New York, February 23, 1931.

Speaking today at the annual alumni exercises of Union Theological Seminary, Ivy Lee said:

You have asked me to give my conception of what the business man thinks of Communism. Let me, at the outset, however, say that I do not presume to present the views of anyone other than myself.

Communism may be discussed as a theoretical ideal or as a practical program. I will undertake to deal only with the latter. The one concrete expression of Communism which is of practical interest at the moment is that embodied in the program of the Russian Soviet Government.

Much of this program, and indeed some of the aspects of it which offend us most, are in no sense Communistic. The repudiation by the Bolshevik Government of the Tsarist debts was an act inspired on the one hand by revulsion against the uses the Tsarist Government had made of the money it had borrowed abroad for militaristic or dynastic purposes, and, on the other, as a protest against the attitude foreign governments had assumed toward the Soviet Government. It was an unwise policy and an act contrary to international law. It has cost the Russian Government infinite

trouble. Until some settlement is made of this subject, normal relations between Russia and the rest of the world cannot be completely restored. But the policy had no more to do with Communism than the repudiation by the Southern States of the carpet bagger debts had to do with Communism.

Much of the Soviet program is distinctly Russian rather than Communistic. Suppression of free speech, censorship of the press and of all literature, prohibition of free assembly, secret police, denial of what we regard as civil right, absence of a code of law assuring justice without discrimination to all men - these things are not new in Russia; all were prevalent under the Capitalistic Tsar. They have no essential relationship to Communism.

The revolutionary views and ideas toward relationships of the home and the family which are being tried out in Russia, are not Communistic. When we read such books as Judge Lindsay's COMPANIONATE MARRIAGE and hear of a well known clergyman being expelled from the staff of Grace Church in New York because of his views on marriage, we do not have to look to Russia to find protagonists for startling ideas in our social relations.

The myth of nationalist women in Russia has already been effectively exposed. Marriage is easy and so is divorce, unless children are involved, when divorce is not so simple. The mother and father are always made equally responsible for the care of the child. But just as divorce is easy, the records show that

divorce is becoming less frequent. Prostitution, however, has been almost completely suppressed.

There is an amazing frankness in Russia in relation to all questions of sex - a frankness often shocking to us. But the Russians are not a prurient people. Their minds do not run to sex as do those of many other peoples. The fact would appear to be that in their relations with one another men and women in Russia are very much like men and women elsewhere. Men love their wives and wives love their husbands; they both love their children. Home life is as dear to the Russian as to anyone else. To be sure, today where both men and women work in the factories, arrangements have to be made by the State to take care of the children during the daytime. Creches, day nurseries and homes for children are numerous, but there is no such thing as the nationalized child any more than there is the nationalized woman. It is unquestionably true that the Russians, in their laws regulating the relationships of the home, are disregarding much of the experience of mankind. It is a bold experiment, but it might be made in any Capitalistic country without altering in the slightest the principles of Capitalism.

The industrial system of the country is neither Socialistic nor Communistic. It is merely State Capitalism. The State is the owner of all the tools of production. The organization of the State for this purpose is not unlike that in Capitalistic countries - each industry is organized into a trust or syndicate, each with its board of managers. Raw materials and

wages are paid for with money. The goods produced are sold to the people for money. There is no pretense of carrying out the Communist ideal of "from each according to his powers, to each according to his needs". To be sure, the present plan is regarded as one of transition, laying the foundations of future Communism in fact. But no one claims that Communism itself is as yet other than a dream.

The State maintains a monopoly of foreign trade. But that is not Communistic. It is, on the one hand, a form of protective tariff, and, on the other hand, a plan for strengthening the Russian State in its trade relations with foreign countries.

Even the much talked of collectivization of the farms is more Russian than Communistic. Even under the Tsarist Government clear down to 1906, the so-called allotment land - that is the land received by the peasant on the emancipation of 1866 as distinguished from land privately owned - was held either in communal or family tenure, and the proportion of private owners was exceedingly small. In 1892, out of a total of 11,071,000 owners of land, 10,589,000 were peasants holding their land in communal or family tenure as distinguished from private individual ownership.

The collectivization of the farms is an effort to apply the Capitalistic system of organization to the very primitive agricultural methods prevailing in Russia. Under the plan a whole countryside of farmers throw their land into the collective farm. Each farmer then becomes a worker in a great farm-factory.

He is paid wages for his labor in accordance with his ability and industry. After the usufruct of the farm has been realized, each farmer receives his proportion of the profits of the collective institution pro rata with his contribution toward the plan as a whole. The peasant may then use his earnings as he pleases. He continues to own his home, his garden and his household possessions.

The collectivized farm is primarily a plan for increasing production through utilizing better organization and more up-to-date methods and implements. I am told that as a result of the collectivized farms peasants are already becoming much more individualistic. New appetites are being created; new tastes; new habits and new demands are arising. Many peasants now use handkerchiefs - at least on Sundays. The Soviet Government will find it increasingly difficult to satisfy the demands of the Russian farmer who, for a thousand years, has been, except in the communal holding of land, extremely individualistic in all his points of view.

I have indicated certain of the outstanding features of the present Soviet plan, none of which embody any essential break in Russian history or represent a distinct departure from what would at least be possible in a Capitalistic society. There are two respects, however, in which the Bolshevik Government does embody a break with all the past, respects in which the program may be regarded as essentially Communistic.

First, the Bolsheviks have abolished the institution of private property in so far as it relates to the ownership of the tools of production. Production is entirely in the hands of the

State. Either through a direct limitation upon payments which may be made to the individual, or through the imposition of heavy taxes and surtaxes, the individual is practically prevented from indulging the motive of private gain for what he does. The Russians are seeking to eliminate private profit as the impetus for human economic activity. Their entire system of education is founded upon the theory that labor alone is to be glorified. "He who will not work neither shall he eat" - such is the program of the State. Bread cards are denied to private employers of labor. The entire population constitutes a great economic army, marshalled, "theirs not to reason why", in the service of the State.

Here, then, is a distinct breach with all the past. It is the most characteristic feature of the whole Communist experiment. Closely identified with the abolition of competition and private profit in industry is the system of State Planning. The Bolsheviks reason that as the individual is not free to or may not have opportunity to provide for the needs of the people, the State must.

The Five-Year Plan of industrialization is designed to synthesize the economic effort of the whole nation so as to realize within a stated time certain objectives, primarily the building up of large factories and power plants, improving the railroads and otherwise equipping the State for supplying not merely economic but military needs.

The plan is not unlike that utilized by the United States during the war when, under the War Industries Board, the economic resources of the whole nation were mobilized for the purpose of

winning the war. The Five-Year Plan in its essence is merely a goal of achievement sought to be realized within a definite period. Some people profess to see in the realization of this goal a menace to the industrial west through Russia becoming a powerful competitor in great manufacturing countries, flooding the world with cheap goods and destroying our industries.

As I see it, the Five-Year Plan is but the beginning of a series of five-year plans. For an indefinite time to come Russia will be utterly unable to produce the manufactured goods its own people urgently need. The standard of living in Russia is pitifully primitive. Before a standard of living can be evolved there comparable in any sense with that of the United States and Western Europe, there will have to be a long series of five-year plans, each of them calling not only for terrific sacrifice from the people, but demanding a highly trained technical personnel which Russia does not have and will not have for a long time to come, and also calling for a tradition of efficiency which the Russian people have never manifested. Russia will have few manufactured goods available for shipment abroad; she will need them all at home.

The so-called "dumping" which has caused so much excitement during the past year, was, in large measure, a program which Russia was forced to adopt. Being deprived of long-term foreign credits, the Soviet State had outstanding in Europe and the United States substantial short-term credits maturing in 1930. These credits could only be met by the shipment of commodities. The Government had planned to ship sufficient commodities with which to obtain the gold

to pay off these credits. But there was a drop during the year of some 20 per cent in the value of commodities. Hence there was no option to the Soviet Government other than to increase to the utmost its shipments abroad of anything which it could turn into gold.

The Five-Year Plan has behind it a war psychology which is giving it the same kind of impetus as war psychology in this country and in England gave to Western productive energy during the great war. In flaming placards throughout the country, Russians are bidden to "subscribe to the State loan for completing the Five-Year Plan in four years. Let this be our answer to our Capitalist enemies". The building of factories, increasing productivity in every direction, saving, sacrifice, the hardest kind of work on the part of everyone, whether man or woman -- these are all a part of the "industrial front".

The Russian people have been made to feel that the Capitalist world is in league against them. Their answer is the most gigantic and far-reaching industrial plan ever undertaken by any nation in time of peace. The pity of it is that even when all the factories are built and after all the privations have been endured to achieve the statistical success of the Five-Year Plan, the chances are that the people will be terribly disillusioned. There is a navie faith on the part of the Bolshevist in what the mass man can do. He believes that if you have Henry Fordism embodied in huge factories, and fill those factories with the mass man, there will be an immediate outpouring of mass production.

The experience of American business men shows very clearly,

however, that a great abyss separates the building of productive machinery from efficient production itself. Russia has already had to import thousands of foreign technicians and workmen to get its plans going. It recently announced that many thousands more foreigners would be mobilized for this purpose. It will be a long process before the ultimate goal is realized. Though the tempo of industrial realization is very rapid at the moment, it is not reasonable to conceive that the present basis of sacrifice and enthusiasm on the part of the people can be maintained. When the disillusionment comes - as come it surely will unless the experience of all history is to be belied - the people will want to know why their dreams have not been realized. There will have been no world revolution abroad; the people will not have their needs supplied at home. Meanwhile, they will have had enormous contacts with the West both through the people they themselves have sent to the West and those whom they have imported from the West. They will see clearly, it seems to me, that only through the greater and greater adoption of Western methods will they be able to realize the higher standard of living at which they are aiming. Their plans and methods will undergo an inevitable if slow modification.

To be sure, Stalin said in an interview published in The NEW YORK TIMES on February 5, 1931: "The job we are doing, if it succeeds, will overturn the whole world and free the whole working class. For that we must learn and learn and learn and master the technique of industrial management and overcome our backwardness." That is Stalin's challenge. It is a challenge, however, which should

cause no dismay to and create no anxiety on the part of anyone who believes in the fundamental strength of the Capitalist system.

The weakness of the Soviet plan lies in two fundamentals:

First, it does not give to the individual human being the possibility of enjoying those satisfactions which have constituted the chief impulse for individual economic endeavor in the past.

Second, such a plan does not give men freedom. Capitalism produces independent, enterprising, creative citizens. To be sure, it breaks down unless enough citizens are unselfish, public-spirited and responsible in their work, their investment and their use of money. But Capitalism does not discount the danger of the lure of riches, the worthlessness of riches as a means of social or individual happiness and the vast superiority of the joys of the spirit. The stress and strain of business, its ruthless and corrupt aspects, the jealousies and unhappiness caused by ostentation, will grow less as successful men of business become convinced that money cannot give them what they most require.

But under Communism the State decides what food shall be grown, what houses built, what commodities manufactured, what recreations provided. It divides up the work decided upon so that each citizen does his share for which he receives an arbitrary quota of the gross return. The citizen is forbidden to create anything or to go into buisness on his own account. The State decides exactly what kind of life everybody shall lead, what they shall eat, drink and make merry over and, what is more important, that the individual shall not settle these things for himself but obey the collective

will.

If we rely upon the State to organize everything, we surrender our freedom and initiative in return for the work and standard of life the State can give. Under Capitalism we rely upon private freedom, private enterprise, freedom to live adventurously, freedom to do supreme things.

The development of a Henry Ford would be almost unthinkable under the Russian system. Human nature craves freedom to explore, freedom to invent, freedom to dare. The individual derives his greatest satisfaction from working out a better order of life for himself through making his family more comfortable and being free to make that contribution toward the life of the community which his own enterprise and conscience may suggest. Destroy that individual energy, enterprise and initiative and you destroy one of the greatest mainsprings of material progress. All history teaches this, and the Bolsheviks can no more escape the lessons of history than they can push back the tide.

A system of Communism may be practical for a time in a community like Russia which has only just emerged from the collectivism of tribal or village life or where the primary and overwhelming need is to produce and distribute the barest minima of subsistance. But such a system could not last a day in the United States or Great Britain where countless millions have acquired the habit and desire to think, act and choose for themselves. It will not last in Russia when the people have emerged from the present pitifully low level of life and have come to experience some of the joys of living upon a

higher standard.

Next to elimination of private profit, the other essentially Communistic aspect of the Soviet program is the attempt to develop a state and a nation upon an entirely materialistic philosophy. That has never been tried before. Practically all other nations, even barbaric tribes, have built their Government on some kind of religious foundation. But it is a part of the creed of the Communist Party that religion is opium for the people.

This feature, again, of Bolshevism is bound to fail for the essential reason that such a philosophy deprives human beings of one of the deepest satisfactions in life, and gives nothing in return.

Much of the attitude toward religion in Russia may be attributed to the fact that religion under the Tsar was a religion of formalism, of superstition, and was in no sense a personal religion. I have visited anti-religious museums. I have witnessed anti-religious motion pictures in Russia, and though many of the exhibits were sacrilegious, I have seen few things which the Russians were being taught to object as "religion" which would not be equally objectionable to the modernistic religious thinker. Religion to the Bolshevik is a collection of dogmas, a highly developed ritual. The religion which is within, which primarily regulates his personal life, that is a conception of religion the Bolshevik does not recognize.

I had a talk one day in Moscow with Mr. Yaroslavsky, head of the Godless League. I told him that it seemed to me his people were trying to make a religion of their Communism, but he protested that he did not believe in any religion. I came to the conclusion that he and I did not define the word with the same terms. I asked him how much of his time he devoted to anti-religious activity and he said about one-twentieth - surely not the statement of a man who felt that the effort to destroy religion was the most important thing in life.

There is no question that the Communist Party is against religion. Those who worship must pay for the right to do so. The priest is deprived of civil rights as well as of a bread card. Religious instruction is not permitted to children. Anyone who practices religion in Russia today undergoes a certain martyrdom. But everyone under the law has the right to worship in his own way. There were some 55,000 Orthodox Churches at the time of the Revolution. Perhaps 5,000 of them have been closed - some of them because they were more useful as secular buildings, some of them undoubtedly due to the over-zeal of anti-religious Communists. But I am told that some of the churches which have been closed are now being re-opened.

Information comes from a source in this country interested in the spread of Protestantism in Russia and yet not inclined to be sympathetic with the Communist Party, that there are in Russia today 12,000 Protestant preachers and religious workers, of whom about 200 have been exiled. Under the Tsar the same source intimates that

there were 4,000 Protestant clergymen and workers.

There is today a distinct growth of personal religion in Russia. The Russian is essentially a mystic and responds readily to an appeal to a personal religious experience. I am one of those who believes that those essential features of Christianity which Dr. Fosdick calls its "reproduceable experiences", are fundamentally true. I am one of those who believes that the prophets, the martyrs, the saints and Godly men who, in all ages, have professed an intimate personal religious experience, have enjoyed something which was not only real to them but as real in essence as the existence of the universe itself.

Unless we are to believe that all these experiences have been but hallucinations and self-deceptions, if we believe in God as a reality and in Christ as an expression of that reality, must we not feel absolutely certain that in spite of all the religious repression and all the materialistic philosophy of the Communists, individual Russians will more and more come to experience the reality of this personal religion. Having experienced it they will tell of it to others and in the long run the Russian people can no more escape the reforming, regenerating and inspiring influence of that which is real in religion than they can escape the rising of the morning sun. Realizing, then, the terrific background of Russia's history, the character of the religion against which the Russians today revolt, their lack of knowledge of the kind of religion which to us is real, must we not say of those who today so violently oppose religion in Russia, as was said from the

Cross: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do?"

That our people have not allowed their views toward the religion or the civilization of foreign countries to affect them in their mutual relationships. has, according to Judge John Bassett Moore, been a fundamental tenet of the American Government from the beginning. The administration of George Washington established diplomatic relations with the Barbary powers, popularly known, because of their lawless depredations, as the Barbary Pirates, and concluded treaties with them, one of which -- the Treaty with Tripoli - declaring that as the Government of the United States was "not in any sense founded upon the Christian religion", and had, in itself, no character of enmity against the laws of religion or the tranquility of Musselmen", no dispute arising from religious opinion should ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two nations.

I have thus indicated the two essential respects in which the Russian experiment breaks with the past and is characteristically Communistic. The Russians have embarked upon an uncharted sea in their efforts to escape from the restrictions, the tyrannies and the oppressions of the past; they have disregarded the experience of mankind. But the skilled and successful navigator always returns to the old moorings after a stormy voyage.

There are many thoughtful people by whom Russia is regarded as a great menace to all that we hold dear and worth while. To those of us, however, who believe in the beneficence and inherent strength of our institutions, may I not recall the story of "the

wise man which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock."

If we see a man building his house upon sand, do we abuse the builder or show him how to erect the house upon foundations of rock? The Christian Science Monitor in a recent editorial very sanely expressed a profound idea:

"It would be idle to deny that recent events in Russia are disturbing, but the peoples of other countries may well view them, not with bitterness and malice, but with sympathy for the Russian people and a determination that tolerance and social justice shall prevail within their own nations. Clear perception of the failures - and successes - of the Soviet system is necessary and helpful. Mere hatred of Russians is neither."

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