1940².

At one stroke, the USSR gave up the role that it claimed for itself "as champion of peace", "defender of the independence of nations, "participant in the antifascist struggle" It revived the Czarist tradition. An absolute priority was given to the interests of the Soviet state which sought to extend to the maximum its sphere of influence and territories on which it exerted its domination and exploitation.

Section 1

THE ENTENTE WITH HITLER AND THE TERRITORIAL EXPANSION OF THE USSR IN THE AUTUMN OF 1939

The first country in which Soviet troops penetrated after the German-Soviet pact was concluded - and in conformity with it - was Poland. After the Wehrmacht had invaded Poland and occupied a large part of its territory, Germany invited the USSR to take its portion but this was done after a few days as if it wanted to keep up appearances. On 17 September, when the Wehrmacht penetrated territories allotted to the USSR under the pact, the Red Army also invaded Poland officially. This invasion began by being presented not as a result of the German-Soviet pact but as a consequence of the "internal weakness" of Polish State. According to the Soviet government, it was a case of going to the help of Ukranian and Bylorossian "*blood brothers*." However, this version did not satisfy Germany (because it implied that the USSR had acted of its own will). A common German-Soviet communique on 19 September showed things in a different light. It declared that German and Soviet troops had the mission of "restoring peace and order disturbed by the disintegration of the Polish State"³.

As a result of these military operations, the population of the USSR rose by some 12 million of which 7 million were Ukranians and 3 million Bylorussians. The great majority of the

Poles found themselves under German occupation, only one million Poles were incorporated in the USSR. In the succeeding months hundreds of thousands of inhabitants of the annexed territories were deported to the East as “hostile” and “disloyal” elements. As for Polish soldiers taken prisoners by the Soviets, the majority of them disappeared in camps or were massacred, most of them officers⁴.

On 28 September 1939, Ribbentrop returned to Moscow to sign the German-Soviet Friendship pact and a treaty on the boundaries between the two countries. As a result of this treaty, a common communique was published declaring that the Polish question was “definitively settled” The territories of Poland were totally distributed between the two signatories. Thus Poland was shared for a fourth time. The communique published on the occasion of this pact said that if France and England did not stop hostilities “Germany and (...) Soviet Union would hold consultations on measures needed to be taken”⁵

On 31 October 1939, Molotov pronounced the “funeral oration” of Poland when he declared:

A quick strike at Poland, first by the German Army then by the Red Army and nothing has remained of the ugly dwarf of Versailles⁶

In the stampede for the occupation of Poland and in agreement with treaties with Germany, the USSR turned towards the Baltic countries. The Soviet government imposed on Estonia a “treaty of mutual alliance” by virtue of which this country “accorded” military bases to the USSR. By this treaty signed on 28 September 1939, the USSR undertook to respect Estonian sovereignty. A little later, Latvia was forced to sign a similar treaty. Then came the turn of Lithuania but it obtained the “restitution” of Vilno (its historic capital, annexed by Poland after the First World War). These treaties place the three Baltic countries in strict dependence upon the Soviet Union, and were a precursor to their later annexation. However, at that time, the countries preserved their sovereignty.

Section 2

THE PACT, SOVIET DIPLOMACY AND THE COMMUNIST PARTIES

The abandonment of the principles which appeared to guide Soviet diplomacy till the conclusion of the pact was all too sudden and severe. The “antifascism” on parade as also the “respect for the sovereignty of nations” and condemnation of the recourse to force to regulate international disputes were thrown to the winds or were interpreted in such a manner as to lose all meaning. From one day to the next, the leaders of the USSR and their press changed their tune.

Pravda of 24 August 1939 presented the pact signed earlier as “coherent with the policy of the Soviet Union” that is a “partisan of peace and growth of commercial relationships with all countries” However, the Soviet press said nothing of the toast proposed by Stalin, in the course of the reception for Ribbentop, a toast in which he said: “Because the German people love their Fuehrer so much, let us drink to the health of the Fuehrer” - (a toast which lends itself to the interpretation either that the German communists, socialists and liberals “loved the Fuehrer”, or that they were no part of the German people”).

On 31 August, Molotov placed communication on the pact before the Supreme Soviet. He emphasised the idea of durable pacific coexistence with nazi Germany and expressed the idea that the accord with Germany constituted a turning point. He said,

23 August should be considered as a date of great historic importance. It is a turning point in the history of Europe, and not only Europe (...). Till recently, in the place of foreign policy, Soviet Union and Germany were enemies. This situation has changed it all and we have stopped being enemies (...) History has shown that between Russia and Germany enmity and war had never done any good to either.

Taking about France and England, and taking their “socialist chiefs” to task for being particularly violent in the denunciation

of the pact, he added:

If these gentlemen have any equally irresistible desire to go into war, well, let them go alone, without the Soviet Union. We shall see what kind of warriors they will turn out to be.

It was immediately after this declaration that Germany invaded Poland, that is to say "went into war" *Pravda* of 2 September published over three columns and on the first page the speech of Hitler announcing the invasion of Poland. In this speech Hitler said:

I can take as my own all the words uttered by People's Commissar Molotov in his speech before the Supreme Soviet.

The Soviet press announced that England had declared war on Germany but gave little space to the news coming from France and England.

On 29 September, *Pravda* published the joint communique at the end of the signing of the new pact of German-Soviet friendship. Molotov and Ribbentrop declared that the Polish question being "solved" it was in "the interest of all nations" that there be an end to the conflict between Germany on the one hand and Great Britain and France on the other. The communique specified that the signatories want to strive for peace to be reestablished and went on:

If, however, the efforts of the two Governments remain without any effect, Great Britain and France will necessarily bear the responsibility for the continuation of the conflict.

Thus a new theme is mentioned, the theme of the *inversion of roles* (which implied a change in the meaning of words). Germany had become a "peace-loving" power as against England and France who had become "instigators of war" This theme was taken up again and developed in the speech of Molotov on 31 October 1939 before the Supreme Soviet. Molotov qualified western countries as aggressors and denounced the idea of a war which would be waged for the "destruction of Hitlerism" Such a war, he said, would be an "ideological war" "a sort of the religious

war of the middle ages”

The speech developed this idea too.

During the last few months, notions such as those of aggression and aggressor have received a new content. Germany finds itself in the situation of the State that aspires for peace while France and England are for the continuation of war (whence this conclusion?) The roles are changing, you see (...).

Molotov, therefore, presents nazi Germany as having “peaceful” intentions, one of the “justifications” of the pact of friendship was, moreover, that it enabled the USSR to reinforce its relations with Germany and to give “a political support (...) to its aspirations for peace”⁷

It will be seen that all these assertions would be “forgotten” after the German aggression against the USSR. The “revision” will even go so far that Stalin will assert later that ever since 1939 the war had an antifascist character. Thus, in his “election” speech of 9 February 1946 he was to declare:

The Second World War (...) had from the very beginning an antifascist and freedom-giving character. One of its tasks was the reestablishment of democratic liberties. The entry of the Soviet Union into the war against the axis States could only reinforce (...) the antifascist and freedom-giving character of the Second World War⁸.

However, in 1940, the pact of friendship signed in September was the starting point for a totally different discourse of a new presentation of the international situation. It was also the starting point for a new extension of commercial accords between Germany and the USSR. This latest accord was expected to increase considerably the deliveries to the Reich in order to reinforce its war economy and to help it in overcoming difficulties born of the Anglo-French commercial blockade.

The tone of the Soviet press towards Germany and of messages of the leaders of the USSR to the leaders of the Reich were especially warm. Thus, for Stalin’s sixtieth birth anniversary when he had received greetings from Hitler and Ribbentrop, he

sent a telegram to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hitler in which he had said:

The friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union and Germany, cemented through blood, has all the reasons for remaining solid and durable⁹

The tone remained the same till the victorious offensive of the German army in France which gave rise to disquiet of which a feeble echo could be found in the Soviet press. However, Germany continued to be shown as a "peace-loving" power facing the "instigators of war" Most speeches of Hitler were reproduced by Soviet newspapers. This attitude was particularly clear during the first half of 1940 when a new economic agreement was concluded with Germany (11 February 1940) which considerably increased the supply of Soviet raw materials to the Reich.

In 1940 and till the German attack against the USSR, the aggressive acts of Germany were not presented as such. For example, the occupation of Denmark and Norway in April 1940, the invasion of Belgium and Holland in May 1940, and the German and Italian aggressions against the Balkan countries in 1940 end and early in 1941.

Soviet propaganda said nothing that would "shock" nazi leaders. The government and censors saw to it that nothing was pointed that could give offence to Germany or Italy. In this respect, Ernst Fischer, who represented the Austrian CP in the CI apparatus, cites a significant fact. In the beginning of 1939, he had finished writing a small book called *The Fascist Theory of Race* which contained, among other things, a chapter on "The Jewish Question" This book was about to come out of the press at the time of German-Soviet pact. The authorisation to publish was revoked. The *Glavlit* (the department of censorship) asked him to take out this chapter. He hesitated for a long time and then accepted to do so. His book could appear without this chapter and under the name *Reactionary Theory of Race*. However, things had taken such a long time that when the book came out the German army had invaded the Soviet Union. The *Glavlit* then intervened again that another chapter (which dealt with the question of the blacks in the United States) be taken out and the chapter on the Jewish question be reinstated. Finally, that was

the form in which the book came out, with the title *Fascist Theory of Race*¹⁰. This example shows how particular the Soviet government was - from 1939 to June 1941 - not to displease the nazi government. A circular had even been sent out to the camps to prohibit wardens from treating political prisoners views as "fascists"¹¹.

When the pact was concluded it largely paralysed the activity of the CI but the international apparatus installed in Moscow continued to function till the summer of 1943¹² and sent out, as always, directives and/or "analyses" in agreement with the requirements of Soviet diplomacy. For the CI, as for the USSR (at that time), the war going on was simply an imperialist war in which France and England were the aggressors. The CPs in different countries were asked to agitate accordingly. Those who tried to react otherwise were "called to order"

Thus according to the Rumanian historian Viorica Moisuc, the RCP had called in September 1939 for a struggle against fascism and nazi Germany and appeared to have been called to order by the CI¹³

As for the PCF, it immediately approved the German-Soviet pact and presented it as an act of peace but it began by adopting a "patriotic" position. It voted the military budget, reaffirmed its anti-Hitlerism while Maurice Thorez joined his regiment with the recommendation of the party¹⁴. However, after the entry of Soviet troops in Poland, the PCF lined up behind the positions of the USSR and the CI and asked that an end be put to the war against Germany. Moreover, on 27 September 1939, the PCF is banned.

When France was occupied, the CP tried at first to negotiate with the occupants the legal reappearance of its organ *l'Humanite*. The delegation in charge of this negotiation was Maurice Tread, in charge of international relations. Negotiations evidently broke down. It was only very slowly that the PCF changed its orientation towards one of active resistance that it carried out later¹⁵, but, meanwhile, German-Soviet relations were at first to worsen and finally change radically when Germany invaded the USSR.

Section 3

THE TERRITORIAL EXPANSION OF THE USSR IN THE BEGINNING OF 1940

The territorial expansion of the USSR and the extension of its "sphere of influence" did not stop with the operations carried out in the autumn of 1939. Other operations were to join them.

At first, in his speech of 31 October 1939, Molotov presented his territorial demands to Finland. Asserting that the frontier of this country was too near Leningrad and constituted a danger, Molotov asked that this frontier go back by a few dozen kilometers. Further, he asked that Finland offer a naval base to the USSR in the northern part of the Gulf of Finland. By way of compensation he proposed the ceding of wider Soviet territories to the north of the USSR. Finland rejected this demand but accepted to negotiate. In November, the Soviets assert that the Finns had bombed their frontiers and killed several soldiers. On 29 November, the USSR used the pretext of this incident to declare that the non-aggression pact between the two countries was violated and that it was, therefore, free from its obligation. War was declared against Finland. The press published threatening articles of the type "Let us sweep away the Finnish adventurers from the face of the earth" (*Pravda*, 30 November 1939). On 2 December, the Soviet newspapers announced the formation of a "People's government of Finland" This "government" was formed by a few Finnish communists living since a long time in the USSR, the majority of them working in the apparatus of the CI. On 3 December, the Soviet press announced that the USSR had signed a "mutual help and friendship pact" with this "government" and it indicated that the pact would be ratified at Helsinki by the two parties. This implied that the Soviet leaders did not recognise any more the government in place in the Finnish capital and proposed to install a so-called "People's government"

In fact, on the ground things did not develop the way the USSR wished. The Red Army suffered heavy losses and marked

time for several weeks. This led the Germans to make a more negative judgement than before about the military capacity of the Red Army. As a result of this aggression the USSR was expelled from the League of Nations. The Soviet leaders even feared that this would become an occasion for a "reconciliation" between Germany and the "Westerners" and that the USSR would have to pay the price for it¹⁶.

In January 1940, the Soviet offensive was still blocked despite the heavy losses suffered. Finally, after having brought in reinforcements and changed the command, a new offensive is unleashed on 11 February 1940. This one only made an advance of a few kilometres possible through the fortified line that protected the Finnish frontier. New reinforcements had to be brought in to mount a new offensive on 28 February. A few days later, the Finnish resistance was sufficiently broken for the government at Helsinki to propose negotiations. Moscow had then completely "forgotten" the "people's government". It spoke of it no more and negotiated with Helsinki on a peace treaty which was signed on 12 March. This treaty was harder for Finland than what Molotov has asked in October¹⁷.

The "initiatives" of the USSR in Poland and in Finland revealed the existence of Soviet expansionism which aimed not only at "bringing Russian lands together" but also which nursed larger ambitions.

From June 1940, in the aftermath of the victorious lightning offensive of German troops in France, Soviet expansionism showed itself up again, and in two directions.

At first in the direction of the Baltic states. They were already placed under the guardianship of the Soviet Union as a consequence of the German-Soviet pact. They were accused of violating "mutual assistance pacts" binding them to the USSR. Moscow sent them an ultimatum which ended in the formation of coalition governments controlled by Soviet commissars supported by the Red Army. According to the Russian press, these events were received with enthusiasm in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. "Elections" were organised where only candidates chosen by the local CPs "advised" by the NKVD could contest. New governments were formed. They put an end to spontaneous occupations of

factories, nationalised industry and “requested” incorporation of their country into the Soviet Union. And this was “granted” *Pravda* could then write: “The Sun of Stalinist constitution now spread its beneficent rays on new territories, on new peoples”¹⁸ In practice, one then saw the growth in mass deportations of those whom the NKVD accused of being hostile to the USSR.

The operations of the Red Army in the Baltic countries raised doubts in Germany. Therefore, a Soviet declaration on 23 June emphasised that Soviet troops were spread out in the Baltic states and were not concentrated on the German frontier. The declaration added that the measures taken by the USSR have only the aim of “safeguarding the mutual assistance between the Soviet Union and these countries”¹⁹

A few days after the entry of the Red Army in the Baltic countries, Soviet expansionism developed in another direction, towards Rumania. On 26 June, Moscow sent an ultimatum to the government of this country. This ultimatum required the immediate “return” to the USSR of Bessarabia (which used to be a part of the Czarist empire and had been mentioned in German-Soviet treaty.) It asked, further, for the transfer to the USSR of Northern Bukovina which was never a part of the Czarist empire and on which German-Soviet accords were silent. The Rumanian government said it was ready to negotiate, but on 28 June the Red Army entered these two regions they had claimed. They are later annexed. Five months later, Rumania joined the Axis.

Section 4

THE PROGRESSIVE TRANSFORMATION OF GERMAN-SOVIET RELATIONS

A certain transformation in the German-Soviet relations becomes perceptible after the invasion of France by the *Wahrmacht*. The quickness of the military campaign had caused worry to the Soviet government which expected a long conflict. More or less similar to that of the First World War. The capitulation of France created fear in the leadership of the Soviet party because the

situation in Western Europe had made available high contingents of the Wehrmacht likely henceforth to be deployed elsewhere. This situation drove Moscow not only to speed up its action in Rumania but also to raise again the themes of panslavism and to reactivate its economic and political relations with Yugoslavia. The USSR then raised the old problem of the straits that limited the movements of its naval fleet between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. These Soviet initiatives are badly received by the Reich which tended to limit its deliveries to the USSR.

In the speech delivered on 1 August 1940 to the Supreme Soviet Molotov submits a boastful balance sheet of the assets of the German-Soviet *entente*. He feted the incorporation into the USSR of 23 million inhabitants in less than a year. He wanted to reassure himself about the future. While attacking British imperialism, he emphasized the English willingness to continue the combat and even alluded to the idea of a later intervention of the United States. He suggested that the decision of Churchill (then Prime Minister) to send Stafford Cripps as ambassador to Moscow could "mark the desire of England to improve its relations with us" And yet, this appointment was not followed by any serious negotiation as Moscow refused to tackle any problem seriously.

The USSR made note of the hardening of German positions in the Balkans. Nazi troops penetrated into Rumania and, in September 1940, the Reich gave its "guarantee" to what remained of this country. This decision was evidently aimed at the Soviet Union. Hungary then joined the Axis. The USSR protested only indirectly by publishing press extracts hostile to this membership.

Despite this deterioration in the situation in the Balkan countries, the Reich made a few gestures in the autumn of 1940 to improve the German-Soviet diplomatic relations. Thus, while signing the tripartite agreement between Germany, Italy and Japan, on 27 September 1940 a door was left open for cooperation with the USSR. It was, of course, a way of letting England know that it was futile to continue to resist a strong military bloc.

On 13 October 1940, Ribbentrop sent a long letter to Stalin. It said that England could not hold out for long and suggested that Molotov come to Berlin so that Hitler could "explain to him

personally his views on the relations between our two countries” He added, and emphasised: “Of course, it belongs to the four powers to adopt long term policy involving a delimitation of their spheres of interest on a large scale²⁰”

In November 1940, Molotov went to Berlin for very firm negotiations with Hitler and Ribbentrop. He wanted to know accurately what the intentions of the signatories of the tripartite accord were in Europe and in Asia. He was especially disturbed by German intentions in the Balkans, Finland and Turkey. He reiterated the interest that the USSR took in Bulgaria and in the straits but reacted with coldness to the project submitted to him by Ribbentrop about changing the tripartite pact into quadripartite pact. The stay of Molotov did not bear any fruit. The common communique at the end, published in *Pravda* on 15 November, showed that no result was achieved.

However, on 25 November 1940, Kremlin hands over to Schulenburg, the German ambassador, a memorandum which explains the conditions for the entry of the Soviet Union in this tripartite pact: 1. The space to the south of Batum and Baku in the direction of the Persian Gulf should be considered as the centre of gravity of the aspirations of the USSR; 2. German troops should evacuate Finland; 3. Bulgaria would become a Soviet protectorate by the signature of a mutual assistance pact; 4. a Soviet base would be installed in the zone of the straits on the Turkish territory; 5. Japan should give up its concessions for petrol and coal in the Sakhalin Islands²¹.

These Soviet demands had no response. We now know that a few days after this Soviet memorandum was received, on 18 December 1940, Hitler took the decision to invade the USSR in 1941. This decision corresponded to what was called the “Barbarossa plan” which was initially proposed to enter into operation on 15 May 1941²².

Germany used the Soviet memorandum to frighten the concerned countries and the Wehrmacht entered Bulgaria in January 1941. This country joined the Axis in the month of March.

Moscow appeared willing to ignore the twist which was now taken. In the beginning of 1941, Molotov made enquiries about

an answer to the proposals made by Stalin and on 11 January Moscow signed a new economic agreement with Germany. Soviet deliveries to the Reich grew in volume. Germany thus received large quantities of wheat, cotton, petrol, manganese, chromium, copper and rubber. A part of these products had, incidentally, been bought from the United States. Simultaneously, German deliveries to the USSR practically vanished. In the last months of the Spring of 1941, the Soviets furnished goods probably in the hope of improving German-Soviet relations.

In reality, these relations only deteriorated, especially when nazi troops entered Yugoslavia in the beginning of April, a few hours after the USSR had signed a pact of friendship and non-aggression with the newly formed government of that country. The USSR did not, moreover, react to this invasion nor to that of Greece, but these military operations and the resistance met with by German troops led Hitler to push back the invasion of the USSR to 22 June.

Some of the decisions of the Soviet leaders show that they were aware that a threat was ripening. On 13 April, the USSR achieved a diplomatic success by signing a non-aggression pact with Japan which reduced the threat to the far-eastern frontiers of the USSR²³. With an intention to face better the situation that was deteriorating in Europe, Stalin became the head of the government. On 6 May, he replaced Molotov as the president of the Council of People's commissars. Molotov became the vice president and retained the portfolio of foreign affairs.

However, decisions taken by the Soviet leaders indicate that they did not believe (or "did not want to believe") that a German attack was imminent. They even seemed to imagine that it could be avoided or, at least, put off by gestures of servility towards Germany and by abstaining from taking any precautionary steps so as "not to provoke" the Wehrmacht.

Among the gestures of gratuitous servility, one may mention the closure of embassies and legations in Moscow of a certain number of countries occupied by the Reich (such as Belgium, Greece, Yugoslavia) which was tantamount to a *de facto* recognition of German conquests. Further, on 14 July, a communique from the Soviet news agency Tass declared that in

the eyes of the Soviet government “Germany scrupulously respects the clauses of the non-aggression pact” and that “rumours about Germany having the intention of revoking the pact and attacking the USSR were without any basis whatever”

In fact, the Soviet government refused to take into consideration indications communicated to it on the imminence of the German attack, whether these came from Churchill, through Maisky who was the Soviet ambassador in London, from Sorge, (Soviet intelligence agent stationed in Tokyo and extraordinarily in the know of German military plans) or from Trepper, chief of the Red Orchestra set up in Brussels. In order to give evidence of its “confidence” in German leaders, Moscow did not take any precautionary steps on its frontiers. Till the end, it wanted to treat Germany as a friendly power. Thus, when on 22 June, Molotov received Schulenburg in the morning, who read to him a message from Hitler amounting to a declaration of war, he did not know what to say. “But that is war. Do you think we had deserved it^{24?}”

Section 5

THE BEGINNING OF WAR

We do not propose to analyse here the military events of the first few months of war but to recall rapidly what happened then²⁵ in order to spotlight how little the Soviet army was then prepared to face Hitler’s aggression. This poses a series of questions on the nature of relations that the Stalinist leaders had considered possible with nazi Germany on the degree of material preparedness of the Soviet army, on the military doctrine and the mental preparation of the soldiers and of the Soviet population. This last point has a special importance because it throws light on the type of support that the people of the USSR gave to the regime and to the Stalinist party.

To begin with, a few facts. In less than five months, the Wehrmacht occupied the Baltic countries, the portion annexed from Poland by the USSR, the whole of Bielorussia, a major portion of

Ukraine and arrived at the gates of Leningrad, and within hundred kilometers of Moscow. It had taken the major part of the Donetz and the North of Crimea. These territories used to yield before the war the major portion of industrial production and accounted for 40% of the population. The Red Army thus underwent in a short time a series of serious defeats and a number of its divisions had allowed themselves to be encircled. More than two million Soviet soliders were then taken prisoners. It was a military disaster without precedent²⁶ The later reversals of the relationship of forces and the final victory of the Red Army only appears more impressive because of it. However, initial defeats remain to be explained.

A number of factors were at the origin of this defeat. Only the most important can be enumerated here.

The first, and officially recognised, factor was that Soviet leaders were “surprised” by the German attack. Despite all notices they had received²⁷, they did not believe that an attack was imminent.

A few hours after the German attack, Molotov announced it and added (with extraordinary “simplicity of mind” because the Hitlerites had behaved since years as bandits on the inter-national stage, which indeed was what the USSR had emulated with respect to its neighbours):

This attack against our country is an act of perfidy without precedent in the history of civilised nations. This attack was launched despite the existence of a non-aggression pact (...) which we have respected at all times in all its clauses, most scrupulously (...) The Germans had never had the smallest motive to accuse the USSR of having failed in its obligations.

The speech of Molotov ended by an appeal to close the ranks and by proclaiming the certitude of victory. However, major themes were those of nazi “perfidy”, of “surprises” of the Soviet government and the assertion that the USSR was ready for any concessions to avoid conflict²⁸.

All the evidence confirms that Stalin received the news of the German attack as an inconceivable thing which he was not

prepared to believe in the first place. Further, he let several days elapse before issuing directives²⁹ and 10 days before speaking to the country. He did so, at last, on 3 July when heavy losses were already suffered. In his speech, he goes back to the themes of “surprise” and of “perfidy” Thus, he declared, fascist Germany has violated with perfidy and with suddenness (!) the pact of non-aggression³⁰ ”

The word “perfidy” recurs constantly in this speech as if the aggression of Hitler was not only unexpected in practice but also “morally” inconceivable!

The “surprise” alluded to by Stalin does not get in as a simple argument in the speech to explain the enormous territorial and military losses suffered by the USSR. Several facts show that this surprise was real. Despite all the information received by the Soviet Government on the nearness of the German attack, the USSR had not taken any steps for mobilisation and, as Stalin accepts, “the Red Army had not taken itself to the frontier”³¹.

Official Soviet history reveals to what point the Red Army was unprepared to face the German attack on 22 June, particularly the Soviet troops on the frontier zones were dispersed over wide areas, in depth going from 90 to 500 Kilometers. It specifies:

The entire defence of the frontier of the USSR was founded on the hypothesis that a German attack by surprise was out of question (...) ³²

It should also be pointed out that the German-Soviet pact far from being used as giving the USSR breathing time to prepare itself to resist a nazi aggression better (which was the argument *a posteriori* to justify the pact) was followed by steps which weakened the defenses of the USSR. For example, old fortified frontiers which formed a strong line from the Baltic to the Black sea were dismantled and there was an absence of any conversion of Soviet industry into a war industry capable of sustaining the shock treatment by German armies. No plan at all of any mobilisation was prepared³³.

Even when the German attack had begun, Stalin was still unprepared to believe its reality. He asserted that only some isolated detachments of the German army had entered into action,

acting against the orders of Hitler, in order to “provoke” the USSR with a view to start war. Consequently, he gave orders, kept in force for a long time resulting in heavy losses, not to fight back the Germans and not to give a riposte to German aerial attacks. Thus, the majority of Soviet planes were kept on the ground so much so that a portion of the Soviet air force was destroyed on the spot since 22 June without even having given a fight. The German army thus advanced with hardly any resistance and without any monument or bridge being destroyed³⁴

The refusal of the Soviet government to get ready to face German aggression, and then recognise its reality and even all the discourses on German perfidy show an astonishing confidence in the solidity of the pact concluded with Hitler (as if the regimes of Hitler and Stalin were destined for an enduring *entente*) and, once the war had begun, an extraordinary fear to look the reality in face.

However, military disasters that continued to pile one on top of another for several months were not merely the effect of “surprise” of the early days. These disasters had deep-seated causes, among which the decapitation suffered by the Red Army in 1937-1938 and the unreal character of Soviet strategic theory. This theory is written into the *Rules* of 1939 for the Red Army (which was still in force in 1941) as also in other documents. As the Soviet historiography sees it:

These texts negate the efficiency of the *Blitzkrieg*, presented as an outdated bourgeois theory. Soviet military theory was above all based on the principle of offensive which would aim at the complete destruction of the enemy (...) on his own territory.

Consequently, the possibility of a forced retreat (as one which was practised for four months) was not examined attentively “and the problem of large forces having to cut off a threat of encirclement was never examined seriously”³⁵ Now, almost all the battles which the Red Army had to wage till in the autumn of 1941 were battles of encirclement.

The military doctrine at the beginning of the war corresponded to a rejection of the theories of Tukhachevski³⁶

condemned and shot with thousands of other officers in 1937, on the pretext of a so-called "treachery" In fact, the refusal to recognize the realism of the theories of Tukhachevski was based upon the desire of the party leadership to conserve an upper hand on the functioning of the army while the conception of war propounded by Tukhachevski implied a great mobility of the armed forces and high technical competence on its part. It limited the day to day control which the party could exert on the army.

The crushing sacrifices in 1937 of military cadres (experienced officers having been replaced by quickly promoted men, lacking in practical formation, training and theoretical knowledge) also explains the defeats of the early months of the war.

Another explanatory factor: insufficiency of material means as against those available to the German army. In fact, between 1939 and 1941 the ratio of material forces between the Wehrmacht and the Red Army had evolved to the detriment of the Red Army. Despite an effort at large scale but partial Soviet rearmament, the Red Army was much less well equipped than the enemy in artillery, tanks and planes. New and excellent models of planes and tanks began to be delivered to the Red Army in 1941 but in laughable quantities so much so that the outdated material was withdrawn without being replaced³⁷

All these explanatory factors for the gigantic initial defeat went hand in hand with another fundamental factor: the lack of combativity of a portion of troops and innumerable surrenders.

In his speech on 3 July, Stalin had already expressed his disquiet strongly on this situation and had denounced it with vigour. This speech clearly bears evidence that there existed in the ranks of the army and in the country a "state of mind" which caused Stalin great concern. He returned to this subject many times to proclaim

It is necessary that there be no place in our ranks for cry-babies and the weak at heart, the panic-mongers and deserters (and worse). We have to organize a relentless struggle against the chaos makers at the back, deserters, panic-mongers (...)³⁸

It was not so much a matter of never-ending denunciation of the "enemies in our ranks" but one of hard reality which confirmed the military communiques of July.

The rupture between the population and the regime pointed, in the early days of the war, to a portion of the population of the occupied territories to organise themselves and try setting up a collaboration with the German army or administration and bring to the Germans the opportunity of being able to recruit a large number of "anti-Soviet" elements while the party had practically crumbled in these territories, such being its credibility. The horrors committed by nazi troops later transformed this situation³⁹ while in large areas remaining under Soviet control, the party attempted for a while to manage affairs differently than they had for years, thus giving rise to the hope of a "liberalization" of the regime. Thus very rapidly the war well and truly changed into a *patriotic war*, especially for the *Russian* people.

To come back to the events of the beginning of the war and to the German-Soviet pact, one can evidently wonder if it was "paying" for the leaders of the USSR. This question was often raised. This is not pertinent because it leads to an impasse on a fundamental fact: in the situation in which the USSR found itself in 1939 by the fault of its government, the pact was inevitable, there was no other foreign policy available to it.

On the other hand, the use to which the fact of having signed the pact was put by the Soviet leaders was significant for two reasons:

Firstly, they had largely wasted time which the pact had given them for a win. The effort to arm was badly tackled. Moreover, during the period between the signing of the pact and the aggression by Hitler, the Soviet leaders were incapable of improving the relations of the party and the power with the population. On the other hand, these years were characterised by an increase in exploitation of workers and by brutal requirements imposed on the working class, mainly through work legislation.

On the other hand, Soviet leaders had used the pact to practise an expansionist and chauvinist policy. Molotov could well proclaim in his speech of 1 August 1940 that by extending its power over new territories, the USSR had brought about "an

important increase in (its) power and in (its) territory", he was losing sight of the fact that this expansionism had in no way improved the state of defence of the USSR. The Soviet armed forces were further dispersed, their lines of communication were considerably lengthened and, above all, they crossed the territories whose population was particularly hostile. Thus, the territorial expansion of which Molotov was so proud was militarily useless and even harmful. It revealed, for example, the imperialist nature of "Soviet" power, its scorn for people, its avarice and its affinities with nazism and imperialism.

Footnotes

1. cf. Jacques Martin, *op.cit.*, p.87s, which cites the Secret protocole of 23 August and gives extracts from later German-Soviet treaties which also placed Lithuania in the sphere of Soviet influence.
2. Among those who were thus handed over to the Gestapo were militants condemned to death in Germany, such as the young German worker or the Hungarian journalist Bloch about whom Margaraté Bubber-Neumann has spoken in her book, *La Revolution mondiale* (the World Revolution), *op.cit.*, p.397 She herself went over from Soviet camps to Hitlerite camps.
3. cf. A.Worth, *op.cit.*, p.62-63.
4. Of the 230000 prisoners, 82000 alone survived and rejoined later, after the German aggression against the USSR, either the Anders Army (formed by the government in Exile in London), or the Berlin Army (formed in the USSR on Soviet initiative). The first ones numbered about 75000 and the second 7000. Polish army men dead during deportation or executed were thus 148000. Among them figure 12000 to 15000 officers. Dead bodies of more than 4000 of these last ones were found in the charnel house of Katyn where they were struck down in the spring of 1940 (cf. the article of Alexandra Kwiatkowska-Viatteau, "Katyn: the negation of a massacre", in *L'Histoire*, June 1981, p.6s; the author cites a large number of sources and studies).
5. A. Worth, *op.cit.*, p.64.
6. New York Times, 1 November 1939.
7. cf. F.Claudin, *op.cit.*, t.1, p.348 and A.Worth, *op.cit.*, t.1, p.66.

8. cf. Stalin, *Oeuvres* (works), t.16, Paris, NBE, 1975, p.188-189.
9. A. Worth, *op.cit.*, p.73.
10. cf. Ernst Fischer, *An Opposing Man*, London, 1974, p.352.
11. Leopold Trepper, *Le Grand Jeu - Memoires du Chef de l'orchestre rouge* (Memoirs of the chief of the Red Orchestra), Paris, Albin Michel, 1975, p.110, no.1.
12. The CI was officially dissolved on 10 June 1943 through a resolution of 15 May of the Presidium of the EC. This resolution would appear to have been approved by the CPs of a certain number of countries. In fact, everything seems to point out that the decision was taken by Soviet leaders, in order to "improve" their relations with Western powers and to get ready for a distribution of spheres of influence between them and the Soviet Union. The already cited book of F.Claudin gives the principal official texts concerning this dissolution, a bibliography of the fundamental works on this decision and an analysis of the conditions in which it was taken. (cf. *La Crise du mouvement communiste* (The Crisis of the Communist Movement), *op.cit.*, t.1, p.20 to 49).
13. cf. V.Moisuc, *La Diplomatie de la Roumanie et la Question de la defence de la Souverainete et de l'independance nationale dans la periode mars 1938 - may 1940* (Rumanian Diplomacy and the Question of the Defence of Sovereignty and National Independence during the period March 1938-May 1940), Bucharest, Publications of the Academy of the S.R. of Rumania, 1971 (in Rumanian) especially p.237; cf. also Stefan Lache and Gheorghii Tsutsui, *La Roumanie et la Conference de Paris de 1946* (Rumania and the Paris Conference of 1946), Cluj, 1978. These authors refer to a directive of the CI in May 1940 figuring in the archives of the CC of the RCP, Fund 1, Actes, no.167, p.15 to 22.
14. A short while later, Thorez was to receive the order of the CI to assemble the "centre of liaison and direction" set up at Brussels. Therefore, he deserts from the French army. Later, he was asked to leave Brussels for Moscow where he remained till 27 November 1944 (on these points, cf. Philippe Robrieux, *Histoire interieure du parti communiste Francis, 1920-1945 et 1945-1972* (Internal History of the French Communist Party), Paris, Fayard, 1980 and 1981, mainly p.494 of Volume 1 and p.78 of Volume II).
15. On the policy of the PCF during the war, see the last part of the first volume of Philippe Robrieux, *Histoire interieure ...*, *op.cit.*, The book of Courtois, *Le Parti Communiste dans la Guerre* (The

- Communist Party in the War), Paris, Ramsay, 1979 and the article of Denis Peschanski, "La demande de parution legale de *l'Humanite* (The application for Legal appearance of *l'Humanite*) (17 June - 27 August 1940)" in *Le mouvement social* (Social Movement), no.113, 1980.
16. cf. A.Worth, *op.cit.*, t.1, p.74-75.
 17. On the war of Finland, cf. *ibid*, p.78-79 and Jacques Martin, *op.cit.*, p.92s.
 18. cf. David G. Dallin, *Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy 1939-1942*, New Haven, 1942, p.259, cited by R.C. Wesson, *op.cit.*, p.145-146.
 19. A. Werth, *op.cit.*, t.1; p.86.
 20. Cited in A.Werth, *op.cit.*, t.1, p.97.
 21. cf. *Nazi-Soviet Relations*, Washington, 1948, p.238-239; *Declarations of Ribbentrop at Nuremburg*, Proceedings of the trial, Vol. X, p.328-329, cited by Jacques Martin, *op.cit.*, p.99.
 22. cf. R.G.Wesson, *op.cit.*, p.153.
 23. Since 1931 when Japan had committed aggression in China and once again since 1935 when the Japanese army invaded Northern China, tension had grown between the USSR and Japan whose troops faced one another many times when the USSR gave up, in 1937, the "politics of appeasement" which it was practicing till then. Moreover, Soviet troops won local victories which were not negligible and the USSR having concluded a non-aggression pact with China began supplying arms to the government of Chiang Kai-Shek (who was obliged, in December 1936, to sign a treaty of cooperation with the CCP for a policy of a united front against Japan). Towards the end of 1939, after the conclusion of the German-Soviet pact, confrontation between Soviet and Japanese troops stopped (cf. G.Wesson, *op.cit.*, p.126-127).
 24. W.L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, London, 1960, p.487.
 25. On the history of war, see *Istoriia Velikoi Otechesvennoi, Voing Sovetskogo Soyuz (in short IVOSS)*, 6 Volumes, 1960-1965; see also the very important work of Alexander Nekrich, *The 22 June 1941* (in Russian), Moscow, 1965, translated into French under the title " *L'Armee rouge assassinee* (The Assassination of the Red Army) *op.cit.*, and the book of Piotr Grigorenko, *Staline et la Deuxieme guerre mondiale* (Stalin and the Second World War), Paris, l'Herne, 1969 in which can be found references to the censored reviews of Nekrich's book in the USSR and the discussions which

this book raised.

26. cf. A.Werth, *La Russie en Guerre* (Russia at War), *op.cit.*, p.115 to 221 and A.Dallin, *La Russie Sous la botte nazie* (Russia under the Nazi Boot), Paris, Fayard, 1970.
27. See in P.Broue, *Le Parti bolchevique* (The Bolshevik Party), *op.cit.*, p.416, a list of warnings received by the Soviet Government which was even informed of the day and hour of the German attack. cf. also Roy Medvedev, *Faut-il rehabiliter Staline?* (Should Stalin be rehabilitated?) Paris, Seuil, 1969.
28. cf. A.Werth, *op.cit.*, p.137.
29. cf. R.Medvedev, *Faut-il rehabiliter Staline?*, *op.cit.*,
30. cf. Staline, *Oeuvres* (Works), t.XVI, *Op.cit.*, p.15.
31. cf. Staline, *ibid*, p.15.
32. cf. IVOVSS, Moscow, 1960, p.475.
33. Among various descriptions of this unpreparedness towards aggression (while Soviet armies were dispersed for occupying new territories), one should mention those found in the work of Piotr Grigorenko, *Staline et la Deuxieme Guerre Mondiale* (Stalin and the Second World War), *op.cit.*, mainly p.118s.
34. cf. IVOVSS, A. Werth, *op.cit.*, t.1, p.128 to 136, P.Broue, *op.cit.*, p.417.
35. IVOVSS, Vol. I, Cited in A. Werth, *op.cit.*, p.117.
36. What was most tragic was that it was the German army that got hold of these theories and put them into practice, as shown by P.Grigorenko in his book, *Staline et la Deuxieme Guerre mondiale*, *op.cit.*, p.82-83.
37. IVOVSS, Vol. I; p.415-416, p.455, p.475-476.
38. cf. Stalin, *Oeuvres* (Works), t.XVI, p.16 and p.17.
39. On this question, see the work of A.Dallin already cited: *La Russie sous la botte nazie* (Russia under the Nazi Book).
40. cf. D.Grigonenko, *op.cit.*, p.117-120.

POSTFACE

IN ORDER NOT TO CONCLUDE

We come to the end of our enquiry into the "Soviet" system born of the changes and the struggles of the 1930s. This enquiry does not lead us to drawing of any formal conclusions. In fact, its very object prohibits us from doing so because it constitutes a totality which became system and which continues to undergo transformations. Hence the constant need for new and multiple analyses. Under these conditions, it would be vain to want to freeze the results obtained in order to present them in the illusory form of a "total" vision.

Let us recall, however, some of the results of this enquiry. The economic, social and political changes of the 1930s in the USSR made it possible for a new type of capitalism to be installed, *a party capitalism*, marked by the specific conditions of its emergence and containing a new type of dominating class: *a party bourgeoisie*.

At the end of the 1930s, during the war and immediately after the war, political power was concentrated at the top of the party, whose "leading" group found itself closely dependent on the general secretary who exercised an autocratic dictatorship to which no political force and no social layer could offer effective resistance because the terrorist forms of power and the forms of official ideology paralysed every organised action.

For a part of the war, some of the characteristics of this system of political and ideological domination appeared to have become somewhat blurred, but once the conflict was over, they asserted themselves once again and strongly. The State terrorism and repression functioned more implacably than ever, striking millions of men of all milieus, including the close collaborators of Stalin.

When Stalin died, in the beginning of March 1953 a widespread purge was in preparation. It should have continued

the wave of repression and terror which had extended its scope in the aftermath of the war to the countries occupied by the USSR where "people's democracies" had been installed. The economic, social and political system of those people's democracies was asked to reproduce the essential traits of the Soviet system to which they were closely subjugated.

1. Some Major Events of 1953 and the Years that Followed

The difficult conditions in which the replacement of Stalin was carried out at the head of the Soviet Union revealed that the system existing at that time (and this is true even today - the book was published in March 1983. *Tr*). was not capable of ensuring regular forms of devolution of power. In fact, this replacing could only be ensured at the end of a series of confrontations. Nikita S. Khrushchev, in league with Malenkov and Molotov, eliminated Beria in the beginning of the summer of 1953. The police chief was then arrested, tried and executed a little later. In September 1953, Khrushchev became the first secretary of the party¹

In February 1955, Khrushchev eliminated Malenkov who has been till then the president of the Council. He was replaced by Bulganin. Khrushchev held most of the power and, in May 1955, he signed the Warsaw pact which linked the "people's democracies" militarily with the USSR. From September, East Germany, now the "German Democratic Republic" also joined this pact.

The personal character of the leadership of the party and the State by Khrushchev became clear in 1956, during the XX Congress, and even more, in July 1957, when with the help of Zhukov, Khrushchev went about eliminating the "anti-party" group (Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich and Shepilov).

In October 1957, Khrushchev further strengthened his power by getting rid of Marshal Zhukov who was divested of all his functions. On 27 March 1958, the first Secretary also became the President of the Council.

¹ Six years later, in October 1964, it is the turn of Khrushchev to be divested of all his functions. He was retired by the Central

Committee. In the course of the six years of his greatest power, the first secretary had aroused ever-increasing discontent of his colleagues of the Presidium and the Secretariat. The charges made against him were very many; an increasingly more personalised leadership of the party, attacks on the prerogatives of the apparatus, reverses in foreign policy (in 1960 the rupture of the agreements with China; in October 1962, the USSR was forced under the pressure from the United States to withdraw the rockets it had installed in Cuba) ; disastrous results of its agricultural policy and deterioration of the relations of the First Secretary with the army.

Leonid I. Brezhnev replaced Khrushchev at the head of the party. The period which began then was marked by the quasi-continuous consolidation (till the beginning of 1982) of the powers of Leonid Brezhnev. This consolidation can be seen from the extension of the domains where the first Secretary (then General Secretary) intervened directly. Thus, in the beginning of 1976, Brezhnev became marshal of the USSR and assumed the presidentship of the *Defence Council*. A year later, he eliminated Podgorny from his function as the President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, thus practically becoming the head of State and taking charge of the whole of the problems of foreign policy which he was, incidentally, already supervising earlier.

From 1964, we see a regular increase in the international interventions of the USSR with a rising scope. These interventions buttressed by a military power in rapid expansion increasingly gave to the USSR a new status as a world superpower. Consequently, the internal economic situation became more difficult.

In August 1968, the occupation of Czechoslovakia whose party had strayed from the line proposed by Moscow was still presented as a defensive operation to maintain the *status quo* resulting from the world war. But in the course of outside operations carried out later, the USSR could not claim any recognised inter-national treaty in support. It acted under the pretext of "fraternal help" It sent into the concerned countries "military specialists" or took help of certain armed contingents. These operations concerned notably South Yemen, Ethiopia,

Angola and, in December 1979, Afghanistan. This country was then invaded by Soviet troops supposedly to bring their co-operation to a government whose chief is assassinated forthwith. The invasion of Afghanistan opens in reality a war which put the people of this country against the Soviet army depending upon weak and hardly trustworthy local military forces.

A glance at these events show that during the last three decades the Soviet political scene had undergone a number of upsets while the rise of military power of the USSR made it a state intervening on a world scale. This led it to increasingly come up against the United States and, also, to enter into different accords with that country with a view to holding more or less in check the military competition that was becoming dangerous. The new status of the Soviet Union rested above all on the build up of an enormous war apparatus and on impressive industrial development (which is in contrast to the penury and crises which this country had known and towards which we shall return shortly).

One of the questions which arise is the following: to what extent the changes and the developments mentioned above had upset the totalitarian system built during the 1930s ?

It is not easy to answer this question because the changes that intervened in the Soviet system were varied. However, we can say that the Stalinist system taken as a whole is still in place in the beginning of the 1980s. Of course, some of its characteristics were modified under the pressure of a large number of contradictions and social forces at work. However, these modifications have not given birth to really new economic, social and political structures. We can even say that they have enabled the old system to consolidate itself by transforming some secondary traits but without making it capable of solving adequately the contradictions which undermine it and which makes it less and less fit to confront the aspirations of those who lead it and the aspirations of ordinary workers. The absence of an adequate response to the system of contradictions and to the increasingly acute crises that it comes across leads to a progressive paralysis of economic and political life.

To justify these assertions we will have to examine what are the (dominating) elements of continuity and what are the

(secondary) elements of change which characterise the system and its functioning, that is to say, its practices. Further, we may emphasise straightaway that the elements of continuity are to be found simultaneously in the political, ideological and economic domains. In this last case, the primacy of accumulation and dictatorship of the capital over the workers and the peasants continue to dominate.

2. Continuity and Change in the Political System and Practices

One of the fundamental continuities between the present political system and the one that took shape in the 1930s is the role which devolves on the leadership of the party as the centre of concentration of power. Despite secondary changes, it is always the leadership of the party which has taken political (and economic) decisions of a fundamental nature. Also, it is the leadership which enunciates the ideological formulations which had to be considered as “just”

To receive respect, the party leadership continued to “manage” the privileges enjoyed by the dominating class and those, fewer in number, that benefitted some layers of the exploited classes. It had always to take recourse to the political police which kept a close watch on the citizens and had wide powers to arrest “suspects” and have them condemned for years in camps, in prison or in “psychiatric hospitals”

A) The Relative Effacement of the Role of the Security Organs and State Terror

However, after the death of Stalin, we witness a relative effacement of the role of State terror and security organs.

This effacement is seen to have begun, immediately after Stalin's death, by Beria himself who decided to set at liberty a small number of detainees and to release the doctors who were arrested under the charge of assassination of top leaders. This was the so-called plot by “assasins in white aprons” As could be seen at the time of Stalin's death, the sentencing of the arrested doctors should have opened the way for new trials and a mass

deportation of Jews accused of Zionist and pro-American activities.

After the elimination of Beria, the party leadership reduced the role of the organs of security (or, more briefly, of the “organs” as the usual Russian expression was) and purged the MVD². It split up the MVD into several administrations which were strictly subordinate to it. However, the representatives of the “organs” progressively acquire an increasing weight within the leading organs of the party. This offset the efforts made in the aftermath of Stalin’s death to reduce the influence of the political police.

The earliest decisions aimed at reducing this role could only be implemented, during the summer of 1953 with the cooperation of the top brass of the army. These decisions were evidence, firstly, of the desire of the members of the leading group to control the “organs” because they had themselves lived under the permanent fear of being arrested, accused of just anything whatever and condemned. A reduction in the autonomy of the “organs” was also desired by the cadres of the party, the State, the economy etc., who too, during the Stalin era, feared being arrested under one pretext or the other.

The relative effacement of the role of the “organs” led to making their operations more selective. Consequently, one could henceforth express oneself a little more freely than in the last years of the Stalin era and one feared less the possibility of arbitrary arrests. State terror, therefore, beats a retreat as can be seen from a reduction in the number of those interned in the camps. Their number is still 2 to 3 million in the beginning of the 1980s against, however, of nearly 8 million in 1952. The estimates concerning the number of those in the concentration camps, and all that we know about the arrests and trials on the smallest pretexts (in the Khrushchev era as also in the Brezhnev era) show that if State terror was reduced it was far from having disappeared altogether. It continued to strike at ordinary workers who - for harmless “faults” - could be subjected to punitive work (paid at a reduced wage). It struck also at the protestors and the “dissidents”

Generally speaking, the fear caused by the KGB was always enough to find quite easily witnesses needed to condemn anyone who needed to be so condemned. This was true even during the period described as the “thaw” (1956-1964)³. During this period,

the recourse to psychiatric hospitals (as a means of keeping in detention those whom one did not want to be presented before the judicial organs and whose opinions are condemned by the power) become more common. It stands for a particular form of State terrorism, less spectacular than the trials. Since about a decade the recourse to psychiatric hospitals acquired new scope while the number of condemnations also increased.

The limited character of the reduction in the role of the "organs" explains why the apparatus of repression remained extremely powerful. Thus, the KGB had at its disposal its own military force controlling 130000 men equipped as infantry units to which must be added 800000 men of the MVD as also a militia of 250000 persons. The troops of the KGB and the MVD have their own parking lots, tanks, armoured cars and helicopters⁴.

On the whole, the changes represented by the relative withdrawal of the role of security organs and State terror should not be overestimated. Repression is always there on a large scale although it operates more selectively. Further, and in an arbitrary way, all means are kept in place so that the scope of repression could be widened at will.

B) The Substitution of an Oligarchic Leadership in Place of an Autocratic Leadership

From the end of 1934 to March 1953, the power was, as we know, concentrated in the hands of Stalin who ruled in an autocratic manner. Whenever he wanted, he would eliminate his closest collaborators including those who formed part of the leading group. The death of Stalin was followed by an important change in this aspect of the functioning of the power apex. The leadership group is afraid that if its members snipe at one another, they would no longer remain in control of events. They tried, therefore, to *govern collectively*, with difficulty in the beginning but with greater success progressively. The idea was to prevent a new Super Chief bursting forth on the scene and drastically reducing the influence of the other members of the leadership. This change operated progressively and was frequently in trouble with opposite tendencies.

To begin, from 1953 to 1957 the struggles inside the leading group were intense. As we have seen, they end up in the pre-eminence of Khrushchev who exercised a veritable personal power between July 1957 and October 1964. However, this personal power had nothing in common with the power that Stalin exercised because the other members of the leading group were not at the mercy of the First Secretary since the "organs" and the army were not entirely subordinate to him.

The collective character of the authority of the leading group was also a result of the members of this group having their own power base more clearly defined than in the days of Stalin. This power base of their own corresponded to the domain of activity placed under the direction of the different members of the leading groups and it was also based upon the *links* which each one had woven with the different apparatuses and with those who happened to lead them. Their function was also stabilised as a result of the setback in state terror. In the situation thus established, each member of the leadership enjoyed a sort of political-administrative "fiefdom" and a clientele with which all other members of the leadership, including the First Secretary, had to come to terms. Thus, an *hierarchy* was established between the leaders. The place of each one in this hierarchy was determined in a complex way: by his official functions (which placed the first secretary at the top), by the more or less significant extent of the different "fiefdoms" and of the different "clienteles" subordinate to him and by his weight in political and economic life as a whole.

The last years of the "reign" of Khrushchev were, however, marked by efforts deployed by him to smash - to the profit of his personal power - this hierarchical structure and the "administrative-feudatories" thus established. He attacked in particular certain "fiefs" by dividing them in order to reduce the power of other members of the leading group and the role of important cadres not placed immediately under his authority. The aim was to try and render the system more flexible and to restore an increasingly personal power. This attempt came up against the hostility of other members of the leading group. Added to the factors of discontent already mentioned, efforts made by Khrushchev to smash or reduce the solidity of hierarchical structures then in

existence led other leaders to oust him and replace him with a new First Secretary on whom the leading group imposed a greater respect of the principles of "collective leadership" This did not prevent the totality of the *system structures as also official ideology* getting pushed in the direction of personalisation of power which incited those occupying the top slot to place themselves "above" other members of the leadership.

Thus, Brezhnev played an increasingly preeminent role. This became obvious after XXIII Congress (April 1966) when the post of the General Secretary was revived in his favour. However, this increased role of the General Secretary did not lead to the restoration of a veritable personal power but rather to a greater personalisation of power that he exercised. The signs of this "personalisation" are many. Thus, the title of the "Chief of the party" was bestowed on him by several speakers at the XXIII Congress and on the 70th birthday of Brezhnev in 1976. He was even called the *Vozhd* (guide) as Stalin used to be. It is nevertheless true that the position of Brezhnev would always be radically different from that of his predecessors because the power he could exercise on the members of the leading group was much more limited. This limitation could be especially felt in the months between the death of Suslov (beginning of 1982) and the death of Brezhnev himself on 10th November 1982.

In fact, in the beginning of the 1980s the peak of power was effectively occupied by 14 men most of whom were simultaneously members of the Polit Bureau and of the Secretariat⁵ That is what one may call the summit of the *leading political oligarchy*. The CC formed an oligarchical layer that was wider but whose powers were less. Finally, the political oligarchy, in a restricted sense, included beside the previously mentioned personalities, regional secretaries and secretaries of cities and of more important districts as also some chiefs of the departments of the Central Committee of the CPSU. These leaders and these cadres taken as a whole formed a collectivity of a few hundred persons who constituted the political apparatus of the bourgeoisie of the party (often denoted, in popular language, as the "*party nobility*"). This apparatus maintained with the whole of this class, relations of cooperation and this tended to put an end to open fights and

confrontations characteristic of the years 1930 to 1953.

The top of the political oligarchy played a role of collective management of the party bourgeoisie. Henceforth, it ensured this management by following relatively precise rules in the matter of promotions and advancement. Because of these rules a *nomenklaturist* could not be banished into oblivion (quite exceptional cases apart).

The relations between the leading groups of the party and the dominating class were thus peaceful. The earlier violence and arbitrariness were, to a large extent, given up. The power summit agreed to see the stabilisation of a wide layer of cadres, administrators, leaders of enterprises in their position. The attempts to prevent this stabilisation were generally seen to be factors that generated a veritable administrative and economic chaos.

After the elimination of Khrushchev, the main apparatus had an increasing representation on the PB. (not official but *de facto*) The relationships which were established between the leading group and the apparatus were surely not exempt from *contradictions* but an effort was constantly made to limit them and to avoid confrontations. Consequently, most decisions were essentially the result of *bargaining* which took into account the relationship of forces. Adoption of such a practice amounted to an important change in the *form* of regulating conflicts within the dominating class. The path of such a practice was the outcome of a thrust of various layers interested in making the system function more peacefully. This was, moreover, not achieved without impediments as could be seen from the confrontations which came up between the leaders during the period 1953 to 1964.

The "peaceful" resolution, through bargaining, of the contradictions between different layers of the dominant class became possible because these layers were, in practice, represented within the leading group across the apparatuses between whom they were distributed. Since 1976, one could consider that the army itself was represented on the Polit Bureau by D.F. Ustinov who joined this organ for the first time. Ustinov was Minister of Defence too since 1973 and was appointed Marshal of the USSR three months after his appointment to the ministerial post. It is

true that D.F. Ustinov was not an authentic armyman by profession because he had risen from the corps of armament engineers. In practice, he defended the interests of the army so that it could be in a position to come up to the requirements imposed on it by the political leadership. As for the KGB, its positions were strengthened since 1965 within the leadership organs⁶ After the death of Brezhnev and the rise of Andropov as General Secretary one could consider that the KGB occupied a decisive position in the party leadership.

We must refer here to the increasing role played by the Soviet military-industrial complex in internal and inter-national policy. In fact, there existed a set of forces which formed such a complex enjoying considerable weight in the Soviet life because of the resources at its disposal, the positions occupied by those who are at its head, the prestige which surrounds them and the importance which political leaders attached to military problems. This importance is due, among other things, to the burning memory which the defeat in the early days of the second World War had left, to the scarcely glorious outcome of the "crisis of the rockets" in 1962 (cf. *infra*, p.296) and also the ever increasing world wide political ambitions of Soviet leaders. The military-industrial complex was the beneficiary of numerous financial advantages and priorities in allocations of efficient researchers and cadres, in the supply of raw materials and inputs needed for its development. However, if the political and economic weight of the military-industrial complex was real, it would be misleading to see in it (at the time) an "independent" force, because it was closely integrated and linked to the leading political oligarchy.

On the whole, since 1953, and especially since 1964, there was increasing integration (but not a fusion) of the principal civil, military and security functions within the leading political oligarchy. These diverse functions were put into practice by different apparatuses. This institutionalisation of functions made it possible for bargaining to be practised inside a thin layer formed of principal members of the party hierarchy. It was within this layer that decisions were taken taking into account forces operating in the party bourgeoisie. Thus open confrontations were avoided and compromise solutions were sought. This practice had as a

counterpart an extraordinary *immobilism* of the political system. Such an immobilism that it made the system less and less capable of solving problems of increasing complexity which faced the country. Since a number of years, in fact, no major economic problem was the subject matter of decisions which would have brought a real solution for it. We can see that by examining quickly what had become of the various reforms adopted since 1965. We must emphasise that Stalinist policy which sought to pulverise the bureaucracy by bestowing a privilege on vertical relations led, by a dialectical reversal, to the formation of bureaucratic bodies which, from the end of 1950s, defended their own interests within the leading group.

The political changes which took place for nearly three decades had modified not the political system but only some aspects of its functioning. They made it possible to face issues of the moment, to let priority sectors of industry to make progress (with increasing difficulty, it is true) and to avoid bloody frictions between leaders but they were not sufficient for solving increasing contradictions within the country and the regime.

C) The Policy of "Detente"

The international policy of the leaders who succeeded Stalin appear to be characterised by a twist which would appear to have substituted a "policy of detente" in place of the "cold war" of Stalin's era. Things are not all that simple. We surely witness from 1953 a withdrawal of open forms of the "cold war" which was inaugurated by two speeches. The first of them was given by Stalin on 9 February 1946⁷ and the other by Zhdanov unleashing the campaign against the influence of Western culture and laying the basis for the formation of *Cominform* (a substitute of the third international). Later, the "cold war" became "hot" with a series of military confrontations coming up with the support of the USSR (e.g. the Korean war began in June 1950).

After the death of Stalin the tune changed: it sang of "peaceful coexistence" and of "detente". Important decisions intervened to give some credibility to this new discourse and, therefore, the period of "thaw" on the international level. The earliest of these periods begins with armistice in Korea. It

continued till 1956 with the reduction by one third of Soviet armed forces in 1955 and 1956, mutual recognition of the FRG and the USSR and concluding a State treaty with Austria (May 1956) which put an end to the occupation of that country.

This "thaw" was favoured, on the part of the Soviet Union, by the need felt in that country to develop its exchanges with Western powers in order to import equipments and modern technology. It was facilitated also by the fact that the USSR, from 1955, was developing its thermonuclear arms. Henceforth, the Soviet Union participated more closely in the activities of the United Nations and undertook negotiations aimed at a concerted policy of "arms limitation"

In 1956, this early "thaw" was interrupted by the Soviet intervention in Hungary (as a consequence of the revolt of the Hungarian people) and by the Franco-British intervention in the Suez Canal. After a period of tension, a new period of "thaw" opened up, in September 1960, with the journey of Khrushchev to the United States and his talks with President Eisenhower. This "thaw" was interrupted by the crisis of the rockets placed in Cuba. This crisis ended, as we know, by a compromise. Then began another period of "thaw" It was developed under the frequently repeated catch word of "detente" Depending upon the moment it used to acquire very different connotations.

During the end of the Khrushchev era, detente served especially as an agreement in favour of open cooperation between the USSR and the Western world. In the 1970s, when the rise of the Soviet army, navy and airforce was most marked, the discourse and efforts of Soviet leaders were once again oriented towards negotiating treaties of "limitation of arms" These negotiations and the treaties concluded did not in any way put a stop to the armament policy of a wide reach followed by the USSR but they made this policy appear as in conformity with accords previously signed with some great powers, the United States above all. The negotiations lead USSR, on the other hand, to limiting the Soviet aid to the democratic republic of Vietnam in its fight against American aggression. The theme of detente was accompanied, on the Soviet side, by a discourse preaching increases in cultural , technical, scientific and economic exchanges with Western

countries. In fact, it was these three last mentioned types of exchanges which interested the USSR the most.

It was within the framework of "detente" that Soviet leaders and the Western powers signed the Helsinki accord, at the end of the conference in this city on 31 July and 1 August 1975. For the Soviet government, this conference preserved the *status quo* inherited from the Second World War. In exchange, it agreed to sign a document which contained a series of "undertakings" concerning human rights. In reality, Soviet leaders were only renewing undertakings already given to respect the terms of the United Nations Charter and the Declaration on Human Rights. They had signed these documents a long time earlier and they always treated them as mere scraps of paper. The Helsinki charter was no different. Finally, the Helsinki conference offered to the leadership of Brezhnev a self-congratulating theme but it did not in any way slow down the armaments race.

In fact, the policy of "detente" was only a special form of the "cold war". It did not signify in any way that Soviet leaders had given up world expansion which was developing under the cover of ideology of the "historic mission" of the USSR. This ideology asserted that this country should make its contribution to extending throughout the world what the CPSU called socialism and proclaimed that the USSR should help in a "liberation of the peoples" (which placed, in effect, the peoples so "liberated" under economic and military dependence of the Soviet Union). Thus, the policy of "detente" such as it was conceived by the CPSU was compatible with military specialists being sent to other countries and with military interventions throughout the world⁸.

The theme of "detente", moreover, combined in itself the proclamation of an activist conception of "proletarian internationalism" whereby the USSR arrogated to itself the right of intervention in the internal affairs of the countries under the leadership of other parties claiming to be Marxist-Leninist. Such interventions did, indeed, take place in 1956 in Hungary and in 1968 in Czechoslovakia. Poland could avoid a similar intervention in 1981 because its military chiefs, under the leadership of General Jaruzelski, carried out a *coup d'etat* which conformed, at least for the time being, to what the Soviet leaders were

demanding. On the contrary, in other countries where the parties were less linked to the USSR and who had developed their own national ideology such as Albania and China, such interventions could not take place. However, the refusal of these countries to submit themselves to Soviet hegemony led the USSR to commit political and economic aggression against them (by breaking off unilaterally the accords of cooperation entered into with them). This led to serious difficulties in Albania and China. The hegemonistic desire of the Soviets had also led, especially in 1969, to bloody confrontations on the Sino-Soviet border. These events were the culmination of a long history and examining it here is beyond the scope of this book.

The policy of "detente" which the USSR pretended to pursue as also its "proletarian internationalism" would thus appear as masks behind which the policy of world-wide hegemony of the Soviet Union was hidden. This same policy led the USSR to develop economic and military relations with countries it did not consider as following a "socialist" or even a "non-capitalist" path. Such was the case of Egypt, India and Argentina and Brazil with which the Soviet Union had developed close economic relations and on whose side they often voted in the United Nations. The desire of the Soviet leadership to play a worldwide role and the economic needs of the USSR pushed it to develop its arms exports. That is a domain where it occupied the second place in the world, immediately after the United States⁹

Soviet hegemonic policy also fed Soviet discourse on the "international socialist division of labour" This new discourse replaced the earlier one on cooperation between countries of the Soviet bloc or with countries that were members of the COMECON¹⁰ This organism, founded in 1949 in response to the launching of the Marshall Plan and also to isolate Yugoslavia, had life breathed into it only in 1959. The Soviet leadership then gave to it a new impulse. From this time, the COMECON and the theory of the international socialist division of labour was used to replace the policy of looting the "people's democracies" (that is to say taking away more or less well paid products) prevalent during the Stalin era of policy of economic domination of these countries. It aimed at setting up an international division of labour

which subjected the development of countries linked with the USSR to its national requirements, especially to its requirements in armament, technology and accumulation. This gave to the Soviet Union the possibility of regularly exploiting countries associated with it in the COMECON and to bring to bear pressure on them to force them to participate in investments in the USSR itself. This contributed to a growth of accumulation taking place in Soviet territory. Concrete analysis of the way COMECON functioned leads to uncovering the role effectively played by it and to throwing light on the real significance of discourse on the socialist international division of labour¹¹.

3. Continuity and Change in Soviet Ideology

The present official Soviet ideology of the early years of 1980s was essentially one that took shape between 1930 and 1952. It was basically as alienated as that. The only change made in it concerned the way that these central themes were articulated. This was modified in order to adopt official ideological discourse to internal and international exigencies. This adaptation rendered contradictions between official ideology and reality a little less crying and contributed to erasing certain traits of earlier dogmatism which had to yield greater place to "realism" or empiricism.

A. The Leadership Role of the Party and the Denunciation of the "Cult of Personality"

On the whole, the theme of the "leading role of the party" — which had tended towards the end of the Stalin era to receive a slight setback in the face of the assertion of the growing role of the State - came back to the foreground. The development of this theme was connected to the effort to ensure greater authority to the leadership of the party, mainly with respect to the apparatus of the State proper. In fact, bargaining between the top positions in the different apparatuses was carried out within the leading group that happened to be at the head of the party.

An important change affected this aspect of official ideology. It presented the *leading group* as a "collective leadership" or

“college” and did not accord a decisive role to the person of the general secretary as it was the case during the Stalin era.

This change was made through the denunciation by Khrushchev of what he had called the “cult of personality” of Stalin. One of the culminating moments of this denunciation was the XX Congress of the CPSU (1956). The denunciation of the “cult” fulfilled, in reality, some ambiguous functions. It aimed not only to bar the road for a restoration of autocratic power (hence to consolidate the collective authority of the leading political oligarchy) but it also aimed (by holding Stalin personally responsible for all the crimes committed when he was general secretary) at hiding the involvement in these crimes of his close collaborators (who were, in fact, his successors - Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Kaganovich etc.) and, above all, it aimed at hiding the fact that these crimes were not in the nature of “accidents” but they were the “*product of a system*” which had remained fundamentally unchanged.

The denunciation of the “cult” played several other roles too. Thus, it aimed at soothing cadres and the population by giving them an impression that they would, henceforth, live in a society where it would be less dangerous than before to speak out and to take initiatives. This was not entirely false either.

We should not forget, on the other hand, that the denunciation of the “cult” went through the crest and the cusp and that during the period of Brezhnev different currents were at play, trying more or less to “rehabilitate” Stalin. This amounted, in perspective, to a certain rebirth of state terrorism. Such tendencies had become evident towards the middle of the 1970s.

After the fall of Khrushchev the authority of the KGB was once again reinforced, as we have seen earlier. A high level leader of the party was then placed at its head and the leadership of this organism did not amount any more only to the “right” of a simple seat in the Central Committee. In 1967, the new leader of the security organs, Andropov, was appointed candidate member of the Polit Bureau and, in 1973, he became full member of this leadership organism (as Beria was earlier). In 1978, the two assistants of Andropov, both professional secret service agents, were appointed to the CC, one as a full member and the other as

alternate member. Besides, both of them as also Andropov became generals of the army. In 1982, Andropov was appointed to the party secretariat and one of his close collaborators directed the security organs. These were promotions of great importance and raised the official "prestige" of the KGB and reinforced its links with the party and army. The repression hardened again in the course of the 1970s. In January 1980, a decree passed strict regulations about work discipline by laying down a series of punishments for delays, "idling" at work and unjustified absence¹²

Generally, the theme of the leading role of the party served to extend repression, if found useful, against all those who expressed reservations and criticisms against the leadership or the policy of the party. These reservations and criticisms were likened to crimes, to subversive and anti-Soviet activities emanating from the enemy and inspired by "imperialism"

Official ideology continued to present the leadership as the source of every legitimate political decision. It attributed to the party at all times the monopoly of knowledge of laws of society and of history and identified it with the progressive forces of the people. Also, all that was officially decided by it was officially identified with the expression of the true people's desire. The dictatorship of the leadership of the party thus continued to be taken for a higher form of democracy. A number of rites and ceremonies where the Soviet people were called upon to hail their leaders and to approve of them, especially voting for them, aimed at symbolising this identification and to prohibit any public expression of a political thought other than official thought.

However, in last instance, the fidelity required of each one of them was not a fidelity to ideology (which could change, so that remaining faithful to its past affirmations could amount to treachery) but a fidelity to leaders who behaved as if they were owners of knowledge and of the State and, consequently, as "masters" of citizens who should remain subject to it and may not invoke any right in the face of it.

B) The Relative Set-back of Dogmatism

As in the Stalinist era, official ideology essentially clothed a form of discourse which could do without any demonstration of

what it put forth and pretended to confer on what it asserted the imperative authority of a political decree. It grew therefore into *dogmatic discourse*. This discourse sought to sustain its affirmations only if it was thought necessary and possible and proceeded to do so with citations from Marx and Lenin and/or decisions or resolutions adopted earlier by the party.

Through its discourse, official ideology claimed to have access to knowledge of real relations by acquiring this knowledge from simple concepts and abstract principles without having to submit its assertions to scientific experimentation. Here we had a *dogmatic position and practice* similar to those developed to the maximum extent by Stalinist ideology when it claimed to judge by its own criteria the validity of any scientific proposition whatever (in physics, mathematics, biology, history, economics, etc.)

However, while dogmatic discourse continued, the dogmatic position and practices of official ideology of the post-Stalinist period tended to receive a setback, at least in the domains of sciences and nature, while they apparently came unstuck but little in the domain of social sciences, history, economy and politics. However, even in the domain of the natural sciences the dogmatic position of official ideology penetrated with some difficulty as could be seen by the obstinate support given to Lysenkoism by Khrushchev. In the beginning of the 1960s, Lysenko and his supporters still continued to occupy a dominating place in biology and agronomy. The party leadership saw in Lysenkoism a conception which could solve more easily the difficulties in agriculture and animal breeding and a conception "founded" on the laws of dialectical materialism. On the other hand, other conceptions of biology, particularly the conclusions of genetics and molecular biology were rejected or were looked upon with suspicion despite their incontestable success under the pretext that they were not in conformity with the laws of dialectical materialism and thus represented "bourgeois sciences"

From 1962, scientific circles tried to resist this dogmatism more actively. In May that year, the Academy of Sciences organised a colloquium which emphasised perspectives opened by genetics and molecular biology. The colloquium came to the

conclusion of even a need to establish research institutions which would ensure growth of these branches of biology. Establishing such research centres required a decree of government and a Commission of the Academy had prepared a text of this decree. However, the party leadership and especially Khrushchev took a negative attitude with respect to this Commission and ended by dissolving it on 12 July 1962. On the order of the party leadership, the archives of the Commission of the Academy of Sciences were raided and are no longer available¹³. The party leadership created another Commission which received directions aimed at orienting biologists towards Lysenkoist conceptions. But scientists participating in it continued to resist these directives so much so that this Commission was finally replaced by a small working group which the party hoped to be more docile. In fact, even this restricted working group asserted the need to develop all trends in biology while placing an emphasis on the Lysenkoist conception nonetheless. The resolution adopted by this working group was ratified by the Central Committee and by the government in the form of a decree dated 25 January 1963.

This decree appeared to be a compromise. Now, an article *over two columns* on Lysenko appeared three days later in *Pravda* and *Izvestia* simultaneously (which was surprising for a text of this kind). This article reaffirmed all his positions, condemned the errors of Darwin and Morgan, discussed a new law on the transformation of non-living matter into living matter, denied the role of genes in heredity etc. This article was the starting point of a big Lysenkoist offensive supported by Khrushchev. However, the political and economic situation was such that the debate could not be simply closed and opened a polemic. The Lysenkoists published several articles. In one of them, they referred to a sentence in a speech by Khrushchev on 8 March 1963 (before a gathering of writers, incidentally), where he said:

Peaceful coexistence in the domain of ideology is a treachery towards Marxism-Leninism, a treachery towards the cause of workers and peasants¹⁴.

In February 1964, Khrushchev gave a long speech before the Central Committee. In it he praised the conceptions of Lysenko which, according to him, made it possible to obtain high yields in

cereals, meat and milk¹⁵ Thus the Lysenkoist offensive continued and led, among other things, to the liquidation of all indigenous bovine races.

However, in June 1964, the Academy of Sciences again put up a resistance. This resistance exasperated Khrushchev who threatened to dissolve the Academy. But finally, the disasters which struck Soviet agriculture led, among other causes, to the fall of Khrushchev and end of Lysenkoism.

This episode marked a setback for dogmatic positions and practices in biological and physical sciences but these positions remained alive in the domain of social sciences where one continued to separate “the true” for “the false” in the name of Marxism-Leninism, which was, of course, adjusted to the needs of the moment.

As for dogmatic discourses, they hardly received any setback. One of its functions was, in fact, to make it possible to denounce those who were opposed to it¹⁶

C) The Ideological Relations of the Population with the Power

The ideological relationship of the population with the party and the State were far from being relations of confidence in the capacity of its leaders and in the truth of their discourse but were relations of subjugation resting massively on *representation of the inevitable character of the power in place*. This representation was fed on repression against any organised criticism of the system, on brutality of this aggression and on the memories of the terror of the Stalinist era.

The solidity of this representation rested, in the final analysis, on the fear of having to think differently, a fear of which a classical author had already spoken as “Spine of the Russian man *beaten black and blue*”¹⁷ Of course, repression and fear did not rule out revolts but these revolts are numerous in the Stalin era as later. But as they could not be organised on a large scale they remained limited to the localities where they took birth such as Novocherassk (in 1962), Grozny, Krasnodar, Yaroslavl and in many other places¹⁸.

The image of the inevitable character of the power in place was somewhat strengthened by difficulties come across (from the

very fact of the specific mode of ideological domination) in organising on a somewhat wider scale a project that would represent another type of society. Under these conditions, the idea of rejecting what existed did not appear to open up on anything except "emptiness". The fear of this "emptiness" was magnified by effects of several decades of privation of all freedom, so much so that even the idea of an overthrow or significant weakening of power and norms which it proposed generated a veritable panic in the widest layers. Here intervened a "fear of freedom"¹⁹ which is not without similarity with the one felt by those who have lived for long in a shut universe and who respond with utter disarray in the face of the responsibility that they would have to assume once they are free. The *constraint* is thus sensed as a "security". Also, those who attack the stability of the regime could be perceived as "enemies" either because their action appears to generate uncontrollable "anarchy", or because their courage puts to shame those who would also aspire for changes but whom fear prevented from treading this path.

However, the ideological relations of the mass of population to the "Soviet system" were not linked only to the image of the "inevitable necessity" of the power in place. They also included "positive" elements related to certain aspects of the policy followed by the power.

In the Stalinist era, *Stalinist populism* was one of these elements. It contributed at that time to the image of the general secretary (despite the hatred accumulating against him) as the instrument of social unity - in reality non-existent - and as a leader who corrected "abuses" committed by the privileged and the powerful. The reality of this ideological relationship to Stalin, counterpart of the pulverisation of social conscience, is confirmed by an enormous flood of letters addressed to Stalin and coming from workers and peasants²⁰. To Stalinist populism corresponded, in those days, a *people's absolutism* that sees in repression exercised by the power (a repression which struck innumerable workers and peasants too) an indispensable means of eliminating "enemies of the people" whose activity appeared, even in the eyes of ordinary citizens, to be one of the reasons for difficulties that they experienced in their day to day life. This image led to spying,

hunt for traiters, to practices which endlessly divided people while uniting them in a common "vigilance"

The ideological relationships of the population to the power varied in course of time and were of an extremely complex nature, being historically formed. They could be, at one and the same time or one after the other, relationships of "confidence", "dependence", "hostility" etc., combining in an ever changing manner. Thus, the relationship of people's confidence the power appeared to have been minimal towards the end of the 1930s and in the beginning of the German-Soviet conflict (and this played a role in the early defeats) whereas it was strengthened with military successes and especially at the moment of victory in 1945, but it rapidly weakened in the years following the end of the war when famine and death once again became the lot of millions of peasants²¹

The relationship of confidence in Stalin too varied with the social classes and layers. It was particularly little among the Kolkozians and the cadres of the army (some of whom were sent to the gulag after the war and were seen to be capable of organising veritable revolts there)²².

Despite these fluctuations and these contradictory aspects, the relationship of confidence in the power, which the personality of Stalin had created in a portion of the population disappeared to a large extent after the death of the general secretary. The ideological relationships of the population with the leaders who succeeded Stalin were still more unstable than those which were established with him. They depended largely upon what was expected from the policy of these leaders (because they were not backed by a known history - real or falsified - that could serve as the ground for barely durable ideological relationships). Thus from 1956 to 1960, Khrushchev gained from the hopes raised by his promises (and some objective changes). These hopes reached their nadir in 1962-1964. The fall of Khrushchev once again raised a certain hope and was even received with joy by the workers although Brezhnev hardly had the benefit of any sympathies (he was looked upon as the "traitor" who had done in the "old chap", the *Staric*, who was responsible for his "rise" Kossygin, President of the Council of Ministers was the recipient of some confidence,

especially towards the end of the 1960s and in the beginning of the 1970s when there was a veritable rise in living standards. But in the second half of the 1970s, living standards slowly stopped rising. Thus, after the disappearance of Kosygin, a large mass of the population appeared increasingly disenchanted with the team of leaders without there being anyone who could be considered as the future leader who could receive people's sympathies. The beginning of the 1980s is marked by a surly wait for the disappearance of Brezhnev and his team. His death was received with indifference by the people in November 1982.

The relations of the population with those who exercised power since the death of Stalin depended largely upon steps they took in economic and social policy, hopes that these steps raised and by their real effects, on *different social classes and layers*, because promises concerning a faraway "radiant future" had already lost all appeal. The conditions were ready, during the 1970s, for the growth of a veritable ideological crisis.

Faced with this crisis which resulted, at one and the same time, in economic disappointments and an increasing erosion of the effects of a stereotyped discourse on marxism-leninism guiding party policy, it increasingly fashioned conservative ideological themes that were already at work in Stalinist ideology. As Helene Carrere d'Encausse has rightly pointed out, the three major ideological themes worked out henceforth for the peoples of the USSR refer to the Trinity of work-family-motherland. This Trinity can be defined as:

The rehabilitation of the family goes hand in hand with an acceptance of traditional moral values, with a rejection of permissivity and of all forms of marginality. The stereotype of the "good" Soviet citizen traced by the media is the worker who works for the good of his near and dear ones and the common good of all, who is disciplined and who belongs totally to the system whose values are transmitted by him to his family²³.

Official Soviet ideology of these times would thus to make the *family* a veritable bastion of the State and party. It was supposed to function as its continuation, with the responsibility

of supervision and education. This role bestowed on it a higher rank in the hierarchy of official values. However, in reality, the place of the family in accepted values was receiving a setback as can be seen in the abandonment of the family by a large number of persons. As for the role stressed in official ideology towards *work*, it grew all the more as it functioned in the nature of a counterblast to increasing indifference shown by Soviets towards work offered in the factories, in the State organisations and the Kolkhozes, work that was carried out under conditions of military regimentation of the early parts of the century. This "indifference" is a particular manifestation of the class struggle of the workers.

Official propoganda sought to fight these phenomena by proclaiming that work has become a "moral" need, a need to serve the people. Assertions that were refuted by facts all the time and by the speeches of the leaders who denounced "slovenliness" and asserted, as did Khrushchev at the XX Congress, that it "is indispensable to wage an even more resolute struggle against the remnants of capitalism such as indolence and parasitism, drunkenness and hooliganism..."²⁴.

As far as *patriotic discourse* is concerned, it followed great-Russian nationalist policy which gave real power, in each Republic, to Russian leaders while posts of figure-heads were allocated to "locals" The peripheral republics were used as training grounds and promotional avenues for future central cadres, Russians mainly. This was hardly favourable to the development of "Soviet patriotism" that was so vaunted in official discourse. The publications of the army often complained of a lowering of patriotism among the youth, a lowering that affected not only the youth of the non-Russian Republics but also Russian Youth.

Thus discourses on work, family and motherland like those which condemned alchoholism or spoke of a future of plenty had hardly any effect on the population. Practices attributed to the "remnants of capitalism" by the leaders (especially gambling and "drunkenness") were in full rise while economic policy remained circumscribed by limits imposed on it by a system that had not undergone any fundamental changes.

4. *Continuity and Change in Economy*

The continuity of the economic system could be seen in the maintenance of the same relationships of production and exploitation, of the same forms of ownership, although the relative magnitude in salaries and in State ownership showed an increase and that of the work in concentration camps and work in the Kolkhozes showed a diminution when compared to the Stalinist period.

At the level of day-to-day management, strict subordination of economic administration, undertakings, technicians and trade unions to the party leadership continued. The main criterion for selection of cadres and for appointment to a political, administrative, economic, or even technical post continued to be the candidate's fidelity to the line and ideology of the party and his devotion to its leaders. Such a criterion generally favoured promotion of the mediocre, of those lacking in character and depth of knowledge.

However, economic reforms had been very many from the middle of the 1950s. During the war and in its immediate aftermath, the Commissariats and central industrial ministries intervened increasingly in the working of undertakings (which reduced the importance of the principle of a "single leadership" and led to strong administrative centralisation). In 1957, a large number of these industrial ministries were wound up. This was one of the main reasons for the reforms introduced by Khrushchev. It shifted the tasks of these ministries to new regional organisations, the *Sovnarkhozes* or *regional economic councils*. This decentralisation was accompanied by an increased economic role of the party. The resistance of the state apparatus to these measures and discontent of a large number of *apparatchiki* contributed to the failure of these reforms.

After the fall of Khrushchev this reform was given up. In 1965, the central ministries were reestablished but another reform was tried out. It left greater initiative to enterprises by reducing the number of objectives imposed on them and letting them have, in some cases, direct economic links between them and commercial organisations. In 1967, prices were revised in order to bring them

in line with monetary costs and give a greater place of economic calculations in terms of money. However, these reforms had little influence on central planning. They responded to contradictory conceptions and had but little effect in practice.

A new economic reform, set in motion in 1973, learnt from the consequences of this failure. This last reform went in the direction of a *new centralisation* and introduced a large number of undertakings in *industrial associations* which had a say in day-to-day working. This reduced once again the initiatives which the heads of the production units could take. The results of this reform were deceptive. Thus, in 1979, another reform saw the light of day. Its official aim was to "improve" the working of the economy by modifying the mode of fixing the objectives of the plan and by having recourse to a new centralisation of economic decisions and planning. As Marie Lavigne has very succinctly pointed out, the text of this reform constituted "an extraordinary admission of the failure of the reform launched in 1965"²⁶

To sum up, the different economic reforms represent a series of failures. They attempted, in vain, to reduce the enormity of wastages, useless transportation of products from one end of the country to the other, improve the quality of production, shorten delays in commissioning equipments and "speed up technical progress", ensure more regular supply to the factories, farms, commercial organisations, and ultimately, to the public.

The failure of the reforms appears to indicate the profound inability of the system set up during the 1930s to undergo any real change, to withstand changes which seriously modified the place of different agents of production and which reduces the heavy and paralysing overlordship exercised by central administrative organs and the party on the economic life of the country. Now, such an overlordship is increasingly incompatible with the complexity of the economy and the depletion of the work force reserves at the disposal of the country.

A similar failure can be noticed in cases of attempts to change the organisation of work in the factory by distancing itself from the old military model and through the formation of multipurpose brigades in pursuance of directives given on several occasions during the 1970s. This failure was also due to several resistances

these directives came up against. Moreover, in cases where such brigades were formed and functioned well, they were dissolved quickly because workers who participated in them generally left once they had received bonuses which this work organisation allowed them to receive. In fact, the nominal revenues of which they were the beneficiaries were not reflected in the market. Hence, they thought it pointless to pursue effort which required team work²⁷

This apparent inability of the system to change had only partially harmed the increase in production, and did so very late. Till recent years, in fact, the Soviet economy could mobilise manpower reserves and continued to enlist new workers from the countryside and to transfer them to industry and it pushed to the maximum the growth of women workers. However, today, the potentialities of this kind of extensive growth have practically come to an end.

We may add that the failures and increasing difficulties of the system had shown a partial easing of real conditions of work which were far from fully corresponding to regulations of undertakings and which the administration was supposed to respect, especially from the point of view of the series of products they were supposed to furnish, qualities these products were expected to attain and technical conditions of their production.

The violation of the plan and the formal regulations of the working of the economy increased all the more easily as local cadres could extract personal advantage from them for they widely opened the way to the growth of "clandestine" production and trade (either in State undertakings, or in private industrial or commercial units functioning in violation of law but nevertheless tolerated) which gave rise to a *parallel or underground economy*. It is impossible to evaluate the magnitude of this *second economy* but it is known that in several domains it played an important and indispensable role, it ensured the supply which, without it, would not be available to the public, to state undertakings and to the kolkhozes.

The extension of the parallel economy considerably increased real earnings of party and state cadres, mainly at the level of districts where few cadres had access to "closed" shops (reserved

for higher cadres). To let this parallel economy work, these cadres took a cut of the part of the receipts arising from it, or, if they can be used directly a portion of the products of the parallel economy. Thus they imposed a veritable *tribute* which enabled them, among other things, to have access to personal cars or to have houses built for them (with materials diverted from the construction yards of schools and hospitals). They could thus acquire any kind of consumer goods (bought "under the counter" in state owned shops or in the parallel economy) and would be served in separate halls of the best restaurants, generally at a highly reduced price. Heads of the enterprises who would not agree to pay such "tributes" to local cadres ran the risk of great trouble because these cadres always had the possibility of accusing them of various offences and to have them condemned.

The *tribute* thus extracted by some cadres occupying a fairly high level in the hierarchy should not be mistaken for *bribes* which ordinary people had to pay to obtain a part of services to which they theoretically had a "right", especially to get some medical treatment, receive some medicines or medical care etc. Neither should this tribute be mistaken for the *confusion* which enabled those with enough money to buy university diplomas and degrees, or academic ranks, or even a job in the apparatus of the party or the State²⁸.

The parallel economy did enable the official economy to function and yet constituted one of the bases of the privileges of the party bourgeoisie. Thus this bourgeoisie encouraged the parallel economy to a certain point and even obliged economic agents to do so. At the same time, however, the parallel economy was tolerated only between certain limits (which varied depending upon the circumstances and subjective assessments of the authorities) since if this parallel economy were to become all conquering it could have ended by damaging the official economy. When the limits of tolerance were crossed, some of the activities entering within the scope of the parallel economy gave rise to penal punishments including death sentences for heads of enterprises, their collaborators and workers.

If the parallel economy made it possible for the system to function, it rendered the realities of production and exchanges

which were supposed to be governed by state plans even more opaque.

The parallel economy existed even in the Stalin era but it assumed an enormous upward swing during recent times. All in all, within limits which the power could manage to impose on it, it did not modify fundamentally the working of the Soviet economic system which continued to be subjected to the exigencies of capital accumulation and economic crises resulting from them. Henceforth, these crises entered in a general way of the system.

5. The General Crises of the System

The crisis of the Soviet system concerned at one and the same time economy, ideology and politics and these three aspects of the crisis directly had a bearing on one another.

A) The Economic Crises

To take a superficial view of the matter, the Soviet system appeared to ignore crises and attain remarkable growth. Thus, one could estimate that in 1980, total Soviet production (measured by the Gross National Product) had increased about threefold²⁹ with respect to the level attained in 1955. This last mentioned year corresponded to the end of what one could call "Stalinist economic policy" characterised, among other things, by very unfavourable terms of exchange in agriculture.

To the extent that such comparisons are significant, the growth mentioned above indicated by the GNP would let the total national income of the USSR exceed from about a quarter of the United States to about half³⁰

The advance of the GNP and national income of the USSR was surely remarkable. It corresponded in the main to a high increase in non-agricultural production. In view of this fact and the rapid increase in *investments* and *military expenditure*, individual consumption increased only much more slowly. Unfortunately, in this domain, Soviet statistics are still quite meagre when compared to others. It is not, possible, therefore, to give anything more than very approximate evaluations.

We may recall, firstly, that in so far as the real wage of the Soviet workers, in constant roubles, is concerned it attained the level of 1913 and 1928 only between 1963 and 1965, which means a stagnation of nearly half a century³¹. The ten years that followed showed a relatively quick "recuperation" The real wage increased by about 37% between 1965 and 1975³². From 1975 to 1980, per capita consumption showed an increase of only 1.6% per year³³. It can be estimated that real wages did not increase quicker than the average per capita consumption, that is to say an increase of 10.6% in five years. This would place the real wage in 1980 at about 50% above the 1955 level. According to estimations of the Joint Economic Council, the Soviet per capita consumption would seem to represent approximately, in 1937, 37% of the American level³⁴. Such a figure surely overestimates Soviet consumption because it takes into account neither the poor quality of the products nor shortages. In any case, it is extremely low for an economic power of the size of the Soviet Union. It confirms that the system worked only very secondarily to meet the needs of consumers and, above all, for accumulation and production of armaments³⁵. While the growth of the GNP slowed down, these two types of uses of production namely, accumulation and production of armaments continued to grow at a high rate and weighed increasingly heavily on individual consumption.

a) *The Cyclical Crises*

The Soviet movement of production and investments was always subject to a *cyclical crises* as it was since the 1930s. Moreover, it was also subject to increasingly deeper *structural crisis*.

The *cyclical crises*, related to current contradictions of capital accumulation, appeared especially in 1960, 1963, 1967-1969, 1972 and 1975³⁶ (from where the fusion of cyclical crisis with economic structural crisis made it more difficult to show the manifestations of the cycles proper).

Like the cyclical crises of 1930s, those of the 1950s and the following years were marked by an overaccumulation which gave rise to *generalised shortages*, including that of the labour work force³⁷, means of production and consumer products and by a

tendency for price increases, a tendency that was hidden to some extent by administrative measures and subsidies. These crises bring in their wake a momentary but significant lowering of the rate of growth and efforts to "thin out" the personnel of some units of production or administrations in order to transfer workers they employed to more efficient or more "profit-making" sectors. These phenomena acquired greater scope lately than in the 1930s because the enormous reserves of the labour force represented formerly by a still pretty numerous peasantry had practically disappeared.

b) *The Structural Economic Crisis*

The progressive disappearance of reserves in manpower and the inability showed by the system to adapt itself to the situation in the transition from a largely extensive accumulation to a largely intensive accumulation (which would make it possible to increase more rapidly the social productivity of work) were at the origin of a *structural economic crisis* characterised by an increasing clear and lasting weakening of the rate of growth of the GNP³⁸.

The various statistical sources available show different rates of growth but all of them confirm the regular trend towards the lowering of these rates.

I shall confine myself to dwell upon the figures cited by A. Bergson. They bring out the following series³⁹

	1955-1965	1965-1970	1970-1975	1975-1980
Annual rate of increase of the GNP	5.5	5.3	3.8	2.8

The indicators available applied to official forecasts show that during the five year period 1980-1985 the rate of growth of the GNP could fall below 2%. If we take into account the anticipated increase in military expenditure (which had shown an increase since ten years of 5% per year and which should have continued to increase at least at this rate) and growth of population, we could predict, for this five year period, a stagnation and even a

slide back, for sure, of per capita consumption, despite the *anticipated increase* of production in Sector B (consumer goods) of industry. All the more so since agriculture was showing several signs of aggravation of its own crisis which is treated elsewhere. In 1981, we apparently record a fall in the GNP because the harvest of cereals is at the lowest since several years. It is only 175 million tons (unofficial estimates) against a target of 239 million in the plan. Moreover, industrial production of 16 branches of industry out of 32 recognised by official statistics is also on the slide down⁴⁰

The structural economic crisis already had negative effects for the people. The supply in the shops was increasingly defective, the official rise in prices and those on the parallel market were manifold. This did not prevent the people from having an unusable potential "purchasing power" rising to an equivalent of several months of wages.

The deterioration of living conditions was not limited to individual consumption. It affected the *working conditions* in all their aspects (a tougher work discipline and especially an increase in work accidents, some of them especially serious, taking place, at the end of 1981 and beginning of 1982, in Moscow and in other cities with access to foreigners).

We also notice, since 1970, a *serious deterioration of the state of health and medical care*. It is characteristic that the latest figures published by the Central Directorate of Statistics stop at 1975. But figures already point to a sharp increase in *infant mortality*. Between 1971 and 1975, it went up by a third, and statistical analysis reveals that this mortality is under estimated by 14%. The death rate of children less than one year went up to 40% against 13% in the United States and in Europe. On this account, the USSR finds itself at the level of developing countries of Latin America and Asia (Costa Rica, Jamaica, Malaysia). Similarly, the *life-expectancy has gone down* since the early 1960s and is less by six years than in industrially developed countries. In 1978, life expectancy is 61.9 years for men against 66 years during 1963-1965, which is a lowering of four years. This is an *exceptional phenomenon* which could be explained by worsening nutrition and medical care, by an improper working of the health

system (which gets an increasingly reduced budget allocation), by the rise in alcoholism (a result of economic and agricultural crisis), by the rise of pollution and accidents at work places⁴¹.

We are thus faced with an economic and social crisis that is general, deep-seated, long-lasting and many sided. It simultaneously affects the international position of the Soviet Union and the day to day life of citizens.

c) The Chronic Crisis of Agriculture

The structural crisis is all the more serious as it happens to be grafted on a *chronic crisis* of agriculture on which a few words need to be said as it has become an integral part of the structural crisis. It tended to block the growth of the GNP and, furthermore, it pointed out that, even if some solutions to this crisis are known, they were always unacceptable to the leadership of the party, at any rate in the present state of the relationship of social and political forces.

We should firstly recall a few striking facts. We must note, for example, that in 1979, the yield in cereals was only 14.2 quintals per hectare. This places the USSR *below the level of Greece and Yugoslavia in 1956-1959 and below its own level in the 1970s while Soviet agriculture had absorbed upto 27% of the investments figuring on budget in the middle of the 1970s*. The Kolkhozian and Sovkhozian agriculture had thus shown to be incapable of seriously advancing even when large financial and material means were provided to them (for example, the production of mineral fertilizers had gone up, in conventional units, from 55.4 to 94.5 million tonnes between 1970 and 1979)⁴².

The chronic crisis of Soviet agriculture led the USSR increasingly to buying foodgrains from the United States, Canada and Australia. This policy of purchases, started by Khrushchev in 1962 has been followed ever since. In 1972, the USSR bought 18 million tonnes of goodgrains from the United States and, in 1979, it bought 25 million tonnes.

The veritable agricultural bankruptcy of the USSR appeared in all its magnitude when we compare the yields of Soviet agriculture with those of American agriculture in the beginning of

the 1970s. The figures for the years continued to be significant because of the stagnation in agricultural results in the USSR. Before examining other figures, we must recall that in the beginning of the 1970s Soviet agriculture employed 26.6 million persons as against 3.8 million for American agriculture and that the two countries had more or less equal cattle. For each person employed, the productions are as follows:

Production per Person Engaged in Agriculture

	USSR (Annually)	United States (Annually)
Cereals	4.5 Tonnes	54.7 Tonnes
Meat (dead weight)	320 Kg	4570 Kg
Milk	2.8 Tonnes	11.8 Tonnes
Potatoes	2.43 Tonnes	3.2 Tonnes

If the yields in Soviet agriculture were low, its cost prices were very much higher than those of American agriculture although the minimum hourly wage in the USSR was 44 Kopecks, which was (at the exchange rate) 59 cents in the United States (figures of 1968) against an hourly agricultural wage in America of \$ 1.72. Despite these low wages, the production cost of wheat is 102 roubles per tonne in the USSR as against an equivalent (in roubles) of 49.5 in the United States. For maize, the figures are as follows: 136 roubles (in the USSR), 32.25 in the United States. For beatroot 32 roubles against 9.4. For beef 1113 roubles against 337⁴⁴.

Thus, despite Soviet wages being three times lower than American wages, it happened to be more "advantageous" for the USSR to buy its agricultural products in the United States instead of producing them under the conditions in which it was producing them (even if we do not take into account problems of security in supplies and the balance of payment).

B) The Ideological Crisis

The changes in ideological relationships between the people and the power had slowly led to an ideological crisis. This crisis was not linked only to structural economic crisis. It was much older than the most evident manifestations of the latter. Today, however, these two crises reinforce one another.

The ideological crisis was seen to have multiple forms. Moreover, it also concerned the relationships of political leaders with official ideology of which they were spokesmen. There is hardly any doubt, in fact, that as a consequence of economic failures gathered by the USSR, the *credo* of the Stalinist era and the Khrushchevian era on the capability of the Soviet Union to catch up with the United States and overtake it in a minimum period of time appeared to be laughable to those who held power in the Soviet Union so much so that they tried above all to overtake that country in the military domain.

For the leaders and the higher layers of the apparatus in general, the apparent unity of ancient official ideology was broken. It was only some elements of this ideology which played an active role, its conservatism, its assertion of the immutable "leading role" of the party, the need to control to the maximum, circulation of information in order to be able to govern⁴⁵. This ideology continued to condemn any intervention in the political life by "insufficiently trained" layers of the population. This was looked upon as needing to be constantly educated and reeducated by the party. In short, the leading political oligarchy remained basically attached to the elitism of totalitarian ideology which sought to subject the individual entirely to the party and the State. The chauvinism and belief in the worldwide role of the USSR, including the role it was supposed to play in *liberating* other peoples also continued to occupy a central place in the ideology of the dominating layers and contributed to the development of the Soviet armament policy and to Soviet foreign policy. The armament policy furthermore aimed to *demonstrate to the peoples of the USSR the power of its government*, its capacity for action and the *irreversible* character of its power even while the earlier economic *credo* had fallen apart

However, the crisis of ideology had another dimension too, and this was not limited to the political oligarchy and leading sections and developed within all the layers of the population. It raised questions about the relationship of the population with the power. There were several elements that contributed to the development of this crisis.

When the political internees were set at liberty in 1953, and then in greater numbers in 1956, and after the denunciation of the crimes of the Stalinist era, they played an important role in the beginning of an *open* questioning of official ideology.

The return of former internees gave a chance to a portion of the people to own up again the country's past (which was hidden by a highly untrue history and which continued to be so to a very large extent). This owning up provided fertile ground for the growth of independent thinking about history and politics which directly questioned party ideology.

Thus a new atmosphere was created. It incited the intervention of generations that had not known, or had known but little, the large scale terror of the Stalinist era. Youth circles were formed and became cradles of questioning and thinking for themselves. Soviet works were published abroad and were circulated within the USSR clandestinely. Moreover, there began the circulation within the country of writings which were not submitted for censorship and of which copies were made. That was *Samizdat*. The earliest of these writings were from the pen of former internees, the memoirs of Evgeny Ginsburg, *the Vertigo*, then the *Stories from Kolyma* by Shalamov, which were circulated as early as the 1950s. The beginning of the 1960s saw the appearance of clandestine reviews such as *Syntaxis* and *Phoenix 61*. We also notice a literature and a poetry in their full rise which escaped censorship. The authors of these works like Bukovski, E. Kuznetsov, V. Ossipov were arrested as early as in 1961 while the new ones made their appearance later, such as Siniavski, Yuri Daniel, L. Pliushch and several others who were to be arrested or exiled from Russia.

During these same years, the high prestige of Scientists (which the regime had tried to keep in check) enabled some of them who were more outspoken or more courageous and more

famous than others, to publicise ideas different from those of official ideology. This was the case, from 1958, of Academician Andrei Sakharov who continued his struggle and was later exiled to Gorky. Thus appeared, still in an embryonic form, a beginning of *public opinion*, of an opinion other than the fictitious one, made up by the power.

At the same time there began to grow a struggle for rights inscribed in the constitution but that had remained unrespected. This struggle appeared especially dangerous to the political oligarchy. Demanding the respect for legality was, in its eyes, an attack on the very foundations of the Soviet State because this demand *exposed the fictitious nature of law intended above all to hide the brutal arbitrariness of the State*. Therefore, a call for the respect of law constituted a manifestation of opposition to the system.

Other forms of struggle also came forth in the 1960s and the 1970s. The struggle of the believers of different faiths who demand that their faith be respected, the possibility of organising themselves and independence for practitioners of their cult. The despised nationalities too intervene in questioning the official ideology: Ukraine, Lithuania and other nationalities of the Baltic countries, the nations of Caucasia and Central Asia played an important role through spokesmen who were as yet in a minority but who drew the sympathy of many workers, peasants, intellectuals of their nations.

All these movements were put down but not with the same violence known before 1953. Although repression was real and it hardened after the fall of Khrushchev and the rise of Brezhnev at the head of the party, different forms of protests followed one after the other and contributed to the growth of new ideological relationships and new forms of organisation. Under these conditions a more open expression of discontent of workers asserts itself. Not only were there localised revolts that were put down with severity, but also attempts to organise independent trade unions. Thus was born the *Association of Free Trade Unions of the Workers of the Soviet Union* founded by a miner, Khlebanov which could function only for a few months between February and October 1978 (when Khlebanov was arrested and sent to a psychiatric hospital).

This earliest free trade union was followed by *Free Interprofessional Association of Workers (SMOT)* which addressed a press conference on 28 October 1978 and whose moving spirit was Vladimir Borissov. This second trade union was composed of activists who already had political experience and who learnt their lessons from the arrest of Khlebanov. Although subjected to repression⁴⁶, the SMOT held on. It formed restricted groups, mostly concentrated in Moscow and Leningrad and sent out materials for political and trade union education, mainly on magnetic tapes⁴⁷. The number of workers who participated in this movement was certainly very small but the very existence of these syndicates bear testimony that workers were questioning official trade unions and the myth of unity of the working class behind "its leading party"

The call to order sent out by authorities to official trade unions only confirmed that they were again as incapable as in the past of helping workers in defending their conditions of existence. This weakness of official syndicates became evident, for example, from the repetition by Brezhnev, fifty years later, of what Stalin had said in the 1930s. Thus, in the beginning of March 1982, at the XVII Congress of the Trade Unions, Brezhnev repeated almost word for word the words of the former general secretary when he asserted that "the trade unions do not make use often enough of their rights in order to improve the working conditions"⁴⁸.

The ideological crisis that was thus developing is all the more significant since repression, as we know, continued and people were subjected to constant propaganda for which was mobilised *an ideological army* that exceeded in number the army, navy and air force⁴⁹. This propaganda involved, in the words of Suslov, "millions upon millions of ideological cadres" and constituted a process that "should be uninterrupted"⁵⁰.

The propaganda did not aim at inspiring a "faith" or "belief" but quite literally to *crush* the people under the "conservatism of the thought inculcated (...), compulsory reasoning, stuffed and baked each day by the magnetic throat of radios, reproduced in thousands of newspapers (...), summarised in the "digest" for political education circles (...)"⁵¹. It was not a question of convincing people (ultimately, no matter what their thoughts

were⁵²) but of *preventing* them from thinking, of mutilating their spirit, of obliging them to say what the power wanted them to, of depriving words of their sense, to draw the Soviet people in the deafening noise of assertions constantly repeated. Their inanity ended up by making one wonder if there was even any capacity to think. Official ideology spread from morning to evening by the propoganda thus filled a role of obscuring spirits, of ideological diversion and of crushing the voice of individuals. This was achieved through constraint, by a constraint imposed by fear, fear of repression in the normal sense of the word and fear experienced by all those who benefitted from the smallest "privilege" (but did not have any right) of losing it, however small it may be, even if it were to have a posting in a less unfavourable place or have access from time to time to some "rare" products (such as potatoes, for example, when they are in short supply). Now, the various protest movements bear testimony to this fear - although always there - no longer as universal as before. This is also a part of an *ideological crisis* whose consequences should not be underestimated.

C) The Political Crisis

In short, economic crises and ideological crisis with their specificities, revealed that the Soviet system was up against an extraordinary blockade in the way of any true transformations of the system. This blockade lead to a deep political crisis. It paralysed the leadership, reduced it to managing day to day matters, rendered it incapable of pushing through reforms which could perhaps avoid the aggravation of difficulties in which the country was increasingly plunged. This political crisis led men and women, still few in number, belonging to different layers and social classes to organise, to assert points of view different from those of the power and to protest against some of its decisions. However, this second aspect of the political crisis was still very limited, because all the social layers and classes were profoundly divided. Within each layer or class, there existed, as we know, some individuals who enjoyed certain privileges, legal or illegal (but tolerated) even small ones as to be ridiculous. They often held on to the *status quo*, more or less supported the power and

represented elements of stability.

Thus, after several decades, the system set up during the Stalin era appeared to be quite solid but incapable of facing a new era. It grew, it aged, but it could not ripen and launch changes which could have enabled it to tackle with a certain efficiency problems which had to be faced. In part, in order to run away from internal difficulties, the power launched a policy of world-wide expansionism of a hegemonistic character and pursued large scale armament production. It thus created a fearful military power to which it devoted - even during the years of *detente* - enormous efforts and sums of money.

In this system, the dominating class, formed of the party bourgeoisie headed by a leadership oligarchy, is deeply cut off from real problems of the people. It lived in increasingly privileged conditions while the living standards of the mass of workers had stagnated since many years and was on the verge of getting worse. This class was seen for the moment to be incapable of solving problems which assailed it because different groups and layers into which it was divided were trapped in a maze of power relationship which exercised a paralysing influence. Within this class, each was a vassal of a superior and the overlord of a large number of persons. At its head was a suzerain supreme, the General Secretary, who could act only in consideration of what was wanted by those who were nearest to him in the hierarchy.

Some of the ideological and political traits of the system described in the present work would show its great similarity with powers of the fascist type.

Economically, the party bourgeoisie lived in the image of capitalist social relationships. They impose the primacy of accumulation while the highly specific form acquired by the political and social domination and the *modus operandi* of the ideology try to subjugate accumulation to constraints that correspond above all to requirements of stability of the power of the dominating class and of its principal fractions. For the time being these requirements prevented it from really innovating and led it to selecting practically irremovable political cadres even when they were incompetent and corrupt. Thus the system acted as a brake on the development of production, penetration of

technical progress (unless it be in certain domains where spectacular results were sought) and the general rise in living standards. Whence the general crisis of the system. The existence of this crisis imposes a large number of mutations in whose absence the Soviet formation would not come out lastingly from increasing difficulties in which it was pushed. However, the growth of crisis does not mean that the system was "condemned to collapse" nor that a revolt will inevitably ripen within it although the elements of discontent were getting accumulated. The inherent contradictions of the crisis could grow in various ways. It would, therefore, be vain to want to predict the outcome.

Paris, December 1982.

Sponsor's Note

With reference to Bettelheim's observation that "the growth of crisis does not mean that the system was "condemned to collapse"...., I wrote to Bettelheim that the readers would be interested to know his present comments on the subsequent collapse of USSR from its earlier form of party capitalism. To this, Bettelheim replied (Fax dt. 8.1.96) as follows: "Dear Friend, I received your fax dated 19.12.'95. Due to my bad state of health, I could not reply earlier. For the same reason, I am not presently able to write new comments on the last lines of my book now under print in English.

Yours friendly
Ch. Bettelheim"

Footnotes

1. The title of general secretary was abolished. It was revived in April 1966, when Brezhnev was the chief of the party. At the same time the term polit bureau (which had been temporarily replaced by the term "Presidium of the Central Committee") was again used.
2. The MVD is the Ministry of the Interior which was replaced or the NKVD, in the aftermath of the war, the term "ministry" having replaced all the organisms of that level earlier called "Peoples' Commissariat" In March 1954 the KGB (*for Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti*) or the Committee of the State Security was created and took over the main functions of security. In 1962, Khrushchev abolished the MVD at the level of the USSR and changed it into the ministry for the protection of public order. The local agents of the MVD were then placed under the formal authority of the Executive Committees of the regional Soviets. In 1966, Brezhnev reconstituted a pan-Soviet Ministry for the preservation of public order. In November 1968, he gave it back the name of the MVD. The powers of this ministry and those of the KGB increased again regularly since 1965 but never attained the scope of the end of the Stalinist era.
3. See, for example, what Efim Etkind has written on this subject, in *Dissident malgré lui* (Dissident in spite of himself), *op.cit.* In this book the author narrates some of the trials and arbitrary condemnations that took place between 1963 and 1974.
4. cf. on this point, Helene Carrere d'Encausse, *Le Pouvoir Confisque*, *op.cit.*, p.172.
5. cf. on this point, H.Carrere d'Encausse, *ibid*, p.292 and 302-303.
6. cf. *infra*, p.300.
7. cf. *Izvestia*, 19 February 1946. In this discourse, there was neither any question of socialism nor of communism, but of the state, Soviet regime, its greatness and of the greatness of the motherland.
8. We must point out that for Soviet leaders, the term "detente" did not signify any "loosening" but on the contrary a ceaseless strengthening of the positions of the socialist camp, as said in a Soviet political dictionary cf. *Kratkii Politicheskii Slovar*, Moscow, 1978, p.321.
9. According to the data provided by the American agency for armament control, total Soviet arms export rose up, for the period 1974-1978, to more than 27 billion dollars against 28.4 billion for exports of the same time from the United States. Between 1974 and 1980,

Soviet sales of arms went up threefold.

10. This anagram stand for the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.
11. On these various points, see Giovanni Graziani, *Comecon, domination et dependence*, Paris, Maspero, 1982.
12. cf. *Pravda*, 12 January 1980.
13. Cf. Zhores Medvedev, *Grandeur et Chute de Lyssenko* (Glory and Fall of Lysenko), Paris, NRF, 1971, p.246-247.
14. cf. *Ibid*, p.254.
15. cf. *Pravda*, 14 February 1964.
16. This function of dogmatic discourse in the Soviet system is highlighted by Alexander Zinoviev, as also by Jon Elster. cf. the article of this author, "Negation active et negation passive" (Active negation and passive negation), in *Archives europeennes de Sociologie*, 1982, mainly p.330-331.
17. According to the formula which Grigori Svirki recalls in *Ecrivains de la Liberte* (Writers for Freedom), *op.cit.*, p.57-58.
18. cf. Michel Heller and Aleksandr Nekrich, *L'Utopie au pouvoir* (Utopia in Power), Paris Calmann-Levy, 1982, p.492-495.
19. *La Peur de la Liberte* (Fear of Freedom) is the title given in French to a work of Erich Fromm, Paris, Buchet-Chastel, 1963, published in English in 1941 as *Escape from Freedom*, in which the author questions himself on the reasons which had led to submission before nazi or fascist totalitarianism.
20. The book of Nicolas Werth, *Etre Communiste ...*, *op.cit.*, throws much light on this subject.
21. cf. M.Heller and A.Nekrich, *op.cit.*, p.390.
22. These revolts, often the work of former officers, are many from 1945 to 1955 (cf. *idid.*, p.413.)
23. H. Carrere d'Encausse, *Le Pourvoir Confisque* (The Confiscated Power), *op.cit.*, p.189.
24. cf. *Cahiers du Communisme*, No,12, 1961, p.120.
25. The consumption of alcohol in the USSR had risen to such a degree that it exerted visibly negative effects on mortality (I shall take up this point again) and led to the "rounding up" of drunkards in city streets, from where they were taken to "centers for de-addiction"
26. cf. M.Lavigne, "Nouvelle reforme economique en Union Sovietique" (New Economic Reform in the Soviet Union), *Le Monde diplomatique*, September 1979, p.3.

27. cf. On this point the article of Daniele Leborgne: "1930-1980: 50 ans de croissance extensive en URSS" (50 years of extensive growth in the USSR), in *Critique de l'economie politique*, no. 19, April-June 1982.
28. On *tribute* and bribes, cf. Konstantin Sinis, *The Second Economy at the District Level*, Occasional Papers, No.111, Washington, Kenan Institute. On misappropriation and extortion, cf. M.Haller and A.Nekrich, *L'Utopie* op.cit., p.527. See also G.Duchene "L'officiel et le parallele dans l'economie politique (The official and the Parallel in political economy), *Libre*. no.7, 1980, and by the same author, "L'economie parallele en Union Sovietique" (Parallel economy in the Soviet Union), in *Le Courrier des pays de l' Est*, October 1980.
29. This coefficient of increase of 3 corresponds to an annual average growth of 4.5%. It is lower than what the official statistics display (namely a coefficient of 5) because it eliminated the overvaluations which are included in these statistics. It is based on similar revaluations of economists and statisticians. Some of these revaluations and their sources can be found in A. Bergson, "Soviet Economic Slowdown", *Problems of Communism*, May-June 1981, p.24s. These revaluations have been used here and were completed by old and recent official statistics. Were also used the estimations carried out by Jacques Sapir in an unpublished paper, written in October 1981 and titled: *Premiere Synthese Sur l'economie Sovietique* (Preliminary Synthesis of the Soviet Economy) - 1950-1975 and in his article in *Le Monde diplomatique*, November 1981.
30. According to calculations of official Soviet statistical organs, the national income of the USSR appeared to have gone up by 31% over the national income of the United States in 1950, to more than two-thirds of this income in 1979 (cf. N. Kh... v 1979g, p.67) but these percentages correspond to a strong overvaluation of the Soviet national income as can be seen from the comparison of industrial and agricultural productions of the two countries. It may be pointed out that the population of the USSR is higher by 20% than that of the United States. This means that a total national income earned to 5% of that of the United States amounts to a per capita Soviet income of 40% of this country, but the Soviet standard of living compared to that of the American consumer is lower than this percentage because of shortages (meat, milk, butter, eggs etc.), and bad quality of products.
31. cf. *Supra*, p.222.

32. cf. the works of G.E. Schroeder and B.S. Severin in *Industrial Labour in the USSR*, London, Pergamon, 1978.
33. cf. M.Elizabeth Denton, "Soviet Consumer Policy" in Joint Economic Council (JEC), *Soviet Economy in a time of change*, Vol. I, Washington, 1979.
34. *Ibid*, p.379.
35. According to estimations that are most widely accepted, the military investments and expenditures would consume more than 35% of the GNP (cf. Jacques Sapir's article in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, table no.4 cited earlier). Other sources used by Jacques Sapir (cf. Table 1 of the same article) reveal that the percentage of military expenditures with respect to the GNP is higher than the one which leads to estimating it at about 35% of GNP for military expenditures and investments.
36. These crises were studied by J.Sapir in the paper cited already, *Premiere Synthèse ...* and in a paper dated March 1982 unpublished to date.
37. Soviet policy tried to provide for a part of the manpower shortage by importing work forces. For quite different reasons, it takes recourse to this palliative with much care. Thus, the Soviet Union has recourse to immigration of Bulgarian and Finnish workers. Since some time, there has also been thinking on immigration of Cuban and Vietnamese workers. Till the beginning of 1982, there were projects which had not till then taken shape, but in the spring of 1982, the arrival of Vietnamese workers was indicated.
38. It is to be noticed that the structural crisis of Soviet economy deepened just when the economic crisis of the countries of "private capitalism" and particularly in the United States was getting increasingly serious. The leading teams in these countries too appeared to be incapable of finding even palliatives for the crisis which changed into an ideological, moral and political crisis of an especially serious nature.
39. cf. A. Bergson, *Problems of Communism*, May-June 1981, p.26. This figure for the period 1955-65. has been recalculated by me from Soviet official statistics with corrections by using methods employed for the other in this series of figures. I may add that for 1980, the Soviets accept a rate of growth of the order of 1% (see Table 2 of the article by J.Sapir in *Le Monde diplomatique* already cited) which is thus lower than for the one where the population increases.

40. cf. Pravda, 24 April 1982, and *Herald Tribune* 25 April 1982.
41. cf. Nik Ebershadt, "The Health Crisis in the USSR" *The New York Review of Books*, 19 February 1981. There is also a serious study of these problems in "Aspects de la Sante publique en URSS" (Aspects of Public Health in the USSR) in *Problemes Economiques et Sociaux*, Documentation Francaise, 18 December 1981, See also Dr. Knaus, *Medicine en URSS* (Medicine in USSR), Paris, Belfond 1982 and the study by Murray Fischbach cited in *Le Monde*, 9 November 1982.
42. cf. *N.Kh* V. 1979g, p.177 and p.220.
43. cf. The table on p.18 of the article of B.Kerblay, "L'experience sovietique d'agriculture collectiviste" (The Soviet experiment in Collective agriculture), in *Revue d'Etudes cH8090:4;2y"9z'est*, September 1979.
44. *Ibid*, p.28, Table 4.
45. Any attack on censorship appeared as a threat to power. This can be seen several times, for example in the era of Khrushchev, during the huge campaign against Boris Pasternak whose *Dr. Zhivago* had appeared abroad; during the Brezhnev era, in May 1967, when Solzhenitsyn wrote to the IV Congress of Writers to protest against the censoring of Glavlit and no writer read this letter from the rostrum. It was seen, again, in July 1968 during the meeting of the CPs of the east meeting in Warsaw, where Gomulka stood up against the proposal of the Czech CP to do away with censorship, going to the extent of declaring "The suppression of censorship simply means that the leadership of the party has given up exercising any influence on the general development of the country" (cf. Erwin Weit, *Dans l'ombre de Gomulka* (In Gomulka's shadow, Paris, 1971, p.277). The Soviet press commented on this proposal and wrote that it would allow the counter-revolution to "run away with media to demoralise the people of the country and poison the conscience of the worker by the *gall of anti-Socialist ideas*" (cited by Michel Hellar and Alcksandr Nekrich, *L'utopie au pouvoir* (Utopia in power) *op.cit.*, p.517). Quite lately, in Poland, the Soviets have exerted strong pressure against any removal of censorship in that country.
46. Borissov, who was already arrested in 1964 for organising a clandestine Marxist Study Circle, spent three years in a psychiatric hospital. After his first release, he was arrested again in 1969 as member of a group for defence of human rights. He was sent again to the psychiatric hospital till 1974. After the founding of SMOT, he was arrested in March 1980 and expelled from the USSR in June

- of the same year (cf. *Chronique des petites gens d'URSS* (Chronicle of Common People of the USSR, *op.cit.*, p.19).
47. cf. On his point, Helene Carrere d'Encausse, *Le Pouvoir Confisque* (Power Confiscated), *op.cit.*, p.271-272.
 48. cf. *Le Monde*, 18 March 1982.
 49. cf. M.Heller and A.Nekrich, *L'Utopie au Pouvoir* (Utopia in Power), p.545.
 50. cf. *Pravda*, 18 October, 1979.
 51. cf. *Des Voix Sous les Decombres* (voices under the Debris), Paris, Seuil, 1975, p.12.
 52. As A.Zinoviev points out in *La Maison Jaune* (The Yellow House).

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