

London



By
W. P. GOATES

Secretary
 Anglo-Russian
 Parliamentary
 Committee

With a Preface by
**THE RIGHT HON.
 G. LANSBURY, M.P.**

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Published by
**THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN PARLIAMENTARY
 COMMITTEE**

5 Robert Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.2

AUGUST, 1933

MORE
ANTI-SOVIET LIES
NAILED

By

W. P. COATES

Secretary, Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee

With a Preface by

Rt. Hon. G. LANSBURY, M.P.

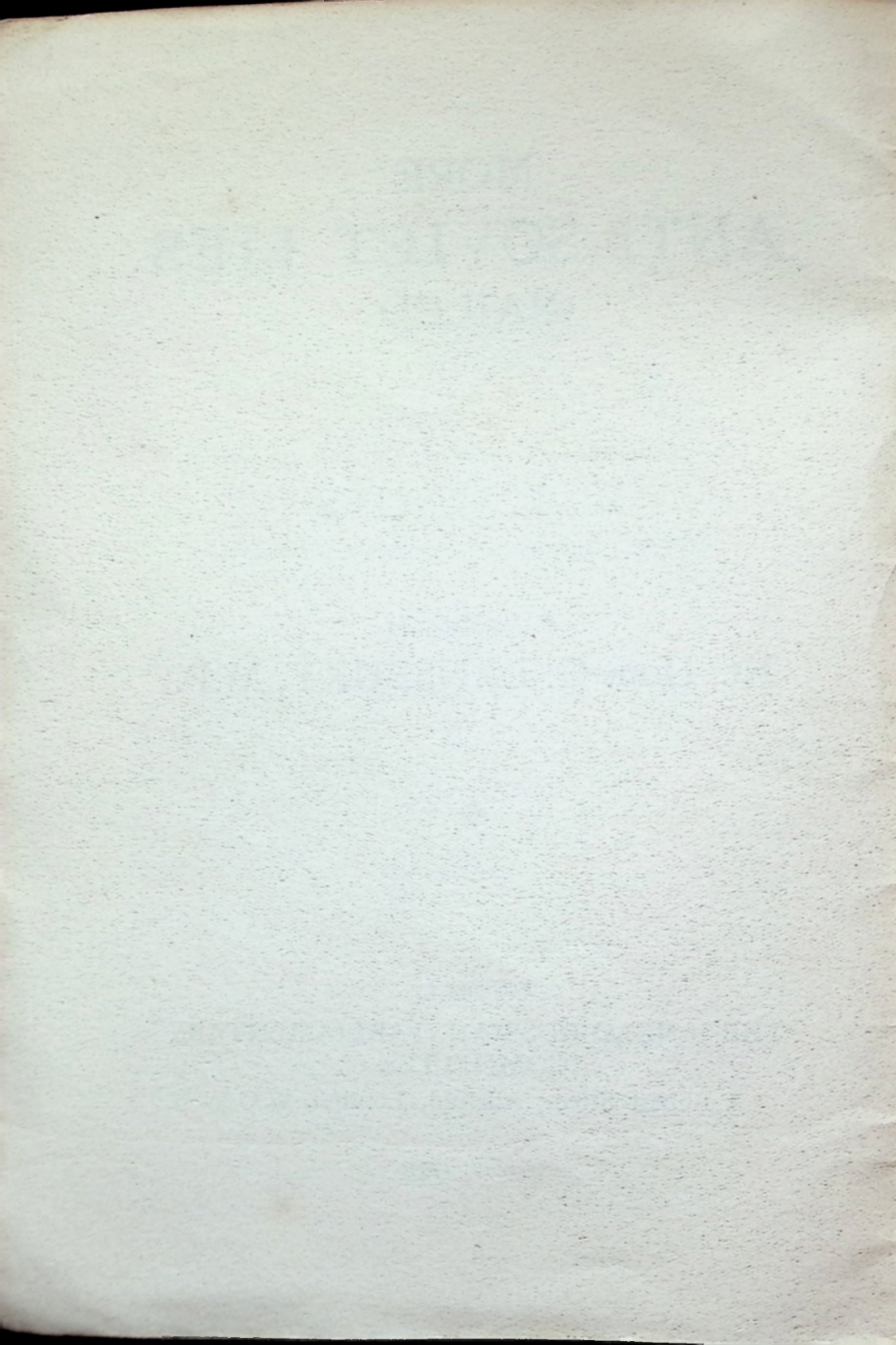


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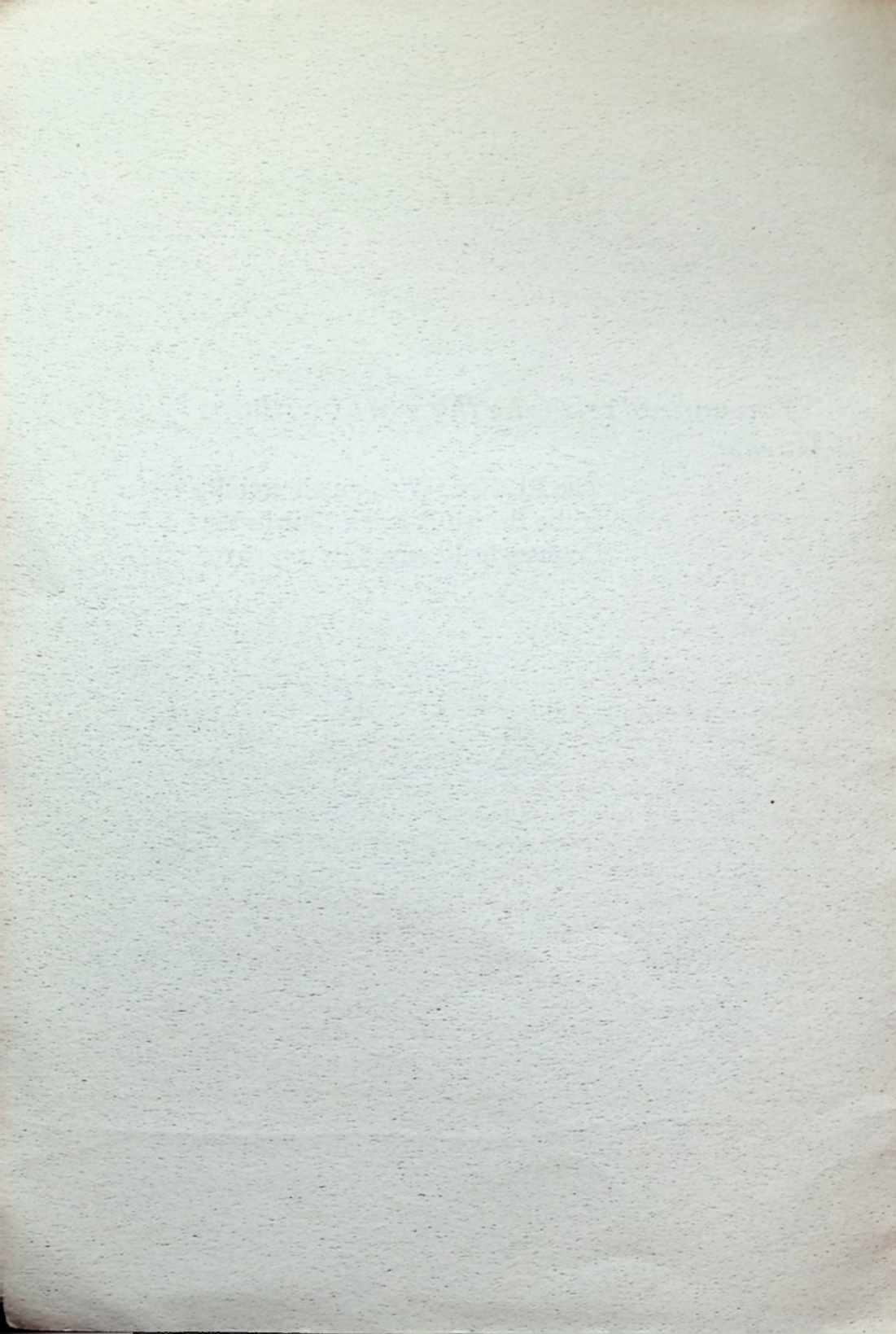
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*"You cannot re-make the world without
Russia."*

The Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill,
at the British-Russian Club in the
Connaught Rooms, July 17, 1919.



Preface

My friend and comrade Pat Coates has on many occasions rendered valuable service to the cause of peace between Russia and Britain by clearly refuting the many cruel and unjust statements made by interested persons against the Government of that great country. In this book he has once again given the lie to those who choose to describe the Russian workers as a nation of slaves held in subjection by brute force. My friend gives chapter and verse for his case against those who so grossly distort the facts.

I trust this book will be read by many thousands of business men and women and that it will find a prominent place in every private and public library throughout the land.

It is said that facts are stubborn things, and so they are, and the fact is that in Russia a Government rules which was established in 1917 to take over the rich natural resources of that great country and develop them for and on behalf of the Russian nation. This is a wonderful experiment, one which only people with faith, courage and industry could undertake. Mistakes may have been made. Whoever did or tried to do anything and never blundered? Surely we who live in Britain cannot claim that our lords and masters never do wrong. It is no more right to expect perfection from the Russian people than it is to expect perfection from other nations who produce swindlers both in the seats of the mighty and the lowly.

The colossal task set themselves by the Russian Socialists is one which should be supported by all lovers of the race: they aim at establishing a social order within which there will ultimately be a nation banded together in the bonds of economic security and equality. That day is not yet, but is the goal they seek to attain. We are not called upon to judge or accept all the means they adopt to attain their ends.

This, however, is true; the nations of the world cannot afford to neglect, boycott or condemn the U.S.S.R. She is an economic fact. Her people are pulsating with a new life, her young people

dream dreams by night and strive might and main to make them real, and who shall dare to say them nay.

M. Litvinov, the Foreign Minister representing the Soviet Government at the World Economic Conference, declared the faith of his Government in world co-operation. He called upon the Powers to give up economic warfare and to co-operate for the salvation of the world.

For the moment his appeal has been made in vain. But time is on the side of Socialism and the more the facts of life and work in Russia are known, the greater will be the demand which will rise from the peoples of all lands that each and all of us in our own way and by our own methods will win our way to Socialism which means peace, progress and brotherhood.

GEORGE LANSBURY.

Foreword

About three years ago (May, 1930), we issued a brochure entitled "Anti-Soviet Lies Nailed." Since then the constant stream of misrepresentations and distortions in our Tory Press has not only not ceased, but from time to time it has become more and more virulent and shameless. This has been particularly the case whenever for one reason or another relations between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. have become more than usually strained.

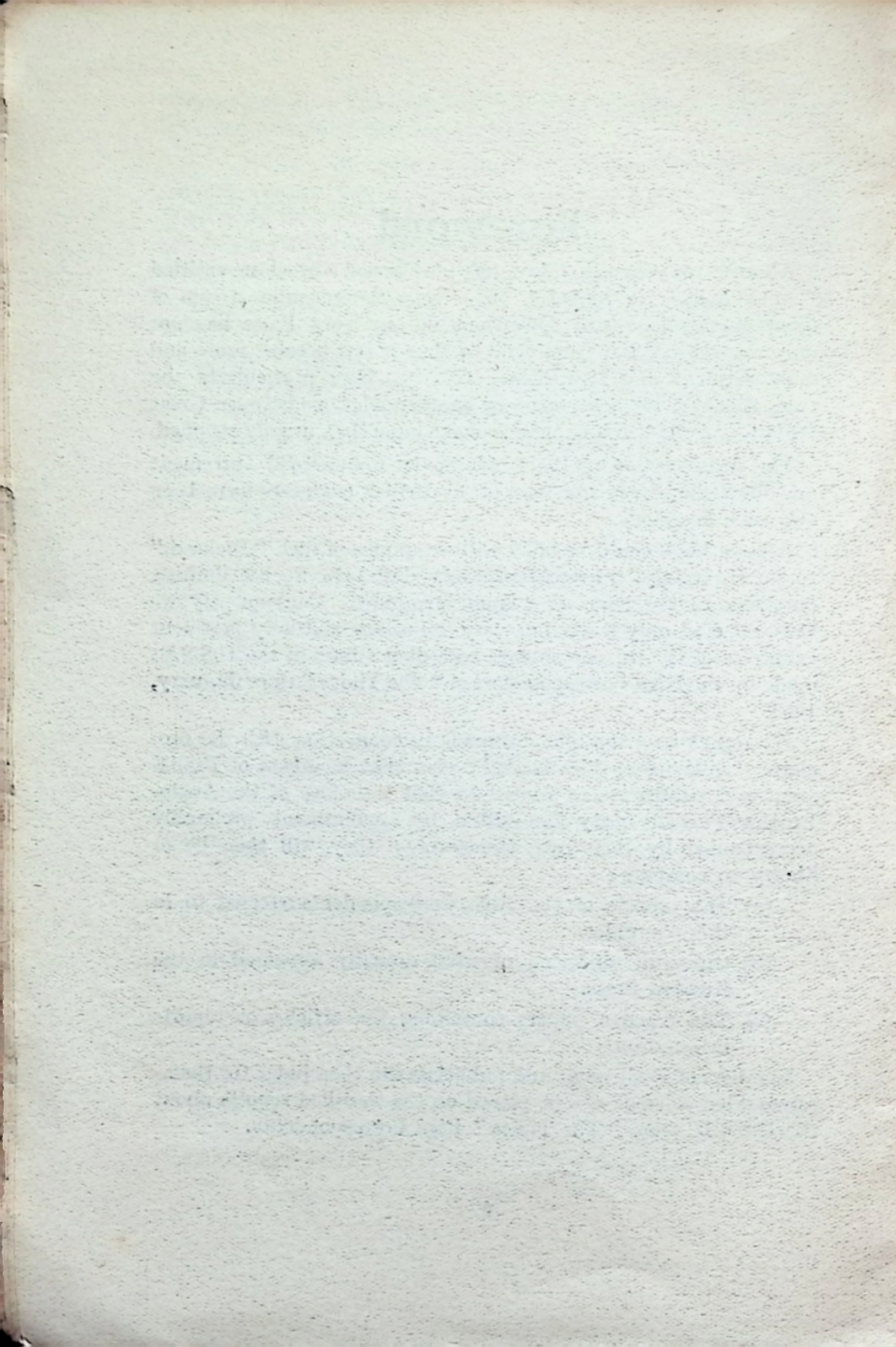
The denunciation of the Anglo-Soviet Commercial Agreement and later the arrest and trial of six British engineers have been two such occasions.

A large book could be filled with examples of such "Diehard," to put it mildly, misrepresentations—but here we are limiting ourselves to the issue of a small pamphlet. Consequently we have selected only a few but very important and very pertinent examples of the mis-statements regarding affairs in the U.S.S.R. made by the Riga Correspondents of "The Times" since January, 1933.

We repeat here the offer we made in connection with the brochure "Anti-Soviet Lies Nailed," viz., that Members of Parliament and publicists are invited to visit the office of the Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee, by appointment, preferably accompanied by their own translators; they will then be at liberty to compare:—

- (a) The reports of the Riga Correspondents referred to in this pamphlet.
- (b) Our own rendering of what actually appeared in the Russian Press.
- (c) The Russian papers containing the articles or reports in question.

Members of Parliament and publicists can then judge for themselves what reliance can be placed on the so-called reports about the U.S.S.R. from "The Times" Riga Correspondents.



Misrepresentations Concerning Industry Arrears in Wages

"The Times" Riga Correspondent in a message dated May 5, 1933, draws a picture of the state of arrears of wages in the U.S.S.R. which gives the impression to the unwary reader that very large numbers of the Russian workers do not receive the wages due to them and that the Soviet State enterprises have an enormous indebtedness in respect of wages. The message, amongst other things, says:—

"The total wage debt of Soviet industry amounts to over 100,000,000 roubles. One Ural trust owes miners 10,000,000 roubles; this debt has been accumulated since the end of 1932. Harkoff Sugar Trust owes its workers 3,000,000 roubles; one Ukrainian transport organisation 4,000,000 roubles; and Stalinsk factories 5,000,000 roubles. Not only in remote districts, but in many State enterprises in Moscow and Leningrad there are wage arrears of two or three months." ["The Times," May 6, 1933.]

It may be pointed out in passing that the total wage bill of the U.S.S.R. amounts to 2,750,000,000 roubles per month or 110,000,000 roubles per working day, so that even if arrears on any one date really amounted to 100,000,000 roubles—*this would be the equivalent of less than one day's wages.*

Nevertheless we were interested to know where exactly "The Times" Riga Correspondent obtained the figures of 100,000,000 roubles. Accordingly we sent the following letter to "The Times":—

"Sir,—The above Committee, at a recent meeting, had under consideration the following passage which appeared in your columns of May 6, 1933, from your Riga correspondent:—

'The total wage debt of Soviet industry amounts to over 100,000,000 roubles.'

"The members of the Committee would regard it as a great favour if you would kindly inform me in what Soviet paper or papers this statement appeared.

"The members of the Committee wish me to assure you that their one consideration in this matter is to get at the truth.

"Thanking you in anticipation of an early and favourable reply.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) W. P. COATES,
Secretary."

"The Times" was good enough to pass the inquiry on to their Riga Correspondent and subsequently very courteously sent us the reply of the latter which was as follows:—

"In reply to your letter of May 15 and the enclosed inquiry from the 'Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee' of May 12, my statement in "The Times" of May 6 that the total wage debt of Soviet industry amounted to over 100,000,000 roubles was based on the following official organs of the Soviet Press:—

	Roubles
1. "Trud," April 1, page 3, col. 2. Wage debt at one enterprise in Voronezh district exceeds ..	84,600
2. "Trud," April 9, page 4, col. 5. Wage debt at the Fireproof Trust and the Kaganovich Ball-bearing Works : 445,000 + 173,000 =	618,000
Same page, col. 6 : Experimental Works	58,000
3. "Trud," April 16, page 4, col. 5. Co-op. Construction	161,000
4. "Trud," April 26, page 4, col. 5. Stalinisk factories	4,619,000
5. "Pravda," April 5, page 2, col. 4. Promstroï ..	500,000
6. "Pravda," April 4, page 4, col. 7. Photo Trust ..	120,000
7. "Pravda," April 6, page 4, col. 6 : Torfoprodukt (a)	215,000
" " " " " " Tekhvod (b)	43,575
8. "Pravda," April 9, page 4, col. 6. Moscow-Kazan Railway	1,000,000
9. "Pravda," April 16, page 4, col. 6 Ural Coal Industry	9,900,000
10. "Pravda," April 12, page 4, col. 6. Ural Metal Industry	2,000,000
(This debt appears to have been paid in April.)	
11. "Pravda," April 26, page 4, col. 5 Gorki Port ..	200,000
12. "Izvestia," April 26, page 4, col. 4. Lower Volga teachers	30,000
13. "Izvestia," April 28, page 2, col. 7. Tashkent Statefarms	194,000
14. "Ekonom. Zhizn," April 5, page 1, col. 4. Dnieprokombinat	5,000,000
15. "Ekonom. Zhizn," March 9, page 2, col. 4. Four Moscow enterprises	1,053,000
16. "Legkaya Industriya," March 17, page 4, col. 4. Ivanovo Light Industries	20,000,000
17. "Konsomolskaya Pravda," March 15, page 2, col. 1. Volga Timber Industries	5,500,000
18. "Za Industrializatsiu," March 4, page 2, col. 4. Vovat Works	3,400,000
19. "Za Industrializatsiu," February 18, page 2, col. 5. Peat Trust	5,000,000
20. "Za Industrializatsiu," February 9, page 4, col. 5. Soyuzstroï	9,000,000
	68,691,175
21. Omitted : "Sotsial. Zemlyadelie," March 22, page 4. Tractor Stations	14,000,000
	82,691,175

" These are some of the figures published in these 7 Moscow newspapers. There are others, but they have not been quoted here for fear of possible overlapping. Further figures are to be found in provincial newspapers, but there is no possibility of obtaining an exhaustive account. In general, the Soviet reports refer to the 'colossal wage-debt' only vaguely, and avoid giving figures. Thus :—

" Izvestia," April 28, says wages on farms and enterprises of the Middle Volga are 3—5 months in arrears.

" Pravda," April 24.—The grain mills, factories, and trusts of the Ukraine are 2 months in arrears with the payment of wages.

" Ek. Zhizn," April 12 and 22, says approximately the same, giving a few names of the worst enterprises.

" Trud," April 10, 12, 16, mentions the Yaroslavo Technical Institute, the Podolsk Cement Factory, the Timber Mills of the Leningrad district, and other enterprises as 3—6 months in arrears.

" Pravda," March 20, describes Construction Works which are 3 months in arrears.

" Legkaya Industriya," March 20.—Wages in the Ivanosk Glass Industry are 3 months in arrears.

" This list of references to arrears of wages, without any definite mention of the amounts owed, could be greatly extended. But the above is sufficient to show that the total wage debt exceeds 100,000,000 roubles. Indeed, it is more probably nearer 500,000,000 at the present time."

[NOTE.—For the convenience of reference we have numbered the various definite items of arrears given by "The Times" Riga Correspondent.]

We obtained all except one of the issues of the papers cited by "The Times" Riga Correspondent as giving definite sums of arrears, and on turning to the columns mentioned we find that in a large number of cases ("Pravda," April 4, April 6, April 9, April 26, "Trud," April 9) they are reports of cases of arrears in which the managers responsible have been prosecuted for the criminal negligence to pay wages punctually.

In such cases there can be no doubt whatever that the arrears were paid simultaneously with the pronouncement of sentence if not before. In some cases, such as that reported in "Pravda," April 5, "Pravda," April 16, "Pravda," April 12, it is reported in these very issues that the arrears of wages in question had been paid even before the prosecution had taken place. In the case reported in "Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn," April 5, it is stated that the wages for the first quarter had not been paid as a result of bad management but was paid with the help of an advance granted on account of the second quarter by the Commissariat for Heavy Industry.

In the cases reported in "Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn," March 9, the managers responsible were to be prosecuted and had been given 3—10 days within which all arrears of wages were to be paid.

Similarly, in the case reported in "Izvestia," April 28, the manager was given ten days within which to pay the arrears.

In the cases of the Vovat Works reported in "Za Industrializatsiu," March 4, it is reported that one of the works which was owing 1,200,000 roubles was paying these arrears in full. In another enterprise owing 375,000 roubles, the arrears were also being paid. Whilst the remaining 1,765,000 roubles could readily be paid with better organisation.

As regards the "Sotsialisticheskoe Zemledelic," March 22,—this is a report of a resolution of the Union Commissariat for Agriculture which demands that the managements of the Regional and District Tractor Stations *should immediately investigate as to how the 14,000,000 roubles assigned by the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. for covering arrears of wages had been used.* Should any of this money not have been employed as directed, those guilty were to be prosecuted.

All the other cases are demands for the prosecution of those responsible, as for the most part it is not a real lack of means to pay wages which has resulted in the accumulation of arrears, but exclusively bad management, such as the failure to collect sums due to the particular works from other enterprises, the expenditure of the wage fund on other unauthorised purposes, the illegal withholding of sums which should have been earmarked for wages, etc.

We might thus divide all the cases upon which the Riga Correspondent based his reckoning into two lists, one which reports the cases as settled and where the arrears have therefore been made good and the other in which the wages due, so far as the particular report goes, had not at that time been paid:—

Sums involved in Cases in which Arrears Paid.		Sums involved in Cases in which Arrears are not Paid.	
	Roubles.		Roubles.
(2)	173,000	(1)	84,600
(2)	53,000	(2)	445,000
(5)	500,000	(8)	161,000
(6)	120,000	(12)	30,000
(7)	215,000	(16)	20,000,000
(7)	43,575	(17)	5,500,000
(8)	1,000,000	(18)	1,765,000
(9)	9,900,000	(19)	5,000,000
(10)	2,000,000	(20)	9,000,000
(11)	200,000		
(13)	£194,000		41,985,600
(14)	5,000,000		
(15)	1,058,000		
(18)	1,575,000		
(21)	14,000,000		
Total.	36,026,575		

The figures on the right indicate the case cited by the Riga Correspondent of "The Times" on page 12.

We have not the "Trud," April 26 (item 4), consequently we do not know whether the 4,619,000 roubles mentioned in the list of items of the Riga Correspondent had been settled when the report appeared or not—but in any case we see that of the sum of 82,691,175 roubles mentioned by the Riga Correspondent as definitely owing to Soviet workers when he wrote his report, e.g., May 5, 1933, over 86,000,000 roubles at least had been settled in March and April.

Secondly, it is surely illegitimate to lump together cases of arrears reported on various dates in February, March and April, and to state that this lump sum was owing in April or May. The probabilities are that cases reported on a particular date were settled and put right within 8-14 days.

We also made inquiries regarding some of the other figures quoted in "The Times" report and we are authoritatively informed that the Urals Trust, stated by the Riga Correspondent to owe its workers 10,000,000 roubles, actually owed at that time only 500,000 roubles.

Again, according to the Riga Correspondent, the Kharkov Sugar Trust owed its workers 3,000,000 roubles. Actually the total indebtedness of the Sugar Trust at that date was 300,000 roubles.

According to the Riga Correspondent, a Ukrainian Transport organisation owed 4,000,000 roubles. Actually the indebtedness of that organisation at the time referred to was 1,200,000 roubles.

It is true that, partly due to incompetence, but mainly to the sabotage of hostile elements who have gained positions of trust, arrears of wages have illegally accumulated in certain enterprises, but in the first place the Riga Correspondent has exaggerated the figures out of all proportion to the facts. Secondly, the authorities are taking energetic steps to eradicate the evil.

Unemployment

"The Times" Riga Correspondent reported on March 18, 1933, that:—

"The Soviet Government has ordered the re-introduction of labour exchanges in order to combat the problems of industrial unemployment. The labour exchanges of Russia were dissolved at the end of 1930, after unemployment had been formally 'abolished' by decree on October 9, 1930. They have become necessary again in consequence of the halt called by Stalin for 1933, the first year of the Second Five-Year Plan."

So far as we know no such order has been issued by the Soviet Government and it is definitely untrue that there is unemployment in the U.S.S.R. On the contrary, there is still a shortage of workers in many of the industries.

The real facts are that the staffs in various State Departments and the Central Offices of various economic organisations were found to be swollen out of all proportion to that required for efficient work and have therefore been drastically cut down; further, some enterprises were employing more workers than they really required whilst in other enterprises there was an acute demand for more workers, particularly skilled workers and experts. Consequently there has been a cutting down of staff in the former enterprises.

But there is no shortage of work in the U.S.S.R.; it is quite possible that many of the office and other workers dismissed in Moscow cannot find work again in Moscow; on the other hand, they could find plenty of jobs in other parts of the country and the Labour Departments no doubt register such workers for redistribution to other parts of the country where their labour is required.

The whole problem in the U.S.S.R. is not that of making or finding work for unemployed, but to redistribute labour in accordance with the real requirements of the national economy.

Number of Workers Employed

In the course of an article of the Riga Correspondent in "The Times," January 25, 1938, dealt with in the section on agriculture, it is stated:—

"Molotov announced that the total number of persons employed by the State would be reduced this year, but improved organisation, stricter discipline and more intensive work must increase the productivity of labour so as to raise the total industrial output to 16.5 per cent. above the actual output of 1932."

Actually, M. Molotov did not say a single word about reducing the number of persons employed—what he did say in this connection was:—

"We are undertaking to increase the industrial output by 16.5 per cent. The total number of workers and employees is to grow by only two per cent."

It may be noted here that the total number of persons employed as wage workers in the national economy of the U.S.S.R. (industry, transport, building, agriculture, forestry, trade, education, etc.) has risen from 11,600,000 in 1928 to 22,800,000 in 1932.

Reorganisation of Railway Administration

On July 12, 1933, in connection with the publication in the Soviet press of decisions for the reorganisation of the administration of the Soviet Railways, the Riga Correspondent of "The Times" says:—

"RIGA, July 11.

"Molotov and Stalin issued a joint decree last week declaring the necessity for emergency measures in order to deal with the disorder on the railways, and since then further decrees on the subject have followed almost daily.

"In the decrees it is pointed out that the efficiency of the railways has declined continuously during the last two years, and that the total traffic for the first quarter of 1933 had sunk below the low level of the first quarter of 1932."

Actually in the "decree" to which the Riga correspondent refers, *e.g.*, the decision issued July 4, 1933, and signed jointly by M. Molotov (Chairman of the Council of People's Commissaries) and M. Stalin (Secretary, Central Committee of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R.) there is no word or question of "emergency measures" and the "daily" issue of "decrees" since then, boils down to the publication of two decisions, one, July 9, 1933, giving details of the measures to be taken for the reorganisation of the administration of the Railways and the other, the publication July 10, 1933, of the report of the ratification by the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. and the Council of People's Commissaries of the U.S.S.R. of measures to be adopted for the establishment of proper discipline in the working of the railways.

Further, the decisions do *not* point out "that the efficiency of the railways has declined continuously during the last two years." The first decision published on the subject (July 4, 1933) stated that: "the goods transported in the first quarter of 1933, had diminished to 61,000,000 tons as against 67,000,000 tons in the first quarter of 1932. *The improvement which had started in the winter of 1931-32 had not been maintained.*"

Actually, the freight turnover in the first 6 months of 1932, although below the plan, was 137,400,000 tons or 15·8 per cent. *in excess of the first 6 months of 1931.* As for the passenger traffic, this in January-June, 1932, was about 15·5 per cent. *in excess of the plan and 44·5 per cent. in excess of that in January-June, 1931.*

It may be pointed out further, in order to put the matter in its right perspective that in 1931, the combined freight and passenger traffic on the Soviet railways was already 6 per cent. in excess of the estimates laid down for the final year of the original Five-Year Plan (1932-33) and during the first half of 1932 there was a further increase of 27·3 per cent.

It may also be as well to point out that in 1932, goods transport on the railways measured in ton kilometres was 2·5 times that in 1913 and 81·3 per cent. in excess of that in 1928. The number of passengers carried by the Soviet railways in 1932 was 2½ times that carried in 1928.

There has thus been very solid success on the railways and none of the decisions published on the subject recently speaks of "a continuous decline."

Nevertheless, the work of the railways during the first six months of 1933 has not been satisfactory, and particularly in view of the rapidly developing national economy of the U.S.S.R. and the calls made thereby on the Soviet railways their efficiency does still leave much to be desired. (In 1932, nearly 255,000,000 tons of goods were transported on the Soviet railways—in 1933, the plan laid down the transport of 300,000,000 tons.)

In addition, undoubtedly, as the new decisions regarding the railways point out, there is considerable sabotage on the railways. This is manifested not so much by direct wrecking as by the more subtle means of sending untrained or insufficiently trained men to carry out responsible tasks, keeping experts engaged in routine office work, etc. In other cases, bad organisation is due to bureaucracy, incompetence, carelessness, etc.

To overcome these difficulties, the new decisions provide for a reorganisation of the administration of the railways and they also provide—what the Riga Correspondent conveniently omits to point out—for a considerable increase in the wages of all classes of railway workers ranging from 34 per cent. to 62 per cent.

In the course of the same report in "The Times," the Riga Correspondent says:—

"All the railways in the U.S.S.R. were yesterday placed under a sort of 'emergency law' by a decree which, it may be remarked, has not been issued by the Soviet Government, but directly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which assumes control of the railways. For carrying out the decree the creation of a new semi-military body, with extensive punitive powers, called 'political police,' has been ordered. It will be organised on lines similar to those of the political police created a few months ago in connection with collective farms and State farms."

We wonder has the correspondent tried to pack as many inaccuracies (to put it very mildly) as he could in one paragraph? Anyway whether he tried or not, he has certainly succeeded in doing so. Let us take the points seriatim :—

1. Neither by this decree nor by any other order have the railways of the U.S.S.R. been placed under anything remotely resembling an “emergency law.”
2. By the decree (decision) in question, the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. does *not* “assume control of the railways.”
3. No new body (semi-military or other) has been formed “for carrying out the decree.”
4. “The creation of a semi-military body” called “political police” has *not* been ordered.
5. No “political police” have ever been organised in connection with the collective and State farms.

The reader may well ask: “Is there nothing true in the Riga Correspondent’s report?” That would be an over-statement—the kernel of truth in the report is that the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. published July 11, 1933, a resolution which after describing the faults in the working of the railways and in the activities or, in some cases, lack of activities of the members of the Communist Party and other would-be active workers on the railways, proceeds to describe in detail the functions of the political Departments the organisation of which on the railways had been mentioned in the decision of July 9, 1933, as one of the measures for improving the work of the railways.

Like the Political Departments attached to sovkhozy and kolkhozy, these Political Departments on the railways are in no sense whatever “police”; they are Communist Party organisations on the railways (that is why it is the Central Committee of the Communist Party which has signed this particular decision) formed from well-trying, disciplined, experienced party workers and their functions are to direct the party propaganda and organising work on the railways and more particularly to ginger up and help every section of the railway administration to improve the work of the railways and the living and working conditions of the railway workers.

The decision lays down the duties of the Railway Political Departments as follows :—

“It is the duty of the Political Departments *by means of persuasion and organised propaganda work* to create conscious iron discipline on the railways, thus assuring a new wave of powerful Socialist competition and ‘shock’ work on the railways and raising the whole level of party political work among both the brain and manual railway workers. (Our italics.)

“ It is further the duty of the Political Departments to wage a constant struggle with the anti-working class and hostile elements (saboteurs, thieves, wreckers, idlers, etc.) . . . to carry out the necessary measures to prevent theft and to assure the firm protection and care of State socialist property.

“ The Political Departments should organise the spread of knowledge of railway technique among Communists and active non-party workers—they should help such workers to raise their skill, thus making it possible for them to become real masters of the enterprises entrusted to them . . . ”

The Political Departments are to struggle against bureaucracy on the railways, they are to encourage self-criticism and the eradication of mistakes, wrong practices, etc., and, in general, it is hoped they will form, as it were, “ the party eye control in all branches of railway transport.”

Perhaps we have said enough to show that the Riga description of the new decisions regarding railway administration is as far from the reality as were their reports regarding the organisation of Political Departments in connection with the kolkhozy* and sovkhozy.†

* The kolkhozy are collective farms formed by the pooling of the resources of a number of individual peasant farmers. They vary in the degree of collectivisation of their resources. Some are simple associations of peasants to work their land in common. In others, the herds, or some of them, and all or part of the implements are also collectivised. Whilst in the comp etc form they are organised in communes in which everything used for production is owned in common.

† The sovkhozy are State collective farms.

Misrepresentations Concerning Agriculture

A Speech by M. Stalin

One of the most ingenious bits of fiction spread by the Riga Correspondent of "The Times" was what purported to be a report of a speech by M. Stalin made at the joint Plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Committee of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. on January 7, 1938.

The "report" given by the Riga Correspondent appeared in "The Times," January 9, 1938, and was dated Riga, January 8, 1938.

But as a matter of fact this speech had not been released to the press till *the evening* of January 9, 1938 (the Soviet press published it January 10, 1938) and it was not broadcast at the time of its delivery.

It is also an interesting fact that the "Daily Telegraph," January 9, 1938, stated that M. Stalin had made a speech and added "No report was issued."

The fact that M. Stalin had made a speech at the Plenum in question was announced in the Soviet Press on January 8. That was quite enough—what did it matter what M. Stalin said? The Riga correspondents knew quite well what they wanted him to say.

According to the "report" of the Riga correspondent, M. Stalin, in his review of the Five-Year Plan, laid emphasis on:—

"Its most glaring shortcomings, especially on the agricultural front," and "criticised the industrial results achieved in 1932 . . ."

Actually he did nothing of the kind. His whole speech was a paean of triumph at the splendid achievements of the Five-Year Plan, and although he admitted, as every Soviet leader always has admitted, that there had been mistakes and defects in their work, he expressly said:—

"Unfortunately, I cannot now dwell upon the defects and mistakes, as the limits of the summary report which has been assigned to me do not leave room for this. But this is not the point now.

"The point is that despite the defects and mistakes, the existence of which no one among us denies, we have achieved such real successes that they excite admiration among the working class throughout the world. We have secured such a victory that it has a truly world-historical significance."

According to the Riga correspondent's report, M. Stalin

"scolded the representatives of the party's provincial organisations for allowing a new lease of life to the kulaks, who had regained, he declared, their influence in the countryside, disorganised the collective farms, and corrupted many rural branches of the Communist Party, especially those in Kuban and the Lower Volga, and so necessitated numerous local re-conquests of the rank and file of the peasantry."

Actually, M. Stalin said nothing of the kind. He did not scold, nor did he even mention "the party's provincial organisations"; he said nothing about "rural (or other) branches of the Communist Party being corrupted." He did not mention in his whole speech the Kuban and Lower Volga. He said nothing about "local reconquests of the rank and file of the peasantry."

Formation of Political Sections

On January 25, 1933, the Riga correspondent returns to the attack and in the course of a long article contrives to distort completely the proceedings and decisions of the joint Plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Committee of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. (referred to in the preceding section).

The Riga correspondent stated that M. Stalin in a second speech had announced:—

"that the existing collective farms were to be taken under the strict control of the Communist Party, purged of all anti-Communist members and forced to carry out the Communist policy by means of a newly-created body of political police." (Our emphasis.)

and that a few hours later:—

"... the Central Committee issued the decree Stalin had foreshadowed for the organisation of a new political police force especially for the control of peasants on State farms and collective farms." (Our emphasis.)

Actually, neither Stalin nor the decision of the Plenum proposed to purge the collective or State farms of anti-Communist members, nor was there any proposal for setting up political or other special rural police. The decision in question seeks to rid the sovkhozy and kolkhozy from anti-Soviet, anti-kolkhoz and anti-sovkhozy elements.

By the decision of the Plenum, *Political Sections* were established. These sections are attached to the Sovkhozy and Machine Tractor Stations (which provide machinery and technical help to the Kolkhozy). The resolution to form these Political Sections points out that:—

“ The village Communists and Young Communists are faced with the task of organising and leading a real Party and Soviet group in the collective and State farms ; a task of winning a majority in the collective and State farms and driving out the anti-Soviet elements gathered there, first of all from among the department managers, accountants, bookkeepers, and warehouse keepers.”

The resolution lays down that for the purpose of insuring the proper economic and social working of the kolkhozy and sovkhozy, the correct application of Soviet laws and to put a stop to theft of Soviet and collective property, etc., the political sections should conduct :—

“ Organisational, political and educational Party work among the members of the Party and Young Communist League in the State farms and Machine Tractor Stations and in the collective farms served by them, by organising mass political work among the collective farmers and State farm workers, by properly selecting and distributing the Party and Young Communist League forces of the collective and State farms and the non-Party active workers who are devoted to the collective farm cause . . . ”

The resolution lays down that the political sections are to expose wrecking activity, help in selecting skilled technical workers, render help to the party and young communist party branches in the State and collective farms, etc., but also says :—

“ The political sections of the Machine Tractor Stations and State farms must under no circumstances take the place of the director of the Machine Tractor Stations and State farms, remembering that the economic direction of the station or State farm rests with the director of the Machine Tractor Stations and State farm who works on the principle of single command, and remembering also that the political sections must by their mass political organisational and educational Party work help to solve the tasks confronting the director of the State farm or Machine Tractor Station.”

In short, the political sections have nothing whatever to do with a rural “ political police ”—they are simply an endeavour by the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. to exercise organised vigilance on the proper organisation and work of the State and collective farms.

Similarly, June 20, 1933, after a garbled account of the need and measures taken by the authorities for guarding the crops against theft, the Riga Correspondent informs us :—

"The Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party has published further explanations of its decision to overcome the revolt of rural Communists.

"The explanations say that new conditions have arisen requiring new methods of management. Over 10,000 selected town Communists were sent to the countryside as 'political police,' with extraordinary powers to take over the purging and management of collective farms. The political police were not subject to local administrative organs or local Communist committees, but strife arose because the latter endeavoured to assert authority over them. The resultant confusion in the last few weeks has made harvest prospects much worse."

[*"The Times," June 20, 1933.*]

Actually, there has been no "revolt of rural Communists." True, certain differences had arisen between the local party organisations and the political Departments in a number of districts. This was due partly to misunderstanding, partly to the conscious mischievous sabotage of individual members of the local Communist organisations who had joined the latter for the express purpose of hindering progress in the villages, but to speak of revolt is absurd.

Secondly, the impression conveyed by the Riga report is that of complete confusion in the work of the political Departments and that this is acknowledged by the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Nothing can be further from the truth.

In the decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on this subject, published in the Soviet press June 16, 1933, a warm tribute is paid to the work of the Political Departments in the villages. The decision says:—

"The first results of the Political Departments during the preparation and carrying out of the Spring sowing shows that the Political Departments are really becoming a most important instrument of the Party for consolidating the kolkhozy and machine tractor stations and in cleansing them from anti-working-class elements . . ."

The decision further provides for the formation of Communist branches and groups of Communist sympathisers within the kolkhozy wherever possible.

It lays down the more or less exact relations between the Political Departments and the local district organisations of the Communist Party in order to ensure harmonious work between them.

The decision also provides for the organisation of work amongst women in the kolkhozy, for the publication of a popular newspaper by every Political Department attached to Machine

Tractor Stations; the organisation of book and paper kiosks, cinemas, etc.

As for harvest prospects having been made "much worse," the lie to this is given by the fact that the work of sowing has been completed by a much earlier date than last year in nearly every district of the U.S.S.R. The work has for the most part been carried out much better and the prospects for a good harvest are excellent.

Red Army and Spring Sowing Campaign

On March 14, 1938, the Riga Correspondent of "The Times" gave us the following interesting report:—

"The Soviet Government has ordered that the sowing campaign in the chief grain districts be carried on this spring with the assistance of the Red Army and under martial law. (Our emphasis.)"

"An officer will be placed at the head of each State farm, with power to establish military discipline. Such officers have already been appointed to most State farms in the Northern Caucasus, and the system is being introduced into other regions."

There was and is no more shadow of truth in the statement that the Spring sowing was to be carried out "with the assistance of the Red Army and under martial law" than there was in the allegation that a political police force had been formed for the rural areas.

The fact is that wherever possible former leaders of the political sections in the Red Army have been appointed to head the political sections of the sovkhozy and Machine Tractor Stations.

The reason is that the Red Army almost from its inception has been a great civilising and educational influence in the country. The political workers in the Red Army have had a first-class training in guarding the interests of the workers' and peasants' State against would-be disloyal elements. In the Red Army they have also learnt the value of discipline, of good organisation, of cleanliness, and have become accustomed to decent civilised methods of work and living conditions.

Consequently, the experience of the Red Army political workers would undoubtedly be of first-class importance in helping the best elements in the sovkhozy and kolkhozy to organise their work and educational activities, to eliminate "White Guard" and kulak elements and to prevent wrecking and sabotage.

But no martial law was ever proclaimed, there was no question of introducing "military discipline" and the Red Army as such has had nothing whatever to do with the Spring sowing campaign.

The Spring Sowing

In the issue of "The Times," May 11, 1933, the Riga Correspondent deals with the Spring sowing situation in a report which almost surpasses itself in the striking way in which the facts are misrepresented. This report, dated May 10, starts out with the statement :—

"Information reaching Moscow leaves no doubt that grain prospects in all the important regions of the Ukraine and Western Siberia are catastrophic."

Actually by May 5, 1933, the area sown in the Ukraine was 7,068,000 hectares or 41.3 per cent. of the Spring sowing plan, as compared with 5,015,000 hectares sown by May 5, 1932. In Western Siberia, the area sown by May 5, 1933, was 1,923,000 hectares or 28.6 per cent. of its plan, as compared with 1,062,000 hectares sown by May 5, 1932.

We may add that according to the preliminary returns, by July 10, 1933, the area sown in Western Siberia was 7,357,100 hectares, *i.e.*, 9.3 per cent. in excess of its plan ; whilst the Ukraine by July 10, 1933, had sown 16,376,000 hectares or 95.6 per cent. of its plan.

It would seem that it is the Riga correspondent who has made a "catastrophic" blunder or———

In the same report dated May 10, 1933, the Riga correspondent informs us :—

"Last week the Commissariat of Agriculture officially reported that the total area sown was greater than on the same day last year. Now 'Pravda' and other newspapers publish a warning that these official figures are illusory ; the spring started earlier than in 1932, but ploughing and sowing had proceeded more slowly."

The kernel of truth in this statement is that *in certain areas*, sowing had indeed proceeded more slowly than last year, but this was not true and is not true of the U.S.S.R. as a whole. Moreover, "Pravda" never published any warning about the figures of the Commissariat for Agriculture being illusory. On April 15, 1933, the "Pravda" pointed out that it was not alone the early Spring this year which was responsible for the more successful sowing, but also the better organisation and the greater experience in running large-scale collective farming.

In the course of a leader, the "Pravda," May 7, 1933, says :—

"The Spring sowing campaign developing on a wider and wider scale gives many thousands of bright examples of the struggle of

kolkhoz members for a high quality of agricultural work . . . the better quality of the work on the soil this year is an undeniable and highly significant fact."

The article goes on to point out the lessons to be drawn from the negligence in early ploughing, etc., of last year, but nowhere does it say a word of the returns being "illusory" or the position being "catastrophic."

Again, in a leader on May 8, 1933, the "Pravda" points out the greatly improved exploitation of agricultural machinery this Spring as compared with last year in many areas.

It also draws attention to areas in which this work is not proceeding satisfactorily and says:—

"However, even the considerable failure in certain regions and Machine Tractor Stations to utilise efficiently their tractors and machines cannot alter the general positive appraisal, it cannot veil that fundamental and for us most important fact that a definite turn for the better is discernible in the quality of agricultural work."

On May 10, 1933, "Pravda" published the following figures:—

<i>Area sown by May 5.</i>	
<i>This Year.</i>	<i>Last Year.</i>
33,915,000 hectares	21,635,000 hectares
<i>Area Sown During First Five Days of May.</i>	
8,595,000 hectares	6,659,000 hectares

And it may be stated that according to preliminary returns, by July 10, 1933, the total area sown in the U.S.S.R. was 93,108,600 hectares (98 per cent. of the plan).

We only need take one more point in this strange "report" of the Riga correspondent. In the last paragraph he says:—

"The Commissariats of Agriculture and War are organising a patrol by aeroplane. The first detachments of this patrol began work in the Ukraine and Northern Caucasus this week-end, laden with proclamations to the peasantry."

This is based on a report in "Pravda," May 7, 1933, "of the setting out of a number of aeroplanes for the First Propaganda Flight to the Northern Caucasus organised by the Political Departments of the Commissariat for Agriculture."

By no stretch of the imagination can this be described as "a patrol by aeroplane."

The British Engineers and the Powers of the O.G.P.U.

There is no need to deal here with the numerous misrepresentations of the Riga (and other) correspondents regarding the arrest and trial of the British engineers in March and April, 1933. We would give here only one instance of mischievous misrepresentation during this period :

On March 16, 1933, "The Times" published, under the heading "Emergency Law in Russia," the following report from their Riga Correspondent :—

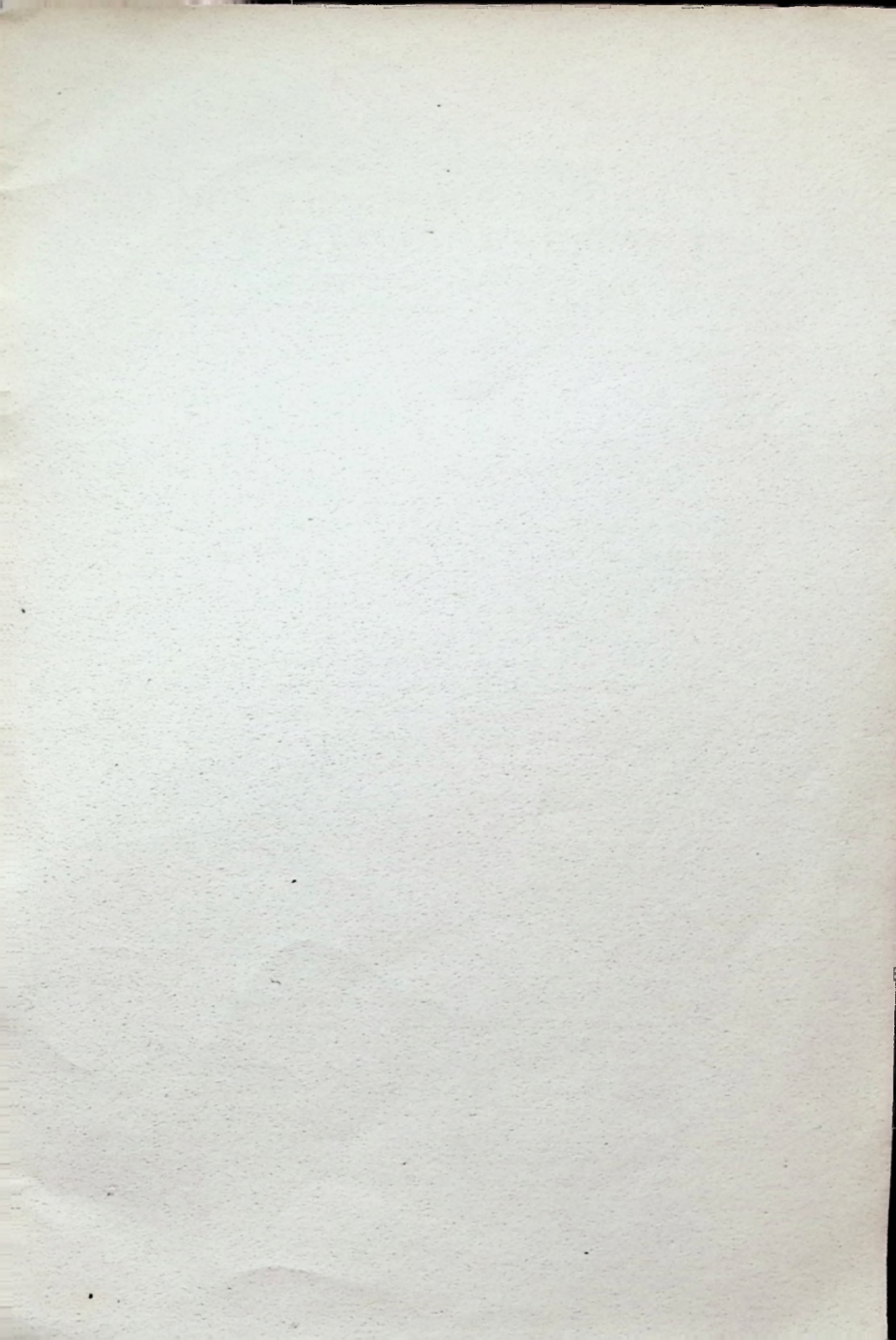
"The Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union to-day proclaimed the whole of the U.S.S.R. under a state of emergency law, depriving the ordinary Courts of a great part of their usual functions, and endowing the OGPU with extended powers to inflict summary justice, including the death penalty . . .

"The new Proclamation declares that the further extension of powers is necessitated by the widespread disloyalty of State employees, who recently have ever more frequently joined organised bands of wreckers actively striving to undermine the Soviet regime by anti-Soviet 'diversions,' arson, explosions, destruction of machinery and factory plant, and similar acts . . .

"The arrested engineers are subject to this new decree."

The reply to this is :—

1. There was no truth in the statement that "the U.S.S.R. has been placed under a state of emergency law." The decree enjoined the O.G.P.U. to use the powers which it had possessed since November, 1923, to repress arson, dynamite outrages, wrecking of machinery in State enterprises, and other sabotage with special severity.
2. There has been no extension of the powers of the O.G.P.U. and the decree did not speak of "widespread disloyalty of State employees." What it did say was that "recently it has been discovered that certain State officials—from whom (in view of their position and the powers vested in them) one might have expected an honest and conscientious regard for the workers' and peasants' State—had participated in counter-revolutionary sabotage."
3. The decree in question did not apply to the arrested Britishers—since the latter were not State officials—to whom exclusively the decree referred.



The Moscow Trial

(April, 1933)

**Its History, its Effects
and its Course Day-by-Day**

□

Compiled by

W. P. COATES, Secretary,
Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee.

Preface by

A. G. WALKDEN, Chairman,
Trades Union Congress General Council.

Foreword by

D. N. PRITT, K.C.

□

MR. WALKDEN says :—

“In the course of the following pages no attempt is made to hold a brief for either side, but a serious and successful attempt is made to hold a brief for honesty and truth.”

MR. PRITT says :—

“I have read it very carefully, after a full study of the verbatim report itself, and in my view it gives a perfectly fair summary of that report, and consequently a perfectly fair description of the trial.”

“THE FINANCIAL NEWS” (July 22, 1933) says :—

“Mr. Coates’ compilation may be recommended to all who wish to ensure that their opinion of that regrettable episode is soundly based on known fact.”

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