

**SOVIET SOCIETY AND COMMUNISM**

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**JAGJIT SINGH ANAND, M.P.**



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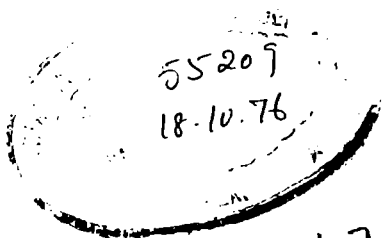


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*Soviet Society and Communist Party*

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## INTRODUCTION

SO much calumny has been poured out against the Soviet Union. So many lies told and abuses hurled against it.

Barely had the Soviet state been born in 1917 when the Western powers, one and all, pressed their lie-fabricating machines into service. We in British-ruled India and the people of other subject Afro-Asian nations, were treated to heavy and concentrated doses of the stuff churned out, day in and day out, in "metropolitan" London and in its sister Western capitals.

Who were the people specialising in "Soviet affairs?" What were their credentials?

As early as 1928, Jawaharlal Nehru gave a graphic instance of this brood of people and of their ways of cooking up stories in the kitchen of their fevered imagination:

"The most prolific suppliers of news about Russia have been the Riga correspondents of British and other newspapers. A writer in the *New York Nation* described recently how Riga correspondents are made. 'The first time I served as a Riga correspondent was in London. An editor made a correspondent of me by giving me an editorial leader clipped from one of the morning papers. He instructed me to re-cast part of it in the form of a dispatch and date it from Riga. The editorial was one reviewing in some detail the pernicious activities of the Third International. I must have re-written it rather well for later I was entrusted with other tasks of the same delicate nature. I became the paper's regular Riga correspondent—'From our own correspondent', as they like to say in Fleet Street. A year later I was in Paris and attached to a newspaper there. And in Paris I found myself again a Riga correspondent. The work was two-fold now. There were

French journals and English journals to re-write. All of them including the one in London which formerly employed me, seemed to boast Riga correspondents. In all their dispatches there were revelations—Bolshevist atrocities, Cheka executions, Soviet economic difficulties, dissatisfaction of the people with the Government. As in London, this material was turned over to me; and out of the mass another composite Riga correspondent was born. Whenever I think of Riga now I do not visualize a city, but a newspaper office—old desks, pastepots, chairs, typewriters, waste papers. Riga is a newspaper office city. It may have a geographic location. For all I know it may be populated with individuals absorbed in their own affairs; eating well, sleeping well, dreaming of owning automobiles. You cannot prove it by me. Once, in a moment of inexcusable curiosity, I went to the trouble of hunting up Riga in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. That fount of current information describes it as a thriving port on the Baltic Sea, from which agricultural products, chiefly oats, are exported to England. Obviously, it was an old edition of the Encyclopaedia. By this time the rumours far outnumber the oats. If cities ever receive decorations for signal service, the Western world should confer prime honours upon Riga. By its mere existence as a four-letter word used for a dispatch date-line it has served as a barrier against the plots of the Soviets, thus keeping sacred and inviolate the idealism of Western Europe. Riga defends the world against the insidious propaganda of the Soviets. Red lies break against its intrepid front.’’

*(Soviet Russia)*

The question naturally comes to mind: Why at all were such stories spun out and given such wide currency at the cost of murdering truth? Why were costly campaigns of systematised slander built up against the social, economic and political structure of the world's first, newly-born socialist state?

We again get an answer, clear and simple, in the writings of Nehru, who was among the first Indians to comprehend the significance of the birth of the new power and its unique importance in world affairs heavily dominated, until recently, by Western capitalist powers:

“I have no doubt that the Soviet Revolution had advanced human society by a great leap and had lit a bright flame which could not be smothered, and that it had laid the foundations for that new civilization towards which the world could advance.”  
*(The Discovery of India)*

“While the rest of the world was in the grip of the depression and going backward in some ways, in the Soviet country a great new world was being built up before our very eyes. Russia, following the great Lenin, looked into the future and thought only of what was to be...”  
*(Autobiography)*

“If the future is full of hope it is largely because of Soviet Russia and what it has done, and I am convinced that if some world catastrophe does not intervene, this new civilization will spread to other lands and put an end to the wars and conflicts which capitalism feeds.”  
*(Presidential Address at Lucknow)*

The survival of the Soviet state despite the machinations of Western powers, its emergence as a leading industrialised power of the world, its breath-taking advances in economy and technology, and its increasing role in the international scene have upset apple-cart imperialism. No more is the world a monolith of the coalition of powers wedded to capitalism, colonialism and racism. No more are world affairs their exclusive preserve. And no more are the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America friendless in their struggle for launching on the path of independent development.

The Soviet Union has decisively thrown its influence, resources and diplomacy in favour of international forces working for a better social order, for a world without even the tiniest speck of colonialism, for a world freed from the scourge of apartheid and aggression and war.

And, lastly, we in India take comfort from the fact that in the Soviet Union we have a dependable ally tried and tested in times of difficulties when the leading Western powers were arrayed against our very national interests. Our friendship with the Soviet Union, built over the years after independence, has grown into a powerful factor of international affairs influencing these decisively in the direction of world peace and security in Asia. Besides, this friendship has been of immeasurable source of strength to our nation in rebuilding its economic

fabric from the wreckage left behind by the British. It has given muscle to our independent industry, to our entire economy struggling to be self-reliant, especially after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's announcement of the 20-point Economic Programme.

It will be my endeavour in the following pages to set Soviet developments in perspective, to lift them out of the cloud of misrepresentation spread by hostile interested powers and their mass media.

A correct understanding of the Soviet Union, of its social and economic fabric becomes imperative for us Indians who are learning a lot from its experience. When Nehru spoke to his countrymen of the "new civilization" India would build on throwing off the colonial servitude, he had the Soviet experiment in mind. In his Presidential Address to the Lucknow Session of the Indian National Congress, he said: "Some glimpse we can have of this new civilisation in the territories of the USSR."

The setting up of the world's first peasants' and workers' state; the construction of socialism on the basis of advanced industrialisation, collective-farm agriculture and people's culture; the setting up of the technical and material base of socialism; the successful implementation of the Leninist course of peace and friendship with the peoples of the world—such have been the mighty achievements of the Soviet people led and inspired by the CPSU. The Soviet people have always regarded the Party of Lenin as their own Party, as the builder of their new life. An attempt has been made in the following pages to show how the Party led them in taking power into their own hands in 1917 and thereafter in constructing a new society the like of which the world had not seen before. The reader will see for himself how the Party's guidance helped the Soviet people conquer seemingly insurmountable difficulties in the field of industrialisation and collectivisation of agriculture, in fighting the war against Hitler and then in rehabilitating the economy, in building the world's first developed socialist society, in strengthening the forces of peace and detente, and in forging strong ties of friendship and cooperation with the newly-liberated countries.



The CPSU will be soon holding its Congress. The 25th Congress, like the 24th, will be another important milestone in the Soviet people's path towards the construction of a communist society. Hence it is relevant and appropriate to evaluate the CPSU policies, to see them as guides to the fulfilment of Soviet Union's historic aims and objectives.

If these pages succeed in fostering a better understanding of Soviet affairs, the purpose of promoting the cause of friendship between our two peoples will have been served.

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## When the wretched of the earth arose

**T**HE Soviet state was born in the crucible of the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917. It was a genuine people's revolution. As was stressed at the 50th anniversary of this great historic event, the most essential and paramount expression of the popular nature of the October Revolution was the alliance between the working class and the peasants, and the joint struggle and fraternal cooperation of the working people of all nations of Russia against their oppressors. The Revolution was organised, inspired and led by a genuine working class party, the Party built by V.I. Lenin, who was continuing the cause of Marx and Engels. The popular character of the October Revolution was graphically revealed in its very first document—"Appeal of Petrograd Revolutionary Military Committee to the Citizens of Russia" drafted by Lenin. It stated :

"The cause for which the people have fought, namely, the immediate offer of a democratic peace, the abolition of landed proprietorship, the workers' control over production, and the establishment of Soviet power—this cause has been secured.

"Long live the revolution of workers, soldiers and peasants !"

The new Soviet power was set up in the course of a severe struggle against the classes overthrown by the Revolution. These classes had hoped that the oppressed Russian working masses would be unable to set up and sustain a government of their own. The capitalist-owned *New Times* wrote: "Let us assume for a moment the Bolsheviks will win. Who will govern them: perhaps the cooks, the experts in rissoles and steaks? Or the fisherman? The stableman, the stokers? Or, perhaps, nursemaids will rush off to a session of the State Council in between washing babies' napkins? Who will? Who are these statesmen? Perhaps the locksmith will deal with the theatre, the plumbers with diplomacy, and the carpenters with the post and telegraph? Are you sure they will? History will give the Bolsheviks an answer to this question."

History did give its answer when the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, which proclaimed the victory of the Revolution on behalf of the working class and the entire working people in the country, elected the first Soviet Government with Lenin at its head. It was a government pledged to bury the past which had condemned hundreds of millions to poverty and wretchedness, to illiteracy and disease. It was a government determined to build a future in which these wretched of the earth would own the earth, wash it clean of the rubble left over by old-aged rule of the oppressors, and build a brotherhood of man.

The world sat up when the Congress of Soviets adopted Lenin's history-making "Decree on Peace" and "Decree on Land" which expressed, in simple and straight words, the cherished aspirations and fundamental interests of the common people. "The Decree on Land" abolished landlordism, proclaimed it the property of the people and turned it over to peasants. The Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets adopted in January 1918 the "Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People". It was a document of signal importance in world history. Its very first article declared:

"Russia is hereby proclaimed a Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. All power centrally and locally is vested in these Soviets."

For the first time in world history, the will of the working

masses was asserted, the task of abolishing exploitation of man by man and division of society into classes was posed, and the aim of building socialism was set unambiguously.

The Declaration further proclaimed :

“There can be no place for exploiters in any government today. Power must be vested wholly and entirely in the working masses and their authorised representatives—the Soviets of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Deputies.” It also proclaimed that “the Russian Soviet Republic is established on the principle of a free union of free nations”.

Those were stirring times in Russia. The world watched the rise of this new peasants’ and workers’ power with bated breath. Friends of the new power the world over welcomed the Revolution as a new star on the firmament of mankind. They saw in it the embodiment of its hopes and dreams. They looked forward to its flourishing and blossoming into a viable, strong socialist power. The enemies, on the contrary, were thrown into a fit. In the Revolution they read the writing on the wall : the era of the end of imperialism was drawing to a close. “Strangle Bolshevism at its birth”, roared Sir Winston Churchill.

But Bolshevism had come to stay on one-sixth of the world. Its life could not be ended because it arose from the very life-giving springs of mankind, from its yearning for building a new world—the world of socialism.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks whom he led knew very well that the winning of power by the Russian working class was only the beginning of the process of building socialism. The essence of socialism, as Lenin had defined, was that means of production become the property of the people, and production based on exploitation be replaced by one under a common plan run in the interests of the entire people. Between capitalist Russia and its transformation into a socialist society lay a transitional period of nearly 20 years. These were years of heavy odds and enormous tasks, superhuman courage and exemplary fortitude, indomitable will and countless sacrifices. These were also the years of internal armed subversion by overthrown classes aided and abetted by external aggression.

## 2

# The poor industrialise their impoverished land

THE Revolution, which had won, had achieved its aim of setting up a new state of peasants and workers, of abolishing private ownership of means of production, of taking over land from landlords and distributing it among peasants, of making major industrial enterprises, banks, railways, the property of the people. Capitalism had been vanquished but not destroyed. Socialism had taken firm roots but had not grown into a sturdy tree yet.

The task was not so easy ; it was a formidable one. The young Soviet power, struggling to consolidate itself in the teeth of armed opposition from counter-revolutionary forces and aggression from imperialist powers, had inherited a dark legacy from Tsarism. Russia was an enormous country with 80 per cent of its people eking out an existence from backward agriculture. Economically and technically, it lagged behind the Western countries by 50 to 100 years. Three-fourths of the population was illiterate.

And, then, the country found itself thrown into a civil war sparked by internal counter-revolution and imperialist intervention. These twin forces sought to reverse history—to restore relations which had existed before the Revolution, i.e., to destroy the people's power. The civil war was imposed on

the country and caused complete devastation. Industry turned out only one seventh of even the small quantity of products which it had turned out before the war. Grain, coal and metal were in short supply. Transport and other means of communications were all in a state of paralysis. Technical personnel and experience were woefully inadequate.

The Soviet power thus had to start building a socialist society almost from scratch. A stupendous task, indeed.

The Bolshevik Party rose to the occasion and, under Lenin's leadership, elaborated a scientific plan for a fundamental transformation of the country, a plan for the building of socialism. The 8th Congress of the Bolsheviks adopted the programme of socialist construction, defining the tasks to be fulfilled in the period of transition. The most important of these tasks were to develop the productive forces in every possible way, to set up the material and technical basis of socialism, and to see that socialist social relations achieved full victory.

The programme for the building of socialism mainly aimed at electrification and industrialisation of the entire country, cooperation in agriculture, and a cultural revolution.

Building socialism in one country ! This was the main issue after the Revolution. It was on this issue that the Bolshevik Party encountered opposition from various factions and other groups. The Party however defended Lenin's programme of building socialism and rallied the entire Soviet people in their heroic and selfless effort of carrying it out successfully.

On Lenin's initiative, a State Plan for the Electrification of Russia (GOELRO) was evolved. It provided, in the course of 10-15 years, for the construction of 30 power stations with a total capacity of 1,500,000 kw.

The key to the construction of socialism in Russia was its socialist industrialisation. It could not be carried out until the country built a viable heavy industry serving as a foundation for the development of entire national economy, improvement of living standards of the people, strengthening of national defence and preservation of the country's economic independence.

In industrialising the country, the Soviet state, however, did not take to the traditional method earlier employed by Western powers. Industrialisation of capitalist countries had usually begun with the building of light industry which involved less capital investments. Besides, this method was slow in tempo. The Soviet Union, the world's first socialist state, faced encirclement by capitalist powers hostile to it from its very inception. They saw in it a challenge to their supremacy in the world, to the very social and economic mores of their system, and consequently never abandoned the hope of militarily crushing it. Capitalist encirclement and the lurking danger of war called upon the Soviet Union to embark upon the path of industrialising itself by first developing the heavy industry.

This could not be put into practice without raising colossal resources, without mobilising capital investments. These resources had been made available to Western capitalist powers by cruel plunder of colonial peoples, by military conquests, and by ruthless exploitation of working people of their own countries and, lastly, by foreign loans.

Obviously, a socialist land like Soviet Russia would not stoop to these means. It tapped altogether new sources for capital accumulation : the labour of emancipated workers and peasants ; the profits of state enterprises, banks, domestic and foreign trade ; the deposits made by the people in saving banks. One of the basic principles in running the economy was to make the fullest use of all internal possibilities, to spend money prudently, to improve labour productivity, and to reduce costs of production. Other principles of socialist management—all worked out by Lenin—were to combine centralised planning with developing the working peoples' initiative, to use commodity-money relations, cost-accounting, material and moral incentives for work and correct balance between the interests of the society as a whole and the interests of each worker individually. Of considerable importance to raising resources was the assistance rendered by peasants in speeding up the process of industrialisation. The October Revolution had abolished landlordism and freed the peasants from paying 700 million roubles in gold for the purchase of land and for paying rent to landlords. The peasantry's close interest in



industrialisation lay in the fact that only a developed industry could supply the much-needed farm machinery and fertilisers. The peasants, therefore, contributed liberally towards industrialisation both through its labour and material means.

The rate of industrialisation acquired a special importance for Lenin and the Party. The young Soviet power, surrounded by hostile powers, was faced with a choice : either to establish a large modern industry in a historically brief span of time or get defeated.

Naturally, it required great effort, consummate planning, countless sacrifices and, above all, infallible guidance. The people were thrilled by Lenin's plan of GOELRO and by other plans. They saw in these a beacon to the future. The enemies outside the frontiers of the Soviet state called the GOELRO plan "a show-window of Russian community", "a fantastic and a harmful undertaking". They "prophesied" that a backward country like Russia could not be electrified.

The celebrated writer H.G. Wells, who visited Russia in 1920, wrote in his book *Russia in the Shadows* in the chapter entitled 'The Dreamer in the Kremlin' :

"...Lenin, who like a good, orthodox Marxist denounces all 'utopians', has succumbed at least to a utopia of the electricians....Can one imagine a more courageous project in a vast flat land of forests and illiterate peasants, with no water power, with no technical skill available and with trade and industry at the last gasp. I cannot see anything of the sort happening in this dark crystal of Russia, but this little man at the Kremlin can ; he sees the decaying railways replaced by a new electric transport, sees new roadways spreading throughout the land, sees a new and happier communist industrialism arising again..."

Lenin wrote to H.G. Wells : "Come back and see what we have done in Russia in ten year's time."

Step by step, steadily and confidently, Soviet Russia carried out Lenin's plan. The Soviet people, by Herculean effort, succeeded in setting up in 1920 a power station operating on peat at Shatura. It was followed two years later by the Kashira Station near Moscow using local coal. Thereafter power stations began to go into operation every year. In 1926, the

Volkhov Hydro-Power Station (58,000 kw) was started. By the end of the GOELRO decade, the assignments for building up power capacities had been carried out. In 1927 came up the Zemo-Avchaly Hydro-Power Station on the Kura river (Caucasus) and in 1932 the world witnessed the commissioning of the Dnieper Hydro-Power Station (Ukraine) with a capacity of 558,000 kw. By 1935, the Soviet Union had overtaken many developed capitalist countries in power generation: it had gone ahead of Britain, France and Italy, occupying the second place in Europe and the third in the world.

So, backward Russia could, after all, do it—but only because its people had come into their own, taking their destiny into their own hands. This was particularly evident during the building of heavy industry which transformed the very face of Soviet Russia.

In December 1925 the Communist Party held its 14th Congress. It was at this Congress that the Party formulated the policy of socialist industrialisation of the country and endorsed the programme of building heavy-industry enterprises. This signified the end of the first stage of the New Economic Policy (NEP) which Lenin had formulated with the objective of attaining the pre-war level of farm production. The second stage was to build a large-scale socialist industry. This was a pre-requisite for laying the socialist foundation of the national economy.

Socialist industrialisation proceeded according to plan and not spontaneously as in Western countries. It began with the development of heavy industry for producing means of production. The entire country turned into a gigantic construction site. Day and night, in scorching heat and Arctic cold, in burning sun and snow blizzards, young and old, men and women, Communists and non-Communists, Russians and Kazakhs, Ukrainians and Uzbeks, people of all nationalities, worked miracles and suffered privations to set up the first industry of their socialist land. People throughout the length and breadth of the country hailed with tremendous enthusiasm the First Five-Year Plan (1928-1932). Economic development of tremendous importance took place in the country. New industries unknown to Tsarist Russia were set up, such as the

machine-tool, tractor-manufacture, aircraft and automobile industries, the chemical industry, the power and agricultural engineering industry, etc.

The Soviet Union, receiving neither foreign loans nor any other assistance from outside, succeeded in setting up 1,500 enterprises in the First Five-Year Plan period, 4,500 in the Second Five-Year Plan period and about 3,000 in the 3½ years of the Third Five-Year Plan period. These enterprises became the proud possessions of the Soviet people who looked at them with love and respect and as the basis of the future of their socialist motherland. These giants included dozens of world-famous projects like the Dnieper Hydro-Power Station, the Magnitogorsk Steel Plant, the Kharkov, Chelyabinsk and Stalingrad Tractor Plants, the Gorky and Moscow Motor Plants, the Turkestan Siberian Railways, etc.

The builders made superhuman efforts to fulfil orders ahead of schedule and boldly undertook jobs they had not done before. Foreign specialists, for instance, claimed that copper tuyeres for the Magnitogorsk Iron and Steel Works could be made only in America. Came the retort from Soviet workers of the old Ural works : "Why go to the Americans ? We will make these ourselves." And these they made in record time.

At the new plants and factories ordinary Soviet workers started an emulation movement for higher labour productivity, for mastering new techniques and for fulfilling state planned targets ahead of schedule. Over 75 per cent of Soviet industrial workers had participated by 1932 in the emulation movement. The Party's Central Committee had issued a statement earlier on May 9, 1929, that socialist emulation between plants should become a permanent way of drawing workers into the movement of building socialism. Leadership of the emulation movement was in the hands of trade unions. The activities of trade unions, of the Young Communist organisations and of the economic management bodies in the field drew full support from the Party.

Towards the end of the First Five-Year Plan period the emulation movement underwent substantial changes. The emphasis from now onwards was not only on quantity but also

on quality. New forms of emulation emerged between workers of different industries for better handling of machines and for higher productivity, and between factories for better on-the-spot training of young workers. One of the outstanding successes of the new stage of socialist emulation was the Stakhanov movement. Alexei Stakhanov, a young worker, developed a pattern of work enabling him to fulfil 14 daily quotas in one single shift. This movement, named after its pioneer, caught on all over the land. Many possibilities for raising output were disclosed ; many technicians, engineers and managers felt encouraged to take a closer look at the organisation of labour and production technology and to revise the existing quotas. In 1939, over 2 million people had contributed new ideas in the sphere of industrial technology. How much it meant in speeding up the process of industrialisation can well be imagined.

The Party linked the task of industrialisation, not only with spreading the socialist emulation movement, but also with training *en masse* skilled personnel, with raising workers' general educational standards, and also with improving their technical skills. The colossal rate at which the Soviet country was industrialising itself demanded hundreds of thousands of new workers.

The Party trained a vast body of personnel in the operation of new machines during the process of technical modernisation and construction of new enterprises. On-the-job training was given in Apprenticeship Schools which, over a span of 20 years, trained 2.5 million skilled workers—the backbone of the basic working class of the country. Workers were also trained through different kinds of “crash courses”.

The Soviet path of industrialisation was hitherto unknown to the world. It was, therefore, difficult and full of challenges which were successfully met by the people of the country who denied themselves many essential things, showed unique feats of courage and daring and self-sacrifice in order to transform their backward land into a powerful socialist state.

Meanwhile, the Western propaganda machines were printing lie after lie trying to cast a blemish on the Soviet model of

industrialisation and to discredit it in the eyes of the people of the world. The Western trumpeteers forgot all about the high price their countries had paid for carrying out their industrialisation—the ruin brought on millions of farmers, the pitiless exploitation of women and children in factories and mines, the plunder of colonies, the gunboat diplomacy.

Soviet industrialisation, on the contrary, avoided like plague all these ruinous alternatives. Its advantages were admitted, grudgingly though, even by many Western economists. Prof. Frederick Schuman, a leading American specialist on international relations, wrote in his book *Russia Since 1917: Four Decades of Soviet Politics* :

“Industrialisation is not unique...What is unique in the USSR is that a single decade saw developments that required half a century or more elsewhere. Industrialisation was achieved, moreover, without private capital, without foreign investments...without private ownership of any of the means of production and with no unearned increment or private fortunes accruing to entrepreneurs or lucky investors...A staggering human reality is mirrored but faintly in the obvious generalisations : the adventure led from illiteracy to literacy, from the NEP to socialism, from archaic agriculture to collective cultivation, from a rural society to a predominantly urban community, from general ignorance of the machine to social mastery of modern technology.”

France's largest capitalist newspaper, *Le Temps*, wrote on January 27, 1932 : “The Soviet Union has won in the first round of industrialisation without the assistance of foreign capitalists. Russia's industrialisation evokes fear and admiration.”

The Soviet Five-Year Plan of industrialisation drew admiration from all corners of the world.

Lloyd George, one of Britain's most outstanding statesman and former Prime Minister, in a chat with well-known Soviet diplomat Ivan Maisky, pointing to a copy of the *Daily Telegraph* lying before him, said : “Martin Moore here affirms that your Five-Year Plan has failed. What nonsense ! Your Five-Year Plan is the greatest thing now happening in the

world. Its outcome will be of enormous importance to mankind.”

The world-renowned writer, Stefan Zweig, wrote : “In our suffocating Europe paralysed by general mutual distrust, we have nothing to match the Five-Year Plan.”

## Every tractor was a shell blasting the old order

THE world was witnessing with wonder and admiration how the Bolshevik Party of Lenin was turning Russia into a country, where, in the words of famous Czechoslovak writer Julius Fucik, "Our future is already a thing of the past". This experiment was more miraculous in the Russian countryside where every blade of grass shook with the new mighty wave of change, where Mother Earth came back into the hands of her sons held captive by their torments, and where new harvests shone resplendent in the sunrise of socialism. Inspiring is the story of Bolsheviks restructuring the life of the Soviet village, the life of the villagers. The transformation which the villagers' mainstay, agriculture, underwent imparted a new colour to the blackened earth, fertilised every patch of its barren land, and quickened the birth of a new life which is today sung by Russians in song and told in legends. The saga of Soviet agriculture is a saga of the story of triumph of man over ossified tradition, over forces of decadence.

As in industry, so in agriculture, the Soviet power had a dismal legacy to inherit from Tsarism. Before the Revolution the peasants constituted over three-quarters of the population. Agricultural methods were very primitive and productivity of land was low. Two-thirds of land—and the best land at that—

was owned by landlords, the Tsar, the Church and the *kulaks* (rich farmers). Of the 20 million and odd peasant holdings, 13 million belonged to poor peasants who were living lives of abject poverty. They were the targets of cruel and ruthless exploitation by landlords and *kulaks*. An overwhelming majority of them worked with primitive farm implements. Only .8 per cent of farm implements were mechanised at the end of 1916 and draught cattle accounted for 99.2 per cent of power used in the fields. In 15 per cent of the farms in Russia before the Revolution, the farmers did not own the fields, 30 per cent had no horses, and 34 per cent did not possess farm implements of any kind. Most farmers very rarely tasted milk or meat. Famine, epidemics and poverty dogged them at every step. Illiteracy and backwardness, disease and destitution were their common lot.

Thus the peasant question naturally received the foremost attention of Lenin. This question had played an important role in many a revolution. But it was only after the triumph of the Russian Revolution that it was decided in favour of the peasants themselves.

To begin with, as stated earlier, the Revolution dispossessed the landlords of land and distributed it free among the toiling, land-hungry, impoverished peasantry. "The Decree on Land" declared :

"Private ownership of land shall be abolished forever ; land shall not be sold, purchased, leased, mortgaged or otherwise alienated."

The Soviet power turned over to peasants more than 150 million hectares of land without any compensation. The peasants were freed from the time-honoured obligation of paying annual rents and from incurring expenditure on buying the land they tilled. They were also freed forever from paying back debts to the Peasants' Land Bank. All implements owned by landlords were turned over to them. Thus, the beginning of a new way of life in the "rural hinterland" of Russia was started. At the source of this cataclysmic change in the countryside—as in that of turning backward Russia into an industrialised power—stood, of course, Lenin and the Party



of Bolsheviks led by him. This change was a part of the socialist revolution in the Russian countryside.

In bringing about a basic transformation in the countryside a considerable role was played by the Committees of the Poor, set up in consequence of the promulgation of the Decree of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee in 1918. The Committees assisted the poor peasants in their struggles against the *kulaks* who supported the counter-revolution, helped in supplying grain to industrial centres and to the Red Army during the civil war, and later in setting up the first collective and state farms.

The changes brought about by the Revolution in the countryside led to regrouping of class forces. The bourgeoisie and landlords disappeared as a class. The *kulaks* found their economic strength considerably weakened. The redistribution of land, implements and cattle led to a large number of poor peasants being pushed closer to becoming middle peasants. The middle peasants now became the central figure on the rural scene whereas the pre-revolution period had witnessed the emergence of capitalist farms.

It now became imperative for the Soviet state to find out correct ways for the gradual transformation of small-commodity farms into large-scale socialist production. Besides, the right kind of economic and political relations had to be established between the working class and the peasantry. Lenin had been studying closely the moods of the peasants; he met them in delegations and individually and was responsive to every shape of their thought and feeling. As Lenin's Secretary, N. Gorbunov, wrote in his memoirs :

"I remember vividly Vladimir Ilyich's characteristic posture. He sat so near the peasant as he was speaking to them that their knees touched; he bent forward as if it helped him to hear better and to miss nothing; with a friendly smile he asked questions and gave instructions in a very business-like manner. The peasants left him delighted, muttering: 'Now, that's power, that's our real people's power.' "

Lenin came to the conclusion that the military-political alliance between the working class and the peasantry forged during the civil war should be followed by a close economic

link between the town and the countryside. He called the alliance between the working class and the peasantry the world's most miraculous force, and stressed that no socialist changes were possible without this alliance. He was of the firm opinion that farm cooperatives alone could transform agriculture on socialist lines. This was the easiest and simplest way for peasants to establish socialism, according to the founder of the Soviet state.

Lenin's plan for cooperatives is famous the world over. In it he elaborated the ways for transition to socialism in town and countryside. He outlined the main principles and methods for setting up farm cooperatives and transforming life in the countryside. Certain requisites were needed for bringing about this transformation. It was necessary to build a material and technical base, to strengthen the alliance between the working class and the toiling peasantry in their struggle against rich peasants, to conduct political work among the peasants on a large scale, to bring about a change in their traditional psychology, to remould the entire make-up of the village life along socialist lines, to convince the peasants of the advantages of large-scale socialist production using the experience of the first cooperative and state-owned farms as an example.

As mentioned earlier, the Soviet power had inherited a dark legacy from Tsarism in agriculture as in other spheres. To it were added the long list of damages wrought by the civil war and the imperialist intervention of 14 states. The overall agricultural output in 1921 dropped to 60 per cent of the pre-war level and crop production to 55 per cent. The head of cattle was reduced by 40 per cent and the area under crops by 32 per cent. It was not until 1928 that the harmful effects of economic disruption and dislocation in the rural areas caused by World War I, the civil war and the imperialist intervention were overcome. However, the general state of agricultural development still fell short of the requirements of socialist construction in the country. Industrialisation caused a rapid growth of urban population which, in its turn, increased the demand for foodstuffs and raw materials for the expanding industry. At the same time, with land distribution

and the consequent improvement in living standards, the consumption of foodstuffs in the countryside also rose.

The Soviet state and the Party saw in Lenin's plan of cooperation a solution to all these problems. Lenin brought home the point that the peasants should in the first place realise the need for combining their individual, disconnected efforts, must see for themselves the advantages of mechanised large-scale farming. He also stressed that socialist transformation of the countryside would take some time, with the simple forms of cooperation giving way to more complicated forms benefiting all toiling people of the countryside. Lenin's cooperative plan stipulated the following essential conditions for setting up collective farms: voluntary unions, all-round support to the peasants' initiative in organising a collective farm, widespread state economic assistance for effecting socialist transformation of the countryside. This plan also considered the raising of the cultural level of peasants as one of the most important aspects of cooperation. Lenin pointed out :

"The proletarian state must effect the transition to collective farming with extreme caution and very gradually, by the force of example, without any coercion of the middle peasant."

The principle of voluntary cooperation, Lenin cautioned, in no way meant that the peasants' small holdings would on their own be transformed into large-scale socialist agriculture. As a farmer cannot give up old ways overnight, the principle of teamwork was introduced in agriculture step by step, starting with the simplest forms of cooperative societies in the sphere of joint supplies, sales and credits and then proceeding to encouraging small farms to join cooperatives on a strictly voluntary basis. Lenin severely warned the Party against making any attempts at coercion in setting up cooperative farms. The Bolsheviks heeded his advice that the peasants should be given the chance to learn, from their own experience what advantages flowed from teamwork on land. In setting up cooperative societies and collective farms the Party cadre took into account the local economic and sociological features, the way of life and traditions of the people.

Refashioning agriculture on the basis of Lenin's cooperation plan brought about a revolution in the Soviet countryside. It marked a turning point in the life of the entire agrarian population.

In December, 1927, the 15th Party Congress met to give first priority to the policy of setting up cooperative farms. The Party set itself the task of turning the desire of the majority of peasants for introducing new methods of farming into a nationwide, organised movement.

The Soviet state and the Party relied, first and foremost, on the support of the poor peasants and farm labourers in carrying out socialist changes in the countryside. The state set up a fund to provide poor peasants with credits on easy terms enabling them to buy implements, horses, livestock, etc.

A network of machine-and-tractor stations (MTS) was set up. The MTS was a state enterprise supplying cooperative farms with machinery on a contract basis. The MTS started working in 1927. When the crops had been sown and harvested with its assistance, the peasants declared: "Now that we have seen the tractors at work, we do not want to go on with our poor small farms and we have decided to have a common farm with tractors and not isolated farms."

Naturally, one of the first largest enterprises of the First Five-Year Plan was the Stalingrad Tractor Works. Never before had the vast Volga seen a "labour battle" like the one then taking place on its historic banks. The construction site was draped in red streamers saying: "Every tractor is a shell blasting the old order."

The creation of a powerful tractor industry and farm machinery gave a powerful impetus to the cooperative movement. The country's tractor industry was able to meet the needs of developing cooperative agriculture from 1932 onwards. The Stalingrad Tractor Plant was commissioned in 1930, the Kharkov in 1931, the Chelyabinsk in 1933. A special workshop for producing tractors was set up at the Krasny Putilovets Plant in Leningrad. Gigantic plants for producing different kinds of farm machinery were built. Among them was the Rostselmash Plant built in 1930. Its annual output

exceeded that of the similar enterprises of Tsarist Russia put together. The importance of MTS in the life of poor peasants can be gauged from the following excerpts of a letter sent by a group of peasants to the *Izvestia* of November 27, 1927 :

"We settlers from Shevchenko, Krasin, Kalinin, 'Chervona Zurka' and 'Voskhodyashcheye Solntse' farms express our deepest gratitude to the Soviet power for the enormous aid that was given to us for the rehabilitation of our farms. Most of us are poor peasants who, having had no horses nor farm implements, could not till the land allotted to us and were forced to rent this land to the local *kulaks*.... The yields were extremely small for, naturally, the leaseholder is not eager to exert himself on somebody else's land. The small credits we received from the state were spent on food and we became poorer each year. This year we were visited by a representative of the Association of Ukrainian State Farms who offered to have our lands ploughed by tractors instead of giving us cash credits. All settlers except several *kulaks* consented although few believed that the job would be done properly. To our extreme joy—and to the chagrin of *kulaks*—the tractors ploughed up all the fallow and virgin lands. They ploughed the land five to six times, harrowed it to rid it of weeds and finally sowed the entire area with good-quality wheat. Now the *kulaks* no longer mock the tractor team's work.... Having witnessed the work of the tractor brigade we do not wish to carry on with our small poor households. We have decided to organise into a socialised tractor economy where there will not be scattered peasant plots."

This narrative should not lead the reader to believe that the restructuring of Soviet agriculture on the basis of Lenin's plan of cooperation was a smooth affair. How could it be when it involved changing centuries-old traditions, life styles, social mores and the peasants' very psychology? Moreover, certain mistakes were committed. The Central Committee of the Party adopted a decision substantially to complete the setting up of cooperative farms, with state assistance, by the end of 1933. Full account was taken, in arriving at this decision, of the diverse conditions in the countryside and of the fact that the peasants in various areas, regions and consti-

tuent republics were not equally ready for setting up collective farms. A pronounced trend, however, emerged in some areas of applying pressure to speed up the rate of setting up cooperatives, which was already high. This could not but cause trouble. When some peasants were still hesitant to join the cooperatives, this kind of enforced speed-up went contrary to the principle of voluntariness, amounting to a little more than issuing orders. These and other distortions were, however, quickly corrected. On March 14, 1930, the Party Central Committee adopted a decision in this context. The Party organisations were asked to observe very strictly the principle of voluntariness in the setting up of collective farms, and to concentrate on developing their organisation and economy so that they would become successful in their functioning and work.

The socialist restructuring of Soviet agriculture was achieved on two lines: the setting up of collective farms based on cooperative and collective-farm property, on the one hand, and the setting up of state farms and MTS based on national, state property, on the other.

Was coercion the chief method in collectivisation? The answer was given emphatically in the negative by several foreign observers. A *Daily Herald* reporter visited the lower Volga and the Northern Caucasus in September, 1929 to see how collectivisation was being carried out. He described its main features as penetration of ideas of cooperation in the countryside and the peasants', especially of poor peasants', unwillingness to continue following old ways of life.

The old ways of life could not be discontinued without dispossessing the *kulaks*—the rural capitalists—as a class. They were the last surviving exploiting classes in the country. Several Western historians have shed tears over the fate the *kulaks* met at the hands of history. They forget how, long before the Revolution, Russia's 19th-century poet Ivan Nikitin had described them as beasts always "hungry and thirsty for the property of others". However, despite their bitter resistance to socialist reorganisation in agriculture, the *kulaks* were treated most humanely by the Soviet power. They were only ousted as a class. This meant they were denied special econo-

mic advantages. Most of them were given the chance to reform through work for the common good, but those actively fighting the Soviet power were put on trial.

The abolition of the last exploiting class destroyed the foundations of capitalism in the countryside and paved the way for the full-scale construction of socialism.

Collective farms in the Soviet Union followed the "Model Statute" setting the guidelines for their work. This Statute was adopted at the 1935 All-Union Congress of Collective Farmers. In later years, when collective farming became widespread, it became necessary to draft a new model statute for collective farms. The draft was published in the Soviet press, discussed in length, and, after a special commission had gone into the numerous proposals and suggestions which kept pouring in as a result of nation-wide discussion, it was finally adopted at the Third All-Union Congress of Collective Farmers held in Moscow in 1969.

The collective farm system has taken firm root in Soviet society. The Soviet state buys from the collective farms 54 per cent of grain, 92 per cent of sugar beet, 76 per cent of cotton, 57 per cent of milk and meat. The collective and state farms have changed the very face of Soviet villages and the very life of poor peasants.

"It is no easy thing radically to change the life of the peasant in such a short time, to give him instead of the wooden plough the steering wheel of a tractor or a harvester-combine, to drag him from the mud hut into a brick house and to equip him with knowledge. The former disinherited peasant became the master of his destiny.

"Those who knew our parts in the past wave their heads and say :

" 'It's a miracle.' "

"Yes, a miracle, but not one made by god, but by us—builders of communism."

This is how the transformation in the countryside brought about by collectivisation, by the application of modern machinery and agro-technique, by the spread of education, was described by a noted Ukrainian collective farm chairman M.A. Posmitny.

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The striking social impact the socialist industrialisation and collectivisation were having on Soviet people amazed people outside Russia. Theodore Dreiser, the world-famous writer, wrote after visiting the socialist land :

“Still another fact that I harvested in Russia and which I will never forget is this—that via Communism...it is possible to remove the dreadful sense of social misery in one direction and another which has so afflicted me in my own life in America...But in Russia how different—the prevailing tone of cities and towns has something that has never been anywhere before, I assume. For where are the rich ? There are none. And where the grovelling, feverish poor ? Gone also. What has become of that old intense misery of the poor which you could actually feel, as opposed to the show and vanity and luxury of the meaningless rich ? It does not exist...But as for gauds and fripperies, the underdog, hungry and lying hopelessly, the wealth and show of the accidentally or wolfishly strong and savage victors in a brutal class struggle, that is out.”



## Gates to culture thrown open to all

**W**HEN work on the building of the Soviet state's first tractor plant was started in June 1929, hundreds of people dug the foundation pits with plain shovels and hundreds carried away the earth in horse-drawn carts. The construction work then, in the early phase of the First Five-Year Plan was carried out not by machines but by bare hands. The Soviet people overcame this difficulty during the Plan period itself: the machine-building industry started turning out excavators, concrete mixers, crushers, cranes and power-engined hoisting machines. Then came another severe hurdle: there were not enough skilled workers to operate these and other machines. Today's worker was yesterday's peasant who had not so much as touched a machine. Even the engineers and technicians were new to these first complexes of Soviet industrialisation. The Communist Party was not overawed by this difficulty. It gave a call to the country that it had to create a large, well-knit and closely-cooperating body of skilled workers, engineers and technicians and equip them with the most modern know-how. Ordinary builders had to be forged into skilled workers and from their ranks were to come the engineers and technicians to man the new, gigantic enterprises of Soviet industrialisation. Socialist construction was described as a

smithy producing its own worker. The number of technical people then was very small; only 30 per cent of them had technical education and 30 per cent secondary education. Out of every ten manager sneerly four had no special education and what little they had learned had come from practical work.

What the Western historians and sociologists tend to ignore in emphasis is that a very major section of the specialists still belonged to the old intelligentsia which, in the early phase, did not understand the importance of the Revolution. Historians cannot shut their sight to the well-known fact that the Civil Engineers' Union came out against the Soviet state's nationalisation of important industries in June 1918. The patriotic-minded amongst the old specialists, overcoming their prejudices joined the nation's march towards socialist construction. A sizeable slice of the top echelons of the engineering elite, however, did not give up looking at the newly-risen power of workers and peasants with misgivings. Quite a few of them even took to sabotage. This was disclosed by what has come to be known as the "Shakhty Case". The Communist Party could not but conclude from this that a *new people's intelligentsia* had to be drawn up from amongst the workers and peasants in order to be able to serve their power conscientiously and with enthusiasm and dedication.

This was a superhuman task in a country steeped in illiteracy. Lenin had written with anguish in 1913 :

"There is no other country so barbarous and where people are robbed to such an extent of education and knowledge—no such country has remained in Europe; Russia is the exception."

The plight of Central Asian people was even worse: very few of them could read and write. More than 40 nationalities did not even have their own written languages.

Lenin and his Party set themselves on the stupendous task of making education, science and culture available to all in the country. This task was being tackled for the first time in history. "In the old day", Lenin said in January 1918, "human genius, the brain of man created only to give some the benefits of technology and culture and to deprive others of bare necessities, education and development. From now on all the

marvels of science and gains of culture belong to the nation as a whole..."

Lenin abolished the old Ministry of Education which he used to call the "Ministry of Public Ignorance". He signed the decree on "Elimination of Illiteracy Among the Population of the Russian Federation." "All those people of the Republic", it read, "between the age of 8 and 50 who do not know how to read or write must receive instruction in their native language or in Russian, whichever they prefer. Instruction is given in the existing state schools as well as in those being established for illiterate people..."

War on illiteracy was declared throughout the land. Young and old, men and women, workers and peasants, people of advanced and backward nationalities sat down to read and write. Factories, plants, soldiers' barracks and village classrooms were all turned into sites for stamping out illiteracy. The country became one big school. "That was a time when we had to study by the light of a torch without any textbooks, paper and ink, when we had to sharpen our pencils with an axe," recalled Lenin's wife Krupskaya.

The importance the Soviet Party and state attached to banishing illiteracy can be gauged from the fact that in 1923 the first Soviet President, Mikhail Kalinin, was made the Chairman of a new organisation called the "Abolish Illiteracy Society." He took the lead in helping peasants and workers launch a widespread campaign for collecting funds for promotion of literacy. The framework of this "abolish illiteracy" movement was vastly broader than that of any previous "spread-education" campaign. It involved tens of millions and was led and spurred on by them. Besides, it was marked by a mass zeal and enthusiasm engendered by the feeling that the state belonged to the common people and its destiny was theirs and *vice versa*. Naturally, in the '30s all illiterate adults sat down to learn, to read and to write. By the mid-30's illiteracy among the adult population had been done away with. Now came the universal compulsory primary education and then the development of public education.

The Soviet school was to be qualitatively different from the school of capitalist countries with particular accent laid on

inculcating among the young a spirit of public-mindedness. "Our schools", Lenin declared, "must provide the youth with the fundamentals of knowledge, the ability to evolve communist views independently; they must make educated people of the youth. While they are attending school, they must learn to become participants in the struggle for emancipation from exploiters." The Soviet school was to become a polytechnical institution answering the needs of society as a whole, of building socialism, fostering in the rising generation a spirit of fraternity of peoples, of intolerance of injustice, exploitation and oppression. Another task relating to the development of public education was to revamp the entire educational system root and branch, to impart a new ideological content to it appropriate to the character of the society now being constructed all over the land. No more was the teaching of "pure" science to be made an end in itself but subordinated to the objective of harnessing it to the practical need of building a socialist structure. No more were social sciences to remain as vehicles for disseminating outworn capitalist views serving the cause of old expropriated classes. And no more was teaching to be looked down upon as an "inferior" vocation but as a profession of honour and dedication.

Lenin's decrees were now bearing abundant fruit. The year 1921 saw the functioning of the new universities at Tashkent and Minsk and of the University of National Minorities of the West and the University of the Toilers of the East. These centres of learning and knowledge started turning out specialists who, in turn, trained people for teaching others. At the same time, industrial academies and other educational establishments were set up to train the foremost representatives of the working class and to raise their educational abilities. The workers received higher education without interrupting their work in their enterprises. The Institute of Red Professors and Special Workers' Faculties were set up.

Thus was born the first generation of Soviet intelligentsia from the ranks of the people. The graduates turned out in the 20's by the Special Workers' Faculties became engineers, agronomists, teachers, doctors, public figures, Party leaders, diplomats. They were followed by wave after wave of worker-

peasant specialists, many of whom rose to leading positions in Soviet society. True, in Western countries also some factory lads have been able to occupy exalted positions in their later life. But there it had been an exception whereas in the new Soviet society it turned out to be the rule. Besides, the promotion of ordinary workers to leading posts in society became a mass phenomenon in Soviet times unprecedented in world history. It may be mentioned here that the leading European industrial powers and the United States took decades to form a technical intelligentsia. But the Soviet Union did it in a brief span of time : its specialists matured in the very process of production and operation of new techniques. It is no mystery. The social roots of this unique phenomenon lie in the Revolution, in socialist industrialisation, in collectivisation of agriculture which freed millions from bondage and released their captive energies in a torrent. They were the same people who remembered that only a little while ago they were illiterate, could not sign their names, went around in bast shoes, drank tea with sugar only on holidays. They were, therefore, imbued with the new awareness that the socialist system which remoulded their lives was their own, that their fate and that of their children was indissolubly linked with its fate. The better and harder they worked, they knew, the richer and brighter their life would be.

These countless men and women took up responsible posts in the front-ranks of millions of their countrymen for transforming their land into a socialist state. Their number went on snow-balling as one construction site followed another. The proportion of industrial workers kept on increasing. By the end of the First Five-Year Plan period the bulk of the urban population was made up of the working class and people's intelligentsia. Only in 1928 would people queue up at employment exchanges in the hope of getting suitable jobs. Now these exchange offices gave a deserted look for by 1930 the Soviet Union had wiped out unemployment completely. Subsequently, the exchanges were closed down for no one was jobless in the land. Thus ended unemployment in one-sixth of the world whereas the rest of it was plagued by this scourge and continues to be even to this day. From now on every

Soviet citizen was guaranteed the right to work and every toiling man and woman was confident of the morrow.

Abolition of classes, ending of exploitation of man by man, eradication of unemployment, improvement in people's living standards, universal free education and free medical aid—these were the bounteous gifts of socialism to the Soviet people. A thirst for knowledge among millions of people became evident. The country was now dotted with councils of people's education, people's houses, houses of culture, clubs, libraries, village reading rooms, recreation rooms, etc. Culture was reaching the entire mass of people and not just a tiny circle of elite in the town and gentry in the village. The Party did not uphold a narrow sectarian attitude towards culture taken by some "Left" intellectuals. Lenin called upon the people to assimilate all culture, all the knowledge handed down by mankind. But he warned against mechanical learning of things which had become obsolete. He said:

"This does not mean that we can confine ourselves to communist conclusions and learn only communist slogans. You will not create communism that way. You can become a communist only when you enrich your mind with the knowledge of all the treasures created by mankind."

By the end of the '30s the entire country had undergone a cultural revolution. It had become a country of full literacy, with the most democratic educational system in the world, a country of advancing science and flourishing culture. Writers and scientists, poets and artists, dancers and musicians exerted a powerful influence on people's minds. Humane ideals, feelings of the oneness of mankind, the spirit of internationalism—such were the distinguishing marks of Soviet art, literature and culture. No quarter was given to obscurantism, to ideas of social and economic inequality, of racial discrimination, to misanthropic and dehumanising themes, to the cult of war and aggression. The main heroes of works of art were people, the makers of history, the builders of the new society.

This brief narrative of the pre-war "stocktaking" of the achievements of Soviet socialism would be incomplete without mentioning the importance the Party attached to the full

equality of women, to turning the female half of the society into an active social force. Soviet women got, not just formal political and legal equality, but real equality. Comprehensive measures were taken to educate and enlighten them and to provide them with better living and material conditions. Women were drawn into all spheres of production, into the fields of science, art and culture, into running state and public affairs. They came to occupy prominent posts in administration, in the fields of industry and agriculture, science and education. They worked shoulder to shoulder with men in the mighty construction of socialism which was firmly established in the '30s in every sphere of life of the country.

The outside world was seeing how a socialist industrial and collective-farm power, with advanced science and culture, was taking a determined stride towards still more grandiose goals when Hitler invaded the USSR most treacherously. The fascist invasion put the Soviet society, its state and social system, to the first test after the Revolution and the civil war. And how it passed the test under the magnificent leadership of the CPSU is now known to every schoolboy.

## 5

### Tempered in the flames of war

THE Nazis reckoned on an easy victory for, they calculated, the war would tear the collective-farm system apart detaching the peasants from the working class, that it would break up the unity and solidarity of the nationalities comprising the oneness of the USSR, that the people's intelligentsia would reverse its role *vis-a-vis* the Soviet power. The people of the USSR upset all these calculations of the Nazi barbarous hordes. Led by the Communist Party, they showed unparalleled courage and heroism in defending their country, their hard-won achievements, their socialist system. The brutal war, forced upon them by fascism, welded them together with the Party whose prestige and influence enhanced enormously. During the war years the Party ranks were swelled by more than 5 million candidates for membership and 3.5 full members: this was nearly the number of those who had joined the Party in 12 years between 1929 and 1941. The Party led the people in the deadliest of struggles against mankind's deadliest of enemies. Under its leadership the Soviet armed forces and people rallied together as one man to stem the tide of the advance of Hitler's crack divisions, to step their onward advance, and to go over the offensive, and then to chase them into their own den in Berlin and hoist the Flag of Victory over the citadel of Nazi fascism.

What inspired the Soviet people to pick up the gauntlet



thrown by Hitler and then to send him and his forces into oblivion? What gave them this superhuman energy?

We could answer these questions by quoting Soviet leader Mikhail Kalinin, who wrote:

“When a people has to achieve great and vital objectives, when it has to fulfil enormous nation-wide tasks which are clearly defined and understandable, it builds up energy which overturns all obstacles in its way. It was an energy of this kind which welled up in our people when a mortal danger loomed over our country, when every Soviet citizen, even the most backward collective-farm woman realised that everything was at stake, our life, our freedom, our national honour and the independence of our state.”

Hundreds of thousands volunteered to join the Army even at a time, as in the beginning of the war, when Hitler, taking advantage of the element of surprise, was pressing forward. In the forefront of this mass enlistment were, of course, the workers. “The proletarian state has reared and educated me.” was the typical feeling of a worker, Sinitsin, of the Moscow Transformer Plant. “I am indebted to it for everything. And now, at the decisive hour of the battle against the enemy of our homeland, I voluntarily join the ranks of the Red Army. I promise, my friends, to fight for the happiness and freedom of our land, for the cause of all the toiling people.”

An unforgettable feat of the Soviet people during the war was the physical removal of industry from the vulnerable west to the safe east. It was an unprecedented task in magnitude as well in speed with which it was successfully accomplished under Hitler's bombers raining death and destruction over the skies. As many as 1,360 large enterprises and over 10 million people were evacuated to the east between July and November 1941 alone. (The USSR was invaded on June 22.) In 1943, after the battle on the Volga, the German fascist press was forced to admit that the Soviet industry had not been destroyed, as Goebbels had claimed, but had been fully preserved. “It is nothing short of a miracle,” wrote the *Sehavarze Korps*, “that new masses of people and machines arise from the boundless Soviet steppes, for it looks as if some great magician were moulding them in huge numbers out of Ural clay.”

“The Magnitogork has defeated the Ruhr!”

In these few words an American journalist, Werner, summed up the course of the war on the Soviet-German front.

Side by side with the workers who fought on the front and who in the rear kept the wheels of industry moving round the clock, the collective-farm peasantry rose to the occasion to keep the country, the front as well as the rear, constantly provided with foodgrains and also to fight the enemy on the battlefronts as members of the armed forces and as members of guerrilla detachment.

At the beginning of the war the Soviet Union lost nearly 50 per cent of its cultivated area. The regions under Hitler's occupation accounted for 47 per cent of the total sown area and 45 per cent of the cattle population. Growing more grain on a much smaller area was difficult because nearly 40 per cent of the able-bodied adult population had joined the Soviet armed forces. So, as at plants and factories, at the collective farms as well those who went to fight the enemy on the front found their posts taken up by others including youngsters and old folk on pension. “If necessary, we, old people, will work during nights, too. I wish to tell our sons: ‘Smite the enemy and have no fears about the collective farm. We shall tend and reap the harvest. Never fear’.”

Such was the common attitude of collective farmers as expressed so forcefully by one of them—P. Fedyakin of Kuibyshev Region.

The Soviet intelligentsia's role was inestimable in as much as it kept all its talent and skill at the service of the armed forces. Scientists devised ways of neutralising magnetic mines, made radar installations, invented devices for piloting ships and aircraft and for artillery-fire control. Chemists devised the method of getting high-ocean petrol. Doctors and surgeons enabled 75 per cent of the wounded to return to the front. And writers, poets, playwrights composed monumental pieces inspiring people to deeds of valour and glory.

The unity of nationalities comprising the USSR, instead of cracking up under the war stress as Hitler had vainly hoped for was steeled still further, thus demonstrating its invincibility. People of all nationalities joined together in one mighty

phalanx against the Hitler hordes. Millions of them fought side by side against their common enemy with one determination and under one slogan : "Death to the Enemy". Typical is the example of a Kazakh collective-farm shepherd who asked the local military commissar to enlist all his four sons into the Army :

"They are all splendid horsemen, their bodies are used to the saddle, their hands know how to wield a sword and their hearts are filled with hatred for the enemy. Take them !"

The indestructible unity of the nationalities of the USSR was a natural outcome of their common fundamental interest in socialism, which had cemented them together into an invincible alliance. A Soviet citizen, whichever the region he belonged to, the language he spoke, the dress he wore, considered the Soviet land his own home, its defence his sacred duty, its victory his motto. An idea of this feeling could be had, for instance, in the autumn of 1941 when the people of beleaguered Leningrad received a radio "message" from 95-years-old Kazakh bard, Jambul, opening with the lines :

Leningraders, my children !  
Leningraders, my pride !  
In the jet of a stream  
That flow in the steppes  
The jet of the Neva's reflected.

Another instance can be seen in the grim days of October 1942, when the working people of Uzbekistan sent a letter to the Uzbek servicemen fighting on the front :

"Free sons and daughters of the Uzbek people ! Your people are the offspring of the Soviet Union. For 25 years, together with you, the Russians, Ukrainians, the Byelorussians, the Azerbaijanians, the Georgians, the Armenians, the Tajiks, the Turkmenians, the Kazakhs and the Kirghiz built night and day our big house, our country, our culture.... You should not wait for the insidious and blood-thirsty bandit to break into your street, but drive him away from your brothers' doorstep. For your street begins in Byelorussia and the home of the Ukrainian is your home."

The enemy was driven away from beyond the doorsteps of all the peoples of the USSR. The Soviet people came out victorious in the war, covering themselves, their armed forces, their glorious Communist Party, with imperishable glory which has gone down in history in letters of gold.

The victory of the Soviet Union in the war against Nazi Germany demonstrated the inherent vitality of its socialist system, the strength of unity of its working class, peasantry and people's intelligentsia, the inviolable fraternal unity of its people and, above all, the maturity and wisdom of the Party leadership which led the entire country to its triumph over Hitler and thereafter to an immensely enhanced role in world affairs.

The Western press and several Western commentators have made efforts to belittle the role the Soviet Union played in bringing about the final debacle and defeat of Nazi Germany. For instance, they give a highly exaggerated account of the part played by the US war material sent to the USSR. The Soviet people did receive material assistance from Allied Powers and were thankful for it. These supplies were of some help, but the role they played was insignificant. The US supplies to the USSR, for instance, did not exceed 4 per cent of Soviet war production. Also, the USSR war expenses and losses from destruction caused by Nazi Germany added up to a colossal sum. The US Lend-Lease supplies to the USSR formed only 2 per cent of it. Besides, this assistance was very meagre in the early phase of the war when it was needed most directly. Former US President Herbert Hoover, no friend of the Soviet Union, admitted that the USSR stopped the Nazi armies before it got the Lend-Lease. Gen. John R. Deane, wartime head of the US Military Mission in Moscow, wrote in his book, *The Strange Alliance*, that the delivery of American and British supplies to the USSR in the latter part of 1941 and the early months of 1942, that is, in the most difficult period of the USSR, "was disappointingly slow."

## War wounds healed in record time

**T**HE Soviet people won the war at an unimaginable price. Perhaps, no other nation had suffered so grievously, shed so much blood : 20 million Soviet men, women and children perished. And the material losses were staggering, amounting to 30 per cent of the national wealth of the USSR. The fascist troops, out to pulverise the creations of the Soviet people, plundered and destroyed 1,710 cities and towns and burnt down 70,000 villages. They razed to the ground, fully or partially, about 32,000 factories, blew up 65,000 kilometres of railway tracks, plundered 98,000 collective farms and machine-and-tractor stations, reduced to rubble thousands of hospitals, secondary and specialised technical schools, colleges and libraries. The terms of the pre-war price level, the total material losses amounted to an astronomical figure : 2,600 thousand million roubles. This includes 679,000 million roubles worth of art treasures and other valuable things looted by the Nazis.

What the brutal Nazi hordes of fascist Germany could not destroy or maim or wound was the unconquerable, imperishable spirit of the Soviet people breathed into their very life-style by the socialist system. It was this indomitable spirit which inspired the people, under the leadership of their battle-tested Party, to get down to the awesome job of healing the war

wounds of every family, of every village and town, of every region and district, of the entire land. Again, it were the inherent potentialities of the socialist society, its monolithic unity and its planned economy, which helped the people organise their effort and resources in a nation-wide effort to restore its crippled industry, agriculture and transport, and its educational, public health and cultural establishments. The challenge of peace-time was as great as that of the preceding war period.

The smoke at several bombed craters was still rising when the Soviet Party and state set themselves the task of rebuilding their war-ravaged territory, restoring industry and agriculture to pre-war levels and then of exceeding them. Such were the main objectives of the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1946-1950), successor to the earlier Third Plan, the implementation of which was suddenly interrupted by Hitler's unprovoked aggression against the Soviet Union.

Where was one to start from ?

The Party was clear in its mind. As a necessary beginning, it decided, it was essential to give priority to restoring and developing heavy industry and railways. The Plan started getting under way. A country-wide socialist emulation developed, as in the period of construction of socialism, to reach and exceed the targets ahead of time. The unbreakable friendship and brotherhood of the nationalities of the USSR, which had passed the grim test of war, revealed themselves with particular force those days. A Soviet journalist described the scene in these words :

“Trainloads of industrial equipment, food and consumer goods flowed to the war-ravaged areas from the country's eastern regions, the Kazakhstan Republic and the constituent republics of Central Asia. The once-backward outlying areas inhabited by non-Russian nationalities sent relief supplies to their Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian brothers, who had earlier helped their own industrial and cultural advancement, to enable them to cope with the aftermath of war.”

The superhuman efforts the people made to repair the colossal war damages bore fruit. In 1948 industry exceeded its pre-war level of production and in 1950, when the Five-Year

Plan ended, that level was exceeded by 73 per cent against the target of 48 per cent.

Considerable achievements were made in rehabilitating agriculture which, besides being ravaged by war, had been hit by drought in 1946. Three larger tractor factories had been set up in war time. Old tractor-building enterprises at Stalingrad and Kharkov were restored in the first years of the Plan, the one at Chelyabinsk resumed production, and then another tractor plant was set up in Minsk. Thus, the USSR now had, instead of three tractor plants which existed before the war, seven which between 1945 and 1950 turned out 536,000 machines, nearly as many as were produced during the First and Second Five-Year Plans. Furthermore, the agricultural-machinery plants manufactured over 250,000 tractor-drawn seeders and hundreds of thousands of other machines and implements. So, the pre-war level of agricultural production was reached, in the main, by 1950.

The USSR's pre-war industrialisation had made it possible to overcome the war ravages in record time, to surpass the pre-war level in industrial output, and to create fresh possibilities for rapid progress.

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The subsequent Five-Year Plans, namely, the Fifth, the Sixth, the Seventh and the Eighth, were historic milestones in the Soviet people's further economic development and social and political achievements. In this period the Soviet people were not only stepping up the rate of growth of their own economy, but were also helping the people of Eastern Europe and Asia who had embarked on the socialist path of development after the final rout of Nazi Germany and militarist Japan. The USSR was at the same time extending its hand of cooperation to the newly-liberated countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America in building their independent economies sought to be held in a state of colonial bondage by Western imperialist powers.

A new era was beginning in the life of the Soviet people now busy building a communist society of their dreams and in the life of the people of other socialist countries forming

together the world socialist community. To us in India, and in other newly-independent countries, this was the era of building our new, resurgent life from the debris left behind by colonialism. In this we Afro-Asian people had the absolute support of the world socialist community, and of the USSR in particular.



## The making of a developed socialist society

“THE other day we were giving a party,” wrote Helmut Peterson, a worker of the Popov Radio-Engineering Works in Riga, a letter to a Soviet newspaper. “The conversation turned to recent improvements in everyone’s material position. One of us had just received a new flat; another had bought a motor-cycle ; yet another had just returned from a trip on the Volga river and was already planning a holiday in the Caucasus. “Our life is becoming better and fuller from year to year, but this does not happen automatically. It requires the hard work of all of us. This is the basis of our society. The riches we possess are created by the combined efforts of the entire people. Every collective of workers, every republic is making its contribution to the common cause.”

“Our life is becoming better and fuller from year to year.” This is how an ordinary Soviet worker sums up the aggregate effects on the lives of his countrymen, of the Five-Year Plans carried out after the USSR had triumphed over Nazi Germany, rehabilitated its economy, surpassed the pre-war level in industry, and laid a basis for further development of its economy.

Over the years the scale of Soviet national economy was substantially increased, its development accelerated and qualitative indicators improved. Heavy industry, the basis of Soviet

economy, was further developed. The branches which determine technical progress—electric power, chemical and petrochemical industries, engineering (especially radio electronics and instrument making)—developed at a much faster rate. Light and food industries and collective-farm agriculture also registered a considerable growth. The Communist Party's consistent policy of ensuring the priority development of socialist industry—and, principally, its basic heavy industry—turned the USSR into a great power. It was this policy which enabled that country to protect the hard-won gains of the socialist revolution, to end the centuries-old backwardness, to achieve gigantic economic, social and cultural progress.

The year 1956 was important in Soviet history and in the history of international relations. The Communist Party—the ruling Party of the mightiest socialist state—held its 20th Congress which, as subsequent events showed, considerably influenced the drift of world history. The Congress played an outstanding role in the development of the Soviet Union and the world communist movement. In an analysis of the international situation the Congress proceeded from the fact that the world had split into two systems—capitalist and socialist, the competition and antagonism between which affected all aspects of the economic, political and ideological life of nations. The Congress documents further elaborated theoretical questions of vital importance: the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, the possibility of averting another world war in the modern epoch, and the forms of transition by various countries to socialism.

An important place in the proceedings of the Congress was also given to questions of further strengthening the Soviet social and state system and the further development of socialist democracy. A report was made on the "Cult of Personality and its Consequence", and the Congress categorically condemned the Stalin personality cult which had arisen. The Congress called upon the Party to take consistent measures to ensure that the cult was fully overcome and its consequences remedied in all spheres of Party, state and ideological work, and that the norms of Party life and the principles of collective leadership elaborated by Lenin were strictly observed,

The Communist Party held its 21st (Extraordinary) Congress in 1959. The Congress declared that socialism had triumphed fully and decisively in the USSR. Socialism had emerged beyond the boundaries of one country which signified a profound change in the balance of forces in the world arena in favour of socialism. As a result of the victory of socialism and the consolidation of the unity of Soviet society, the Congress stated, the USSR had entered a new stage in its development—the stage of building communist society in which the principle “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs” would prevail. The Congress elected a commission for preparing a new Draft Programme of the Communist Party.

The Party Programme, historic in its importance, bold and dynamic in its contents, was adopted in 1961 by the 22nd Congress. This was the Third Programme of the Party—the programme for building communist society. The Second Programme (adopted by the 8th Congress in 1919) of building a socialist society had been fulfilled. The new Programme assessed the results of the constructive labour of the Soviet people under the leadership of the Communist Party and put forward the tasks of creating the material and technical basis for communism, transforming socialist relations into communist relations, and educating all working people in the spirit of lofty communist consciousness. The Programme also gave an analysis of the world revolutionary process in relation to the growth in the might of the socialist system, the disintegration of the colonial system of imperialism and the development of the international communist and working-class movement.

The Party held in 1966 its 23rd Congress which devoted special attention to the strengthening of the world socialist system and, besides, discussed questions arising from the successes of the national liberation movements of the Afro-Asian peoples, from the fight against imperialism and in defence of peace, democracy and socialism.

The largest number of delegates to attend a Soviet Party Congress was at its last Congress, i.e., at the 24th Congress held in March-April 1971. It opened on March 30 and lasted for eleven days. The Congress was attended by 102 delega-

tions of Communist, Workers', national-democratic and Left socialist parties from 91 countries.

The Congress elaborated a scientific programme of economic, socio-political and cultural development of Soviet society for the building of communism and drafted the foreign and home policy of the socialist state. The objectives of the Party's foreign policy were declared to remain the same : to strengthen the unity and cohesion of the socialist countries, their friendship and brotherhood, securing thereby favourable conditions for the building of socialism and communism; to support the national liberation movements and promote all-round cooperation with the young national states; to maintain consistently the principle of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems; to rebuff resolutely the aggressive imperialist forces, and to work to save mankind from another world war.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, declared the Congress, expressed the will of the Soviet people when it worked persistently against war and aggression, for a lasting peace for the whole of mankind. The Peace Programme was approved by the Congress. It was another striking manifestation of this policy. It was universally received with appreciation and respect and is being successfully implemented by the Soviet Government.

In working out the Party's economic policy, the Congress considered the specific features of the current period. As was noted in the report of the CPSU Central Committee, these consists in the fact that, compared to the 1930's, the country had reached an immeasurably higher level in the economic sphere, in socialist relations, and in cultural development and in the political awareness of the people. A developed socialist society had been built in the USSR.

The Congress came to the conclusion that conditions had been created for the simultaneous solution of a broader range of problems. The Soviet state, it stated, was now capable of concentrating more energies and funds to increase living standards without slackening its efforts to further promote industry on the basis of attainments of scientific and technological revolution. The main task of the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1971-1975), the Directives for which were approved by

the Congress, was to bring about a major increase in the material and cultural level of the people. This goal, the Congress resolved, would dictate the Party's activity both in the next five years and over a longer perspective.

The Congress outlined important tasks in the social sphere. These included further consolidation of the unity of Soviet society, consistent promotion of Soviet democracy and enlisting broader masses in the running of social and state affairs. Other tasks outlined were further all-round scientific and cultural development and consolidation of a moral and political atmosphere in the country in which people breathe easily, work well and live in tranquillity, and conditions which ensure their unrestricted intellectual development.

The next Congress of the Party, the 25th, is scheduled to meet in February 1976. It will review Soviet and international affairs in the context of the new trend of detente gaining ascendancy in international affairs, the further expansion of USSR's friendly relations with the newly-liberated countries of the East and, finally, give the last touches to the new, 10th Soviet Five-Year Plan (1976-80). People everywhere are looking forward to the Congress as one giving a renewed vigour to Soviet economic development, to its policy of peace and detente, and to its increasing role in world affairs in the common interests of the peoples of the entire world.

As is evident from the foregoing pages, socialism in the USSR triumphed in the latter half of the '30s. This was followed by nearly four decades of the Soviet people's heroic labour in war and peace-time. The Soviet economy of that time and the present economy of the country are based on the same type of relations of production, on the same economic laws—the laws of socialism. There are, however, new features which distinguish the present-day economy from that of the late '30s. As Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, said in his speech at the 24th Party Congress :

“An immeasurably higher level has been achieved in the national economy, in socialist social relations, in the culture and consciousness of the broad masses. The developed socialist society, to which Lenin referred in 1918 as the future of our

country, has been built by the selfless labour of the Soviet people. This has enabled us to tackle in practice the great task set by the Party Programme by its latest Congress—that of building the material and technical basis of communism.”

The most important specific features of the contemporary stage of Soviet economic development is its entirely new magnitude. Immense economic strength has been built up on the basis of industries of all types and kinds, large-scale socialist agriculture, advanced science and skilled cadres of workers, specialists and managers. At the time of the 24th Party Congress, the economy produced a social product worth nearly 2,000 million roubles, that is, ten times more than at the end of the '30s. Naturally, the Soviet people, their Party and their state have set themselves grandiose tasks of which they could only dream in earlier stages of development. The Soviet state concentrates today, not just on top priorities (as it did in the early stages of building of socialism) on which the existence of the young workers' and peasants' state depended, but also on a broader set of problems. Leonid Brezhnev gave the 24th Congress a majestic panorama of these problems :

“While securing resources for continued economic growth, while technically re-equipping production, and investing enormously in science and education, we must, at the same time, concentrate more and more energy and means on tasks relating to the improvement of the Soviet people's well-being.”

In fact, the task of the Ninth Five-Year Plan, now nearing its completion, has been to secure a considerable rise in the living standards and cultural level of the Soviet people on the basis of high rates of growth of socialist production, increase in its effectiveness, scientific and technical progress and accelerated growth of the productivity of labour.

Setting the rise in the standard of living of the Soviet people as the main task of the Ninth Five-Year Plan is intended, by the Soviet Party and state, to determine the general orientation of the country's economic development. The Soviet Party proceeds from the basic postulate that under socialism the fullest possible satisfaction of the people's material and cultural requirements is the supreme aim of social production. From the inception of the Soviet state

the Party had been trying its utmost to achieve this objective. But for well-known historical reasons, as Leonid Brezhnev told the delegates to the 24th Congress, "Our possibilities were limited for a long time. Now they are substantially greater, which enables the Party to raise the question of centering economic development still more fully on improving the life of the people." Moreover, the Party expresses the firm belief that a higher standard of living is becoming an ever more imperative requirement of Soviet economic development, one of the important economic pre-conditions for the rapid growth of production.

The Soviet Party has had no illusions about the immensity of this task. "It will take time, serious effort, immense means and resources to implement the course of considerably raising the people's standard of living," Brezhnev told the Congress.

The Ninth Five-Year Plan has gone a long way in improving the people's well-being. The cash incomes of working people have been increased in the shape of raising basic wages and salaries of certain categories of workers; the social consumption funds were considerably expanded to help improve the living conditions of large families, women working in the sphere of production, pensioners, students; house-building has been continued on a still larger scale, helping about 60 million people; vast funds have been earmarked for public utilities and for town and village improvement; consumer goods production was stepped up at a rate higher than the cash incomes of the people.

A graphic idea of the work undertaken by the Soviet state to further improve the people's conditions can be had from the scale of housing construction undertaken in the USSR. The American magazine *Newsweek* wrote long back that the USSR was ahead of the USA in housing construction, building 22 million per year as against 1.5 million in the latter country. The UN Commission on Human Rights reported about two years back that the USSR had advanced to the first place in the world in the volume of housing construction and that the rents there were the lowest in the world. Le Corbusier, the internationally-renowned French architect and town-planner

and the designer of the beautiful city of Chandigarh, wrote as early as 1955: "The whole fantastic might of our epoch must be mobilised in the service of peace—for building dwellings." The Soviet record in this mighty endeavour has, indeed, been second to none.

Obviously, such immense tasks cannot be clothed in reality without maximising the achievements in science and technology, without further accelerating their progress. The scientific and technological revolution in the USSR—as epitomised in its pioneering work in space travel—is a harbinger of the new future of the Soviet Union. The acceleration of progress in science and technology holds the key to the building of a material and technical base of communism in the USSR. Ever since the Revolution, the Soviet Party has held on to the belief—and carried it out in practice—that progress in science and technology and social progress in socialist society are interdependent, ensuring an intensified development of production.

In the USSR—even some of the Western thinkers corroborate it—while the achievements of science and technology are placed at the service of communist construction, for satisfying the material and cultural needs of man, for creating the optimal conditions for this development, at the same time fullest use is made of the possibilities provided by the social, economic and political conditions of developed socialist society for the acceleration of scientific and technological progress, for the activation and stimulation of the creative efforts of man, who alone has brought about the scientific and technological revolution. Thus, the scientific and technological revolution and its impact on man is acquiring ever wider significance today in the USSR.

Western writers have written copiously to show that the Marxist ideal of man in communist society is utopian. This ideal, as students of Marxism are well aware, is a harmoniously developed individual, a man who creates, to whom work is the prime necessity of life and the highest pleasure, a man whose free development is a part of the development of society as a whole, a society which, on its part, aims at



achieving this harmony of development, i.e., the unrestricted development of all human forces and talents.

The ideal is not a product of the mind of an "armchair philosopher" but of a scientific analysis of the entire preceding development of human society and culture, the result of the analysis of the logic of social progress. Soviet society rejects the way of life advanced by Western thought, namely consumer society, leisure civilisation, technocratic society, industrial state, etc. It rejects this way of life because, as ideologues of capitalism affirm, man is not the object of progress but the means of achieving it. The Soviet people reject this way of life as being unworthy of man and humiliating to him.

What kind of man is the citizen of the developed socialist society of the USSR? Again, Western writers have done their utmost to show that he is in no way different from the citizen of the "affluent society" of Europe and America given to the same greed and avarice, acquisitiveness and selfishness. The following incidents related by the former Speaker of the Lok Sabha and a veteran Sikh leader, Mr. Hukam Singh, after his visits to the USSR, should make the reader see the distinct and clear line which sets the Soviet man apart from his contemporary in the profit-dominated society of capitalism :

"A foreigner, on a visit to a Russian school, asked a Soviet child, 'I buy a cow for 100 roubles and sell it for 110 roubles, how much profit do I make?' The boy was astounded and replied aghast, 'This is impossible; earning profit is an illegal act.' " (*Russia Today*)

"I read an amusing story in a Soviet Publication.

"The first pilot to make non-stop flight from the Soviet Union to America was the Soviet flyer Valeri Chkalov. An American reporter interviewed him on the conclusion of his famous flight :

" 'How about your property, Sir ?'

"Oh, my affairs are splendid. I have good reason to consider myself one of the richest men in the world,' Valeri Chkalov answered.

“ ‘And, how much are you worth sir ?’ the inquisitive reporter persisted.

“ ‘Do your own counting,’ answered the pilot with a sly twinkle in his eyes. ‘I am co-owner of all the national wealth of the Soviet Union. Everyone of my fellow citizens works to some degree for me just as I, in my turn, work for him...’

“ ‘Any Soviet citizen could say the same of himself’, the publication concluded.” (*Ibid.*)

The sovereign motto governing the life of a Soviet citizen is that man is not a wolf to man but a comrade and brother. He is acutely aware of the fact that he is a part of the entire society and that the society draws its strength from the activity of all its members. The old rule “It is no concern of mine”—which is the credo of people taking care only of their interests—is repugnant to Soviet man. His concern for the general well-being finds its concentrated expression in his own and also in his comrades’ creative, innovatory initiative. “I give my all to the Five-Year Plan, the Five-Year Plan, gives its all to me.” This motto, declared by innovator Ivan Volobuyev, a milling operator, defines the relations between the society and the individual in the USSR. “Everything for the sake of man, for the benefit of man.” The Party Programme sums up in these few words the maxim of developed socialism in relation to the society’s concern for Man and Man’s concern for society.

Every social order demands new relations between man and man. Socialism, unlike capitalism, breeds new human relations and moulds a new spiritual make-up. The Soviet man’s way of life and his spiritual make-up spring from the socialist system of production which has abolished exploitation of man by man and moral, political and ideological antagonisms between people and between social groups. The mainspring of the Soviet man’s new ethics lies in the fact that as Lenin wrote in the early months of the Revolution, “for the first time after centuries of working for others, of forced labour for the exploiter, it has become possible to work for oneself and, moreover, to employ all the achievements of modern technology and culture in one’s work.” It is this that

should make the Western thinkers ponder over the question posed by an American working-class leader : "How can you weigh the growing sense of insecurity, alienation and frustration, of not being involved, not being a factor, under capitalism, with that of being totally involved and relevant, of being able to determine the course of life, that flows from the inner nature of socialism ?"

In the course of socialist construction in the USSR significant successes have been made in surmounting certain social distinctions and in designing a single way of life for the Soviet people. Not all distinctions in social life, including the distinctions between town and country, between mental and physical labour, between incomes and living standard of various professional and qualified groups, etc., have been erased so far. Of course, they do leave an imprint on the way of life and, in the words of a prominent Soviet scholar, "give rise to some of its microstructural peculiarities". But, in the main, he adds, the Soviet people have a stable common way of life. In the developed Soviet socialist society of today, and particularly as a result of the scientific and technological revolution, there is an intensive approximation of the work and life of the urban and rural populations, rapid eradication of the distinctions between mental and physical labour and the levelling up of the material welfare of the population. The Ninth Five-Year Plan has been a major step forward in improving the common way of life of the Soviet people and in furthering their equality.

"A new historical community of people, the Soviet people, took shape in our country during the years of socialist construction," Leonid Brezhnev declared at the 24th Party Congress. "New harmonious relations, relations of friendship and cooperation, were formed between the classes and social groups, nations and nationalities in joint labour, in the struggle for socialism and in the battles fought in defence of socialism. Our people are welded together by a common Marxist-Leninist ideology and by the lofty aims of building communism. The multi-national Soviet people demonstrate this monolithic unity by their labour and by their unanimous approval of the Communist Party's policy."

## 8

# Central Asian Republics : Centuries telescoped into decades

A constituent part of the Soviet community of nations are the Central Asian Soviet Republics whose phenomenal progress from medievalism to modernity has been a marvel of history. The social, economic and cultural advance of the peoples of these areas, described as the prisons of Tsarism, are a classic example of the solution of what has come to be known as the problem of nationalities. It is difficult to believe today that only a few decades back these vast, sprawling Central Asian lands had only 64 ploughs made of iron. Only about 1 per cent of the Uzbeks and a fraction of 1 per cent of the Turkmenians, the Kirghiz and the Tajiks were literate. Even this tiny number of the literate belonged to the rich families. The Tsarist attitude to the people's problems was evident from the following letter a high-ranking official wrote to the Orenburg Military Governor :

“I am not swayed by any philanthropic desire to improve the lot of the Kirghiz, to enlighten them and to raise them to the level of the European nations. I sincerely want the Kirghiz to remain shepherds and nomads for all time and not to become landed farmers. I want them to remain ignorant of science and even of learning a trade.”

But this was not to be. The Kirghiz, the Uzbeks, the Turkmenians, the Tajiks and the Kazakhs found their poverty-stricken land upturned by the October Revolution. "Even at the very thought of the bygone time, one shudders when one thinks of what lay in store for the nomadic Kazakh and Kirghiz people had it not been for the October Revolution. It is terrible to say : possibly we could have ceased to exist. And is there a people who would not want to exist for ever. And therefore even for this alone, for crushing colonial imperialism, and thereby saving my people from physical destruction, I want to glorify, to my dying day, the October Revolution which originated in Russia and I solemnly call upon my children's children to regard that October as the beginning of our days." These words of the well-known Kirghiz writer, Chinghiz Aitmatov, echo the thoughts and feelings of all the people of Soviet Central Asia.

The turn towards the better in the wretched lives of these oppressed people was heralded, after the victory of the Revolution, by the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia adopted by the Soviet Government on November 2, 1917, which proclaimed the equality and sovereignty of peoples, the abolition of national privileges and restrictions, and the free and unhampered development of national minorities and ethnic groups.

It thus became possible for the peoples of Central Asia to establish their statehood and to develop their economy and culture. In its "Appeal to All the Working Moslems of Russia and the East", the Soviet Government declared :

"Henceforth, your faith and customs, your national and cultural institutions, are proclaimed free and inviolable.... Be it known to you that your rights, like the rights of all the nationalities of Russia, are protected by the full might of the Revolution and of its organs, the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies."

The first step towards developing the national statehood of Central Asian peoples, long held under subjection by Russian Tsars, was the formation of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1918. In a telegram of greetings Lenin said :

“We welcome your initiative, and are deeply convinced that you will cover the whole territory with a network of Soviets, and will act in close contact with the Soviets already in existence.”

The Turkmenian Republic issued decrees on the nationalisation of banks, railways, cotton ginneries, etc. The people of the region fought grim battles against foreign invaders and internal forces working for counter-revolution, for the restoration of the old decrepit order. Fourteen Turkestan commissars were done to death by counter-revolutionary groups. But the newly-established Soviet power in Turkestan overcame counter-revolutionary resistance and stabilised and strengthened itself. In 1920, the people overthrew the despotic feudal regimes in Khiva and Bukhara, establishing the Khorezm and Bukhara People's Soviet Republics. Turkestan, Bukhara and Khorezm were multi-national republics in which political and administrative borders did not correspond to the national make-up. The redistribution of territories of these republics on the basis of nationalities, as advocated in 1924 by the Bolshevik Party and Lenin, was declared in the historic “Decree on the National State Demarcation of the Republics of Central Asia (Turkestan, Bukhara, Khorezm)”. Thus came into being the Soviet Socialist Republics of Uzbekistan (with the Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic) and Turkmenia, the Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, the Kara-Kalpek Autonomous Region as part of the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (established in 1918) and the Kara-Kirghiz Autonomous Region as part of the Russian Soviet Federative Republic. The newly-formed Uzbek and Turkmenian Republics immediately applied for entrance into the USSR as Union Republics. Five years after the formation of Turkmenia and Uzbekistan, the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic was set up. In 1936, the Kazakh and Kirghiz Autonomous Republics became Union Republics and also joined the USSR.

The joining of the Central Asian Soviet Republics in the world's first multi-national socialist state, the USSR—formed on December 30, 1922—multiplied the potentialities of their peoples in socialist construction. The multi-national Soviet state had been created by the revolutionary energy of the Party

and by its great endeavour and determination. Its formation had been made possible by the establishment of the Soviet system which had transformed relations between the toiling masses of the nationalities of Russia, had overcome the old national hostility, destroyed the basis of national oppression, and won for the Russian workers the trust of their brother workers of other nationalities not only in Russia but also in Asia and raised this trust to enthusiasm and to a readiness to fight for the common cause.

Speaking on the occasion of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the formation of the USSR, Leonid Brezhnev said :

“The formation of the USSR was a direct continuation of the cause of the Great October Revolution, which opened a new era in mankind’s development; it was a practical embodiment of the idea of our great leader, Lenin—the idea of a voluntary union of free nations.”

The people of Soviet Central Asia, during the start of their new life, relied on unstinted help from their brethren in the Russian Federation. Help came from Russia in raising the level of economy and culture to that of the developed regions of the country—a task the people of Central Asia could not achieve then by themselves. Train-loads of factory equipment for setting up industries in the spheres of metallurgy, timber, textiles and foodstuffs were sent from Central Russia. Whole factories and mills were brought to Soviet Central Asia along with specialists and workers. The spinning mill transferred to Ferghana from the Moscow Region became the basis of the Republic’s textile industry. Construction of hydro-electric stations and industrial enterprises was started. By 1925, over 30 plants had been started in Soviet Central Asia. The Government of the Russian Federation allocated special funds for the restoration of irrigation canals.

Soviet Central Asia started coming out from the dark tunnel of backwardness into the sun-drenched valleys of enlightenment. Educational establishments were set up—including general, specialised secondary and higher educational schools. The Turkestan University (now called Tashkent University), set up in accordance with the decree signed by Lenin, was the

first institute of higher learning in Soviet Central Asia. Russia sent to the university funds, academic personnel, train-loads of laboratory equipment, text-books and an enormous collection of books for the science library. Illiteracy and lack of trained teachers created enormous hurdles which were overcome with the help of Russian teachers who were conversant with the languages and customs of the peoples of the region.

The First Soviet Five-Year Plan singled out the economic and cultural advancement of the national republics and backward areas as one of its principal targets. For many years, the all-Union budget subsidised the budgetary expenditure of a number of the national republics. In some republics people living in difficult conditions were given tax relief and even tax exemption. The Government of the USSR instituted in 1925 a special assistance fund for the backward peoples.

Industrialisation made rapid advance, increasing the output in Uzbekistan during the 1928-32 period by 150 times. New industries were set up, railways built, canals dug. Manual labour engaged in construction sites in the beginning was replaced later by machines, excavators, etc. The Central Asian Republics now had a working class of their own. The republics became an important, developed industrial-agrarian region of the USSR having mining, non-ferrous metal, oil and gas, engineering, instrument-making and power industries, developed transport and communications. Highly-mechanised collective farms dotted the land from one end to another. "I visited the homes of rank-and-file collective farmers and got convinced they were quite well off," French writer Jean Marabini stated. "At times, I forgot that I was a Frenchman and looked at your truly tremendous successes and achievements from the viewpoint of millions of inhabitants of those extensive regions of the planet where hunger, misery, backwardness and disease still hold sway. What a convincing and attractive example! Uzbekistan is to these millions of unfortunates, to many countries of the world." "In the present-day Republics of Central Asia, I see the future of my country," remarked the Director-General of the Ministry of Planning of Somalia.

Central Asian Republics underwent deep-going changes in the cultural and intellectual field. They have today 26,000



general educational schools with nine million students, besides 104 institutions of higher learning with 560,000 students and 468 specialised secondary schools with a student body of half a million. Tashkent University alone boasts of 30,000 students. The republics have their own intelligentsia working in diverse spheres like astronomy and atomic physics, mathematics and agro-sciences, humanities and literature. The Central Asian Soviet Republics have their own academies of sciences with a net-work of 200 establishments engaged in fundamental and applied research. The people read avidly their own classics as well as those of Russia and other peoples of the USSR and the world. Theatres, opera houses, music halls attract large crowds every day. After seeing the ballet *Giselle* at the Kirghiz Academic Theatre, the French journalist M. Mourange remarked :

“Would it ever have occurred to the authors of the famous French romantic ballet that audiences in the Tien Shan Mountains of far-away Central Asia would understand the heroine’s sufferings? At this thought one realises even more clearly how far these people have advanced, covering ten centuries in less than 40 years.”

Perhaps the most spectacular progress has been achieved in solving the question of women who in Central Asia had lived over the ages as prisoners or dead tradition, dark superstition, and backward patriarchal-feudal relations. The Soviet power emancipated the Central Asian woman from her bondage—from the veil *paranja*, polygamy, bride-ransom, forced and early marriages, etc. Today women of these regions work shoulder to shoulder with menfolk in building the radiant future of communism. They constitute 40 per cent of the people engaged in production in the Central Asian Republics. Women take active part in running state affairs, in managing industry and scientific establishments, in conducting advanced research and in promoting art and culture. “When I received the invitation to take part in this Moscow meeting, devoted to the 40th anniversary of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, I began to think over what to tell you, dear comrades,” Fatima Kasymova, a member of the Uzbek delegation, stated. “Should I tell you about my life as head of the Engels Collective Farm

in the Samarkand Region for the past 20 years and as a mother who, besides raising six children of her own, adopted 10 children of different nationalities in the Second World War, that having graduated from the Agricultural Institute, I am now working on a Master's thesis on the selection of new, very sweet, varieties of *sultana* grapes?... And I felt that my life story, the life story of an ordinary Uzbek woman, would be a vivid example of what the Soviet power has given to the women of the East."

## From Peace Decree to Peace Programme

**T**HE colossal construction work going on in all the republics of the USSR, in other socialist countries and in the developing nations of the "third world" could be carried out only in conditions of peace. Peace is an article of faith with the Soviet Party, government and people as with the whole of progressive humanity. It is embedded in the traditions of the Soviet power, forming an inseparable part of the Soviet system and the common watch-word of the Soviet people. Peace forms the bedrock of the foreign policy of the Soviet state, a basis of which was laid down in the Peace Decree adopted by the Second Congress of Soviets on the next day after the victory of the October Revolution, November 8, 1917. The Decree enunciated entirely new principles underlying the foreign policy of the newly-born peasants' and workers' state. The desire to achieve a just and democratic peace, equality and friendship of peoples were the keynotes of the historic "Peace Decree", determining the subsequent course of the foreign policy of the Soviet state. The Decree called upon all belligerent nations and their governments to start immediate negotiations for peace—peace without annexations and without indemnities. It repudiated the imperialist policy of violence and plunder, came out for the complete equality of nations and for respect

for their sovereignty and independence. The Decree thus ushered in a new foreign policy hitherto unknown in international relations, the policy of peace, good-neighbourliness, friendship and cooperation with all countries regardless of their social system.

Over half a century spans the adoption of the Peace Decree by the Second Congress of Soviets in November 1917 and the Peace Programme by the 24th CPSU Congress in March-April 1971. Their essence, however, has remained unaltered for they answer the needs of the people of the Soviet Union and of the rest of the world. They are both rooted in Leninist principles of internationalism, of consistent opposition to imperialism, of peaceful coexistence of states with different states and of universal peace. Over the years the Soviet state has preserved and carried forward the main tenets of its Leninist foreign policy and, taking into account the changes and shifts in the world situation, filled it up with new content. Whatever the character of combination of forces on the international scene, the Soviet state has steadfastly stuck to, proclaimed and carried out its foreign policy of peace and peaceful coexistence. The Soviet states' foreign policy has not been the policy of a nation-state defending its narrow "national" interests at the cost of interests of other peoples. Its foreign policy flows from the character of its socialist society which has abolished all exploiting classes, all national enmities, and all that which breeds chauvinism. The socialist society is internationalist in outlook, pledged to uphold the cause of the entire progressive mankind. Socialism has proved, in word and deed, that it represents a powerful stronghold of peace and progress on our planet. The socialist foreign policy, being class-oriented and internationalist, serves the cause of peace, freedom and security of all peoples, the cause of their national independence, democracy and social progress. The foreign policy of imperialism, on the contrary, is aimed against socialism and at suppressing the national-liberation movements of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The Soviet foreign policy has been the object of vicious attack at the hands of imperialist circles hostile to it from very inception. The policy of diplomatic, political and economic

boycott of the USSR long pursued by Western powers was a negation of the policy of peaceful coexistence. Students of international relations are familiar with the long history of the Western powers' hostility to the USSR beginning from Churchill's dream of "strangling Bolshevism at its birth" and going on to Dulles' notorious call for "roll-back" and "containment".

We need not go over the well-known facts of history in detail. It is sufficient to recall the decades following the First World War when anti-Soviet forces in the West lent all moral and material support to Hitler in the hope of turning him "East-ward" much against the USSR's sincere endeavour for building a common united front against this rising fascist menace which later plunged the continent into a grim blood-bath. Even in the Second World War, when the Allied forces fought with the USSR against their common foes, men like Senator Taft came out with the declaration that a victory of communism was more dangerous to the USA than a victory of fascism. Soon after the end of the war Churchill had already come out with his notorious anti-Soviet speech at Fulton in which he called the USSR a mortal enemy of the "free world". In October 1945 General Patton appealed for a preparation for a Third World War. The then US President, Harry Truman, on March 6, 1947, voiced America's claim to leadership of the world and on March 12, put forward his "doctrine" which, in effect, proclaimed the United States as the world's anti-communist, anti-Soviet policeman. As D.F. Fleming wrote in his *The Cold War and Its Origins*, the Truman Doctrine made the US a "world policeman".

It was thus that the cold war originated and gained momentum or, rather, was furthered. On November 30, 1950, Truman went on record, speaking of the need for a world-wide mustering of forces against communism. This was in total disregard of what Roosevelt had pointed out soon after the rout of the Nazis in the War, namely, that vast prospects existed for mutually advantageous cooperation between the USSR and the USA. The US ruling circles, continuing the cold war further, resorted to atomic diplomacy, brinkmanship, trade blockade, etc. They formed aggressive

blocs like NATO, SEATO, CENTO; started the world's costliest and most senseless arms race; built the deadliest of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons; fanned and took direct part in devastating "local wars" in Korea, Indo-China, and the Middle East and overthrew democratically-elected governments in several countries.

What could the USSR do under these difficult and trying circumstances fraught with the gravest of dangers to its own security and independence and to the peace of the entire world? Would it allow itself to be browbeaten by the cold-war warriors, the sabre-rattlers? Perhaps the West thought the USSR would be brought down to its knees. As Robert W. Tucker says in his book *The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy*, the entire US post-war policy, a policy of ensuring US world supremacy, signified that the "only policy the Russians could have pursued which would not have incurred American hostility was one that placed Russian security—and not only security—largely at the mercy of the good intentions of others, above all, America."

The USSR could certainly not pursue such a humiliating and suicidal policy. It had built a new society which had to be safeguarded against external threat from whoever it emanated. Restraining itself against the gravest of provocations, it set itself to the task of further developing its economic and defence potential which had given a magnificent account of itself in the anti-Hitler war. The enormous might of the socialist community of nations, the wide sweep of the working-class, democratic and national-liberation movements, the increasing role played by newly-liberated countries in world affairs and their growing friendship with the USSR and other socialist countries—all these factors combined to make it hopeless and suicidal for an aggressor to trigger off an armed clash against the world of socialism. The hopes placed by the most aggressive and reactionary circles in the West on nuclear blackmail, economic blockade and psychological warfare against the socialist community were all belied. The West started realising that its theory of "position of strength" was out of tune with times, that cold war was outdated, and that a new, more sensible policy was called for. Of course, it

took quite a long time before the bankruptcy of the concepts of "diktat" started revealing their untenability to an increasing circle of Western ruling classes. Steadily, step by step, pressed by objective facts, which they could neither alter nor deny, the leaders in the West began arriving at realistic conclusions about the need for a positive response to the peace policy of socialist countries.

It was against this altered background of the world scene that the 24th CPSU Congress came forward with its Peace Programme. The world capitals started studying its global historic significance and the accompanying peace-oriented initiatives of Soviet diplomacy taken at the instance of Brezhnev who took personal interest in giving the new trend in world affairs a vigorous and energetic push.

The Peace Programme outlined the following priorities in the field of foreign policy ; wiping out hotbeds of war and aggression; creation of a stable peace in Europe and Asia; struggle for limiting the arms drive and for general and complete disarmament; liquidation of vestiges of colonialism and racism; development of equal and mutually-advantageous cooperation between states with different social systems on the basis of principles of peaceful coexistence.

The Peace Programme resolutely demanded an end to imperialist aggression against the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. It pledged the Soviet people's active championship of the just cause of the heroic people of Indo-China. Regarding the Middle East, the Programme, reiterating the firm support of the USSR to Arab peoples, expressed the Soviet state's willingness to join other powers, who were permanent members of the Security Council, in providing international guarantees for a political settlement in the Middle East on the basis of respect for the legitimate rights of the Arab people subjected to aggression. An effective solution of the Middle East problem can be reached only if Israel completely evacuates the Arab lands occupied in 1967. Also, the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including their right to form their own state, should be ensured fully. Only after a political settlement is reached could further steps for a military detente be taken in

the whole area, in particular, for converting the Mediterranean into a sea of peace and friendly cooperation.

The peoples of the world, outstanding statesmen, public leaders, newspapers hailed the Peace Programme as a document full of promise in giving a new turn to world affairs. It was described as a "peace offensive" in which there would be no losers and no winners. The Peace Programme is, indeed, a watershed in world affairs since it is the first document to give a powerful impetus to the trend of recasting international relations so as to completely exclude the use of force in inter-state relations and thus in ensuring the solutions of the key social, economic and other problems of our time in a climate of universal peace.

The peace initiative taken by the Soviet Union, and by Brezhnev personally, after the adoption of the Peace Programme has met with tremendous success as shown in the increasing process of relaxation of tension, normalisation of relations between the USSR and Western powers including the USA, receding of the cold war, and the diminishing threat of a global nuclear war and confrontation between the two world systems.

The years that have elapsed since the 24th Party Congress have been packed with exceptionally extensive and fruitful activities of the CPSU and the Soviet state on the international scene. There can be no denying the fact that the struggle for the implementation of the Peace Programme and for its consistence fulfilment have produced a tremendous effect on the content, character and entire structure of international relations, and have resulted in big positive changes in the world situation. The main achievement is that the threat of war has definitely not only lessened but has also been put aside and that prospects for peace are becoming much more solid and real.

The ensuing process of detente opened new opportunities and prospects for strengthening the cooperation of the USSR with Afro-Asian and Latin American countries. In the main, an end has been put in the world today to direct colonial domination. The progressive democratic forces of Portugal



united to put an end to the world's last colonial empire, that of Portugal itself.

Outstanding successes were achieved by the people of Indo-China, signifying the victorious completion of the courageous liberation struggle of the peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, demonstrating the invincibility and might of the revolutionary and national-liberation movements of today. Once again, it has been confirmed that a policy of aggression and attempts to break the will of nations striving for independence, peace and social progress is bound to end in a fiasco. The gains of the peoples of Indo-China, particularly of the heroic Vietnamese people, are a joint major success of world socialism, revolutionary and national-liberation movement and the entire progressive mankind. It is also a powerful blow at the forces of internal reaction in the countries of Indo-China, at the aggressive schemes of international imperialism, and at imperialist policy in general.

Following the adoption of the Peace Programme, the USSR, which made a great contribution to the victory of the peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, actively promoted the cause for liquidating the hotbed of war in Indo-China. This hotbed, which had long aggravated international relations and had become a serious obstacle to international relaxation, has now been eliminated. "This in itself creates additional possibilities for the further improvement of the international climate and opens, in particular, more favourable prospects for extending the zone of relaxation to South-East Asia and the whole of the Asian continent, for laying firm foundations for a stable peace in Asia which would include the setting up there of a reliable system of collective security," stated Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko.

Another outstanding achievement of the Peace Programme has been the cycle of successes achieved in the course of peaceful and mutually beneficial cooperation of the USSR with the capitalist countries of Europe and the positive effect these successes produce on the situation in the continent. Europe was the main theatre of the two World Wars, and on this continent the situation is entirely changed today. The turn to realism in the policies of West Germany and of other

Western powers and the changed situation in Europe have all combined to ensure the recognition of the political and territorial realities emerging in Europe after World War II and in the course of the post-War development. Such is the historic essence of the treaties concluded by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries of Europe with the Federal Republic of Germany, which have confirmed, in particular, the inviolability of the borders between the German Democratic Republic and the FRG and the Polish Western border along the Oder-Neisse line. Addressing the 50th anniversary of the formation of the USSR, Mr. Brezhnev declared :

“The treaties between the USSR and the FRG, and between Poland and the FRG, which formalised the inviolability of the existing European frontiers, the set of agreements on West Berlin, and the treaty on the principles governing relations between the GDR and the FRG, the final breakthrough of the diplomatic blockade of the GDR—all these are important steps in Europe’s progress towards peace and security. And all this is not any one country’s gain alone, but a great victory for reason and realism in international relations.... Our people know that the two world wars burst into their homes from the West, from Europe. We remember 1941. Every Soviet citizen cherishes the memory of 20 million compatriots who laid down their lives in the Great Patriotic War. We remember all this well as we complete the history-making work of finalising the immutability of the post-War European settlement.”

Of immense importance to creating a better climate in international relations and in further strengthening the cause of peace is the positive shift which has taken place in the USSR-USA relations. The summit meetings between the leaders of the two great powers of the world have led to several agreements, the most important of which has been the one on prevention of nuclear war. Its main purpose is to preclude the outbreak of nuclear war between the USSR and the USA and to prevent such a war between either of the two sides and other countries. *Time* magazine described the agreement as a code of nuclear conduct. Another important agreement relates to the limitation of the anti-ballistic missile system and strategic offensive arms.

Also of world-wide importance is the document entitled "Basic Principles of Mutual Relations between the USSR and the USA" which, as is well-known, marked a turn from the cold war to peaceful coexistence. According to this document, both sides are to avoid military confrontations and to prevent nuclear war and any situations that might lead to a dangerous aggravation of their relations. In keeping with the principles of peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems, both sides agreed to renounce attempts to gain unilateral advantages at the expense of the other side and recognised that their security was promoted by the observance of the principle of equality and renunciation of the use and threat of force.

The agreement between the two countries on the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes laid the basis for large-scale joint programmes which are of great scientific importance. The world recently hailed the joint Soviet-US space flight as the beginning of a new era in international cooperation. The Soviet-US summits are, thus, of importance not only to the two countries, but also to the entire world. They have reduced the threat of world war and helped in consolidating world peace and security. The agreements are not directed against any "third country" and its interests. Moreover, the agreements stipulate that the results of Soviet-American bilateral cooperation should be used to consolidate world peace and improve the life of the people of all nations. The people of the world, therefore, hope the USSR and the USA will succeed in making the improvement of their relations a permanent process. This will benefit all nations interested in creating conditions for mankind's further progress in economic, scientific, technological and cultural fields and in ensuring peace and happiness for future generations.

The main achievements of Soviet foreign policy since the adoption of the Peace Programme have, therefore, been solid and substantial and which no one can ignore today. These achievements, briefly summarised, are : the threat of a world nuclear-missile war which came to hang over mankind in the cold war period has been lessened; the prospects for preserving universal peace have become more favourable; a turn from

cold war to detente has taken place in international relations; the process of improving the world climate is assuming an irreversible nature. "Thanks to the consistent peace-loving policy of the socialist states, as a result of the active steps of democratic forces of all countries as well as the realistic stand taken by the governments which have become aware of the danger of continuing the 'cold war', the situation in the international arena has radically changed... A profound re-structuring of the system of international relations on the basis of principles of peaceful coexistence has begun. It can and must be continued...", states the call to the peoples, Parliaments and governments issued by the CPSU Central Committee, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet and the Council of Ministers of the USSR on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Victory over Hitlerite Germany.

An outstanding event which influences the course of positive developments not only in Europe but also all over the world was the recently-held Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The 33 European states as well as the USA and Canada signed on August 1, 1975 the Final Act representing a collective agreement on a wide range of pressing problems: peace, security and mutually-advantageous cooperation. Addressing the Conference, L.I. Brezhnev said:

"...We view the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe as a common success of all its participants. Its results can be of use also outside Europe... We are convinced that the successful implementation of what we have agreed upon here will not only have a beneficial effect on the life of the European peoples, but will also make a major contribution to the cause of strengthening world peace."

The historic significance of the Conference, emphasised by Mr. Brezhnev in his address, is perceived by people who belong to the generation which experienced the horrors of World War II. "Its objectives are also close to the hearts and minds of the generation of Europeans which has grown and is now living in conditions of peace and which quite justly believes that it cannot be otherwise."

It was in Europe that aggressors crowned themselves with questionable laurels many a time, only later to be cursed by

people. It was here, in Europe, that a political doctrine originated, claiming a title to world domination which led to the collapse of states whose resources had been used to serve criminal and inhuman purposes. Mr. Brezhnev added :

“This is why the hour has struck for the inevitable collective conclusions to be drawn from the experience of history. And we are drawing these conclusions here, being fully aware of our responsibility for the future of European continent which must exist and develop under conditions of peace. One could hardly deny that the results of the Conference represent a carefully weighed balance of the interests of all participating states and, therefore, should be treated with special care.”

The Conference was an event of tremendous international significance. It inaugurated a new stage in detente, constituted an important step on the road of consolidating the principles of peaceful coexistence and developing relations of equal cooperation among states with different social systems. It confirmed that the old policies based on “positions-of-strength” and cold war were fruitless and harmful. At the same time, it opened up new opportunities for solving the central task of our time, namely, strengthening peace and international security.

The Final Act is a historic document. According to it, no one must try to dictate to other peoples how they should arrange their internal affairs. The people of a state—and they alone—have the right to solve their problems and establish their internal laws. This can serve as the only basis for an edifice of effective European security. The agreements reached at the Conference put relations between the participant countries more solidly on the basis of the principles of peaceful coexistence, define concrete directions and forms of cooperation in different spheres of life and lay down foundations of a reliable peace on the European continent. They also project a broad and clear-cut platform of action of states on a unilateral, bilateral and multilateral basis for many years and, possibly, dozens of years to come.

The Soviet Union, as is well-known, is persistently striving for military relaxation in the European continent as a sequel to the successful outcome of the Conference. A halt to the

arms drive and tangible steps towards disarmament have become cardinal elements in the process of implementation of the policy of detente. The prime task, naturally, is reduction in military tension. Detente has to be deepened, made irreversible, given added momentum and extended to all regions of the world.

The effects of detente are so favourable to the peoples of the entire world that no right-thinking person would wish to reverse its powerful trend, to return to the frozen years of the cold war. In spite of spectacular achievements of detente, this new, dominant trend in international relations finds its enemies, some of them even occupying vantage positions in the public and political life of their countries. Certain reactionary and militarist circles have chosen to come out against the present realities of the international situation. They have not freed themselves of the old complex which Senator Fulbright has described as the "arrogance of power". Some of them still stick to old cold war concepts. Former US Defence Secretary Schlesinger, for instance, in an interview to the *US News and World Report* placed emphasis on the feasibility of "new tactics" of armed action. Peace, he asserted, is based on military power. Senator Helms, another cold war warrior, insists that the "thoughtless striving" for detente with the USSR has had a serious impact on American interests leading to what he calls the "present tragedy" in Cambodia, the "failure of our policy" in South Vietnam, the "instability" in Europe, etc.

One cannot but marvel at the shameless effrontery of such people who seek to pass off black for white and who attribute the failure of their own outdated interventionist policy to that of detente. They still have the nerve to insist that the Lon Nols and Thieus, who, as US commentator Anthony Lewis points out, grew fat on American aid while their people starved, were defending freedom and democracy.

These people are not at all disconcerted by the fact that this kind of talk may well lead them to assert that detente among states should guarantee the eternal existence of all the rotten regimes in the world, including that of the 'black colonels' in Greece and of Salazar's henchmen in Portugal.

Such a turn of events would, of course, suit the opponents

of detente very well, but the march of history cannot be reversed. It is after all quite clear that relaxation of tension in relations between states with different social systems and internal processes in individual states are quite different things. In their own affairs, each country and each people have the right to decide things for themselves. Detente is not a barrier to national liberation movements nor to progressive socio-political transformations in the world.

Judging by certain statements in the Western press, some representatives of reactionary circles still seem to think that detente is some kind of a kindly act on the part of the West with regard to the Soviet Union and the other socialist states, which are the only ones allegedly in need of it.

These are, of course, ridiculous conceptions. But the fact remains that those who share them have to this day failed to realise that in the conditions prevailing in the age of nuclear missiles the only alternative to detente is return to cold war and nuclear brinkmanship.

## A firm alliance with the Third World

**T**HE Soviet Peace Programme was welcomed not only as a trend-setter for international detente but also as a powerful call for conducting “a resolute struggle against imperialism” and for firmly rebuffing the “evil designs and subversions of aggressions”. The Programme declared that the Soviet Union would continue giving undeviating support to the people’s struggle for democracy, national liberation and socialism. The Soviet Communist Party’s policy has been rooted in unflinching opposition to imperialism. Support to people oppressed by imperialism forms the international tradition of the Party. In 1916, before the Revolution, Lenin declared unequivocally :

“We shall exert every effort to foster association and merger with the Mongolians, Persians, Indians, Egyptians. We believe it is our duty and in our interest to do this... We shall endeavour to render these nations, more backward and oppressed than we are, ‘disinterested cultural assistance...’ We will help them pass to the use of machinery, to the lightening of labour, to democracy, to socialism.”

The Soviet state, from the date of its establishment, demarcated itself from Western powers by denouncing their colonial [policies and by aligning itself with the peoples of the subject



East. "The Decree on Peace", issued one day after the Revolution, emphatically disavowed the policy of plunder and coercion. It denounced every incorporation of a small or weak nation into a large or powerful state without the precisely, clearly and voluntarily expressed consent and wish of that nation. The Soviet state was, thus, tied to the cause of peace as well as to national liberation from the very day of its birth. The Decree on Peace was followed on December 3, 1917 by an "Appeal to All the Working Moslems of Russia and the East" which set forth new principles of mutual relations with peoples of Asian countries. The Appeal declared that the peoples of the East should have the right to develop their national life freely, without obstruction, and that the Soviet people would build up relations with them on the basis of equality, mutual respect and friendship. Naturally, the victims of imperialism found in the Soviet state its natural ally in seeking deliverance from an international system based on enslavement, war and national oppression. The USSR has lived up to the expectations of the peoples struggling for their independence and freedom from colonial and imperialist rule.

The end of World War II heralded the beginning of the end of the colonial area. One colonial state after another proclaimed its independence, raising high the banner of national liberation. India's independence, hailed by the USSR as a great event in Asian history, was followed by the independence of other Asian and African states. The process of declaration of independence went on uninterruptedly despite the armed might of Western powers. The young newly-liberated states found in the USSR and the world socialist camp a powerful shield against the sword of imperialism. They declared their new foreign policies of peace, non-alignment and friendship with [the USSR and countries of the socialist camp. The pioneering role was played by Jawaharlal Nehru, the architect of the policy of non-alignment. The "Third World", as these newly-liberated states came to be called, were no longer the playthings of Western powers but constituted a powerful international force tilting the world balance against the old world of imperialism, war and aggression.

The "Third World" declared its opposition to aggressive

blocs, to imperialist economic plunder, to vestiges of colonialism and inroads of neo-colonialism, to racism and apartheid. It launched upon the course of independent development, of building an economy free from imperialist domination, serving the national interests of the people long held under subjection by Western powers.

Most Asian countries came out for cooperation and security on an all-Asia basis. Again, the pioneering role among Asian leaders was played by Nehru who, as early as 1947, took the initiative in convening an Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi attended by 27 countries including the Soviet republics of Central Asia and Trans-Caucasus. Nehru emphasised at the Conference that Asian countries should give thought to mutual cooperation and he was the first to come out with the new idea of Asia being turned into a zone of peace. This idea found its classic expression at the Bandung Conference, whose decisions went down in the annals of history as a major step towards determining the anti-imperialist course for Afro-Asian states, as a powerful manifestation of their desire to ensure the collective defence of peace. This desire for peace and cooperation of Asian nations has been opposed, tooth and nail, by imperialism which believes in its age-old policy of "divide-and-rule". Its unwillingness to reconcile itself to the loss of its possessions has brought so much disaster to our Asian continent as was witnessed lately in Vietnam.

In a desperate bid to save all it can, imperialism fans tensions in Asia, sets one state at loggerheads against another, disturbs the peace of the region and places its security in jeopardy. The Asian people have seen through this game and are, therefore, coming out increasingly in favour of a collective assertion of their will, of uniting their efforts in a determined bid to rid this continent of tension, war and aggression.

It is in this context that the Soviet Union's plan of collective security in Asia assumes great importance. The plan was outlined by Leonid Brezhnev in 1969. He explained that the USSR was in favour of collective security for Asia because "we seek to exclude wars, armed conflicts and imperialist aggression on the Asian continent; we want every country and every people to be in guaranteed conditions for free development

and national regeneration; we want a spirit of trust and mutual understanding to prevail in relations among Asian countries.”

The Soviet proposal of establishing a collective security system in Asia can be regarded as an alternative to imperialist military blocs disuniting the countries of the continent. The proposal aims at establishing a system among Asian states on the basis of principles such as renunciation of the use of force in relations between states, respect for sovereignty and inviolability of frontiers, non-interference in domestic affairs, extensive development of economic and other cooperation on the basis of complete equality and mutual advantage. This proposal, directed at turning Asia into a continent of peace and cooperation, finds increasing support from Asian peoples and governments. Asia is determined to ensure that the obstacles offered by reactionary and aggressive forces are finally overcome. It is these forces which impede the process of detente throughout the world and which are specially fearful that the Asian continent, once its peace is guaranteed collectively, will be closed forever to domination.

The essence of the Soviet proposal for collective security in Asia was suggested by the logic of developments in the continent. It summarises and generalises the entire positive experience accumulated in Asian politics for the past decades. The Soviet proposal has much in common with the *Panch Sheel* approved by the Bandung Conference, the 20th anniversary of which was observed on a large scale this year. The broad identity of the objectives of the Soviet foreign policy with the interests of the national liberation movements has resulted in a successful development of cooperation between the Soviet Union and Asian countries. In these countries, as, Mr. Brezhnev told the Indian Parliament in November 1973, confidence is growing in the feasibility of achieving a lasting peace and creating a situation there favourable for concentrating their efforts on the present-day tasks of their internal development. The search is being intensified for practical ways and concrete measures, both partial and general, which would be conducive to promoting and strengthening the security of Asian states. “It is on these problems that the

thinking of the Asian public is concentrated, and we believe this to be a major achievement," he declared. "Asia can and must become a continent of peace, friendship and cooperation... This great goal is worth the efforts and the struggle," he added.

Asian countries, having freed themselves from colonialism, play an active role in international developments. They contribute appreciably to spreading the process of detente which has come to influence their mind. They are fast dissociating themselves from military blocs and working steadfastly for the neutralisation of South-East Asia. The Pentagon's construction of the Diego Garcia military base has further fuelled the engines of the popular movement for turning the Indian Ocean area into a zone of peace. It is only through collective security that lasting peace and tranquillity will come to the troubled continent of Asia.

The collective security system has got to be universal. All states of the region should be able to take part, on an equal footing, in its establishment. None of them will gain any privileges to the detriment of others. This approach, consistently advocated by Soviet leaders and supported by Asian opinion, opens wide possibilities for the equal and mutually advantageous cooperation of all countries believing in the principles of peaceful coexistence, respect for sovereignty, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

It is here that the relevance of the Helsinki Conference to developments in Asia inevitably comes to mind. The European collective security model can be profitably adopted to Asian conditions to enable evolving a single code of peace and cooperation. The fact that conditions in Asia are basically different from those in Europe does not rob the Helsinki principles of their universal character. Take, for example, the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states or the principle of non-use of force in settling international disputes. These are more relevant to Asia than to any other region of the world. The foreign bases on Asian soil, after all, constitute a threat of force. Naturally, the Helsinki principles gain ever increasing relevance to conditions obtaining in our continent. The significance of the Final Act

lies precisely in the fact that it proclaims principles which can be useful in Asian conditions as well. These principles are in strict conformity with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, of which most Asian countries are full-fledged members. The principles of the Final Act are universal and equally applicable to Asia and to all other continents and countries in the struggle for ensuring security and for establishing cooperation for peaceful purposes. As Mr. Brezhnev said recently :

“The assertion of the principles of peace and security in inter-state relations among the countries of Asia and Africa, just as in international relations in other parts of the world, would doubtless promote a still more effective implementation of the young states’ economic and social development programmes, would contribute to the elimination of the seats of tension and conflict heated up by imperialists and neo-colonialism. Already today the results of the European Security and Cooperation Conference render their beneficial effect on all international developments. It is our conviction that the basic principles outlined in the Final Act of the Conference extend beyond the boundaries of the European continent and can be used on other continents.

“So far as the Soviet Union is concerned, it will go on working, together with all the forces loyal to the cause of peace and freedom, for ensuring every people conditions for a peaceful life, for free development and national renaissance. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union stands invariably on the side of those who come out against imperialist aggression, national oppression, neo-colonialism, racism and social injustice.”

The Soviet Union’s support to such forces, to the people of the “Third World”, forms an integral part of the current world polity. Its graphic illustration is provided by the strong, ever-increasing ties of friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union and of our country now juridically embodied in the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation. It is a treaty between the first country of victorious socialism and the largest peaceable Asian state. It is a treaty which, in the words of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, “is an important milestone in our bilateral relations and it helps to safeguard

stability in the region.” “We greatly value the growing co-operation between our two countries based on equality and mutual benefit, mutual respect and mutual trust,” she declared in her message to Soviet leaders sent in reply to their greetings on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the treaty.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has explained, more than once, the genesis of the development of Indo-Soviet friendly relations. During the 1973 visit of Brezhnev to India, she declared in her various addresses of welcome :

“The Soviet Union has commended our respect and admiration from the early days. The Great October Revolution, and the mass struggles which preceded it, had a profound impact on national liberation movements all over the world. We saw in it a historic turning point on the road towards a brighter future for all mankind. Our Indian Revolution followed its own distinctive path. But from the beginning the Soviet Union’s understanding and sympathy towards the struggles of colonial and newly-freed peoples was evident...

“Before we gained independence you were sympathetic to our freedom movement. After the dawn of freedom you were the first to help us in establishing gigantic industrial enterprises in the public sector, and thus began the strengthening of our relations at another level....

“I should like to express our deep appreciation of the invaluable help that Indo-Soviet cooperation has brought to us in our advance towards a self-reliant, modern industrial economy. A special feature of this help is that it flows into our state sector—to which we have assigned a vital role in our planning—and more particularly into key branches of industry such as metallurgy, machine-building, oil, and power generation—on which the future growth of the economy so largely depends. Bhilai, Bokaro, Mathura, these are among the names which have become symbols of our cooperation...

“My father, Jawaharlal Nehru, once described friendship as the most precious gift that one nation could give to another, and you have given us this gift...

“Our people do not make friends lightly, but once they do so, they do it with an open heart and with full understanding. The friendship between the Soviet Union and India is not a

superficial one. There are certain basic principles which unite us. There is, however, one thing, in particular, which, I feel, I must mention here. There are some people who try to confuse and misrepresent things. But the fact is that the Soviet Union has not, during so many years of friendship, ever put pressure on us or told us what to do or what not to do."

Friendship between India and the USSR was raised to a qualitatively new level after the 1973 visit of Brezhnev to India resulting in the signing of the Joint Declaration, the 15-year "Agreement on Further Development of Economic and Trade Cooperation" between the two countries, and the "Agreement on Cooperation between the State Planning Committee of the USSR and the Planning Commission of India". This was the Brezhnev's first visit as the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU to a newly-independent country. Hence the historic importance of the visit. It is rightly considered as a red-letter day in the annals of Indo-Soviet friendship for it further strengthened it and led to widening and deepening of cooperation between our two countries in different spheres of life. As Mr. Brezhnev said at the banquet given in his honour by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi :

"Soviet-Indian relations have now reached such a degree of stability and mutual trust that we have the opportunity to look forward into future for many years ahead and to plan to a certain degree this future in various fields of our cooperation."

Everything is being done, both by India as well as by the USSR, to implement all agreements signed during the historic visit. Cooperation between the two countries is carried on by expanding some of the projects built earlier with Soviet assistance and by constructing new industrial enterprises and other projects including those in the fields of ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, geological prospecting, extraction and processing of oil, natural gas, and other minerals, in energetics, in the petro-chemical and other branches of industry, and in agriculture as well as in the field of training national technical cadres. Both the countries are today cooperating actively in the further expansion of the metallurgical plant at Bhilai to produce 7 million tonnes and of that in Bokaro to produce 10

million tonnes of steel annually, in the construction of an oil refinery at Mathura with an annual production capacity of 6 million tonnes, a copper mining and dressing complex at Malanjkhand, of an underground metropolitan railway line in Calcutta.

Indo-Soviet ties have also expanded to embrace cooperation in other fields like science, art, literature, education, public health, press, radio, television, cinema, tourism and sports. The manifold cooperation is ever expanding year after year, from one field to another. This leads to better understanding between the two peoples, to stronger and firmer friendship between them. As Mr. Brezhnev said during his address at the Civic Reception held in his honour in Delhi :

“The Soviet-Indian relations... are producing from year to year ever more specific material results of cooperation and, at the same time, valuable spiritual results. The good seeds, sown in the minds of hundreds of millions of Indian and Soviet people, yield abundant sprouts and deep traditions of Soviet-Indian friendship are being shaped.”

Indo-Soviet friendship has successfully stood severe tests and trials. It has come to acquire a qualitatively new dimension, not only in bilateral relations, but also in the international sphere. It plays an ever increasing role in strengthening peace and security in the world, especially in Asia. The two countries have joined their strength together to ensure that the principles of peaceful coexistence continue to form the governing principle of international life, that use of force for settling inter-state disputes is abandoned for ever, that policies of colonialism, aggression and apartheid are abolished all over the world.

The representatives of the two countries have expressed their satisfaction, from time to time, on the coincidence or proximity of the positions of their countries on crucial questions of the international situation. They have re-affirmed that they attach special importance to the broad development of mutually advantageous cooperation and consolidation of peace and stability in Asia based on joint efforts of all the states of this largest and most populated area of the world. Both the countries are of the firm opinion that turning Asia into a continent of lasting peace, stability and good cooperation



will unquestionably facilitate the further normalisation of relations between countries and the strengthening of universal peace. India and the Soviet Union have consistently come out for the right of the peoples to freely decide their destinies, to realise their sovereign rights and implement progressive socio-economic transformations.

Friendship between India and the USSR is not only friendship between two governments but also between two great peoples of the world playing a very important role in world affairs. The peoples of both the countries are determined to preserve their friendship and to strengthen it still further, not only for their mutual interests but also for those of world peace and the progress of mankind in general.

## Where democracy is a fact, not fiction

THE survey made in the foregoing pages will have given the reader an idea of the type of state the October Revolution gave birth to—a type until then unique in world history, in social and economic structure, in relations with foreign countries, in approach to problems of peace and war. The Soviet state had also been unique in its state and political structure. It has been this aspect of its socialist character that has earned the loudest denunciation by Western imperialist commentators.

The crux of the “criticism” levelled against the Soviet socialist state structure by these worthies has been that “it is not democratic”. It is an irony of circumstance that this criticism, for all it is worth, emanates from the very people who keep their lips sealed when the democratically-elected government of Chile is overthrown by brutal murder and mass oppression, or when democracy is strangled in Spain. How can these “upholders of democracy” pacify their conscience when they see millions in the Western countries roaming about unemployed, a handful of tycoons tailoring state policies to serve their interests in armament and war industries, a caucus of moneyed bags manipulating the mass media to dull the mind of the politically-awakening masses.

What makes their criticism of the Soviet system suspect is that its vehemence is directly related to the desperation with which the ugly realities of the Western system are sought to be camouflaged. For every act of murder of democracy ten brazen lies have to be invented about the USSR. But let us not give a catalogue of these lies. Let us straightway dwell upon the Soviet state structure and see how it has given democracy a qualitatively new content, embracing within its ambit all the widest sections of masses, and not just a narrow circle of the elite, the rich, the propertied few.

The Soviet state system owes its distinct character—deliberately overlooked by Western commentators—to the social character of the socialist system which has rid itself of the scourge afflicting non-socialist societies, namely, exploitation of man by man. This has imparted substance to freedom, made it tangible and also accessible to one and all. Besides, this has fully ensured the well-being of all members of the society and their free, all-round development.

Power in the USSR vests with the working people represented by the Soviets of Working People's Deputies. The Soviets are elective bodies of state powers constituting the political foundation of the Soviet system. Naturally, the Soviets are the real embodiment of the power of the people. As bodies of state power and of people's self-government, they are empowered to take decisions on matters of political, economic and cultural development. These Soviets, from village and city Soviets to the Supreme Soviet to the USSR (the country's Parliament), are elected by citizens directly. All elected members (called Deputies) are accountable to their constituency which has the right to recall them. Elections are held on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot. Elections are genuinely popular in character and enjoy the most active support of the people. As many as 99.9 per cent of the electorate took part in the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of the Ninth Convocation in 1974. Election expenses are not borne by candidates but by the state.

The local Soviets, as organs of state power, stand closer to the people, ensuring their broadest participation in govern-

ing the country and in working out state decisions. Thirty million "activists" assisted them in this work. Bourgeois municipalities, on the contrary, are stripped off their political functions (for they are local organs of government but not of state power) and occupy only a subordinate position in regard to central authorities. Besides, the bourgeois municipal councils differ in their composition as well. An absolute majority of Deputies in the USSR is composed of workers and collective farmers and over one-fourth of them are under 30 years of age. Each election results in considerable changes in the composition of the Soviets. For example, more than half of all the Deputies elected in 1973 became Deputies for the first time. The Soviets enable millions of working people to receive training in state administration and to imbibe the experience that is essential for active participation in public affairs. Most elected representatives of the people are not "professional politicians" but workers drawn from factories, collective and state farms, scientific and educational institutes. They discharge their duties as Deputies during hours when they are free from their work. No remunerations are paid for functions discharged in the capacity of representatives of the people. The democratic function of the Soviets is fully ensured by the Constitution, which makes it obligatory on them to report to the electorate regularly at meetings of people and in their collective bodies.

The people's control bodies, elected for a term of two years, ensure extensive participation of the working people in control over the affairs of the state. These bodies enjoy tremendous prestige and are a graphic manifestation of Soviet democracy.

The most widespread of Western criticism of Soviet democracy is that the Communist Party guides the state. According to Western critics of the Soviet system, this fact is in itself sufficient proof of the "formal character" and even "worthlessness" of Soviet democracy. What democracy can there be, the imperialists say, when state power is concentrated in a powerful political party cemented together by an ideology?

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union does not fight shy of admitting that its leadership of the working class ensured

the success of the socialist revolution and of the construction of socialism. As long as a state exists a party stands at the helm of affairs. In the capitalist society the ruling parties work for protecting private ownership of means of production and the system based on it. On the contrary, in socialist society parties protecting the public ownership of means of production are the ruling parties. The Soviet people's advance towards communism cannot take place without the Communist Party leading the process towards the achievement of this goal. "Communism cannot be built without Communists just as a block of flats cannot be built without architects, and outer space cannot be conquered without cosmonauts," writes a Soviet philosopher. "The Party is set up for the express purpose of helping the working class to understand where its vital interests lie, of organising it and encouraging it to struggle for the realisation of those interests... The function of guiding society in the name of the class, with its consent and on its authority, is performed by its political vanguard, and again not directly but through a system of governmental and public institutions."

The opponents of the Soviet system further allege that socialism rests on a one-party system which, according to them, contradicts the principles of democracy. Here again the opponents shut their eyes completely to the fundamental distinction between the socialist and capitalist systems of social relations, interposing a Chinese wall between the political form of a system and its social content, attributing undue importance to the former without taking the latter into consideration. The Marxists maintain that plurality of parties in capitalist society is a phenomenon accounted by the existence of various classes, by their mutual antagonisms. A party is an organised political expression of the interests of a class and, consequently, the struggle between classes—a natural phenomenon in capitalism—is reflected in the struggle between their respective parties. The existence of at least two parties representing the interests of antagonistic classes remains the distinguishing feature of capitalism. A multi-party system in capitalism implies a competition for power struggle waged within the four corners of the system without striking at its social and economic roots. This imports a negative character to the principle of multi-party

system for it shuts out the revolutionary party of the working class which is committed to building an entirely different kind of society based on social ownership of the means of production. This, of course, should not be stretched to mean that a multi-party system, though not guaranteeing the fullest democracy of the common people, has no democratic content in a capitalist state where the only alternative to it is a one-party system which, under capitalism, degenerates into the totalitarian dictatorship of the monopolies. Bourgeois scholars are, therefore, expressing legitimate concern over the decline of the multi-party system over recent years in some capitalist countries. In these countries, the "centre of sovereignty has been transferred from the will of the people to the will of the 'elites' in control of the parties," writes the American sociologist Enrico Opocher in his collection of articles entitled *Political Thought Since World War II*. The Marxists, therefore, draw the correct conclusion that the multi-party system, despite its class limitations, constitutes one of the important institutions of bourgeois democracy. They affirm their stand that the progressive forces must not only work for its preservation in capitalist society but must use its democratic content, won through centuries of struggle, for building a new society.

No Soviet thinker has ever gone on record saying that socialism is incompatible with the multi-party system. The All-Union Central Executive Committee—the supreme legislative body of the country elected by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets—was multi-party in composition, having 62 Bolsheviks, 29 "Left" Socialist Revolutionaries, six Menshevik internationalists, three Ukrainian Socialists, and one Maximalist-Socialist-Revolutionary. Though the Bolsheviks had an overwhelming majority, they did not form a one-party government, and offered ministerial posts to the second largest group of delegates, namely, the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries. Lenin, however, clearly stated that the majority would agree to share power with the minority in the Soviets "provided that minority loyally and honestly undertakes to submit to the majority and carries out the programmes... for gradual but firm and undeviating steps towards socialism." The government was eventually formed with the participation of "Left" Socialist-Revo-

lutionaries. This group, however, showed no intention whatever of cooperating loyally with the Bolsheviks for effecting socialist changes. Events showed that the group only wanted time in order to organise a counter-revolutionary rebellion and seize power. The rout of "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and the establishment of a single-party system consequently became a historical tradition of the Soviet society. It should not be forgotten that in countries which embarked upon the socialist path of development after the military rout of fascism in World War II a multi-party system emerged and developed successfully. Thus, socialism does not rule out a multi-party system as some of the enemies of socialism make vain efforts to "prove". The only pre-condition for this is that all participating parties should represent the working sections of the population and cooperate fully in the construction of socialism under the leadership of the working class. The one-party political system which socialism has evolved in the USSR has shown, not only its inherent vitality, but also its qualitative superiority to the bourgeois system which passes from one crisis to another, leaves all crying contradictions of society unresolved, and faces a question-mark baffling even to the apologists of capitalism.

What is the relationship between the Party and the Soviet state? In working this out, Lenin searched for an optimal correlation between the leading role of the Party and the functions of the state bodies, which would make it possible to put into operation an efficient system of people's government, give fullest scope to the initiative of the working people, and ensure the fullest possible expression of the interests of the working classes and sections of the population. The Party strove from the very inception of the socialist state to guide the work of the Soviets and not to supersede them.

Lenin's instructions were very clear :

"While retaining in its hands general guidance and direction of the entire policy of the Soviet state, the Party must draw a clear line between its current work and the work of the Soviet bodies, between its apparatus and that of the Soviets. This delineation, conducted systematically, must, on the one hand, ensure more regular discussion and decision of questions

of an economic character by the Soviet bodies, and increase the responsibility of every Soviet functionary for the work entrusted to him and, on the other, enable the Party to concentrate on its basic task of directing the activity of all government bodies of education and organisation of the masses of working people."

The Soviet system ensures that the functions of direct administration of state affairs are not passed over to the Party for, as the Soviet organs of public opinion stress, this would undermine rather than enhance the role of the Party and turn its committees into ordinary administrative bodies. Besides, it is also pointed out, a Party organisation, by concentrating on direct administrative work, may create the illusion of holding all the levers of control in its hands, but, in actual fact, the trivia of everyday reality will obscure new trends from its view and prevent it from keeping its finger on the pulse of social life. Western opponents of the Soviet system suppress the well-known fact that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union directs its units to eschew superseding governmental agencies, petty tutelage, unwarranted interference in current administrative work.

The Communist Party's guidance of Soviet society takes three forms: political, ideological and organisational. The Party's principal function is political leadership; it elaborates a policy and then carries it out. The Party Congress and Plenary Meetings of its Central Committee work out major political decisions which they submit as authoritative recommendations to the highest bodies of state power. After their approval by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR the recommendations acquire the force of law and are put into practice. A typical example are the Directives of Five-Year Plans prepared by Party Congresses serving as a basis for documents which are drafted by the State Planning Committee, approved by the Council of Ministers, discussed in the Commissions of the USSR Supreme Soviet and finally made into law by it—the highest body of Soviet state power. Most of the work in formulating political decisions on the basis of policy guidelines and the practical implementation of these decisions is done by state bodies of power and administrations whose activity is



coordinated and directed by the Party. In the sphere of foreign policy the Party takes an active part in performing such functions of the state as promoting fraternal relations with other socialist countries and consolidating the world socialist system; supporting national liberation movements; developing all-round cooperation with countries which have freed themselves from the rule of colonialism and embarked upon the path of independent development and social progress; struggling for world peace and for peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems. In such spheres the Party not only determines the political line but also directly implements it together with the government. Also during an international crisis, when an emergency arises, the Soviet ruling party cannot avoid taking operative decisions. Together with the highest bodies of state power, it assumes full responsibility for every political move. The danger of day-to-day political decisions taken by state bodies (in which the Party does not take part) deviating from the general political policy of the Party is excluded by the latter's ability to influence current policies through Communists and, secondly, by organising different forms of people's control.

In the ideological field, the Party first of all develops the Marxist-Leninist theory, fundamental and applied social sciences making up, in their totality, the basis of both the policy of the Party and the process of communist education directed by it. Only under socialism is it possible to scientifically substantiate the state policy. Both the system of social relations and the organisation of production and labour are scientifically based. Marxist-Leninist ideology is the first and only ideology in history which is thoroughly scientific, free from mysticism, deriving its strength not from blind faith but from a confidence springing from deep insight into the essence of objective laws of social development. In its most general sense, the task of the Party's ideological guidance is the communist education of people—imbibing in them a scientific world view, spirit of patriotism and inter-nationalism, communist morality, creative attitude to labour, etc.

In the sphere of organisation, the Party organises peoples control and its influence on policies through its members. The

Party leadership has a decisive say in the selection and appointment of leading functionaries. The Party forms the government in socialist society like any other ruling party with a majority of seats in the legislature.

Wherein does the process of Party guidance of socialist society, described above, deviate from the norms of democracy? For the first time in history have democratic principles and objectives been laid firmly on economic foundations. In the West, on the contrary, bourgeois democracy is based on private ownership of means of production, on class antagonism, on exploitation of the majority by the minority. Western bourgeois democracy, in spite of its loud protestations, is robbed of its genuine character by denying to the common masses all levers of power and decision-making. The mature socialist society, as opposed to the "affluent" West, creates increasingly reliable safeguards against the abridgement of democracy. These safeguards lie in the constant improvement of forms and methods of guidance of society by the Communist Party, in the extension of participation of the working people in the government and enhancement of its effectiveness, and in imparting greater meaning to the principles of freedom of the individual. Socialist democracy is daily being enriched, broadened, and raised to a still higher plane.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union has a body of most democratic principles governing the vast gamut of its activities. Collective leadership is the most important principle of Party leadership which enjoins on all Party units to abide by the decisions arrived at by higher party bodies—a law for units as well as for members.

A constant consolidation of Party's ties with the working class and the entire Soviet people is a source of strength to the Party leadership. The Party consults people on all major questions of domestic and foreign policy, making these questions an object of country-wide discussion involving an ever-widening strata of people in all its work.

The Party also follows Lenin's injunction that honest admission and rectification of errors shows its seriousness, strength and political maturity. Criticism and self-criticism are the basis for the Party's theoretical and practical work and a

tool for studying and changing the reality. Criticism and self-criticism are not an end in themselves but are a means to strengthen and develop the Party. It is the indicator of the political health of the Party.

Every member of the Party enjoys the right to criticise any Communist irrespective of the position he holds at Party meetings, conferences, Plenary Meetings of Party Committees, Congresses. The Soviet Party has not divided Communists into those who can be criticised and into those who cannot. No Party member is exempt from the supervision of rank-and-file. The Party Rules bind all primary Party organisations to ensure that every Communist upholds in his life and cultivates among working people the moral principles set forth in the moral code of the builder of communism and incorporated in the CPSU Programme. The norms of Party life contained in Party Rules make it into a sound and healthy organisation, give it strength and staunchness, arm it with lofty ideals, ensure its fully democratic life, and enable it to perform its guiding role in the building of communism.

As the foregoing pages have shown, the spectacular advance of Soviet society has been guided by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It has been the result of the titanic efforts of the Party, of its leaders as well as cadres. Fidelity to the cause of the working masses and indissoluble bonds with them have endeared the Party to these sons and daughters of the Soviet land. They see in the Party their leader and guide, their spokesmen and tribune, their representative and friend.

Founded and reared by Lenin, the CPSU has unswervingly upheld the teaching of Marxism-Leninism. It has served as its compass throughout the long course of leading the October Revolution to victory; establishing the world's first workers' and peasants' state; constructing socialism on the basis of advanced industrialization, collective-farm agriculture and people's culture; setting up the technical and material base of the advance society of communism. The unity of the CPSU is cemented by its recognition and implementation of the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

The CPSU has an all-embracing character determined, as is well-known, by the fundamental changes brought about in

the class structure of the Soviet society. The Soviet socialist society has rid itself of the exploitation of man by man and is composed of working class, collective farm peasantry and the socialist intelligentsia. The CPSU cadre is naturally drawn from working people of factories and farms and the socialist intelligentsia. The working class, however, remains the main source of the CPSU's strength, monolithic cohesion and organisation. The Party, therefore, constantly strengthens its working class core.

The Rules state that the Party "bases its work on unswerving adherence to the Leninist standards of Party life, the principle of collective leadership, the promotion, in every possible way, of inner-Party democracy, the activity and initiative of Communists, criticism and self-criticism."

All fundamental matters of the Party are decided through collective discussions at Party Congresses, within the Central Committee, which is the Party's supreme body in the intervals between the Congresses, and within Party organisations and their elected bodies. Mr. Brezhnev said at the 24th Party Congress :

"The main thing in the Communist Party's work is to map out the general prospects of social development, chart out a correct political line and organise the working people to implement it. Our entire reality shows that the CPSU is honourably discharging its role of political leader of the working class and all working people, and guides the Soviet people along the correct way indicated by Lenin."

Each CPSU Congress is a milestone in the history of the Party and the Soviet people. Thorough preparations are made for each Congress, with both Communists and non-Communists taking an active part in it. "Our Congresses", Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin said at the 24th Congress, "like unfading stars, point out the true road to a bright future for all mankind."

The CPSU will be holding its 25th Congress in February 1976. This decision taken by the Central Committee Plenary Meeting in April 1975 has found "a ready response among the Communists and all working people, and given rise to a fresh upsurge in the labour and political activity of the Soviet people."

The Soviet Party, in its truest democratic tradition, will review its domestic and foreign policies, its organisational activities, etc., at its forthcoming Congress. Preparatory work has long begun and numerous workers at enterprises, collective farms, scientific establishments are observing the approaching event with the traditional Soviet method of scoring new labour achievements, displacing new valuable initiatives and taking fresh pledges for increasing their creative activity. The Party's Central Committee sees in these initiatives a graphic expression of the Soviet people's mass patriotism, their unflagging desire to carry out the Party's plans. It has called upon all Communists, young and old, to follow the example set by front-rankers.

The Congress will be attended by a large number of Party and state functionaries, factory, collective-farm and state-farm workers, economic managers, scientists, teachers, doctors, diplomats, writers, artists. The "claim" made in some foreign countries that only Party functionaries attend the Congress is baseless as is shown by facts. The last (24th) Party Congress—74.4 per cent delegates were elected to such a forum for the first time—had among its participants 1,195 workers, 870 collective-farm and state-farm workers and 717 drawn from the intelligentsia.

The 25th Congress will be another milestone in the eventful history, not only of the CPSU, but also of the Soviet Union and the international community. It will sum up the results of its work during a period which has witnessed major events in the domestic life of the country as well as on the international scene. A new five-year plan for the future will be mapped out, a plan dynamic in content, bold in initiative and far-reaching in its results. Progressive people all over the world, of all climes and continents, are full of hope that the CPSU's new policy to be formulated at the Congress will take mankind another big notch towards a world without wars, a world where man can live peacefully and work for a brighter and happier life for himself and his children. □□□



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