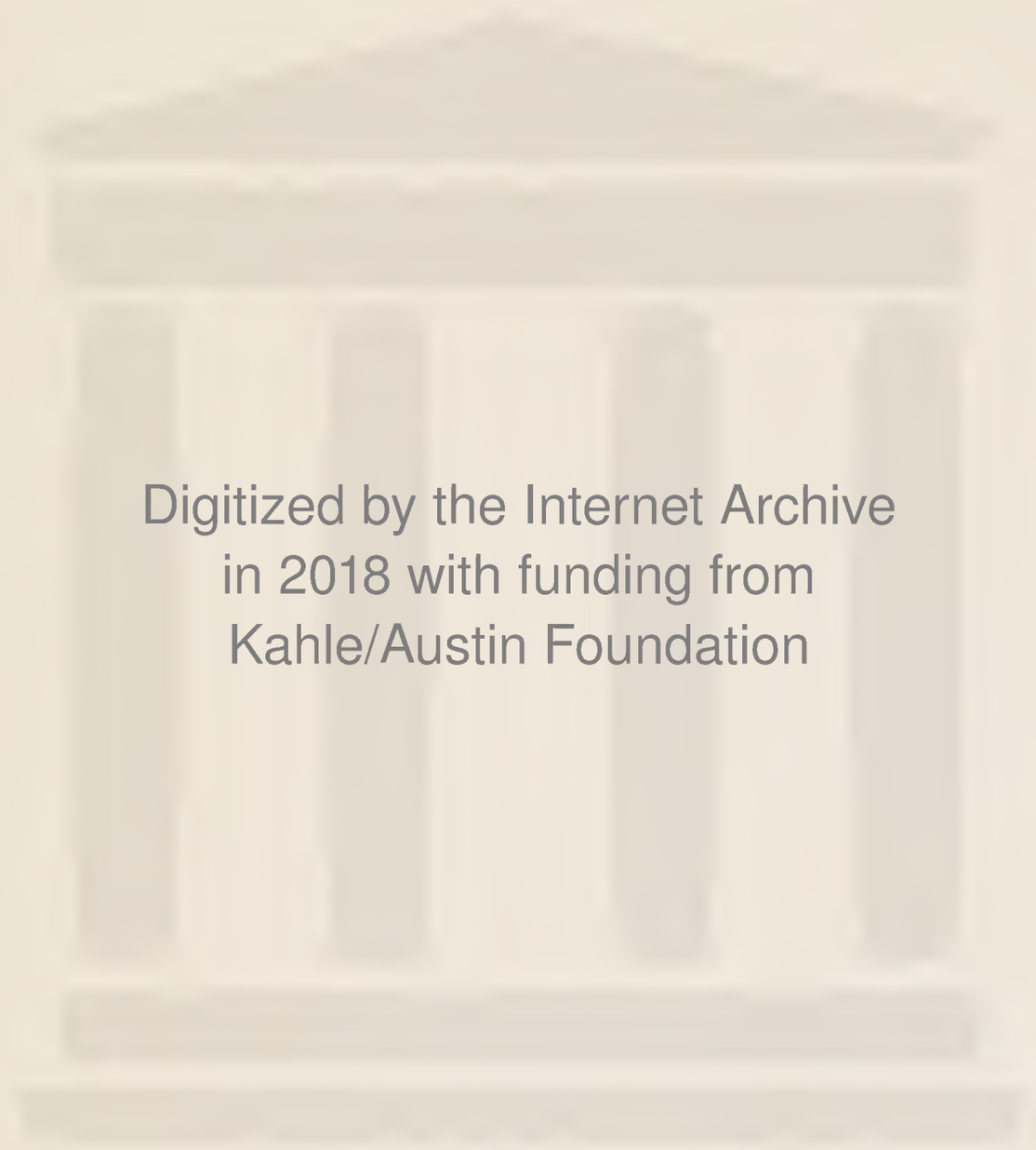
The Soviet Union

Edited by R. W. Davies



THE SOVIET UNION

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edited by

R. W. Davies
Director of the Centre for Russian and East European Studies
University of Birmingham

with the assistance of

Denis J. B. Shaw
Department of Geography
University of Birmingham

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PREFACE

This book seeks to provide a general introduction to the contemporary Soviet Union for sixth-formers and non-specialist undergraduates, and is based on a short course provided annually for first-year students at Birmingham University whose main fields of study range from engineering to fine arts.

The importance of the subject is beyond doubt. The Soviet Union is by far the largest country in the world, occupying as much as one-sixth of the earth's surface, and is perhaps better endowed with mineral wealth than any other country. It is second only to the United States in total industrial production, and, together with the United States, is one of the two military 'super-powers'.

But the significance of the Soviet Union in the modern world extends far beyond its economic and military might. Ever since the Revolution of 1917 it has offered the challenge of what claims to be a new social, economic and political order – a planned socialist system. Together with the other countries which form part of the Communist world, the Soviet Union – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as it is officially known – presents an alternative to Western capitalism both in its ideology and in its organisation.

No consensus exists about the nature of the Soviet alternative, or the extent of its success. Marxist is divided from Marxist, non-Marxist from non-Marxist. Some Marxists see Soviet developments as a successful adaptation of Marx's doctrines to the conditions of a developing country: for them, the Soviet Union today is a genuinely socialist state, carrying the torch for the rest of the world. For other Marxists, such an assessment is a distortion and a betrayal of Marxism: the Soviet Union is a new kind of class society, dominated by a privileged bureaucracy, and no element of socialism remains. Non-Marxists also differ strongly among themselves. Some would argue that much that is positive can be learned from Soviet experience. Poor countries like India, while avoiding Soviet mistakes, can base themselves on Soviet planned industrialisation in order to bring speedy economic progress to their hungry masses; advanced Western countries, where governments and private firms are increasingly involved in economic planning, can learn much from contemporary Soviet planning methods. But many non-Marxists reject the Soviet system, past and present, as undemocratic, bureaucratic, illiberal and inhumane: according to them it should be studied as a foremost example of what not to do.

For an understanding of modern Soviet society it is therefore particularly important to be aware not only of the agreed facts but also of the

principal issues involved in assessing them. The eleven authors of the present volume, all specialists on the theme of their own chapters, have endeavoured, as well as providing the basic facts about their subjects, to introduce the reader to major disputes and unsolved problems. The book has been deliberately constructed so as to provoke informed controversy; it will soon become clear to the reader that the individual authors differ considerably among themselves in their approaches to the study of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet system was established in a specific country at a specific time, and the authors of this book are all firmly convinced that it is impossible to make a satisfactory assessment of the system without some knowledge of the specific historical background and culture of the Russians and the other peoples who make up the Soviet Union, and of the international context in which the Soviet Revolution took place and was consolidated. We therefore begin our account with a consideration of the geography and history of the Soviet Union (Chapters 1–4) before turning to a discussion of its contemporary political and social structure (Chapters 5 and 6). In the second part of the book we endeavour to discuss the major general problems of contemporary Soviet society by looking at specific important examples of Soviet life and culture (Chapters 7–11). The final chapter places Soviet developments in an international context, returning to an historical approach (Chapter 12). Lists of major dates and a glossary are designed to help the reader who is unfamiliar with the Soviet scene. A bibliography, divided by subjects, provides a guide to further reading.

Dr Denis J. B. Shaw was responsible for collecting the photographs and preparing maps and diagrams; I am most grateful to him for his efficient help.

The authors also wish to express their thanks to Pat Short for her meticulous drawing of the maps and diagrams, to Michael Holdsworth of Allen & Unwin for his helpful advice and encouragement and to Anthea Roth for efficiently preparing the typescript for the publisher.

R. W. DAVIES
University of Birmingham

NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

R. W. DAVIES is Professor of Soviet Economic Studies and Director of the Centre for Russian and East European Studies of the University of Birmingham. He is the author of *The Development of the Soviet Budgetary System* and (with E. H. Carr) of *Foundations of a Planned Economy, 1926–1929*, vol 1.

DENIS J. B. SHAW is Lecturer in Soviet Geography in the Department of Geography, University of Birmingham. He is a specialist on the settlement of early Russia and is also working on aspects of Soviet urban and regional planning. He is contributing to a forthcoming volume on the geography of the socialist city.

MAUREEN PERRIE is Lecturer in the Centre for Russian and East European Studies and the Department of Modern History, University of Birmingham, and is author of *The Agrarian Policy of the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party from its Origins through the Revolution of 1905–7*.

M. LEWIN is Professor of Soviet History and Politics in the Centre for Russian and East European Studies and the Department of Political Science, University of Birmingham. He is the author of *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power*, *Lenin's Last Struggle* and *Political Undercurrents in Soviet Economic Debates*.

DAVID LANE is Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He is the author of *The Roots of Russian Communism*, a study of the Social-Democratic Party at the time of the 1905 Revolution, *Politics and Society in the USSR* and several other studies on contemporary politics and society in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

N. J. DUNSTAN is Lecturer in the Centre for Russian and East European Studies and the Faculty of Education, University of Birmingham. He is a specialist on contemporary Soviet education and author of a forthcoming book on special schools in the USSR.

R. AMANN is Lecturer in the Centre for Russian and East European Studies and the Department of Political Science, University of Birmingham. He is a specialist on Soviet politics and science policy and joint author of *Science Policy in the USSR*. He has recently completed a study of the chemical industry, which will be included in two volumes on Soviet technology to be published by Yale University Press.

T. J. GRAYSON is Lecturer in the Centre for Russian and East European Studies and the Department of Engineering Production, University of Birmingham. He is a specialist on Soviet engineering production and has written many articles concerned with the comparative experiences of Soviet technology.

R. E. F. SMITH is Head of the Department of Russian Language and Literature, University of Birmingham, and has published on several aspects of farming in Russia from early times.

G. S. SMITH is Lecturer in Russian, Department of Russian Language and Literature, University of Birmingham. He is a specialist on eighteenth-century Russian literature and has also translated and written on modern Russian poetry.

M. V. GLENNY was formerly Lecturer in the Centre for Russian and East European Studies and the Department of Russian Language and Literature, University of Birmingham. He has written widely on problems of Soviet literature and drama. He has translated many Soviet works and is also engaged in a study of the interaction between British, German and Soviet policies before the Genoa Conference of 1922.

CONTENTS

Fig. 1 The USSR: major physical features and cities

CHAPTER 1

The Geographical Reality

by
Denis J. B. Shaw

Physical environment, with its many dimensions, provides man and his organisations with both opportunities and limitations. Even a modern and highly organised state, such as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, cannot overlook the facts of geography, sometimes blatant but more often subtly felt, which inexorably bring their influence to bear upon human activity. This chapter seeks to investigate some of the most obvious of these influences and trace their consequences.

SIZE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The USSR is by far the largest nation in the world. Covering an area of 22·5 million square kilometres (8 million square miles), it is twice the size of China, two-and-a-half times that of the United States, and no less than ninety times the size of the United Kingdom, amounting to 15 per cent of the entire land surface of the world. From west to east the USSR stretches through 10,000 kilometres, or eleven time-zones. For those who normally visualise the United States and the Soviet Union as occupying opposite sides of the northern hemisphere, it is salutary to remember that the westernmost tip of the United States in Alaska (Prince of Wales Cape) is less than 90 kilometres from Cape Dezhnev, the easternmost point of Siberia. The two are separated by the grey waters of the Bering Strait and in winter it is perfectly possible, though hardly advisable, to walk across its frozen surface.

From north to south the longest axis across the USSR is somewhat less – 4,800 kilometres, but along this axis the physical changes are very great. The northernmost point of Soviet territory, on the islands of Severnaya Zemlya, experiences sub-zero temperatures throughout

virtually the whole of the year and is situated only a few hundred kilometres from the North Pole. The most southerly portion of Soviet territory lies on the borders of Afghanistan and within a short distance of the frontiers of India and Pakistan (Fig. 1). The U S S R is truly a giant among nations.

Vastness brings both advantages and disadvantages to a nation. Territory must be held and administered, involving costly communications over long distances. In the past communications could be exceedingly slow. The Russians attempted to make the maximum use of their long and slow-flowing rivers for transportation purposes (though the northward-flowing Siberian rivers were of limited utility in this respect) and in winter had recourse to the sledge, but many outlying provinces remained extremely remote from the centre of power in the days of the Tsarist Empire. An old Russian proverb – 'God is in his heaven, and the Tsar far away' – reflects the isolation of the provincial governor of those days, and there can be little wonder that many governors ruled their districts like personal fiefs. Communications even today are often difficult and expensive. The average length of haul for goods travelling by rail is considerable, and many northern and eastern settlements, remote from the main centres of population and the networks of road and rail, can be reached only by air or by water.

Defence of such a vast territory is complicated and difficult. The Soviet Union borders directly on twelve other countries, and her sea coast, including the many offshore islands, is exceedingly long. High mountains to the south and east, however, have rendered defence somewhat easier; in past centuries, the only really major challenge to Russia in this area (apart from the British in India) came from the Chinese, who in the seventeenth century successfully checked the eastward Russian advance. At the beginning of the present century Japan for a time menaced Russia from the east; in the past twenty-five years a reinvigorated China has again asserted herself and in Soviet eyes seems threatening at times in both Central Asia and the Far East.

To the west, by contrast, the Soviet frontiers have little natural protection. Russian and Soviet history has been characterised by a series of major invasions from the west – by the Poles in the seventeenth century, the Swedes in the eighteenth, Napoleon and his Grand Army in 1812, and twice by the Germans in the present century. During the German invasion of 1941–5 over 20 million Soviet lives were lost, with a permanent effect on the Soviet labour force. This momentous fact, coupled with the need to protect the many outlying and vulnerable areas, in itself helps to explain the heavy Soviet emphasis today on defence, with a huge defence budget, a large programme of national service, and much military propaganda.

On the other hand the vast territory of the U S S R has been an important strategic resource as well as a liability. This was amply demonstrated by the defence-in-depth strategy successfully employed by the Russians

Travel by air is very popular in the Soviet Union especially in less populated regions. (*Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR, London*)

Mountains line the southern and eastern fringes of the U S S R. Herding sheep in the Pamirs of Tadzhikistan (*SCR*)

Fig. 2 The USSR: major natural regions

both in 1812 and in 1941–5.

Over this huge Soviet territory natural conditions vary enormously. This is important from the point of view both of natural resources and of land use. About half the territory of the USSR, for example, lies within the boreal forest zone, and the presence of this zone means that the Soviet Union is the world's most important possessor of softwoods (Fig. 2). Much of this softwood, especially in the east, is poorly exploited, but in the more populated regions to the west the heavy demand for timber for paper, construction and wood chemicals leads to overcutting in many areas. Again, to the south of the boreal forest and the zone of mixed forest, lie the forest-steppe and steppe grasslands which are coincidental with the rich 'chernozem' or black-earth soils. The black earths are among the world's most fertile soils and consequently the steppe grasslands have now been almost entirely ploughed up for grain. Other resources of this type include the huge rivers, which make a substantial contribution to the power industry through the highly developed network of hydro-electric power stations, and the extensive areas of peat bog, especially in the swampy areas in the north and west of European Russia, which even today supply a certain amount of peat fuel for power

generation. Even climate is a resource in this way: the USSR is large enough to include some areas, such as Central Asia and the Transcaucasus, where such sub-tropical products as cotton can be cultivated, in contrast with areas in the far north, where cultivation of any type is impossible.

The natural resources of the USSR also include a very significant mineral wealth. Almost every important mineral ore is to be found somewhere on the territory of the USSR; geological prospecting is a flourishing and continuous activity. Significant deposits of iron ore are to be found in several very convenient parts of the European USSR as well as in places to the east of the Urals, and these deposits supply the Soviet Union's important iron and steel industry. The most notable area for mineral wealth, however, includes the Kola Peninsula in the far north, the Central Siberian Plateau, and the fold mountains of the far east. In these areas some spectacular discoveries have been made. In 1945, for example, no diamond deposits were known in the USSR and all industrial diamonds had to be imported. Then in 1954 the announcement was made of the discovery of a rich diamond pipe in the Vilyuy River valley on the Central Siberian Plateau, and this pipe was subsequently discovered to rival even the old Kimberley blue earth in South Africa. Other

A diamond-extracting dredge on the remote Irelyakh River in the Yakutian taiga, north-eastern Siberia (*SCR*)

minerals exploited in these remote regions include gold, lead, zinc, nickel, tin, copper and apatite.

Perhaps the most significant of all the Soviet Union's natural resources are her sources of energy. Coal, oil and natural gas account for over 90 per cent of her total fuel consumption, the rest being peat, oil shales and firewood. The USSR has very extensive coal deposits, which include the Donbas coalfield in the Ukraine and the Kuzbas in western Siberia, though some of her apparently most extensive fields, such as the Taymyr and Tunguska fields, are extremely remote. According to Soviet estimates, the USSR has sufficient coal at the present rate of extraction to last for several thousand years. Oil and natural gas are quite abundant. The traditional oilfield of Baku was superseded by the Volga–Urals field soon after the Second World War. Since then major new oil strikes have been made in north-western Siberia and on the east coast of the Caspian, and oil is also claimed to underlie part of the Tunguska valley and the Lena basin. Many of the new discoveries, however, are not only remote but also appear to present numerous technical difficulties. Recent reports even speak of an 'oil shortage' in the USSR, testifying to the many problems inherent in these remoter areas.

All these examples illustrate not only the vast natural resources of the USSR but also a major geographical and historical difficulty. While many of the most important and promising Soviet natural resources, especially mineral resources, are to be found in the remoter north and east, the bulk of the population lives in the west and south – in European Russia and in Central Asia. This discrepancy, to which we return later in this chapter, poses enormous problems for communications, for investment and for industrial development. It would not be too much to say that its solution is one of the most urgent tasks of the Soviet economy today.

TERRITORIAL EXPANSION

The present vast size of the USSR was the product of a long period of evolution. The early history of the Russians and their kinsmen the Ukrainians and Belorussians (together known as the Eastern Slavs) is lost in the mists of antiquity. In early medieval times, under the highly developed Kievan State, the Russians knew a lengthy period of civilisation. This came to grief in the thirteenth century under the depredations of the Mongols, and thereafter Russia was split into a series of loosely connected princedoms. One of these, the princedom of Moscow, gradually assumed pre-eminence and from the fourteenth century began to gather the others under its rule. By the middle of the sixteenth century a united Muscovy was strong enough to be able to challenge the successors to the Mongols (the Tatars) and began to expand both southwards towards the Black Sea and eastwards into Siberia. Referring to this

process, the eminent Russian historian, V. O. Klyuchevskii, declared colonisation to be the dominating theme of Russian history. The first Russian settlement on the Pacific, Okhotsk, was established in 1647, and in 1696 the Russians had first taken Azov, the key to the Black Sea. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a series of struggles against the Swedes, the Poles and the Turks took the Russian frontier westwards to embrace the Gulf of Finland, the Baltic coast, the Ukraine, Poland and the Crimea. In the nineteenth century the Russians subdued the Finns, the peoples of the Caucasus, and those of Central Asia, and annexed fresh territory in the far east from China. In the course of six hundred years Muscovy had thus expanded many times over – from a mere few thousand square kilometres in the fourteenth century to over 20 million by the time of the Bolshevik or Soviet Revolution of 1917. With some exceptions, notably Finland, Poland and the Baltic states, all this territory came under the jurisdiction of the Soviet regime after 1917. The Baltic states were re-annexed in 1940. The Soviet Union is thus almost coterminous with the pre-revolutionary Russian Empire. While the new revolutionary government after 1917 at first denied the importance of territorial continuity with the Tsars, Soviet policies have undoubtedly been strongly influenced by this geographical and historical fact.

Territorial expansion on this scale means that the USSR today is not merely a large state, but also a multinational one. Over a hundred languages are spoken within her boundaries. The Russians are the linguistic and cultural majority, with 53 per cent of the total population; and another 21 per cent are also Slavs. Other racial types include the Turkic and Iranian peoples of Central Asia, the Caucasians, the Baltic peoples, Finno-Ugrians, Mongols and various minor groups. Almost all learn Russian, which is the major language for business and other purposes. The numerical preponderance of the Slavs may not continue indefinitely, however, as birth rates among the Russians and other Slavs are significantly lower than among the peoples of Central Asia.

This racial diversity is catered for within the administrative structure of the USSR by its organisation as a federal state. The USSR consists of fifteen Union Republics, each of which corresponds to a major nationality. These Republics, which vary in size between the enormous Russian Federation, which occupies three-quarters of the entire country, and tiny Armenia, have their own capitals, flags, official languages and, theoretically, the right of secession. One important nationality which does not have a Union Republic, the Tatars, is grouped within an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, which is part of the Russian Federation. Several Autonomous SSRs exist within the USSR. Finally, such entities as the 'Autonomous Oblast'' cater for the national aspirations of minority groups. Each of these nationalities is represented within the Soviet of Nationalities, one of the two houses of the Supreme Soviet (or parliament) in Moscow (see Chapter 4 below).

POSITION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

A further factor of immense significance for the USSR is its position relative to the world's great oceans and continents. The country is situated astride the vast Eurasian landmass, the largest continuous land area in the world – what Sir Halford Mackinder, the eminent Oxford geographer, called 'the world island'. This means that much of the Soviet Union is situated far from the moderating influence of the world's oceans. Moreover, the Arctic Ocean, the nearest extensive water body to much of Soviet territory, is frozen for most of the year. There can be little wonder, then, that most of the USSR suffers an extremely harsh continental climate, characterised by long, cold winters and rather short, hot summers.

The climatic consequences of this continental position are in fact rendered rather more severe by two further factors. In the first place the absence of high mountains along the north coast means that the greater part of the country is open to incursions of cold Arctic air, especially in winter. Late frosts, or an early autumn, are not infrequent hazards for Soviet agriculture. Secondly, the northerly position of the Soviet Union adds to the severity and length of the winter. The historic core of the Russian nation, for example, lies fairly far to the north when compared with the rest of Europe. Moscow lies roughly at the latitude of Edinburgh, Leningrad at that of the Shetland Islands. Approximately nine-tenths of the country is situated closer to the Pole than to the Equator.

Temperature and precipitation are of course the two great variables influencing man and his activity in the USSR. The long, hard winter is usually characterised by anticyclonic conditions which discourage the formation of clouds and the incursion of moderating depressions. Stable air conditions and clear skies produce very low temperatures, which in fact worsen towards the east. Moscow, for example, experiences an average winter temperature of about −8 °C, whereas Novosibirsk in Siberia averages −18 °C. Within Siberia in January temperatures drop especially quickly towards the north-east, and around Verkhoyansk and Oymyakon, the world's 'cold pole', −50 °C is not uncommon, and even lower temperatures have been recorded on occasions. Only the virtual absence of all air movement and very dry conditions render human life at all possible in such conditions.

Spring comes quickly in the USSR and the melting snows and thawing rivers produce the period known traditionally as *rasputitsa*, the Thaw, a time of year notorious, especially in historic times, for floods and for appalling road conditions. Floods are especially characteristic at this time of year in Siberia, where the sources of the northward-flowing rivers naturally tend to experience the thaw before the mouths far to the north. In such places as the West Siberian Plain and the Lena Basin extensive inundations are the inevitable consequence in the early part of the year.

While the winter in the Soviet Union is noted for its low temperatures, the summer tends to be warm. In Moscow, July temperatures of 20 °C or more are typical, whereas in Central Asia 30 °C or even 40 °C are quite normal. On the Arctic coast, on the other hand, the temperature rarely rises much above freezing, and the Arctic islands remain frozen for almost the whole of the year.

The consequence of temperature variations in the USSR is that the temperature range between summer and winter, and hence the severity of the climate, increases towards the east. Thus whereas the annual temperature range is 24 °C in the Baltic states, Yakutia in north-eastern Siberia has a range of 64 °C. Both spring and autumn are much shorter in Siberia than in the western part of the country.

The long winters and generally severe climate in the eastern and northern part of the USSR mean that life for man is especially difficult in these areas. The surrounding seas remain frozen for much of the year and in the Arctic Ocean the reliable period for navigation is only four months – even this is only possible through extensive use of ice-breakers. Another problem is that of permafrost, or permanently frozen ground, which to greater or lesser degree affects almost the whole of the northern and eastern parts of the USSR. Buildings constructed on permafrost

A Siberian road in winter (*SCR*)

need special and expensive protection against the danger of collapse, whilst other phenomena such as pingoes and icings are constantly disruptive of roads, railways and bridges.

The level of precipitation is as critical as temperature for human life and activity. Once again, the Soviet position on the Eurasian landmass has a decisive influence on the situation. Since the prevailing circulation pattern in the northern part of the northern hemisphere is west to east, the western part of the country receives more annual rainfall than the central and eastern parts of Siberia. The prevailing pressure pattern, with anticyclonic conditions in winter and cyclonic in summer, ensures that most of the precipitation occurs during the summer period. However, the level of winter snow cover is particularly critical for agriculture. Here again the European part of the country is rather more favoured, with a fairly thick cover over large areas, whereas in Siberia, with a lower precipitation and with a thin and powdery snow cover, the underlying soils remain relatively unprotected against the severe winter frosts.

The precipitation level falls even more sharply within the USSR as one travels towards the south. Within European Russia and the Ukraine the forested lands give way in the south to the grasslands of the forest-steppe and pure steppe (Fig. 2). Today most of this grassland is ploughed up. East of the Urals, however, the steppe grasslands give way in turn to semi-desert and finally to the pure deserts of Central Asia, with an average annual rainfall of as little as 6 centimetres in places. In these areas population is largely restricted to the oases which bound the great rivers of the region.

Yalta, in the Crimea, has an unusually mild climate by Soviet standards (*SCR*)

The major exceptions to this overall climatic pattern occur partly in extremely favoured regions on the southern extremity of the Crimean Peninsula and parts of the western Transcaucasus. Here an unusually mild climate characterises the winter and, in keeping with the Mediterranean world generally, there is a winter maximum of rainfall. These two places are amongst the most popular in the USSR for holidaying purposes. The other major exception, the Pacific coast of the Soviet Far East, experiences a modified monsoon climate with a very heavy summer rainfall – one of the heaviest in the USSR.

From the point of view of human settlement, it is therefore possible to divide the whole of the USSR into three major regions (Fig. 3). To the north and north-east, largely coinciding with the tundra and coniferous forest vegetation zones, is a vast territory in which the climate is too cold for successful agriculture, with the exception of some livestock farming, and where human settlement is consequently sparse. This is also a region where the temperatures are not high enough to evaporate the relatively low annual precipitation, and where consequently there is an excess of moisture. The result is large areas of badly drained land and poor soils. Conditions are rendered worse by the effects of the permafrost, and the

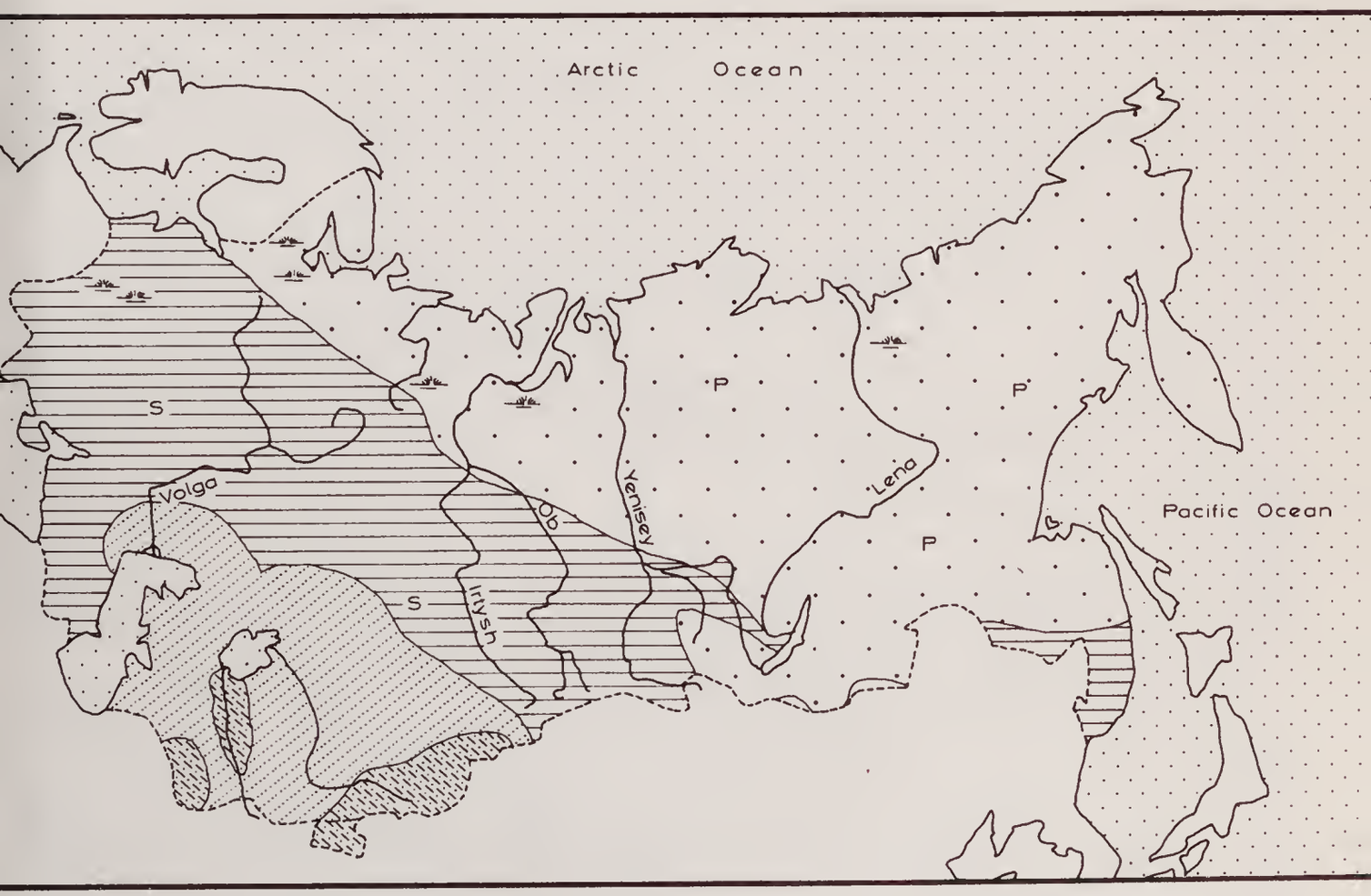


Fig. 3 The USSR: major settlement zones

annual inundations in the spring. Hence it is especially difficult to establish a large base of human settlement in this area, rendering the costs of exploiting its rich resources in minerals and timber particularly high.

The second major region is that which is found over most of Central Asia, with high summer temperatures and consequently high evaporation rates, but very low precipitation. This is an area, then, of inadequate moisture, and the large desert lands can only be used for a very limited part of the year for grazing, and not at all for cultivation. The latter is restricted to the oases, where there is an extensive irrigation network, but where the dangers of salinisation and sand storms add to the difficulties of the situation.

The Soviet government has ventured to implement various grandiose schemes in an attempt to rectify the harsh climatic conditions of these two major regions. It is calculated that within the USSR as a whole a territory constituting 30 per cent of the country is characterised by only 2 per cent of the annual run-off of precipitation. In order to ameliorate these conditions, large new irrigation schemes have been implemented, and under Stalin a mammoth plan was inaugurated to extend southwards

The laying of pipes to convey water from the upper Irtysh River to Karaganda in the dry steppes of northern Kazakhstan (*SCR*)

the zone of adequate moisture by planting shelter belts of trees, thus discouraging evaporation from the soil and even increasing rainfall. The plan was not, however, a success. Even more ambitious have been the various schemes to divert the USSR's northward-flowing rivers southwards into water-deficient regions in Central Asia and around the Caspian. A certain amount of water is thus to be directed into the Kama–Volga system from the northward-flowing Vychegda and Pechora, and in western Siberia water is now taken from the upper Irtysh for use in northern Kazakhstan. Some work is also under way on more far-reaching diversion projects, though the conservation problems are immense.

In the north, also, the Soviet government has tried to improve conditions and has implemented large drainage and soil improvement schemes. Much experimentation has also been undertaken into the breeding of more hardy crop species. Success to date, however, has been relatively modest.

The third major region from the point of view of human settlement is the zone suitable for agriculture, including cultivation, where the bulk of the population lives. It coincides with the greater part of the European area, and a relatively small zone parallel with the Trans-Siberian Railway in western and central Siberia. Here, and on the fringes of Central Asia, are situated the great majority of the USSR's towns and industries. However, even though this region is absolutely very large, it is rather small relative to the country as a whole. For example, the most densely populated 7·5 per cent of the area of the country has about half of its total population whereas, conversely, only 16 per cent of the total population is to be found on an area covering two-thirds of the entire territory. The total arable area is only about 10 per cent of the Soviet Union, and another 15 per cent can be used for grazing. The great discrepancy between that part of the USSR which has a majority of the population and the most favourable natural conditions, and that part which has most of the natural wealth, has already been alluded to as a major problem for its development.

Even within this region of maximum human settlement, however, conditions are often far from ideal. Reference has already been made to the hot summers and bitter winters, and for agriculture the climate even within this area is frequently difficult. It is estimated, for example, that only 15 per cent of all farms in the USSR have over 170 frost-free days a year, and as many as 20 per cent are frost-free for 120 days or even fewer – a very short season indeed. As much as 40 per cent of the cropland receives 40 centimetres or less rainfall a year, and very large areas are subject to drought on occasions. Agriculture in the USSR is notoriously unreliable in its productivity, and the fluctuations, though no doubt worsened by low investment and other factors, are basically the product of a fickle climate. For agriculture and other forms of human enterprise

there are also additional problems in this most favoured zone. In the north and west in particular the aftermath of the glacial period has produced extensive areas of swamp and marsh such as Poles'ye in Belorussia. A total of one-tenth of the surface area of the USSR is calculated to be in need of drainage. Another problem has been that of soil erosion, which particularly affects the fertile lands of the central black-earth region, and the former 'Virgin Lands' of southern Siberia and northern Kazakhstan – the marginal area ploughed up under Khrushchev's direction in the 1950s. Unwise ploughing techniques, particularly on sloping land, and incorrect crop rotations have led to both gulley and wind erosion in these regions; large areas have been stripped of their fertile top soils and rendered unsuitable for cultivation.

CONCLUSIONS: MAN AND NATURE IN THE USSR

The Soviet Union, then, is on the whole a difficult land in which to live. Nature there presents man with manifold problems, though the opportunities, in terms of bountiful natural resources, are also great. Undoubtedly one of the advantages which a belief in the principles of Marxism–Leninism, the official creed of the USSR, has brought to its people, or at least its government, is an inherent optimism, a faith that man and his technology can win through despite the enormous problems with which nature confronts them. Unfortunately, in the past, and especially under Stalin, this faith in the power of science often led to hasty and unwise decisions, to mammoth plans impossible of fulfilment, and to a plundering and destructive attitude towards nature. Nowadays the Soviet authorities are rather more circumspect in these matters, and more inclined to pay the natural environment the respect it deserves. But underlying optimism still defines the official view. Although the geographical reality may not as yet suit the requirements of Soviet society, many Soviet citizens would hold that it can ultimately be moulded to do so.

Birch trees near Moscow, typical vegetation in the mixed forest region of central European Russia (*SCR*)

CHAPTER 2

The October Revolution

by
Maureen Perrie

PRE-REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA

Chapter 1 showed how the vast territory of the Tsarist Empire, covering approximately the same area as the present-day USSR, had gradually been assembled by the end of the nineteenth century. At this time, Britain, France, Germany and the United States were already industrialised and modernised countries. But Tsarist Russia was an autocratic state with an overwhelmingly peasant population, which had been emancipated from serfdom only half a century before, in 1861. Russia was not, however, quite as backward as this general description would seem to imply. In the political field, the Tsar had been forced to permit the existence of a state Duma, or parliament, as a result of the revolutionary upheavals of 1905. This parliament was elected on the basis of an indirect and limited franchise, and its powers were severely restricted. Nevertheless, it did represent, together with the various elected local government bodies which had been created in 1864, some sort of basis for a more broadly democratic constitutional framework. There were many men of liberal views, both in the central Duma and in local government, who hoped and expected that the future political development of Russia lay in the extension of the powers of these existing institutions. The main obstacle to such an extension of democracy was the attitude of the Tsar himself. Nicholas II had a strong and almost mystical belief in his semi-divine role as autocrat, and in this belief he was strongly supported by his wife, the Empress Alexandra, who wanted the autocratic prerogatives of the Tsar to be passed on intact to their beloved son and heir, Alexei. Nicholas bitterly resented the concessions which had been wrung

Tsar Nicholas II and his family in about 1905 (*Radio Times Hulton Picture Library*)

out of him by the Revolution of 1905, and he was determined to yield nothing further to liberal opinion.

In the economic field, the nineteenth century, and, in particular, the decades of the 1890s, had seen a remarkable burst of industrialisation in Russia, and this process continued, after a slight recession at the turn of the century, in the years preceding the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. Industrialisation resulted in the rapid growth of the major cities, and in the formation of an industrial working class. But although the

working class was growing several times faster than the population as a whole, on the eve of war it still represented only a tiny fraction of the total population (Fig. 4). Its political significance was nevertheless immense. It was concentrated in the major industrial cities, especially Moscow and the pre-Revolutionary capital of St Petersburg, and was thus able to influence these centres of power in revolutionary situations such as those of 1905 and 1917. Although the peasantry constituted the overwhelming majority of the population, they were scattered over the expanse of the Russian countryside in isolated villages, and were therefore much more difficult to mobilise and organise for political purposes.

In the years before 1914, therefore, there were many indications that Russia was, somewhat belatedly, setting out to follow the Western European path of development. Capitalist development in industry was accompanied by extensive reforms in peasant agriculture after 1905; and

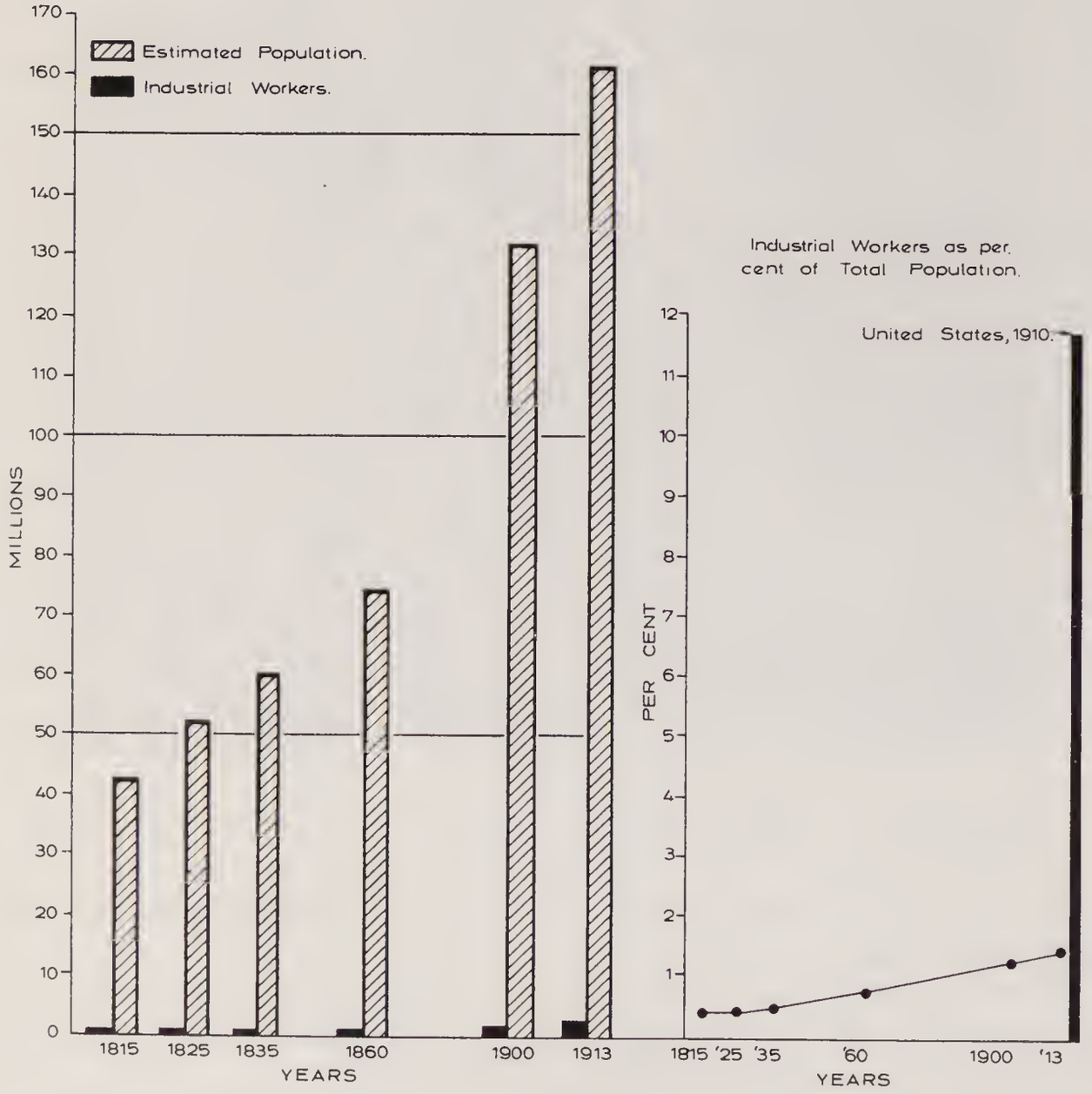


Fig. 4 Trend in number of industrial workers related to total population in the Russian Empire, 1815–1913

'Now at last my people and I are at peace.' Cartoon of the 1905 Revolution and its aftermath (*BPC Picture Library*)

the existence of the Duma not only provided representatives of the new business and professional classes with experience of government and administration, but also served to extend the political consciousness of the peasantry, by familiarising them with the procedure of parliamentary elections. All this has led some historians to conclude that, had it not been for the intervention of the war, Russia would in all probability have followed a peaceful path of democratic capitalist development. The intransigence of the Tsar was a major obstacle, of course – but Nicholas could not live for ever.

If some historians take an optimistic view of the chances of peaceful development for Russia before the war, others argue that a violent overthrow of Tsarism was inevitable. They point to the deep divisions which still existed in Russian society, and claim that the political and economic reforms which followed the 1905 Revolution had only scratched the surface of the problem. Millions of impoverished peasants coveted the large estates of the gentry. The urban workers had to endure appalling living and working conditions, and very low wages. The educated classes were almost entirely alienated from the Tsarist government. In this unstable situation, all these discontents led in 1905 to widespread support for the underground revolutionary parties, and according to these historians revolutionary unrest was again widespread in the summer of 1914.

THE WAR AND THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

Immediately after the outbreak of the First World War, internal conflicts were thrust aside in a general upsurge of patriotic enthusiasm for the Tsar and the motherland. St Petersburg, the German-sounding capital, was renamed Petrograd, and anti-German riots took place in Moscow. The wave of euphoria, however, did not last long. Russia was technologically backward, and the Tsarist government and the army general staff were incompetent and inefficient. The war was a major military disaster for Russia. Some responsibility for the defeats rested with the Imperial couple themselves. Against the advice of his ministers, Nicholas had personally assumed command of the army in 1915, leaving the everyday conduct of home affairs in the hands of the Empress. Alexandra was herself under the influence of an obscurantist group at court, headed by Rasputin, the 'man of God' whose apparent powers to cure the bleeding of her haemophiliac son Alexei gave him a particular hold over the susceptible Empress.

By the third winter of the war, in 1916–17, public confidence in the Imperial government was at an all-time low, and the country was in the grip of a grave social and political crisis. The liberal opposition in the Duma openly accused the Tsar and the Empress of treason, and there was a widespread feeling in society, and even in court circles, that the Tsar must go. The murder of Rasputin in December 1916 heralded plans for a palace *coup d'état*. But before these plans for bloodless reform from above could be implemented, they were forestalled by events from below. Food shortages in the capital were a major source of grievance, and in February 1917 widespread strikes, demonstrations and bread riots took place in Petrograd. They were followed by a mutiny of the troops called in to restore law and order. The government panicked; and with his capital in open revolt against him, the Tsar was forced to abdicate. A Provisional Government assumed power, consisting initially of the lead-

ers of the liberal opposition in the Duma. At the same time, the revolutionary workers and soldiers, whose militant actions had caused the fall of the monarchy, formed their own councils, or Soviets, and these assumed wide responsibilities for the day-to-day running of the capital and the other major cities.

This simultaneous formation in February 1917 of the Provisional Government, on the one hand, and the Soviets, on the other, constituted the 'dual power' on the basis of which Lenin decided that parliamentary government in Russia could and should be superseded by a government of the Soviets. Throughout 1917, the Soviets and the Provisional Government fought a running battle over all the major issues of the day. This conflict represented, in essence, a conflict between those who had made the revolution of February – the militant workers and soldiers of Petrograd – and those who had benefited from it politically – the liberal members of the Provisional Government.

Throughout the summer of 1917, the Provisional Government lurched from one major ministerial crisis to another. The major bone of contention between the Government and the Soviets was the war with Germany. The liberal leaders of the Provisional Government had interpreted

Alexander Kerensky in exile. Kerensky was leader of the Provisional Government from July 1917 (*RT Hulton*)

the events of February as a popular protest against the incompetent and inefficient conduct of the war, and they considered that the Revolution had given them, as the self-appointed leaders of Russian democracy, some kind of mandate to continue the war as a genuinely national effort. Any far-reaching social reforms – such as a redistribution of the land, which was the age-old dream of the Russian peasants – should, they felt, be postponed, preferably until the war was won, but at least until such time as a general election could be held, and a truly representative Constituent Assembly could meet and implement reform measures which would enjoy democratically expressed popular support.

This policy of the Provisional Government, however, was based on a fatal misunderstanding both of the nature of the February Revolution and of the mood of the people in 1917. The workers and soldiers on the streets of the capital had been protesting, not only against the Imperial government's conduct of the war, but against the war itself, with all the terrible hardships it had imposed on the lives of the ordinary people. Thus when the Provisional Government itself launched further military offensives against the Germans in the summer of 1917, involving further heavy casualties and reverses for the Russians, the workers of Petrograd again took to the streets in protest, this time against the Provisional Government. From July onwards, the battle-weary soldiers began to 'vote with their feet' against the war, by deserting from the front, and returning to their native villages to join in the share-out of the land of the gentry.

THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION AND THE CIVIL WAR

In this situation, the only party consistently to promise that it would take Russia immediately out of the war, and devote itself to social reform rather than the pursuit of military victory, was Lenin's Bolshevik party. All other major political organisations, including the other socialist parties, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries (SRs), were pledged to continuing the war effort, and to support of the Provisional Government. It was primarily on the basis of their promises of peace and bread that the Bolsheviks were able, in the course of the summer of 1917, gradually to increase their support in the Soviets of Petrograd and Moscow, and other key industrial centres throughout the country.

The Bolshevik party had played only a minor role in the February Revolution, which was basically a spontaneous outburst of mass unrest. When the autocracy fell in February, the handful of Bolshevik leaders who were in the capital at the time greeted this as the long awaited 'bourgeois-democratic revolution' which would usher in a period of parliamentary democracy in Russia; for this reason they gave qualified support to the Provisional Government. Lenin, however, read the situation differently. The Bolshevik leader had been living in exile in Swit-

zerland during the war, and did not return to Russia until April 1917, in a special sealed train made available by the German government for the repatriation of Russian revolutionaries. On his arrival in Petrograd, Lenin declared that the formation of the Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets after February meant that the time was now ripe for the Revolution to pass into its second, socialist stage, and he put forward the slogan 'All Power to the Soviets'.

On Lenin's return to Petrograd in April, the Bolsheviks still had only minority support in the Soviets, which were dominated by the more moderate socialist parties, the Mensheviks and the SRs. In the course of the summer, however, the Mensheviks and SRs became steadily less popular. From May 1917 they had joined the liberals to form a coalition, and their participation in the Provisional Government, as well as their support for the war, alienated them from the workers and soldiers, whose demands and aspirations were more clearly reflected in the Bolshevik programme.

The Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies was due to meet in Petrograd on 26 October, and Lenin knew that the Bolsheviks would have a majority in that Congress. On the night of the 25th, armed Bolshevik detachments went into action, under the direction of the Military Revolutionary Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, led by Trotsky, implementing a pre-arranged plan to take over all the key positions in the capital. The operation was virtually bloodless, and the Provisional Government made little attempt to put up a resistance. The citizens of Petrograd woke up next morning to find the city in Bolshevik hands. Later that day, the Bolshevik-dominated Congress of Soviets approved Lenin's seizure of power, and passed the first two revolutionary decrees of the new Bolshevik government, the decree on peace, and the decree on land, which authorised the redistribution of gentry land to the peasantry.

The October seizure of power in Petrograd, however, marked only the beginning of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. The Second Congress of Soviets, it is true, had accepted the October Revolution; but this was a Congress of workers' and soldiers' deputies, unrepresentative of the majority of the Russian population, the peasants. The extent to which the Bolsheviks were in a minority in the country as a whole was illustrated dramatically by the elections to the Constituent Assembly, which took place in November 1917, a few weeks after the Bolshevik seizure of power. In this general election, the Bolsheviks received only a quarter of the votes cast, whereas the Socialist-Revolutionaries – a rival socialist party with widespread support among the peasants – had an absolute majority of both votes and seats. The Constituent Assembly met once, in January 1918, but when its SR majority came out in opposition to the October Revolution, it was forcibly disbanded by the Bolshevik government. Soon afterwards, civil war broke out in Russia between those

who supported the Bolshevik government and those who opposed it. The Civil War dragged on for three years, imposing even greater hardships on the Russian people than those of the World War, which the Bolshevik Revolution had claimed it would bring to an end.

The Civil War resulted in Bolshevik victory, and the consolidation, by 1921, of the rule of the Soviet government over most of the territory of the former Russian Empire. But Bolshevik victory in the Civil War did not mean that Lenin enjoyed any more popular support in 1921 than in 1917. The peasantry in particular were more hostile to the Soviet government at the end of the Civil War. The Bolsheviks had gained the passive neutrality, if not the active support, of the peasants in 1917 by their decree on the redistribution of the land, but during the Civil War the peasants were antagonised by the Bolshevik policy of requisitioning grain and other foodstuffs from the countryside in order to feed the towns and the Red Army. Bolshevik support lay in strategically important areas, such as the major industrial centres and the armed forces, and these were the factors which, in the last resort, were to win the Civil War for the Bolsheviks.

CONTROVERSIES ABOUT THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

The events of 1917 have given rise to major controversies among historians and others about the nature and aims of the Russian Revolution. Much of the discussion turns on the question of the inevitability of Bolshevism. Was the Bolshevik path the only possible way forward for Russia after the collapse of the monarchy in February 1917? Was there any realistic alternative to Bolshevism – for example, what were the chances for the establishment of parliamentary democracy on the Western European model? Had the Bolshevik Revolution not taken place, might not Russia, bearing in mind her tremendous natural resources, have continued to industrialise in a more gradual, if perhaps less spectacular way, but avoiding many of the harsher aspects of Stalinism? Or were there inherent factors in the structure of Russian society which ruled out the possibility of her following the capitalist path of development of Western Europe, under its relatively liberal and democratic parliamentary regimes?

With the benefit of hindsight, one might well argue that the failure of the Provisional Government to come to grips with the problems Russia was facing in 1917 was in some way symptomatic of the weakness of the social base which existed for parliamentary democracy in Russia. Incompetent government is not a phenomenon unique to the Russia of 1917. But in most cases, however, incompetent governments are able to muddle through, for lack of any viable alternative. In Russia, there was an alternative – a well-organised, well-disciplined party of professional revolutionaries whose leader was courageous, or ruthless, enough to take

Lenin addresses a crowd in Red Square, Moscow, on the first anniversary of the October Revolution, 1918 (*SCR*)

the decision to seize power, on the basis of a realistic assessment of his own strength and that of the opposition. In taking this decision, Lenin was fortified by his brand of Marxism, which claimed that the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', i.e. political rule by the industrial working class, represented a higher and more progressive form of government than the formal institutions of parliamentary democracy.

October, then, was no automatic consequence of February. The Bolshevik Revolution was the result of specific decisions taken by specific individuals on the basis of Lenin's highly controversial analysis of the revolutionary situation existing in Russia in 1917. Lenin's decision to seize power in October was, as he himself admitted at the time, a gamble, a calculated risk which paid off, insofar as the Bolsheviks were able to retain power. But the fact that the Bolshevik Revolution was successful does not, in itself, prove that the Leninist analysis was correct, or that Russia in 1917 was in any sense 'ready for socialism'. Lenin himself believed that socialist revolution was required in the rest of Europe before socialism could be built in a backward country such as Russia. But

socialist revolution failed to emerge from the postwar crisis elsewhere in Europe, and Bolshevism remained isolated. Many of the problems which the Soviet government had to face in the ensuing years derived directly from the fact that so many of the factors which Marx himself had declared to be necessary pre-conditions for the creation of a socialist society – such as the existence of a mature industrial base – were conspicuous by their absence in the new Soviet state as it emerged in 1921, with its predominantly peasant population, and an economy ravaged by seven continuous years of war, revolution and civil war. Indeed, some historians argue that the success of the Bolshevik Revolution merely shows that Russia in 1917 was particularly vulnerable to a well-organised, efficiently implemented *coup d'état* by a small and disciplined faction of revolutionaries who were able to associate themselves with the current grievances of the popular mood in strategic centres in the towns and armed forces.

A second set of questions is closely related to the first. If the Bolshevik Revolution was not inevitable, but the consequence of specific decisions, taken by specific individuals, at a specific moment in time, was it justified? The Bolsheviks in 1917 had only minority support in Russia, but one of their justifications for their seizure of power was in terms of the benefits which socialism would bring to the people as a whole. You may feel that the seizure of political power by a minority is always wrong, and will inevitably lead to dictatorship; or you may adopt a more pragmatic position, and argue, as Lenin did, that the end justifies the means. In either case, assessment of the Bolshevik Revolution must inevitably be coloured by one's own evaluation of the achievements and failures of the Soviet government in the sixty years since the Revolution.

The Soviet reality of today bears little resemblance to the ideal of the just and egalitarian socialist society which inspired so many of the early Bolsheviks with revolutionary enthusiasm. At the same time, the standard of living and the quality of life of the Russian people today are in many respects far higher than that of their grandparents before the Great War. These are the benefits of the Revolution, and insofar as they are real benefits, and not just figments of Soviet propaganda, the Bolsheviks may deserve credit for them. The costs, however, were also very great, and insofar as they were the result of a conscious decision by Lenin to impose a one-party dictatorship on the country, the Bolsheviks should perhaps also bear the blame.

CHAPTER 3

Industrialisation and After

by
R. W. Davies

RUSSIA IN THE MID-1920S

It was as much as twelve years after the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 before the Russian economy had fully recovered from the devastation of both that war and the Civil War and foreign intervention that followed the Revolution of 1917. In 1921, confronted with the hostility of the peasants discussed in the previous chapter, Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP), which allowed the peasants freedom to trade on the market while continuing to keep factory industry in state ownership. On the whole this policy was successful. By the autumn of 1926, the production of Soviet farms and factories had more or less regained its prewar level.

The first socialist government in the world now began its heroic effort to undertake the radical reconstruction of Soviet society. The circumstances were somewhat unexpected and highly unfavourable. The founders of world Communism, Marx and Engels, believed that socialism would first be established in an advanced industrial country, but Russia in the mid-1920s was still primarily a peasant country. Only one-sixth of the population of 147 millions lived in the towns; five-sixths still lived in the countryside, and nearly all of these were peasants scratching a living from a land which was parcelled up into strips. Most of them could neither read nor write. Most of them had never travelled beyond their nearest market town.

In the first few years after the Revolution, Lenin and all his colleagues continued to believe that the successful construction of a socialist society could be undertaken only in an advanced country, and therefore hoped that Soviet Russia would soon be joined by a Soviet Germany, or

Lenin at the May Day demonstration, 1919 *(SCR)*

England, or France. Instead, the Soviet government found itself in power alone. In the mid-1920s, the Left opposition headed by Trotsky within the Soviet Communist Party feared that as a result of the isolation of the Soviet Union and the apparent dying-out of revolutionary fervour within the Party, there was a serious danger that private capitalism in Russia would be restored. This belief of an important section of the Communist Party was widely shared in the West at the time and much comfort was drawn from it.

The great economist John Maynard Keynes declared soon after the First World War that the Russian economy could not even get back to its prewar level 'within a reasonable period of time except through the agency of German enterprise and organisation'. In 1926, after a visit to Russia, he announced that there was nothing for the West to learn from Russian planning. In the same year the present Lord Boothby, then a young conservative MP, stated in the *British–Russian Gazette*, after a visit to Moscow, that the Soviet regime was gradually evolving towards democracy; and an American business visitor optimistically remarked in the same journal:

'Russian business is today in a transition state, passing from a purely

Socialistic Government-owned regime to a condition in which Government and private enterprise are becoming more and more inextricably intermingled and intertwined . . . [Russia is] rapidly getting ready to make the transition to a substantial measure of private capitalism.'

These prophecies proved to be false, for the Soviet leaders decided to go it alone. They resolved, and were supported in this by a substantial number of the rank and file within the Party, that Russia must undertake an industrial and technical revolution if the standard of living and the culture of her people were to surpass those of the advanced Western

Joseph Stalin (*SCR*)

countries and thus demonstrate the superiority of socialism. In view of the failure of revolution elsewhere, they would have to do this on Russia's own resources. The task seemed to them an urgent one. They were profoundly conscious that Soviet Russia was isolated in a hostile world, and believed that without a strong industrial base for defence the country would be overcome by its foreign enemies as had so often happened to Tsarist Russia over the centuries.

Stalin summed all this up in November 1928, just as he was coming to supreme power:

'In order to achieve the final victory of socialism in our country, it is necessary to catch up and surpass the advanced countries in both a technical and an economic respect. Either we achieve this, or they will destroy us.'

INDUSTRIALISATION UNDER STALIN (1929–53)

In the next ten years Russia underwent a vast industrial expansion, the most rapid and the most extensive anywhere in the world up to that time (Fig. 5). So much new industry was started in these years that Soviet industrialisation was often compared to sewing a coat on to a button. Millions of unskilled peasants poured into the towns and took on labouring jobs on the building sites and in the new factories; the towns expanded, new towns were built. In the early stages, food was very scarce and conditions were bad generally, and the workers were very inefficient. But within a few years the new workers were 'boiled in the factory kettle', as the Russian saying goes. Within a period of thirteen years, between 1926 and 1939, the urban population rose from one-sixth to one-third of the total – from 26 to 56 million people. A vast education programme brought almost universal literacy to a country in which in 1917 most people could not read and write (see Chapter 7 below).

These advances were achieved through a system of state planning. As industry and trade were owned and controlled not by private individuals or companies, but by the state, the government was able to concentrate men and materials on key industries to a greater extent than has been possible in peacetime anywhere in the non-Communist world. In some ways this resembled government planning in Britain during the Second World War; it was a kind of war economy.

While control over industry was brought about relatively easily, the relationship between the Bolsheviks and the peasants presented problems of extreme difficulty.

The bringing together of over 100 million peasants into co-operative farms had always been a goal of the Bolsheviks. Co-operation plus the use of modern machinery would bring about a transformation of the peasant economy. In the long run such a transformation did occur. But in the

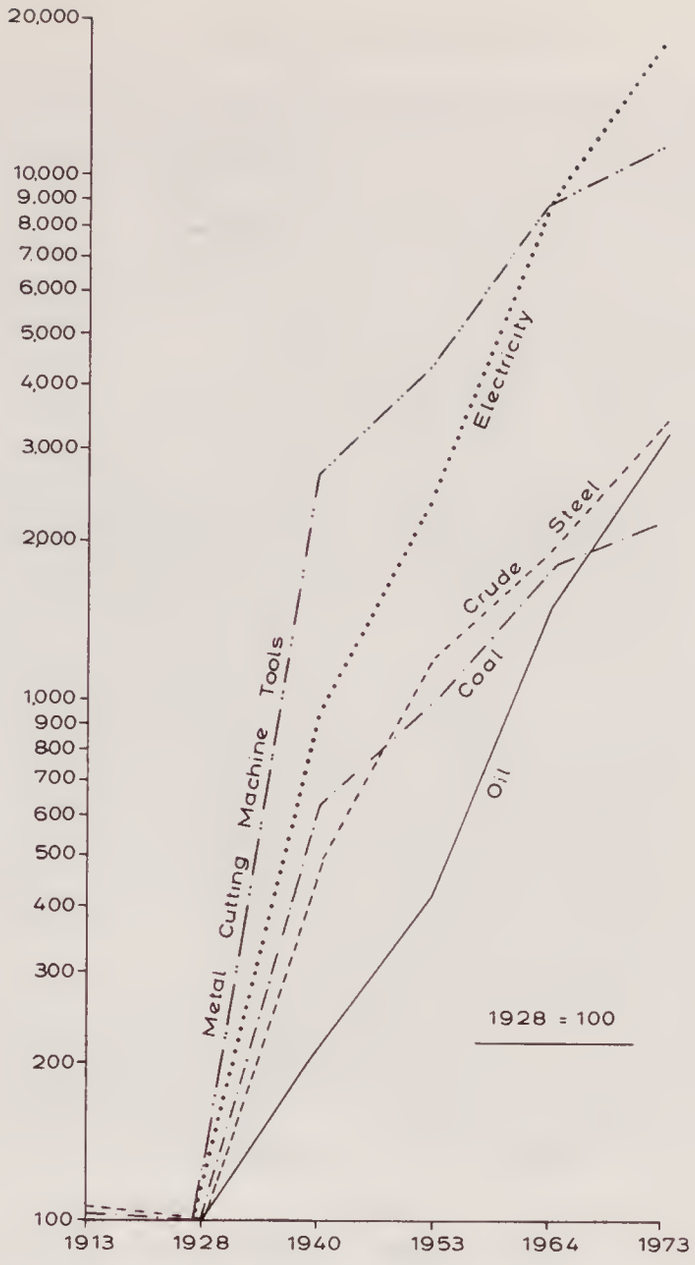


Fig. 5 Industrial growth in the USSR, 1913–73

short term the government was preoccupied by the urgent problem of obtaining food for the growing towns. The Soviet government had little to offer the peasants in exchange for their grain and meat in the way of consumer goods because first priority was being given to the coal mines, steel mills, machine tools and other heavy industries, which form the basis of the industrial development of a modern nation, so that there was little or nothing over for increasing the production of consumer goods to raise the standard of living immediately. The Soviet leaders did not have much experience of the kind of economic manoeuvring which was required to get the best out of this situation and made several blunders in their handling of it. In all these circumstances the peasantry were most reluctant to part with their grain. A friend of mine who was active in Russian politics in the late 1920s assured me that the stormy political controversies which were rocking the Russian Communists all resulted from the annual grain crisis: every year the state tried to get grain and other foodstuffs from the peasantry, and every year its failure to do so led to fierce disputes among the politicians as to what they should do about it. There were very few Russian Communists who were willing to admit, in

public at any rate, the extent of the difficulties they faced and the severity of the measures that would be needed if industrialisation was going to succeed.

By the end of 1927 the pressure of industrialisation, coupled with a few blunders, had resulted in a particularly severe crisis in food supplies. This brought about a dramatic change: it was one of those moments of choice in which the whole aspect of a nation's life is altered. Stalin was in a strong position: he had defeated Trotsky and his group in 1927 and had become the almost undisputed master of the Communist Party. He and his supporters now came down firmly on the side of industrialisation at all costs. Capitalist countries, Stalin argued, had been able to industrialise in the past only by exploiting their colonies and their own workpeople, or in some cases by getting loans from other countries; if Russia was to industrialise on her own resources, she would have to get more out of her peasantry. Stalin's policy met with strong but unsuccessful opposition from some of his fellow-Communists. This 'Right-wing' opposition included the principal trade union and government leaders, and was led by Bukharin, the most prominent Communist intellectual, who wanted to slow down industrialisation and appease the peasants. Bukharin argued that Stalin's policy must involve the development of something like a police state and the return to War Communism; and threatened the fate of the whole revolution. Stalin also anticipated that his policy would involve opposition among peasants and others, but he believed that this could be curbed by a very firm hand.

Historians still argue about whether what was accomplished by Stalin was a betrayal of the Revolution or a necessary consolidation of it. At all events, what happened in the next few years was far more drastic and

The metallurgical combine 'Stalin' in Kuznetsk, 1933 (*SCR*)

Stalin poses with peasant women in an apparently relaxed mood, 1935 (*SCR*)

brutal than Bukharin had feared and Stalin had anticipated. In 1930, the majority of peasants were persuaded, cajoled and bullied into joining the new collective farms, at a time when only a trickle of machinery was available to work the collective land. The better-off peasants – or 'kulaks', the Russian word for 'tight fist' – and those who showed too much opposition, several million persons in all, were summarily and often brutally exiled from their villages as a political danger. In his famous novel *Virgin Soil Upturned* Sholokhov described vividly how a local poor peasants' committee confiscated the house, the farm animals, the iron bedstead and eiderdown, the crockery and even the concertina of the richest local family and expelled them from their village. The army and the political police were also often called in to drive out the kulaks and drive the peasants into collectives. Fodder for farm animals was scarce, and many peasants killed and ate their livestock rather than put it in the common pool. The result of all this was that agricultural production fell considerably; and famine resulted in 1932. Bitter feelings about collectivisation still linger in Russia. Nevertheless the new collective farm system enabled the government to obtain at least a minimum of foodstuffs for the rapidly growing town population: the collective farms under Communist control handed over much more grain to the

state than peasant smallholders would have been willing to part with voluntarily. The upheavals and hunger of the early 1930s were the terrible price which the Russian countryfolk were made to pay so that the rapid industrialisation could be forced through, though this is not to say that this was the most sensible way of coping with the problem.

During the rest of the 1930s agriculture slowly recovered to the 1928 level, as farm machinery poured in eventually from the towns and the peasants became more reconciled to the new system.

In all these developments, the Communist Party, with Stalin at its head, played a unique part. The way the Communist Party – Russians in conversation call it just the Party – fits into Soviet life is one of the most difficult things to grasp. For the Russian Party member, the Party was, as it were, church and political party and masonic lodge rolled into one; for the Russian non-Party person, for the Russian people as a whole, the Party with its couple of million members was in the 1930s the driving motor of the whole industrialisation process. The history and present role of the Party will be considered further in Chapter 5; here we consider its role, and the role of its leader Stalin, in the industrialisation drive. Stalin's competence as a politician may perhaps be measured by his

Constructing the Chelyabinsk Tractor Works during the early five-year plans. Construction in the early period often relied on primitive techniques and mass labour (*SCR*)

success in moulding the Party to be an instrument to guide an industrialisation which was being carried out by a Russian state, with all its historical traditions. Stalin also played an important part in providing the Party with a set of views which have become known as 'Stalinism'; and this was really, it seems to me, an adaptation of Marxism which made it more capable of inspiring and prodding on the Party member in his work of building a new Russia. In a Russian novel (Dudintsev's *Not by Bread Alone*) published a few years after Stalin's death, the self-made factory manager who has risen to power as one of the new men of the industrialisation period has a copy of Stalin's little textbook *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* as his bedside book, and annoys his wife by reading extracts from it to her to justify his rather selfish conduct as an official and as a man – and this kind of use of a philosophical textbook by a typical key figure in Russian society is, perhaps, a tribute to the pervasiveness, if nothing else, of Stalin's political philosophy.

An almost deified Stalin at the head of the Party acted as the pivot of the Communist Party machine and the inspirer of the hundreds of thousands of Party members who went out on Party instructions to establish firm control over the collective farms, and build new towns in the backwoods. There was no place in Stalin's Party for the dissenter; the political police were on watch, and the labour camp awaited the unwise critic. Under Stalin's management the intellectuals who had held many of the top offices in the first years after the Revolution were thrust aside, often not very gently, by ex-workmen and others who were aspiring to high positions. The disciplined body of Party men which ran Russia's new farms and factories was worlds apart from the relatively amorphous party of revolutionaries in 1917.

Thus the political and economic system established in the early 1930s, and continued until Stalin's death and after, was one in which the state owned and controlled most of the economy, planned its growth; and pushed industrialisation ruthlessly and relentlessly. The state itself was controlled by the Communist Party with Stalin at its head. The Party elite formed part of a wider social group of professional and administrative personnel, which was as a whole the leading section of the townsmen. This system enabled the establishment of a powerful industry which formed the backbone of Russia's military strength, and enabled her to resist successfully the onslaught of the German invasion between 1941 and 1945. The impact of this invasion was devastating, and human suffering was immense. At least 20 million Soviet citizens were killed or died prematurely; much of Soviet industry was destroyed. But after 1945 recovery was rapid.

By the time of Stalin's death in 1953, Russia had almost completely recovered from the devastation of the Second World War, and was firmly established as the second most advanced industrial power.

RESULTS OF INDUSTRIALISATION

Soviet industrialisation, then, was a definite system of forced economic development which carried with it enormous economic and social benefits on the one hand, enormous costs and sacrifices on the other hand. On the one hand, it was able to concentrate resources successfully on major projects, catching up the United States in the hydrogen bomb race in 1953 and launching the world's first Sputnik in 1957. This centralised system facilitated the rapid introduction into the USSR of the most advanced technological processes from the United States and elsewhere, brought about great economies of scale in production, and provided, through the centralised production drive, a spur for management and men to work harder in the common cause. On the other hand, great losses occurred, partly due to the concentration of effort on the priority sectors, so that the others were starved, partly due to the bureaucratic system associated with it. The destruction of farm livestock and the decline in peasant morale were counterparts of the triumphs in heavy industry. The lack of initiative and innovation at the works level was a consequence of the concentration of economic power in the hands of the central authorities. There is a great deal of controversy among historians and social scientists about whether these losses and failures were primarily due to the nature of the Soviet system itself, or to economic necessity, or

The large Dnepr hydropower station completed during the industrialisation drive of the 1930s (*SCR*)

to special Russian or Soviet historical circumstances. Some people say: you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs; the Stalin system was a package deal, and the losses were a function of the gains. But it is clear that to some extent the historical past of the Tsarist autocracy, and inexperience and imperfect knowledge of the people who brought the first planned economy into being, drove the system away from its optimum, even in terms of the goal of forced industrialisation.

A judicious assessment of this Soviet experience is of great importance for the industrialisation of the Soviet Union, and the form which it took under Stalin has had profound consequences both for Russia itself and for the world at large. Any visitor to present-day Russia is immediately struck by the contrast between old and new, which in turn is a direct result of the industrialisation process. When you spend some time in a Russian town you feel as if you are watching a scene in one of Maxim Gorky's novels about pre-Revolutionary days, but with large chunks of modern America somehow mixed up with it: old women in shawls jostle the young men with brief-cases on antique trams and up-to-date metros and hovercraft. Stalin created a Russia in which the most modern blast-furnaces in the world could be found side by side with overcrowded housing conditions that at the time of his death had not improved much since the Revolution; a Russia in which government policy was already aiming at raising the school-leaving age to what was the really very high level of 17-plus but in which many of the shopping facilities and everyday goods which the British housewife takes for granted were completely absent. Soviet industrialisation was also important because of the influence it exercised on the rest of the world. In some ways it seemed to teach the rest of the world what not to do. The Communist Parties in the West lost much support because they were identified with the purges and the inhumanities and the social inequalities which formed part of the Communist or the Stalinist version of socialism. But the ability of the Soviet state to produce a dynamic economic system exercised a profound influence on Western economic thinking. Remember that the years of Russia's great industrial advances were the years of the Great Depression in the West. The first Pelican book to deal with economics – Pelican No. 7 – published in 1937, by G. D. H. Cole, a prominent British Labour Party economist, was primarily devoted to a contrast between Soviet and Western economic development in the previous ten years. His graphs of France, Britain, Germany, Italy and above all the United States showed the great decline after 1928 (Figs 6 and 7). In the United States, industrial production fell by over 40 per cent, building activity by four-fifths, factory employment by a third. In the same period, in spite of all the privations I have described, Soviet industry boomed; large-scale unemployment vanished. This played an important part in influencing the movement in favour of state planning in the democratic Western countries in the 1930s and during the Second World War; it was undoubtedly

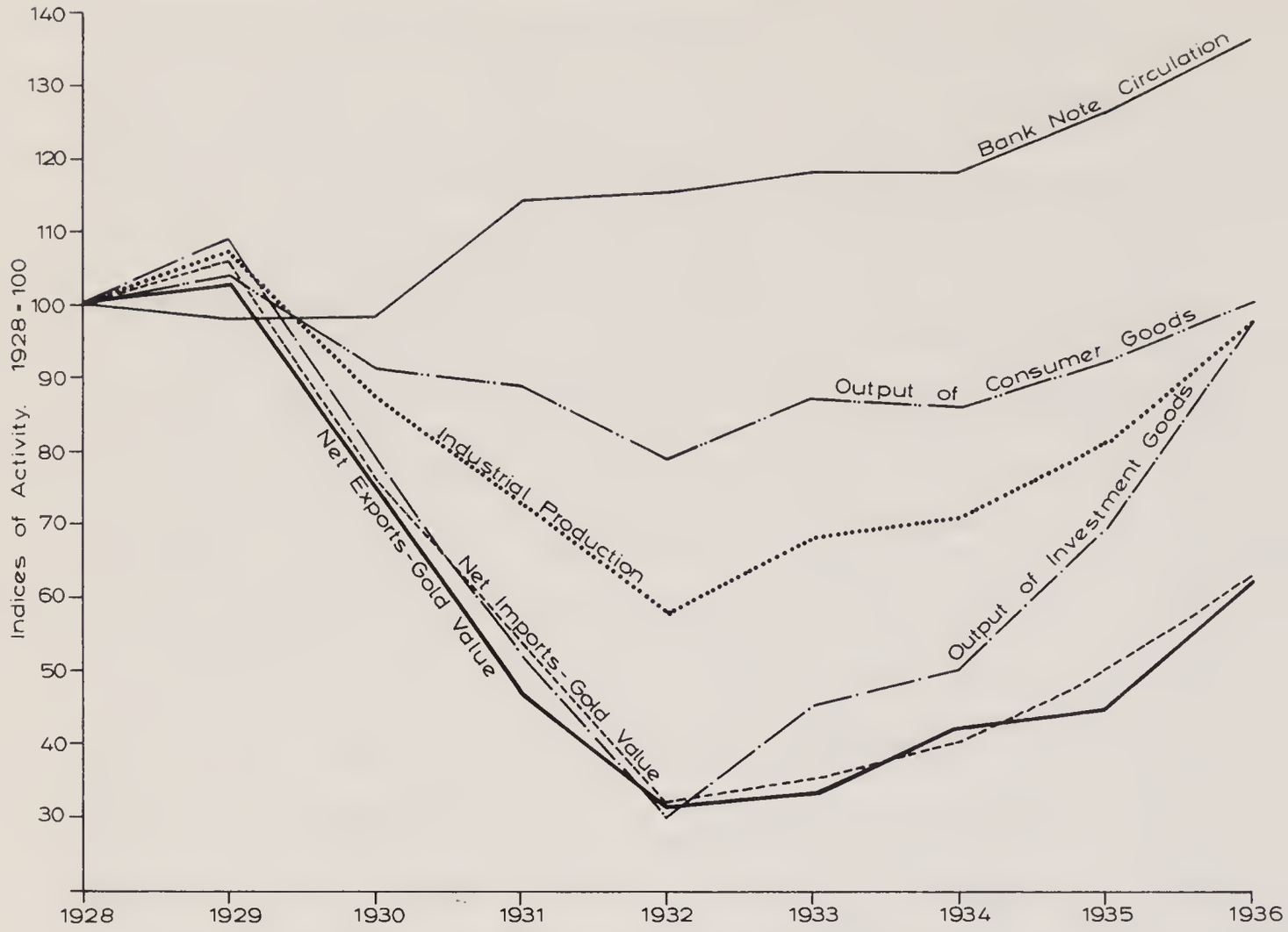


Fig. 6 Economic activity in the United States, 1928–36

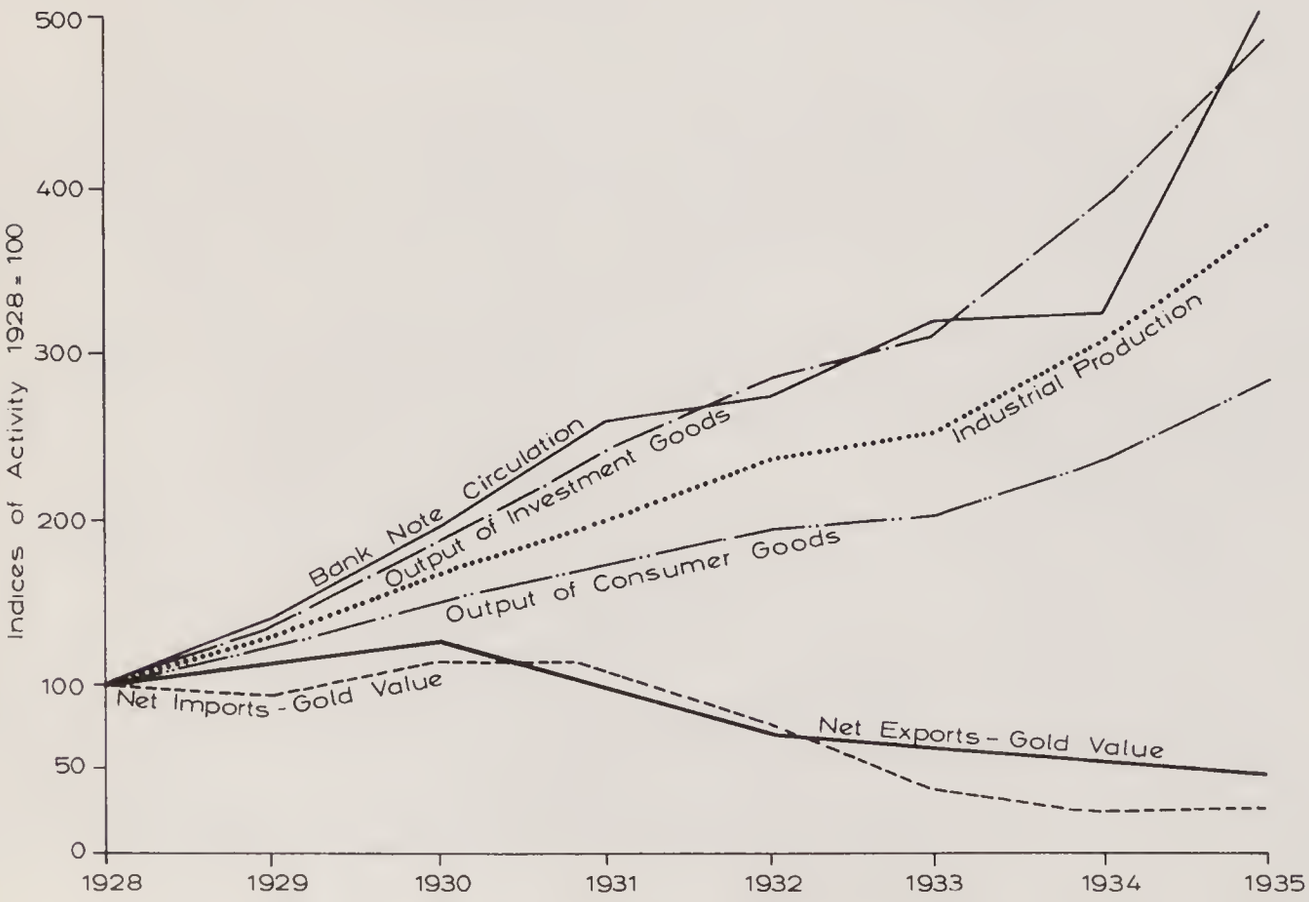


Fig. 7 Economic activity in the USSR, 1928–35

a factor in the emergence of the mixture of state control and private ownership which is now characteristic of most Western industrial countries.

Soviet industrialisation has also exercised a major influence on the four-fifths of the world which is not yet industrialised. Soviet success convinced them that it was possible in a comparatively short time for a relatively backward country to become advanced, to leap forward into the twentieth century. The great developments in China – for all their quarrels with the Russians – have been inspired by the Soviet success, and it has also provided a yardstick against which the economic failures or successes of the ex-colonial nations tend to be measured. Perhaps from the vantage point of 2100 Soviet industrialisation will be seen primarily as a crucial stage in spreading the process of economic and social transformation which began in England in the middle of the eighteenth century to the thousands of millions of peasants who now live on the borders of starvation.

THE SOVIET ECONOMY SINCE STALIN

In the quarter of a century since Stalin's death, a new set of issues has come to the forefront. If the Soviet system of government was successful in pulling a fairly backward country up by its bootstraps, can it be equally successful in coping with the problems of an industrialised country? The Soviet economy nowadays is radically different from that in which central planning by administrative order was introduced in the 1920s. The traditional pattern of distribution of the national income has proved difficult to maintain; Soviet planners have been under strong pressure, to which they have partly yielded, to raise the standard of living by transferring resources to agriculture and to the consumer goods and service industries. At the same time, the simultaneous desire to overtake the United States economically and to equal it in military potential has put an immense strain on resources.

This is the economic background to the changes in the planning system in the past twenty-five years. The pressure on resources has led the Soviet leaders to pin great hopes on increased economic efficiency; and the drive for increased efficiency is at the centre of the reforms in economic planning which have been undertaken in recent years. By the 1950s it had become increasingly difficult to improve economic efficiency within the framework of a highly centralised planning system. Two factors are at work here. First, as Soviet technology progresses, technical advance in an increasing number of industries can no longer be made by merely adapting to Soviet conditions technology which has been borrowed from the advanced industrial countries – further progress depends much more on innovations within the Soviet Union itself. Second, the Soviet economy is now vastly more complex than it was in the 1920s. In

1926, total Soviet industrial production was no greater than the present production of the United States General Motors Corporation. But Soviet industrial production per head of population is now above the British level and for some important capital goods is moving towards the United States' level.

The need for technical innovation and the greater complexity of the economy both point to the need to devolve the decision-making powers of the central authorities and to devise a more flexible system of planning which is easier to administer. Such a devolution of power would also make it possible to provide more scope for the initiative of the new professional classes. Here is a major potential source of improved efficiency. To quote one striking example: in 1928, the total number of qualified engineers employed in the Soviet economy was 47,000; in 1950, the number had increased to 400,000; by 1970, it had reached 2,486,000 – over fifty times as many as in 1928. Taking all these points together, the history of Soviet planning since the death of Stalin may perhaps be interpreted as an attempt to find a solution which would combine flexibility and greater initiative throughout the system with the retention by the central planners of the powers that have often brought the Soviet economy success in its major priorities.

Three major efforts to reform planning have been made since 1953. Between 1954 and 1956, an attempt was made, within the existing administrative hierarchy, to transfer decision-making powers systematically to lower rungs in the hierarchy – from Council of Ministers and Gosplan to industrial ministry, from ministry to factory – and to cut the number of centrally approved targets and instructions. In 1957, this attempt was abandoned in favour of the decision to reorganise industry on a regional basis; 104 regional councils, each in charge of all factories in their region, replaced the thirty ministries which had each been responsible for a sector of industry for the whole country. Eight years later, in the 'Kosygin reform' of September 1965, this attempt was relinquished and the ministries were restored, and together with this a serious effort was made to increase greatly the importance of the profit motive as what has been described by Soviet economists as a regulator of the economic behaviour of industrial firms.

The effects of the reforms of 1965 and after on science and industry are discussed further in Chapters 8 and 9 below. It is there pointed out that so far the weight of the evidence indicates that in the past twenty-five years successes in closing the 'technological gap' have been extremely limited. The road ahead for the Soviet economy is a difficult one and will undoubtedly have many twists and turns. If the reforms succeed, the success could overshadow the Soviet achievement in pioneering the large-scale national planning of rapid industrialisation. This would not only make it possible for the Soviet Union to achieve the goal set by Soviet policy in 1928 – to catch up and surpass the advanced capitalist

economies – it would also greatly increase the control by man of his own future. If the planning reforms fail, or are not successful enough, the Soviet economic system will be judged by history as one which proved able to cope with the first stages of industrialisation in a developing country, but could not deal with the problems of economic growth in a more advanced industrial society.

CHAPTER 4

The Political System under Lenin and Stalin

by
R. W. Davies

THE CIVIL WAR

It was shown in Chapter 2 that the Revolution of 1917, and the Civil War which followed it, established the Bolsheviks or Communists, a primarily urban party, in power in an overwhelmingly peasant country, and that the young Bolshevik or Soviet government was thus in an important sense a minority government. It is true that by 1920 the overwhelming majority of the delegates elected to the nationwide Congress of Soviets were Bolsheviks or supporters of the Bolsheviks. It is also true that in the course of the Civil War many peasants became more sympathetic, or at any rate less unsympathetic, to the Soviet government after experiencing the main alternative to the Bolsheviks, the various White governments established on large stretches of the territory of the former Russian Empire. But the Soviet government was not their government in at least two important senses. In the long term, it was committed to persuading the peasant to abandon his traditional system of family cultivation and to go over to socialised and mechanised farming. In the short term, it was able to win the Civil War only by requisitioning their grain and other foodstuffs to feed the towns and the Red Army, and could offer little in return from its ruined industry. With Bolshevik victory in the Civil War, the continued requisitions after the harvest of 1920 became less and less acceptable to the peasant, and hostility to the regime mounted.

Nor was hostility confined to the peasants. Nearly all the small but

influential professional groups – the engineers, the lawyers, the civil servants – were opposed to the Bolsheviks and believed them to be usurpers of power. By the beginning of 1921 many industrial workers were also dissatisfied. Little remained of the high hopes – some would say the vain utopian hopes – entertained by many revolutionaries in the summer of 1917 that the workers would run their own factories and elect their own managers. Lenin argued that one-man management and good labour discipline in industry were essential to economic success, and before the end of the Civil War these policies were being enforced wherever the central government had control.

This does not mean that the new Soviet government was a tyranny without mass support. An enthusiastic minority (how large it is difficult to say, certainly some millions) in the army, in the factories and in central and local government, many of them ordinary workers, fought heroically and agitated successfully for the Communist cause.

In the last resort it was not military or economic power but the dedication and good organisation of this minority that won the Civil War. For the Bolsheviks were opposed by external as well as internal enemies: both the Central Powers and the Allies, though enemies in the Great War, sent men and arms in support of the White regimes.

For this beleaguered minority the crucial question soon arose: how much freedom of speech and organisation can we permit to our opponents? In the first few months, the new government was permissive: much of the political freedom characteristic of the summer of 1917, and so uncharacteristic of Russia's past history, continued; newspapers and organisations of various shades of Right and Left flourished. But this freedom was eroded piecemeal, not so much by any deliberate decision as in response to the pressure of events. By the end of the Civil War, Soviet Russia was almost a one-party state: a few small groups of socialists from other parties continued a cat-and-mouse existence.

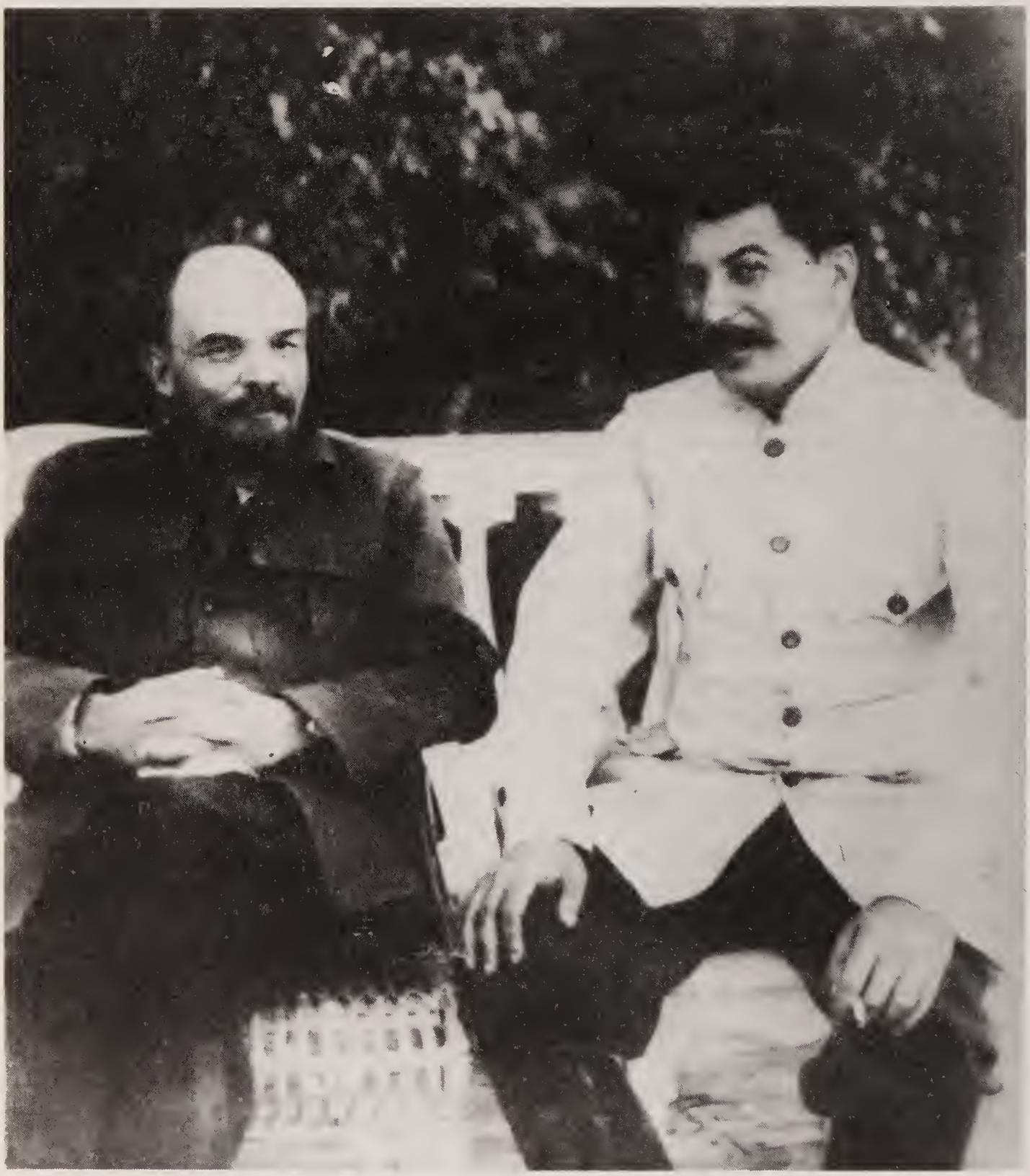
THE YEARS OF TRANSITION: THE 1920s

The launching of the New Economic Policy in 1921 (see Chapter 3) marked a retreat in economic affairs from the centralisation and ruthlessness of the Civil War and gave the peasant much greater economic freedom; it also brought an end to attempts to 'militarise' labour, and invested trade unions with some negotiating powers. A variety of schools of thought were tolerated, in science, literature and even in economics.

But this was at the same time a period in which the political dictatorship was consolidated. All political parties apart from the Communist Party were banned in 1921, and the leaders of the remnants of the other parties were imprisoned or exiled abroad. In August 1921, in an impassioned letter to G. Myasnikov, a local party official who advocated

greater political freedom for other parties, Lenin argued that world capitalism was much stronger than the young Soviet state, and if wider political freedom were permitted within Russia it would use that freedom to buy up journalists and newspapers and win the peasantry over to its side. A few months later, the system of preliminary censorship of all publications, which continues to operate today (see Chapter 11), was formally established.

During the 1920s the Soviet government made heroic efforts to



Stalin with Lenin – the only available photograph of the two men together, much used during the Stalin era (*SCR*)

encourage its own form of democracy, to involve the mass of the population in active participation in government within the framework of national policies laid down by the Communist Party in Moscow. The transformation of Soviet Russia into the 'Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' by the constitution of 1923 was a significant moment. The constitution established the USSR as a union of four national republics, with elaborate arrangements for ensuring the rights and representation of the numerous non-Russian nationalities. On Lenin's insistence, in spite of Stalin's opposition, the Russian Republic was made merely one of several legally equal constituent republics of the USSR. But the way in which the decision to accept Lenin's proposals was taken confirmed the weak position of the elected Soviets, for it was taken not by an organ of the Soviets but by the seven members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and merely ratified by the Soviets.

But, within their limited powers, much progress was made by the Soviets. In 1922, less than a quarter of the electorate voted in local elections; in 1929, the proportion had risen to nearly two-thirds. The number of people participating actively in local government greatly increased, and, with strong encouragement from the central authorities, women began to play an active part in local political affairs for the first time. But the election campaigns were also used to impose central political control on the countryside, and to diminish the authority of the traditional village meeting at the expense of the village Soviet. In these years, too, the principle that all elections should be uncontested was finally consolidated. It is also worth noting that at this time the franchise was neither universal nor equal: the former privileged classes were deprived of the vote and the constituencies were arranged so that one urban vote counted for more than one rural vote (in the Tsarist Duma it had been the other way round: each landowner had more voting power than a merchant, each merchant more than a peasant, and each peasant more than a worker).

STALIN'S DICTATORSHIP, 1929–53

In the 1930s, forced industrialisation and collectivisation were accompanied, as we saw in Chapter 3, by the strengthening of the political dictatorship and by a dramatic increase in the personal authority of Stalin. The paradoxical combination of dictatorship and mass participation, already a feature of the 1920s, continued on a larger scale in the 1930s. In December 1936, what was then known as the 'Stalin Constitution', and is now simply called the 'Soviet Constitution', was approved, and hailed in the Soviet press as the 'most democratic Constitution in the world'. Replacing the Constitution of 1923, it restored the right to vote to the former ruling classes, and rearranged the constituencies so that the vote of a peasant was now equal to that of an urban

A meeting of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet during Stalin's period (*SCR*)

worker. Unequal voting remained only in one unimpeachable respect: in the Soviet of Nationalities, one of the two equal Chambers of Deputies which made up the Supreme Soviet, minor nationalities were over-represented in relation to their population, and each of the eleven Union Republics which now constituted the Soviet Union elected an equal number of Deputies, from the Tadzhik Republic with a population of 1·5 million to the mighty Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) with over 100 million. Mass participation in local and national affairs was now much more extensive than in the 1920s. Thus some 60 million copies of the draft Constitution were printed, and over half a million public meetings held to discuss it.

Yet at all these meetings only quite minor amendments to the Constitution were proposed and the new Constitution was adopted in the midst of the mass arrests in 1936–8 of party officials, army officers and others, known in the West as the Great Purges and in the USSR as the *Yezhovshchina*, after the head of the political police, Yezhov, who was in charge of the reign of terror. And in spite of the impressive provisions for the rights of nationalities, a few years later whole nations, amounting to at least 1·5 million persons in all, were deported *en masse*, men, women and children, to the remoter areas of the country on the grounds that too

many of them were collaborators or potential collaborators with the German invaders.

The war brought out the best and the worst in the political system. The high degree of centralisation of authority enabled the concentration of resources on the war effort to an unprecedented extent, but at the same time it greatly restricted initiative. In June 1941, Stalin's failure to accept that invasion was imminent paralysed Soviet defences and was a major factor in the destruction – on the first day of the war – of huge numbers of Soviet aircraft on the ground. But as a result of the concentration of resources on the building up of the armaments industry in the Urals and beyond, the Russians were able to win the Battle of Kursk with the aid of thousands of new T–34 tanks which outclassed the German Tigers. By this time Soviet military leadership was sure-footed, and the speeches and the idealised image of Stalin played an important part in unifying the Soviet people in the struggle for the independence of their country.

In 1943–5, the years of military victory, the political system appeared to be efficient and successful, and to command popular support. In 1949–53, the last years of Stalin's life, it appeared at its worst. These were years, it is true, of continued economic success, except in agriculture, and of great achievements in prestige projects. In 1949 the first Soviet atom bomb was exploded, four years behind the West, and in 1953, a few months after Stalin's death, the first hydrogen bomb was exploded in advance of the Americans. But they were also years in which censorship and control over intellectual life were at their most rigid, years in which experiment in art and music was virtually forbidden and the unscientific biological theories of Lysenko were compulsory. In January 1953 the arrest of nine prominent doctors, most of them Jewish, on charges of poisoning prominent Soviet leaders, heralded a major new political purge, cut short by Stalin's death. Khrushchev told a closed session of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party in February 1956: 'It is not excluded that had Stalin remained at the helm for another several months Comrades Molotov and Mikoyan would probably not have delivered any speeches at this Congress.' Molotov, the Soviet Prime Minister, and Mikoyan had been members of the Politburo and supporters of Stalin since the late 1920s. This was thus a period of extraordinarily rigid political control, in which the political police played a very large part.

THE NATURF OF THE SOVIET POLITICAL SYSTEM UNDER STALIN

The Soviet political system which emerged under Stalin defies any simple classification. The Soviet view is that in spite of the distortions brought about by the 'cult of personality', i.e. the glorification of Stalin, the Soviet Union in the 1930s was a socialist society, and the political system was basically a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' (see pp. 67–8, 81); the state was considered to be controlled by the working class, in close

Trotsky, opponent of Stalin, exiled from the USSR in 1929 (*RT Hulton*)

Bukharin with Lenin's sister on the editorial staff of *Pravda* in May 1924. Bukharin, a leading member of the Bolshevik Party, was executed after a public trial in March 1938 (*RT Hulton*)

Soviet leaders bear the coffin at the funeral of Kalinin in June 1946. From left to right in front: Malenkov, Beria, Molotov, Stalin (*SCR*)

alliance with the peasants, and with the support of the 'workers by brain', the Soviet intelligentsia.

Many groups of Marxists have challenged the Soviet doctrine that the political system is a 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. Trotsky, exiled from the USSR after his disputes with the party leadership, agreed with the official view that the USSR was still a 'workers' state', on the grounds that the factories, mines and other means of production were owned by society as a whole and hence by the working class. But for Trotsky it was a 'workers' state with bureaucratic distortions', a 'degenerate workers' state' in which a bureaucratic caste was privileged at the expense of the mass of the population and controlled the levers of political power. Other Marxists such as Djilas have challenged this view, and argue that the regime has moved so far from the original goals of the Revolution that it must be seen as merely a new variety of class society, with no socialism remaining in it. Some people in this group call Soviet society under Stalin and after 'state capitalism', on the grounds that a new ruling class has effective control of the means of production which are legally owned by the state; they consider that this ruling class performs the same function as that performed by the capitalist in traditional capitalist society. Both these schools of thought hold that a political revolution will be necessary in order to establish a socialist society and political system in the USSR. A third, more optimistic, group of Marxists, including the late Isaac Deutscher, has argued that Soviet politics is oppressive primarily because of the continued backwardness of the economy, and that what existed in the USSR under Stalin, and perhaps still exists today, is a

Stalin with other Party leaders on the Lenin mausoleum in 1935 (*SCR*)

system 'transitional to socialism', or an 'early stage of socialism', which will eventually be followed by a fully socialist system.

Other writers dismiss all these attempts to fit the Soviet Union into the Procrustean bed of classical Marxist terminology. For them, Stalin's Russia, like Hitler's Germany, was a classic example of 'totalitarianism', a political system dominated by an official ideology, a single mass party, terroristic control by the secret police, and in which all communications, the armed forces and the economy are directed from a single centre. The twentieth-century dictatorships are seen as a new form of political organisation which cannot be described in classical nineteenth-century terms.

A satisfactory explanation of the nature of Soviet politics under Stalin must in my view pay attention to two major features: first, the centralisation and the repressive character of the political system; second, the great upward mobility in the system, the opportunities it provided for millions whose parents had lived without hope in the lower depths of pre-Revolutionary Russia. Each of the theories we have described has its strengths and its weaknesses. In the various Marxist theories much attention is paid to the social and economic basis of Soviet society in the 1930s, little attention to the special form of its political organisation. The 'totalitarian' scheme brings out certain important common features in the Nazi and Soviet dictatorships, but pays far too little attention to their major differences: the aggressive expansionist nature of Nazi Germany, the social dynamism and economic growth of Stalinist Russia. And none of these theories, it seems to me, provides an adequate explanation of the role of the key institution in the Soviet political system, the Communist Party, which is examined more closely in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

The Communist Party, Yesterday and Today

by
M. Lewin

LENIN'S CONCEPT OF THE PARTY

An understanding of the history and functions of the Soviet Communist Party is crucial to our understanding of the contemporary Soviet Union. This is a complicated theme, which could be approached from many different angles and standpoints. Here we consider the contemporary Party in the light of the concept of the Party and the blueprint for social revolution which were developed by Lenin, the founder of the Party, before 1917.

Lenin's plan for revolution and social reorganisation had at least two major aspects, represented by his two famous publications *What Is To Be Done?*, written in 1902, and *State and Revolution*, written a month before he took power in 1917.

In *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin dealt primarily with organisational and strategic questions. He argued that in order to overthrow the Tsarist regime a special type of revolutionary organisation must be created: 'Give us an organisation of revolutionaries, and we will overturn Russia!' He regarded such an organisation as essential because spontaneous popular movements would not in themselves bring about a new socialist order of society. In Lenin's view, the factory working class which had come into being in Russia with the emergence of modern industry would fight for its own day-to-day interests, but would not on its own initiative go beyond a reformist struggle for better conditions. Socialism had to be

Lenin and other Party members at the IX Congress in 1920 (*Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.*; *Wildwood House Ltd.*)

brought to the working class from outside, and in Russian conditions this could only be done by an organisation of professional revolutionaries, trained to operate in illegal conditions and capable of out-manoeuvring the Tsarist political police with their network of informers. These professional revolutionaries would analyse the whole social and political structure of Tsarist society and on this basis hammer out the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary movement.

In the conditions of illegality in which it had to work, the internal organisation of the revolutionary party had to be tight, highly centralised and disciplined, and directed towards effective political action. At the same time the Party had to be capable of analysing society and politics. It would therefore have to be disciplined but flexible: neither a bureaucracy nor a democracy.

This revolutionary party would lead the mass of the people to an armed uprising against autocracy, first replacing autocracy by democracy, and then advancing, together with the successful social revolutions in other countries, towards the establishment of a socialist 'dictatorship of the proletariat' (see p. 81 below).

In *State and Revolution*, fifteen years later, Lenin set out the purposes for which this dictatorship was to be established. Lenin outlined the way

forward to liberation with a capital L, the liberation of society from oppression. The exploitation of one class by another which had characterised all previous societies would be eliminated; the division of society into classes would cease to exist. The state, with all its coercive and repressive machinery – armies, police, law courts and bureaucracy – would wither away. In the new system, it would not be difficult for society to run its affairs: every cook, Lenin dreamed, would learn to govern. Government in any case would consist of running things, not ruling over people. This was a long-established idea among socialists, a dream about a dictatorship which would bring to an end all dictatorships for all time, and establish a society which resembled that long advocated by anarchists as well as socialists.

Lenin's organisational blueprint in *What Is To Be Done?* proved to be a great success. Between 1902 and 1917 three revolutions shook Russia, and on 8 November 1917, Lenin, now leader of the triumphant Bolshevik Party, announced: 'We will now proceed to construct the socialist order.' There are few parallel cases in history of the engineering of events through a carefully drafted action plan, thought up years in advance.

His blueprint for the new social order in *State and Revolution*, on the other hand, was a failure. The Party reached power as Lenin wanted it to. But, sixty years later, it is in charge of a powerful bureaucratic state – and this Lenin believed would not continue to exist. The story of the Soviet Union may be seen as the story of the great success and the great failure of Lenin's different blueprints or plans. Why one plan succeeded and one failed is not yet fully understood by historians. But the answer to the question can partly be found by studying the transformation which took place in the Party after 1917.

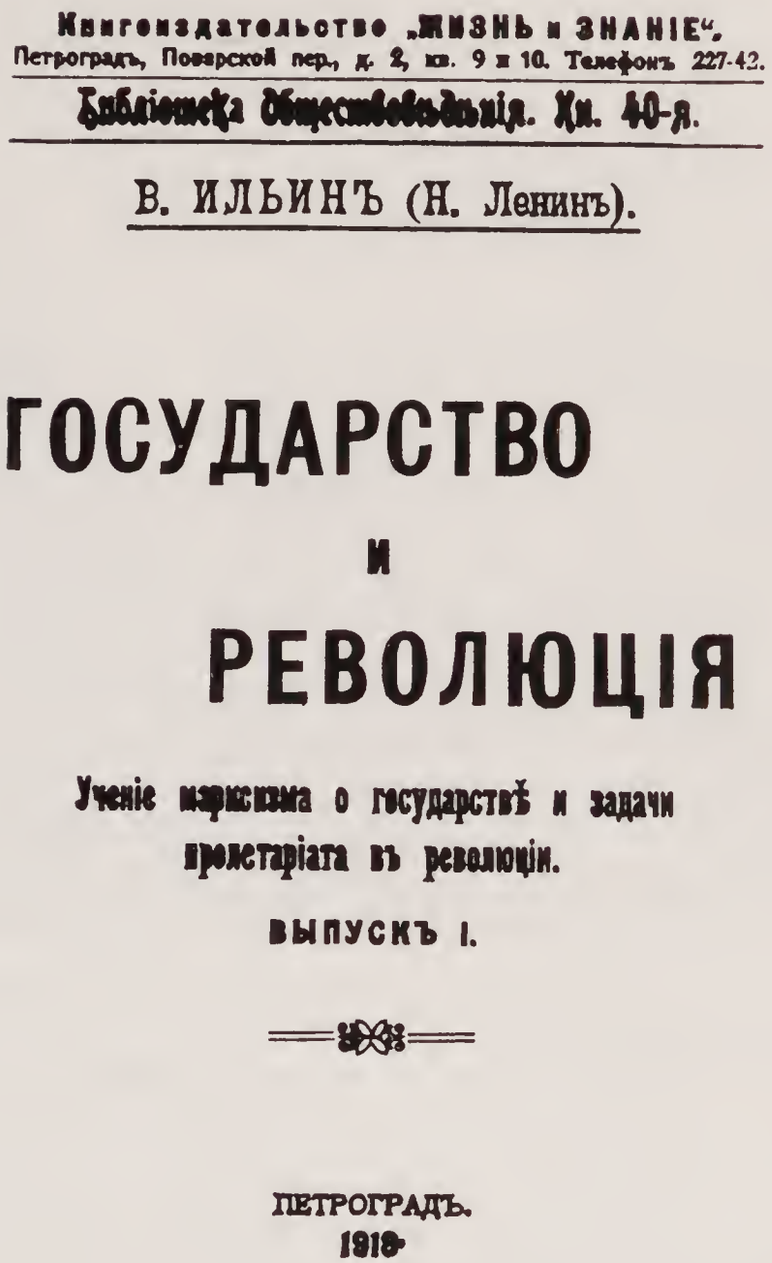
THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PARTY, 1917–77

At the beginning of 1917 the Party had at most 20,000 members. When it took power later in 1917 membership had increased to about 200,000. Today it has over 15 million members and probationary members.

In 1917, it had no formal administrative machinery. Its committees contained the leading members, and they personally carried out all the political and administrative work. Today the Party is run by an elaborate network of full-time officials, an hierarchically organised Party machine employing some 200,000 persons.

Between November 1917 and 1977 the Party has undergone a profound transformation. Seven main stages may be traced.

(1) Before 1917, the central leadership and its journals were located abroad, and had to transmit theories and instructions to the Russian Party from outside. Within Russia, there was a network of illegal committees, each surrounded by groups of sympathisers. But these were not simple soldiers carrying out orders. Leading members from



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ГОСУДАРСТВО
И
РЕВОЛЮЦІЯ

Ученіе марксизма о государствѣ и задачи
пролетаріата въ революціи.

ВЫПУСКЪ I.

ПЕТРОГРАДЪ.
1918

Титульный лист книги В. И. Ленина «Государство и революция». — 1918 г.
Уменьшено

The title page of the first edition (1918) of Lenin's book *State and Revolution (from the Soviet edition of Lenin's Works)*

within Russia attended congresses and conferences abroad, and the central committee members in exile, including Lenin himself, had to fight for and reassert their prestige at every major turning point in the political and ideological discussions. The leading members within Russia enjoyed a considerable degree of independence on many issues, though they tended to look to the leaders in exile, especially

Lenin, for guidance on grand theory and major problems of strategy.

(2) In the months between the two revolutions of February and October 1917 enormous changes occurred. The Party suddenly became a legal, mass-opposition party. It had powerful leadership, which was on the whole followed by the local Party organisations. But these local Party groups continued to enjoy a high degree of autonomy in local affairs, and also, through their delegates to the frequent conferences and congresses, to act as arbiters between quarrelling leaders and to participate in the intensive political debates inside the Party. The Party leaders used to appeal to the rank and file at large and in particular to the local militants in order to gain approval for their proposals.

(3) From the moment of their victory, and during the Civil War which followed in 1918–20, the Bolsheviks were no longer a revolutionary party in opposition but virtually the sole holders of political power. This momentous change, and the gigantic effort of winning the Civil War, began to shape the Party in new, different directions. The semi-anarchist and often unruly Party rank and file began to be moulded into a disciplined, more strictly centralised, militarised organisation. A central Party machine began to emerge. The Politburo was set up to centralise everyday decisions. Secretaries were allocated from the centre without any form of election, to strengthen local Party cells engaged in propping up the war effort, often justified solely by emergency conditions. Debate and dissent within the Party were restrained because of the need for wartime unity; but debate never stopped and no obvious efforts to suppress it were undertaken.

(4) After the end of the Civil War, with the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921, as described in Chapter 3, internal Party debate flared up again.

Up to his death, Lenin's leadership was based on his enormous prestige, but his was neither a personal nor an authoritarian dictatorship. In the Central Committee of the Party, and in the smaller Politburo, no important decision was taken without a majority vote. Party conferences and congresses were regularly and frequently convened, and played an important role in political life. The intermediate ranks in the Party, and even its rank and file, were informed and consulted about major issues. The Party press was lively and well informed and was frank about most of the sensitive issues.

There were, however, some large clouds in this bright sky. At the beginning of NEP, Lenin feared that the Party was in danger of being overthrown by a peasant uprising. Together with the banning of other political parties described in Chapter 4, Lenin secured the banning of 'fractions and groupings' within the Party. Discussion and criticism of policies could continue, but no concerted presentation of rival programmes was permitted, and once a decision was taken, disciplined unity was required to carry it out. Whether this was merely intended as a

The 'Industrial Party Trial', November 1930. This trial of prominent engineers on accusations of wrecking was a prelude to the public trials of Party leaders later in the decade (*RT Hulton*)

temporary emergency measure or reflected a profound trend within Bolshevism is a hotly disputed question.

(5) At first the ban on 'fractions and groupings' remained largely on paper. Even after Lenin's death in 1924 opposition groups continued to function within the Party. But a clear trend now emerged towards what was known among all the oppositions as the 'bureaucratisation' of the Party, and soon became dominant. More and more power was concentrated in the hands of the rapidly expanding Party machine and its leadership, at the expense of the rank and file of the Party and the different political and intellectual interest groups inside and outside the Party. An entirely new aim began to be presented as being the essence of Leninism: the establishment of a 'monolithic' party, which was to be not merely a party disciplined in action but also one in which any possibility of internal opposition was stamped out and all criticism was eliminated.

(6) By 1930, the monolithic party was more or less fully established. The emergence of a monolithic party involved a cataclysm. In the purges, especially in the years 1936–8, most of the leading Party members were killed, and so were all the previous traditions. An entirely new

organisation now replaced the earlier revolutionary Party. It was organised on a different basis: the Party machine was fully in command, all Party institutions lost their influence and the rank and file and the lower and medium-level officials were completely excluded from policy making. It was led in a different way: the group of leaders dominated by Lenin was now replaced by the personal dictatorship of Stalin. The Party was in effect transformed into a ruling bureaucracy in which obedience became the key virtue for all Party members at every level.

The Party had long been seen by its members and leaders as a unique historical instrument for the transformation of society, to which obedience was owed. Even Trotsky, an independent leader of great intellect, frequently asserted that no individual, however talented, could be right against the Party. This treatment of the Party as a fetish or an idol exacted a paradoxical retribution. During the domination of Stalin, the problem of whether an individual could be right against the Party vanished. Now the whole Party could never be right against an individual – its leader, who was treated as infallible. The new principle was enforced by terror, but the Party had already drugged itself into apathy with the philosophy

Party leaders at the XVII Party Congress, January 1934, the last Congress before the great purge of 1936–8 (*Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.*; *Wildwood House Ltd.*)

that individuals should abdicate their political freedom to an organisation.

(7) Developments since Stalin's death in 1953 are not easy to assess, but it is clear that both in the hectic Khrushchev years (1957–64), and after, many new features have emerged.

First, the old style of leadership has gone and the Party is led by a group of top leaders, members of the Politburo. The introduction of what in Soviet terminology is referred to as a 'collective leadership' is a very real and important change.

Second, much more influence and say is given to the 300-strong Central Committee which under Stalin fell into abeyance. Together with the Central Committee members, there is a group of leading Party officials who also seem to have become an independent political force. Thus, though leadership at the very top is powerful, the ruling group is not just a caucus, but a much larger body. Some even use the terms 'elite' or 'class' to describe this ruling group which may also include top government officials and some social groups, like leading scientists, who have access to the central authorities.

Third, the middle ranks in the Party and the educated public generally now have more say in Party policy. There is much less secrecy than before, more information is made available, more consultation takes place before policy decisions are made. Policy makers have recently begun to make considerable use of sociological surveys.

Does this then mark a fundamentally new stage in the development of the Party? To answer this question we need to examine the contemporary operation of the Soviet Party in more detail.

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM TODAY

The distinctive feature of the Soviet political system is that it is a one-party system. The ruling party has an undisputed monopoly of power. In Western countries, and particularly in the United States, one-party systems came to be seen, especially during the Cold War, as the embodiment of all that is evil in politics. The origins of the one-party system were traced to Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?*, and some saw the whole thing as a kind of conspiracy by Lenin. Once the Cold War subsided, however, it became clear that the one-party system was not just the product of one mind, one movement or one country but was a genuine creation of history. One-party systems have appeared in all kinds of countries, with all kinds of attributes and all kinds of labels. We can nowadays study a whole range of one-party systems. Some are important instruments of economic and social development, some are rather instruments of destruction, some are both at different periods of their development. Some exhibit liberal or democratic tendencies; others degenerate into oppressive machines manipulated by despots. Matters

Brezhnev addresses the XXIV Congress, April 1971 (*Novosti Press Agency*)

are much more complicated than might have been supposed, especially as we can also observe some democratic processes degenerating. To understand the Soviet Communist Party, we evidently need to examine it as one specific case in a variety of one-party systems.

Perhaps the central feature of the Soviet Party, like other Communist Parties, is that it has an official ideology which it imposes on society. This ideology, 'Marxism–Leninism', claims monopoly of ideological life and enforces it as far as it can. Purporting to possess the capacity to formulate a scientific theory of history, society and even philosophy (though some of these claims are, in practice, somewhat diluted today), the Party considers itself to be the 'guide' for the whole of Soviet society. 'Guide' could, of course, mean different things in different circumstances. The Soviet Party is not merely concerned with formulating ideology, but also with the making of policy; indeed it frequently not merely supervises the implementation of policies but even implements them itself directly. It is thus both a governmental party, and a *party-government*: its top leadership is in fact responsible for central government, and its intermediate agencies guide the local government. In addition, the scope of Party policy making is enormous. National economic planning, education,

The Secretariat of the Party Central Committee (*Novosti*)

culture and arts – the whole range of social phenomena – are all officially claimed to fall into the Party's purview. Such a party, if it actually does what it claims – and this is so far still the case – can be seen as an agency of comprehensive social planning, shaping, or trying to shape, social forces according to its conceptions and objectives.

What are the main instruments and methods by which the Party carries out this vast range of functions?

First, the enforcement of a monopoly ideology was, and up to a point still is, a powerful instrument for securing a high degree of uniformity of views in society. At the same time it provides a common language between the masses and their rulers and a common frame of reference for the rulers and the different influential groups or elites.

Second, all the leading personnel throughout the USSR – people in positions of responsibility in government, science, trade unions and so on – are trained by the Party or under its supervision and selected for their posts by the Party authorities.

Third, the whole nation is being educated and heavily propagandised under the control of or by the Party (see Chapter 7 below). The monopoly on power and ideology is supplemented by the monopoly on means of communication and information. Discordant voices in matters seen by the Party as sensitive have a very difficult time, and the whole of politics and ideology comes into this category. Dissenters are often persecuted, the authorities even resorting to the convenient device of locking them away in lunatic asylums.

Fourth, cultural activities, especially art and literature, have to follow prescribed paths and are supervised by powerful censors (see Chapter 11 below).

Fifth, the Party is organised so as to enable it to control the governmental machinery and, either through it or, when necessary, directly, the whole of social life. The central leadership, the Politburo, is elected by and formally responsible to the Central Committee, which includes all the leading officials of the Party, the government and the most important other organisations. The Politburo has at its disposal the Secretariat of the Central Committee which is organised like a miniature government, with departments responsible for supervising the main branches of industry, culture and science, the police and the army, propaganda and education. Thus Premier Kosygin's ministers are supervised by parallel departments in the Central Committee although the Premier and his two deputies are themselves Politburo members. The Central Committee departments also control the Party itself, with its ubiquitous network of Party branches in every factory, office or school (Fig. 8).

Finally, the social composition of the Party membership is regulated so as to ensure that different classes of society are represented in it in proportions considered appropriate by the central authorities. In particular, citizens of talent and position either reach leading positions

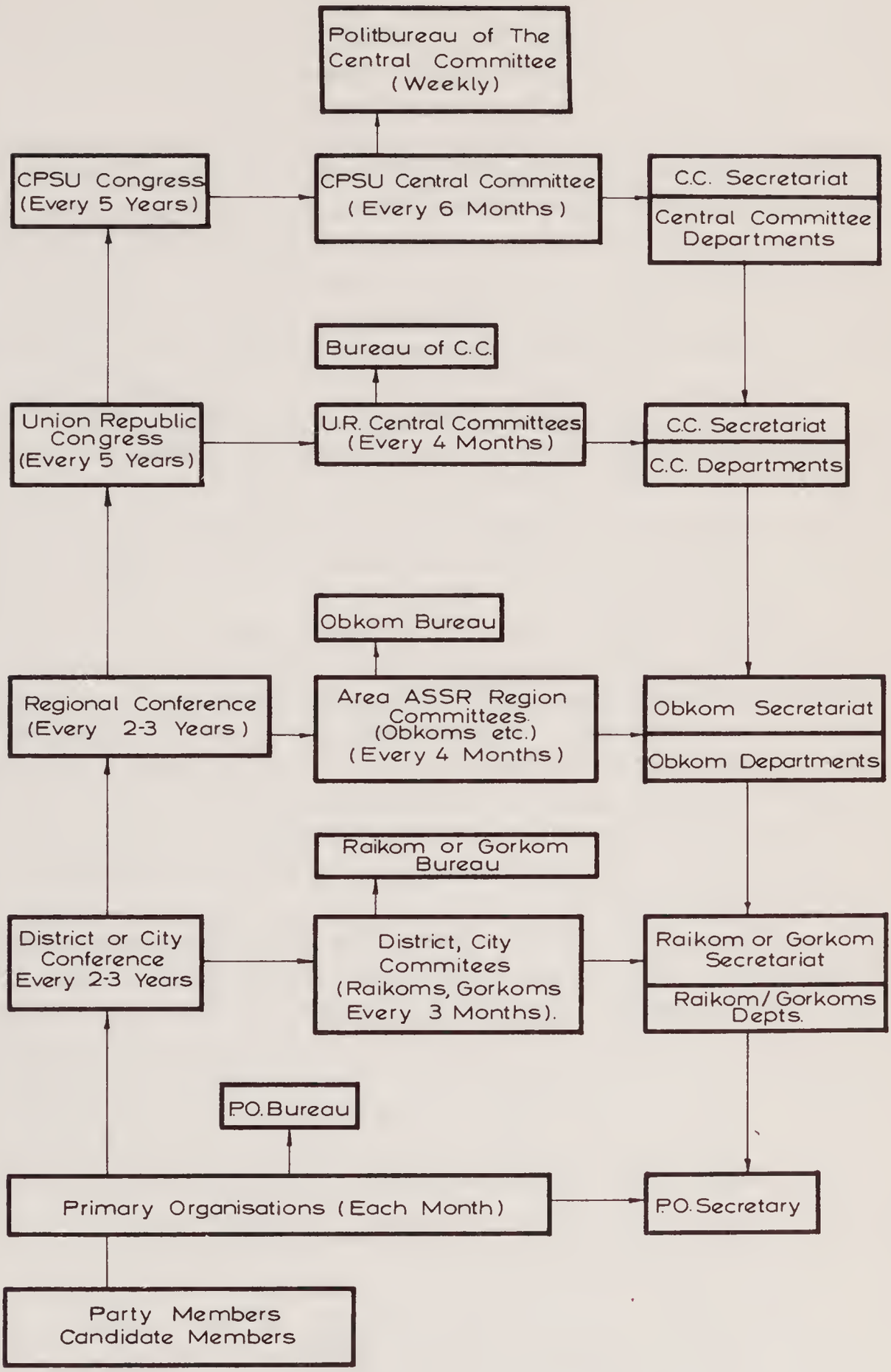


Fig. 8 Structure of the Soviet Communist Party

because they are Party members or are asked to join because they can be influential among their peers.

All these are impressive political organisational methods which help the Party to run the country, to raise it to a high position in world affairs and to create a powerful viable system, though very different from what Lenin's *State and Revolution* anticipated.

So much for the secrets of the Party's success. But now let us briefly review some sources of tension and failure. In fact, some of the factors which made for success are also at the same time creating trouble. The one-party monopoly, and the very insistence of the leadership on ideological and political unity, is in itself a major source of trouble. All rulers probably prefer a situation in which they can afford to disregard or suppress all kinds of anarchic, irresponsible opponents and feel free to devise their policies without interruption. But the strong, disciplined Party machinery shaped by the years of forced industrialisation and world war is now faced by a new, diversified, complex and quickly changing society. This complexity of the social body cannot be evaded. The purges which, forty years ago, a capricious ruler carried out in order to eliminate political risks for himself stemming from diversity, cannot easily be repeated today.

So, unavoidably, pressure groups are being formed and have to be accommodated at least to a certain extent. As will be shown in relation to Soviet culture in Chapter 11, diversity is a reality in spite of police surveillance and powerful censors and controllers. Uniformity of thought just does not exist in the Soviet Union, and its leaders are aware of it. Careful observation shows the existence of different and competing political trends of different denominations, which cannot express themselves freely, but constitute subterranean currents, and penetrate the Party too. So far the Party retains its monolithic conceptions and is not ready to permit the emergence of different political groups even within the Party itself. It is therefore inadequately equipped to deal with political diversity and strife and may one day be forced to learn bitter lessons. The pretence of political uniformity is as detrimental to political development as enforced cultural and artistic uniformity is detrimental to culture and art. In the field of sciences, some of them extremely sensitive to economic and military development, the sheer need for survival as a state often forced the leaders to abandon narrow-minded claims; in order to progress in physics, biology, cybernetics and mathematical economics, the state had to relinquish cherished practices. Some social sciences are still the victim of ideological stifling, but here too the same trend is discernible: a modern society cannot be run adequately without training its leading personnel in a spirit of independence in searching for solutions to political and social problems. Sociology therefore had to be allowed, though efforts are made to keep it from overstepping the limits of a practical, problem-solving technique.

But it is only cultural diversity, intellectual and political challenge and a free flow of information which allow both the development of sciences and the training of open-minded elites and leaders. In fact, there is growing pressure on the Party for access to ever more information in different fields, without which the complex process of training leading personnel is constantly hampered.

Though Soviet citizens have many opportunities to exert their talents and initiative in many fields of private, social and professional endeavours, they are still denied freedom of political activity – other than apparatus politics inside the monopolistic party – and greatly hindered in the public exercise of critical and creative thinking in the spheres of political judgement and social and philosophical opinion. Much private discussion however does take place, in itself an indicator of the existence of a sharp problem.

The increasing number of such thinking people may tend to get alienated from their political system and retreat into cynicism or indifference, if they are not persuaded that 'the system is thinking too'. Obviously, many important problems cannot be raised on a national scale unless a debate is asked for by the government – and many problems which cannot be resolved, let alone noticed, without social pressure, tend to accumulate or suppurate. At the same time, leaders who are not elected or openly tested tend to be of the type that is considered suitable by those responsible for their selection but not necessarily acceptable to public opinion. The fact that they cannot be removed by any regular procedure creates either a sense of helplessness about politics, or deep dissatisfaction and even opposition.

In my own view, the Soviet system has entered a stage in which it will bear many pressures for change and is on a threshold of important transformations. Is the straitjacket put by political institutions on society really unbearable and crisis-laden? What will be the eventual direction of political change? Is there a channel for democratic change within the Soviet political system? Are there Soviet forms of democracy which could emerge within the framework of a one-party system?

Such problems are not easy to answer and they need a lot of thought, further study and also waiting and seeing.

CHAPTER 6

Social Classes

by
David Lane

In studying social class in any society, we are concerned with economic, social and political inequality: the form it may take in a society, its extent and the explanation of why it exists.

Two major explanations are generally put forward to explain the persistence of inequality. Some argue that inequality is 'functionally necessary' to ensure that society operates efficiently and effectively. It is necessary to ensure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the best-qualified persons. But others argue that inequality is a result of the process by which the desirable things in life have become the prerogative of a privileged stratum or class who, by a mixture of force, persuasion and manipulation, maintain the *status quo* in their own interest.

At the time of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the Soviet leaders had very clear ideas on both the causes and the future of inequality. For them, inequality was a temporary historical phenomenon, the causes of which were rooted in the ownership of property. Inequality was initially a functionally necessary feature of society, but at the same time was a usurped prerogative of a privileged class. Their aim was to create an egalitarian society as soon as the material conditions for equality had been established.

In order to understand the present social structure of the Soviet Union, we need to begin by examining these ideas, as an essential background to an examination of the persistence of inequality, and the nature of social classes, in the modern Soviet Union.

MARXIST THEORY OF CLASS AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

According to Marx, class is determined by property relations. The owners of property form the ruling or exploiting class and those who do not own property form the ruled or exploited class. In modern industrial

societies the 'bourgeoisie', or capitalist class, owns the factories, mines and other means of production and constitutes the ruling class. The 'proletariat', the working class, is the exploited class, which owns nothing but its ability to work, which it sells to the bourgeoisie. Ownership of property gives political power and the means for the control of the state to the bourgeoisie. Ownership is a major determinant of the style of life of the ruling class. Lack of property results for the proletariat in a low real income, in cultural and educational deprivation, and in lack of political power. The labourer has only his labour power to sell, he has 'nothing to lose but his chains', and a world to win.

Marx argued that the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie would be resolved by a revolution which would usher in a new epoch of socialism and Communism. A new form of public ownership would be established, and class differences would be abolished:

'The condition for the emancipation of the working class is the abolition of all classes. The working class in the course of its development will substitute for the old civic society an association which will exclude classes and their antagonism.'

After the victory of the working class, in an intermediate *socialist* form of society, the means of production would be publicly owned, and men would work according to their ability; but, owing to the shortage of goods, and the need to provide incentives to efficient work, they would be rewarded differentially according to the work they carried out. Inequality would thus still remain. In the *Communist* stage of society, with an abundance of goods, and with everyone willing to work for the common interest, men would continue to work according to their ability, but would now receive according to their need. In such a society there would be no distinction between mental and manual labour; indeed, there would be no social division of labour.

What did this theory imply for the Soviet leaders after the October Revolution? In the first place, it is necessary to point out that even in theory a socialist society was not initially introduced. The Bolsheviks nationalised the land and large-scale industry. But much land was still privately worked; farm implements, as well as many small factories, remained in private ownership. The proletariat had established a political *dictatorship* defending its power against the dispossessed landowners and bourgeoisie.

At the same time, Lenin and the Bolsheviks had to introduce social institutions appropriate to the new form of society and this entailed an attack on social inequality. Personal titles, for instance, were abolished and an attempt was made in the early revolutionary years to educate all adults to a minimum level. Education was organised on egalitarian principles, and polytechnical education was advocated to bridge the gap

A group of Siberian workers (*SCR*)

between mental and manual labour (see Chapter 7 below). But from 1931 wage differentials were considerably increased. In 1931 Stalin firmly pointed out to the Soviet public that in the socialist stage of society man was expected to 'give according to his ability and to receive according to his work', not according to his need. Until this time unequal rewards tended to be seen as something which had to be tolerated as a temporary necessity, but which should already be greatly reduced even in the socialist stage of society. Now, however, Stalin stressed in an interview with the German writer Emil Ludwig that 'the kind of socialism under which everybody would get the same pay, an equal quantity of meat and an equal quantity of bread, would wear the same clothes and receive the same goods in the same quantities, such a socialism is unknown to Marxism'. He added, 'only people who are unacquainted with Marxism can have the primitive notion that the Russian Bolsheviks want to pool all wealth and share it out equally'; this was the idea of Communism held by primitive 'Communists' at the time of Cromwell and the French Revolution.

While there were *income differentials* in the new Soviet state, from 1936 it was denied that there were any antagonistic classes in a Marxist sense. The official Soviet view of the Soviet Union was one of class harmony not of class struggle. There were still two major classes, the working class and

the collective farm peasantry, because the collective farmers still owned their tools and their products as a co-operative unit, and were not directly employed by the socialist state. A 'stratum' of professional, technical and clerical personnel, usually referred to as the 'intelligentsia', was seen as constituting a distinct major social group, but it was not a class because it had no special relationship to the ownership of the means of production. In the Soviet view, the interests of these three groups did not conflict. A Soviet textbook describes the situation in the Soviet Union as follows: 'Since they jointly own social property, and jointly participate in the social production process, all people are equal and their relations are based on principles of comradely co-operation and mutual assistance.' Thus there were no property-owning classes, and therefore there was no ruling class, and therefore no exploited class, and therefore social harmony prevailed.

This theory is, I think, insufficient to describe social relations in the USSR. It is difficult in the terms of this theory to explain why it is necessary to enforce the maintenance of a one-party system, or indeed to have a state at all. In fact there are important differences in style of life, of income, of power and of honour between groups of individuals in the

Meal-time in the fields for collective farm workers in the Kiev region (*SCR*)

contemporary Soviet Union. Even if we accept the official Soviet view of classes, we still need to explain social inequality in the Soviet Union, if not in terms of ownership of property, then in some other terms. We have to ask again what form social inequality may take in modern society.

KINDS AND EXTENT OF INEQUALITY

If we adopt a wider definition of class, using the work of modern sociologists, we are able to examine the actual configuration of social relations in the USSR in greater depth. Lenski's definition is a most useful one for my purpose. He defines class as an aggregation of persons in a society who stand in a similar position with respect to some form of power, privilege and prestige. In Soviet theory, as we have seen, there are three non-antagonistic social groups: the collective farmers at present make up approximately 22 per cent of the working population; the working class, 54 per cent; and the intelligentsia, 24 per cent. Let us look at each of these groups in turn.

Collective farmers in the Soviet view have a different pattern of production. They are in co-operative production. They collectively own the seeds and produce of the farms. A considerable part of their income is derived from agricultural production on their personal plots, which they are free to sell on the market. Cultural and educational standards are much lower than in the town. There are major differences in consumption patterns and social services. Political participation in the Communist Party and in the organs of government is relatively low compared with that of the other two social groups.

The main characteristic of the other two groups is the place they occupy in the division of labour. The 'intelligentsia' are 'workers by brain' or white-collar workers and they are to be found in clerical and executive jobs, and in the important administrative or directing or creative roles. The top sub-groups of this stratum have a higher salary, they are better educated and a high proportion of them belong to the Party. The workers are divided into two sub-groups, the skilled and unskilled. This class as a whole is occupied in physical work. On average, but with important exceptions, workers receive lower wages than the intelligentsia. They have at best secondary education; they have lower cultural standards than the intelligentsia, but higher than the peasantry. They are well represented in the Party but there are relatively fewer of them than the intelligentsia.

If we now look at three major aspects of inequality or privilege – the pattern of income, the social status of occupations and access to education – it will be clear that the Soviet classification is too crude to embrace the major features of social stratification in the USSR.

First, then, the pattern of income. It is certainly true that since the mid-1950s wage differentials, as far as we are able to tell, have narrowed

A woman construction worker, a not uncommon sight in the Soviet Union (*SCR*)

and there has been an improvement in the lowest rate. But a wide range of incomes still remains. In 1974, the average cash wage was about 125 rubles a month. Research Professors in the Academy of Sciences received, on average, over 1,000 rubles a month. Government ministers received, as a minimum, over 1,500 rubles. Factory managers received between 500 and 1,300 rubles, a physician perhaps 120, an unskilled worker 100. The ratio between the money wages of a factory manager and the average worker could thus be about 13:1. But this may underestimate the real differences because some forms of income are taken in kind, and many Western commentators have suggested that the differential is more in the region of 20 to 25:1. It is very difficult to estimate the distribution of income for no official statistics are published. The largest differential reported in Western émigré sources is a ratio of 300:1 between the highest income and the lowest income, and a ratio of 100:1 between the highest and average. This is almost certainly an exaggeration. Even so it is far lower than in the United States of America where it is estimated that the ratio between the highest and lowest income is 11,000:1 and the ratio between the highest and the average is 7,000:1.

Our second approach to inequality is to look at social status. How do these income scales influence the honour or deference individuals enjoy in society? Do high incomes give people honour in society? Is there a hierarchy of status? There are very few empirical data available on this point. There seems to be a hierarchy of status closely connected to occupation. At the top are the professional creative jobs such as scientists, astronauts, doctors, engineers, and at the bottom are manual, unskilled workers. Research done into the esteem of different occupations in different societies reveals that occupations in the Soviet Union, the United States of America and Germany, and to a lesser extent Great Britain, are given very similar rankings. Preferences of school leavers give a quite good indication of the desirability of certain jobs. In a list of eighty occupations, school children put at the top: (1) Physicist, (2) Engineer, (3) Medical Scientist and (4) Engineer/Geologist. At the bottom (80th), came Household Maintenance Worker, 79th Printing Press Operator, 78th Agricultural Worker and 77th Painter.

Let us now turn to consider educational opportunity, as this is the main avenue for social advancement in the Soviet Union. Who has access to education in the Soviet Union? Are there any specific groups which are excluded? In the West there seems to be a much greater chance for the middle and upper classes than for the workers to receive a higher education. Is this also true in the Soviet Union? The short answer is that there are similarities.

In Table 1 I have shown the aspirations of children and also the ways in which these aspirations are actually fulfilled after children leave school. Examination of the table shows that 93 per cent of school leavers with a

Young and old take part in the May Day parade

Table 1 *Aspirations of Soviet School Leavers (a) and Social Background of Students Attending Various Higher Educational Institutions (b)*

a.

Groups to which parents belong	*Proportion of school leavers wishing to:*			*Proportion of school leavers subsequently actually engaged in:*		
	Work %	*Work with Study* %	*Study* %	*Work* %	*Work with Study* %	*Study* %
Urban intelligentsia	2	5	93	15	3	82
Workers in industry and building	11	6	83	36	3	61
Agricultural workers	10	14	76	90	—	10
Per cent of total	7	10	83	37	2	61

b.

	Manual %	*Non-Manual* %	*Peasants* %	*Total* %
USSR: all students	36·2	53·1	10·7	100
Sverdlovsk University	21	78	0·6	100
Sverdlovsk Law Institute	37	63	0	100
Sverdlovsk Mining Institute	55	42	3	100
USSR Population	54	24	22	100

non-manual background wished to continue to study after the compulsory school-leaving age and 82 per cent in fact subsequently did continue to study. Of agricultural workers 76 per cent wanted to continue to study but only 10 per cent actually did so. One can conclude from this that there is differential access to education after the compulsory school-leaving age. The other part of the table shows the social background of students at selected educational institutions. Here we see that at Sverdlovsk University, 78 per cent of the students have a non-manual background compared to a proportion of the population as a whole of 24 per cent. The Mining Institute has 42 per cent of students with a non-manual background, again a proportion considerably higher than that of the population as a whole. Nevertheless, one should not minimise the opportunities available to children in the Soviet Union. As shown in the table, children of manual workers do continue at higher institutions of education and, looking at the first part of the table, we see that over 60 per cent of children of workers in industry and building continued at school. It should also be borne in mind that the population in the Sverdlovsk area has more persons with a non-manual occupation and that there are far fewer collective farmers than in the country as a whole.

Is the system becoming more hereditary? The brief answer is that over time there is greater internal recruitment from within given social groups but that there is still considerable upward mobility. In the past there certainly has been a very great inflow to higher status positions as a consequence of the very high rate of economic development. As the rate of economic development falls off, it seems to be the case that the extent of upward mobility is falling and that the occupational structure becomes somewhat more hereditary. It should be emphasised, however, that there is very considerable upward mobility and that opportunities are widely available for children of manual workers and of peasants.

THE PERSISTENCE OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

The existence of stratification and social inequality in the contemporary Soviet Union is thus clearly established, in terms of income, status and educational opportunity. Each of these criteria cuts across the conventional Soviet division of the population into 'workers, peasants and intelligentsia'. Within the intelligentsia, in particular, there is a very wide dispersion of income, status and educational opportunity – from leading scientists, writers and administrators living in Moscow or Leningrad at one extreme to poorly paid minor technicians or clerical workers in a small provincial town at the other extreme.

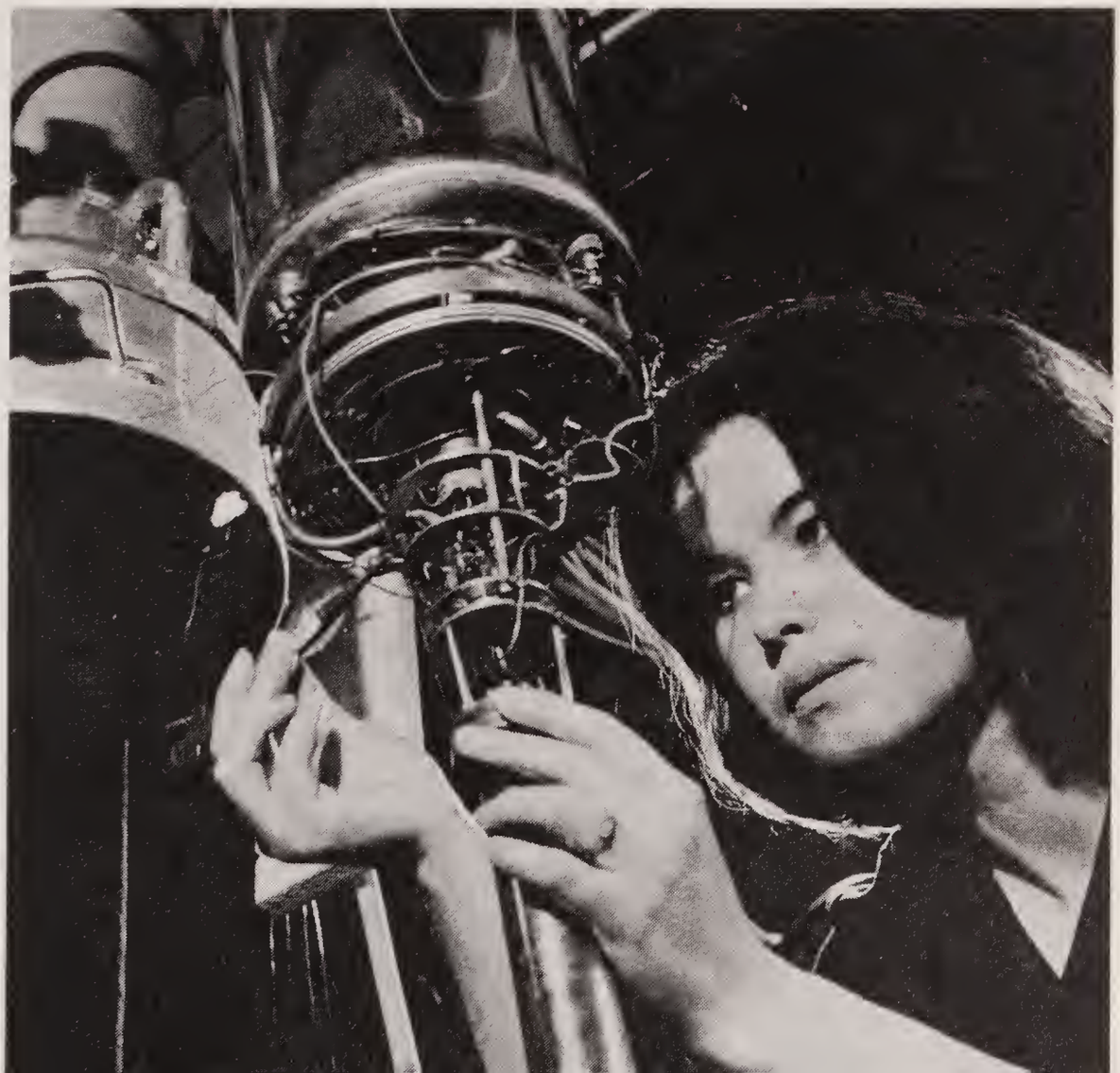
How is the persistence of inequality to be explained? Part of the answer, I think, lies in political influence. Various groups are able to bargain with the political rulers for higher rewards. It is recognised that the morale of important groups in the economy, in culture, in the army and in the administration is important for the maintenance of social stability and for the efficient working of the system.

Another, and perhaps more fundamental, factor is the division of labour between different occupations. Occupational status differentiates various groups of individuals. The directing, intellectual and cultural occupations appear to be universally more desired by members of society. These jobs are more interesting, they have an influence on the way of life, on leisure interests, they affect educational selection and the choice of spouse. People compete for these jobs, occupation gives status, and the status hierarchy is to some extent independent of power and income. Even if there were a very narrow income differential there would still be a status hierarchy; at least Soviet experience would seem to suggest this. Marx was therefore quite right when he suggested that a classless society could only be achieved if there were no division of labour.

Let us now turn to the question raised at the beginning of the chapter: are income differentials necessary to attract and keep specialised and skilled workers? Soviet experience would suggest that the answer is in the affirmative. Under the industrial conditions inherited by the Bolsheviks

Returning home from the pastures (*SCR*)

A research associate of the Joint Nuclear Research Institute (*SCR*)



In a collective farm market in Central Asia

the evidence would suggest that differentials are necessary to induce men to take positions of authority and to reward them for arduous and complicated work. How then can one move towards greater equality in a society which aims at Communism? Four major conditions seem to me to be necessary to increase the degree of equality in the Soviet Union.

First, greater material wealth. A higher level of production would reduce the material shortages which at present exist in the Soviet Union. It should not be forgotten that there are insufficient resources at present in the Soviet Union to provide adequate living space for everyone who wants it. At present the Soviet Union is at a lower level of development than the advanced capitalist countries of the West.

Second, with the development of the productive forces to a much higher level, the division of labour could be reduced and manual and non-manual occupations could be merged. This stage is still a very long way off. But one cannot begin to think of abolishing distinctions between manual and non-manual work when some 25 per cent of the population are engaged in manual labour in the collective-farm type of agriculture.

Third, greater popular participation in public affairs is required. There are still distinctions in the Soviet Union between those who give

orders and those who carry them out. Greater mass participation will only become possible when the working day is very much shorter and cultural and political standards are much higher. It should always be borne in mind that universal literacy has only been achieved recently in the Soviet Union. It is utopian to expect a population which has had relatively little experience of democratic participation to rule themselves through various forms of direct democracy. The political system will also need to adapt. The Party will have to involve the general population in political activity in a much more comprehensive and active way than it does at present.

Finally, a weaker form of family structure is necessary to achieve greater equality; this in turn would involve greater communal care of children. A more important role played by communal institutions would reduce the ability of families higher in the status hierarchy to pass on their advantages to their offspring and result in greater opportunities for the children of lower social strata.

CHAPTER 7

Making Soviet Man: Education

by
N. J. Dunstan

If a Westerner were so naïve as to ask a Soviet official if there were any privileged classes in the USSR, it is possible that he would get this answer: 'Yes. There is one privileged class in our country. The children.' Clearly, the lavishly equipped 'palaces' and clubs, sports schools and centres, and art and music schools offer many young people unrivalled opportunities to follow any leisure-time activity that appeals to them. Of course, geographical factors make them a good deal more accessible in some areas than others. But on principle the state regards its children as an investment and so ploughs large sums into facilities for them. In time they will grow up and take their part in the common task of building the new society. So the Party, as leader in the common task, does all in its power to develop their talents; partly for their own sakes, so that they may lead a full life, but particularly so that they may later make an ample contribution to the life of society. In so doing, it seeks to inculcate a sense of obligation intended to find expression in the utmost loyalty to itself, to the country, and to the Communist way of life. To this end it works through the schools and other educational institutions; through young people's organisations; and, ideally, through the family.

ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Soviet education has developed under four main influences: Marxism–Leninism; Russian pedagogy of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; Western European and American pedagogy of the early twentieth century; and the social, political and economic circumstances and needs confronting the Soviet state.

The young Marx, influenced by the utopian socialists, visualised the

ideal future community as one in which the free, harmonious, all-round development of the individual affords him a perfect existence. His interests and those of society are one. He will find fulfilment through work in a variety of tasks, and the division of labour will disappear. The institution of the school, an instrument of bourgeois supremacy, will wither away along with the state, and every Communist will be a teacher. As Marx matured, these idealistic notions developed along more realistic lines. *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848 called for: 'Free public education for all children. Abolition of factory work for children in its present-day form. Combination of education with material production, etc. etc.' He assumed the continued existence of the school, at least for the time being, and emphasised the need for all-round education, including intellectual, physical and technical components. After the socialist revolution, education would have a major contribution to make to the building of the new society.

(1) The Heroic Years, 1917–31

The early stages of Soviet education were strongly influenced by these views. The first decade after the Revolution was a time of heroic struggle against enormous odds, of idealism versus realism, of enthusiasm and experiment, of hardship and confusion. The leading figures were Lunacharsky, the first People's Commissar of Education (the Russian

Lunacharsky, People's Commissar for Education in the 1920s (*SCR*)

Lenin with his wife Nadezhda Krupskaya, their nephew Victor and another child in 1922 (*SCR*)

word means 'enlightenment'), and Krupskaya, Lenin's wife. Both shared the humanistic attitude to education of the early Marx, including his views on varied physical work, though not his utopian streak. They also ascribed importance to science and mathematics, which had been part of the utilitarian tradition in Russia ever since Peter the Great had imported three Englishmen to give practical training to his young engineers and naval cadets. Tolstoy's concept of free education, with its marked emphasis on the individual, also exerted influence.

In 1918 the Decree on the Unified Labour School was issued. For Lunacharsky and Krupskaya, the *social situation* of the individual child was of paramount importance. He was to develop freely in accordance

with his creative talents, learning several labour skills, and within an environment free from inequality, sorrow and coercion. This would bring into being the perfect man, able to master nature, and so serving society and mankind. Indeed, the school was to be an epitome of the perfect future society. It is not difficult to imagine the problems this philosophy was to cause the rank and file of practising teachers, and in a situation of chaos within and without the legislation could hardly be effective. Before the end of the Civil War in 1920, Lenin intervened, stressing the importance of discipline and persuading Lunacharsky to pay much more attention to vocational education.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, schooling was in a very bad state. In 1923 fewer than half of primary-age children were at school, and only just over half in 1927. There were masses of homeless children, some 8 million of them in 1922, roaming the country. Experiments continued within the schools; fashionable ideas on free activity methods and pupil self-government increased tensions and undermined the role of the teachers, who frequently lived on the poverty line. Valiant attempts were made to remedy the situation, but economic factors militated against success. With the launching of the first five-year plan in 1928, expenditure on education increased. At the same time experimentation enjoyed a final fling, and the end of the school as an institution was again vociferously proclaimed.

(2) Expansion and Conformity, 1931 to Recent Times

This period of experiment and extremism was soon brought to an end. The humane, idealistic Lunacharsky had already been dismissed in 1929; and in 1931 the 'de-schoolers' were outlawed as 'leftist deviationists'. In the same year a resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party downgraded physical work in favour of instruction and upbringing. Teachers and parents – in that order – were invested with a new, responsible role; education became steadily more formal, academic and authoritarian. Increasing importance was attached to *self*-discipline. It was no longer any good blaming external factors; the individual – and that included the child – was to share responsibility for his actions. In 1936 the science of Soviet child development known as pedology, which emphasised environmental conditions and inherited characteristics, was finally condemned for its negative and fatalistic approach, and intelligence tests were banned. Even heredity could be changed by the Soviet teacher. Stalin's earlier-formulated doctrine of socialism in one country now found its educational application in the harnessing of the school to *national* aims. The 'new man', enthusiastic, dedicated and self-disciplined, was very much the new *Soviet* man. Like Soviet literature in the same period (see Chapter 11 below), Soviet schools were thus made to conform to the aims of the Party. Finally, with the intensified industrialisation policies of the five-year plans, there was a

A nursery for children of pre-school age (*SCR*)

growing need for young specialists, particularly, but not only, in science and technology; and a determined and successful attempt was made to stamp out illiteracy. Both goals tended to make the school more achievement-oriented. This led to the introduction of examinations and a four- (subsequently five-) point marking system (see p. 102 below). In many ways the tradition of the 1930s has lasted to this day, its patriotic element greatly invigorated by the Second World War.

There was, however, a notable interlude between 1958 and the mid-1960s. In the 1930s physical labour had gradually vanished from the general school, and was again mentioned only at the XIX Party Congress in 1952, a few months before Stalin's death. In 1958, harking back to Marx's insistence on technical training as one of the three essential components of a well-rounded education, Khrushchev doubled manual work for the first eight school years and raised the minimum school-leaving age from 14 to 15. Those who stayed at school after reaching 15 had to follow a course of labour training which included part-time factory or farm work, and comprised up to a third of their study load. Students in the first two or three years of higher education also had a practical work commitment. As well as ideological reasons for the reform there were

Azerbaizhani children at a general school (*SCR*)

economic and social ones. Because of the academic tradition of the curriculum there were too many 17-year-olds who could not get into higher education but lacked and even despised practical skills, yet too few young recruits to production overall on account of the demographic effects of the war. Once a miner himself and proud of it, Khrushchev wanted to blur the line of stratification between workers and intellectuals, and to stress the moral value of collective physical labour.

However, the educational outcome of the 1958 law was a disaster. Although it had been preceded by experiments in some schools, its implications had not been properly thought out. The children were overloaded; many teachers, educationists and factory managers could not cope with this production training; and there was often no time for more than superficial study of the theory or practice concerned. Recruits to further and higher education were often worse prepared than before. So in 1964 the senior stage of the school course was reduced to two years and the curriculum heavily pruned. Soon after this Khrushchev and his 'hare-brained schemes' were consigned to the dustbin of history. In 1966 vocational training in school ceased to be mandatory, and the vaguer concept of physical work was substituted. This did little to relieve the overloading of the pupil, for the primary course was reduced from four years to three to provide an extra year of secondary education with more

material to master. The academic tradition seemed to have reasserted itself. However, since that time the curriculum has been thoroughly modernised and more and more flexibility has come to be displayed.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCHOOL

What kind of school has emerged as a result of these changes? Let us now consider the career of a Soviet schoolboy, one of some 45 million. Ivan Ivanovich Ivanov, better known as Vanya or Van'ka, starts the general school at the age of 7. (Perhaps he will have received pre-school education; in 1970 these institutions catered for some 80 per cent of urban children in the relevant age-range and 21 per cent of rural children) (Fig. 9). His school is coeducational and free, but he has to pay for textbooks. The primary course lasts three years, covering the usual basic subjects – Russian (12 hours), mathematics (6), art (1), singing (1), PE (2) – and also physical work (2); in the second year one hour of Russian is replaced by nature study. Perhaps Vanya is at one of the growing number of so-called extended-day schools, or ordinary schools with extended-day facilities, which provide a hot dinner and supervised activities after lessons terminate in the early afternoon. In 1975 such arrangements covered over 20 per cent of children in the first eight school years. At all schools there are afternoon meetings for hobbies and other activities; these may, however, be curtailed somewhat in districts where shortage of school accommodation requires the working of a two-shift day. Maybe he will join the Octobrists, an informal club for younger children rather like the Cubs or Brownies.

When Vanya is 10 he will enter Form 4, the first year of secondary education, at the same school or at a new one; his class teacher will be replaced by a number of subject specialists; literature and history will be added to the curriculum, Russian language being reduced to 6 hours; and soon he will almost certainly want to join the Pioneers, the youth organisation for children of 10 to 15; for he would be regarded as an oddity if he did not. In Form 5 (11-plus) the weekly workload goes up by 6 hours to 30, geography (2 hours) and a foreign language (4) are started, and biology is substituted for nature study. Physics begins in Form 6 (12-plus), at the further expense of Russian, and chemistry and technical drawing in Form 7. The secondary-stage physical work course includes woodwork, metalwork, electricity, certain aspects of domestic science and, in Form 8, the fundamentals of production, whilst agriculture is predominant in rural schools. To combat delinquency, a compulsory one-year course entitled 'Fundamentals of the Soviet State and Law' was introduced for 14-plus pupils in 1975.

At the end of the eighth year, i.e. at the age of 14 or 15, Vanya takes examinations, success in which entitles him

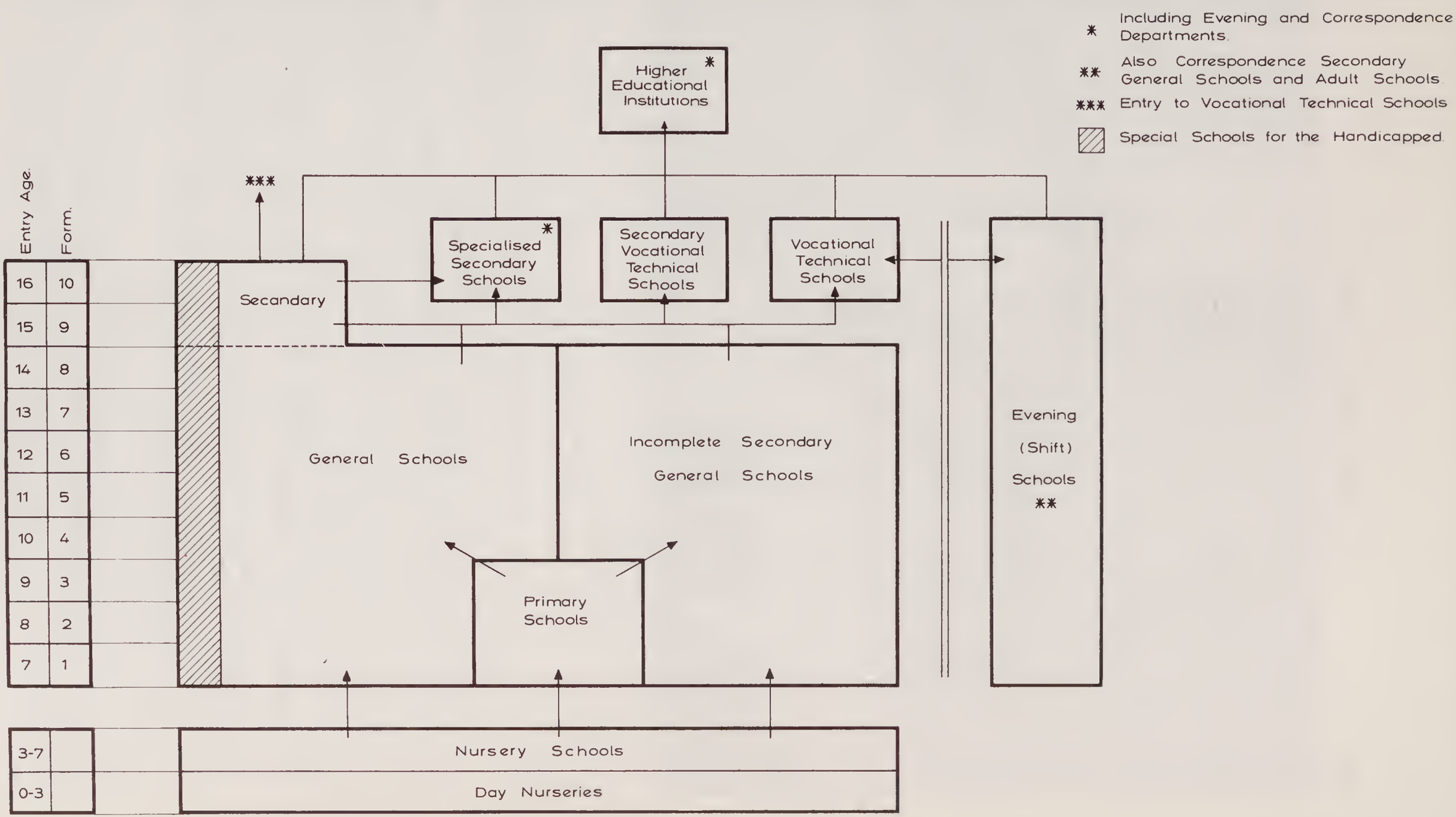


Fig. 9 Structure of the Soviet education system

Children at a meeting of the Young Pioneer Organisation which embraces children of school age (*SCR*)

(1) to stay on in the general secondary school if he aspires to higher education, or, if his school is only an eight-year one, to proceed to another providing the two-year senior course; *or*

(2) to enter a secondary specialised school with a three- or four-year course, training medium specialists in such fields as nursing, engineering or commerce, though admission here is subject to further examination; *or*

(3) to enter a secondary vocational school, perhaps on examination, training skilled workers, with a three- or four-year course; *or*

(4) to enter a vocational school, training skilled workers, with no entry examination and a one- to four-year course. Otherwise he can leave. He will be expected to attend part-time or evening classes to complete his secondary education.

The proportion of students choosing these various paths was estimated in the 1974/75 school year to be as follows: the senior classes of the general secondary schools, 62·4 per cent; specialised secondary schools, about 11 per cent; secondary vocational schools, 8 per cent; vocational schools, 10

per cent; employment, some 8 per cent. At present the period of compulsory secondary education is eight years; it is intended to increase it to ten. The aim of achieving this by 1970, set by the Party Congress of 1966, was not realised and so was postponed to 1975, when 97 per cent of those completing the eighth form were said to be continuing their secondary education in one way or another.

If Vanya stays on in the general school, proceeding to Form 9 (15-plus), he will continue nearly all the subjects of the eighth year. Under the heading of physical work he will embark on a two-year basic course in a subject like motor engineering or agricultural chemistry, the choices depending on what the school can provide, and leading if at all possible to an initial trade qualification. He will also do preliminary military training for two periods a week. Form 10 sees the introduction of one-year courses in astronomy and 'social studies', in effect a mixture of economics and civics, treated, of course, in the appropriate ideological manner. This is the only part of the school curriculum where the doctrines of Marxism–Leninism are formally taught, but it goes without saying that they are implicit or even explicit in the teaching of all subjects, though in some more than others because of the nature of the subjects.

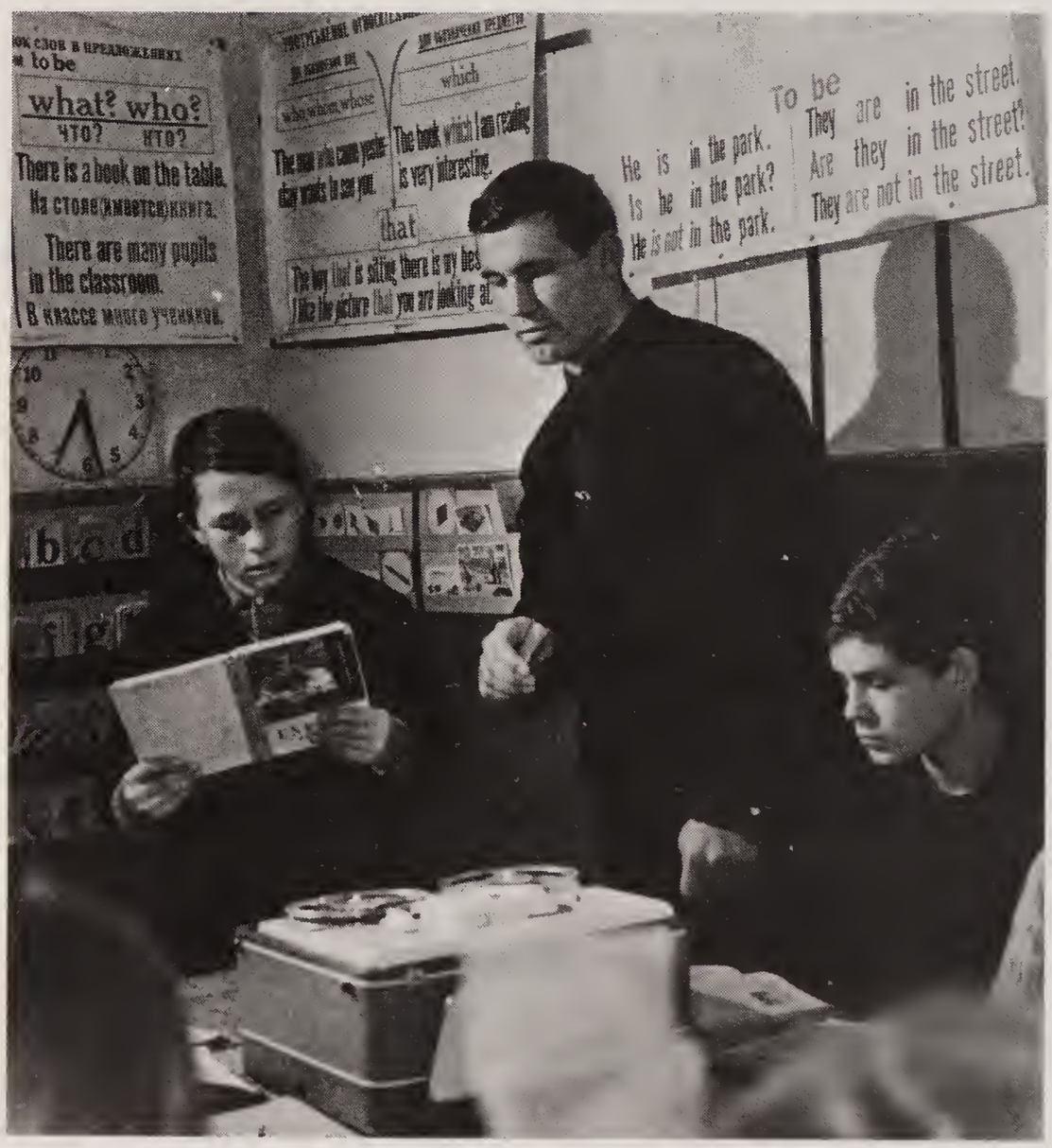
Finally, since 1966 there has been provision for optional extras, rising from 2 hours a week in Form 7 to 4 in Form 10. They can sometimes be very effective: of twenty-one school leavers who had taken the option called 'Fundamentals of Television' at a Moscow school, seventeen decided to make their careers in radio-electronics. But they have problems: they are dependent upon the ability and enthusiasm of staff and the availability of visiting teachers, they are liable to turn into cramming sessions for pupils who aim at higher education, or remedial ones for the floundering, and some pupils may take the word 'option' at its face value and opt out.

To complete the picture, mention must also be made of the special schools for children gifted in the arts, in sport, languages, mathematics and physics, special advanced courses in certain schools, and subject societies which can be a means of going well beyond the confines of syllabuses. There are also boarding schools and facilities for deprived children and those living in rural areas remote from schools, special schools for the handicapped, and evening and correspondence schools.

If we were to look in on Vanya's class, at whatever level, the chances are that we would find the atmosphere strangely formal and well-disciplined, yet without tension and with a friendly relationship between teacher and pupils. One is slightly hesitant about generalising from this because foreign visitors are naturally shown the best schools. In the Soviet press one sometimes comes across incompetent teachers and difficult pupils on the one hand, and the occasional over-regimented school on the other, but it would be rash to make too much of this; such

public exposure is one of the Soviet ways of remedying abuses. The authorities have an interest in turning out self-disciplined citizens, with a conscientious but cheerful attitude to their work and to their fellows; this is reflected in the normal attitudes and practices of the school.

Academically, too, the average Soviet school seems in some ways to have more in common with the traditional English grammar school than with many a school of our day: the stress is on talk, chalk, textbooks, hard work and achievement. Indeed, concern is still expressed that Soviet children are overloaded; and their teachers too have to sing for their supper. Courses have to be planned in great detail months in advance. A great deal of fuss is made about marking: in every lesson a number of children are questioned on their homework and given a grade from 1 (very poor – so poor that I have rarely heard of it being awarded) to 5 (excellent), with 3 as a pass. Periodic assessments on this basis provide the assessment for the year, and this is used by the staff meeting to



Veps children learning to read a foreign language. The Veps language had no written form before the Revolution (*SCR*)

determine whether the child shall be promoted to the next class. In practice this usually happens; children occasionally have to stay down a year, but there can be repercussions at a higher level if a school's performance record is marred.

However, the Soviet school is on the whole less exam-oriented, and only in certain republics are there annual examinations from Form 4; as stated, in the USSR as a whole the important school-leaving examinations come at the end of the eighth and tenth years. Marks are also awarded for conduct, and, interestingly, pupils whose conduct marks are unsatisfactory are not allowed to sit these examinations, though a good report from their employers will earn them the chance to do so later. Failure in one or two papers, unless rectified by resits during the summer, means repetition of the Form 8 course (this applied to 3 per cent of candidates in 1970); unsuccessful Form 10 pupils (1 per cent in 1970) are given an attendance certificate only, but they have a second chance to resit the failed papers a year later. Outstanding pupils, on the other hand – and they also have to be outstanding in their general contribution to the life of the school – win gold medals, and those who have made excellent progress receive certificates of honour. These awards entitle them to preferential treatment when they apply to enter higher education.

There is no systematic streaming by ability, and it is difficult to accept the contention that the innovation of optional courses is tantamount to this; they provide *additional*, rather than *parallel but different*, instruction. However, the absence of formal streaming does not preclude partially differentiated treatment within the class, nor a good deal of experimentation, nor the existence of a number of schools with specially advanced teaching in certain subjects. One should also be wary of the view that the practice of keeping pupils down a year is a form of differentiation by intelligence, since streaming implies a philosophical outlook affecting the masses, whereas this is the fate only of a small minority (in 1975 93·4 per cent of pupils finished the eight-year course on time). Even in its restricted form, it should be added, some educationists are unhappy about making children repeat a year: not only does this put rather too much pressure on teachers than may be good for them, but it can also be bad for the pupils' morale and even cause them to drop out before the end of the eight-year course. For, despite sanctions on parents and exhortations to teachers, a drop-out problem does exist in the USSR; officially the phenomenon is considered to be exceptional, but its size cannot be gauged as no comprehensive statistics are published.

As with all Soviet institutions, the Party and its various committees exercise ultimate control of the education system and permeate it at all points, directly at the school level and indirectly at all levels. The primary Party units, which exist in every school employing at least three Party members, bear the chief responsibility, to the district committees in the first instance, for seeing that policy is put into effect. The staffs of tiny

Senior children taking part in a chemistry lesson (*SCR*)

schools may be banded together to form a Party branch. To sum up, the Party is the source of policy development and the government organisations have to implement it; but implementation combined with inspection falls not only to the ministries and departments of education but also, and particularly, to the primary units. The leadership role of the school Party organisation is openly acknowledged – indeed, a recent handbook on Soviet education calls it a 'driving force'.

MORAL EDUCATION

When we turn from the imparting of knowledge to the inculcating of values we find ourselves in territory which seems very different. It is the Soviet handling of moral or character education, or upbringing, which is the feature of the system that rouses so much interest and hostility in the West – not that the Russians have any monopoly of political socialisation methods, but they use them to far greater effect. This is only one way to the much-quoted goal of the all-round development of the individual, but it plays a central role, linking all the components of the educational programme: intellectual, aesthetic, physical and polytechnical. For this

purpose the Pioneer detachment, identified with the school class, is of great importance.

Soviet educationists strongly stress two main notions: *conscious discipline*, involving a positive sense of responsibility to one's fellows, and a *spirit of collectivism*. These ideas are identified above all with A. S. Makarenko, a star in the Stalinist firmament, who applied them successfully to educational ends in his work in rehabilitating young delinquents and waifs. They have many implications. Younger pupils are sponsored by older ones, who are expected to act as their mentors. Pupils are involved in the community, carrying out 'socially useful work' in their district, and local farms and factories are called upon to interest themselves actively in the schools. Children are exhorted to show concern for public property, not least because it is the fruit of the labours of others. They are enjoined to be helpful and self-reliant at home, and their parents are expected to support the schools' general aims. Comradeliness is the watchword, both in the immediate situation and in the wider context, i.e. the Soviet Union is a vast collective and the totality of 'peace-loving peoples' of the world an even vaster one. Mutual responsibility is crystallised in pupil 'self-government'. At a tender age Soviet citizens are introduced to a system of government by committee and develop the habits of giving speeches, delivering reports, drafting and discussing plans, indulging in criticism and self-criticism, and disciplining offenders. All this is under the watchful eye of the adult whose role it is to guide them towards making the 'correct' decisions for themselves.

Physical education is important partly because it requires strict discipline and can be a valuable form of collective activity, and partly because of the belief that only under Communism can man develop to physical perfection. The propaganda value is obvious; New Soviet Man is meant to outdo his capitalist competitors not only on the production line but also on the Olympic track. Aesthetic education implies creativity, another of his characteristics, and there is political point in studying the achievements of great artists, especially when they are Russians or when they portray heroic figures and events. Finally, intellectual education, which involves training in dialectical thinking and a materialist world-view, is linked to moral education through reverence for Lenin as the great pattern and guide for daily living. A book for children offers this advice to young Muscovites: if you feel sad or worried, go to the Mausoleum and spend a few quiet moments there, with Lenin.

Let us sum up. Marxism–Leninism is held to be the sole repository of truth and the Party is its unique interpreter and driving force. The school is one of the various transmission belts conveying its impulses to the masses. The goal is the transformation of society.

HIGHER EDUCATION

In 1974, 4 million people completed secondary education, and 963,000 entered higher educational institutions (*vuzy*). The USSR has over 800 *vuzy* with over 4·5 million students, about half full-time and the others on evening and correspondence courses. The *vuzy* include over fifty universities. To be eligible one needs a good certificate of ten-year education and one has to sit highly competitive entrance examinations – in general the ratio of applicants to places is between 10:1 and 4:1. A Komsomol reference helps, as does industrial experience. Since 1969 a second chance for people who were unable to complete their secondary education has been available in special one-year courses mounted by the 'preparatory departments' of *vuzy*. The majority of students receive grants, and hostel accommodation, though rather poor and cramped by British standards, is extraordinarily cheap for those who can get it. However, it is not unusual for students to do part-time jobs to supplement their grants.

Courses usually last five years and contain an obligatory component of political history and theory. With a hectic six-day week, continuous

A lecture in the Literary Faculty of Dushanbe Pedagogical Institute, Tadzhikistan (*SCR*)

assessment, examinations twice a year and a final-year dissertation, instruction is rigorous. Poor work can lead to forfeiture of one's grant, but consistently good results may cause it to be increased, as may public service. After graduation, unless exempted on compassionate grounds, one is likely to be directed for two or three years to some place where one's specialism is needed. The best students have first pick of such jobs, while others somehow manage never to turn up. But at least there is no job shortage overall.

PROBLEMS

The essential yardstick for assessing any system of education is the extent to which it succeeds in attaining its goals. In the Soviet Union it has made immense progress, astounding progress when one recalls the tribulations which have beset that country, but there is still some distance to go. The credit for rapidly transforming a relatively backward society into one of the world's two most powerful nations must be ascribed in part to its system of schooling. The achievements of Soviet education are reflected in the tendency of those who have experienced it to give it special praise – even including refugees and émigrés. On the other hand, reports of persistent delinquency and self-seeking attitudes filter through the Soviet press. 'Survivals from the past' are blamed, but their continued existence is surely disquieting.

An interesting question is that of the relative importance of the school and the family. Which is the main agency of socialisation? Officially they are in partnership. But the primacy of the school is frequently implied. It is not often that one hears of the school failing the parents; it seems to be assumed that, should there be failure, the parents are more likely to fail the school. Anthony Potts, an Englishman who spent a year in a Soviet school, reported that he never saw a pupil crying, but he often saw mothers in tears, presumably after a telling-off by the teacher. Parent education is part of the school's activities, and there is great concern that 'unified demands' should be made on the children. Old Marxist suspicions of the family may have been one of the factors behind Khrushchev's ill-starred boarding-school experiment, now superseded by the extended-day. Clearly the influence of the family remains strong. Related is the problem, familiar in our own country, of differing family backgrounds bringing advantages or disadvantages: Soviet sociologists have indicated that the children of intellectuals have better chances of entering higher education than those of workers – even in the USSR.

Then there is the problem of equality versus special needs: needs of the state, needs of the child. They are likely in many ways to be identical since it is in the state's interest to maximise its human capital. Given the money available, how much education should there be? And how should it be distributed? George Bereday sees the cardinal problem of Soviet

education as typical of mass societies: how to reconcile the goals of education for all to a high level, and education of the best to the highest level. Both objectives, of course, answer needs; it is the latter which raises ideological issues. At the moment, the policy is a compromise: there are special schools for the highly gifted in maths and physics, while, as we have seen, in the mass schools ways are being sought both to encourage individual aptitudes and to strengthen the weak without across-the-board differentiation on the basis of intelligence.

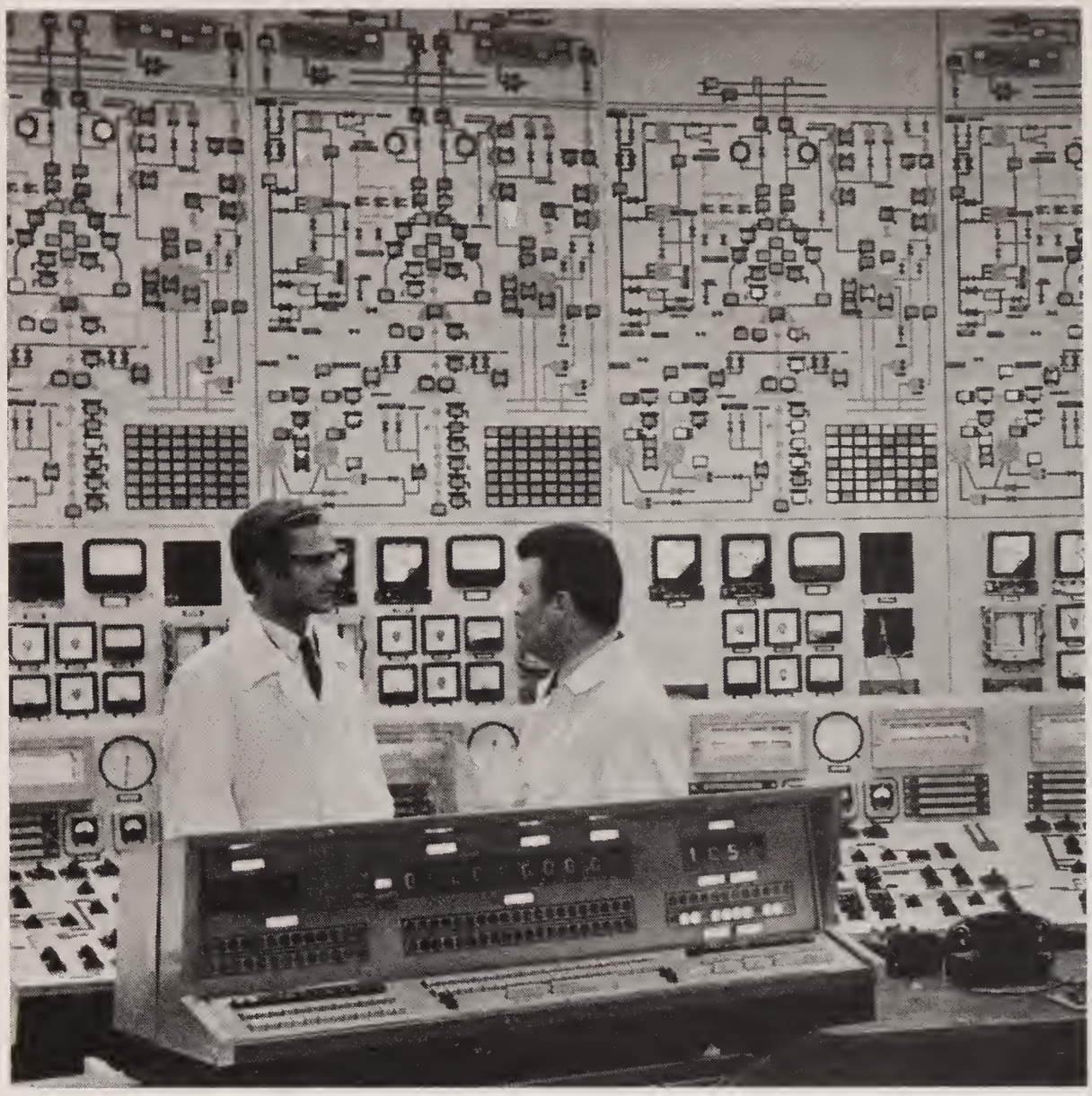
Bound up with this, finally, is the problem of control and conformity versus freedom and innovation. In a tightly controlled environment, where young people are taught to think along set patterns, may not science and technology in the long run lose out, unless there is scope for the imaginative, original thought which leading scientists deem essential for real advance? This thought was behind the schools for the gifted and seems again to have come to the fore. Currently there is much talk about the *creative* application of Marxist-Leninist principles in education; experiment is in vogue, ideas are simmering. What will it all lead to? These are stirring times in the Soviet school.

CHAPTER 8

Science, Technology and Society

by
R. Amann

From an economic point of view, science can be seen as a cycle of activity which includes many different phases. The cycle begins with 'research'. 'Fundamental research' is undertaken primarily for the advancement of scientific knowledge itself; 'applied research', on the other hand, has a specific practical aim in view. The final and most costly phase in the cycle is 'development'. Here, the results of fundamental and applied research are directed to the introduction of new or improved products and processes. This research and development (R and D) cycle is one of the major determinants of change in modern societies. It produces changes in the physical environment which in turn transform human relationships. The extent to which these changes are desirable is often disputed in the West. Some 'optimists', who favour a large commitment of national resources to science and technology, argue that innovation makes industry more competitive and promotes economic growth. Moreover, advances in science are seen to yield other great benefits: the combating of disease, the enhancement of national security, and the stimulation of national pride and intellectual excitement (for example by space exploration). On the other hand there are 'pessimists' who fear that the problem of poverty is being neglected at the expense of prestige projects, which have dubious practical value. They remain sceptical about the relationship between expenditures on science and economic growth and are generally worried about the problems of pollution, depletion of key raw materials and displacement of labour. The Soviet Union has not been immune from this debate, but the tone of it has been much more muted and less far-reaching.



The control panel of an atomic power station (*SCR*)

SOME INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

It is only during the 1970s that the 'pessimists' have begun to gain ground in modifying the policies of their respective governments. During the fat years of the 1950s and 1960s scientific activity in all the industrialised nations expanded enormously and at the end of the 1960s, 90 per cent of all the scientists who had ever lived were still alive. The apparent benefits of the 'research revolution' were such that governments were eager to support the scientific enterprise not only with rhetoric but with hard cash. Some official statistics compiled by the OECD in 1968 revealed that 64 per cent of total research and development expenditure in the United States was provided by the federal government; in the USSR, of course, all R and D is publicly financed, though not all is financed through the state budget. In the USA (and the USSR) over 3 per cent of the gross national product (GNP) is devoted to research and development, and this represents a very substantial claim on national resources. Nevertheless, all the industrial nations were anxious to rise in the inter-

national league table of scientific expenditures towards 'the magic 3 per cent', which was seen as the key to economic salvation.

A rough indication of recent growth trends of qualified scientific manpower employed in research and development in the USA and the USSR is given in Figure 10. The number of scientists has grown very rapidly in both countries, but two major differences are obvious. First, the number of qualified scientists in the USSR now exceeds that in the USA. Second, there has been a substantial decline in the rate of growth of scientists in the USA compared with the USSR. This is largely a consequence of a sharp cut in government spending, which hit the space and defence sectors with particular force and was in turn associated with the high cost of the Vietnam War and the changing priorities of American society.

It seems improbable that any country, however insensitive its economic and political system, could sustain such rapid rates of growth of science indefinitely without irrefutable economic justification. This problem has troubled Soviet economic planners as well as American

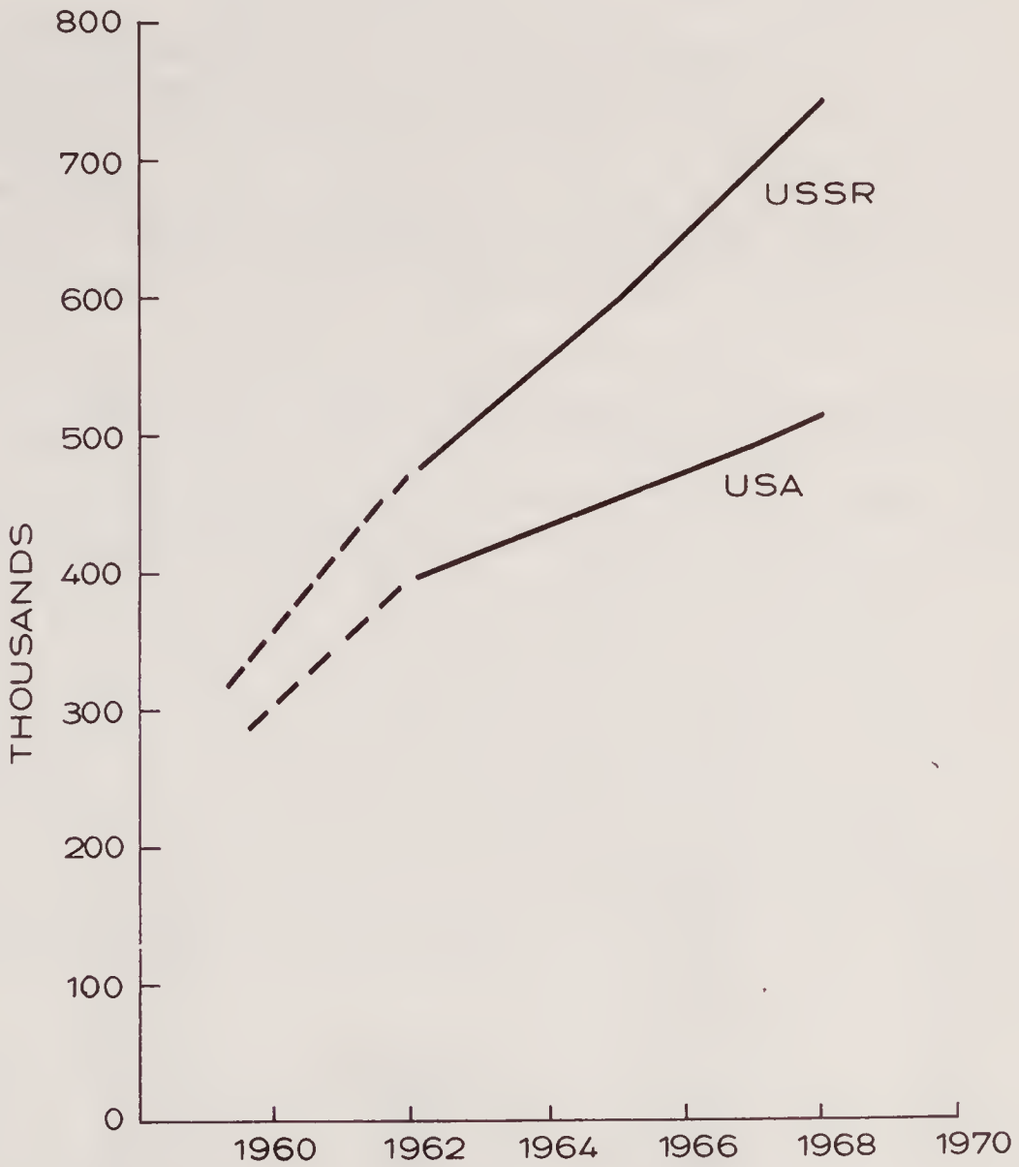


Fig. 10 Growth of graduates employed in R and D in USA and USSR, 1962–8

officials and is illustrated by the striking information in Figure 11. This relates the proportion of GNP devoted to research and development in 1964 (the International Statistical Year) to the average annual rate of economic growth in the subsequent five years. The result is quite startling. Where is the economic pay-off? Japan, a nation with a relatively modest commitment to science, enjoys by far the largest rate of economic growth, while Germany has achieved a rate of growth equal to that of the United States with a level of R and D spending equal to that of Japan. The record of Great Britain is, on the evidence, remarkably poor and the Soviet picture would seem much less rosy if, as is probable, R and D expenditure exceeded 3 per cent of GNP and the quality of Soviet goods and services were taken into consideration.

To explain this strange paradox the argument needs to be pressed a stage further. Figure 12 gives part of the answer. It suggests very strongly that Germany and Japan owe their success to concentrating resources on the strictly economic spheres. The two super-powers, the United States and the USSR, are evidently not sufficiently compensated for their vast expenditures on space and defence by a process of 'spin-off' or 'fall-out', which indirectly raises the level of economic growth.

But this is not by any means the whole story. The extent to which an individual country can innovate successfully and maximise its gains is a very complicated question. Invention, innovation and diffusion of advanced technologies are delicate processes; they cannot be automatically assured by a stiff injection of material and manpower resources. The scientific enterprise is only one segment of the overall economic and

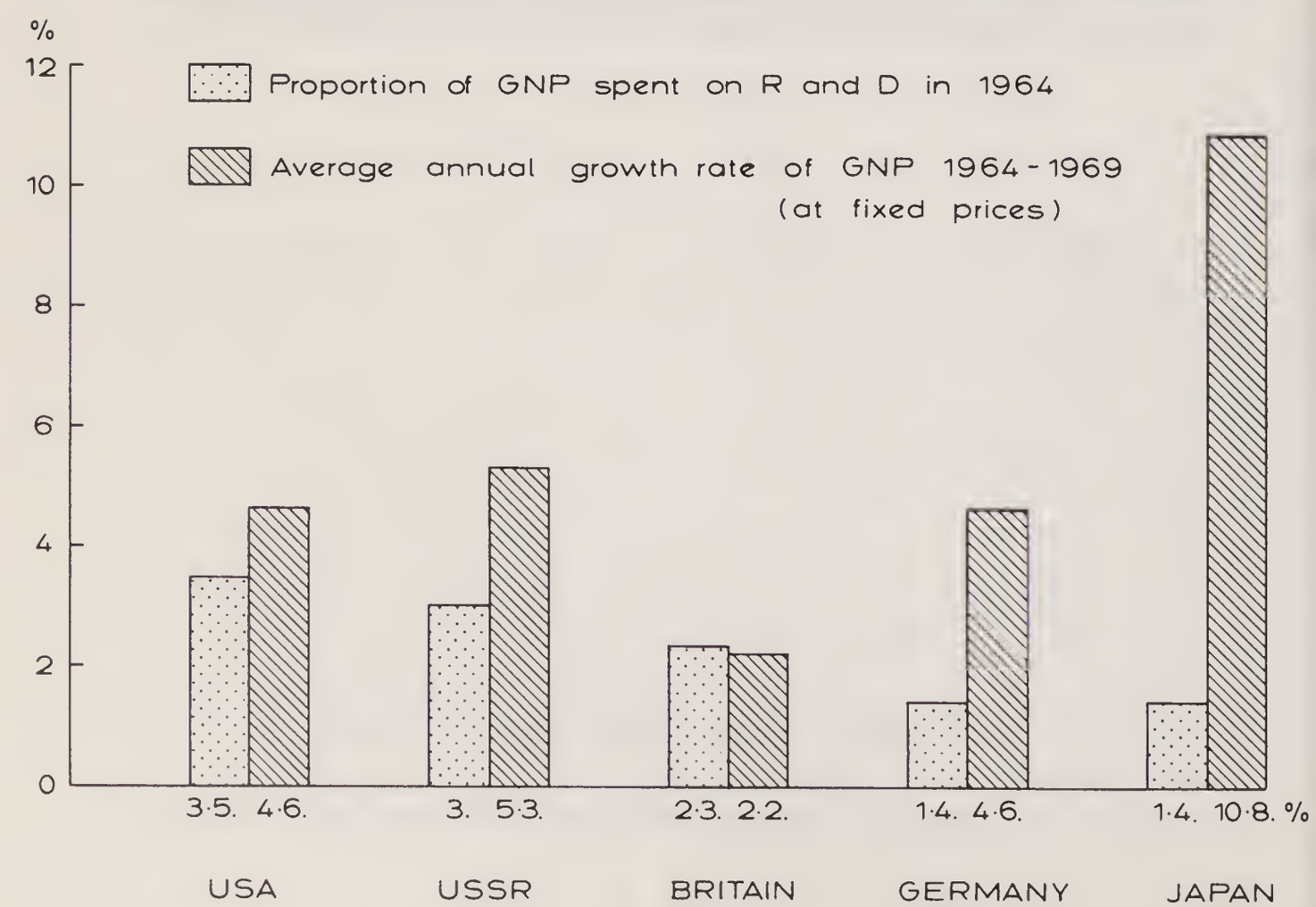


Fig. 11 Proportion of GNP spent on R and D in 1964 and average annual growth rate of GNP, 1964–9, in various countries

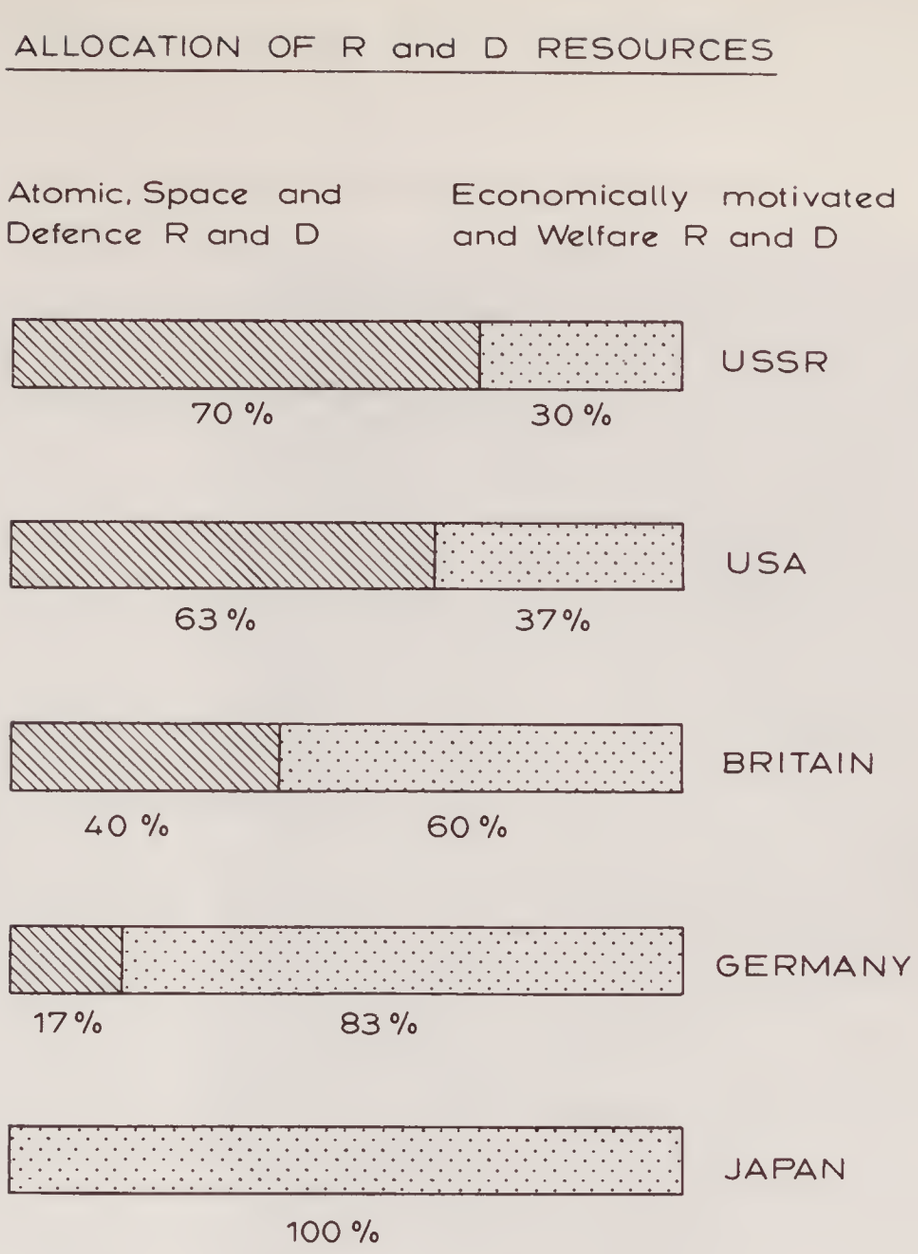
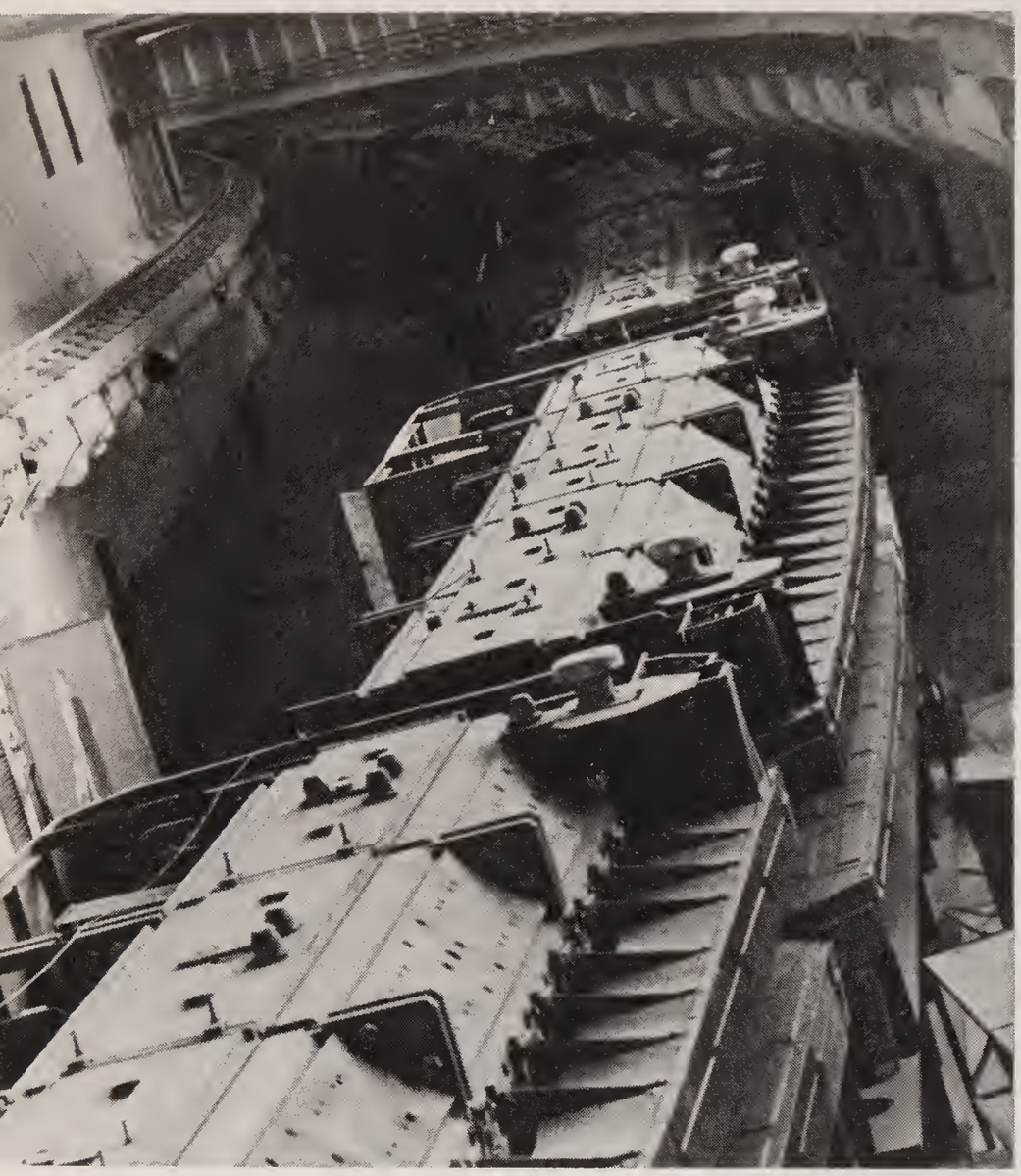


Fig. 12 Allocation of R and D resources in 1964

social fabric and scientific development is influenced strongly by this 'external environment'. It requires a titanic struggle, as Soviet experience has shown, to incorporate advanced technology within a relatively primitive economy (see Chapter 3); the generally low level of education and skills and the deficiency of high-quality equipment and materials impose severe constraints. The historically fashioned institutional patterns of a society and the attitudes which they generate are also very important. One might mention, in this connection, the American genius for improvisation, Soviet bureaucratisation, British conservatism and the propensity of the Japanese to assimilate and improve upon foreign products. These are, of course, stereotypes and do not apply in all cases. But they are sufficiently evident to be part of the general equation. Bearing these considerations in mind, what are the special features of industrial innovation in the USSR?

THE SOVIET INNOVATION SYSTEM, 1928–60

'Industrial innovation' can be defined simply as the process by which the results of research and development are transformed into new products and processes. In the USSR the character of this process has been deeply



An example of a large proton synchrotron – a form of particle accelerator – at Serpukhov (*SCR*)

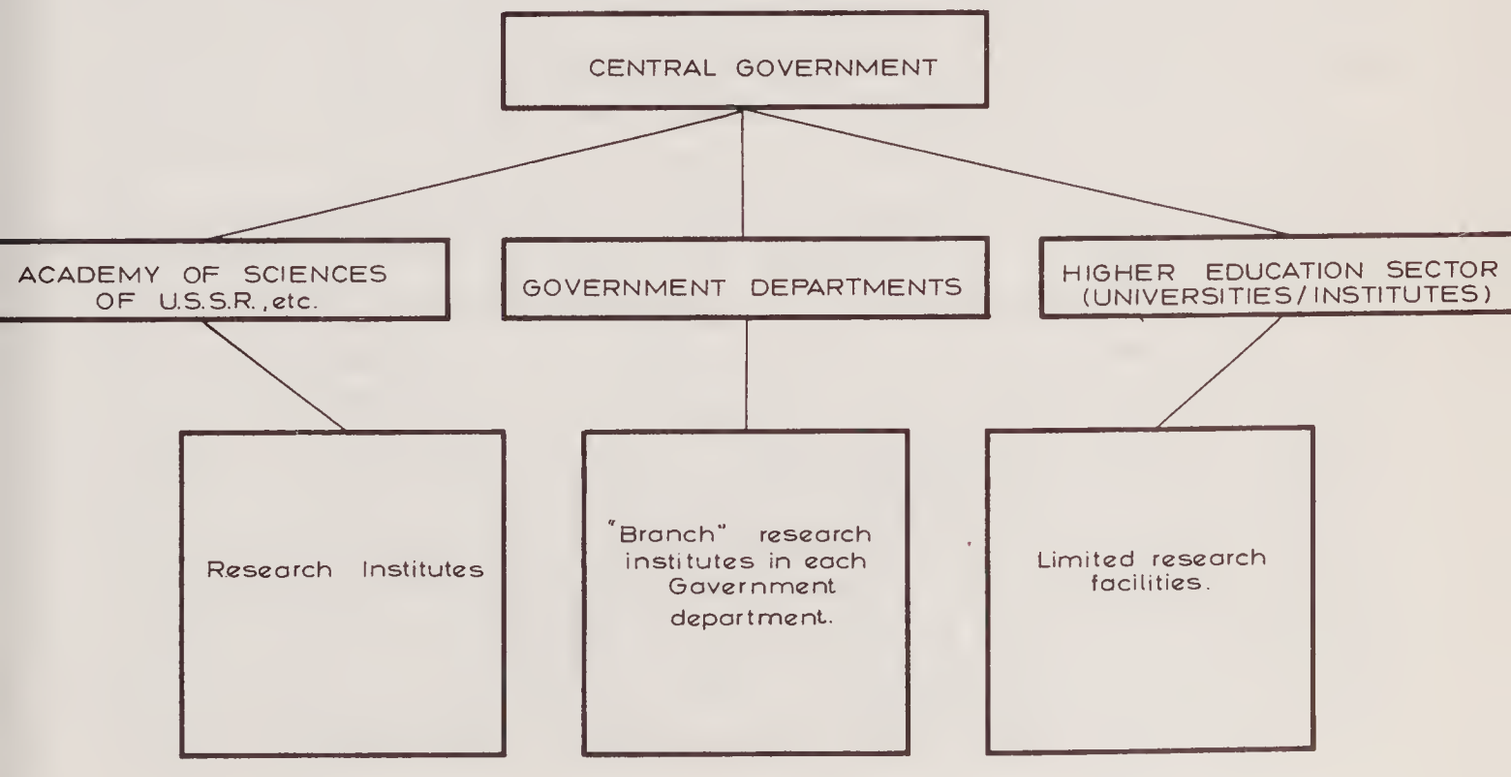
influenced by its stormy economic history and in particular by the industrialisation drive of the 1930s described in Chapter 3. If industrialisation in Russia was akin to 'sewing a coat on to a button' it is understandable that the central planners should attach over-riding importance to the maximisation of output, especially in building up a powerful stock of capital equipment upon which the economic strength of the nation ultimately depended. This strategy squeezed both the consumer and the research and development sector. Although a considerable number of scientific establishments were created during this period there was a marked scarcity of the extensive facilities that are needed to develop and test prototypes; even simple laboratory equipment was sometimes lacking.

This situation still persists today in the USSR and it requires a great deal of energy and ingenuity on the part of scientists to 'beat the system'. In this respect the development sector, the crucial intermediary between research and production, tends to be relatively neglected. Until very recently, the proportion of total scientific expenditure devoted to development work was substantially lower than in the United States. It is paradoxical that in a country which stresses the planned unity of theory

and practice, scientific activity tends to be pervaded by an academic ethos. We might speculate that this is a continuation of the attitudes persisting in pre-Revolutionary times, when a large chunk of Russian industry was owned and run by foreign capitalists and native Russian science existed in a vacuum; its natural outlet was international prestige rather than commercial exploitation. Western visitors have been fascinated to observe their Soviet colleagues' taste for 'blackboard science' and their reticence in pressing forward the practical implementation of their work, which is both a cause and effect of this research/development imbalance. Even the salary structure favours those working in academic institutes rather than industrial laboratories and design bureaux and there is a gravitation of more able personnel from the latter to the former. In the ivory tower of Soviet science the penthouse suite is incomparably more congenial than the basement, and, as we shall see in Chapter 9, this ivory-tower attitude of research establishments is encouraged by the resistance of factories to the introduction of new products and processes.

The tendencies described above are to some extent reinforced by the organisational structure of Soviet science. As Figure 13 shows, there is a horizontal division in Soviet scientific activity between fundamental research on the one hand and applied research and development on the other. This creates an obstacle to the smooth transition from initial idea to practical application. However, although the Academy of Sciences is a very special institution, the last of the great eighteenth-century European academies to retain a leading role in the scientific life of a nation, the situation in the USSR is not radically different from that pertaining in Great Britain or the United States where the relationship between

Fig. 13 Organisation of Soviet science



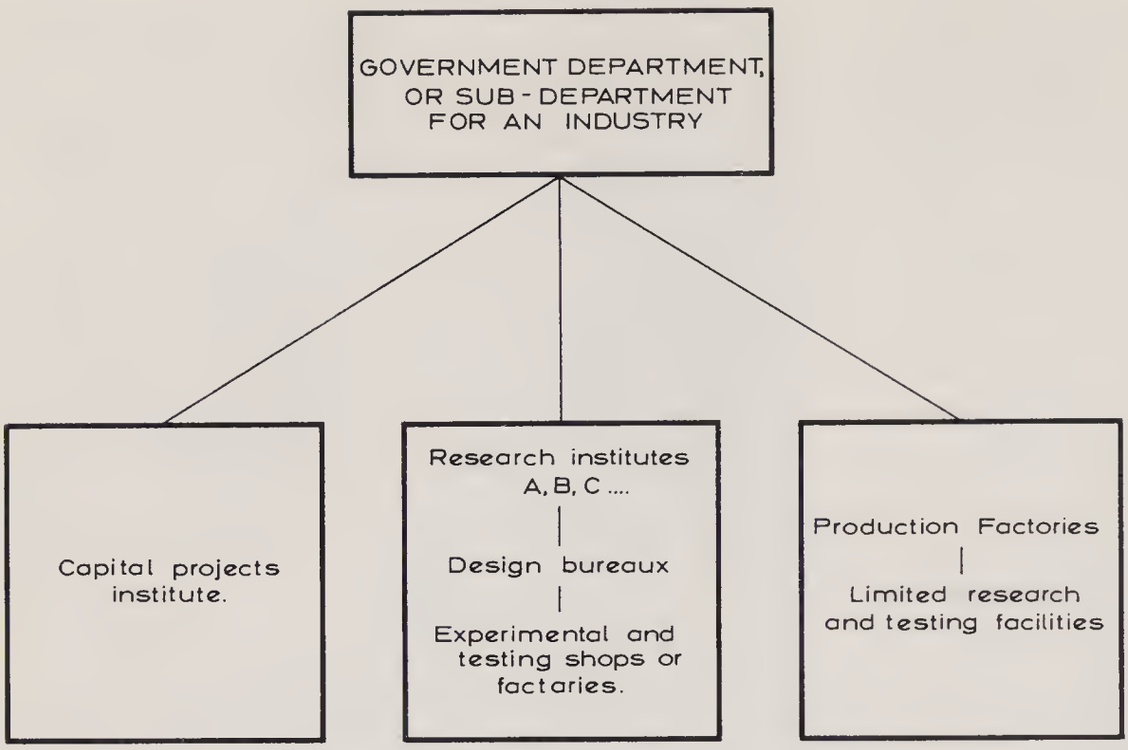


Fig. 14 Organisation of R and D in a typical Soviet industry

industry and the universities is potentially a troublesome one. The really unique feature of Soviet science is not this horizontal division but rather the vertical separation of research and development from production (Fig. 14). This again is a relic of the 1930s when specialist research and development establishments were urgently set up under industrial ministries in order to absorb foreign technology and adapt it to Soviet conditions. Given the level of economic development prevailing at that time, it was unrealistic to expect that advanced technological expertise would emerge as an integral part of the firm's activities – as it often did in the West. But the 'cost' of this structure was the isolation of the factory from the research institute, strengthening the resolve of the former to maximise output and the desire of the latter for academic success.

There can be no doubt that in important instances the ideological rigidity of the Soviet regime has damaged the free development of progressive branches of science. Cybernetics and microbiology are well-known examples of fields which were held back because they were thought to conflict with prevailing orthodoxy. However, although science and ideology have been seen to conflict as *systems of knowledge*, there is also a more positive side to this relationship. Marxism-Leninism supports science as an *activity* because economic development is related fundamentally to the transition of society towards the Communist utopia – hence Lenin's famous dictum that 'Communism equals Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country'. This ideological optimism has induced the Soviet government to maintain the allocation of scarce resources to science during periods when it could ill afford to do so. It has also inspired both Communist Party and trade union activists to par-

ticipate in the introduction of new technology in their free time. Admittedly, the motives underlying this activity are mixed. Duty and ambition are at least as important as genuine inclination, but the tangible gains to the economy from this voluntary work are well documented in the Soviet literature.

If science and technology were conceived to be crucial elements in the political evolution of the USSR it was equally clear, given the predisposition of Soviet leaders to direct and control all important social processes, that they could not be allowed to develop at random. The USSR was the first country in the world to pay serious attention to the problem of planning science. This is reflected in the Goelro Plan for the electrification of the country, prepared before the Civil War had ended, and in the sophisticated ideas of Bukharin in the early 1930s, which anticipated many of the problems of contemporary science policy. However, the delicate balance between firm central direction and scope for individual initiative, which Bukharin had envisaged, did not materialise during these early efforts of planning. The successive specialist planning agencies that were created after 1947 were mainly advisory in character and unable to impose genuine national priorities. Plans for science tended to be a simple aggregate of the wishes of individual institutes and laboratories, amounting, in the words of one Soviet scientist, to 'a heap of paperwork and a false impression of control'. For example, on his visit to the USSR after the end of the war, Eric Ashby (now Lord Ashby) observed that some Soviet research institutions compiled their future plans on the basis of work that had been successfully completed during the previous year. In this way the plan was always fulfilled! On the other hand, there were fields of such outstanding importance that political leaders would themselves take a personal interest. Thus, in the development of atomic weapons, space exploration and aircraft, co-ordination was firm and resources abundant. As we have seen in Chapter 3, Soviet successes in space exploration contrasted with the appalling quality and selection of many consumer goods.

THE 1960S AND AFTER: REAPPRAISAL AND REFORM

By the beginning of the 1960s some Soviet leaders and professional economists began to realise that the USSR was about to enter a new phase in its economic development. The traditional instruments and priorities of economic planning, whatever imperfections they might appear to contain with the benefit of hindsight, had transformed the Soviet Union into one of the world's most powerful industrial nations. But in order to rival the economic achievements of the United States and Western Europe in qualitative terms it was clear that the USSR would have to depend increasingly on native scientific advances and innovation, otherwise she would be in a permanently inferior position. Traditional

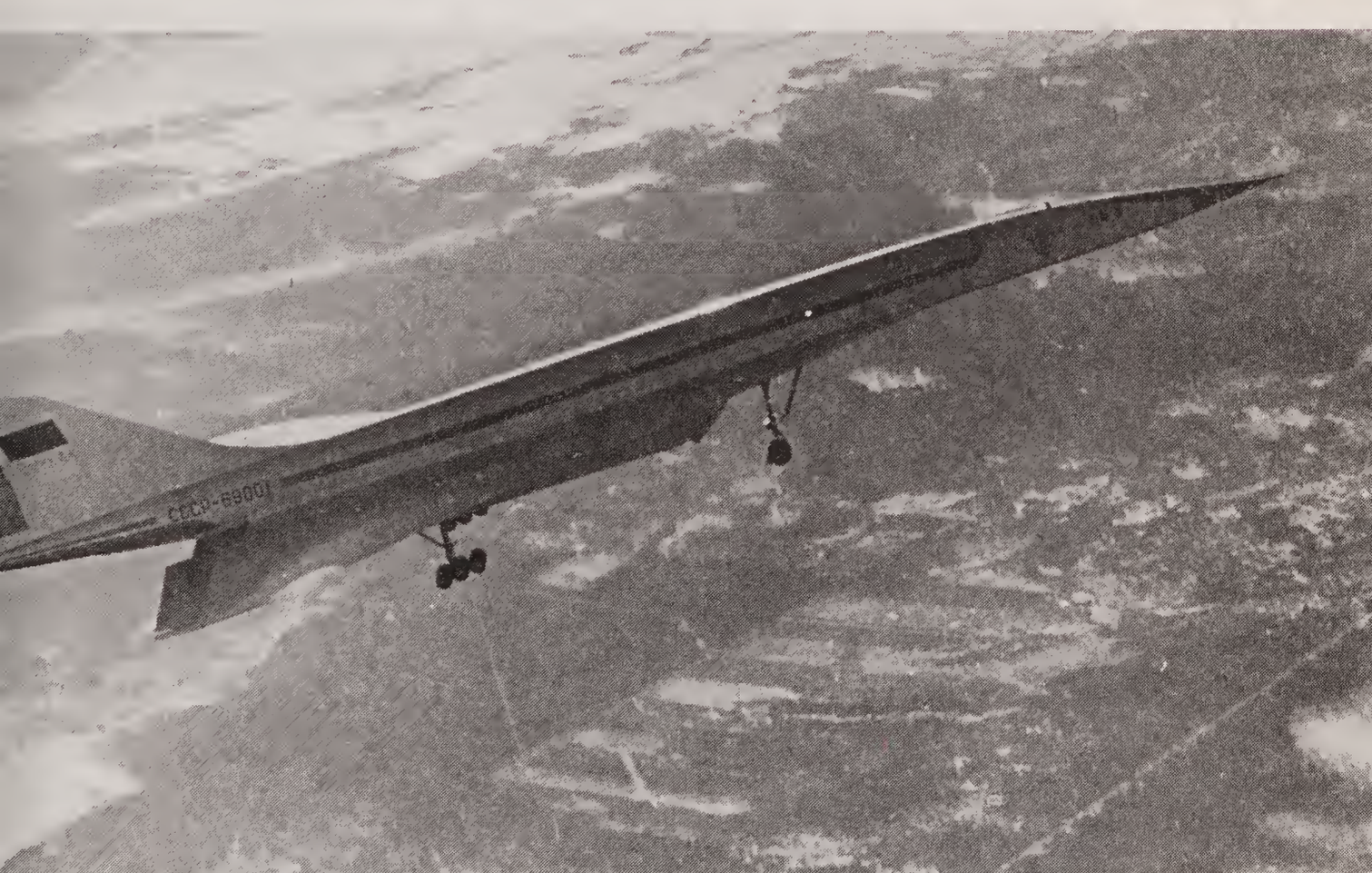
View of Akademgorodok, the Soviet 'science city' in West Siberia (*SCR*)

methods had been successful in pushing through advances in top-priority fields but could not assure the widespread innovation that would benefit the consumer or match the United States. Even fields of central importance to the economy as a whole, such as computers and chemicals, were relatively neglected. Thus, in order to make innovation an organic part of the system a change in the structure of incentives was required. New 'economic levers' and administrative changes were introduced in order to overcome the conservatism of scientists and factory managers (see Chapter 9).

Research institutes have been encouraged to supplement their income by entering into contracts with industrial enterprises, for which they receive bonuses based on the economic return resulting from their work. Although this might seem at first sight a departure from socialist principles it is in fact merely a continuation of a trend first established by the Stakhanovite movement of the 1930s; in addition to traditional 'moral incentives' such as ideological enthusiasm and patriotism, specific 'material incentives' are introduced to stimulate the achievement of

desired results. The availability of such bonuses is intended in this particular case to wean research institutes away from their abstract interests towards more practical matters. In some industries, notably the electrical engineering industry, research institutes are almost entirely dependent on these orders or contracts for their finance.

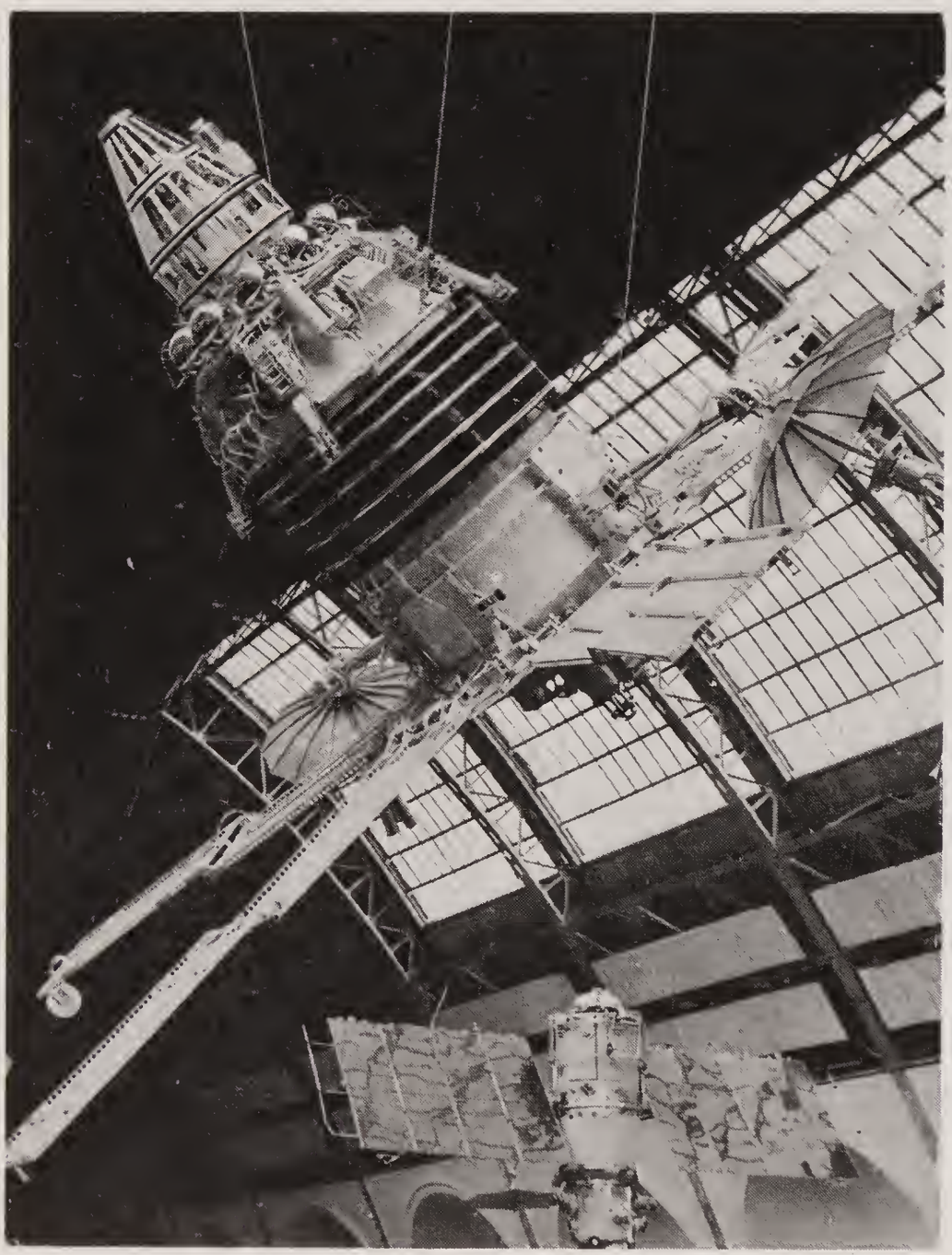
An interesting insight into the extent to which the Soviet authorities may be prepared to go in the use of economic levers as a stimulus to research and development can be gleaned from some recent reforms which were begun initially in the Karpov Physical Chemistry Institute, and are now quite widespread. This Institute took the rather drastic step of creating minimum salaries for its scientific employees, which were 20 to 30 per cent lower than their previous salaries. An addition of up to 50 per cent could then be paid to each scientist according to the results he produced. These results are evaluated every two years by an independent commission on the basis of a standardised scale on which points are awarded for each facet of a scientist's activity ranging from the originality of his research and number of publications to his competence as an organiser. After several years' experience with the new system the Director of the Karpov Institute was able to report that the quality of personnel had improved (many had left!), less time was wasted in peripheral activities and that young scientists in particular were pleased that an objective test of their progress was communicated to their superiors. On



The TU–144, the Soviet supersonic airliner, which can fly at speeds of 2,500 kilometres an hour (*SCR*)

the other hand, there seems little doubt that the period during which evaluation takes place is a traumatic one for the individual scientist and for the Institute as a whole.

A further area of reform to be considered is that of administration, which remains of paramount importance in the minds of Soviet leaders. Here an attempt has been made to strike a balance between centralisation and decentralisation. The State Committee for Science and Technology, which was created in 1965, has emerged as a real executive agency with genuine powers of planning and co-ordination over the national research and development effort. The State Committee is most directly involved with complex, interdisciplinary projects. By the judicious use of its earmarked funds and concern mainly with those projects which are of national importance, the State Committee has increasingly been able to



Molniya–I, the Soviet communications satellite (*SCR*)

impose genuine priorities in shaping the national research and development effort. This is a distinct improvement on the position in the early 1960s when the predecessor of this Committee was little more than a 'clearing house' for all projects. In their desire to ensure the smooth co-ordination of research and development activity, the Soviet authorities do not rely exclusively on central agencies and institutions. This would assume a quite unrealistic degree of knowledge and foresight on the part of central planners. Much has been done in recent years at a lower level to remove the administrative barriers that exist horizontally between research organisations under different ministries and vertically between research organisations and factories under the same ministry. Of these administrative experiments the most ambitious has undoubtedly been the creation of the scientific city (*Akademgorodok*) near Novosibirsk, where some of the most famous Soviet research institutes work in co-operation with advanced industrial enterprises. There have, however, been many other approaches to the key problem of linking the factory more closely with research and development establishments; the most important of these reforms will be discussed in the following chapter.

CONCLUSION

Although the account presented above is greatly oversimplified it does permit some insight into the problem of the complex relationship between science and its 'external' social environment. The special problems of industrial innovation in the USSR cannot be attributed simply to the volume of resources devoted to research and development, although there have been some distortions here. Nor can we naïvely assume that Soviet scientists are less gifted than their Western colleagues: Lebedev (the designer of the first industrial manufacture of synthetic rubber), Kantorovich (the father of linear programming), Sakharov (a chief designer of the Soviet atomic bomb), Korolev (the architect of the early Soviet space successes) and the great physicist Kapitsa are by any measure giants of science. We may conclude that abundant resources and better training can only partially improve the situation. But the patient adjustment of economic and administrative mechanisms is equally important.

CHAPTER 9

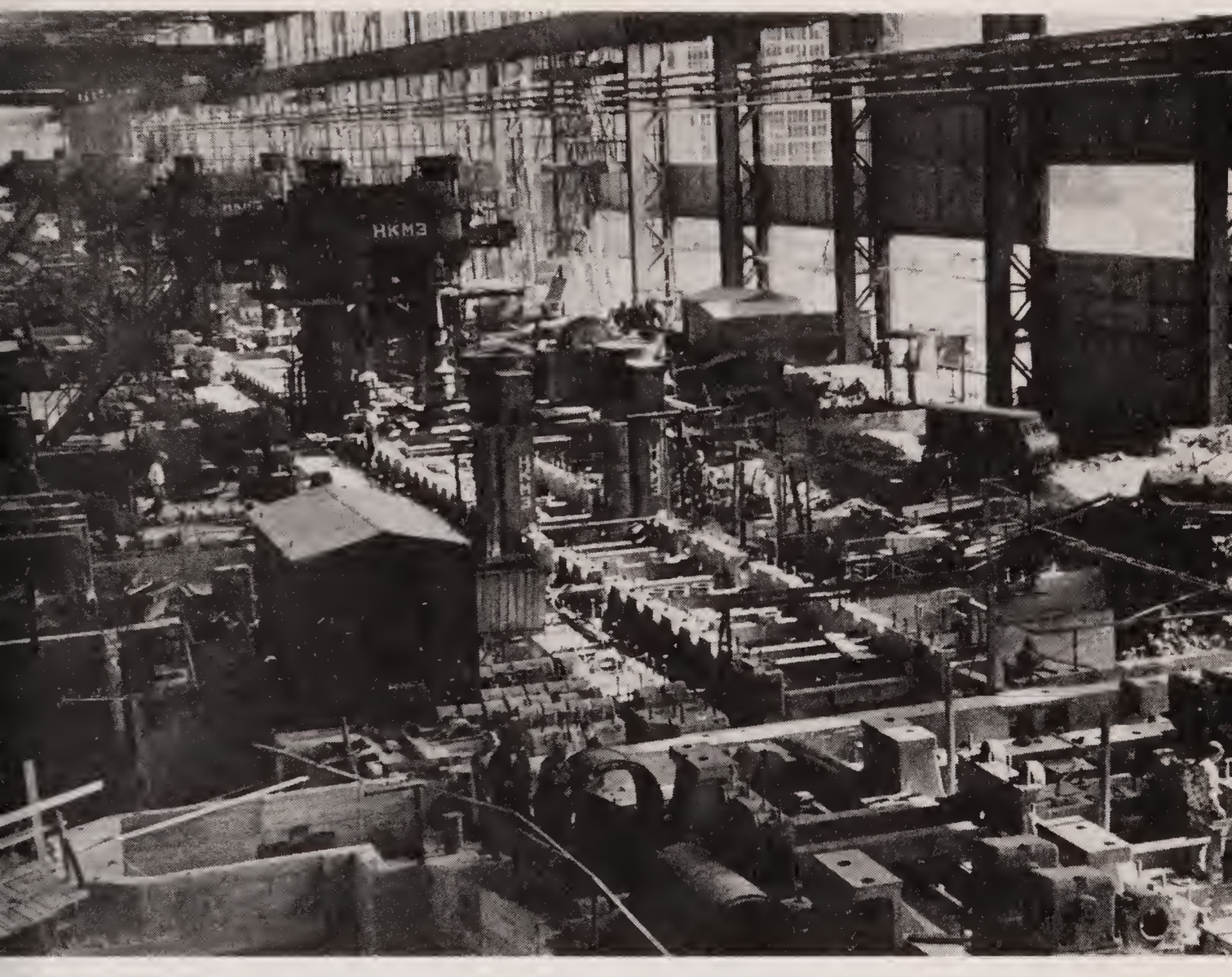
The Factory

by
T. J. Grayson

SOCIALIST AND CAPITALIST FACTORIES

In 1972 there were 48,891 industrial enterprises in the Soviet Union, employing over 32 million persons. The industrial enterprise, usually a single factory, sometimes a group of closely related factories, on the surface resembles a Western firm in many ways. Both must have production equipment and labour combined in forms which are technologically determined; both have similar arrangements for the processing of work; both are hierarchical organisations, with many striking similarities in their administration and management.

But the economic, social and political differences between Soviet socialism and Western capitalism profoundly affect the factory. The Western firm in private industry is controlled by a general manager responsible to a board of directors which seeks to satisfy shareholders that an adequate financial return has been achieved, and which normally competes to sell its output on a competitive market. The Soviet enterprise is state-owned and is controlled by a director appointed by the industrial ministry to which it is administratively subordinate. According to Lenin's theory of 'one-man management', proposed soon after the 1917 Revolution though not effective in practice until a decade or more later, the director should bear the sole responsibility for the management of the enterprise. But like the ministry which appointed him, his economic activity is primarily controlled, not by the market, but by the annual and five-year plan for the factory approved by the government. Plans in the Soviet Union thus replace the market forces of Western economies; and in doing so they set up a web of inter-relationships which affect the economic and social life of each factory. They are also used to monitor the activities of the firm and so determine the financial and moral rewards to be obtained by the management, the technicians and the work



The giant rolling mill of the Novolipetsk factory (*SCR*)

force. In law and in fact, the enterprise is the lowest economic link in a chain which stretches up to the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

THE FACTORY PLAN

The factory plan is a complex of plans, involving all spheres of activity. Firms in the West produce similar plans, more usually referred to as programmes, but, unlike Western programmes, the Soviet plan has to receive government approval. The enterprise plan, known as *tekhpromfinplan* (short for the Russian for 'technical production and financial plan'), is an elaborate document with constituent elements standardised in form, and establishing production quotas, material requirements, manpower levels and financial operating conditions, including expected profit, as well as technical criteria such as levels of quality and reliability. The preparation of the plan takes several months and involves a considerable number of people within the enterprise. But even so this is only the beginning of a long laborious sequence of events in which the plans pass from the enterprise to their superior organisation,

normally a sub-division of their ministry, known as a *glavk*. At the ministry level the enterprise plans are assembled into global ministry plans for submission to an even higher organ – the State Planning Commission, Gosplan. The consolidated plans are used in preparing overall statements of what may be achieved in a given period (one year, five years, sometimes even longer); these are compared with the basic policy targets set by the state. At this stage numerous readjustments are made. The process described above is then reversed, disaggregation taking place at each level until each enterprise receives a plan for the period in question. Before acceptance the enterprise will often try to revert to its original planned targets; compromise usually results between the enterprise and the *glavk*. Planning of this order and on this scale calls for sophisticated methods and Soviet planners have been finding it increasingly difficult to handle the ever-growing masses of data which flow through the system each time the cycle is repeated.

The complexity of the plan, the need for more rational use of skilled managerial labour, the drive for greater industrial efficiency and the pressures for economic reform have all been instrumental in the development of an important recent movement to establish associations of factories (known as *ob' 'edineniya*). These large manufacturing units came into being as a result of the merger of factories which manufacture similar or related products and which are under the control of a single ministry. Many of these new associations were first established in Leningrad and include internationally known firms such as the Sverdlov Machine-Tool Works, Elektrosila factory (for electrical engineering equipment) and LOMO (the Leningrad Optical Mechanical Association). The organisational form is flexible. Some associations are no more than a loose working relationship; but the most common is for several factories to join together under one leading factory which takes control of the policy, overall development and day-to-day activities of the other members. This new movement has raised a number of legal issues. The association director is under the new conditions the 'one-man manager' of the association, but his powers may not extend completely to its members since they retain their identities as enterprises. Questions of finance, bonus payment and the pricing of new products may equally cause friction within the new associations. However it is clear that notwithstanding these constraints the associations have appealed to the technical elite, since they give greater power to the enterprise, and enable improved production arrangements through specialisation and rationalisation. In the more advanced associations direct control of research, development, design and manufacture have been vested in one authority. These attractive features of the association have a more general political and economic interest. The size of the association gives it stronger bargaining powers with its superior authority, and the *glavki* are now themselves being reformed into higher-level associations. While only a

minority of enterprises are so far affected by these new developments, they are obviously of considerable importance in the Soviet concern to compete with the advanced industrial nations in producing advanced products.

MANAGEMENT, PARTY AND TRADE UNION

To organise, administer and control the old-style enterprise and the new-style association, an army of specialists is required. Management in its widest sense calls for specialists to oversee the various functions required in the manufacture of goods. Yet in no Western industrial society is the degree of specialisation as marked as it is in the USSR where each managerial function in the firm is occupied by purpose-trained people. Although in the Soviet Union there are only a few management schools, there are numerous degree courses concerned with individual elements of management such as work study, production planning and foundry technology. Another important factor of Soviet management is that engineering specialists have a higher status and prestige than economists, accountants and legal experts; this is the reverse of the situation in most Western firms. Although the employment of specialists who are not engineers as directors is not forbidden, the director is in practice almost invariably an engineer; and the chief engineer is always the senior deputy director. With limited or no management training, the director and his senior deputy must inevitably be concerned with technical issues more than any other; this may be one of the reasons for the relative neglect of economic and social aspects of management dramatically revealed in Soviet surveys of the work activities of directors and managers. These show that upper levels of management are concerned with production problems for a very considerable proportion of their time while financial questions receive much less consideration. Evidence from British and United States firms indicates a reverse pattern. The surveys also suggest that management services are relatively weak in the USSR: many Western visitors have commented on the poor provision made for secretarial assistance throughout Soviet industry.

The Soviet director has a constraint and an assistance in the form of the factory Communist Party committee which is unknown in the capitalist firm. This committee, elected by Party members, in its turn elects a secretary who although formally a worker spends much of his time dealing with Party matters. The secretary will also have responsibilities to higher organs of the Party. The extent to which he constrains rather than assists the director depends partly on personalities. In the majority of cases the secretary and director coexist amicably but extreme cases of domination by one or the other are not unknown. The Party secretary and his committee are important factors in the life of the factory since

A meeting of a factory Party committee considers the admission to Party membership of assistant steelmaker Gennadii Kosenkov (left) (*Novosti*)

they can and do encourage increased efforts from the workers, promote new ideas in the workshops and act as arbitrators in matters where management–worker relations are strained. This plurality of function – to supervise and to support – presents both the Party officials and the director with fundamental problems. A recent analysis of industrial managers by Hardt and Frankel suggests that the relationship between the Party and the director may be changing as directors strive for an increased professionalism which can only be achieved with limited Party controls.

The trade unions are less influential. Trade unions in the Soviet Union are open to all employed persons, 'irrespective of race, nationality, sex or religion', and there is one union for each industry or sector of the economy. The director and the engineers thus belong to the same union as the workers at the bench. Local branches are concerned with material and cultural needs at a local level, but have no direct influence over wage-scales and terms of employment. Trade union activity in the factory centres on safeguarding working conditions, especially in matters of safety and health, and assisting in the allocation of housing. Support is also given for factory-based social, cultural and leisure activities. Trade

Meeting of a trade union committee at Orenburg gasworks (*Novosti*)

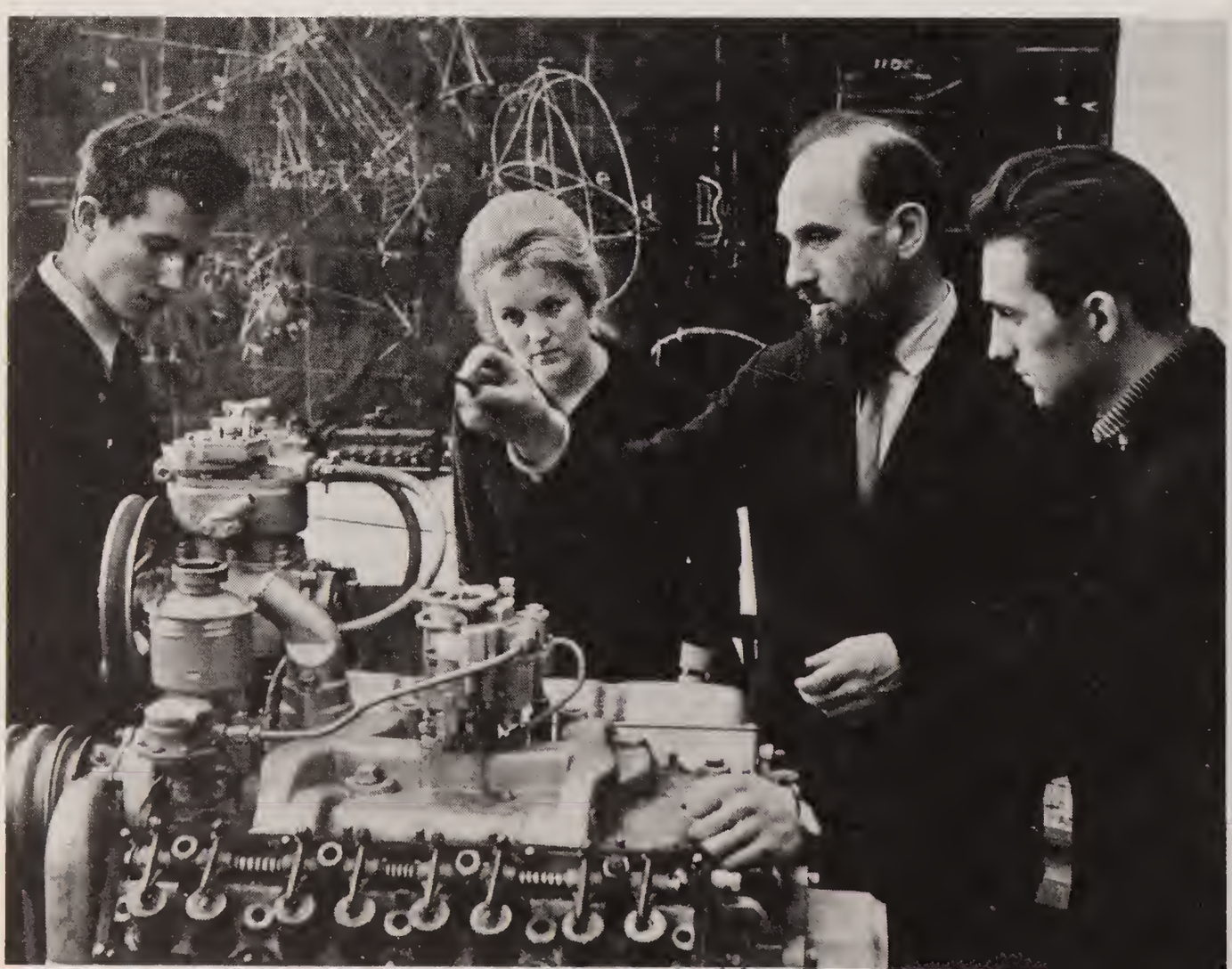
union influence in the factory comes from their membership of a number of important committees. The production committee reviews the factory plan before submission to and on receipt from the planning agency, while other committees on which the trade union is represented consider the allocation of bonuses from factory profits, and the education and training of workers. Disputes between trade unions and management mainly centre upon unfair dismissal, and directors may be taken before workers' courts. Strikes are never reported in the Soviet press and although they do occur are seemingly rare and certainly meet with severe reprisals.

THE WORKFORCE AND ITS PROBLEMS

The shortage of labour is the problem of problems for the director in his dealings with the workforce. An important factor in recent shortages has been the reduced flow of labour from the countryside. Whereas in the past rural areas have been a pool of labour, current efforts to promote agriculture (with increased wages for agricultural workers) have reduced this flow while educational programmes have increased the student population at the expense of the industrial labour supply. At the same time female labour in some areas has not been fully utilised even though

The 'Arsenal' factory workers take part in a May Day parade (*SCR*)

Factory college – the design of the car engine is explained to students (*SCR*)



women have equal opportunities with men in most situations: regional differences associated with the presence or otherwise of textile factories have been noted. Some industries suffer labour shortages because of the arduous nature of the occupation, others because local housing and transport facilities are not available or badly organised. Shortages are aggravated by labour turnover. Since there is a shortage of skilled workers it is not difficult to get jobs, and mobility in search of improved conditions is common – especially if this means moving from a socially unattractive small provincial town to an attractive city such as Moscow, Leningrad or Kiev. Seasonal labour turnover, associated with workers returning to the countryside, is not unknown. Absenteeism through drunkenness is a serious problem; a few years ago prices of vodka and other spirits were drastically increased in the hope of reducing consumption. Absenteeism also seems to be a problem among young workers.

The Soviet government has recently endeavoured to improve labour skills and stability by introducing improvements in the vocational technical schools for young workers, and advice centres on job opportunities.

But the main emphasis is placed on wage incentives as an encouragement to skill and harder work. Wages are determined by the worker's position on the wage-scale. The difference between persons at the top and bottom of a particular scale can be of the order 1:3·6 although the national average is about 1:2. In 1962 a reorganisation of the wage-scale resulted in lower-paid workers improving their relative positions and this development has been strengthened in the past few years; but particularly when bonuses are considered earnings are still substantially greater for the higher-skilled workers. Skills are graded according to established conditions for each industry. Gradings are determined by the complexity of the job, the precision required in the work and the responsibility involved. The grade is fixed by the foreman. Disputes between the worker and the foreman over whether a correct grade has been set can be brought before a trade union labour dispute commission. There was some discussion after the 1965 reforms on a proposal to scrap nationally set rates and grades, but it was not apparently supported by the State Committee of Labour and Wages. Owing to the shortage of labour, workers are often given higher grades than they are entitled to as a means of persuading them to remain at the factory.

The wage-scale is usually combined with piece-work, which has been a focal point of the industrial payment system since 1918 when Lenin praised F. W. Taylor's methods of management. In 1923 the Party Congress passed a resolution in favour of 'dependence of individual wages on actual output'. The actual proportion of the total workforce on piece-work has fallen from a peak figure of about 75 per cent. This proportion fell mainly as a result of the introduction of 'process'

The factory crèche, such as this one, permits the employment of mothers (*Novosti*)

conditions in industry through greater mechanisation and automation, in which the level of output is no longer determined by the individual worker or group of workers. But the proportion still remains as high as 55–60 per cent.

THE DRIVE FOR IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY

The industrial arrangements we have described on the whole proved extremely effective, as was shown in Chapter 3, in bringing about a rapid advance of Soviet industry. Until the late 1950s, Soviet industry expanded more rapidly than that of any other country. Even now, Soviet industrial production has been rising more rapidly than in most industrialised countries – in terms of increased output, only Japan has performed consistently better than the Soviet Union.

But the technological lag has continued. It manifests itself in many ways. As was pointed out in Chapter 8, consumer industries lag while space programmes tend to flourish. But the USSR is also behind in many of the most sophisticated technologies in the computer and electronics industries. Even in traditional technologies, development is very uneven. Soviet factories are still very much 'metal-removal' orientated

An early photograph of a factory production conference at Magnitogorsk, presided over by the director of the works (*SCR*)

and lag in the use of 'metal-forming': the use of metal-*cutting* machines predominates at the expense of metal-*forming* machines such as presses. This dependence on metal-cutting is reflected in the continued use of cast products in the USSR while in Europe and the USA castings have played a declining role. Even in the case of metal-cutting itself the Soviet factory until the past few years failed to exploit an original lead in the field of electronically controlled machines – known as NC machines. Such examples could be multiplied.

Our discussion of the Soviet factory has brought out some important reasons for the continuing lag. The enterprise is oriented on the plan, and the plan has traditionally been cast in terms of increases in production rather than increases in quality and sophistication. Bonuses at every level were related to the increase in production, and this reinforced the inherent difficulty of adapting a labour force drawn primarily from a rural background to the production of advanced goods. Scientific research and development fitted into this production-oriented system, being maintained (see Chapter 8 above) only by separating research institutes from production, with the result that theory was not converted into practical industrial results.

Many recent efforts have been made to improve this situation. The

plan now pays much more attention at every level to new products and processes. The State Standards Committee, Gosstandart, has been greatly strengthened. In 1970 the head of the Committee, V. V. Boitsov, was made a full member of the Council of Ministers, and in 1974 a top-level Party resolution calling for a national drive for improving product quality invested Gosstandart with powers to inspect and confiscate substandard goods through a network of regional inspection laboratories. A programme for new standards and improved product quality is now prepared by each firm as part of its plan. A system of quality marks (*znaki kachestva*) administered by Gosstandart aims at bringing the level of quality up to the best in the rest of the world. Perhaps the most significant feature of this proposal is that it gives the factory director increased scope to influence prices; products which receive this mark are normally allowed to be priced well above the official state-determined figure. Side by side with these changes in the requirements of the plan, serious efforts have been made to replace centralised administrative control by economic incentives. The 1965 economic reform (see p. 54 above) has been followed more recently by the restructuring of bonus schemes for both workers and management with the aim of encouraging quality as well as quantity of production. Other factors now taken into account in assessing bonuses include economies in the use

At a Moscow car plant members of the Young Communist League display results of spot checks on production. This is a well-practised form of incentive in Soviet factories (*Novosti*)

of raw materials and of energy in its many forms. Bonuses specifically provided for innovations and inventions have also been increased.

But all these measures have not done enough to encourage the Soviet factory and its director to make the investments of resources and effort, and to take the risks involved, in improving products and processes. In spite of recent improvements, shortages of goods of all kinds continue to be characteristic of the Soviet economy: factories still find little difficulty in disposing of their production. In spite of changes in the price system, it is still often more profitable as well as less troublesome for a factory to continue to produce a well-established product with a well-tried process. The incentives for factories to innovate are still weak.

Much attention has therefore also been devoted to the acquisition of advanced Western plant and equipment, and the purchase of licences, in order to hasten the closing of the technological gap. This policy has been notably applied in the chemical and motor industries. Nevertheless a question mark hangs over the Soviet factory today. We return to the problems raised at the end of Chapter 3. Can the factory adapt itself to conditions of world technology in the last quarter of the twentieth century, and thus at last achieve the goal of 'catching up the West in a technical and economic respect' first posed in the 1920s?

CHAPTER 10

Farms and Farmers

by
R. E. F. Smith

PEASANT FARMING

As we saw in Chapter 1, the land and climate of the USSR does not favour farming. Only a tenth of the area can be tilled, compared with about two-thirds in the United States of America. The country is subject to extremes of cold, heat and moisture and this makes much of the area impossible to farm. It is true that in the south of European Russia and stretching eastwards, virtually to the Great Wall of China, there are fertile, black-earth soils. This is the region of the steppes, but this area is exposed to considerable dangers of drought. Altogether, the continental nature of the country means that the moderating effect of the sea on climate is much less than in Western Europe. The range of temperatures is increased and the frost-free period is restricted. Even in those areas where it is possible to farm, the work period – the period when farmers can get on to the land – is limited, and there are long months when virtually nothing can be done outside. This contributes to a tendency to work in spurts at key periods, with lengthy periods of intervening idleness.

The title of this chapter is in some ways misleading. In one sense, there are no farmers in Russia. The term 'farmer' implies a man who works the land in order to market the produce. The peasant, as distinct from the farmer, is not necessarily closely tied to the market; his prime concern is not to market produce in order to get money from which he lives, but rather to maintain himself and his family directly from the land. If he makes money, it is to meet his tax demands and so on; for him money is just a different sort of crop with its own set of use values. Russian farming has been traditionally 'peasant farming'. There is still, even today, a considerable feeling for this historical fact; members of Soviet collective farms are often referred to in the Soviet Union as 'collective farm peasan-

Picking cotton by mechanised means in Central Asia (*SCR*)

try' rather than 'collective farmers'. We must take account of Russia's history to understand today's Soviet Union.

At the time of the First World War, five-sixths of the Russian population lived in the countryside, and it was not until the 1950s that over half the population of the Soviet Union were living in towns. The vast majority of people living in the countryside at the time of the First World War lived on family farms. They worked the land with family labour; only occasionally was there a hired man. The peasants lived, for the most part, in wooden houses with thatched or shingled roofs, and in fairly small villages. The land was still worked, as in medieval Britain, in the form of scattered strips which were reallocated between families from time to time. Consequently, the highest unit of peasant organisation was very often the commune – a group of people on a particular territory who came together, whether they lived in one village or more than one village, in order to divide up a particular area of land so that each family should have what was felt to be a fair share. The particular way in which this was done varied. Sometimes the allocations were made in terms of the number of people in the family, the number of 'mouths' as the Russians put it – that is to say in terms of consumers. Sometimes the allocations were made in terms of producers, the number of pairs of hands. But,

basically, because the aim of the people living in the countryside was to get a living for themselves direct from the land, this central function of dividing up the land – land which was in short supply owing to rapid growth of population – was quite crucial and held the peasant community together against the outside world, even when there were fierce internal arguments about every inch of land.

Looked at from the viewpoint of the national economy, peasant farming of this type had major drawbacks. The peasants' lack of concern to market produce meant there was very little possibility for state accumulation of capital and hence for industrialisation. In the period between the 1905 and 1917 Revolutions, a series of agrarian reforms had been carried through (named after the Prime Minister of the time, Stolypin) which encouraged peasants to withdraw from the commune and to set up as individual farmers with consolidated holdings or at least enclosed fields. This was known as Stolypin's wager on the sober and the strong. By 1917 a certain tendency to leave the commune was already marked, at least on paper, but one should not exaggerate the impact of the Stolypin reforms. In 1917, simultaneously with the two political revolutions described in Chapter 2, a third revolution took place, an agrarian one, an elemental movement throughout the countryside, in the course of which the peasants seized the land and often reallocated land taken from the large landowners, the church, from the estates or even from wealthier peasants. They divided up this land among themselves, and in the course of this process the old communal institutions were strengthened almost everywhere.

The Bolsheviks had come to power in 1917, but there was a major contradiction which was not resolved till the 1930s and even then the resolution itself posed further problems. The problem was this: the land was now in peasant hands, but the peasant outlook, because it was not directed towards the market, was basically one which could manage without the state. For its part, however, the state could not manage without the peasants. The state demanded peasant surpluses in order to accumulate wealth to have the means to undertake the reforms intended: to recover from the disasters of the First World War, to build a modernised Russia which would no longer suffer the ills of backwardness. The peasants, however, had basically what you might regard as anarchist views. In fact, insofar as there was any peasant political movement, it was represented by groups whose colour is now virtually forgotten; not for them either reds or whites: they were the greens. Their views resulted in a desire for local republics; they were dominated by local parochial interests of a narrow kind and not concerned with the formation of those larger units which are essential to the political administration of a great land empire such as Russia. The peasants were organised in about twenty million farms and each of these was inclined to go its own way. If they came together, they came together for specific local purposes such as

building a bridge, erecting a school, choosing a herdsman to pasture the cattle, a watchman to guard against fire and so on.

The state, for its part, had to get its hands on food supplies and other raw materials, and the period 1918–21 was a period when the state administration had virtually no foothold in the countryside. Armed squads had to be sent from the towns to collect grain and only gradually was this state banditry against the mass of the population changed into a more regular taxation system in kind. In fact, it was not until the mid-1920s, until ten years after the Revolutions of 1917, that Soviet power began to have an effective hold on the countryside; and this effective hold, of course, was not always seen by the peasants as being in their interests.

From the earliest days of the Bolshevik Revolution, there had been encouragement for the formation of collectives in the countryside: what were called communes (*kommuny*), 'artels' – groups of workers, co-operatives of various sorts, all these were encouraged. It was felt that rather than the individualist, and therefore potentially capitalist, entrepreneurial approach of the Russian peasantry, collective activities were likely to coincide much more with the Bolshevik view of the world and

A village scene in the Gor'kiy region (*SCR*)

the state. But these collective units which were encouraged were rather like some of those communes which we see at the present time in this country, or more particularly in the countryside in the interwar years in this country. They were for the most part groups not of land workers, but of intellectuals, of people who either wanted to 'opt out' of the real world as they found it, or regarded a 'back to the land' movement as their contribution to the struggle against Russia's backwardness.

Peasants, for their part, were uninterested in the politics-mongering of the state organisations; they were uninformed and uncomprehending about what was going on around them. This is scarcely surprising. The majority of the people of the countryside were still illiterate before the mid-1920s. Even quite simple newspapers frequently had to be read to those in the countryside, and some of the new terms introduced and the new terms of speech being used by these cosmopolitan intellectuals who had carried through the Revolution of 1917 meant absolutely nothing to the peasants. A characteristic story is that at the time when the first tractors were being introduced in the countryside the peasants did not understand the difference between 'tractorist' and 'Trotskyist'.

For its part, the state laid great hopes on the organisation of larger units in the countryside. The very limited quantity of machinery available could most effectively be used if there were large fields to be worked. The traditional small strips farmed by the poorer peasants were quite unsuitable for tractor cultivation; and, added to that, it was the larger and richer peasant families who supplied most of the surplus. But, of course, the Bolshevik view was that these richer peasant families, these successful farmers, farmers who in England would have been regarded as 'yeomen' – a word of approval – these people were regarded with fear and apprehension by the Bolsheviks because they were seen as potential capitalists. These are the men who are called 'kulaks' – 'tight-fists'. The Bolshevik use of the word 'kulak' is really rather a distortion of its original meaning. Originally, at peasant level, it meant not so much the tight-clenched fist as the cupped hand in which smaller men are held. They may be held in an oppressive grip or they may be held protectively; there is an ambiguity about the term in its original meaning. The Bolsheviks came to use it simply to mean the oppressive and threatening fist of emergent capitalism in the countryside.

COLLECTIVE FARMS AND STATE FARMS

But Bolshevik hopes from large-scale farming and fears of emergent capitalism met with little response from the peasants. The Bolshevik collectivisation campaign at the beginning of the 1930s met with intense peasant resistance; some of its economic and social consequences have already been discussed in Chapter 3.

What was a collective farm? It was basically a co-operative farm, in

which the individual peasant farms were amalgamated into larger units. But it was a co-operative with a difference – an organisational arrangement forced on the peasant, in an economy not fully based on money and with poorly developed links between farms and the market. The collective farms were organised so that most of the land was worked jointly, and much of the produce of this collective land was delivered compulsorily to the state at very low prices. The collective-farm members did not receive wages, merely a share of produce remaining after the compulsory deliveries had been met. The share-out was not on an egalitarian basis, but was determined according to the number of conventional labour-days which each member of the farm had worked. The actual days worked did not coincide with the labour-days; for instance, a skilled worker – say, a lorry driver – would obtain several labour-days for each actual day worked, while a woman sweeping out a yard would receive only a fraction of a labour-day for a full day's work. The amount paid out for each labour-day was an appropriate fraction of the produce retained by the farm. In this way, wage payments were avoided and the countryside continued to maintain itself while considerable quantities of produce were handed over to the state at low prices.

An early photograph illustrating a members' meeting on a collective farm (*SCR*)

The collective-farm member did not spend his whole time working the collective land. At first, some Communists had argued that not only the fields but also the livestock, the houses and the eating arrangements should be made communal. Some of those against collectivisation accused the Communists of even proposing to communalise wives. But in the end it was decided that the fields and some of the livestock should be jointly held and worked, but that each family should also retain its own house and a garden – a garden usually of some size by British standards – which would enable the collective-farm members to have not only flower-beds and a kitchen garden, but also orchards and a few animals. In fact, until quite recent times, these personal plots of the individual farm families were the main source of everything except the major field crops (mostly grain), including most vegetables and milk. In the hard years of the 1930s, the peasant could not have survived without the personal plot, and most of his income in money came from sale on the market of produce grown on this plot.

A further important aspect of the collective farm was the existence of state-owned machine-tractor stations. When collective farming was first instituted on a mass scale in the 1930s, the draught power basis of the farms had largely collapsed due to the slaughter of horses. We have to remind ourselves continually that until the 1930s horse-drawn implements (including the traditional forked tillage implement, the *sokha*) were usual in Russia. Many of the 25 million individual peasant households of that time did not even have this very simple implement. There were only 1 million threshing machines in the country and 3 million reapers. The first machine-tractor stations were organised in 1929. They were a state-run agricultural contractor service supplying machinery and the men to work the machinery to farms on contract; but they also supervised, and partly controlled, collective farms. The collective farm had to supply a further substantial sum in money or grain to the machine-tractor stations in return for their services. In the first years after collectivisation in the 1930s, the tractor power available was too small to make good the loss in horses killed as a result of the collectivisation.

Agriculture had not fully recovered from the disaster caused by collectivisation before the German invasion of the Second World War. The war itself caused immense losses to Russian agriculture. It was followed by a period of very strict control of the collective farms which lasted until after Stalin's death in 1953. Punitive taxation was retained and the private plots held by individual members of the farm were reduced in size. In 1950 a campaign was started to reduce the number of collective farms by amalgamating them. This aimed at creating more easily mechanised units. There were about a quarter of a million collective farms in 1950; in two years the number fell to 97,000; there are now about 32,000. This means that collective farms these days are very large in size,

Teaching peasants the workings of a tractor. Scene on a Machine Tractor Station in the 1930s (*SCR*)

often including three or four villages within their boundaries. In fact, they are by no means what we would regard as a farm, but something much more akin to a parish organised within a planned economy as a single agricultural producing area. Many farms, in fact, include some local industry within their boundaries. This is one reason why it is wiser to talk about collective-farm members rather than collective farmers. In units of their size, obviously there are going to be many people who are not directly farming the land itself.

After Stalin's death in 1953, Khrushchev introduced many new measures affecting agriculture. First of all, prices for agricultural produce were raised and taxation was reduced. The part played by the machine-tractor stations was changed, and a little later their equipment was sold off to individual collective farms. In the same period, an enormous campaign was undertaken which resulted in 36 million hectares of new land being ploughed up, mainly in southern Siberia and northern Kazakhstan. This tremendous extension of the sown area was intended to offset the continuing insecure basis of farming in Russia. It was a decision not to deal with the weakness of crop growing in Russia by intensifying farming. There are, of course, immense reserves in

intensification, but such a policy would, inevitably, have involved very considerable capital investment. In order to do it one would need not merely increased fertilisers, new machinery and new types of seed, but also a considerable investment in raising the general level, including the educational level, of those in the countryside. The disasters which struck the countryside and the great stress which has been put on industrialisation in the Soviet Union has meant that the countryside in Russia is perhaps something like that in Ireland: most of the lively lads have left and gone off to the town. In the Irish case, of course, the town happens to be overseas, in the Russian case the town is internal, but the result is that in the main it is the less strong, less adventurous, less enterprising people who have been left in the countryside. The decision to extend the sown area, therefore, was conceived as a simple and relatively easy way of increasing the total crop. But it is really only after the Khrushchev period – from the late 1960s – that farm produce has begun to receive prices which are at all reasonable. It is from this period that on many collective farms members have also begun to receive wages and pension rights. The money basis of farming has been extended. Collective farms in the USSR continue to be subject to considerable control from above, from the local councils (the soviets) and planning bodies, from ministries who purchase their produce and from the Communist Party in the countryside. But they do now have a much greater degree of initiative, and

A collective farm market in a Soviet city

they are much more a part of the total society than they have ever been before.

A substantial part of Soviet agriculture is organised not into collective farms but into state farms. State farms are directly under the control of the state, and those who work on them are workers receiving a wage. In the last ten or fifteen years, during the period when conditions in the collective farms were being brought much more into line with the general conditions in the country, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of state farms. Of course, when collective farmers become wage earners there is much less difference between the collective farms and the state farms. Moreover, it is no doubt convenient from the point of view of the state to have the direct control which is possible as a result of the organisation of a state farm.

AGRICULTURE TODAY

What have been the results for agriculture of all these changes during the Soviet period? The crop structure of Russian farming has changed (Fig. 15, Table 2). Grains have become less important relative to potatoes and

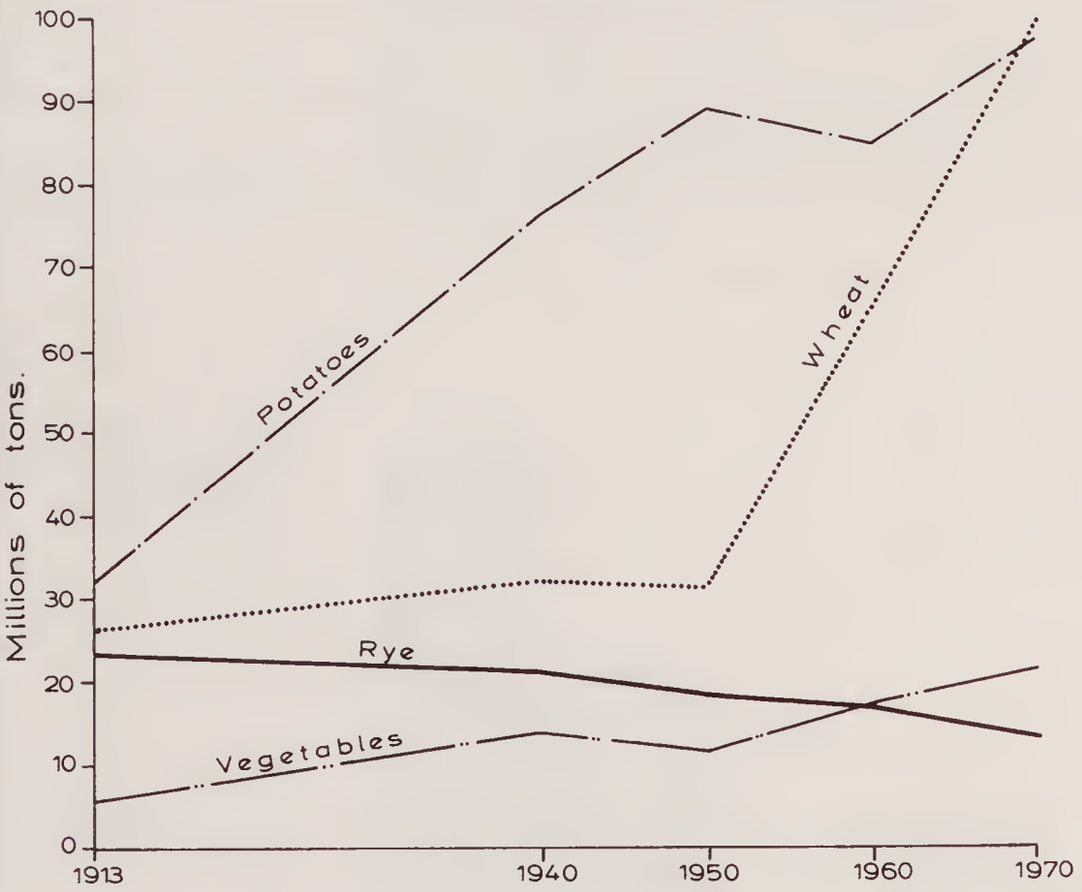


Fig. 15 Output of selected grains, 1913–70

Table 2 *Harvest (millions of tons) and Yields (centners per hectare)*

	1913		*1940*		*1950*		*1960*		*1970*	
Grains	86·0	8·2	95·5	8·6	81·2	7·9	125·5	10·9	186·8	15·6
Rye	23·2	8·0*	21·1	9·1*	18·0	7·6*	16·4	10·1	13·0	13·0
Wheat	26·3	10·0* 7·3†	31·8	10·1* 6·6†	31·1	9·1* 7·6†	64·3	15·1* 9·5†	99·7	22·8* 12·3†

* winter sown † spring sown

vegetable crops; rye, despite an overall increase in the harvest of all grains, shows an absolute decrease; the growing of wheat has been increased and extended into west Siberia and Kazakhstan. Oats have declined as machines have replaced horses (Table 3).

Table 3 *Feed Crops (millions of hectares)*

	1913	*1940*	*1950*	*1960*	*1970*
Grasses and silage	3·3	18·1	20·7	59·2	57·7
Oats	19·1	20·2	16·2	12·8	9·2
Barley	12·7	10·5	8·2	11·0	20·0
Roots	0·05 (1916)	1·0	1·2	1·5	1·8

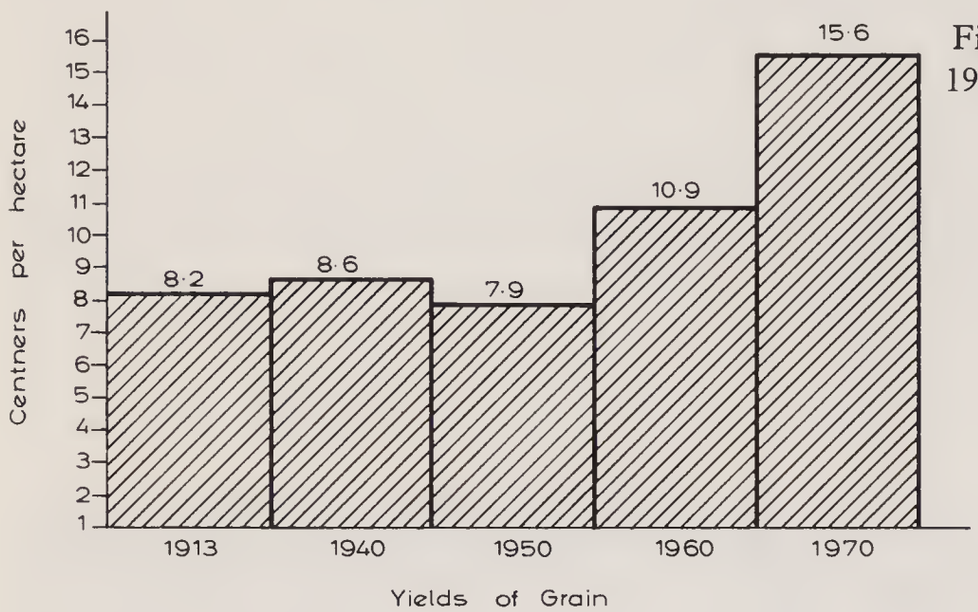


Fig. 16 Grain yields, 1913–70

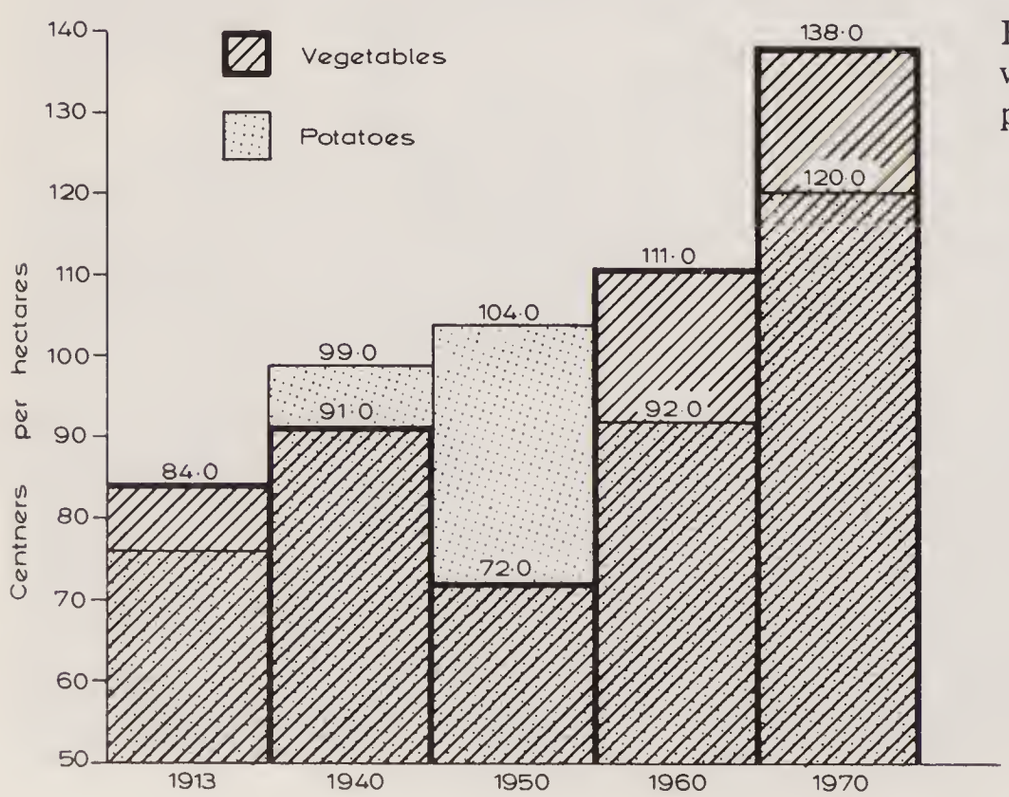


Fig. 17 Yields of vegetables and potatoes, 1913–70

Yields of grain have increased more than 50 per cent since the time of the First World War (Fig. 16), wheat yields have virtually doubled (Table 2); potato yields and yields for vegetables have increased greatly only in the last few years (Fig. 17). As far as crops go, then, there have been noticeable advances, partly achieved through an extension of the sown area, and carried out with a considerable reduction in the numbers employed in agriculture.

Livestock, however, continues to be the weakest aspect of farming in Russia. The hay yields are perhaps no more than a tenth of those we would regard as acceptable in this country; yet animals have to be stalled for about 200 days in the year. In 1917 root crops were virtually unknown, and animals had to be fed on straw and coarse feeds. In times of famine, the thatch had to be taken off the peasant houses in order to keep the animals alive. During the Soviet period there has certainly been a substantial improvement in fodder supplies, though they still remain poor by standards in Western Europe or the USA. By the late 1920s, livestock numbers had, in general, recovered to the level of about ten or fifteen years previously. But the collectivisation programme of the 1930s resulted in mass slaughter of livestock. Recovery was encouraged by the fairly wide use of artificial insemination, but the invasion by Nazi Germany took place before livestock numbers had reached their pre-collectivisation levels. Again, it is only in the 1950s and the 1960s that substantial advances are noticeable, both in the number of animals and in their productivity (Fig. 18).

Fig. 18 Livestock numbers, 1916–70

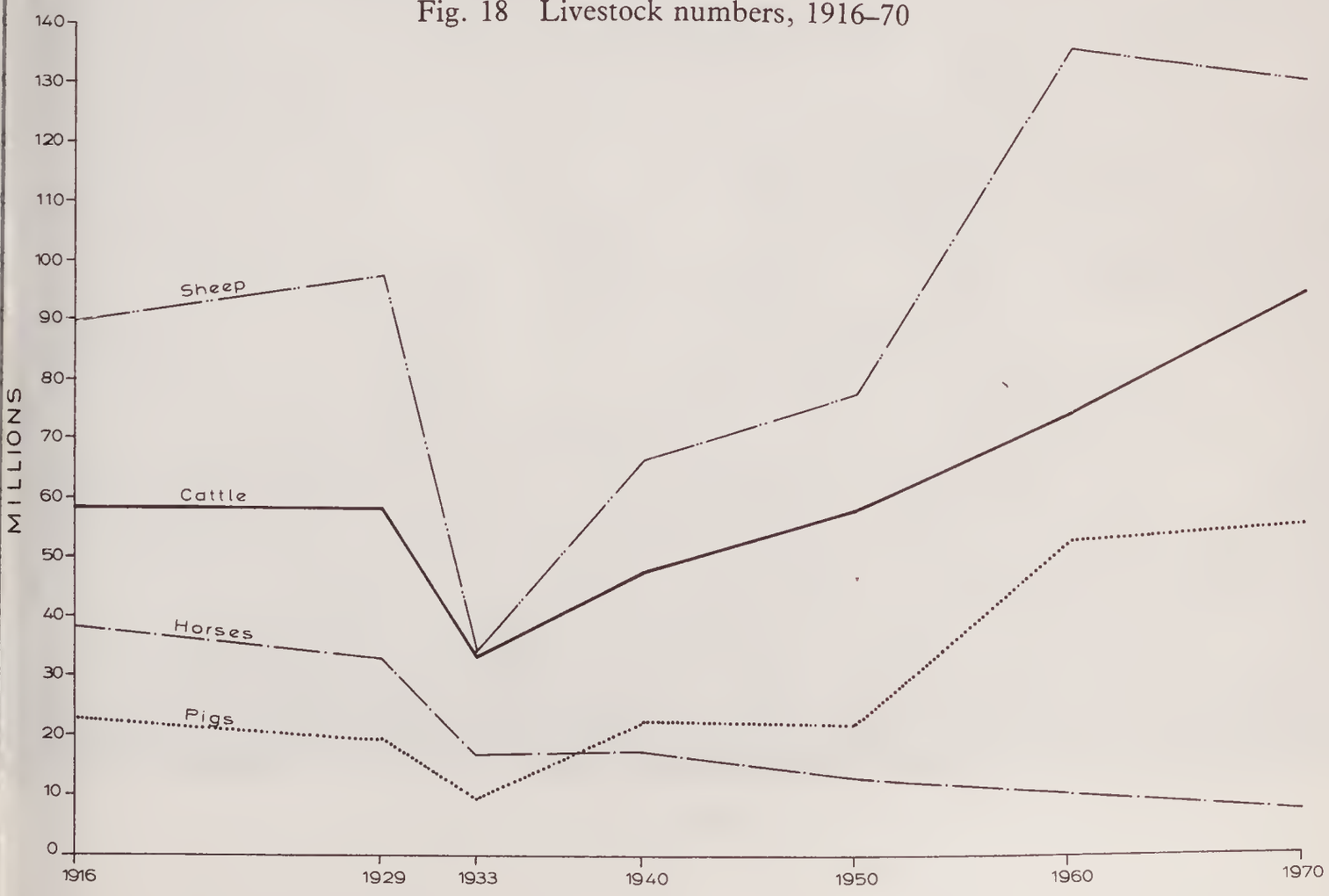


Table 4 *Numbers of Socialised Farms, Population and Tractors*

	1913	*1928*	*1932*	*1940*	*1950*	*1960*	*1970*
Collective farms, all types ('000s)	—	33·3	211·7	236·9	123·7	44·9	33·6
State farms ('000s)	—	1·4	4·3	4·2	5·0	7·4	15·0
Total population (m.)	159·2	150·6	161·0*	194·1	178·5	212·3	241·7
Rural population (m.)	130·7	123·0	128·8	131·0	109·1	108·5	105·7
Tractors (m. HP)	—	0·5	2·4	17·6	27·7	47·6	111·6
Tractors ('000s phys. units)	—	27·0	148·0	531·0	595·0	1122·0	1977·0

* 1931

Overall, then, since 1917 Russian farming has radically changed, as the country has moved from an agrarian to an industrialised situation (Table 4). The concealed unemployment on the land has been virtually eliminated by the growth of industrial employment, but this industrialisation was initially carried through at the expense of farming. The countryside was given a very low priority in development plans. The change from largely traditional strip farming with simple wooden implements to large-scale tractor farming has involved the formation of collective farms and state farms, and the elimination of the individual family farm. But it is only in the last ten or fifteen years that farming as a whole has been put on anything like a par with other sectors of the

Women working inside a collective farm (*SCR*)

economy, and it is only in this period that agricultural production has substantially increased.

Agriculture continues to rely on the relatively lavish use of labour. In the case of grain, for example, it takes six times as many men in Russia to produce a ton of grain as in the USA – the yield is about the same, roughly a third of that we achieve in this country. The continued insecurity of Soviet crop farming is reflected in a Soviet witticism. Lenin's famous definition of Communism as 'Soviet power plus electrification' has now become 'Soviet power plus Canadian wheat'. But, of course, one has to point to the fact that despite the creation of Soviet Russia in hostile conditions, despite the intervention of the early years and the massive blunder of collectivisation and the disasters of the Second World War, Russian farming has proved itself sufficiently viable to maintain the vast industrialisation programme which has been carried through. By concentrating all their efforts, the Russians were able to give us the word 'Sputnik'; but at the same time, that concentration, that single-minded devotion to the development of an industry which was going to catch up and overtake the industrial West, probably resulted, until the last decade, in the town/country split in Russia being as wide as ever before. All this raises the fundamental question: have the efforts to industrialise been worthwhile from the point of view of the mass of the Russian population?

Table 5 *Per Capita Consumption of Selected Items by Rural Population*
(cwt. p.a.)

	Grain	*Potatoes*	*Fruit and Vegetables*	*Meat and Animal Products*	*Milk and Milk Products*	*Sugar*	*Tea*	*Vodka and Alcohol (pints)*
Early 20th century	5·04	2·90	1·19	0·44	2·20	0·07	0·005	5·6
1940	3·98	2·66	0·91	0·31	2·80	0·05	0·004*	8·3†
1960	3·70	3·31	1·16	0·59	4·49	0·34	0·008*	8·1†
1968	3·39	2·97	1·28	0·73	5·28	0·65	—	14·72†

* Consumption per capita of urban and rural population
† Production per capita of urban and rural population, so not comparable with the earlier figure

If you look at Table 5 you will get some idea of the broad changes in the diet of the Russian countryman over the Soviet period. The diet has been modernised. There is less grain consumed, more fruit, vegetables and meat, at least some of lower quality (Soviet battery animals are no better than ours). The consumption of milk and milk products has more than doubled. More than ten times as much sugar is eaten as in 1940; but, of course, if as a consequence you develop diabetes, now there is probably a doctor around to look after you. If all else fails, there appears to be plenty of opportunity to turn to drink.

CHAPTER 11

Literature and the Arts

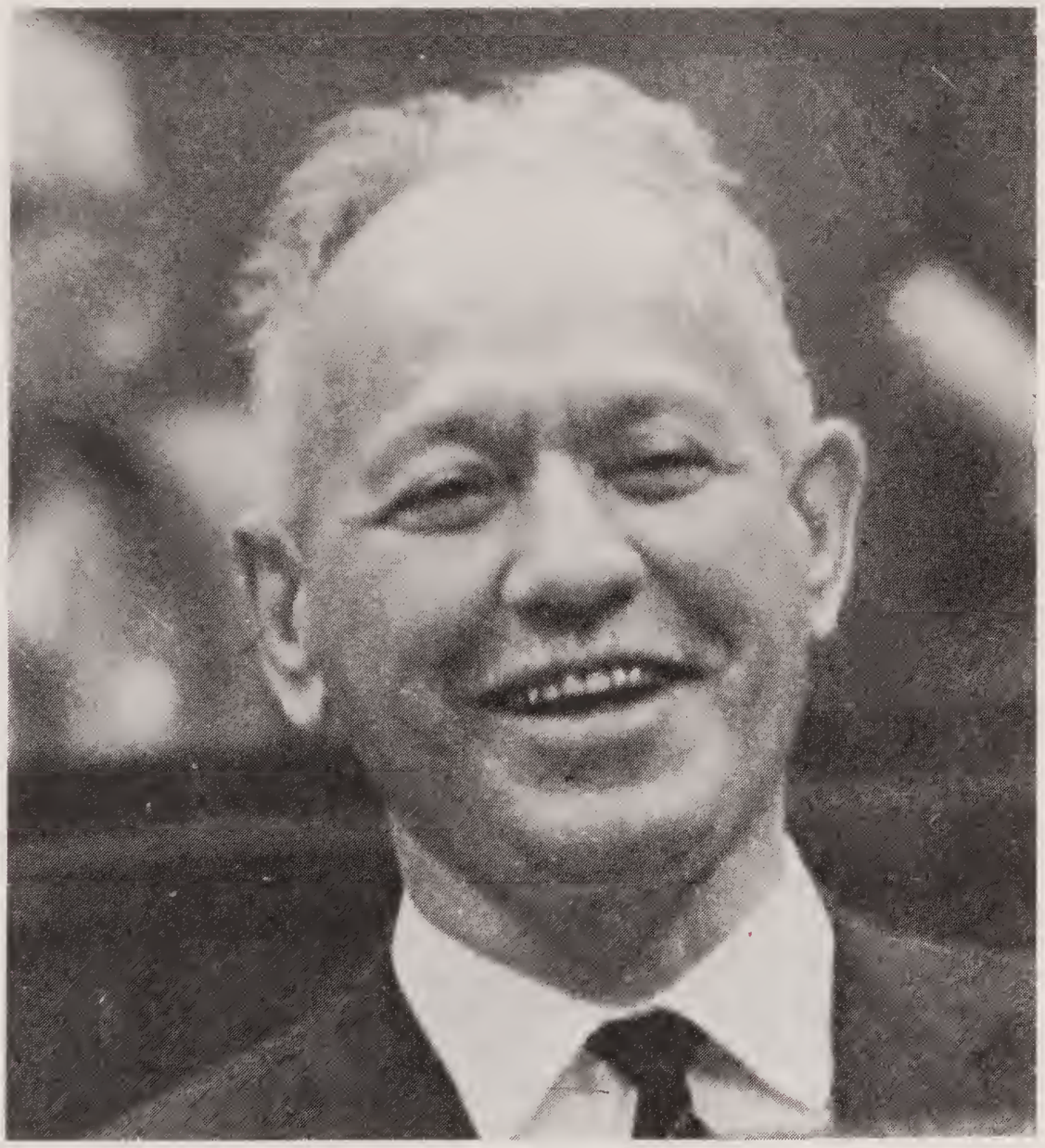
by
G. S. Smith

This discussion will be confined to the literature and culture of the Russian-speaking part of the USSR. Though this culture is the dominant one in the country as a whole, it should not be forgotten that Soviet culture exists in terms of scores of languages and artistic traditions, some of which pre-date Russian culture, and others which have emerged from the pre-literate stage only since 1917. Russian culture dominates partly because of the numerical ascendancy of Russian speakers and their wide geographical distribution among the nationalities whose republics constitute the USSR, partly because of the prestige of Russian cultural achievements both before and after 1917, and partly because Russian is for historical and political reasons the common language of the USSR, understood by educated people of all nationalities and dominating the media of communication. Officially, there are supposed to be no contradictions between the cultures of the constituent nationalities of the USSR in respect of content and method, so this limitation can be justified to some extent. This discussion will also be confined to the cultural scene of the last ten years, which means that some of the most interesting issues about Soviet culture will not be raised: for instance, the question of the extent to which it is a new phenomenon, the result of an unprecedented social and political order rather than a continuation of pre-Revolutionary tradition; and the question of the extent to which the development of Soviet culture reflects the historical phases through which the USSR has passed since 1917.

STATE CONTROL

The central, inescapable fact about Soviet culture, the point from which all discussion of it must begin, is that it is, with only insignificant exceptions, under the economic control of the state, like all other means

of production and exchange in the Soviet economy. Literature and the arts form part of the planned economy of the USSR, and they compete for state resources, formulate five-year plans, and are subject to political decisions in the same way as other sectors of the economy. General policy decisions concerning the arts can be, and are, taken at the highest level of the state apparatus, the Politburo. These decisions are customarily published in the leading newspapers as resolutions of the Central Committee and, as in other spheres of Soviet life, they effectively have the status of law. The Agitation and Propaganda Department of the Central Committee and the Party groups within the various organisations concerned with cultural affairs have the task of seeing that these decisions are publicised and take effect. In specific terms, the 'Party line', which is what these decisions express, is the first point of reference for those in day-to-day control of cultural affairs, such as editors and the repertoire departments of theatres and film studios, in deciding what to accept, what not to accept, what to commission and what to promote. The political and ideological factor takes precedence over commercial and



Mikhail Sholokhov, famous Soviet writer and Nobel Prize winner (*SCR*)

artistic considerations; the fact that a Soviet author is published in frequent and massive editions is not necessarily an indication that his books are being bought and read.

But it is not only broad policy decisions that are taken at the top level of government. There are several well-attested, if exceptional, examples of specific cases being decided at this level. The decision to allow publication of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* in 1963 was made by Nikita Khrushchev; and it was presumably Khrushchev's subsequent negative statement about the theme of this work that made editors refuse to publish the 10,000 (Khrushchev's figure) other novels and stories of concentration camp life that were submitted for publication after *Ivan Denisovich* appeared. Viktor Nekrasov has stated that certain changes were made in the film *The Soldiers*, based on his Stalin Prize-winning novel *Frontline Stalingrad*, at the personal behest of Marshal Zhukov.

CONTROL BY PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The idea that the top political leadership exercises monolithic control over the arts has, however, been questioned by the novelist and critic Arkadii Belinkov. He argues that the leadership seeks and acts on advice from the top men in the various professional organisations. These organisations – the Unions of Writers, Composers, Artists, Architects, Journalists, Cinematographic Workers and the All-Union Theatrical Society – constitute the most important mechanism through which control over the arts is exercised. To a large extent, the opportunity to engage in professional artistic activity in the USSR is conditional upon membership of the appropriate organisation. They are centralised and bureaucratic; they hold Congresses every so often, but in practice they are controlled by their central secretariats, which as in the case of other parallel Soviet institutions include a Party group. While the chairmen of the professional organisations tend to be people who have made a significant contribution (however far back in the past) in the appropriate sphere of the arts, the members of the secretariats are almost always individuals for whom a nominal contribution has provided the stepping-stone to the exercise of their bureaucratic vocation.

The Union of Writers is the most powerful and the best known of the professional organisations. It is organised on a regional basis, and within its regional structure into committees corresponding to various kinds of literature – prose, poetry, criticism, translation. Work in progress can be submitted to these committees for discussion, and a favourable response is a useful factor in moving a work towards publication. We are fortunate enough to have a detailed account of this process at work, though in an exceptional case, that of Solzhenitsyn's *Cancer Ward*. This discussion, and the other dealings between Solzhenitsyn and the Union of Writers of

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, another Nobel Prize winner, now exiled from the Soviet Union (*Press Association*)

The Soviet Writers' Union receives the Order of Lenin (*SCR*)

which documentation has been published (see Bibliography), provide an invaluable insight into the operations and structure of the professional organisation.

The Union of Writers is a rich organisation, and has at its disposal scarce and desirable facilities like restaurants, clubs, sanatoria; membership is a path to a comfortable and privileged life. It has a large say in granting permission for foreign travel. It administers the Literary Fund (*Litfond*), money accumulated from fixed-scale deductions from royalty payments and made available to members when the need arises – for example, to support themselves while working on a project. The Union of Writers controls the most prestigious literary periodicals (*Novy Mir*, *Oktyabr'*, *Voprosy literatury*) and the major literary publishing house, *Sovetskii pisatel'*. It goes without saying that these resources are less likely to be forthcoming to unreliables, and taken together, they constitute the most powerful set of incentives making for co-operation between writer and state. The situation is similar in the other arts.

CONTROL BY CENSORSHIP

A further major instrument of control is censorship. Nothing can be published in the USSR unless it has been passed by the institution known as 'Glavlit' (or simply 'Lit'), the censor's office. The system is that the copy for any publication is submitted to Glavlit, whose representative goes through it and indicates what can and what cannot be published. The necessary changes are made, and the revised version is resubmitted to be checked and then stamped and signed. Only with this stamp and signature will the printer accept it for reproduction. The Glavlit representatives work by reference to what is colloquially known as the 'Talmud', a manual listing topics that cannot be mentioned in public print.

The Glavlit stamp and signature is by no means the first nor the last stage in the process of censorship. Before any work gets to the stage of submission to Glavlit it must pass through the hands of many other cultural overseers. It is obvious that since a writer knows very well that if his work is to be published in the USSR it will eventually land on the desk of the Glavlit censor, he is going to be conditioned by this knowledge in the process of composition; this self-censorship is the most subtle and insidious element in the mesh of controls. Writers have a shrewd idea of what will pass and what probably will not, and they act accordingly. It is quite likely that many writers *think* accordingly, and even that conforming has become subconscious and natural after so many years of the system's existence, just as writers in other societies are spontaneously guided by their instinct for what is commercially viable.

In the USSR, as in Russia before 1917, works of fiction normally appear in periodicals before they come out as books, and it is to the

editorial board of a periodical that literary works are normally submitted in the first instance. Editorial boards contain the usual Party group whose job it is to see that the Party line is observed. Though a determined and courageous chief editor, like Tvardovskii of *Novy Mir* during the 1960s, can exercise an influence in shaping the 'profile' of the journal, his position is precarious and dependent upon political factors. A manuscript coming into the office of a journal is passed to sub-editors and readers, who make a first set of revisions in consultation with the author. It is said by Soviet writers that the subtlest literary minds in the world are to be found in the ranks of these sub-editors; their advice is by no means always negative. Besides exercising the normal functions of cutting and stylistic supervision, sub-editors are the leading experts in finding the form of words that will get delicate passages through without sacrificing too much of the author's thought. The sub-edited manuscript then goes before the editorial board for further discussion and, if necessary, alteration. Only then is the work set up and the copy submitted to Glavlit.

But even when all these stages have been passed and the work appears, all is not necessarily well. There is also post-publication censorship. A published work can be pounced on by critics, or, even worse, singled out for adverse comment by a government spokesman: in extreme cases this can result in the withdrawal of the work from libraries and a ban on its sale; and the author's next work will be treated with extra caution. Post-publication censorship applies most noticeably in the field of the cinema and music, where the suppression of performance is much easier than the seizure of published copies of a book or periodical. And it should not be forgotten that censorship applies not only to Soviet-produced works, but also to the selection of foreign works for translation or exhibition in the USSR. English-speaking people who make contact with Soviet teachers of their language go through the trauma of realising that for them our leading modern writers are Galsworthy and Aldridge (Soviet teachers in turn recoil from Western syllabuses of modern Russian literature). Censorship applies as strictly to the past as it does to the present, so that certain periods in the history of Russian literature and art are almost unknown in their native country outside a very small circle of privileged specialists.

There are certain loopholes in the system apart from the ones caused by the clumsiness of the system itself, the sheer volume of material published and normal human fallibility. One of them is the device of not publishing in Moscow or Leningrad, but sending your work to a Russian-language journal in a non-Russian peripheral republic. It will not circulate very widely, but at least it will be in print.

SOCIALIST REALISM, THE AUTHOR AND THE READER

Perhaps the crucial difference between Soviet and Western censorship

lies in the fact that where Western censorship is almost exclusively *pro*scriptive, Soviet censorship and the controls that go with it are also *pre*scriptive; an artist is told what he should do as well as what he should not. What he should do is laid down in the general policy of the Party in the field of artistic creation, as expressed – or enshrined – in the doctrine of Socialist Realism. There are several definitions of Socialist Realism, ranging from the official: 'the truthful, historically concrete presentation of reality in its revolutionary development' combined with 'the task of the ideological remaking and education of the workers in the spirit of socialism' – to the cynical: 'Socialist Realism is praising the leaders in language they themselves can understand.' It is futile to try and understand Socialist Realism in aesthetic terms; it is ultimately a political formula, a way of saying that the creative artist should represent life in the way the Party wants it represented at any given time, and that the ultimate loyalty of the artist is to the state rather than his art. The variety of aesthetic systems in Soviet culture at the present time is certainly too wide to be understood within the confines of realism; but although by and large only lip-service is now paid to the aesthetic aspect of the doctrine, its political aspect has certainly not been eroded.

Apart from prescription, there is another significant difference between the artistic process in the USSR and the West. In the West, what is read by the reader, seen by the viewer and heard by the concert-goer is the result of a long series of compromises involving artists, producers, editors, accountants, backers, lawyers and agents, all of whom have their own motives and interests. But the author almost always has several alternative channels through which he can get his work to the public, and can choose the one that will interfere least with his purpose. The Soviet author is faced with a much more monolithic system, and in the USSR artistic works are compromises to a greater extent than in the West; it is never possible to be certain how far the final product represents the author's intention – assuming, that is, that there is a final product at all, and that it has not foundered somewhere within the control system or been dismissed as unrealisable at the moment of conception. This affects the way people read and see and listen. They understand what hoops have been jumped through in order to get the work out, and that what is not there is probably as significant as what is. Soviet readers are to the Western mind almost incredibly sophisticated in this respect; they take nothing at its face value, and are capable of conducting debates in language that to the non-Soviet person is a mass of clichés and evasions, but to them is fraught with quite specific, though unmentionable, detail. And there are writers sufficiently gifted to exploit this skill of their readers.

FORM AND CONTENT IN THE SOVIET ARTS

What are the wider effects of the system of control in terms of the form

and content of artistic works produced inside the USSR? In general, it must be said that the arts in the USSR are backward and conservative in formal terms. One of the permanent yardsticks of Soviet criticism is whether or not the work in question will be comprehensible and morally beneficial to the average person. This objective, understandable and praiseworthy in a context of mass literacy only recently achieved, when institutionalised has the effect of stultifying experiment and producing a uniform middle-brow art, and of preventing the existence of an *avant garde* whose experimentation would revivify the mainstream. It is usually technical experimentation that Soviet critics have in mind when they reach for their favourite bogy-word 'formalism'. Many Soviet writers and artists are privately ashamed of the extent to which their culture has been divorced from the European context since the 1930s, are irked by the technical limitations within which they are obliged to work, and are acutely embarrassed by insistent official proclamations about the leading role played by the USSR in the field of world culture. However, formal conservatism is by no means entirely the product of official interference; it is also a manifestation of the genuine concern of Russian intellectuals that their work should communicate, should be accessible to a wide audience rather than a privileged elite; it is worth noting that 'unofficial' art in Russia is not formally experimental to any large extent – the novels of Solzhenitsyn provide a good example. In the context of the controls described above, plain speaking is the most daringly experimental technique possible.

In the period since the Revolution, Russia has made vital contributions to the arts in four main areas. The first, non-representational painting and sculpture, was largely a legacy from the pre-Revolutionary period. The second was in the theatre, where Soviet directors during the 1920s developed non-realistic techniques of presentation that are still a powerful force in world drama. The third was in the cinema, and particularly in the work of Eisenstein, with his development of montage, the close-up and the crowd scene. The fourth was in the art of the poster. Significantly all these developments took place in the 1920s, and they were suppressed – or, as the apologists would say, superseded – in their country of origin with the rise of Stalinism. Perhaps only poster art has retained the vitality and immediacy of the earlier period, though the messages often seem hypocritical. The effect of the control system since it was instituted effectively in the 1930s has been the overwhelming predominance of variations on a few officially sanctioned themes: the vast iconography of Lenin, the heroic aspects of the last war, psychologically stable and physically robust workers and peasants building Communism, the leading role of the Party in all aspects of life. Along with these things goes extreme prudishness in the treatment of sexual themes and a Victorian attitude to language. In these two respects, however, as with technical experimentation, it may well be that official intolerance reflects

A poster of the 1920s, designed by D. Moor. The caption reads: 'Have you joined the volunteers?'

Visual art of the 1920s – a book cover designed by S. Chekhonin, for the II Congress of the Communist International

genuinely widespread assumptions about propriety in art, for it is remarkable that unofficial art also tends to avoid eroticism and low language. The most vital unofficial art form in Soviet society is the political rather than the sexual anecdote.

Does the wholesale interference with artistic creation matter in any real sense? For the majority of readers and writers it probably does not. In the USSR, just as in the West, most of the people active in the arts are craftsmen doing a job in the same way as other people make shoes, clothes and furniture. They produce what they know can be sold without difficulty and provide them with a living, and they do this without cynicism or compromising their integrity; they simply do a job of work according to the requirements and preferences of the customer or sponsor in the West, and the Party in the USSR, and their personal fulfilment is related to the degree of professionalism in the execution of the job. It would be a difficult task to establish whether it is the demands of the customer or of the Party that produce the worst art: the essential difference is that the arts are serving two different kinds of demand. And for the majority of the population in West and East the matter is of little consequence, since what they desire is escape and entertainment rather than art, and these things can more easily be found in the spectator sports (notably ice hockey in the case of the USSR), and most easily of all in drink.

'Leniniana' – a display of books by Lenin in various languages. Lenin displays are very much a feature of Soviet bookshops (*SCR*)

UNOFFICIAL CULTURE

But the majority is not everybody, and there is another side to the story. The threshold of toleration in cultural affairs in the U S S R at present is a low one, but it is still considerably higher than it was twenty-five years ago. Creative artists are subjected to many varieties of persecution if they go against the system, but they are not now as a rule physically exterminated, nor is it as necessary as it once was to be vociferously for the system. But the remarkable fact is that in spite of the forty-year-old system of control and the concentration of resources in state hands, there are still artists to be found who will not toe the line. This was true even in the worst years of Stalinism; during the 1930s and 1940s there were men like Mandelshtam, Bulgakov and Shvarts, who wrote non-conformist work with no hope of publication and with the very real risk of arrest and death. And though much has been destroyed, there have always been individuals of sufficient dedication to take on themselves the arduous and self-sacrificing task of preserving the work of such men. In the last three years, the state has begun to use expulsion rather than imprisonment as a punishment for the dissident artist; and the daunting prospect of exile has not deterred such people as Solzhenitsyn, Maksimov, Nekrasov, Brodsky, Galich and Sinyavsky – to mention first-rank writers alone – from holding fast to their vision of truth.

The U S S R has a substantial alternative artistic tradition to the official one. People copy and disseminate officially unacceptable works of literature (*samizdat* – 'self-publishing') and songs on magnetic tape (*magizdat* – 'tape-recorder publishing'). Manuscripts are sent abroad for publication (*tamizdat* – 'publishing over there'), though this form of publishing has been more limited since the Soviet Union signed the Universal Copyright Convention in 1973. Unpublished and suppressed works are broadcast back to the U S S R (*radizdat* – 'radio publishing') and reach a wide audience. But whereas works of literature can be copied, if only in relatively small numbers, paintings exist in one copy, which will remain unknown if not exhibited; the performance of music involves large numbers of people, and of dramatic works yet more; film making requires expensive technical equipment and skilled labour. The written and sung word can bypass the official network to a degree unattainable by the other arts. But compared with the massive circulation figures of officially printed books and the degree of exposure available to an officially sponsored film, play, picture or sculpture, *samizdat* and its analogues must remain a drop in the ocean, available to a tiny proportion of the population; and without a breach in the economic monopoly of the state, or the end of insistence by the Party on a monolithic and totalitarian ideology, it is difficult to see how this situation can be radically changed.

Underlying the system of controls is a factor which forms the cardinal

difference between the situation of the arts in the USSR and the West. The situation in the USSR arises as a result of an age-old Russian conviction that the artistic word and image are potent forces in social and political life, forces that can be ignored by government only at its own peril. The artist must be taken seriously. In the West there is often to be found among intellectuals an attitude to this situation (or predicament) that is tinged with masochistic jealousy. Is it preferable to be persecuted but taken seriously or to be free to speak but ignored? Perhaps artistic freedom can only be permitted when the arts have a negligible social and political resonance. The government of the USSR acts on the assumption that the arts could undermine the state; it has not so far been prepared to test whether or not this assumption has any validity, and seems undeterred in its pursuit of conformity despite the opprobrium it earns abroad and the clear evidence that there will always be artists whom persecution cannot break, and regimentation cannot control.

CHAPTER 12

Foreign Policy

by
M. V. Glenny

THE BACKGROUND

Probably the single most far-reaching outcome of the First World War was the emergence of a new state – the Russian Soviet Republic – out of the ruins of the Russian Empire. From its creation in 1917 the Soviet state was not only something entirely new in world politics; it also seemed to be a paradox: a state founded on a doctrine which predicted the eventual dissolution of all states. In the conception of its makers, the very existence of Soviet Russia presupposed the inevitable collapse of capitalism in its imperialist phase. Lenin had characterised this system as being cannibalistic and bound to destroy itself – externally by war in the struggle for markets and colonial possessions, internally by revolution. Nor were the Bolshevik leaders of the October Revolution under any illusions as to the hostility of the capitalist states towards the Soviet Republic and they believed (at least until Lenin's death in 1924) that Communism in Russia was unlikely to survive unless revolution spread from there to the advanced industrial countries of the West, starting with Germany. The basis for this belief was Marx's theory of 'revolutionary internationalism' – the idea that 'the proletariat has no fatherland', that the interests of the working class transcend national boundaries, and that these boundaries will vanish one by one as the Communist revolution spreads like an epidemic from country to country. Together with the conviction that the capitalist world was ripe for collapse from its own inherent 'contradictions' (analysed by Lenin in his important theoretical work *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*), this formed the basis of the new Soviet state's attitude to the outside world. It will be seen that these views came to be modified in the course of time.

This modification occurred largely for two reasons. The first and negative reason was the failure of the expected proletarian revolution to

Peace Conference at Brest-Litovsk, 1918. Soviet delegates (Kamenev, Joffe and Trotsky) meet their counterparts *(RT Hulton)*

develop in the industrial societies of Western Europe and North America; as a result, the capitalist system of states did not collapse like a row of dominoes as Lenin and his colleagues had prophesied. When the two other major Communist revolutions eventually did succeed much later, they occurred not in the advanced industrialised countries with a large, organised, urban working class, but in huge underdeveloped China (1949) and tiny poverty-stricken Cuba (1959), whose populations (like that of Russia herself in 1917) consist overwhelmingly of peasants. The second and more positive cause of the change in the Soviet Union's view of itself and the outside world was the massive shift in global power-relationships which began in the 1930s and has been evolving ever since. From being extremely weak and vulnerable in 1920, when she was attacked and almost beaten by Poland, the Soviet Union grew in economic and military strength by giant strides until she obtained effective military parity with the USA by exploding her own atomic bomb in 1953. Since then the USSR has remained a very close number two to the USA in the world super-power league and is likely to stay in that place for the foreseeable future.

THE CAPITALIST WORLD VERSUS RUSSIA (1918–20)

Soviet Russia's début on the international scene was a very humiliating occasion. Defeated by Germany and obliged to sue for peace in order to

stop the Germans from advancing into the heart of Russia, Lenin's government had no option but to sign the harsh, dictated Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 in which the Soviets were in effect forced to buy time by ceding massive areas of territory (Fig. 19). Lenin regarded this as grim proof of his belief in the incorrigible rapacity of imperialism.

This view was further confirmed by the Civil War, which devastated Russia for the next three years. The Civil War was not only an internal struggle between the Communists and their counter-revolutionary adversaries. It also provoked the armed intervention of the USA, Britain, France, Italy and Japan, who made a muddled and ineffective attempt to remove the new Soviet regime by force. These years of almost universal foreign hostility backed by armed force left a permanent legacy of bitterness towards the capitalist world and suspicion of its intentions.

REVOLUTIONISM VERSUS DIPLOMACY (1921–7)

The restoration of peace in 1920 began a period in which Soviet Russia still believed in the possibility of the spread of revolution; after a few years, however, this prospect became so obviously unlikely that it was tacitly abandoned as a serious element of Soviet foreign policy. The period from 1921 to 1927 was marked by an often baffling contradiction in policies, in which Soviet Russia's 'right hand' often did not appear to

Fig. 19 Soviet frontier changes and expanding sphere of influence, 1921–77

know what its 'left hand' was doing. The 'left hand' was represented by the policy of fostering world revolution, of which the institutional form was the Third, or Communist International, usually called the Comintern. Founded in March 1919, the Comintern was originally meant to be the international directing body of worldwide Communist revolution; in theory it could give orders to the Soviet Communist Party just as to other national Communist Parties and it just happened to have its headquarters in Moscow. This was to some extent true until Lenin's death in 1924; subsequently, after a few uneasy years of interregnum in which gaining control of the Comintern became one of many possible moves in the internal power struggle for the Soviet leadership, the Comintern became in effect subservient to the winner of that struggle: Stalin. The 'left hand' – the Comintern – apparently did its best to subvert the governments of other states by supporting revolutionary Communist Parties all over the world. The Comintern had not exactly distinguished itself by its skill in promoting the cause of revolution outside the USSR. Perhaps its most unfortunate effort was to support the non-Communist Chinese Nationalist Party (the Kuomintang) led by Chiang Kai-shek. When ordered to cease opposing the Kuomintang and to collaborate with it, the Chinese Communists obeyed (under protest) and were massacred for their pains by Chiang Kai-shek in the cities of Shanghai and Canton in 1926 and 1927. A remnant escaped to the fastnesses of Central China, where they re-emerged twenty years later under Mao Tse-tung to seize power. But they did not forget the way the Soviet-run Comintern had treated them.

Meanwhile the 'right hand' of Soviet policy, i.e. the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (known by its Russian acronym of Narkomindel and functioning more or less like any other foreign office) was engaged in trying to conduct normal and tolerably friendly relations with foreign states. Chicherin, People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs in this period, was remarkably successful. By the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922 he secured a valuable accord with Germany which lasted until 1932. He also gained diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union from all the great powers except the USA, and concluded a number of useful trade treaties. After a decade in office Chicherin retired for reasons of ill-health in July 1930, and is remembered as one of the outstanding diplomatists of the 1920s.

THE LEFT PHASE (1928–33)

Stalin's accession to supreme power in 1928 marked the final triumph of the doctrine of 'Socialism in one country' which he had promulgated several years before. This marked the final abandonment of the notion of fostering world revolution as the prime aim of Soviet foreign policy; instead, Communists in every other country were called upon to regard

the national interests of the Soviet Union as identical with the cause of Communism itself. Paradoxically the dominant group in the Soviet Communist Party now expected, primarily as a consequence of the profound economic crisis which began in the capitalist world in 1929, that revolutionary upheavals would increase. The most unfortunate outcome of this 'Left turn' was that the German Communist Party was ordered *not* to form a political alliance with the Social Democrats, the non-Communist socialist party, against the rapidly growing threat of Hitler's Nazi Party. Many people believe that if the German Communists and Social Democrats had formed a united front in the late 1920s and early 1930s they could have succeeded in keeping the Nazis out of power; but Stalin and the dominant group in the Comintern regarded not the Nazis but the Social Democrats as the more serious rivals to the Communists for the allegiance of the German working class. The hope was that if the Nazis won, it would so provoke the German workers that they would rise in revolution and the Communists would take over control. This was a serious misjudgement, and Hitler came to power in 1933 with results that are well known.

COLLECTIVE SECURITY AND POPULAR FRONT (1934–9)

Stalin soon realised his mistake over Hitler. He was also alarmed by the earlier Japanese annexation of Manchuria in 1931, which was uncomfortably close to Soviet Siberia. These considerations now produced a further 'about turn' in the policy of the Comintern, which by now was no more than an instrument of Soviet foreign policy. The Comintern was instructed to promote first the 'United Front' between Communist Parties outside the USSR and the Social Democratic Parties, and then the 'People's Front', which was intended as a wider alliance with opponents of fascism to halt its progress. The Narkomindel, under the new Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Litvinov, simultaneously started to cultivate friendly relations with the potentially anti-fascist powers of the West, a development already given an impetus by the recognition of the Soviet Union by the United States in 1933. As an integral part of this policy, in 1934 the USSR joined the League of Nations (the forerunner of the United Nations in the interwar years), which it had hitherto boycotted, but now regarded as a suitable forum in which to drum up international resistance to European fascism and Japanese militarism. For the next four years Litvinov tried without much success to form an anti-fascist bloc between the Western powers and the USSR, a policy known by the name of 'collective security'. The West, however, and Britain in particular, were too suspicious of Soviet intentions and too prone to appease Hitler, who proceeded step by step – the militarisation of the Rhineland (1936), the annexation of Austria (1938) – to put his aggressive aims into effect. Soviet support of the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War

(1936–8) proved ineffective; Franco took power and installed yet another fascist regime to join those of Italy and Germany. In 1937 Japan launched an undeclared war on China. At last even Britain grew alarmed when in 1939 Hitler broke the 1938 Munich Agreement (by which he had agreed to limit his territorial claims in Czechoslovakia to the ethnically German border region of Sudetenland) and annexed the whole of Czechoslovakia. Belatedly and half-heartedly Britain and France began negotiating for a mutual assistance pact with the USSR.

SOVIET–GERMAN ALLIANCE (1939–41)

Even before Anglo-Soviet talks about a pact began, Litvinov (who was a Jew and therefore unsuitable for dealing with Hitler) was sacked and replaced by Molotov, who started secret talks with Germany; on 23 August 1939 the German–Soviet Non-Aggression Treaty was signed. This freed Hitler's hands to attack Poland on 1 September 1939. The Second World War thus began with the USSR in an attitude of benevolent neutrality towards Germany. A fortnight later, in accordance with a secret clause in the German–Soviet pact, Stalin moved into Eastern Poland, and in 1940 took over the Baltic States (Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania) and re-annexed Bessarabia from Romania, a region which had been Russian until 1918. By these moves Stalin went a considerable way towards re-establishing the western frontiers of Russia as they had been

Red Army men covering prisoners emerging from a German dugout, December 1942 (*RT Hulton*)

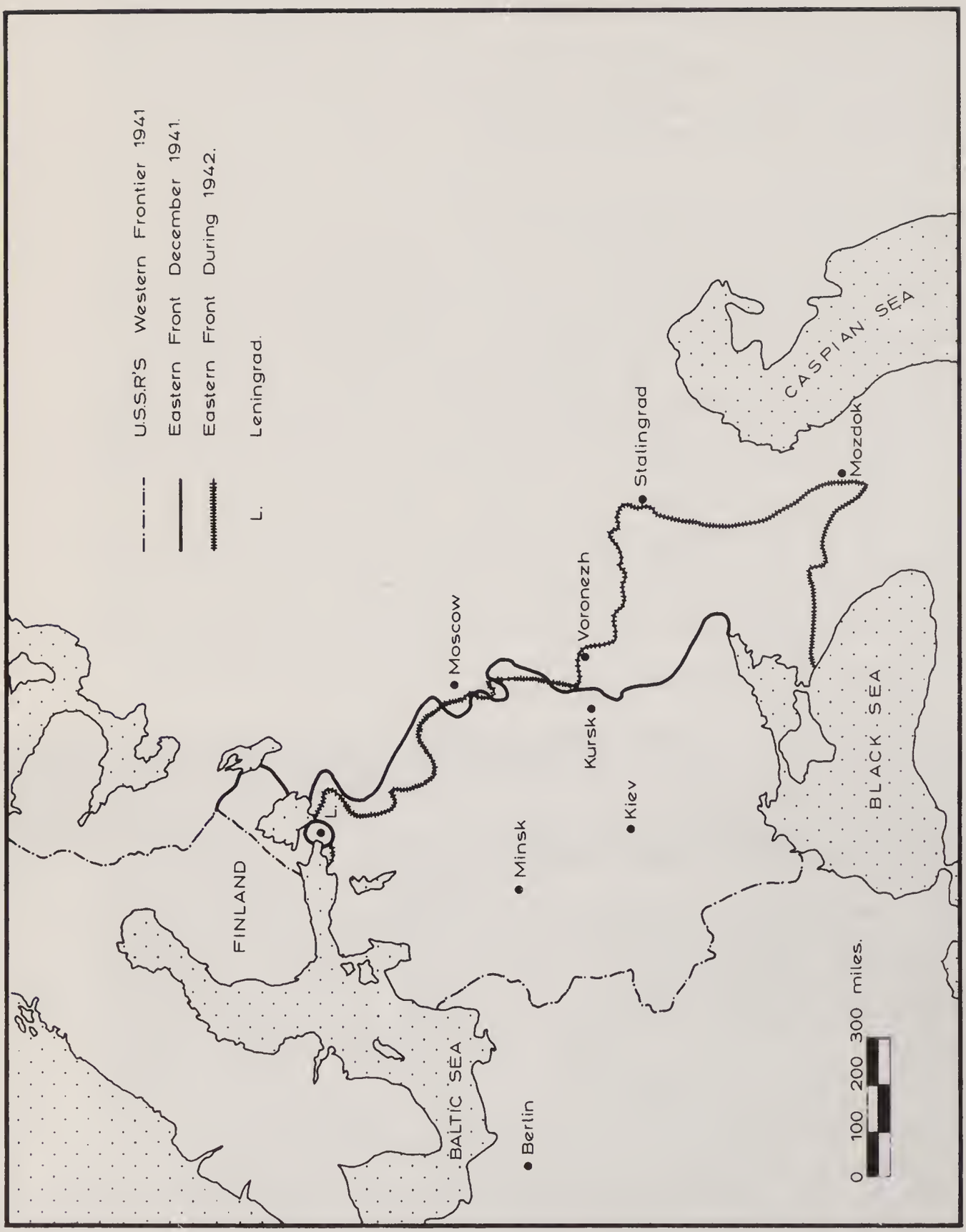


Fig. 20 German invasion of the USSR, 1941–5

before her defeat in 1918 (Fig. 19).

ALLIANCE WITH THE WEST (1941–6)

Although in retrospect it seems hard to believe, Stalin appears to have trusted Hitler to keep his word and observe the Non-Aggression Pact; in consequence the U S S R was badly unprepared when Hitler unleashed an unprovoked, undeclared war on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. Since Britain was the only other European power fighting Germany, an alliance of necessity was now concluded between Stalin and Winston Churchill's Coalition Government. When the U S A declared war on Germany and Italy soon after she was attacked by Japan at Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the wartime alliance of the so-called 'Big Three' against the fascist powers was completed.

In the Far Eastern theatre of war, however, the Soviet Union did not declare war on Japan until the last weeks of hostilities in 1945; this non-involvement in the fighting against Japan was a prudent strategic measure which enabled Soviet forces to be concentrated against the German onslaught in the west. After nearly two years of hard-fought battle, in which at the peak of their advance the German forces reached Stalingrad on the Volga, came within gunshot of the outer suburbs of Moscow and besieged Leningrad (Fig. 20), by a colossal effort the Soviets started to beat the Germans back at the end of 1942. Finally, as a

Stalin as international statesman. Here he is presented by Churchill with the sword of state, a gift to the people of Stalingrad (Tehran, November 1943) (*SCR*)

result of a savage and destructive war fought largely on Russian territory, in which the Red Army suffered the heaviest casualties of any Allied army, in May 1945 the victorious Soviet troops halted facing the American and British armies across the River Elbe in the middle of Germany.

In political terms the outcome of the Second World War was a triumph for Stalin. In addition to regaining the Baltic states and the former Polish and Romanian territories lost in the German advance, the Soviet Union also annexed parts of Finland, Eastern Czechoslovakia, and the eastern half of East Prussia. At the Yalta Conference in February 1945 the 'Big Three' met to decide on postwar spheres of influence; there Stalin ensured that Soviet control of Eastern Europe should be complete, and, with the exception of Yugoslavia and Albania, that control is still in force to this day. Communist rule, which never spread beyond Soviet Russia's European frontiers by spontaneous evolution, as Lenin hoped it would, was instead exported by Stalin in the wake of the beaten Germans and imposed by military force (Fig. 19).

COLD WAR (1947–54)

After Yalta, and the Potsdam Conference held in the summer of 1945, the wartime allies soon fell out, and from 1947, when President Truman decided that Soviet expansion had gone far enough and proclaimed the 'Truman Doctrine' of 'containing Communism', there began the period of grim East–West rivalry known as the Cold War. Starting with the Communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia in 1948 and the blockade of West Berlin in the same year, the stakes were raised again and again as the two sides hovered on the brink of a 'hot' war. To put up a united front, the Western powers pooled their armed forces in NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

At the same time (1948) Soviet policy received another challenge: angered by Stalin's bullying treatment, Yugoslavia, under its tough and independent-minded leader Marshal Tito, broke away from the Soviet ring of so-called 'satellite' states in Eastern Europe. This defection, however, appeared to be more than outweighed by a great access of power to the Soviet side when Mao Tse-tung led the Chinese Communists to victory in 1949 and signed an alliance with Stalin in February 1950. It was in that year, too, that Truman's policy of 'containing Communism' was put to its most severe test when a 'hot war' broke out in Korea between China (with strong Soviet backing) and the Western powers – a war that lasted until 1953. In the meantime, the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe was further cemented by the military alliance of the Warsaw Pact, created as a response to NATO. Thus, by 1953, the year of Stalin's death and only eight years after the end of the Second World War, an apocalyptic nuclear war between the seemingly monolithic bloc of Communist powers and the West seemed a distinct possibility.

Czechoslovakia fell into the Soviet sphere of influence in the aftermath of the Second World War. Here Molotov signs a treaty of friendship with the Communist leaders of that country (*SCR*)

COEXISTENCE: THE KHRUSHCHEV PHASE (1955–64)

Fortunately matters did not come to war, and in the world at large the interregnum between the death of Stalin and Khrushchev's accession to undisputed Soviet leadership in 1955 was a time of uneasy stalemate between the highly polarised power-blocs of East and West. When Khrushchev began effectively to direct Soviet foreign policy, however, it soon became clear that his style was to be very different from the unabashed tactics of great-power expansion as practised by Stalin. Soviet external policies became a great deal more flexible, but also much less predictable. Viewed overall, Khrushchev's most positive action was to begin the thawing-out process which put an end to the Cold War, a move initiated in 1955 when he announced a new Soviet doctrine of competitive but peaceful coexistence with the capitalist powers – actually the revival of a policy first formulated by Chicherin in the early 1920s. At the same time the relaxing effect of Khrushchev's internal political campaign

of 'de-Stalinisation', launched in 1956 at the XX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, also loosened the Soviet grip on the satellite states of Eastern Europe. Poland and Hungary gave voice to their discontent with Soviet dominance. In Poland this crisis was resolved without bloodshed, but Hungarian defiance evoked a tough Soviet response in which the anti-Soviet movement was crushed by armed force.

Still more negative from the Soviet viewpoint, though of immense consequence for the global equilibrium of power, was Khrushchev's action in terminating the Soviet alliance with China in 1958–60. The details of the ending of the Sino-Soviet alliance are complex and to some extent still obscure. Both sides tended to conduct the dispute in ideological terms, concealing the more specific issues of great-power politics which are bones of contention between the erstwhile allies. Western analysts believe that a high-handed Soviet attitude towards economic aid to China, coupled with Khrushchev's refusal to impart certain vital secrets relating to the development of nuclear weapons, were the fundamental causes of the rupture. Since then the two great Communist powers have pursued diverging and often antagonistic roles in international affairs, a situation whose full effects are only now beginning to be felt.

Scene from an international conference of Communist Parties in Moscow (*SCR*)

Nor in this period of the late 1950s and early 1960s were the USSR's relations with the Western powers entirely free of alarums and excursions. Despite his policy of 'peaceful coexistence', Khrushchev was often erratic and unpredictable, perhaps due to his need to play a balancing role between various factions or groupings within the Soviet leadership. It was probably as a reaction to criticism within the innermost councils of the Soviet Communist Party that he felt obliged to regain the diplomatic initiative for the USSR in August 1961 by putting up the Berlin Wall, which physically cut off the Soviet Eastern sector from the Western sectors of the divided city. He then took an even riskier step by shipping intercontinental missiles to Cuba; if installed, these weapons would have put virtually the whole of the USA within range of land-based Soviet rockets armed with nuclear warheads. This led to the Cuban crisis of October 1962, and again the world teetered on the brink of nuclear war. When President Kennedy's tough reaction obliged Khrushchev to climb down and remove the missiles from Cuba, Soviet prestige suffered a heavy blow – not least in China, who regarded this as evidence that the Soviet Union was incapable of standing up to the imperialist powers.

During the remaining two years of Khrushchev's tenure of office, the USSR's external policy was marked by greater caution, exemplified by Soviet signature of the nuclear test-ban treaty in 1963.

COEXISTENCE: THE BREZHNEV PHASE (1964–)

Since Khrushchev's fall in 1964, the triumvirate of Brezhnev, Kosygin and Podgorny (with Brezhnev increasingly in the leading role) has directed the main lines of Soviet foreign policy. Their major external commitment – already begun under Khrushchev when the USSR financed the building of Egypt's High Dam on the Nile at Aswan – has been to give aid, arms and support to the Arab states in their still-unresolved conflict with Israel. This flared up and led to the defeat of the Arab forces in the Six Day War of June 1967, and then broke out anew in October 1973. The Soviet motivation for their pro-Arab policy appears to be a compound of ideology, power politics and strategic considerations. In ideological terms the USSR regards the Arab countries as being too easy a prey for various forms of semi-colonial domination by the Western powers – unless the USSR takes measures to draw them into the Soviet sphere of influence. At the same time Israel is regarded as a threatening bridgehead of American imperialism in the Middle East. By enabling the Arabs to prevail over Israel, the Soviet Union hopes to become the dominant great power in that region; she could then exert a political stranglehold over the West's vital source of oil; since October 1973, however, the Arab states have taken this weapon firmly into their own hands. As a further consequence of befriending the Arab states, the USSR has at last overcome the obstacle which has cramped Russia's

foreign policy for well over a century: access to naval bases in the Mediterranean. By gaining naval bases in Syria, Egypt and Algeria, the Soviet Union has to a certain extent outflanked Turkey, the eastern bastion of NATO, and the Soviet Fleet is now in a position to challenge NATO's twenty-year control of the Mediterranean. Since July 1972, however, when President Sadat ordered the Soviets to leave most of their bases in Egypt, Soviet ability to influence and control Arab actions has been less than complete, and it is likely that the main lesson of the October 1973 Arab–Israeli War will be to demonstrate that the Soviet Union now puts a high priority on the need to maintain good relations with the USA – even if at the expense of certain of its Middle Eastern allies and client-states.

There is, however, one area where Soviet actions have shown unequivocally that the USSR is not prepared to concede a fraction of its entrenched interest. The Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, to suppress the reformist régime of Alexander Dubcek by force, was evoked by the Soviet Union's fears of an ideological rift within her vital East European sphere of influence. This move was justified retrospectively by the so-called 'Brezhnev Doctrine' of limited sovereignty within the Socialist camp – limited, that is, for any state unfortunate enough to be in striking distance of Soviet troops, though no such limitation applies to the sovereignty of the USSR.

Despite the rough Soviet handling of Czechoslovakia, the early 1970s have also witnessed an easing of certain tensions in the area of Central and Eastern Europe. Largely as a result of the initiative taken by Chancellor Brandt, the Soviet Union negotiated a détente with West Germany, the Federal Republic of Germany, in the form of a series of treaties in which the USSR settled a number of diplomatic scores which had been a source of irritation to her since 1945. By these treaties West Germany recognised the Oder–Neisse Line as the definitive frontier between East Germany and Poland; recognised East Germany (now more properly referred to as the German Democratic Republic) as a sovereign state; and acquiesced in the partition of East Prussia between Poland and the USSR. The two chief benefits offered to the FRG in exchange were a greatly increased share of Soviet foreign trade and improved access to the GDR for citizens of the FRG and West Berlin. By concluding these treaties the Soviet Union hopes to tap West German technological expertise through trade; to extinguish finally any claims to German reunification and to the restoration of the pre-1939 frontiers; and to lessen any potential military threat from West Germany as a NATO power.

Following on the pact with West Germany, two further initiatives – one stemming from the USSR, the other from the USA – have been undertaken in the slow and cautious process of dismantling the military and political structures of the Cold War. The first is what promises to be a lengthy and difficult series of negotiations leading to a European security

pact, by which NATO and the Warsaw Pact powers would agree to effect a 'mutual and balanced' reduction of their conventional (i.e. non-nuclear) armed forces in Europe, to be perhaps eventually guaranteed by an East–West non-aggression treaty.

Simultaneously, the USA and the USSR have entered negotiations in the so-called 'SALT' talks (SALT standing for Strategic Arms Limitation Talks), which if they are successful will result in the two nuclear super-powers agreeing to a mutual levelling-off and scaling-down of their respective arsenals of intercontinental ballistic missiles. These moves all form part of a broader, long-term trend in Soviet foreign policy under Brezhnev – namely, a far-reaching détente with the USA and the liquidation of the costly and outdated military postures of the Cold War.

Apart from the obvious benefits to be gained from better relations with Western Europe and the USA in the form of reduced military expenditure and increased trade, it is likely that their underlying cause is to be found in the unabated preoccupation of the USSR with the question of

Soviet aid to North Vietnam. The Soviet vessel *Ho Chi Minh*, out from Vladivostok, docks in Hanoi (*SCR*)

China. In the late 1960s relations between China and the Soviet Union became extremely tense as a result of border clashes along the Ussuri River in eastern Siberia, a region where China has long had territorial claims against Russia dating back to the days of Tsarist expansion in the nineteenth century, and since then there have been repeated rumours of more trouble along the Sino-Soviet frontier. The Soviet attempts to outflank China wherever possible in Asia have led the Soviet Union to cultivate the friendship of India, and for the same reasons (because China supported Pakistan) Soviet policy openly backed the state of Bangladesh which emerged from the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. The new Soviet–American *rapprochement*, symbolised by an exchange of visits between President Nixon and Brezhnev in 1972/3, was undoubtedly motivated to a great extent by Soviet alarm at the dramatic improvement of relations between the USA and China that has taken place since the ending of the war in Vietnam.

The Chinese question, which has for so long haunted Soviet foreign relations, continues to cause concern to the USSR. With another potential super-power in the form of the enlarged EEC beginning to emerge in Western Europe, and with China apparently liable to develop closer relations with both Japan and the USA, the signs are that the Soviets will have to reconsider their unfriendly attitude and come to terms with China too. The ghosts of the 1926 Canton–Shanghai Massacre are not yet laid to rest.

APPENDIX

Soviet History: Some Major Events

1861		Liberation of the serfs
1890s		First industrialisation drive
1894		Nicholas II succeeds to Imperial throne
1905		First Russian Revolution
1914		Outbreak of Great War
1916	December	Murder of Rasputin
1917	February–March	Revolution overthrows Tsar: establishes 'Dual Power'
	October–November	Revolution establishes Bolshevik or Soviet Government
1918	January	Constituent Assembly dissolved
	March	Treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed by Soviet Russia with Germany
1918–20		Civil War and Foreign Intervention
1919	March	Communist International founded
1921–9		New Economic Policy
1921	March	X Congress of Communist Party ends requisitioning of grain and bans 'groupings' within Party
1922		Rapallo Treaty signed by Soviet Russia with Germany
1923		Constitution of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics approved
1924	January	Death of Lenin
1926–7		Pre-First World War output of industry and agriculture restored. Chinese Communists defeated by Chiang Kai-shek

October 1928–December 1932		First five-year plan
End 1929		Drive to collectivise agriculture launched
1931		Japanese invasion of Manchuria
1933		Hitler comes to power in Germany
1933–7		Second five-year plan
1934		USSR joins League of Nations and supports Collective Security
1936–8		'Great Purges' or 'Yezhovshchina'
1936	December	'Stalin Constitution' adopted
1941	22 June	German invasion of USSR
1941	October	Moscow under siege
1942	November	Soviet victory at Stalingrad
1943	July	Soviet victory in Kursk tank battle
1945	9 May	Victory over Germany
1947–54		The 'Cold War'
1949		Pre-Second World War output of industry and agriculture restored. Chinese Communists victorious in Civil War
1953	March	Death of Stalin
1955–present		'Peaceful coexistence' with West
1957–65		Regional economic councils established
1960		Soviet economic and technical aid to China cancelled
1962	October	Cuban missile crisis
1964	October	Khrushchev replaced by Brezhnev and Kosygin
1965		The 'Kosygin' economic reform

GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

Bolsheviks	More revolutionary section, headed by Lenin, of Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (so called from the Russian word *bol'shinstvo* – majority, because they obtained a majority of the votes at the 1903 Congress)
Bourgeoisie (capitalist class)	In Marxist theory, the class which owns the means of production and exploits the proletariat (q.v.) under capitalism
Brezhnev, L. I.	General (formerly First) Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (the leading political figure), 1964–
Bukharin, N. I.	(1888–1938), Bolshevik leader, prominent intellectual in 1920s, headed Right opposition 1928–9, executed 1938
Communism	In Marxist theory, in the higher stage of Communism when goods are abundant, means of production will be publicly owned as under socialism (q.v.), distribution will be according to need not work done, and the distinctions between mental and manual labour and town and country will be abolished
Duma	Pre-Revolutionary parliament with limited powers and franchise, established 1906
Glavk (*glavnoe upravlenie*)	Chief administration, major sub-division of a Soviet ministry (plural glauki)
Glavlit (*Glavnoe literaturnoe upravlenie*)	Chief Literary Administration, the Soviet censorship office
GNP	Gross National Product
Gosplan (*Gosudarstvennaya planovaya komissiya*)	State Planning Commission
Intelligentsia	In Soviet terminology, refers to the white-collar workers or 'workers by brain', not engaged directly in production (usually refers only to those in this group with some professional or semi-professional skill)
Khrushchev, N. S.	(1894–1971), First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (the leading political figure) 1953–64; Chairman of Council of Ministers of USSR (= Prime Minister) 1957–64

Kosygin, A. I.	Chairman of Council of Ministers of USSR (= Prime Minister) 1964–
Lenin, V. I.	(1871–1924), Leader of Bolsheviks (q.v.), before and after October Revolution
Marx, Karl	(1818–83), Founder of scientific Communism
Marxism-Leninism	Soviet term for the official ideology of the Communist Party, from its founders Marx and Lenin
Mensheviks	Less revolutionary section of Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (from *men'shinstvo* – minority) – see Bolsheviks
NEP	New Economic Policy (Soviet policy introduced in 1921 permitting peasants freedom of trade on market, while continuing state ownership of large-scale industry)
Narkomindel (*Narodnyi komissariat inostrannykh del*)	People's Comissariat (= Ministry) of Foreign Affairs
Ob''edinenie	Association of group of enterprises, especially in industry (see Chapter 9)
Oblast'	Region (unit of local government within one of the fifteen Soviet republics)
Peter the Great (Peter I)	Tsar of Russia, 1682–1725; reformed and westernised Russia by brutal means, and hence often seen as precursor of Stalin
Politburo	Political bureau of Central Committee of Communist Party of the Soviet Union, responsible for major policy decisions
Proletariat (working-class)	In Marxist theory, the wage-earning class under capitalism; sells its labour-power to the bourgeoisie (q.v.) and is exploited by them
R and D	Research and development (see Chapter 8)
Rasputin, G.	'Holy man' from Siberia, preaching redemption through sin, strongly influential on Empress and Court 1905–16
Samizdat	'Self-publishing' (officially unacceptable writings, privately copied and disseminated in USSR)
Socialism	In Marxist theory, the first or lower stage of Communism (q.v.); factories, mines and other means of production are publicly owned, distribution is on the principle: 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his work'
Soviet	Russian word for council; originally the name of local revolutionary organs elected by workers, soldiers and peasants, now the name of local and

	central government organs in USSR
SRs	Socialist Revolutionaries (pre-Revolutionary pro-peasant party)
Stalin, I. V.	(1879–1953), General Secretary of Communist Party 1922–53 (dominant political leader from about 1928 to 1953)
Stolypin, P. A.	(1862–1911), Russian statesman, chairman of Council of Ministers 1906–11, suppressed revolution and carried out agrarian reforms, assassinated by SR terrorist who was also police agent
Tekhpromfinplan	The 'technical production and financial plan', the basic planning document of the industrial enterprise
Trotsky, L. D.	(1879–1940), Soviet revolutionary leader, People's Commissar for War 1918–25, headed Left opposition in 1920s, expelled from USSR 1929, murdered 1940
Tsar	Monarch (emperor) in pre-Revolutionary Russian Empire
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics – also known as the Soviet Union and (inaccurately) as Soviet Russia (the Russians similarly refer to Great Britain as 'England')
Vuz, pl. vuzy (*Vysshe uchebnoe zavedenie*)	Higher educational establishment(s), including both universities and higher technical educational establishments (vtuzy)

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This book is a general introduction to the contemporary Soviet Union for sixth-formers and undergraduates. It is based on the short course provided annually at the University of Birmingham for first-year students whose main fields of study may range from Engineering to Fine Arts.

Ever since the October Revolution of 1917, the Soviet system has been the subject of stormy debate. Is the Soviet Union a genuinely socialist state or a new class society in which no element of socialism remains? Is it a successful example of the planned industrialisation of a backward country or merely an inefficient totalitarian dictatorship?

The eleven authors of the present volume have sought not only to provide the basic facts about their subject and the results of recent research but also to introduce the reader to major disputes and unsolved problems. The book has been deliberately constructed so as to provoke informed controversy; while the various chapters have been carefully co-ordinated, the authors differ considerably in their individual approach to an assessment of the Soviet Union.

The Authors are all present or former members of the teaching staff at the University of Birmingham. They are all acknowledged specialists in their fields and the book provides a remarkable example of an integrated multi-disciplinary approach to a major set of world problems. It will be essential reading for a wide variety of students, from sixth-formers preparing for 'A' level to second-year politics students studying world affairs. In addition, it will be of interest to all those concerned either with the Russians as a people or with the problems of international socialism.

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