

October 7, 1946

LABOR ACTION

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN STALIN'S RUSSIA - I

By F. FOREST

The wide-spread purges now taking place in Russia have the world bewildered. Are the Russian rulers punishing "thieves and misappropriators of nationalized property," or are they punishing workers who are rebelling against the inhuman speed-up system known, ironically enough, as "socialist emulation"?

Is the Stalinist bureaucracy removing people who have succumbed to "bourgeois nationalism," or is the severity of the purges in the Ukraine due to the fact that this part of Russia, which is the greatest single source of coal, iron, steel and grain, is not anywhere nearing the production standard of 1940?

Are writers being removed for their acceptance of "bourgeois ideology," or is this only a method this exploitive ruling class uses in warning workers that it will not stand for continuous low productivity "merely" because the workers have no houses in which to live or food sufficient for an intensive day's work?

Is the removal of certain military generals a way of showing the military caste its subordination to the powerful Politburo, or is this also a manner of throwing a sop to the veterans who are complaining of not receiving their meagre financial allotments while the military budget is expanded to compromise a full 40 per cent of the entire national budget?

It is impossible to answer any of these questions by looking at the official version of the purges. One must go behind the gaudy façade and observe the role of labor in Russian society. This is the key not merely to an explanation of the purges, but of the very nature of the Russian state.

Stalin, without batting an eyelid, answered affirmatively the question put to him by Alexander Werth of *The Sunday Times* of London: "Is 'Communism in one country' possible?" This makes sense only if, instead of considering communism a classless, stateless, free society, you consider, as does Stalin, that "socialist emulation is the communist method of the construction of socialism on the basis of the maximum activity of millions of masses."

What, in reality, is this "socialist emulation"?

The first slogan that Stalin issued when Nazi Germany attacked Russia in June 1941 was: "There is no distinction between the front and the rear." This meant that just as the soldiers at the front could not quit because the clock chimed 5, so the workers in the factories could not quit then. The working day was extended to 12 hours, and a "new" mode of labor introduced. Stakhanovism, which is the Russian version of the piece work system, was replaced by "socialist emulation." Under the system of Stakhanovism the individual worker had some choice left as to whether he wished to become a pace-setter. Under "socialist emulation" he has none, for "socialist emulation" depends not on the competition between individual workers, but between factories.

ON "SOCIALIST EMULATION"

"Socialist emulation" means that Factory Stalin challenges Factory Molotov to "fulfill and overfulfill" its quarterly plan by ten per cent and to accomplish that a month in advance of schedule to boot. Factory Molotov must take up the challenge. That means that all workers in both factories, whether they wish to or not, must do all possible within the time limit set to fulfill the goal.

Bolshevik, the official theoretical and political journal of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, in its issue of April 1946 (No. 7-8), devotes its editorial to the need of "Socialist emulation for the successful carrying out of the new Five-Year Plan." The whole editorial centers about Stalin's interpretation of this demonic speed-up system:

"Socialist emulation says: some workers work badly, others well, still others better.—CATCH UP WITH THE BEST AND ACHIEVE A GENERAL RISE. This, precisely, explains the unprecedented production enthusiasm which has embraced millions of toiling masses as a result of socialist competition. There is no necessity to state that competition has never called forth anything resembling this enthusiasm of the masses."

The tyrannical government has accepted as a matter of course the unexampled heroism of the Russian worker during the war, his untold sac-

rifices, and the sufferings he has had to withstand. And all that he is told now is that there will be no let-up; that, as the official government newspaper, *Izvestia*, puts it in its June 10, 1946, editorial:

"There must not be a single worker who does not achieve the norms set—that is the chief significance of socialist emulation."

The "enthusiasm" of the Russian worker is so great that he is rebelling against the planned, systematic sweatshop conditions introduced during the war and since developed to a fine point. To a large degree it is this which is producing the chaotic conditions in the country. This is not the first time the Russian worker has shown his dissatisfaction with his lot in the so-called "workers' state."

Ever since August, 1943, when the first order for the restoration of the liberated areas was promulgated, the Russian worker has had to bow to the grindstone. *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, the Russian press as a whole, hailed 1943 as "the year of the great conversion" to the conveyor belt system. With the end of the war, the Russian worker is being told that just as there was no distinction between the front and the rear during the war, so there will be no distinction in the mode of labor between war and peace.

The working day was reduced to eight hours (though not to the prevailing seven hours before the war broke out), but the system of "socialist emulation" remains as the prevalent mode of labor. However, so great were "labor offenses," that the Russian planners have found that, if they wish a sufficient labor force at hand to put into effect the Fourth Five-Year Plan, they must grant labor a general amnesty for all its wartime "offenses." This it did.

The question now is: Will the Stalinist bureaucracy modify its conception of "socialist emulation," or does it think it can keep the Russian masses quiet by diverting their attention from their dissatisfaction with the state to the scapegoats the state is now furnishing them in the purges? To answer that, we must look into the devastation wrought by the war and the goals set by the Fourth Five-Year Plan, which we shall do in our next article.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN STALIN'S RUSSIA - II

By F. FOREST

1. THE FOURTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN

Russia has a most crying need for a labor force large enough and productive enough to cope with the devastation wrought by the war and the norms of the Fourth Five-Year Plan, which is, first and foremost, a plan for machine construction. The promises given to the workers regarding a rise in their standard of living is made strictly dependent upon "a consistent and systematic reduction of the cost of all goods and on wide-scale construction of all kinds of scientific research institutes to enable science to develop its forces." (Stalin) In other words, the Russian worker is told that if he wishes a raise in wages, he had better display a high labor productivity since, basically, a "reduction of the cost of all goods" is dependent upon it. Until science will have developed a form of synthetic feeding, the Russian worker must continue to earn his food through the conveyor-belt system.

The question of the labor force must be viewed against a background of the loss of seven million men in a war which left 25 million persons homeless. These, Molotov tells us, live in "dug-outs or worse." Being ill-housed and ill-fed, the Russian worker is now told that he must also remain ill-clothed. Even, theoretically, for example, only 240 million pairs of shoes are planned for the year 1950, the last year of the Fourth Five-Year Plan. This means hardly more than one pair of shoes, every two years, per person. This is not the exception but the rule for all of light industry. In the production of cotton and woolen fabrics, moreover, the Fourth Five-Year Plan sets the following figures: 4.6 billion square yards and 160 million square yards respectively. Here is how this compares with previous plans:

	1932	1937	1942
Cotton	4.7	5.1	4.9
Wool	270	220	177

In other words, the plan for 1950 for light industry is less than for the First Five-Year Plan, and this at a time when Russia has in the meantime incorporated 25 million additional people into her empire!

The only exception to the sector of means of consumption goods is, even as in Czarist times, the production of vodka, which is planned annually at 11-12 pints per person. (Since the "per person" includes children in the cradle, the Rus-

sian worker, in reality, is assured of a greater number of pints.)

When the Russian worker asks why must he continue to be so ill-clothed in the "land of socialism," he is told that before he can have textiles, he must have textile machines, and the plan for the machine construction calls for a 200 per cent rise above 1940. Outside of machine construction, no such high target figures exist for heavy industry, but, in contrast to the light industry, they are exceedingly high, in each case representing a percentage of 1940, though below the plan for 1942, set up before war broke out.

	in millions of tons		
	1940	1942	1950
Iron	15	22	19.5
Steel	18.3	28	25.4
Coal	160	243	250
Oil	31	48.5	35.4
Electric power	48	75	82 (bln. kwt. hr.)

The average annual rate of increase planned for heavy industry is fourteen per cent, contrasted to only seven per cent for light industry. Moreover, the leit motif of Stalin's February 9th speech, in which he first announced the Fourth Five-Year Plan, was that this situation would continue for many years, since the goal was to catch up with the United States. "Perhaps three new Five-Year Plans will be required to achieve this, if not more."

The much-oppressed Russian worker, weary, hungry and destitute shows little interest for the high plans for the continued further production of means of production and ever lesser production of means of consumption. Drew Middleton, of *The New York Times*, who has just visited the crucial Don Basin region tells that the economic conditions and productivity of labor there is comparable to that of the devastated Ruhr. That, in one sentence, tells us more of the devastation of that region and the low productivity of labor than all the exhortations of *Pravda*, *Trud* and *Kosmopolitanskaya Pravda*.

2. THE RUIN CAUSED BY THE WAR

The invasion of the Ukraine in 1941 and the devastation of its Don Basin region deprived Russia of 64 per cent of its coal production, 60 per cent of its production of pig iron, 48 per cent of steel, 35 per cent of manganese, 50 per cent of wheat and 74 per cent of sugar beet. Industrial machinery, livestock and grain were systematic-

ally removed by the Nazis, dams blown up, mines flooded and factories destroyed. In some cases, as in Leningrad, the Russians were successful in transferring the equipment to new industrial areas in the Urals, but most of the materials could not be moved in time. In fact, despite all ballyhoo, the growth of new industrial areas in the Kuznetsk Basin, the Urals and the Amur Valley in the Far East do not, in any appreciable extent, make up for the loss of no less than 25 per cent of the fixed capital. Official Soviet reports to the Reparations Commission list the following destruction:

- 70,000 villages
- 8 million dwellings
- 31 million industrial enterprises
- 98 thousand collective farms
- 40 thousand miles of railroad (out of total of 62 thousand)
- 17 million heads of cattle and 4,000 tractors

When you add to this, the unprecedented wear and tear of capital equipment, and put that alongside the tremendous development in production in the United States during the war, you can get some semblance of the gigantic, if not impossible, task facing the Russian worker in the next five-year period. It is, as its aim, the restoration of the national economy to pre-war levels, and an increase of industrial output of 30 per cent. As we saw, this "general" increase means a decrease in the production of consumer goods, a "general" increase (200 per cent) in the sector of machine construction.

The task is well-nigh impossible. If it is intended, as it is, by a ruling class, to circumscribe the achievement of the task within the inter-imperialist framework, that is, without benefit of proletarian revolutions, which the Stalinist bureaucracy could not weather. But to try thus to accomplish the plan means to take it out of the hide of the Russian worker. It all boils down again to how much opposition will the Russian worker stand?

What has been done in the first six months of the Plan? What is the relationship to the Russian peasant? What is the relationship of the peasant to the state?

Next week we will return to a consideration of the Plan, both in the industrial and agricultural fronts, and against accomplishments and the crisis now plaguing the Russian economy.

means that 12,644,000 must be built between now and 1950.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN STALIN'S RUSSIA - III

By F. FOREST

RECONVERSION TO PEACE ECONOMY

The first step in the conversion of production from war to peace occurred simply—on paper. It was a mere change in the name of the commissariats. Thus the Commissariat for Tank Building was changed to the Commissariat for Transport Machine Building, that of the Ammunition changed to the Agricultural Machines. The only really significant change in this shuffle of titles was the abolition of the Building Department of the GPU (the Commissariat for Home Affairs, or NKVD). We will have to wait to see what that means in the status of the army of forced labor employed by the GPU. But what was seen immediately was that the problem of reconversion could not be solved by a mere strike of the pen.

As has happened so often throughout the life of the various Five-Year Plans, no sooner was a plan mapped out, than an unplanned-for phenomenon occurred. With the end of the war there was a mass exodus of labor from the Urals to the liberated areas. Since the building up of the Urals is important both for the national economy and for purposes of military strategy, it was necessary to cope with this rush of labor to get back to its old homes. A Committee for Assessment and Distribution of Labor, under the Council of Commissars, was established for this purpose. At the same time, although the word Commissariat had nothing but the name in common with the original establishment of peoples councils, it rang so unpleasantly in the ears of the Russian exploiters, that they decided to transform all the Commissariats into Ministries. The title, Ministry, may have had a more comforting sound just because it so closely paralleled the ordinary capitalist government institution, but this, too, did nothing to solve the reconversion problem.

Recent Pravdas are full of complaints of the poor work done these first six months of the Fourth Five-Year Plan in the coal industry, that extremely sensitive barometer for the whole economy since coal conditions all the rest. Last week we pointed out that the one statement, that productivity in the Don Basin region is approximately that of the Ruhr, was more significant than all the panegyrics about the success of "socialist emulation." Nowhere in war-torn Europe was the ruin greater than in the Ruhr, and the post-war production which showed progress at

first, suffered a drastic set-back when the ration of the German worker was reduced to below starvation level. This resulted, naturally enough, in absenteeism, which ran at about 30 per cent of the whole labor force. Productivity sank so low that production was below even the miserable minimum needs decreed by Potsdam. Hence to state, or to allow it to be stated, that productivity in the Don Basin was hardly above that of the Ruhr, means that indeed a miracle would have to occur before production in 1950 could reach 150 per cent of pre-war level, as set by the Plan.

Although those who had dared say that pre-war production levels would not be reached in 1940 were called "peddlers in Trotskyist Bukharinist bourgeois skepticism," it is now admitted that production is hardly 60 per cent of pre-war production. Moreover, the Russian managers of industry state that the ability to reach pre-war levels of production "within two years" clearly depends on having a sufficiently large labor force. To that end they offer higher salaries to attract agricultural workers from the kolkhozes to the mines. However, the crisis in agriculture is even more acute than in industry, and hence no release of its labor force is at present possible.

THE AGRICULTURAL FRONT

Significantly enough, contrary to the method employed by the Fourth Five-Year Plan both as to industry and agriculture in general, the percentages of increases set for livestock raising are not increases over 1940, but only over 1945. For one acquainted with the Russian economy the reason is not hard to guess. When the Nazis completed the most destructive invasion in modern history, there remained in the liberated areas only 6.5 per cent of the pre-war number of horses, and 6.2 per cent of cattle. In round figures for the whole country, this meant that in 1945 the 1940 existence of 17.5 million horses and 65.6 million heads of cattle had dropped catastrophically to 10.5 and 47.0 millions, respectively. Thus, to speak of an increase by 1950, of 46 per cent in horses, and 39 per cent in cattle over the 1945 figure is to speak of an actual decrease of the pre-war figure in the case of horses, and barely reaching that level in the case of cows. Thus far only three million heads of cattle have been sent to the liberated areas. Compare this with the fact that before the war these areas had 25 million heads of cattle!

The only somewhat bright spot on the agricultural front is that the grain area sown in 1945 was 75 per cent of pre-war level. In general the Fourth Five-Year Plan specifies a 27 per cent increase in agricultural production over 1940. This, however, depends on the state of mechanization. When the first order for the restoration of the liberated lands was promulgated in August 1943, it was stated that those areas would have only 5 to 10 per cent of the pre-war number of tractors. Since the Five-Year Plan was initiated reports have spoken glowingly of the restoration of the Machine-Tractor Stations. What they failed to add, until the purges began and that fact came out, was that these MTS are but shadows of their former self. A total of 28,000 tractors have been sent to these areas. Contrast this to the fact that the collective farms in the Ukraine alone in 1940 had 80,000 tractors!

The March issue of the *Bolshevik* complained that collective farmers "contribute little to collective production," do not show due care for the communal economy of the farms, but endeavor to inflate their private holdings at the expense of the communal land. But in other instances it is admitted that the "annexations" consist not of land, or tractors, but of food. The *Bolshevik* tries to raise a smoke screen when it blares forth editorially that the German fascist occupants endeavored to implant the ideology of private property and nationalism. Unfortunate for the mouthpiece of the Russian politicians, the plain fact is that the Nazis themselves utilized the collective form of farming. No collective property was parcelled out, needless to say, among the local peasantry. No, the chaos in the agriculture front is not due to the private property ideology of the peasants. The truth is much simpler. There is a collapse of the whole material structure of collective farming. Mechanization in the collective farms has so utterly broken down, that a dispatch from Stalin speaks of agriculture being carried on by hand. No wonder the purge is so deep-going on the agricultural front. The purge is but the Russian name for economic crisis.

Will Russia be able to overcome the crisis shaking its agricultural economy through imperialist expansion, or are the purges proof of the failure of expansionism to overcome the internal crisis? Next week we will consider Russia's conquests.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN STALIN'S RUSSIA - IV

By F. FOREST

The oil route has always been one of the standard routes followed by all imperialisms. It was therefore no surprise to anyone not blinded by the misconception that Russia was a "workers' state" to see Russia grab the oil fields of Rumania, Austria, and then demand equal rights with the Anglo-American imperialists to exploit the Middle Eastern oil fields, the richest in the whole world. What was not clear at the time, however, was how directly connected was this move with the state of oil production in Russia itself. The Russians had not revealed the exact state of damage to the Baku fields. The world learned for the first time on March 16th, from Voznessensky's address to the Supreme Soviet on the Fourth Five Year Plan, that production of oil in the Baku region was but one-half of what it was in pre-war times. The Plan revealed, furthermore, that oil production in Russia, even should the plan be 100 per cent fulfilled, will be two-thirds of that originally set for the end of the Third Five-Year Plan, 35.4 million tons in 1950 as against 48.5 million tons set for 1942.

Is there a direct connection between the looting by the Russian army of everything from machinery to grain, from livestock to textiles, from the dismantling of factories to the herding off of prisoners of war into forced labor camps, and the crisis of the Russian economy in general? And is this connected with the oil route and the state of oil production? We shall see.

RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM

The march of the Russian army from Poland, Germany and Austria on the one hand, to Manchuria, Japan and Korea on the other, ought to have convinced any one with eyes to see that the Union of so-called Soviet Socialist Republics is composed neither of republics nor of soviets; they are neither socialist nor are kept in a willing union. Their very existence as nations can be done away with by a ukase, as was the case with no less than five republics. Although the world did not learn of it till 1946, the following five republics were deprived of their autonomy in 1945: the German Volga Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, the Kalmyk A.S.S.R., the Karachayev Autonomous Region, the Chechen-Ingush A.S.S.R. and the Crimean A.S.S.R.

Russian imperialism expresses itself in three different ways. These are (1) direct conquest, (2) trade agreements, and (3) reparations. In approaching the spread of Russian imperialism, we need to see, on the one hand, what connection there is between Russian imperialism and the internal difficulties Russia is experiencing. On the other hand, we have to see whether the conquests of Russia "compensated" either for the ravages of war she experienced, or attenuated the strug-

gle of the Russian exploiters against the Russian exploited.

DIRECT CONQUESTS

Since the outbreak of war in 1939 Russia has conquered over 275,000 square miles of territory inhabited by nearly 25 million people, thus:

	Square Miles	Population
Lithuania	24,058	3,029,000
Latvia	20,056	1,950,000
Estonia	18,353	1,120,000
Eastern Poland	68,290	10,150,000
Bessarabia & Bukovina	19,360	3,748,000
Moldavia	13,124	2,200,000
Carpatho-Ukraine	4,922	800,000
East Prussia	3,506	400,000
Karelo-Finland	16,173	470,000
Petsamo, Finland	4,087	4,000
Tannu Tuva, Central Asia.....	64,000	65,000
Southern Sakhalin	14,075	415,000
Kurile Islands	3,943	4,500
Total	273,947	24,355,600

Since these have now become part of the Russian Empire which the rulers dare call "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," not only have the economics of these territories become stultified, but the societies as a whole have overnight become "classless societies," each having a "classless intelligentsia" on the one hand, and workers and peasants on the other!

"SPHERE OF INFLUENCE"

There is, secondly, the Russian "sphere of influence" (read: sphere of oppression). This includes all of Central Europe: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, and of course, Germany. Here it functions "flexibly," either exercising direct control as an occupying power like in Germany, indirectly statifying the economy as in Czechoslovakia, or functioning jointly with the old capitalist-landlord-King rule as in Rumania. It pays to stop for a moment on the Russian-Rumanian Trade Agreement, which is typical of Russia's agreements with Central Europe, and which closely resembles the "trade agreements" the Nazis elaborated precisely for this same region.

The agreement with Rumania provides for joint trading companies whose boards consist of 50 per cent Rumanians and 50 per cent Russians. These have joint banking institutions in which capital is likewise 50-50. Take the "Sov-Rom" oil concern thus set up for the "exploration, exploitation, processing and commercialization of petroleum and petroleum products." The Rumanian government contributes a half share in the crude petroleum as well as, exclusive boring rights on Rumanian territory, and Russia contributes the necessary oil field equipment. This equipment, in

the main, turned out to be booty it took from the Germans. Where, however, Russia does not have the capital equipment, it promised to give Rumania the wherewithal (gold) to buy it elsewhere. All purchases of capital equipment must go through Russian hands.

REPARATIONS AND TRADE

There is, thirdly, the old-fashioned method of reparations, and, again, it follows the old imperialist method of helping the "mother" country, regardless of what injury that causes to its own economy. Thus, for example, Finland has to pay Russia \$300,000,000 in the form of timber, paper, metals. But whereas formerly timber constituted 84 per cent, and metal only four per cent of Finland's pre-war exports, the reparation agreement specifies that \$200,000,000 of reparations shall be in metals.

Where "trade" is not in the form of reparations, it follows the exchange of manufactured articles of Russia against raw materials of other countries. However, since Russian commodities are of very poor quality, it can actually only trade with even more backward countries, for example, India.

FORCED LABOR

Finally, and by no means the least important, there are prisoners of war, mainly from Germany and Japan, who have been transported for work in Russia. No one knows their exact number, but it runs into several millions. These are hardly ever mentioned in the Russian press, but their forced labor has definitely entered in the calculation of the Russian rulers. It is impossible to gather anything from the Russian press as to the attitude of the Russian proletariat to these proletarians of other lands that are now to be found as part of the forced labor army. Is perhaps the existence of forced foreign labor the reason for the liquidation of the Building Commissariat under the NKVD which had utilized Russian forced labor?

There is no way of knowing the exact degree of burden these unfortunates take off the backs of the Russian workers, to the detriment of both. But one thing is clear. The Russian worker is dissatisfied with this lot. His productivity is as low as the prices on consumer goods are high. The amnesty granted them for wartime labor offenses has not put an end to their dissatisfaction. The latest Pravda article from Russia, dated August 19, suddenly refers to Stalin's speech of a few years back in which, in his own crude manner, he had spoken of labor as the greatest productive force of all, thus: "of all capital in the world, people are the most valuable." The tone of the article would make us believe that leaders who do not realize this truth should be purged. Is this really the reason for the purges? We will turn our attention to this next week.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN STALIN'S RUSSIA - V

By F. FOREST

The purge on the ideological front has become wide-spread. It is greatly complicated by the composition of the so-called Communist Party of Russia. This party has long since ceased to have anything in common with the ideas of Lenin-Trotsky which had overthrown Czarism and established the first workers state in history. This party has long since ceased to be proletarian in its composition; it has become the party of the new ruling class that hid under the title of the "classless intelligentsia." The party further deteriorated during the war for its tremendous growth brought in an entirely new element that answered the chauvinist call of the "Great Patriotic War." Over three and a half million people—or fully two-thirds of the party membership—joined the party since the outbreak of war. These know nothing at all of the past of the party.

Many special columns in the press are being devoted to their training, new textbooks are being published and no less than 10 million copies of Stalin's falsification of history known as "A Short History of the RCP" (Russian Communist Party) have been issued for their "enlightenment." But is all this effort expended because of a change of line from the wartime glorification of Czarist generals like Suvorov to a "return" to Leninism? Not at all! The "cadres" are being taught to be reverent to "The Leader." The professors are being specifically instructed not to follow the old rule of teaching the great lessons of October 1917. Too much time, complains the *Pravda* of April 1946, is being spent on the pre-October period; too little on the post-October. The greatest stress should be paid to the Great Patriotic War. That is where full-blooded Stalinist history begins.

THE THEORY OF VALUE

The change in the teaching of history had been preceded three years ago by a much more radical change in the political economy taught. In August, 1943, the chief theoretical journal of the country, *Under the Banner of Marxism*, published an editorial which asserted that the law of value functioned in Russia. (It has been published in English as "Political Economy in the Soviet Union.") It is of no concern to us here how the Stalinist writers got out of the contradiction of asserting that the law of value, which means the existence of an exploitive class, operated in Russia, and maintaining at the same time that socialism had been "irrevocably established." What does concern us here is that Leontiev, the author of this article, had for years been writing the exact opposite; to did Ostrovityanov. The latter helped author a whole book, *Outline of Political Economy*, in which he argued that the law of value could not function under socialism which meant the end of exploitation of man by man. He

also asserted that it did not operate in the old workers' state; that it was a capitalist category. Yet these writers were not only not "liquidated"; they were not even removed from their posts.

THE PURGE OF WRITERS

How does it happen then that at this time writers of much lesser note, and on a change of line not so startling, are being accused of "bourgeois nationalism" and removed from their posts. In fact, so far as the ideological front is concerned the purge has taken a greater toll of writers than even the more monstrous and gory Trials of 1937. If it is not in the main due to a change of line, what then causes the present purge of writers, artists, musicians? The answer is to be found not in the state of mind or propaganda, but in the state of production. It is clear that the purges are the consequences of trying to execute the Fourth Five Year Plan. The other changes of line occurred either during the war when all energies were bent on defeating the Nazi invaders, or when the Fourth Five Year Plan was first announced, but had not been tested against six months of the plan's operation, as it is presently.

THE GENERAL PURGES

The purges began on July 26 when a certain factory director by the name of Kamchatkov was accused of having reported overfulfillment of quotas 102.4 per cent, when in reality his factory had only come up to 98.3 per cent of quota. The purge in fact appeared like a joke; for such mild offense, even when spread on the front page of the paper, no great punishment could be given. Even the revelation of embezzling of 40,000 rubles from the Ministry of State Control could not have brought more than a jail sentence and a fine. Nothing to compare with the wholesale executions of the 1937 Trials which had wiped out the whole Old Guard of the Bolsheviks who led the overthrow of Czarism. The present purge was indeed a "soft" one.

It did not, however, accomplish its purpose of diverting the dissatisfaction of the worker with the state rulers to a few embezzlers. Even the sop thrown him in the form of an amnesty for all wartime labor offenses did not quiet the worker. He knew that behind the glittering front of "socialist state," "nationalized property," "collective farms," "planned production" stood, on the one side, the fatted state officials, industrial managers, politicians, generals, and on the other side stood he, ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-housed. Where was the equality of rationing when, alongside it, running in fact through the whole fabric of Russian life, was black marketing? How did catching a few embezzlers stop large-scale profiteering, millionaire kolkhozniki investing in tax-free government bonds? He continued in his own way. Production in the first six months of the Fourth Five

452

Year Plan was nowhere near the 93.8 per cent figure. No, in reality, it was barely 50 per cent of the plan.

The purges spread more deeply, but they were not called purges. To judge by the Russian headlines, you would think that it was all a matter of righting wrongs. The slogans: "Against Indifference to Complainers," "Workers," "Greater Attention to Veterans," "Against Wastage of Raw Materials and for Lowered Costs of Production," "Every Pood of Grain is Important to the State," "For Stalinist Citizens for Mothers and Children." At the same time, N. S. Khrushchev, Premier of Ukraine, revealed on August 23, that "a mass replacement of the party's personnel is taking place," that 64 per cent of all secretaries of regional committees of the party and 86 per cent of all directors of Machine Tractor Stations were replaced. Nevertheless, compared to the '30's, this is still a soft time.

Thus far, the Russian state is moving cautiously, but the economy of production continues to be bad. A. G. Zverev, Minister of Finance, according to the New York Times of October 12, reports that inefficiency in the Ministry of Armaments alone lost them 10 million rubles, that certain trusts have reached only 27 per cent of their quotas, that repair equipment, costing 2,400,000 rubles had not been ordered for more than two years, and that production costs which should be lowered by 17 per cent at the end of the Five-Year Plan have, in fact, been raised 19.2 per cent. This report, along with the newly created Council for the Five-Year Plan, which was set up on October 9 to cope with the catastrophic situation in the agricultural field will, no doubt, result in a series of purges. In fact, since the prospect of a famine is hanging out of the present crisis, it is not surprising that the whole of the Five-Year Plan will continue to be a series of purges after another.

The rise in the workers' wages is wiped out by the greater rise in prices. In many instances of consumers goods there has been a 300 per cent increase. The Russian masses will fight so heroically and sacrifice so much that they have nothing better to face than a bread diet. In Ukraine it is feared that there will be actual starvation when the UNRRA shipments cease. This is Stalin's Russia in its worst hour. The workers' standard of living and demand for goods is the Crux of the matter. Under these conditions it is criminal to continue to call the workers' state as does the Socialist Workers' Party. This can only harm the cause both of the Russian worker and that of the world proletariat. The workers' rights must cease to live in such a state as Russia. The only way out is to call the state as it is. Nothing in Russia and outside Russia has anything in common